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83rd Annual Loggers’ Jubilee coming Aug. 6-9

BY BUDDY ROSE
The East County Journal

Excitement and fun are coming to Morton next week for the 83rd Annual Morton Loggers’ Jubilee. The annual celebration of the logging heritage of our area will conclude with “The Granddaddy of all Logging Shows” in Jubilee Arena on Saturday and Sunday. The shows will wrap up a busy week that will see Morton swell to bursting with large crowds of visitors. Other crowd-drawing attractions include the wild and zany Lawnmower Races on Friday night and the Jubilee Grand Parade on Saturday before the logging show.

Grand Marshalls for this year’s parade are long-time Jubilee supporters, Mike and Sheryl Fairhart. As the primary announcer, Mike has been the voice of the Jubilee parade and logging shows for many years. Both are graduates of Morton High School and lifetime residents of the area.

About 30 contestants have signed up for this year’s world-class lumberjack competition. They include new names and many old, familiar names and a sizeable contingent of women competitors. Last year’s Bull of the Woods Jubilee champion, Nate Hodges, will be here to defend his crown. Brian Bartow, world champion speed climber and seven-time Bull of the Woods title holder at Morton will not only compete but will entertain and thrill the crowd with his tree-climbing clown act during both logging shows.



The 2025 Loggers’ Jubilee Bull of the Woods overall men’s champion, Nate Hodges, is shown here competing in the hot saw competition last year. Hodges won that event, which is not too surprising since he holds the current world record in the hot saw event.

To put the skill level of the Morton lumberjack competition in perspective, it should be noted that Hodges was Stihl Timbersports U.S. Champion in 2024 and 2025 and was crowned World Champion in 2024 in

France, the first American to win that title. He also holds the world record for the hot saw event.

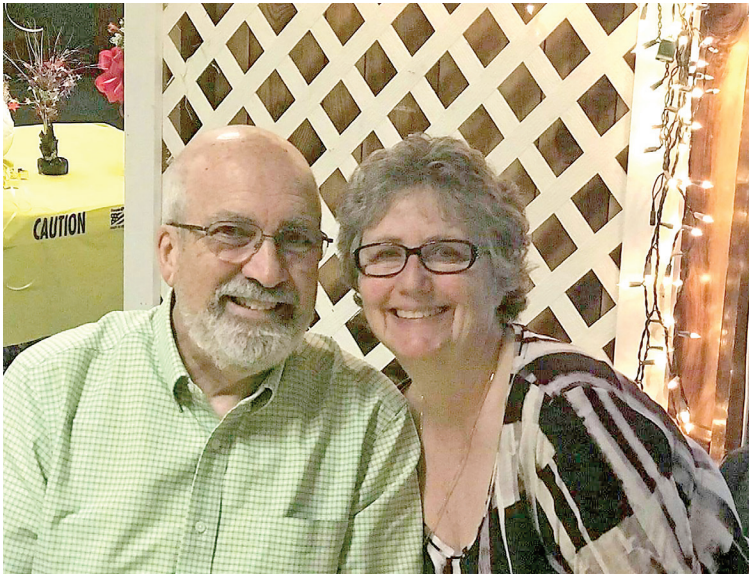
Other perennial competitors and crowd favorites returning to Morton this year include the popular husband-wife team,

Mike and Sandra Forrester, from Idleyld Park, Oregon. Amy Skirvin and other family members from Waldport, Oregon will also be here. Mike Johnson, from Philomath, Oregon will return along with a contingent

of young competitors he is mentoring.

The Morton logging show has always consisted of a full slate of lumberjack competition events.

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Mike and Sheryl Fairhart celebrating at a party.

Loggers’ Jubilee parade
Grand Marshalls are
Mike & Sheryl Fairhart

BY AMBER BROWN
East County Journal

Mike and Sheryl Fairhart were surprised when the Jubilee Committee selected them to be the Parade Grand Marshalls for the 83rd annual Morton Loggers’ Jubilee. “We are honored,” Sheryl said.

Mike has been on the Jubilee Committee since 1972 (54 years) and Sheryl has been on the Jubilee Committee for 30 years. Both Mike and Sheryl are graduates from Morton High School and have been proud to be a part of the Morton community for so many years.

Sheryl was in charge of the flea market for 25 years and, while Janice Cramer is the new lead, Sheryl is still helping during the transition period. She has worked in other aspects of the Jubilee but she spent the majority of her time in charge of the flea market.

Mike has been the announcer for many of the events, including the royalty coronation, lawn mower races, parade and

logging show. He was asked by Gary Coleman to take the job.

Mike was born in Tacoma and raised in Morton. After high school, Mike spent a few years in the U.S. Army before getting a job at the KELA radio station in Centralia. He graduated from Washington State University with a major in communications.

He would come home almost every summer and assist with the Loggers’ Jubilee. Mike had been assisting Reg Lester Jr. for a number of Jubilee weekends before becoming a co-announcer and finally taking over the position. “The week of Jubilee is intense, but I like it. It’s fun and I enjoy it,” Mike said.

He explained that when he first began the position, that on the day of the parade Reg would go through and interview each entrant and write notes on notecards. Mike’s job was to keep the notecards straight.

Roughly 13 or 14 years ago, Rick Stockdale joined the Loggers’ Jubilee volunteers.

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Packwood meeting for Skyo Fire update

BY AMBER BROWN
East County Journal

A collaboration of firefighting entities put together a meeting for the communities of Packwood and Randle to give updates on what had happened with the Skyo Fire and what will happen.

The meeting on Friday, July 31 had 70 people attend in person and 58 people attend through Zoom. The Packwood Improvement Club hosted the Zoom meeting and the radio station in Packwood, KVRV 89.1

has been giving fire updates as they’ve been coming out and in the top 15 minutes of every hour.

The meeting started with Teresa Tanner, District Ranger for the Cowlitz Valley Forest Service, speaking about the quick response by the Western Washington Interagency Management Team to quickly find, identify and handle the 14 fires that were caused by the lightning storm that passed through on July 22. She expressed her thanks to the quick response.

Spokesman Nick Scafe said, “A lot of work has been done in

9 days.” There were 14 outside of the Skyo Fire that they were handling. He stated that 8 of them were out, 6 were being patrolled, 2 were controlled, 2 contained and firefighters are looking for hotspots and two were still active.

The Skyo Fire initially had six forest service firefighters to respond to it, which was why they called in the management team to assist.

The fire is in a difficult location to reach. Even though it was visible to travelers along U.S. Highway 12, to reach the

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Linda Mettler remembered for legacy
of passion about the Loggers’ Jubilee

BY AMBER BROWN
East County Journal

There are people whose impact is measured not by the spotlight they stand in, but by the countless things that simply wouldn’t happen without them. For the Morton Loggers’ Jubilee, that person was Linda Mettler.

Linda was passionate about the Loggers’ Jubilee, not just as an event, but as a tradition, a community and a legacy worth protecting. She believed in its future and worked tirelessly to help it grow, expand and continue to thrive for generations to come. Linda worked with her husband, Sonny, behind the scenes of the Loggers’ Jubilee for more than 45 years, involved in almost every aspect at one time or another.

Many knew Linda as the friendly face with a warm smile, always moving from one task to the next, always on a mission. What many didn’t see were the countless hours she devoted behind the scenes. From advertising, securing permits and licenses, coordinating volunteers and entertainment, organizing logistics, updating the website and keeping the committee



Sonny and Linda Mettler showing past Jubilee merchandise.

connected, Linda was the glue that held the Morton Loggers’ Jubilee together, not just during the weekend, but year-round. “She did so much,” friend and fellow teacher, Janet Collier said.

Her work didn’t begin when Jubilee weekend arrived, and it certainly didn’t end when the last event was over. It was a year-round commitment with months of planning, preparing, problem-

solving and ensuring every detail was in place and everyone had what they needed long before the first parade entry lined up or the first competition began. Linda carried that responsibility with remarkable grace, making even the most demanding tasks seem effortless, always with a smile.

Linda was also the keeper of the Jubilee’s history. She carefully

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