

# Active and Caring

## *Kay Corbin takes the time to help his community on Big Bend's Caring Neighbors board*

*By Yvonne Prater*

**K**ay Corbin of Pasco has been a Caring Neighbors board member beginning with the first meeting.

"We have to give credit to Co-op Manager Jim Johnson, who founded the board, with Dale Anderson's help," says Kay. "I've been on the board since the beginning as one of the representatives of Franklin County and the Big Bend geographic area. I, along with four others, was in on the set up of the board and the building of its bylaws."

Kay is semiretired, yet stays active. He finds being a Caring Neighbors board member both challenging and satisfying.

Kay has had an interesting life and career.

"I've never been beyond 250 miles from where I was born and raised, except during my U.S. Air Force days," he says. "I was born and raised in Heppner, Oregon, where I spent many memorable years growing up on my grandparents' ranch."

After he finished high school, Kay joined the Air Force and spent four years as a member of the military

police. For three years, he was stationed at Winnemucca, Nevada, then signed up for worldwide service and was assigned to Greenland for a year.

"It was very cold and windy, down to minus-70 to 80 degrees, but quite pleasant in the short summer, about 70 degrees on the positive side," he recalls. "We experienced darkness for half the year and the midnight sun and daylight for the other half. The Northern Lights were real spectacular. It looked like bright darts flashing across the sky in glittering colors."

After the service, Kay worked three years for the Oregon State Police out of La Grande. He decided that wasn't what he wanted to do with his life, so he went to college,



*Kay Corbin stays active in the community and finds his work for Caring Neighbors satisfying.*

earning a bachelor's degree at Portland State University in business administration and accounting. He worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as an auditor, starting in Portland, then Walla Walla and back to Portland. Later, he moved to the Tri-Cities in 1983 and worked for the U.S. Department of

Energy as a cost price analyst and auditor. His career as an auditor with the government dealing with commercial contractors gave him the expertise and knowledge for the consulting work he does now.

"However, being in semi-retirement, I work because I want to, not because I have to," Kay says. "I work four hours a day, four days a week that is adjustable to meet mine and my employer's schedule."

Kay and his wife, Leonore, who retired from working with the Boy Scouts of America, Blue Mountain Council, live in Sun Willows in Pasco.

The Corbins have three children, Brian, Krista and Kayla, who are all married and have careers in the Tri-Cities area. The Corbins also have seven grandchildren, two who are in college.

Kay says he likes serving on the Caring Neighbors board.

"Jim Johnson really has us focused on the committee's activities, and we receive applications in a timely manner prior to our quarterly meetings," he says. "It's probably one of the best programs to help communities I've ever heard about. On boards that I have served before, you are out there begging for money to keep the

organization going so you can provide services.

By contrast, the money that comes in from Big Bend Electric Co-op members is made up of smaller voluntary donations each month.

"We know we are going to get a certain amount from the rounded-

up billings, which will help us to meet the many needs that are applied for on a quarterly basis.”

The applications come from nonprofit organizations, municipalities, schools and fire districts.

“It is such a small effort by the members for such a great benefit to needy programs,” he says. “Caring Neighbors come from the heart. We have about \$24,000 to \$28,000 a year to donate to different organizations.”

The board meets quarterly, reviews applications groups turn in and analyzes each one based on need.

“We try to spread the money out as much as we can,” he says.

Through a couple of different community action councils, the program helps needy Big Bend Electric Co-op members with their winter heating bills.

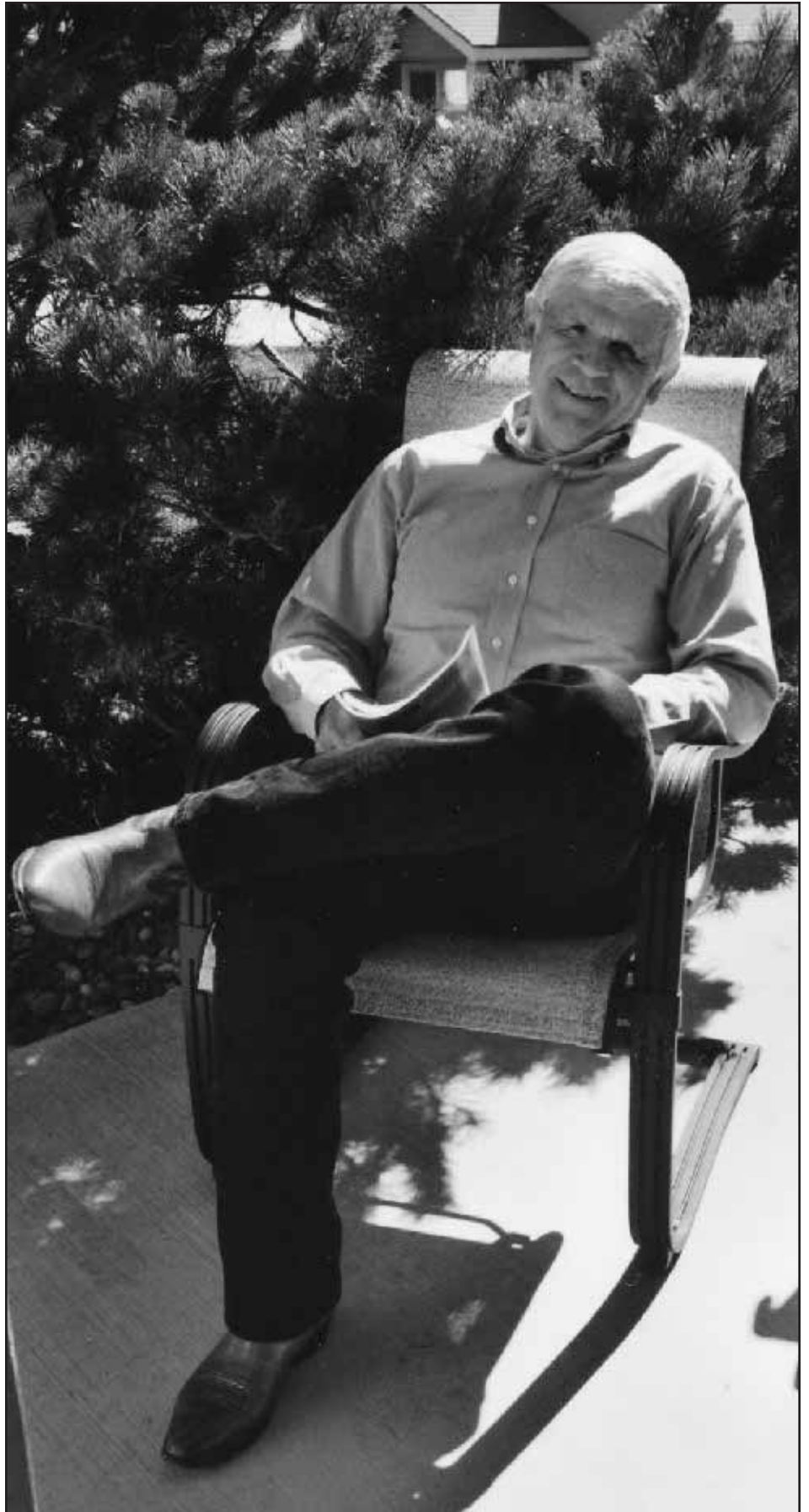
Kay also finds time for hunting and riding on the original family ranch in the Blue Mountains near Heppner, Oregon. He boards his horse there.

“For over 12 years now, my son and I have enjoyed elk hunting in North Idaho,” he says. “I haven’t had a lot of luck when it comes to actually killing an elk. They are such magnificent animals. So the elk are pretty safe with me. I am thinking of exchanging my gun for a camera and just take pictures of them during elk season.”

“Your age is a state of mind,” Kay says. “You can be as old as you want or be as young as you want. Though your body may age, if you keep your mind young, it helps your body to age gracefully. When you’re done with your career, building your life and what you’ve got around you, your family, home, etc., then you take on new challenges.”

Kay looks forward to reading and attending nearby Columbia Basin College, taking courses of special interest to him.

“The beauty of it is that I don’t have to be graded,” he says. ■



*Kay enjoys hunting and riding his horse in the Blue Mountains near Heppner, Oregon.*