

# CLUPNY:

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work. But it's satisfying work, because you're helping kids and that's my focus."

Clupny was recently honored at the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce's Distinguished Citizens Awards with the Merit Award, and presenter Jesus Rome, who coordinates CASA for the area, said he had asked Clupny to speak with him at the National CASA Convention in March because of the integrity and passion Clupny shows in advocating for children.

"He called me the poster child, but I thought I was just doing my job," Clupny said.

CASA is one of many organizations Clupny volunteers for. He said his first real volunteering experience was as a teenager in California when he worked with a local Hispanic community group to create a Spanish-language library. Later, in McMinnville in his early twenties he helped settle Vietnamese refugees. Since he moved to Hermiston in 1978 to work as a speech pathologist for the InterMountain Education Service District (he is now mostly retired, other than some consulting work for the Hermiston School District), Clupny has continued to collect new causes to donate his time to.

He is a member of the Lions Club, a subdeacon at the Catholic church, a member of the Knights of Columbus, part of the prison ministry at Two Rivers Correctional Institution, co-facilitator of a Parkinson's support group and longtime supporter of Meadowood Springs camp for kids

with learning disabilities.

He has been a Boy Scout troop leader, a volunteer firefighter and a Stanfield city councilor.

Each volunteer opportunity along the way has been inspired by a friend or co-worker who blazed the trail then inspired Clupny to follow them.

"It's just a body of work that accumulates over time," he said. "I'm lucky at 64 to be as healthy and as active as I am."

The religious work at TRCI has been one of the more interesting things he's volunteered for, Clupny said. Even though people just want to lock up the "bad people" and forget about them, he said it stuck with him when the prison was being built and someone remarked that there would be Catholic men in there who would need ministered to. He said he feels he has learned from the inmates as much as he has taught them.

"There are very intelligent people in prison," he said. "There are people who have changed their hearts in prison, and I've seen it."

Clupny said when he moved to Hermiston in his twenties, he never thought he'd stay long enough to become an "oldy moldy" in town. But he ended up establishing a career, marrying his wife Carol and raising two kids here. Now, he said, he "can't go anywhere without seeing someone I know."

"I found a place to blossom and I'd like to stay blossomed for a while around here," he said.

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# Hermiston business celebrates 40th anniversary

By JADE McDOWELL  
Staff Writer

Dale Platt, owner of Desert Cobbler in Hermiston, knows that they don't make shoes like they used to. Although his business celebrates its 40th anniversary on Wednesday, he's had to adapt along the way.

"When I first came here I just did shoe and boot repair," he said. "Now I do a little bit of everything."

"Everything" includes making leather saddle bags, belts, holsters and knife sheaths. Platt has some standard sizes on hand, but he can also tailor-make holsters or sheaths to fit the weapon someone brings in.

Over the years, shoes and boots have become cheaper, but also more cheaply made. Footwear has gotten more casual (meaning less leather) and the way the shoes are put together by machines makes it harder (and more expensive) to repair. All that has taught people to think of their shoes as something disposable that are not worth repairing.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

Dale Platt has owned and operated the Desert Cobbler in Hermiston for 40 years, celebrating four decades in business this week.

"Some people don't want to bother," Platt said.

Of course, there are still people in Eastern Oregon who appreciate the value of a good, high-quality work boot or cowboy boot that has been properly worn in. For those customers, Platt saves that favorite pair of boots with a new sole or heel. He said some of his customers have been coming to him for almost as long as he has been in business.

Despite the change in how

shoes are manufactured, he said the basic tools for fixing them are "still pretty much the same."

Platt grew up in the McKay Creek area, and learned the trade from a cobbler shop in Pendleton in the 1970s. He had gone off to college but came home to work after he ran out of money, and a cobbler offered to train him up in the art of shoe and boot repair. When Platt heard that a cobbler in Hermiston was selling their business, he decided

to take it over and moved to Hermiston.

Platt said he used to bring his children to work and let them entertain themselves in a playpen or, as they got older, help greet customers. Despite all that exposure to the industry, none of his three children wanted to follow in their father's footsteps and become a cobbler. He never took on anyone to train, either, since business started declining around the time that he would have considered it.

Still, Platt keeps on working, adapting to the changing industry and adapting to the challenges that come with being a downtown business owner. He said one of the keys is to remember is good old-fashioned customer service.

"Just be here when you tell people you're going to be here, and treat everyone the same," he said.

Desert Cobbler is located at 120 N.E. Third St.

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# STATE:

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"Some guys are going to have to wrestle over their head at the state tournament," Wyse said, "but that's what we're here for."

Hermiston head coach Kyle Larson said that he's not necessarily worried about the numbers game, as much as he's focused on making sure his guys wrestle hard and wrestle well.

"Some years it makes a difference, some years it doesn't. We've taken 18 to the tournament and won state titles, and we've had 11 and won state titles," Larson said. "We just have to worry about the things we can control and score as many points as we can, and that's how we're going to win this tournament."

Leading the charge for the Bulldogs will be seniors Valen Wyse and C.J. Hendon, who are the lone two returning state placers from 2016.

Wyse, the defending 152-pound state champion, moved up to 170 pounds this season and comes into the tournament off a second consecutive district title which helped him earn the No. 1 seed in the state bracket.

Meanwhile, Hendon earned a third place finish last season and comes into the state tournament with the No. 1 seed at 138 pounds.

Other returners with state experience include Adrian Tuia (No. 2 seed at 145), Julio Leiva (No. 7 at 170), Joey Gutierrez (No. 3 at 182), Kenny Bevan (No. 5 at 220) and Beau Blake (No. 5 at 285). All five wrestlers come in fol-

lowing top-2 finishes at districts and are determined to turn in a much better performance at state this time around and Wyse said that the key to victory starts with those five.

"When we had to pull it together as a team we did it at the Oregon Classic Tournament last month," Wyse said. "So if we can get that mojo going again at the state tournament and put it together, beat up on people wrestle like bullies, it's definitely going to pay off for us."

Hermiston will finish up their week of practice with a light workout on Thursday afternoon before packing up and making the trek to Portland. Larson said that after a real hard week of workouts last week, this week has been more focused on fine-tuning tech-

niques and making sure the guys stay fresh enough to wrestle at their best come Friday.

"We talked (Monday) about just getting on mat and wrestling the guy in front of you," Larson said. "It doesn't matter if he's a Crater guy or a kid from Bend or wherever, you step on mat and wrestle as hard as you can and give all effort you have and the outcome will be there at the end of the six minutes or the end of the tournament with the team points."

"I really feel the guys are fired up and excited to get there so I think we're going to roll in there and guys will compete and give best effort for sure."

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