

# Ski lodge restoration brings back family memories

By KYLE SPURR  
The Bulletin

SANTIAM PASS — When the wind blows through the pine trees here at the top of the forest, it reminds Dann Boeschen of his early childhood at the Santiam Pass Ski Lodge. The sound always brings him back to that time in his family's history.

Boeschen's parents, Arthur and Mary Boeschen, operated the ski lodge from 1945 to 1948, a time when the lodge became a site for leisure and recreation after World War II. The lodge was built in 1940 by the Civilian Conservation Corps but stayed mostly empty during the war.

It was easy for people driving over the pass to miss the lodge since it is tucked in the woods across the highway from Hoodoo Ski Area, which opened in 1938 in the Willamette National Forest.

Boeschen, 77, who owns a winery with his family in St. Helena, California, never forgot about the lodge, even when it was abandoned and fell into disrepair for the past three decades.

"I've thought about it a lot over the years," Boeschen recalled recently.

Boeschen was thrilled three years ago when he heard about plans to restore the lodge and save it from being demolished.

Dwight and Susan Sheets, former teachers from Salem who moved to Sisters last year, signed a five-year permit with the U.S. Forest Service in May 2018 to begin work on restoring the lodge.

By 2023, the couple plans to have the lodge open for daytime use.

The couple formed the nonprofit organization Friends of Santiam Pass Ski Lodge and have raised about \$1 million through grants and donations. They are nearly halfway to their goal of \$2.5 million to fully fund the restoration.

The funds raised so far have been enough to make major improvements to the lodge. Over the past year, the Sheetses hired crews from local job corps organizations and a national nonprofit agency, HistoriCorps, to attach new siding, dig trenches to install electrical wires and address structural issues.

The lodge is now safe for people to enter and will be protected from heavy snowfall this winter, the Sheetses said.

On one of the final days of construction recently, the Sheetses walked through the two-story lodge and could imagine what it was like in the 1940s, when Boeschen's parents welcomed visitors. A stone fireplace still sits in a large community room, and pieces of wooden bed frames are left in the dormitory-style lodging area, where visitors would spend \$2 per night.

"This lodge was used by so many people over the years," Dwight Sheets said. "When we started exploring this project, we found thousands of people saying they spent all kinds of time up there."

The Sheetses could also envision what the lodge will be like when it reopens. They want it to be a place where people can store their belongings when they ski at Hoodoo or hike in the summertime. It will also be a place for weddings, live music and other catered events.

"We want to bring it back so people can use it," Dwight Sheets said.

Boeschen, who has returned to the lodge several times over the years, spent the month of September at a home he has in Black Butte Ranch so he could see the progress being made to the lodge.

"It's very encouraging," Boeschen said. "We admire the Sheets' perseverance and their courage in getting started and continually planning to see it through."

The 6,000-square-foot lodge was placed



Photos by Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

From left, HistoriCorps volunteers Laura Azevedo and Julie Buer move scaffolding during the restoration of the Santiam Pass Ski Lodge.

on the National Register of Historic Places in 2018 for its unique architecture and its historical significance to the region. The lodge was used by a Presbyterian church group from the late 1950s until 1986. It has been vacant ever since.

Boeschen never heard why his parents decided to take on the challenge of operating a lodge in the remote wilderness. Boeschen's father grew up in Salem and taught himself to ski and mountain climb at Santiam Pass, so Boeschen suspects that's why he took over the lodge.

"He was in love with those mountains," Boeschen said.

After three years running the lodge, Boeschen's parents were worn out and moved to Milwaukie, southeast of Portland, where Boeschen's father opened a tire shop and raised Boeschen and his two siblings.

The lodge was a short piece of the family history, but it holds a special place in Boeschen's heart. He often looks over old black and white photographs that show him as a toddler on his mother's wooden skis or him skiing with his sister, Judy, who was two years older.

When his father died in 2000, Boeschen's mother took the family back to the lodge to spread his father's ashes. Boeschen remembers his mother telling the family, "this is where it all started."

Boeschen's parents were married in California, where he was born. But they considered the lodge the beginning of their lives together.

"For her to say that, I took notice," Boeschen said.

Boeschen knew exactly where he would bring his mother's ashes when she died in 2006 — the same sacred spot in the wilderness.

On trips back to the lodge, Boeschen is flooded with memories. And every time he hears that familiar sound of wind through the trees.

"It just speaks to me and says, 'this is what was built,'" Boeschen said. "This is what my parents brought me to."

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Dwight Sheets | Sisters resident who is helping restore the Santiam Pass Ski Lodge



Bend resident Jim Redmond, a volunteer with HistoriCorps — a nonprofit historic preservation organization — hands a piece of siding to project supervisor Eric White in October while restoring the Santiam Pass Ski Lodge.

## SUB-BIDS REQUESTED Astoria School District

**Captain Gray School South Façade Renovation**  
Skanska is requesting bid proposals for Subcontractors to complete the Captain Gray School South Façade Renovation.

**Bids Due: 12/1/21 @ 2PM PST**

A Non-Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, November 17th at 11am.

Join from the meeting link:

<https://skanska.webex.com/skanska/j.php?MTID=m7058c46f93e16131c8aeab87ec4632c8>

To join from a mobile device:

PH: 1-415-655-0001, ID: 24248476987#

The Request for Proposals are available here:  
<https://app.buildingconnected.com/projects/6171c079e9eef900d0fd4c00/bid-packages>

Project Contact:

James Ferris; [james.ferris@skanska.com](mailto:james.ferris@skanska.com)  
Chad Schlottmann; [chad.schlottmann@skanska.com](mailto:chad.schlottmann@skanska.com)

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## PFIZER VACCINE CLINIC FOR KIDS

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine received authorization from the FDA for children ages 5-11. CMH is offering a vaccine clinic for all children (CMH patients or not) in this age group.

**DATE:** Saturday, Nov. 13  
**TIME:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Astoria Armory  
**RSVP:** [cmhkidsvaccine.rsvpify.com](https://cmhkidsvaccine.rsvpify.com)

**QUESTIONS: 503-325-8500**

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