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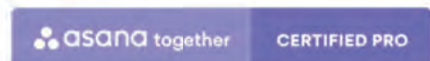


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 Chelsea Marr  
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 Elaine Bakke  
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**Editors**  
 Kirby Neumann-Rea  
*Hood River News*  
 Mark Gibson  
*The Dalles Chronicle*

**Editorial**  
 Neita Cecil  
 Emily Fitzgerald  
 LisaAnn Kawachi  
 Caleb Lundquist  
 Noah Noteboom (Intern)  
 Trisha Walker

**Advertising Director**  
 Jody Thompson

**Advertising**  
 Suzette Gehring  
 Tom Peterson  
 Niki Piacente

**Design**  
 Minna Kim  
 Eagle Media Lab

Hood River News  
 419 State St.  
 Hood River  
 541-386-1234

The Dalles Chronicle  
 811 E. 2nd St.  
 The Dalles  
 541-296-2141

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# Table of Contents

Alethia Larsen.....	6
Molly Schwarz.....	10
Maria Venero .....	16
Kenya Sarabia-Figueroa .....	20
Sharon Roberts.....	26
Alice Clark.....	30
Barb Ayers.....	38
Emily Curtis.....	42
Ellen Kilkenny, Tammy Keys .....	48
Socci Galvez.....	54
Carla McQuade .....	58
Sheri Castaneda .....	64
Laila Davis.....	68
Natasha Skov.....	76
Lisa Farquharson .....	82
Staci Hanson .....	86
Dr. Analene Pentopoulos .....	90
Kathleen Schacht.....	94
Terri Vann.....	98
Advertiser Index.....	102



Left to right: Kalyn, Debra, Charlie, Willow, Mckaila, Halle, Emma, Deidre, Jacque, Audrey, Patty, Sue, Kelly, Janelle, Ann



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Alethia  
Larsen

By Trisha Walker | Hood River News

**I**t's been 14 years since Alethia and Allen Larsen opened Allen's Fine Woodworking in their upper valley home, and in that time, both Alethia's role and the size of the business have considerably grown.

For one, the couple now has a showroom at Third and Cascade in downtown Hood River, where they provide custom cabinetry and design services.

For another, Alethia Larsen's role has gone from behind the scenes office work to a more visible role.

"When we first started, we worked out of our home and I rarely interacted with clients," she said. "... But when we opened up our showroom downtown, I guess I became more of the face of our company. I became the person people would first meet when they would come into our showroom, because at that time, Allen was still doing most of our installs and I would schedule times for him to meet with clients."

As the showroom continued to grow, so did her role in each project.

"Now Allen and I function as a team on most projects, each of us bringing a different set of eyes to the project. He handles more of the technical side of the kitchen designs and I work with clients one to one to get to know how they use their space, so the end design works for their individual style and needs."

And in the end, clients get a space that is truly designed for them, functioning as good as it looks.

For Larsen, the best — and most fun — part of the job is working with clients in designing their kitchens. She imagines herself in the kitchen in order to organize it for maximum function based on how the client will use the space. Then, she helps with color and material selection. In between clients, she manages the showroom and handles the bookkeeping, paperwork, advertising and marketing.

"They say the kitchen is the heart of the home, so when we work with our clients on their kitchens, we

get to help create something special for their family to enjoy for years to come," she said. "Designing a kitchen space for people that they are proud of and happy with is so rewarding — I fall in love with each space we work on, and through the process, our customers become more than just clients, they become our friends. I love it!"

Larsen said clients are pleasantly surprised at the affordability of Allen's Fine Woodworking's custom designs.

"I have heard from many people that they assume just because we are a small, boutique-style design studio that we must be expensive," she said. "Then, when they work with us and find out how competitive we are and that most of the time, we're less than the 'big box' stores, they're shocked.

"Plus," she added, "when it's your business, you put your own heart and soul into it."

The business is definitely a family-affair, with both of the Larsens' sons training alongside their father.

"We love the flexibility owning our own business has given our family," Larsen said. "It's allowed us to spend more time with each other. Our motto is, 'the family that works together, stays together,' and we still find time to sneak away every year for a family vacation."

Larsen said that the couple appreciates how welcoming other downtown businesses were when they "took the leap" and opened the Allen's Fine Woodworking showroom seven years ago, and that the busy, late nights and long weekends have been worth it.

"We want to thank all of those who we've had the privilege of meeting and working with over the years," she said. "Thanks for inviting us into your homes and lives. We hope you're still enjoying your kitchens!"

Allen's Fine Woodworking is located at 216 Cascade Ave., Suite A; for more information, visit the showroom or contact 541-354-1800 or [info@allensfinewoodworking.com](mailto:info@allensfinewoodworking.com). Information can also be found at [allensfinewoodworking.com](http://allensfinewoodworking.com).

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Molly  
Schwarz

By Kirby Neumann-Rea | Hood River News

**M**olly Schwarz has tapped into her serious and comical sides as a music teacher and impresaria of a cancer concert fundraiser now in its seventh year.

"I love to make people laugh — and I love singing, and singing and singing," said Schwarz, who has taught pre-school music in Hood River for the past 11 years and formed her own school, Mary Ann Hall's Music for Children, on Hull Street on the Heights, five years ago. She and her husband, Danny, have three boys, Dane, 10; Cassidy, 7; and Whit, 4.

Seven years ago she saw a way to tap into the adult-side of her muse, and give something back at the same time.

Schwarz's latest "I Hate Cancer" Concert, with friends, happened July 12-13 at Columbia Center for the Arts, and raised \$17,000. Schwarz presented "Smother! You Can't Spell It Without Mother!"— her frank and often ribald take on parenting.

Proceeds benefited the Vivian Rose Weaver Defeat DIPG Foundation. (Vivian is a local 4-year-old girl with an inoperable brain tumor; 100 percent of the funds go to the foundation for research.) Vivian's parents are Simon and Katie Weaver of Underwood, medical professionals who work in Hood River.

"I'm glad to be able to do something, even a little bit," Schwarz said.

Schwarz blends comedy, original music and covers, sketches and songs by guest artists.

"I tell stories about my kids — lots of self-deprecation," she said. "It's all personal anecdotes. I choose the music to flow with the theme of the show."

A sample joke is this:

"I tell my audience, 'If you become a parent, don't - ever - play - with - your - kids. Once you start, you can't stop, and it's SO boring.'"

She turns Def Leppard's sexy "Pour Some Sugar On Me" into a comment on how married people can keep

intimacy alive.

"This is Three" is a spoof of "This Is Me" from "The Greatest Showman."

"It's about how, um, unpleasant, pre-Ks can be. But it's sung from a three-year-old's perspective," she explains.

Past "I Hate Cancer" shows have twice helped the Don Benton Cancer Fund, and to pay for a 3-D cancer scanning machine at Providence, which has been lead sponsor since the start.

Schwarz teaches at pre-schools including Bright Beginnings, where she directs the music program. She also taught the program in New York for several years before moving west.

Schwarz learned the piano at age 6, until 10, "and my mom let me quit."

"I always say I blame her, but I'm really glad I had that foundation." At her school, "I don't teach piano, we just do music together." Further, her guitar skills are "super basic."

"I know five chords. I do them well, but just five. My performing strengths are singing and comedy."

She grew up in Pennsylvania, earned a musical theater degree from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and lived in New York after college and later Los Angeles, considering a performing career.

"I came to Los Angeles to be a working waitress-slash-actress, to be a living stereotype," she joked. Then she moved to New York, which she described as "scary, but the best decision I ever made." There, she met Danny, and they were married 13 years ago. They lived in San Diego and then came to Hood River after a job offer from his current employer, Duotone. "What a great place to be," she says of the Gorge.

In its seven years, "I Hate Cancer" concerts have raised more than \$40,000 for cancer patients or research. A long-time friend died of cancer and she saw an opportunity to put her talents to use.

"I was fresh out of having my first child at the time, and I thought, 'I want to do something. I have a back-

ground in theater I hadn't touched in awhile. I'd been teaching for a number of years, but the performance part was stagnant. It was okay, because I was a new mom and busy."

This month was not necessarily the last performance of "Mother ... Smother."

"I think it's a show that could go places, and I would like to try to make that happen. It's universal themes. Everyone just wants to laugh. It has a great mix of really tender moments and then I turn it around and you laugh.

"It's such a lonely process when I write it; it's like, 'I don't know if this is a good idea?'"

The planning and carrying of out her shows is freeing — now. It's been stressful in the past, and Schwarz has recently come to terms with her command of the creative process, and the content.

"It's a strange time of life. I'm 45 and for so many years I was so afraid of putting myself out there," Schwarz said. "I felt like I was hiding from performing, that thing I was made of. It was like, 'I have the music school, cool, kids love it, Hood River loves it,' but it sank in: 'What about you?'"

"And then I started doing the concerts and every year

before concert it has been so stressful. My husband told me, 'I don't understand your relationship with this. You love it and you're so stressed out.'

"It was so many moving parts trying to please everyone else," she said. "It was a little all over the place. This is the first year, where I knew, 'I got it. It clicks. Do what you want, listen to yourself, and I have so many people who are supporting me.'

"I feel this is a true representation of me, for the first time. It's a funny thing to be 45 and 'you got it! Eureka!'"

She grew up loving to perform, then studied musical theater, became a mom, and "parenthood trumped those experiences.

"I think I got rusty. I was so focused on worrying. Often I said, 'I want to perform. I just want to be in a play with a director, just tell me what to do.' It took me awhile, to realize, 'it's all on me, I'm doing it, and I'm glad, look what we're getting back.'

"It was cool to do it in Portland (at Carey's Comedy Theater) not for a benefit. It's a matter of trusting yourself: 'You've got this. You knew it was funny. It still is, don't let them see that you're scared.'"

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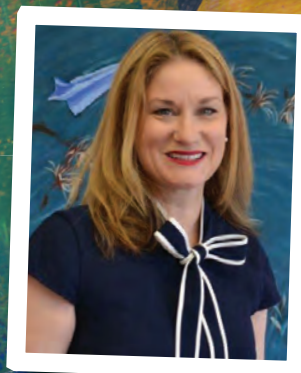


Mary Ortega, Ana Garcia and (not pictured) Itzel Ortega.

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Pictured L to R:  
Jessica Campanella, Sandy Crawford

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Back: Sam Morris, Sandra Spears, Pam Webster,  
Tina Kipper, Mari Braden, Jessica Galvan  
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*Maria Venero*



By Elaine Bakke | White Salmon Enterprise

**T**eaching or traveling to exotic lands ... that was the decision Maria Venero had to make when deciding what career path she wanted to pursue when it was time to go to college. “I know it didn’t make much sense, but I remember reading about the life and work of Margaret Mead, an American anthropologist who traveled to Oceania to study the cultural conditions and behavior of natives. I fantasized about traveling to exotic places and learning about other cultures,” Maria said. “The thing I didn’t like about it was the uncertain future of a career that seemed long and hard to be able to obtain once I was done. Then, I started contemplating more and more the idea of becoming a teacher. It was something I loved, and it had a promising future.”

Maria’s love for teaching came at the hands of her mother. Born in a little town in the Cantabria region of northern Spain, Maria remembers her mother teaching with another lady in what was “the bottom floor of her grandfather’s house.”

“As a young child, I’d often go visit her and play outside with her students. Her passion for teaching was something that I always admired. She was respected and cherished by the community,” Maria recalls.

On the flip side, Maria’s father worked in Germany when she was a child, coming home only during the holidays. “He instilled in me his passion for traveling, learning new languages, and, above all, respecting people’s cultural differences and uniqueness.”

It took Maria three and a half years to complete her schooling, and she then prepared for “las oposiciones,” a Spanish teaching test that, if completed successfully, “would open the doors” for her to work in public schools.

Maria started exploring her options and was lucky to find a job in the Spanish Embassy in London. A year later, she was teaching pre-school for Spanish immigrants — a job she thoroughly enjoyed.

Four years later, she was ready to do something differ-

ent. She moved to Mexico, where she and a friend wanted to start a school. “It took us six months to realize our dream. The city hall in Irapuato, Guanajuato bought two portables where we housed children 9 months to 3 years old,” she said.

While taking a course in San Miguel De Allende, Maria’s career path veered yet again. She was offered and accepted a job to become part of a non-profit school for students with a variety of handicaps. It was also in San Miguel where she met her husband, David, an American working as an agronomist in Mexico for Lipton Company.

His career brought them back to the States, where he ended up working as a field supervisor for Trout Lake Farm. Another career move took the couple to Maui, where David was responsible for planting 500 acres of coffee in the Kaanapali. It was in Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii where their daughter, Nohelani, was born.

Her birth and future schooling had Maria looking into the Montessori philosophy and practices of teaching. Nohelani and Maria both started at the Montessori School at the same time, Nohelani as a student, Maria as an assistant for a student with muscular dystrophy. It was one of the Montessori teachers who was instrumental in helping Maria get her teaching papers in the United States. Up until this point, her Spanish teaching credentials were acceptable everywhere she taught, except in the U.S.

That paperwork allowed Maria the opportunity to pursue her next goal — becoming a Montessori teacher through Chaminade University. Two years later, that goal became a reality. Maria taught at the school for an additional two years before another move came — this one back to White Salmon and her husband’s job in Trout Lake.

Again, additional certification was needed for Maria to teach in either Washington or Oregon. While obtaining her certification, Maria worked for the White Salmon School District as a bilingual para-pro at Henkle Middle School. The following year, she transferred to Whitson Elementary School, where, after a couple of years, she became the bilingual teacher.

For those six years, Maria taught a bilingual transitional model through which students from first to fourth grade were pulled out for 45 minutes every day to come to her classroom for instruction. Today, Whitson's bilingual program looks quite different in the way the service is delivered to students — it's a pull-in program that targets the second language development of students.

Maria currently has her own classroom at Whitson Elementary; June 13 was the last day of her 11th year of teaching first graders. "I'll miss them as I do every year. It's a privilege to be around my students for 180 days. We become a community where we share happy and sad moments. We laugh, we learn, and every day is a new day of discoveries. I love teaching first grade, it's the age of discovering and sharing the world around them."

She said her biggest satisfaction, however, comes from observing her students' growth and seeing them discovering what they are passionate about ... just like she did.

"Kids are like an open book. They let you know right away what is going to work for them and the changes that I need to bring as a teacher. Teaching for me is fun because it's never the same thing, it's just a continuous learning process."



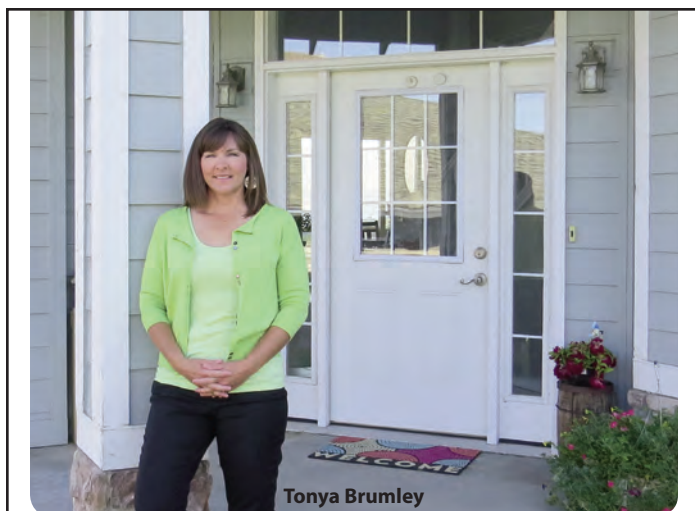
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*Kenya*  
*Sarabia-Figueroa*

By Mark Gibson | The Dalles Chronicle

**K**enya Sarabia-Figueroa, 24, celebrated the first full year of Terra Cotta Boho Boutique LLC at the end of June and is all smiles as she talks about the women's wear boutique she owns and operates downtown The Dalles.

"We're doing really well," she exclaimed, when asked about the shop's first year, but the "we" is a bit misleading. "I say 'we' all the time, but it's just me," she laughed. Kenya is the sole owner of the boutique, which features Bohemian-style clothing, shoes, accessories and gift products, but she's had a lot of help from the business community and her family getting it set up and running. "Everyone helps me," she said. Luise Langheinrich, owner of Lines of Design, was very helpful as she worked to get the shop together, as did staff at the Small Business Development Center at Columbia Gorge Community College. Once her plans were complete and a location found, her family helped her set up the shop, building and installing clothing racks, getting together furnishings and working out the decor.

The result is a warm and friendly shop, replete with color and giving the impression, despite its small size, of having a lot to offer.

The Bohemian styles she purchases for the shop are trendy, and the style has a "certain something," which Kenya described as "free spirited, eclectic, unique and feminine."

It's multi-cultural, as well. "It ties in a lot of elements from different cultures and countries," she said. Her own roots are in Mexico, but Kenya was born and raised in The Dalles, graduating from The Dalles High School in

2012.

Kenya finds and purchases clothing at a variety of online wholesale suppliers, and attends trade shows in Portland and Las Vegas as well. "There's new inventory every week, I always have something new for people to check out."

Kenya keeps close tabs on trends, here and around the world, and keeps an eye on what local people are wearing as well. "I like everything in the store, but it's not necessarily *my* style. I watch what people in The Dalles like to wear." She tries to have something for every body type, from extra small to extra large, and every age as well. Her primary demographic, however, is women in their mid 20s to late 30s.

Through her first year, business has been steady, she said. "It's working, it's all good. People are coming in every day." Although located off the main streets — across Washington from the Granada Theater — people are learning where she is. "A lot of people find me because they park here to go somewhere else," she said.

The shop is a step toward bigger dreams for Kenya. "I'd love to expand, to grow and have more options. Maybe have more stores in the region," she said. "I enjoy doing it, I love it."

But that is for the future. "I love how small it is now," she added.

Terra Cotta Boho Boutique, LLC, 214 Washington Street, The Dalles, is owned by Kenya Sarabia-Figueroa. She can be reached by phone at 541-769-0550; email at [hello@shopterracotta.com](mailto:hello@shopterracotta.com); online at [shopterracotta.com](http://shopterracotta.com), and on Instagram and Facebook @shopterracotta.



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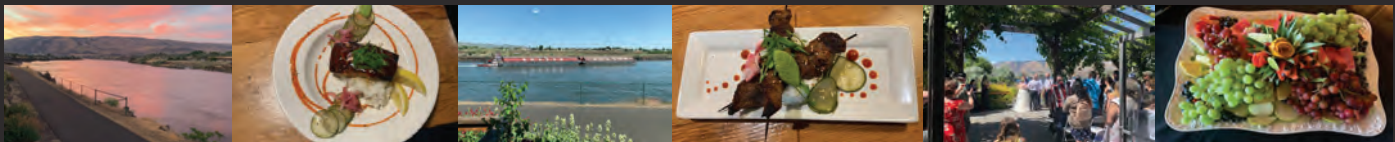
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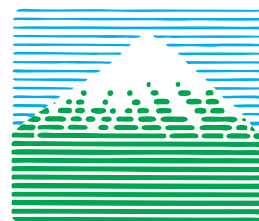


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Sharon  
Roberts

Harvest Market  
SHARON  
STORE DIRECTOR

By Elaine Bakke | White Salmon Enterprise

**S**haron Roberts was recently promoted from assistant manager to store manager at Harvest Market's White Salmon store – she is the first woman to hold the position and is ready with the store staff to earn the community's business.

Sharon grew up in the Glenwood Valley, moving to White Salmon as a teenager. In 1991, as a 20-year-old and single mother of a 1-year-old daughter, she applied for her first job – as a check-out clerk at the newly opened Thriftway Store in White Salmon. Although she did some shelf stocking and a little bit of bookkeeping, her job was mainly checking.

“Things were different when I started. Back then shelf stocking was left up to the men in the store. Things have changed. Now everyone, both women and men work as a team to get the shelves stocked. In fact, at the time I was hired, the staff was mainly male, whereas now the staff has a great mix of women and men,” Sharon said.

A number of years after she started working for Thriftway, the store was sold to new owners. Although the Thriftway name remained and everything appeared the same to customers, inside changes were being made. For one thing, Sharon and two of her fellow employees were selected to attend management classes in Ferndale, Wash. In addition to working as a checker, Sharon's responsibilities grew to include both bookkeeping and payroll.

“I didn't really know why they picked us to attend the manager classes. I believe we were asked because of the length of time we had worked for Thriftway,” said Sharon, adding “Up until then, I had learned as I went along.”

In 1997, the store was sold to Peter O'Neal and

family and became Harvest Market by Thriftway. Sharon continued working in bookkeeping, payroll and checking. As time went by Sharon was promoted to management as a “PIC” (person in charge), and was placed in charge of the dairy department, where she ordered, stocked and displayed dairy products.

“Our store is unique. Every employee does it all. If you know how to do many different things in the store, you can always help someone else,” she said.

Jeff O'Neal succeeded his father as store owner and changed the store's franchise to Harvest Market. Under Jeff's leadership, Kevan Bren (one of the two employees who had attended the management classes with Sharon) became store manager and Sharon was promoted to assistant manager and remained in charge of the dairy department and assisting with the store's bookkeeping.

Sharon remembers that in the store's past “a lot of different store managers came and went over the years. I have worked for my fair share of managers.” Sharon found working with Kevan, once he became manager, was rewarding and mentoring. “We really got along well.”

Over the years, Sharon expressed her interest to Harvest Market's owner and management about her goals of possibly becoming the store manager once Kevan eventually retired.

While Sharon had filled in for Kevan when he was on vacation or out of the store, there were many first-time experiences and new aspects of the manager's position she has needed to learn.

“I had never done employee scheduling.” She has dealt with the store's sales/productivity numbers, worked with every vendor, and monitored safety issues and building inspections, she said.

Sharon works hard every day to follow the

same principles laid out by her mentor and prior manager, while still putting her own personal touch on things.

Sharon believes in the customer. “First and foremost is the customer.” If a customer does not find a particular item on the store shelves, the staff at Harvest Market will try to locate the product from one of its vendors and request that the item be brought in and put onto the shelves.

Sharon has been very fortunate in how her career developed over the years. “I think it was because I always work hard and stuck it out. I really do like the grocery business. I love it and wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

Sharon is here to carry on the “tradition of providing the community with a great shopping experience just as the manager before me did.”

Sharon’s personal life outside of store hours includes being a loving grandmother, spending as much time as she can with her four grandbabies. She also likes playing with her two dogs, sewing, crocheting and camping. A new pastime for her and her husband is kayaking. “If the wind blows too much, though, I’m done,” she said.



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*Flice*  
Clark

By Kirby Neumann-Rea | Hood River News

**H**ood River Valley roots loop around, under, and even overhead for Alice Clarke, office manager at Sheppard's Orchard and Vineyard Equipment.

Her father brought the family to Parkdale from Montana when Clarke was 8-years-old. He worked for BPA and helped install the high-line transmission wires that run east-west across the valley.

She ran the parts department for an auto dealership not long after high school, became a full-time mom and then worked for Sue Collins' travel agency, before joining Sheppard's 18 years ago, where she is the only woman on staff at the Hood River agriculture implementation store.

"They all respect me and treat me very nicely," Clarke said. "Nathan Stanton played baseball with my son; Rick Martz, I went to high school with; Brett Henderson, sitting in the cafeteria listening to his funny stories, it's great. He and Rick have worked here longer than anyone. They are a great group of guys."

All three fields Clarke has worked in have been about something she loves doing: helping people meet their needs, be it in auto parts, travel plans or large-and-small purchases of ag implements.

"I take a lot of calls and questions and figure out what people need and get them to the right person here," said Clarke, who handles orders and all financing contracts.

It does not take long for her to get at least a baseline of what a customer needs. She works closely with owners Ben Sheppard and Craig Sheppard to follow through on that.

"I have loved working with Bill, Craig and Ben." (Bill Sheppard, Craig's father, is retired but still involved in the company.)

"It's been really wonderful, I love it when Bill sits down and visits with me, and tells me all his adventures" (including Crag Rats tales).

Clarke is one of the first faces you see walking into the showroom. Her office is just inside a large open window, making her easy to find.

"You can see, and visit with people, and see your friends. I enjoy knowing people, and getting to know people. That was true of my other jobs: you had to know people and their needs.

"It warms my heart."

One woman called and Clarke recognized her immediately.

"I remembered what kind of tractor she had. I did her original contract, and now I can pull her file and give it to Craig, and he can work with her on whether she wants to go with a \$40,000 tractor or a \$25,000, and trade this one in."

She said her office knowledge is based on what an orchardist or farmer might need on the ground.

"I help as much as I can and give I give it to Craig, but Craig and Ben are the most knowledgeable about what a person needs."

"I'm always putting out fires. When people are angry on the phone, you talk to them calmly and quietly and usually you can solve the situation."

Clarke said, "I know people. I know the farmers and when they come in I know their names. Not everyone, but I've lived here."

The late Everett and Connie Campbell moved Alice and her six younger siblings to Parkdale in the 1960s. She attended Parkdale Elementary and Wy'east Middle School and graduated from Hood River Valley High School in 1975.

"I married at a very young age." She and her husband, Ken, son of the late Gorge painter Gilbert Clarke, have two children, Nathan and Renee, both of Parkdale, and they have a grandson, William, 5.

Clarke worked for Connie Smith car dealership, on the Heights where XTC is now located, and later for 12 years for Sue Collins Travel.

At Sheppard's she was hired to do the bookwork.

"The business has just escalated so much," she said.

“Things have changed, and when I started working for Craig everything was done basically by hand, and more and more things now are on-line.”

Sheppard’s moved to its new location two years ago, after 98 years on State Street. “It’s really nice,” she said of the new space. The firm celebrates 100 years later this year; she speaks proudly of the centennial milestone.

At home, Clarke said, “I am an avid gardener. I garden a lot, my flowers are just spectacular right now.” She raises more than 200 dahlias.

“I love to play raquetball and I’m learning to play pickleball, taking lessons. I’m usually at the club at 5 a.m. four days a week, and work out. It’s what I like to do.”

And there is grandson William, who starts kindergarten at Parkdale this fall.

“He lives seven minutes away, I stop on my way home from work and have him as much as they let me have him.”

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Front row: Linda Millan O'Dell, Francisca Klarquist. Back Row: Carol Wagar, Janette Harrington, Joni Sohal, Sally Becker. Not Shown: Elizabeth Hartley.

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Dianne Level and Mayra Sandoval

Mayra was born and raised in Hood River. Mayra's role is essential to Anderson's service to our communities. "Being bilingual has given me the best opportunities to help those in my Latino community. I lived in Mexico for 1 year where I met my husband. We have been married for 4 great years and counting. When not at work we are usually out exploring the Gorge". Hablamos español



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Dianne is a retired educator (Westside Elementary) & long-time resident of Hood River. She and her husband, Bob, have three children and nine grandchildren. Dianne's role as Family Service Counselor is vital in helping our community with pre-planning their final wishes.



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*Barb*  
Ayers

By Noah Noteboom | Hood River News

**D**espite being an urban-grown global traveler, Hood River County Emergency Manager Barb Ayers' favorite place is right here in the Hood River Valley. Ayers was born and raised in San Diego, Calif., where she discovered her passion for public safety and windsurfing. Her interests have brought her all over the world, from Bali to Mosier.

She graduated from San Diego State University, where she studied journalism and creative services. In 1991, she was hired as the public relations director for the San Diego Zoo, where she worked for 13 years. During her time there, she worked alongside local establishments to try and drum up business, and even aided in the filming of documentaries about the wildlife in the zoo.

After 9/11, tourism was on the decline, while public safety was on the upswing. Ayers then saw an opportunity to serve with the San Diego Fire and Rescue Department. During her four-year stint, she played a prominent role in the founding of San Diego CERT (Community Emergency Response Team).

"It's not just, we will do it for you. We do it together," said Ayers on including the community in emergency response, and not simply relying on firefighters or police officers.

Trained by firefighters and other safety officials, the nearly 1,500 volunteers for San Diego CERT are tasked with getting the community involved in how to best prepare themselves for natural disasters.

In 2007, Ayers moved to Hood River, where she spent most of her summers previous, and secured a job with Providence Hospital as the director of marketing and communications.

After four years at the hospital, Ayers took a job offer to be the communications director for the city of Vancouver, Wash. She spent just over three

years in Vancouver, but Hood River was a place that never left her mind.

"I missed Hood River every single day I was gone," she said.

Ayers maintained her home in Mosier, and was living there in 2009 at the time of the Microwave fire. She had to be evacuated as the fire had burned more than 1,200 acres. Ayers was also a resident in 2016 when the Union Pacific train, carrying crude oil, derailed, incurring over \$9 million in damages.

"I have lived both sides of disaster," says Ayers on her experiences.

After Karl Tesch retired in 2014, Ayers was hired to succeed him as the county's emergency manager. Witnessing all the good that can come from being a public servant, she has pledged to only work for non-profits or public agencies.

"I woke up one day and thought to myself, I want to be a part of the solution."

Volunteering is something that is important to her: She is on the Hood River Rotary and Mosier Fire Board, while also serving on the board of the United Way of the Columbia Gorge. United Way is a group that raises money to help keep non-profits operating in Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Klickitat and Skamania counties.

When she's not planning for potential disasters, Ayers thoroughly enjoys windsurfing and hiking with her dog, Doodle. Doodle can be seen hanging ten off the front of her stand up paddle board, or riding a surfboard in the annual Fourth of July parade.

Ayers is also the webmaster of DogDiary.org, where she writes stories through the point of view of her dogs. She has always had a passion for writing and photography and aspires to be a published author someday. Living a service-oriented life has turned out to be just the ticket for the Hood River community's emergency manager.



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## Alicia Ross, M.D.

I love practicing medicine in the gorge! I find that my patients have such a “can do” attitude which makes partnering with them such a rewarding experience. When I am not practicing medicine, I love spending time with my family, hiking, traveling, and cheering the University of Oregon Ducks.



## Laura Whiting, PA-C

I have lived in Hood River since 2008 with my husband and two daughters and am fortunate to practice an area of medicine I love. Educating patients about heart health and partnering with them to achieve their goals makes me happy. When not seeing patients, I enjoy mountain biking, attempting to surf, being outside with my family, traveling, and practicing Spanish.

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By Emily Fitzgerald | Hood River News

**E**mily Curtis has spent the last 10 years building a business from the ground up with her husband, and the last seven or eight pouring her heart and soul into Hood River Rotary — a combined experience she describes as “like standing in a fire hydrant — really exciting, but it’s a wild ride.”

Curtis, who grew up in The Dalles, returned home to the Columbia River Gorge after college and worked at the Hood River Chamber of Commerce for a while, where she picked up marketing skills. “But it wasn’t called marketing,” she said, “it was telling our businesses’ story and what we do.” Curtis insists that her job at Curtis LLC is the same: Continuing to tell the business’ story; particularly focusing on how the team at Curtis Homes does everything together, as a team.

That aspect of teamwork also comes into play at Rotary. “When we work together, we become so much more powerful as a group,” she said, adding that Rotary is good at “valuing the differences in people and the strengths in people and really trying to draw those out.”

Curtis is embarking on her year-long term as president of Hood River Rotary, an organization she joined to get connected to more local businesses and grew to love for its commitment to the community.

“There’s such a long legacy of people who’ve given so much to our community who have been president,” she said, adding that she’s “excited to be a small part of that long history of service.”

She encourages young people like herself to get involved in Rotary, since it’s a way to give back to the community in a tangible way; and you get to meet up with local business professionals for lunch every Thursday, “and how much time do you get to carve out to do that?!”

When asked what she has learned from her Rotary experience, she said that, not only has she learned more about herself as a young professional, she has learned

that there is power in just showing up — “Whether on the business side or getting involved in Rotary or as a company getting involved in the Children’s Park,” she said, “you don’t need someone to ask you. You just need to volunteer and say ‘yes.’”

Curtis Homes, the business she co-owns and operates with her husband, Cameron, started from a volunteer opportunity the couple said ‘yes’ to over 10 years ago: Helping to rebuild houses gutted by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. The experience had such an impact that Curtis incorporated the fleur de lis — a symbol of grassroots support for New Orleans’ recovery — into the business’ logo. “We came home and thought, ‘homes mean so much to so many people,’” she said, “We wanted a daily reminder of why we’re doing this...It’s about providing a home that people will spend Christmas in and bring new babies into; that idea that people will get to have a home that will last them a lifetime.”

The one question that Curtis gets the most, she said, is what it’s like to work directly with her husband. “It’s been neat to be able to build this company together,” she said, adding that they both enjoy being each other’s cheerleader. “It’s fun both ways, to see each other grow.”

The couple, who recently celebrated their 11th anniversary, have the added challenge of incorporating their 4-year-old daughter, Lucy, into the business — which, Curtis said, sometimes means bringing her along to meetings in Bend.

“It’s really important that Lucy knows what hard work is and what a small business looks like,” she said. “As a woman, to have been able to show a daughter that she’s capable, telling her ‘you’re capable and you can really do anything you want’” has been an incredible experience, she added.

When asked what other advice she would want to pass on to her daughter, Curtis said, “I want Lucy to know how much she’s capable to really achieve, to surround herself with other wise people ... and to trust yourself,” she said, “we all know a bit more than we think and failure is totally okay. Everybody roots for a failure, but nobody roots for a quitter, so failure is totally okay.”

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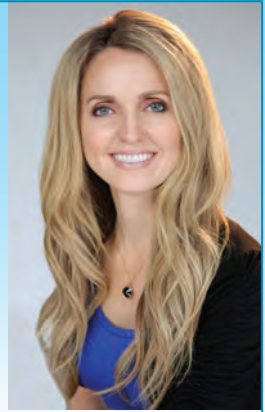


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*Ellen  
Kilkenny*

*Jammy  
Keys*



By Mark Gibson | The Dalles Chronicle

**A**lthough Ellen (Bohn) Kilkenny of Bohn's Printing isn't herself directly related to "aunt" Tammy Keys—though there is a family connection through marriage—"Everybody down here is pretty much family," Ellen said. And it shows, the two working together seamlessly.

Ellen and Tammy have been working together for a long time, Ellen running the front desk, keeping books and helping where needed, Tammy working as a graphic artist and in the bindery.

Neither of them really planned to make a career at the print shop, but both are happy with the work they do and their future at the shop, which was first established in The Dalles in 1904.

Ellen began working at the print shop during the summers while she was a student at The Dalles High School, but her father, owner Richard Bohn, likes to point out that she often spent her weekends there as a baby, playing in her crib while he finished up a job. In 2007, Ellen graduated from college with a degree in geology, just as the economy fell apart and the Great Recession left recent graduates stranded without work.

She took a job at the print shop, and found it to her liking. "It's busy and it's interesting, I found I really enjoyed it," she said. She gets to meet a lot of people, and help them accomplish their goals. "People have an idea of what they are looking for, we are here to translate what they want onto paper. They don't know how it all works, so we help them get what they want.

"Some people are just so happy when they see their final project. Some are excited, some are very quiet. I'm happy making the products that people are looking for."

The shop works with a mix of equipment, much of it digital state-of-the-art machines, but traditional presses are in the mix as well. "Short runs are more economical with the digital machines, especially color," she said. Bigger runs, however, are still more economical to print on

the traditional offset press.

Ellen noted that even a "paperless office" still has to print stuff. The technology has changed, but their main offerings have not: They still do letterhead, business cards, envelopes, folding cards for artists, postcards and more.

Ellen is working on a business and accounting degree, which she anticipates putting into use at Bohn's Printing. She is secretary and treasurer for the company, and runs things when her "semi-retired" dad isn't around, although her business cards simply reads "customer service."

Working in the back room bindery, packaging up jobs for the mail, graphic designer Tammy continues to do at least some of the work she began with when she was first hired 28 years ago.

"I was working at Pietro's Pizza, and my sister-in-law, who worked here, told me about a job opening," she said.

She learned a lot about graphic arts and printing in high school, and started out doing inventory (they sold office supplies back then), wrapping packages and working in the bindery. She learned to set up the equipment from Ellen's grandfather Jordan Bohn, and ran the offset press for about 10 years.

At that time, the transition to digital pre-press had just begun, using programs like Pagemaker, Illustrator and Photoshop. It was all new, and Tammy learned on the job. Eventually she became the graphic designer.

Like Ellen, she loves the variety of work she gets to do. "You don't have to do just one thing every day, you can do different things all the time," she explained.

Bohn's Printing does work for clients locally and around the region. "We have a lot of jobs on the coast," she explained. And as a graphic designer she prepares publications for businesses as far away as Bangladesh, sending the digital files halfway around the world to be printed locally. "You can't get any farther away than that," she said with a smile.

Bohn's Printing is owned by Richard Bohn, the fourth generation of the Bohn family to run the business. They are located at 308 Union Street, The Dalles; 541-296-2361.



BACK ROW: Bryan Dean - Jose Ramirez - Max Pille - Fernando Lopez - Dan Katona - Tommy Wingfield  
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*Soggi*  
Galvez

By Trisha Walker | Hood River News

**S**occi Galvez, Blossoms Bilingual Preschool founder and teacher, always knew she wanted to own a business. She just didn't know what sort of business she would open.

"Always, one of my dreams was to have my own business," she said. "I wasn't sure what sort of business that would be. I love children and I got really excited to work with them, and I wanted to do more."

Galvez began working with children at age 18, "fresh out of high school," at a Head Start migrant program. She then moved into a position at La Clínica, where she stayed for 10 years before working at Mid-Columbia Children's Council for eight years.

"It was very powerful for me — I learned not to take things for granted, to help out and reach out to the community and every individual, because you never know how families live," she said of MCCC. "I learned compassion and empathy, and it was very profound for me. It's an awesome program."

Blossoms Bilingual Preschool, serving kids ages 3-5, began in 2008 through Community Education, offering a bilingual morning program a few days a week. The preschool moved to Mid Valley Elementary in 2010, and in June 2015, Galvez went out on her own, opening her school in the Pine Grove Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education building, formerly Pine Grove Elementary. She now offers full day care.

"This is a great introduction to a school setting and allows children to learn English and Spanish in a play-based environment," said the preschool's website.

Although the program has grown since its

inception, there's always room to expand, she said.

"There's a big need in the community for working parents to have a place to take their children," Galvez said. "... More children means more opportunity to play and grow and learn."

It took a couple of years of looking for a suitable place before the Pine Grove location opened up. She rents the former cafeteria from the Hood River County School District.

"This space is amazing — I am really happy," she said. "There are many opportunities for the children to come out (to the playground) during the day and let the energy out and explore the environment. We're in the middle of amazing orchards, and it feels very unique and special."

Besides teaching English and Spanish, the school incorporates sign language in various ways.

"We teach throughout the day, practical things they can use," she said. "One of the most important things I teach is life skills. Sometimes, as adults, we take those things for granted and don't encourage children to talk about emotions."

She also uses the Positive Behavior Integration Support program, a "pyramid" of sorts, she explained, that helps children learn about themselves and their peers.

"Through Early Intervention, we have some children with special needs and we really incorporate that into this program, because I also feel children need to learn at a young age that we are all different and we need to accept (everyone)," she said. "How do we help them feel good about themselves? If we have a child with a special need, children can help out and not be fear-

ful of the differences, or whatever disability they might have.”

Working with Galvez are Yesenia Vences, Maria Galvan and Samantha Sheppard; all have passed background and fingerprint checks and must have 18 hours of continuing education each year.

Running a business “requires so much of you,” said Galvez, and she’s grateful for the support of her family: Husband Uziel, daughters Rebekah, 24, and Jessica, 15, and son Carlos, 22.

“I’m so thankful to my family – they support me 150 percent,” she said. “They are there for me so I can focus on the business. I go home and I know things are taken care of because they’re there for me. They love what I do and they sometimes come and visit and help out in the background.

“They’re the foundation of everything. If it wasn’t for them, I wouldn’t be able to do this business,” Galvez said.

The preschool is currently on summer hours, offering summer camps.

For more information on Blossoms Bilingual Preschool, visit the website at [www.blossoms-bilingual-preschool.com](http://www.blossoms-bilingual-preschool.com).

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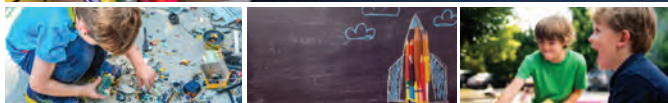
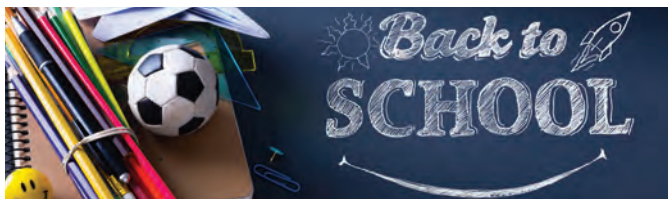
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Front: Rocío Aguilar. L-R Middle: Claudia Ordaz, Natalie Crocker. L-R Back: Sabrina Poole, Didi Turley, Dr. Maggie Anderson. Not pictured Holly Webster.



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Welcome  
COME  
ON IN



Carla  
McQuade

By Neita Cecil | The Dalles Chronicle

**A**t 14, Carla McQuade rode her bike four or five miles to and from work, where she was manager at a restaurant in her hometown of Medford. So it should come as no surprise that McQuade, along with partner Todd Carpenter, now owns two pubs in the Portland metro area — down from the four they had earlier — and this year they opened the Last Stop Saloon in downtown The Dalles.

She and Carpenter moved to The Dalles two years ago, buying a historic house that she recently refurbished with the help of friend Linda Reynolds.

“This town is very inspiring. You can’t help but want to do something wonderful and bring some valuable assets for people to enjoy,” McQuade said. “The city will work with you; people are hungry for it.”

She and Carpenter are also rehabilitating the former Recreation Building next door to the Last Stop and will turn it to a variety of uses. Her son is leading the demolition work there and her daughter is working at the Last Stop with her. Her other son lives in Portland with his wife. Carpenter’s youngest is in high school and his oldest is in college.

“I thank God every day that I have amazing kids. Amazing family, period,” McQuade said.

“I’m in a happy spot,” she said. “The residents here and clientele have been huge supporters. We wouldn’t be here without them.”

Asked if she’s a workaholic, she said, “I get a little obsessive. I’m driven, yes. I want to succeed. Failure is not an option. We both take pride in ownership. Being in the customer service industry, we’re here to serve.”

In their work in The Dalles, Carpenter is great at social media, McQuade said, but she prefers face to face interactions. “I stay under the radar.”

McQuade, who got her first job at 12 manning a hotdog cart — “Growing up, you had to work to get clothes or anything” — is no stranger to hard work.

She and Carpenter first bought Morgy’s Pub and Grill in Hillsboro. “Get up at 5 in the morning and go home at midnight

seven days a week for a year. It was grueling. But there was no choice. We invested the money, we had to see it through.”

They did some fun things to draw business, including Carpenter holding a sign by the side of the road with an arrow on it saying, “Need a beer?”

The hard work paid off. “It was a success. We got it up and off the ground,” she said. Three years later they bought the Broadway Saloon in Oldtown Beaverton and then a couple years later they bought The Ship Tavern in Multnomah Village in the Portland area.

Then they opened a whiskey bar called Bootleggers, but sold it to Carpenter’s cousin, Doug Carpenter. Then they sold Morgy’s.

Before those years of business ownership, McQuade worked for Hood River Distillers for a number of years, and before that she managed a bar in Beaverton for 14 years. She took a job with McClaskey Wine & Spirits in Portland just before the 2008 crash and lost her job three months later.

She then went into construction with a cousin, rehabbing cottages the cousin owned.

“In the very beginning I was not an organized person. It taught me to be organized and focused,” she said. “You start remembering things. Over the years you just train yourself. A lot of it is training.”

McQuade preferred work to school and dropped out at 15, but got her GED at 34. She said she’s the one with the street smarts and Carpenter, who is head of IT at Rebound Orthopedics in Vancouver, is the book smart one “It’s a good complement for the two of us,” she said.

At one point, McQuade was taking care of three restaurants they owned in Portland. “It was a little overwhelming. I know — shocking, right?”

After landing in The Dalles, McQuade decided to semi-retire and refurbish their historic home. But after spending nine months doing that, she was recharged and ready to get back into the swing of things.

As she worked at the Last Stop one recent morning, McQuade said, “Restaurants are what I know, so I came back in and I was ready, and I do love people, so it’s enjoyable to interact with people.”

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Castaneda



By Caleb Lundquist | Hood River News

Since 1975, Bette's Place has been a staple of the dining industry that has attracted countless people to Hood River over the decades, and since 1987 Sheri Castaneda has been serving its customers with steadfast commitment to the success of the restaurant. Her love for the place has grown day by day, to the point where last November she agreed to take over ownership of the establishment from Gay Jones, the daughter of the original owners Bette and Jerry Walters. Castaneda's history with Bette's is a simple one; she joined and just never left.

"I was a sophomore in high school and my cousin worked here and told me I should come work. I came in August and would work 3:30 to 5 p.m. after school. I was scared to death when I started," said Castaneda, laughing. "I started working weekends and did that all through high school. I went to Clackamas Community College, came home and worked on weekends. Then I went to Portland State ... came home and worked on weekends. I just stayed with it; it worked out for me."

Castaneda earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Portland State University in 1997 and shortly after married her husband, Ricardo, a Hood River County Sheriff's deputy. She came onboard with the restaurant under its original ownership of Bette and Jerry and stayed through the transition to Gay. The main draw for her were the people, both the customers and the owners; Bette's provides a homey atmosphere and sense of community.

"The people are great to work for — Bette, Jerry, Gay and Gary. Gay is still helping me, she's great. I worked for Bette and Jerry and

they were just wonderful," said Castaneda. "I remember Bette in the kitchen and her sister Francis baking the pies. When Gay took over, I just stayed. Lots of customers that we have are regulars for years. They come in and tell us how long they've been coming, which is always nice."

Bette Walters passed away in April of 2018, having been away from the business for many years. The discussion of who would take over the restaurant from Gay had been lingering for some time before Castaneda finally decided to accept it. The topic was a somewhat popular one in recent years, and some hesitance came from the enormous work that would come with. "I was hesitant, because I knew how much Gay worked at the restaurant, but then it was sort of like 'Why not?' after all these years," said Castaneda. "I used to just come in, work and go home. Now I'm at home and still working, worrying about it. It's getting better, at first I was a bit stressed but it's okay."

The ownership change was seamless in terms of the restaurant's output and quality; just what Castaneda wanted. The layout, the menu, the staff and the service are the same — Bette's is and will stay as it has always been.

"Bette's is going to stay Bette's, there's no change coming. It hasn't dropped a beat in all these years so we're going to do the same thing," said Castaneda. "The whole kitchen crew stayed back there which is great, they all know what they're doing, which is helpful."

As for Castaneda's new role, she'll be spending most of her time in the back, helping cook the same recipes that made Bette's famous over four decades ago. She still bakes the pies, but now she also orders the ingredients for it as well.

"It's a lot," said Castaneda. "The payroll, the

scheduling, ordering the food — I’m always doing something for the restaurant. Gay always did it and I’m trying to do what she always did; it’s been working so why change?”

Through the challenges that have come her way with taking over, Castaneda doesn’t regret her decision in the slightest. Bette’s has become a home of hers, a place she’s devoted 32 years of her life to. The establishment has grown in size and popularity, but the quality has remained. The customers come and go, but the joy of working in the restaurant business has stayed the same all these years. “One of the best things is hearing that people love the food,” said Castaneda.

“I think it’s fun to watch them enjoy the food, watching them get excited seeing us bake the pies. They come from all over just to eat here; they come in from Portland for a meal. That’s pretty great.”

Everyone in Hood River knows it, and thousands more outside of Hood River do too. The restaurant business may be tough, its demands may be endless, but after three decades of service, Sheri plans to keep Bette’s on a steady, successful course.

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Laila  
Davis

By Emily Fitzgerald | Hood River News

**L**aila Davis fell in love with Tygh Ridge Ranch the moment she saw it. To her, the place's natural beauty embodied an ease and stillness that could foster creativity and healing. It inspired her to start the Nature's Point Center for Creative Expression.

"The crowning beauty of this is people are coming to this valley that just radiates beautiful energy, and that's why I wanted to do this, to bring people out here," she said, "Whether people are from Portugal or Seattle, or anywhere, they all kind of leave with the same feeling."

While Davis' official role is to oversee Nature Point's operations, she has found herself taking on a wide variety of duties. "Being out here in the country, sometimes you have to wear every hat," she said, "I'm very grateful that I have a very broad background."

Davis' versatility came from her childhood on a sheep ranch on Criterion Summit and the decades of experience she accrued in the business world and service industry, before she decided to move into a more peaceful space.

"My journey, after being out in the world ... you kind of lose that silent, internal world, so coming out here kind of brings you into that," she said, adding that Nature's Point grew out of Davis' desire to bring that internal world, and the peace that comes with it, to others.

Nature's Point first opened about a year ago, after Davis and her husband, Mike — who she lauded as the "driving force" behind the effort — spent four years renovating an old church in

Tygh Valley to be a retreat center. "It's gorgeous now; it was a very sad building when we got it," Davis said.

The ranch was passed down through Mike's family for five generations, and the couple managed the ranch part-time before deciding to move onto the property full-time in 2011. "Moving here full-time was a leap of faith," Davis said.

When the 6,000-square-foot church was vacated five years ago, the couple purchased the building and began renovating it into what would become Nature's Point.

The business includes the Nature's Point Center in the town of Tygh Valley, which houses a chapel, reception hall and guest wing with an acre of fenced grounds; a lodge on the 5,000-acre ranch; and a "cabin hideaway" on Laila's Organic Farm, a 1,000-acre property adjacent to the ranch. The business' current focus is on destination weddings, but they also offer business retreats, AirBnB rentals, and more.

Davis said she couldn't have done it without the help of many friends, from James Birchfield, the foreman of husband Mike's Eco-Tech Construction, to the creative and marketing guidance of friends Bobbie and Emile Combe.

Regardless of where they're from or why they came, Davis hopes that visitors leave Tygh Ridge Ranch with the same reinvigorated creativity and tranquility that she gets from that land.

Nature's Point Center for Creative Expression can be found at [www.naturespointcenter.com](http://www.naturespointcenter.com).



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Left to right: Liz Romero, Alex Shelley, Jodi Jones, Brigette Phelps, Nicole Cerrato. Not pictured: Laura Maher.



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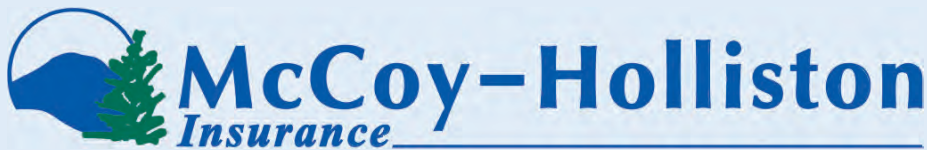


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Natasha  
Skov

By Caleb Lundquist | The Dalles Chronicle

**I**t's a classic business story: The child whose parents have a successful business works her way from part-time to manager, with the day of taking over on the horizon. For Natasha Skov, operations manager of Copa Di Vino and general manager of the Sunshine Mill winery, in The Dalles, that story is its most exciting chapter.

Skov is the daughter of Copa di Vino's owner James Martin, known for his infamous appearances on the popular reality television series "Shark Tank." The family business has become the leading producer of premium wine by the glass in the United States, a concept foreign to the stills and sparkling scene in America until recently. Becoming a member of the family business was also once a foreign idea to Skov, who after graduating with a journalism degree from the University of Oregon in 2010 was confident she would not return home.

"I was sure I was never going to move back home, but when I graduated the economy was bad and jobs were scarce," said Skov. "So I headed to South America to teach English. I didn't know what to do and they were hiring down there, so I went with friends and taught for a few months before running out of money and coming home. I started working the day after I got home; I flew in around midnight and went to work that next morning."

Her origins in the family business did not see Skov starting at the top — quite the opposite. She began as a part-time employee in the tasting room of Sunshine Mill while doing website development for Copa Di Vino. In time, she began participating in business development for the latter, eventually working with the supply chains and operations of Copa, which led to her current positions. As her investment in the business grew, so did her love for it.

"This project is so unique; it's hard not to be passionate about a family business," said Skov. "I think it

makes me driven, seeing my parents' achievements. I want their success for them as much as they do. They've built a legacy and something that could end up employing our entire family and could be passed on to future generations, which is so exciting."

Skov's younger brothers, Griffin and Ethan Martin, both anticipate working for the family business after college. Griffin is studying viticulture and Ethan intends to study accounting, rounding out the Martin family trio of wine-business expertise. This comes at the right time, as James Martin and his wife Molli are looking at the possibility of a transition phase.

"Yes, our family has had numerous conversations about the business and what's going to happen in five years when my father turns 60," said Skov. "He wants by then to be done with the difficult part, not hands off by any means, but able to enjoy the business more. My brothers and I, we all have our pieces to the puzzle that we hope to put together to make the dream complete. That's definitely the long term vision—to run the business together and keep it in the family."

Copa Di Vino and Sunshine Mill continue to expand and grow annually in profits, distribution and net worth. Skov's success has not come without its difficult moments, however, largely due to how she is perceived — as the owner's daughter.

"I feel the challenges have come from people knowing my family and making assumptions about my origins in the company," said Skov. "It's been about overcoming the perception of being the owner's daughter and handed my job, rather than having worked my way up."

The truth of Skov's commitment to the family business is evident in her passion, which saw her strive for greater responsibility and control. She accepted the humble beginnings offered her and kept her eyes on the horizon, which, with steady steps and confidence, she knew she'd reach in time.

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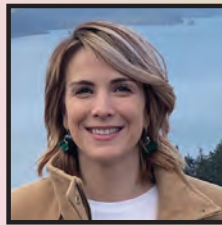
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Lisa Farquharson

By Caleb Lundquist | The Dalles Chronicle

**T**he city of The Dalles has hundreds of businesses within its confines, expanding across an array of industries, services and products. There's a common thread that runs through the majority of them, a chamber of commerce that serves as their collective legislative advocate and information resource. At this chamber's head is CEO Lisa Farquharson, who's been taking The Dalles business world to new heights since her arrival nearly seven years ago.

"As the chamber, we are their voice and advocate in legislation at the state capitol and in D.C.," said Farquharson. "We are also the connector for businesses. I don't know everything and I don't claim to, but I can help businesses get in touch with the right people. It's about that connectivity and offering the right resources."

The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce is located on W. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., just east of Thompson City Park, in a single-story building recently renovated to return to its old-school roots. Farquharson wanted to resurrect the original style and reaffirm the status of the chamber as a staple of the city's business environment. Taking the position after working for six years as both the membership and communication director for the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce, she brought fresh ideas and creativity to The Dalles' chamber structure.

"We have brought a lot of change to our community," said Farquharson. "I came in and wanted to shake the carpets, roll up my sleeves and try to do more. We've changed our membership and accounting structures, we've added and increased our member benefits, and we've become more active at the legislative level. There are networking events that we didn't have before, and we added community events too."

Farquharson runs a small staff, about five employees, split between full and part-time. They are responsible for handling the needs and resources of businesses looking for support and for voicing the concerns of said businesses to governments and relevant organizations. In addition, the chamber also runs the visitor center for The Dalles, offering an introduction of the area to tourists and new residents. The re-

sources Farquharson has gathered in her time are numerous and vast, supplying any business with the right connection when they need it; she maintains strong ties with Oregon State Chambers, Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Business and Industry and Oregon Restaurant Lodging Association.

"Adding that professional level to the commerce is what I aimed to achieve when I arrived," said Farquharson. "Connecting our businesses to those state and federal resources was another big aspect of it, and we've done that for the community."

While she has extensive experience in the chamber industry, Farquharson isn't without her own need for professional advice. When she finds herself searching for answers, she turns to a wealth of knowledge in social groups, consisting of thousands of fellow chamber of commerce directors. These forums offer an avenue for directors to share ideas and provide feedback.

"The support system for chamber professionals is enormous; I'm part of a group of 10,000-plus members and we just shoot questions and advice off one another," said Farquharson. "We're not about trade secrets, we're about making our communities better."

In this exchange, over the years Farquharson has become increasingly aware of a slight difference amongst chamber directors. One that, in a larger scale, remains prevalent throughout the nation — wage discrepancy between male and female employees. There are several factors that contribute to the finances of a city or county's chamber of commerce, as Farquharson explains, but the earnings gap remains.

"That balance issue exists in the chamber world too, I've noticed. Sometimes it depends on the budget and where you're located, but so far I've discovered most men I talk to are a little higher paid than the women," said Farquharson. "Again, that may be because of the chamber's size, having a larger tourism contract, etc. It just seems interesting. The chamber is an old industry, and I'm not sure it's quite caught up. It used to be an all-men industry; it was a long time before women came into the picture."

From her role as CEO, Farquharson has a first-hand look into businesses across various industries in the region. Her insight allows her to reflect on differences amongst business

owners, stereotypes that linger in the business world and the way people are perceived.

“I see a fair number of women or minority-owned businesses,” said Farquharson. “There are certainly some struggles for women businesses, such as perception. If we’re strong and firm, or even ruthless, then we’re seen as being ... something that’s not so nice. If a man does those same things, he’s seen as just being business-oriented. That’s the struggle, finding that balance.”

A difficult balance to reach. With her passion for chamber work ever-growing and her steadfast will undeterred by the long hours the industry demands of her, Farquharson hopes to be around for years to come. The future is bright for The Dalles businesses, and she will help lead them into that future, she said. Goals are constantly being set and new heights being reached at the chamber; with Farquharson at the helm, that progress shows no sign of slowing down.

“I’d love to have us become the Wasco County chamber, working with smaller communities around The Dalles area and grow our membership dues,” said Farquharson. “To strengthen the chamber and the community, that’s the goal. We have made great strides, but I know there’s so much more we can do.”

The Dalles Chamber of Commerce is located at 404 W. 2nd St. and can be reached at 541-296-2231.



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Dr.  
*Staci*  
Hanson

SCRUBS MED

By Elaine Bakke | White Salmon Enterprise

**E**ven though she grew up in The Dalles, Dr. Staci Hanson had never been to White Salmon before ... that is until she became the community's first female dentist.

"I knew I wanted my own practice, so when I heard of a dental practice for sale in the Gorge, I was excited," she said. "I had never been to White Salmon and found it lovely. I feel fortunate each day to be able to own my own business and work in such a wonderful community."

Ironically, Staci never intended to be a dentist; instead, she wanted to be a doctor. "I completed internships with two orthopedic surgeons and a cardiologist. I found it fascinating, but their jobs demanded a lot of their time, not leaving much time for family. I knew I wanted a family and wasn't sure if being a physician was the best fit for me."

She was working on her bachelor's degree in biology at Oregon State University (Go Beavers!) while trying to find a career in medicine that would give her more time and flexibility to be a mom. "My counselor suggested dentistry, but my only experience was as a dental patient and a job in high school cleaning my dentist's office," she said.

On a whim, she took the Dental Admission Test and applied to dental school at Oregon Health Sciences University. She passed the test, was accepted and received her Doctorate of Medical Dentistry in 1998.

Staci is really glad of her career because "I love my job! I love my patients and providing them with the best dental care."

This involves a lot of communication and listening. It involves educating them on what will benefit them, the alternatives, the risks and answering their questions.

"I really enjoy the clinical side of dentistry and although I doubt anyone would choose a dental procedure over a massage, I try to make their visits to my office as enjoyable as possible," she said.

According to Staci, dentistry has changed a lot in the 30 years since she began her practice. Today, dentists use high-quality materials that both last and look beautiful. In 2006, Staci purchased her first digital scanning and design system for making

ceramic inlays, crowns and veneers in her office.

"That has been one of the biggest advancements in the industry and in my office in that the patient can have their entire restoration completed in one day," she said.

Restoration also includes dental implants. Staci is a Fellow member of the American Society of Implant and Reconstructive Dentistry (ASIRD), which requires consistent participation in an implant residency, as well as restoring over 30 implants a year.

The State of Washington also requires dentists to have 21 hours of continuing education a year. "Learning new things keeps me motivated and inspired so I typically end up with at least double that requirement," she said.

"I also work closely with several local dental specialists and am happy to have such high-quality specialists to choose from in the Gorge," she said.

While Staci enjoys the practical side of her dental office, running the business side demands a lot of time. Fortunately for her, her husband, Matt, who is a financial planner, is proficient in business finances. He handles the office payroll as well as a large part of the business side of the practice, while she manages the day-to-day requirements, including employees and their roles at her office.

Staci's philosophy is that you hire someone as much for their character as you do for their skills. "I have been very fortunate to have had much of my staff with me for a long time. They know and love our patients and quality care is very important to us all," she said.

She admits, however, that even with the best staff, a smooth-running business office and continued learning, challenges do arise.

"The nice thing though, now that I have had years of experience, is that I have come to embrace the difficulties as well as the successes as I know that they will bring growth and improvement," she said.

In her spare time, Staci is mother to three children, ages 17, 13 and 11. She's a soccer mom and the family has a 3-year-old horse that her daughter is training. The family also has a passion for the Caribbean and sailing (both she and her husband earned their bareboat licenses 19 years ago) and they try to go to different islands once a year.

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Left to Right: Emily, Martha, Carol, Maribel, Cindy, Heidi, Chella, Alyssa, Brandy, Phyllis



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Dr.  
*Analene*  
Pentopoulos

By Mark Gibson | The Dalles Chronicle

**W**hen Dr. Analene Pentopoulos finished her obstetrics/gynecology residency at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland in 2006, a colleague told her about an opening at the Columbia River Women's Clinic in the Gorge. She took it, and after 13 years has come to call The Dalles home, a place of family and community, something she recognized when she first came to interview. "I really liked all the people at the clinic, and I really liked the community," she said.

"This is the longest I've lived in one place," she said. She has no plans to leave. "I think nowadays, it's a long time to be in a place. It used to be more common," she said. "I think patients prefer their provider to stay; in general, longevity is better for the community, and the hospital too."

Born in New Jersey, she lived in South Africa until she was 6 and graduated from high school in the Bay Area of California. Pentopoulos graduated Magna Cum Laude at the University of California, San Diego in microbiology. She received her medical degree from the Yale University School of Medicine. Her primary specialties are obstetrics (the branch of medicine and surgery concerned with childbirth and the care of women giving birth) and gynecology (the branch of physiology and medicine which deals with the functions and diseases specific to women and girls, especially those affecting the reproductive system.)

Since arriving in town, Pentopoulos has married (The Dalles High School girl's basketball coach Brian Stevens), and now has two sons (7 and 10) and a stepdaughter (19).

"I love it here. I really like my patients, and the medical community I work with. What I really like the most is the relationships I have with my pa-

tients, and that I can help someone, improve their quality of life."

Although she is frequently on call over weekends, and therefore can't plan trips or leave town, Pentopoulos has plenty to keep her occupied. She enjoys baking — especially sweets. "Desserts are my favorite — I'm known for my carrot cake," she said. She also loves to garden, flowers and vegetables both finding a place in her yard. "I spend a lot of time in the garden, I like the solitude and it's a time to unwind."

Over her time here, Pentopoulos has attended over 1,000 births. She also provides general healthcare for women, from puberty to post-menopause, and even performs surgery, something a lot of people don't realize, she said.

It's work she loves.





Sometimes, it can be hard to perform surgery on someone you know well, she said. "If they are close to you, it's harder." But in general, when she bumps into someone she knows as a patient, it's just a one-on-one connection between people, one that she enjoys. "You kind of separate the two, the person from the procedure."

She also enjoys the lifestyle of a small town. "Everything is close. I don't have to commute to work, and all the small businesses we have. I like knowing the people I do business with, they aren't just anonymous people.

"In a larger city, you never see your patients outside work. In a small community, you're more invested with them, you see them all the time outside of work. I think that increases your investment in your patients — and your community."

Dr. Analene Pentopoulos specializes in obstetrics-gynecology, located at Columbia River Women's Clinic, 1810 E. 19th St, #209, The Dalles. They can be contacted at 541-296-5657



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*Kathleen*  
Schacht

By Neita Cecil | The Dalles Chronicle

**W**hen Kathleen Schacht and her husband Skylar Schacht, co-owners of Fix Auto in The Dalles, go to business conferences, they often get asked how they manage to work together every day.

She always answers with a bit of wit and then some practicality: “I guess we like each other enough — and we have our own responsibilities. He’s out in the shop and I’m in the office.”

What’s been most important for them, she said, is “setting dreams and goals so you have something to aim for.”

They both grew up in Boring, and attended school together. He graduated a few years before her and headed off to the Marine Corps and when she herself became a senior, she started working in his parents’ photography shop, a job she kept for nine years.

She did photography herself off and on, but after she and Skylar married, started having children, and then opened a body shop, she didn’t have the time for photography anymore.

As newlyweds in 1995, Kathleen said of Skylar, “His dream was to open a body shop and that’s all we ever talked about.”

They had their first son, Jesse, in 1997 and the next year, in October 1998, they rented an empty building on Second Street. “He actually sold his custom-built Blazer to buy our first paint booth.”

So with that, they began Sky’s Collision Repair “and away we went.”

Once they opened, she’d come in a couple times a week and paid a handful of bills, and Sky was a one-man shop. They gradually

expanded and moved to a new location at the Port of The Dalles in 2010 and joined the Fix Auto network. They now have 11 employees.

Working in the office, she’s mindful that when people come in the door, it’s not a happy circumstance that brought them there.

She said, “It’s like the doctor’s office. They’re coming in with an issue, we try to fix it as quickly as possible, but most importantly correctly.” She said, “It’s more important to fix it correctly than fast, we want to get it right.”

To ensure a high standard of quality, she said Fix pays for a third-party vendor, called Verifax, which does unannounced inspections about once a month to check to make sure technicians are doing their work properly and following OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) guidelines.

Customer service is their top priority. “I think that’s one thing about us, it’s not just about fixing the car it’s about taking care of the customer.

“We’re going to make that bad situation better. We’re going to deal with the insurance company, we’re going to deal with everything we need to deal with, so they get their car back in pre-accident condition.”

The industry has changed significantly in terms of the complexity of cars, with the advent of advanced vehicle systems.

“We just completed certification with GM and Subaru. We are the only certified GM and Subaru repair shop in the Gorge,” she said. “We also are iCar gold class certified, which certifies our commitment to work on all makes and models of vehicles.”

Another change has been the cost of parts. “The price of parts has definitely increased.”

While vehicle computer systems have complicated the repair work, the office work has

been streamlined because of computerization, Kathleen said. It hasn't necessarily gotten easier, though, because the company has grown.

"Every day is different at the body shop, people come in with their stories, every one is unique and we're here to help," she said.

She said, "A lot of times it's 'I backed into a post.' 'Oh, those darn posts, they move all the time,'" she'll joke with them. "It makes them feel better, just hearing people's stories of their trials and tribulations, I guess, and make the bad story turn around."

In fact, that's the best part of her job. "When we can see a customer driving out of the lot and they're happy and their car is back to the way it was, that's the reward."

And what is also making Kathleen proud these days is that their son Jesse is now working at Fix Auto, especially since their younger son, Jacob, who followed his dad into the Marine Corps, is now stationed abroad.

"As a mom I really like that Jesse is a part of the family business," she said, "because the other child is in Japan. One's on local soil."



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*Terri*  
Vann

By LisaAnn Kawachi | Hood River News

**T**erri Vann is no stranger to the Hood River community. Not only was she born and raised in the valley and spent her entire career working in the Hood River County School District, but even in retirement, she remains active in the community, serving on several local boards and continuing to give back to the place she has always called home.

Currently, Vann's community involvement includes serving on the Four Rivers Early Learning Hub Governance Board, Providence Health Systems Oregon Community Board, Providence Columbia Gorge Service Area Advisory Council, Oregon Providence Experience Council, United Way of the Columbia Gorge, Rotary of Hood River and Keeping Families Together.

"I love Hood River, what our community stands for and that it supports education and family," said Vann.

For Vann, these two areas were precisely why her involvement with one of these organizations was such a good fit. As Director of Community Coordination of Keeping Families Together, a privately funded organization that provides tools and resources to aid and cope with parenting, she oversees a board that's primary focus is child abuse prevention. Their goals are to keep kids out of foster care, keep kids in school and provide assistance through substance abuse education and other programs.

And it has been through this work that Vann has found the best solution for her own retirement.

Initially when Vann was approached about becoming involved with Keeping Families Together, she declined. She didn't know what it was and wasn't ready to commit to another project just yet. After taking a short break, she reconsidered.

Vann had spent her career in K-12 education. In her 36 years with the Hood River County School District, she worked in different capacities in every single school in the district with the exception of Pine Grove Elementary. She was a teacher, teaching primarily first through third

grade; an administrator, serving as vice principal and principal at different schools throughout her career; and worked at the district office as director of instruction and special programs for six years. She had lots of experience in K-12 and she thought maybe now was the time to focus on 0-5.

Vann really began to see the need in early childhood education with her own grandchildren. "I looked at my own kids and saw it's such a hard job. As a parent, you're in over your head at some points," she said. According to Vann, her own children possessed all the tools to be successful parents and yet, they still struggled. She began to think about all the people with limitations such as transportation, income, daycare, health insurance, etc. Others are having mental health issues or depression and don't want to ask or feel that they can't ask for help. According to Vann, these difficulties happen regardless of income, although lack of income makes it worse.

"I spent so much time working with K-12 and to be working now with early childhood education, I'm able to see the need now than before. Being on this end I really see the value of early childhood education," she said.

Vann said home visits are a crucial component in the process. With the information gathered through these visits, they can find out which group will provide the most support to each specific family. There is a lot of overlap and Vann likes how each group is non-territorial and works collaboratively to find the best help for each family. Most of the organizations and boards that she is a part of tend to overlap and often allow Vann to see not only what's going on in Hood River, but what's going on in the entire region. They work well together and reinforce the value of the work they all are doing.

For Vann, retirement was the ideal time for her to get involved with these organizations. "When I was working, I felt that I never had the time. Now that I have the time, it's something I can do," she said.

For Vann, her involvement with all these groups really boils down to one word: Community. "I grew up in Dee," she said, "born and raised here in Hood River and went

to school.” The same is true for her husband, John, and their three kids. “We really are hometown people.”

Vann admits that she has said yes to probably a few too many things and is trying to find a balance. “I’ve chosen some, others have chosen me,” she said.

As part of this balance, Vann makes sure to keep time for herself. She and John travel a lot and both enjoy gardening. “I love my flowers and John has his vegetables,” she said. “We spend a lot of time working in the yard.” Vann also enjoys her daily walks around her neighborhood and the two of them are trying to make a better effort to use the kayaks they bought.

If these hobbies and boards weren’t enough to keep her busy, she is also currently organizing her 50th class reunion for this upcoming September.

One might think Vann could get overwhelmed and stressed about all the things she takes on. Instead, she reminds herself, “I’m doing something to support the community,” she said. “You can’t be cranky about giving to your community. If you begin to feel that way, you have to adjust something.”

“You have to be happy that you’re doing it and that you’re able to do it.”

Vann can be reached at [terri.vann@gmail.com](mailto:terri.vann@gmail.com).

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# Advertiser Index

5th Element Salon .....	71	El Puerto de Angeles III .....	67	NW Natural .....	18
A & E Heating and Air, Inc. ....	71	Emma's Bowtique .....	60	Oliver's Floor Covering .....	97
A Kidz Dental Zone .....	56	Eres Salon .....	84	One Community Health .....	45
Allen's Fine Woodworking .....	75	Farmers Insurance - Robin Miles .....	5	Our Children's Place Academy .....	47
American Family Insurance - Jeanne Sreenan .....	74	Fix Auto .....	50	Pathfinder Real Estate .....	22
Amerititle .....	103	Flagstone Senior Living .....	32	Pietro's Pizza .....	74
Anderson's Tribute Center .....	36	Footwise .....	44	Pink Poodle Grooming Salon, The .....	96
AniChe Cellars .....	23	Gardner's Funeral Home .....	50	Pioneer Electric .....	66
Aqua Living Factory Outlets .....	37	Gary Denney Floor Covering .....	96	Playworks Children's Therapies .....	57
Ashley Neff Designs .....	45	Ginnie Mooney Real Estate .....	81	Pour Girls .....	53
Barge Way Pub .....	23	Gorge Academy of Cosmetology .....	72	Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital .....	41
BASI Pilates .....	88	Gorge Family Naturopath .....	89	Raymond James .....	53
Bickler Orthodontics .....	34	Gorge Giving .....	100	Ray Schultens Motors .....	61
Bobbi's Way .....	19	Gorge Sales Team .....	101	Riverside Gymnastics .....	5
Boda's Kitchen .....	14	Griffin House .....	22	Ruddy Duck .....	67
Bohn's Printing, Inc .....	97	Hearts of Gold .....	50	Skyline Medical Clinic .....	51
Broder Ost .....	53	Helping Hands .....	70	Soluna Vineyard .....	37
Brown Roofing .....	47	High Hills Salon .....	44	Sotheby's International Realty .....	28
C.H. Urness .....	44	HiLights Salon and Day Spa .....	88	Sparkling Creations .....	24
Campbell Phillips PC .....	12	Hood River Care Center .....	92	STEM .....	56
Cascade Acupuncture Center .....	18	Hood River Hobbies .....	71	Straightline Orthodontics .....	53
Cascade Eye .....	25	Hood River Supply .....	85	Swell City Decor .....	45
Cascade Pet Camp .....	92	Hood River Taqueria .....	9	Taqueria Los Amigos .....	60
Chamness Saldivar Agency .....	61	Hope Family Care Center .....	35	Terra Cotta Boutique .....	97
Chemistry Jewelry .....	60	Infinity Salon .....	47	The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce .....	28
China Gorge Restaurant .....	78	Joy's Art Studio .....	13	The Dalles Health & Rehab .....	89
Columbia Bank .....	79	Julie Donahue Massage .....	24	The Springs at Mill Creek .....	2
Columbia Basin Care .....	73	Kidsense .....	8	Timmons Law .....	63
Columbia Gorge Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine .....	79	Klein & Associates, Inc. ....	81	Today's Chalet .....	62
Columbia Gorge Title .....	80	Knot Another Hat .....	33	Trellis .....	78
Columbia Laser Skin Center .....	46	Kula Chiropractic .....	12	Tum-a-Lum Lumber .....	14
Columbia Veterinary Hospital .....	8	Lake Taco .....	13	Twiggs .....	29
Community Bank .....	85	Les Schwab .....	74	Venn Salon .....	97
Copperwest Real Estate .....	66	Linda Holloway .....	74	Volcanic Bottle Shop .....	62
Cousins' Restaurant .....	73	Lucky Littles Boutique .....	79	Walmart .....	80
Cousins Country Inn .....	73	Margies Pot Shop .....	93	Wasco Title, Inc. ....	52
Curtis Homes .....	75	McCarthy Law .....	88	Westwind Frame & Gallery .....	62
Curves .....	84	McCoy-Holliston Insurance .....	72	Wet Planet .....	93
Dawkins Insurance Services .....	13	Mediation, Coming to Terms .....	5	Wheatland Insurance Center, Inc. ....	89
Del Carpine Automotive .....	62	Mid Columbia Medical Center .....	100	White Salmon Aesthetics .....	15
Denture Specialist, The .....	45	Mike's Ice Cream .....	67	White Salmon Family Practice Clinic .....	96
Dickey's Store .....	24	Momma Monzie's Doggie Delights .....	78	Willow & Bark Boutique .....	24
Disorder to Order .....	3	Mugs .....	78	Windermere Real Estate Columbia River Gorge .....	104
Don Nunamaker Realtors .....	40	My Family's Pet Doctor .....	40	Wink .....	36
Dream Street Boutique .....	37	Naked Winery .....	63	Women in Business 2020 .....	101
Duckwall Fruit .....	33	Northern Wasco County PUD .....	52	Wy'east Vineyards .....	28
		NorthShore Medical Group .....	32	Yoga Samadhi .....	15
		Noteboom Realty .....	18		



Left to Right- Back Row: Francene Wilhelm, Laurie Baum, Melisa Walter, Megan Kaufman;  
Front Row: Beverly Nanez, Wendy Carter, Donna Lohrey; Not Pictured: Sheri Magill

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Left to Right: Denise Endow, Diane Leibbrandt, Callista Howell, Yireth Jackson Cardoso, Mary Finley, Ana Flores



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