



# Experiencing



## Blossom Time

*Fair weather shines on valley events: more this weekend*

Story and photos by TRISHA WALKER  
News staff writer

While most agreed that Saturday was the busier day, the weekend's warm, sunny weather brought scores of visitors to the valley for the second weekend of Blossom Time.

At the Blossom Craft Show, held at the Hood River County Fairgrounds, a wide variety of vendors packed the grounds, many of which were local. Hood River Special Olympics, Duckwall Fruit's Relay for Life Team, the Trout Lake Quilters, and the Odell Lioness Club — among others — sold everything from baked goods to raffle tickets in support of their causes. The Blossom Quilt Show took donations for Hood River Adopt A Dog, which will also receive money raised from the annual Harvest Quilt raffle, in lieu of an admission charge.

Groups spent the morning or all day cleaning up Hood River Waterfront Park and sites along Indian Creek, as part of Earth Week observances (see page A1 for details on this weekend's Earth Day events).

Thomas and Connie Betts of Foothills Yarn & Fiber reported a very busy day on Saturday, with a steady, if not quite as heavy, stream of traffic coming up to their Sylvester Drive farm on Sunday. Thomas said that because of the early blossom bloom this year, visitors have been coming for a couple of weeks already, lured by the weather and scenery. Between the alpacas, spinning and weaving demonstrations, and extensive yarn and alpaca product selections, Thomas said the farm aims to "give people an experience. We're not your standard yarn store." (Their open house continues this weekend; Foothills is located near Odell, via Central Vale Road.)

Farther up the valley, Parkdale Grange members reported a very good turnout for their annual Blossom Dinner. Three tour busses, plus a motorcycle group of over 65 members, made reservations for the dinner on Saturday. Sunday is traditionally the day for locals, said Jean Hardman, one of the members on site doing "a bit of everything" to see the dinner go off smoothly.

Closer to Hood River, Patrik and Tess Barr, owners and operators of Hood Crest Winery, greeted visitors to their sunny porch for wine tastings. Patrik reported that "Saturday was madness," with every table full by 12:30. Many visitors were there for Columbia Gorge Wine Passport Month (more details at gorgewine.com). Patrik estimated that they lost 20 to 30 of their plants in the November freeze, but said they wouldn't know the full extent of the damage until September or October, closer to harvest.

Businesses including Apple Valley Store did a brisk business as travelers stopped for barbecue as well as baked goods for the annual dessert party at the Tucker Road landmark, and the women of Our Redeemer Lutheran and Pine Grove-Odell Methodist churches hosted their annual bazaars, with a cornucopia of artwork, crafts, baked goods and other handmade items.



DEBBIE CHENOWITH checks out greeting cards after purchasing a set of fruit-themed dishcloths at the Our Redeemer Lutheran bazaar.



TEAM DUCKWALL members selling treats and water to raise funds for Relay For Life include Gloria Campbell, left, Thalia Lara, Lupe Trejo and Topi Cervantes.

TOP LEFT, Kathie Alley and Fair Manager Clara Rice sample Packer Orchard and Bakery cookies at the Blossom Craft Fair and Quilt Show. Above, Chocolate the alpaca greets the camera at Foothills Yarn & Fiber near Odell where, in the center of the page, Thomas Betts demonstrates weaving a lap blanket. Below, Patrik and Tess Barr welcome visitors to Hood Crest Winery on Orchard Road; April is Oregon Wine Passport Month — see sidebar below for details.

### WEEK 3 BLOSSOM TIME HIGHLIGHTS

- April 25 — Spring Cleanup Day, on the waterfront; details on page A1.
- April 25 — Hood River Valley FFA 7th Annual Steak Feed and Silent Auction, 6 p.m. at the HRVHS cafeteria. Tickets \$10; proceeds go back to the HRV FFA chapter to fund future student events and activities. To purchase call 541-386-4500 ext. 4562 or nita.bozarth@hoodriver.k12-or.us.
- April 25 — Procession of the Species, 11 a.m. at Waterfront Park. Earth Day celebration to share what we love about Earth through art, music, dance and story, and how we are working to protect it. Food.
- April 25-26 — Foothills Alpaca Abstract Fiber Trunk Show, 11a.m. to 4 p.m., near Odell (details above).
- April 25-26 — Barrel & Reserve Tasting Weekend Columbia Gorge Wineries in Oregon and Washington. Small bites, special cheeses or pop-up food carts will be available along with take-home recipes, pairing lessons and new releases at 24 participating wineries. \$25 fee; valid month of April. More info at 1-866-413-9463 and columbiagorgewine.com /passport-month.
- Through April — Luminous Yellow: A Color Show, Columbia Center for the Arts, in which Gorge artists explore our most vibrant color, in painting, jewelry, photography, glass, digital art, and more.



APPLE VALLEY STORE visitors sample the fruit jams and spreads on sale.



ATHLETE MARIAH LANGER of Hood River spends time at the Hood River Special Olympics booth at Blossom Craft Fair at Hood River County Fairgrounds.