

## CASCADE observations

# A Love Letter to Odell

By PEGGY DILLS KELTER

I picked up the newest Gorge magazine this morning. I love this magazine, although I must make a confession: I'm also a frequent contributor. That said, editor Janet Cook and creative director and graphic designer Renata Kosina deserve praise for this quarterly publication. The magazine is always full of interesting articles and gorgeous photography. And it's free!

The magazine's contributors and staff work hard to capture what makes the Columbia River Gorge such a wonderful place to live and work. The spring issue includes a diversity of stories, from the history of Tofurky and its founder Seth Tibbott to profiles of local artists participating in the upcoming Open Studio Tours throughout the Gorge.

My assignment this issue was to research and write about the recently completed mural on the wall of the Diamond Fruit building in downtown Odell. This breathtaking mural by artists Michelle Yamamoto and Allison Bell Fox celebrates the cultural history of farming in the Hood River Valley, and tells the stories of the agricultural workers who care for the valley's wonderful fruit crops.

I started writing for Gorge magazine soon after retiring from my teaching career at Odell's Mid Valley Elementary School. Returning to this small community for this assignment was a homecoming for me. I lived there in the early 1980s and fell in love there. Our wedding was catered by an Odell restaurant (Huckleberry Mountain Café, now Michoacan), and I spent my entire teaching career at Mid Valley. Last week, I returned to Odell as a visiting artist — part of the school's annual "Art Week." It was a wonderful, though exhausting, reunion for me.

Art Week brings a team of diverse artists to the school for four days. The students learn about their options ahead of time, and select three different artistic experiences that are most interesting to them. There's everything from bucket drumming to puppetry, watercolor to weaving. Each child is assigned to one of their choices; those kids that selected me made paper mosaics from recycled materials.

The artists spent their first day setting up. I loaded my car with bottles of glue, scissors and flattened boxes of everything from Kleenex to Captain Crunch cereal. Recycled boxes serve as my "paints." Out to Odell, I passed the beautiful mural once again, its color pallet supposed to stay vibrant for at least 20 years.

After lugging all my supplies into the school, I treated myself to some carnitas tacos from the "Los Amigos" restaurant nearby. When I worked at Mid Valley, this was a regular lunch stop for me. Years later, they're still delicious. Fortified with food, I returned to my prep, feeling nervous about the coming days, but my belly full.

Over the next four days, I met with students from kindergarten through fifth grade. The kids made beautiful mosaics comprised of tiny pieces of cut up boxes. As we worked, I also tried to teach them about the three "R's" — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. When I taught this art lesson years ago, I could honestly tell my students that their materials would be recycled. Today, with China no longer interested in the U.S.A.'s recyclable materials, the cynic in me knows that everything dumped into our blue recycling bins goes directly to landfills. Such a sad lesson to teach.

It was wonderful to see the teachers and staff who were my colleagues when I taught at Mid Valley — such an amazing group of hard-working educators. There were lots of fresh young staff members as well, many of them fluent in Spanish. Skilled bilingual staff give students opportunities to learn in both languages. What a wonderful skill; I can say from personal experience that they will never regret being bilingual.

My husband and I volunteer as SMART (Start Making a Reader Today) volunteers at Mid Valley. Every Tuesday afternoon we head out to Odell and read one-on-one with kindergarten and first grade students. It's one of the most satisfying volunteer experiences I've ever had.

During SMART, each student reads one-on-one with an adult reading buddy for a half hour. During that time, the kids get to select whatever book from the collection that interests them. There are books in English and in Spanish. My students enjoy both languages, and their ability to read in Spanish often surpasses my skill level. At the end of a SMART session, the students get to select books to own and take home.

One young boy has been reading with my husband for almost two years. He is only 6 years old, but he's already teaching my husband how to read in Spanish. He corrects my husband when he mispronounces a word, and translates the story into English when necessary.

On the first day of Art Week, I had my group of kindergarteners and first graders sit down on the rug with me so I could explain the lesson. I looked at the students and suddenly noticed a familiar face — the young boy who "tutors" my husband. A few days later these students were on to a new project, one that involved buckets of cut paper letters. One person at a time at each table group shook the bucket and selected a letter. Turns followed until each kid had a small pile of letters to glue down. Many made abstract designs using the cut-out letters; others attempted to make made-up words. One young man selected the letters U, F, K and C and made them into a word not repeatable in this newspaper. He knew it was the wrong thing to do, and placed the letters back in the tub. I breathed a sigh of relief.

My husband's reading buddy found all the letters in his name and glued them down carefully. Then he asked me how to spell "love." I told him and he went in search of those four letters. Carefully glued down, he said it was a present for his mother.

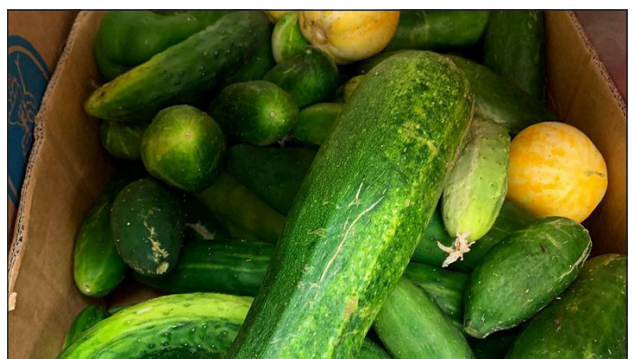


Photo courtesy of FISH

FISH FOOD BANK is in need of donations to help with its community garden, which supplies fresh produce to food bank patrons.

## Items needed

The FISH Food Bank Garden is in need of the following new or used items to aid in spring planting:

- Seventy-five to 100, 10-foot long, thumb sized bamboo stakes that will be used to identify what crops are planted and where.

- Twenty-five to 50 cedar shakes and shingles, 18- or 24-inches in length, will be used to protect young plants

from the relentless west wind that the garden receives.

- Bed sheets in any size. These will be cut up and woven between steel posts to create a wind barrier for the garden.

Donations can be dropped off at the FISH Food Bank Garden Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; contact Tessa at fishgardenvc@gmail.com. Donated items are requested to be delivered by April 1.

## YESTERYEARS

# Kiteboarders 'emerge from woodwork' in 2010

1910 — 110 YEARS AGO

Ground will soon be broken for a new brick building which J. Otten will erect on the corner of Oak and Fourth streets. The plans for the building are in the hands of R.B. Bartlett, architect, and call for a one story and basement structure which will be designed for an additional story later. The building will be built of brick with a cream colored pressed brick front. The frontage on Oak Street will be 50 feet with a length of 80 feet on Fourth Street. The work of dismantling the wooden buildings on the premises has been commenced and excavation for the foundations will be started as soon as they are removed.

1920 — 100 YEARS AGO

Having subscribed \$1,000 for the construction of a new road between Center Vale and Dukes Valley and Odell, residents of that section asked the county court to look into the matter. Last Monday, members of the county court went over the proposed route and as a result decided to approve construction of the road, which will swing north from Dukes valley to Odell Creek, thence east to the shipping point at Odell. The committee from Central Vale and Dukes Valley are J.O. Cameron, F.M. Edwards, Clayton Fletcher and Chas. Sheppard.

1930 — 90 YEARS AGO

Local climbers who use the direct route from the head of Second Street to the Heights will, in a few days, be able to make the journey on brand new wooden steps, which are being installed by the city council.

The annual meeting of the Chamber of Commerce will be held at the Rialto Theater next week, when an all talking picture, Rin-Tin-Tin in "On the Border" will be presented. The net proceeds will be turned over to the Hood River Hospital fund.

1940 — 80 YEARS AGO

Accepting the invitation of Fujinka (Japanese Women's Club), a large number of residents visited the Japanese Community Hall on West Sherman Sunday afternoon. The occasion was the observance of Hina-matsuri (Doll's Festival). The program committee had secured a beautiful exhibit of Japanese dolls, which always highlights the program in Japan. These, together with many examples of flower decoration, a mock marriage in the Japanese style, the long and short ritual of the tea ceremony and other equally interesting items all contributed to the success of this outstanding festival.

1950 — 70 YEARS AGO

In spite of the touch of springtime in Hood River and the lower valley, old man winter still reigns on the mountain from Cooper Spur to the summit. Last Sunday, intermittent snowfall gave the late afternoon skiers some very fine spring skiing and a new four inch blanket of snow late Wednesday assures the north slop skiers another good weekend before they are forced to put the slats away.

1960 — 60 YEARS AGO

Water, key to mankind's survival, will receive the spotlight this year during national wildlife week scheduled for March 20 through 26, according to the National Wildlife Federation and its affiliate the Oregon Wildlife federation. The theme was chosen to focus public attention on the



Hood River News archives

## MARCH 12, 1970

On their way to Puerto Rico, Hood River's delegation to a mock United Nations meeting are preparing here for the Sunday morning flight east. First student at the top of the stairs is Tom Turner. Others down the line are Gary Willis, Lutz Werner, Penny Copper, Candy Copper, Gwen Berg, Bill Burger, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Mash, Mike Jackson, Jon Crosland, John McColster, Bonnie Jensen and Rock Harder. Hood River hosted a mock UN meeting in Portland, and their performance earned an invitation. Students paid their own expenses. They're due to return March 16.

## VERBATIM

### Crag Rats Plan Local Mountain Hut

In order to maintain the mountain spirit and to stimulate the desire to be out in the wilderness as well as possible, the Crag Rats have purchased a piece of land just west of town. While the location of the plot does not suggest the country around timberline on Hood, the boys assure the News that, with a huge amount of rocks of all sizes and a number of wind-tortured trees right on the property, they will not have to tax their imaginations much to make believe they are out on the mountain, especially during winter.

Some of the rocks available will be utilized in building the hut on this property, which is located nearly opposite the Galley service station on the Columbia

River Highway west of town. Heavy shakes will also be used to make the hut look just like the orthodox mountain hut from the exterior viewpoint. Inside, while the mountain hut ideas will be closely followed, it will not be impossible for the Crag Rats and visitors to secure a certain amount of comfort and a huge fireplace will be a welcome spot in the depth of winter. It is here that many of the stories of summer mountain trips will be told.

The idea of a mountain hut clubhouse has been before the Crag Rats for several years and it is now believed that, before next winter, they will have a home right at the edge of town.

— Hood River News, March 14, 1930

streets carry one-way traffic northbound; Fourth from Cascade to State southbound only; and Fifth from Cascade to Oak northbound only.

2000 — 20 YEARS AGO

A final vote from the Columbia Area Transit board of directors is the last remaining step in the long-awaited development of a new transit station on the Hood River waterfront. The Port of Hood River board on Tuesday made its final choice of a site for the facility, ending months of speculation and discussions just weeks before an approaching deadline. The property, located immediately northeast of the Hood River Expo Center on the south side of Portway Avenue, will provide the space for a 1,200-square-foot building designed to serve a variety of local transit services.

2010 — 10 YEARS AGO

The first steady west winds of the year hit Hood River last week and, as if coming out of hibernation, dozens of kiteboarders emerged from the woodwork of winter to dust off their gear, crack their bones and take the first few tacks of a new season. This year, as the windy season approaches, land managers, business owners and user groups are anticipating probably the busiest summers the sandbar has ever seen for the fast-growing sport of kiteboarding.

Compiled by Trisha Walker and Emily Fitzgerald, News staff writer

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