

Kettle Falls Focus

A town with lots of friendly people and 1 grouch



2ND ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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P.O. Box 746 Kettle Falls WA. 99141

FREE

March, 2010

Now also available online
www.kettlefallsfocus.com

Volume 3 Issue 3

The Kettle Falls Focus Celebrates: Two Years

by Peggy Mandin and Susan Urhausen

It has been two years since the Kettle Falls Focus began its journey from idea to successful newspaper. The first issue was printed in March, 2008. It was much smaller then, but it was a labor of love as it remains today.

This paper was born out of Horizons meetings and enthusiasm. In the fall of 2007 Horizons invited the community to participate in an evening-long exercise to identify what residents felt might be lacking in the Kettle Falls area, what improvements could be made and what could benefit the people of Kettle Falls. At that meeting, in the Kettle Falls Senior Citizens Center, four of us, Gloria Squires, Susan Urhausen, Peggy Mandin and Greg Pritchett, came together over the idea of improving community communication by creating a Kettle Falls newsletter. The idea we had for a newsletter or newspaper was slightly vague at first, but during subsequent meetings some things became clearer until we had a concept of what we wanted to produce. To learn start-up details Susan and Peggy took a trip to Springdale to see Linda Ritts, publisher of the Springdale newspaper.

Using our own money we invested in Publisher software and set a target date of March 2008 to publish the first issue. We had no advertising, so paid for the printing costs out of our own pockets. We were happy to do this since we had such a belief in the need for a Kettle Falls newspaper and a desire to see it become a reality as

soon as possible. Our philosophy was to produce a newspaper that was positive; promoting local businesses, publicizing events and telling a little history was our goal. This has not changed. It wasn't long before we realized that in addition to great businesses, we had some very interesting and unique individuals living amongst us that had singular stories to tell. There was a conscious decision made to avoid some things; politics, religion, sports and letters to the editor for example. We wanted to just tout the great things, local events, local people and activities, to celebrate all the good things Kettle Falls and its surrounding area has to offer.

By the time we went to print that March, Greg's busy life kept him from being in the thick of things, but he was (and has) always been a cheery support for the Focus.

In the beginning, Gloria Squires did the layout in the Microsoft Publisher format. She also contributed to the writing, but the lion's share of that has always fallen to us. In January of 2009 Gloria left the Focus and went on to other endeavors. We continued to publish the paper in the same format through March 2009, working out of our homes. It was at that time that David and Dani Bull approached us to offer their design experience and began doing the layout and graphics. Our printers, Griffin, were overjoyed. Instead of wrestling with our Publisher version of the paper, they now had an easier job with David's more sophisticated

software. That step was more than a small change for the Kettle Falls Focus; we grew up in a big way. Besides gaining a much better publishing program, Adobe InDesign, the Bulls changed the entire format and made us look like a real paper! With that change came better graphics and more space. It seems like things just blossomed then, we had more interest, more readers and more advertisers. All of our issues have since been formed with the four of us gathered around a table and a computer at the Bull's home. The April 2009 newspaper was eight pages; in May 2009 we expanded to twelve pages and that has continued to the present time.

The last two years has been quite a journey for both of us. After that first year working on the Focus, some of you may remember that we almost had to give up the paper. Our printing costs were rising and we did not have enough advertising or subscriptions to keep up. Our plea to the community for advertising and/or donations was well received. It has always been difficult for both of us to find a way to deal with the nuts and bolts of the paper, getting advertisers, billing and so forth, when what we both enjoy so much is writing. We have hoped all along for that to magically take care of itself (yes, we can dream) or that someone will come along who adores that aspect of our paper. It is now and has

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In This Issue: Lodging

by Susan Urhausen

The Focus is directing its attention to three lodging facilities in the area this month. There are also many other alternatives to these three businesses, such as campsites and RV sites.

In many instances, the owners/managers of these places are the first and sometimes only contact a visitor to our town or area has. They become goodwill ambassadors to Kettle Falls in that instant. Each one has been asked where to eat, where to shop, and what there is to do for entertainment and recreation. Their knowledge and love of this part of Stevens County has been instrumental in bringing those visitors back as regular customers. Every time they greet someone new with a smile, they help the local economy!

As local residents, we likely know little or nothing about the motels in our town. If any of us stay in a motel, it usually isn't right here in our proverbial back yard. So here's a proposition: do a weekend 'getaway'. Go spend a night or a weekend in one of our local establishments and get away from home. Get to know the owners and managers of these facilities. When you have someone come and visit and you don't have room to have them in your home, you will be better educated as to which inns you prefer, or that would suit your guests better. It's a fun adventure for you, and it helps a local business. What could be better?

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Studio 395, AmericanWest Bank Help in Annual Feinstein Challenge Food Drive

by Susan Urhausen

March has arrived, and for the Kettle Falls Food Bank, and many other food banks and soup kitchens across the country, that means one thing: The Feinstein Foundation's annual Challenge. The Alan Shawn Feinstein Foundation dedicates one million dollars each year to help raise awareness, funds and food for food banks and soup kitchens across the United States. For every dollar, can of food or pound of food raised, this foundation will match a percentage to each organization that participates. The percentage matched depends on how many organizations join the Challenge.

The 13th annual Feinstein Challenge begins on March 1st and concludes on April 30th of each year. It has been the hope of Alan Shawn Feinstein and his family that hunger will cease to be an issue in this country. The Kettle Falls Food Bank has participated in the Feinstein Challenge for a number of years. It has become known well enough, that a number of individuals, organizations and churches plan ahead and make their donations during these two months so the donations will increase in value.

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Photo of Kettle Falls provided by John Tyra, a relative newcomer to Kettle Falls and owner / operator of Dash Wireless, a high speed internet service. John's business Dash Wireless was featured in the February issue of the Kettle Falls Focus.

