



# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Tip: The VMCC logo at the top of each page returns you to this page.



### **VMCC is growing, and so is the need for helping hands.**

From kitchen and meal support to fundraising, membership, grants, and communications, volunteers play a vital role in keeping the Center strong, welcoming, and connected.

There's a place for every kind of support now.

[Read more on page 3 →](#)



### **Murder Mystery Dinner Recap**

A sold-out crowd, a lively cast, delicious food, and plenty of drama made the Murder Mystery Dinner a true VMCC hit.

Guests dressed the part, solved the mystery, and helped create an unforgettable evening of fun, laughter, and community support.

[See the full six-page recap on pages 8-13 →](#)

## WEEKLY GATHERINGS & UPCOMING EVENTS

### **SENIOR CENTER/LUNCH (TUESDAYS)**

March 24, 31 | April 7, 14, 21, 28

**11 AM-1 PM**

Doors open at 11; lunch served at noon

[Learn more on page 6 →](#)

### **LITTLE LEAGUE POKER (TUESDAYS)**

March 24, 31 | April 7, 14, 21, 28

**4-5:30 PM**

Poker Coaching

**6-9 PM**

Texas Hold'em

[Learn more on page 4 →](#)

### **S.A.I.L. (FRIDAYS)**

March 27 | April 3, 10, 17, 24

**10-11 AM**

[Learn more on page 7 →](#)

### **AARP SAFE DRIVING REFRESHER COURSE**

SATURDAY, MARCH 28

**9 AM-3:30 PM**

[Learn more on page 7 →](#)

### **FAMILY BINGO NIGHT**

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

**Doors open at 6:30 PM**

**Games start 7 PM**

[Learn more on page 5 →](#)

### **MCKENZIE BIG STACK POKER TOURNAMENT**

SATURDAY, MAY 2

**Doors open at 10 AM**

**Tournament starts at 11 AM**

[Learn more on page 4 →](#)

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**“A good volunteer is like a four-leaf clover: hard to find and lucky to have.”**

That quote feels especially true to me when I think about the volunteers who make the Vida McKenzie Community Center possible. As a nonprofit, we simply could not do this work without the dedication of our Board members, committee members, and the many community volunteers who give their time so generously.

Over the eight years I have served on the Board, I have seen just how much heart and effort it takes to keep this Center going. From the Christmas Bazaar to summer food sales, ice cream socials, and special events throughout the year, every successful event depends on people who are willing to show up, roll up their sleeves, and help. It never happens with just a few people – it takes a team, and in our case, it truly takes a community.

With new Board members come new ideas, fresh energy, and opportunities to improve how we do things. I see that as a very positive thing for VMCC, especially when it is supported by volunteers who are also giving their time and talents in meaningful ways.

Shelly Pruitt has taken on a vital role as Vice President while also managing rentals and helping oversee the many responsibilities that come with maintaining a commercial kitchen. Jeanine Rhode has also volunteered her time and experience to bring this newsletter back in such a thoughtful and professional way, and I know many of our members are glad to see it return. Both are contributing in important ways, and I am very grateful for their work.

Our March 13 Murder Mystery Dinner was a wonderful example of what can happen when many people come together to create something special. The event sold out, the actors brought so much energy and fun to the evening, and it was a joy to see the community gathered for a night of entertainment, good food, and laughter.

I especially want to thank Janet Savage for donating her time to play piano for our rehearsals and event, Ben Rhode for building the jail prop, and Shelly Pruitt for the many hours she spent helping prepare for the meal and dessert. So many people worked hard behind the scenes to make that evening a success, and I'm happy to share that the event raised \$2,500 for VMCC.

One thing I always notice after events like this is that the people doing the work often aren't able to enjoy the evening in the same way everyone else does. They may miss conversations, photos, and moments of fun because they are busy making sure everything runs smoothly. So the next time you see one of our volunteers or Board members, I hope you will take a moment to thank them. A few kind words truly mean a lot.

Respectfully,

**Tammy Pelton**

VMCC Board President & Treasurer



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# VMCC NEWS

## VMCC Is Growing and We Need More Helping Hands



As programs, events, and community activities continue to grow at the Vida McKenzie Community Center, so does the need for volunteers to help carry that work forward.

With upcoming events, ongoing programs, and expanded use of our commercial kitchen, this is an important time to build stronger volunteer support across the Center.

**Right now, one of our biggest needs is dependable kitchen and meal support volunteers.**

### COMMITTEES, CHAIRS & CURRENT NEEDS

#### Kitchen & Meal Support Committee

**Chair:** Shelly Pruitt

Supports meal service and food-related event work in VMCC's commercial kitchen.

**Current needs:** dishwashing, food prep, plating, serving, and kitchen clean-up. Training will be provided, and volunteers interested in food preparation or service are encouraged to obtain a Lane County food handler card.

#### Fundraising Committee

**Chair:** Carol Farnworth

Supports fundraising events, sponsorship outreach, and donor support.

**Current needs:** set-up and clean-up help, raffle support, ticketing help, and extra hands for larger events

#### Grant Writing Committee

**Chair:** Lisa Moore

Supports grant research, writing, organization, and follow-through.

**Current needs:** document organization, research help, and detail-oriented volunteers.

#### Membership Committee

**Chair:** Jeanine Rhode

Supports member welcome, appreciation, outreach, and business member engagement.

**Current needs:** hospitality help, outreach support, and appreciation luncheon assistance.

#### Communications Committee

**Chair:** Jeanine Rhode

Supports the newsletter, community updates, storytelling, and sharing information with members and the wider community.

Communications at VMCC is a shared effort, with support from Will, Amber, and others who help keep the community informed and connected.

**Current needs:** event photography, proofreading, short write-ups, help sharing VMCC news and events, and someone interested in learning the newsletter process alongside the current editor so publication can continue smoothly in the year ahead.

### READY TO RAISE YOUR HAND?

Choose the option that works best for you:

**Click:** [Volunteer Interest & Support Form](#)

**Scan:** Use your phone camera to scan the QR code and go to the form

**Call:** Ben at 541-603-8249 to request a paper form or learn more.



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# COMMUNITY FUN: POKER



**Next**  
**McKenzie Big Stack**  
**Tournament**  
**Saturday, May 2**  
 starts at 11 AM sharp  
*continues until a winner*  
*takes it all*  
**Questions? Call JP**  
 541-579-3474

The **March 21 McKenzie Big Stack Spring Tournament** brought a strong turnout, spirited competition, and another fun day of community at VMCC.

A total of **24 players** joined the tournament, including several first-time players and a mix of local participants, regular Tuesday players, and out-of-town guests.

The event also raised meaningful support for the Center, with **\$340 in donations to the VMCC** general fund and an additional \$48 from the 50/50 drawing.

As the tournament progressed, the final table delivered plenty of excitement.

In the end, **Darrian Rhodes** claimed first place and the \$560 top prize with pocket queens holding strong against ace-king.

**Greg Williams** took second place and \$360, while **Jeff Chapek** earned third and \$223.

**Mike Danielson** finished fourth, winning \$75, and **Scott Price** placed fifth, taking home \$50.

The day also included a well-loved potluck lunch, with a spread that ranged from pulled pork sandwiches and kale salad to meatballs, pickled eggs, cookies, and brownies.

No one went away hungry, and the meal added to the warm, welcoming feel of the day.

Special thanks to **Jerri-Jo Payne** for helping at the registration table and to everyone who contributed food, prizes, donations, and support.

## Tuesday Night Poker at the VMCC

*Dealer's Choice & Texas Hold'em • Bring a snack (and more to share if you'd like)*  
**Every Tuesday • Dealer's Choice / Coaching Session 4:00-5:30 PM**  
**Texas Hold'em starts at 6:00 PM sharp, ends at 9:00 PM**

### BUY-IN & CHIPS

- \$15 buy-in = 7,000 chips
- \$10 re-buy = 7,000 chips
- \$10 add-in at break = 7,000 chips

### PAYOUTS

**1st, 2nd, 3rd place:**  
 based on chip counts  
**4th place:** \$25



*Friendly, low-key group*  
*Typically 16-24 players*  
*New faces welcome*

*Rain, shine... or power outage.*

*These players mean business! When the lights go out due to a power outage, lanterns come out and play continues. Tuesday poker doesn't cancel easily.*

### COACHING SESSION

**4:00-5:30 PM**

**Topics covered:**

- Tournament/Poker etiquette
- Beginning strategies
- Hands-on coaching advice on how to play your hands

*Coaching not required to participate in regular play.*

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# COMMUNITY FUN: BINGO



# BINGO NIGHT

*All ages welcome • Big fun • Small-town charm*

**SATURDAY  
APRIL 11**

**6:30 PM  
DOORS OPEN**

**7:00 PM  
GAMES START**

**NUMBERS CALLED BY MR. COMMUNITY, WALT WILSON**

**SNACK BAR OPEN**

### HOW IT WORKS

- We play **15 games** using a video BINGO system displayed on a large TV screen
- **2 cards for \$5** – buy as many as you'd like
- Extra cards can be purchased at any time
- **20–30 minute break after Game 10** (perfect for snacks and socializing!)



### SPECIAL GAMES & PRIZES

- **Golden Ticket Progressive Game** (sponsored by Bottle Boys)
  - \$1 per ticket
  - Starts at **\$150** and increases by **\$25 each month** until it's won
- **Final Game Jackpot**
  - Pays **\$75** if BINGO is called within **54** numbers
  - Drops to **\$50** after that

**GIFT CARDS AVAILABLE**

*This is community BINGO, focused on connection rather than high-stakes payouts.*

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# SENIOR ACTIVITIES: Tuesday Senior Lunch

## Tuesday Senior Lunch: A Weekly Gathering for Connection and Community

Since returning on February 17, Senior Lunch Tuesday has quickly become a welcoming weekly rhythm at the Vida McKenzie Community Center. More than just a meal, it's become a place for conversation, learning, laughter, and community connection.

Each month now follows a simple rhythm, with celebrations, guest presenters, Gentle Tech, and community conversation helping shape the weeks.

We're especially grateful to **Jessica Ganieany of Northwest Insurance Service for joining us to share helpful information about Medicare.**

March also included a St. Patrick's Day gathering and a Gentle Tech session focused on navigating VMCC's online resources.

You may also notice that Senior Lunch now has its own new logo (featured below), giving the program a clearer identity as it continues to grow.

In this issue, we're also including a link and QR code to a short video so readers can get a closer look at what Senior Lunch Tuesday is all about.

*April Senior Center*  
 Doors open at 11:00 AM, Lunch served at 12:00 PM, Program begins at 12:30 PM, Suggested lunch donation: \$5

- April 7** Monthly Celebrations & Games  
We'll celebrate April birthdays and anniversaries, play games, and enjoy time reconnecting.
- April 14** CPR & AED Overview  
Firefighter & Paramedic Carmen Pierce from McKenzie Fire & Rescue will provide a helpful overview of CPR and AED use.
- April 21** Gentle Tech with Jeanine  
A relaxed, supportive session focused on building confidence with everyday technology. Topic TBA.
- April 28** Community Conversation + May Preview  
We'll share a preview of May's upcoming lunches, followed by a small-table conversation.

**Have an idea for a presenter or topic?**  
 Please reach out to Jeanine Rhode at [JRhode@VidaCommunityCenter.com](mailto:JRhode@VidaCommunityCenter.com).



Scan to watch the Senior Lunch video



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## SENIOR ACTIVITIES: Health & Safety Programs

### SAIL: Stay Active & Independent for Life

SAIL (Stay Active & Independent for Life) classes are underway at the Vida McKenzie Community Center and continue every Friday, offering a welcoming, instructor-led program focused on strength, balance, and fall prevention.

Designed to support independence and confidence, SAIL combines simple movement, flexibility, and balance techniques in a supportive group setting. The class can be done seated or standing, with or without light weights, and is open to all ages and abilities.

**Classes meet Fridays from 10:00–11:00 a.m. at VMCC. A suggested \$2 donation per class helps support the program.**

Instructor **Nancy Ashley**, trained through the SAIL organization, leads each session and welcomes participants at any comfort level.



Wear comfortable clothing you can move in and come as you are — regular attendance is not required.

**SAIL Friday mornings from 10:00–11:00 • March 27 • April 3, 10, 17, 24**



### AARP Smart Driver Classroom Course

AARP will host a Smart Driver classroom course at the Vida McKenzie Community Center on **Saturday, March 8, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

This refresher course helps drivers update their knowledge of current road rules, safety practices, and defensive driving techniques.

**Participants may also be eligible for an auto insurance discount upon completion.**

The class is open to everyone — AARP membership is not required.

**To register, call Walt at 541-521-5900.**

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# Murder Mystery Dinner at the Deadwood Saloon

Part 1 of a 6-page feature



**The Vida McKenzie Community Center was buzzing on March 13 as guests arrived for the sold-out Murder Mystery Dinner, *Murder at the Deadwood Saloon*.**



Costumes, characters, and a room full of laughter set the stage for a memorable evening of good food, dramatic twists, and old-west mischief.



As the mystery unfolded, tables compared clues, shared laughs, and worked together to solve the crime. More than just a fun night out, the event was a joyful reminder of what makes VMCC special: community members showing up, pitching in, and creating something meaningful together.



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# Murder Mystery Dinner at the Deadwood Saloon

Part 2 of a 6-page feature



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# Murder Mystery Dinner at the Deadwood Saloon

Part 3 of a 6-page feature

*Our talented cast brought the Deadwood Saloon to life with humor, flair, and plenty of drama.*



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# Murder Mystery Dinner at the Deadwood Saloon

Part 4 of a 6-page feature



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# Murder Mystery Dinner at the Deadwood Saloon

Part 5 of a 6-page feature

## CAST OF CHARACTERS



**Banker Bob**  
Walt Wilson



**Banker Bonnie**  
Jennie Ruiz



**Barb Cassidy**  
Laura Murphy



**Mitch Maverick**  
Ryan Van Ausdall



**Montgomery Money**  
Keira Fabio



**Sheriff Sam**  
Jon Payne



**Harry Highstakes**  
Sarah Bosch



**Billy the Bartender**  
Jennifer Riedy



**Taffy the Saloon Girl**  
Chani Demello



**Poker Alice**  
Stephanie Kelly



**Outlaw Jesse Wales**  
Dan Kelly



**Gambling Jack**  
Ed Pelton



**Minnie Money**  
Ellie Riedy



**Saloon Pianist**  
Janet Savage



**MC Ruby**  
Tammy Pelton

### AWARD WINNERS

- **Best Dressed (People's Choice):** Jeff Calavan
- **Best Dressed Runner-Up:** Ryan Van Ausdall as Mitch Maverick
- **Biggest Drama Queen:** Jennifer Riedy as Billy the Bartender
- **Mystery-Solving Table:** Darin & Kail Harbick, Jake & Kelly Pelroy, Jack & Ali Tibbetts

### AND THE GUILTY PARTY WAS...

By the end of the evening, the mystery was solved: Montgomery Money, played by Keira Fabio, was the guilty party.

**Congratulations to the table that cracked the case — and to everyone who helped make the evening such a lively success!**

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# Murder Mystery Dinner at the Deadwood Saloon

Part 6 of a 6-page feature

## With Gratitude

Events like this do not happen on their own. The Murder Mystery Dinner came to life thanks to the generosity, creativity, and hard work of sponsors, donors, business supporters, performers, volunteers, and many helping hands behind the scenes. We are deeply grateful to everyone who helped make the evening so memorable.



## FINANCIAL SPONSORS

- Laura & Mike Murphy
- Jake Pelroy

## IN-KIND SUPPORT

### Bright Oak Meats

donated 40 pounds of pork chops



BRIGHT OAK MEATS

### Soft Peaks Cakery

provided carrot cake dessert



## Soft Peaks Cakery

*Specialty Cakes & Desserts*

### Leaburg Flower Co.

provided floral centerpieces

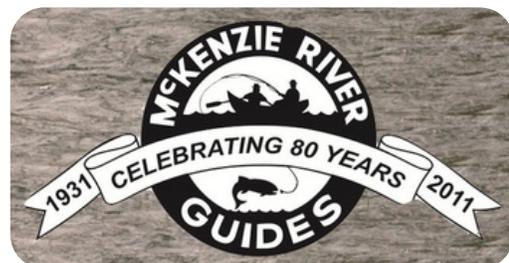


### Twist & Tap Mobile Bar

provided bar service at a generous discounted rate

## PRIZE DONORS

- Covered Bridge Forge
- Belknap Hot Springs
- Tammy & Ed Pelton



## SPECIAL THANKS

- **Meal Preparation:** McKenzie River Guides – Jeff Helfrich, Jon Payne, and Jim Sens
- **Kitchen & Meal Support:** Shelly Pruitt, Linda Morris, and Jesse Raley
- **Guest Hospitality:** Sherry Jones
- **Event Production & Direction:** Tammy Pelton
- **Screen Projection:** Shauna Raley

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# MEMBERSHIP NEWS



## Quarterly Membership Appreciation Luncheon

Please save the date for our next **Quarterly Membership Appreciation Luncheon** on **Saturday, May 9** at the Vida McKenzie Community Center.

- Doors will open at **11:00 AM**
- Lunch will be served at **12:00 PM**
- Meeting begins at **12:30 PM**
- Concludes by **1:30 PM**

These gatherings are one small way we say thank you to the individuals, households, and business members who help keep the VMCC active, welcoming, and growing.

They are also a chance to connect, share updates, and celebrate the community spirit that continues to shape the Center.

As part of this luncheon, we will also be gathering food donations for local food pantries. Members are invited to bring a nonperishable food item if they would like to participate in supporting neighbors in our wider community.

More details will be shared as the date gets closer, but for now, we hope you'll mark your calendar and plan to join us.

## VMCC Spring Fling:

### A Community & Business Member Showcase

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, May 30** as the Vida McKenzie Community Center hosts the **VMCC Spring Fling: A Community & Business Member Showcase**.

This new event is being created to spotlight VMCC Business Members, welcome the broader community into the Center, and celebrate the many local businesses, makers, growers, and organizations that help our valley thrive.

Guests can expect a lively spring atmosphere, opportunities to connect with local businesses and community groups, and more details to come as planning continues.

Spring Fling is not being built as a fundraiser-first event, but it will be a meaningful way to strengthen community connections while increasing visibility and value for our Business Members. We're excited to see this new event take shape.

Because this month's newsletter included an expanded Murder Mystery Dinner feature, we chose to omit our usual Business Member and Board Member spotlights from the March issue. We look forward to sharing a deeper dive on several VMCC Business Members in April's newsletter.

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# CONNECT WITH US

*There are many ways to stay connected with everything happening at the Vida McKenzie Community Center — from our website and newsletter to social media and direct outreach. Here's where to find information, ask questions, or get in touch.*

## Stay in the Know

Whether you prefer online updates, a monthly newsletter, or social media reminders, we've made it easy to stay in the loop. Here are the best ways to follow what's happening at the VMCC.

### Website

- [www.vidacommunitycenter.com](http://www.vidacommunitycenter.com)
- Event details, schedules & announcements
- *Managed by Will Rutherford*

### Monthly Newsletter

- Stories, programs & community highlights
- [VMCC Newsletter Article & Photo Submission Form](#)
- *Editor & Publisher: Jeanine Rhode*

### Social Media pages

- Updates, reminders & photos
- [Facebook](#) - *Managed by Amber Jackson*
- [Nextdoor](#) - *Managed by Jeanine Rhode*

**Follow & Favorite VMCC** on Facebook and Nextdoor for updates.

## Questions or Need Help?

Have a question about an event, program, rental, or membership?

### Email us at:

[SPruitt@VidaCommunityCenter.com](mailto:SPruitt@VidaCommunityCenter.com)

### Call us at:

541-554-9332

For website or social media-related questions, you can also message us through the VMCC **website**, **Facebook**, or **Nextdoor**. We're always glad to help.

## VMCC Board of Directors

### PRESIDENT

Tammy Pelton

### VICE PRESIDENT

Shelly Pruitt

### SECRETARY

Lisa Moore

### TREASURER

Tammy Pelton

### **President Emeritus:**

Walter Wilson

### BOARD MEMBERS

Faith Bokros

Sherry Jones

Ann Penny

Ben Rhode

Rex Starr

You'll often see our Board members around the Center and at public events.

Please feel free to say hello, introduce yourself, and share what the VMCC means to you — they love hearing from the community they serve.

## Vida McKenzie Community Center Info.

### Physical Address:

90377 Thomson Lane Vida OR 97488

### Mailing Address:

PO BOX 163 Vida OR 97488

### VMCC is a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

ID # 93-1297648

Community-supported and volunteer-led, the VMCC is committed to serving the McKenzie River Valley.



# BUSINESS MEMBERS

Thank you to our VMCC Business Members for supporting community programs, gatherings, and connection throughout the McKenzie River Valley.



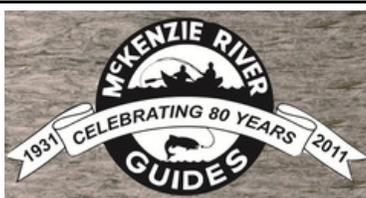
Sha Spady  
503-913-2949



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[leaburg.library@gmail.com](mailto:leaburg.library@gmail.com)



PO BOX 327  
WALTERVILLE, OR 97488  
[walter1ww@aol.com](mailto:walter1ww@aol.com)



[McKenzieGuides.com](http://McKenzieGuides.com)  
PO BOX 464  
Waltersville, OR 97489  
541-285-3676  
[mckenzieguides@gmail.com](mailto:mckenzieguides@gmail.com)



[UpriverOrganics.com](http://UpriverOrganics.com)  
44382 McKenzie Hwy  
Leaburg OR 97489



**Honey Paddle Farm**  
Amber & Brian Jackson  
39920 McKenzie Hwy  
Springfield, OR 97478  
(541) 995-0096  
[hello@honeypaddle.com](mailto:hello@honeypaddle.com)



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[SpringCreekHolly.com](http://SpringCreekHolly.com)



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[thurstonflowers.springfield@gmail.com](mailto:thurstonflowers.springfield@gmail.com)



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541.554.9332  
[spruitt59@gmail.com](mailto:spruitt59@gmail.com)  
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*By appointment only  
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[CoveredBridgeForge.com](http://CoveredBridgeForge.com)  
Custom forged meat cleavers,  
knives & sharpening service  
Jeff Calavan, Maker



# BUSINESS MEMBERS

Thank you to our VMCC Business Members for supporting community programs, gatherings, and connection throughout the McKenzie River Valley.

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