

## Rainbow Covers Round Valley



A rainbow stretched across the valley last Thursday 12/7/23. Photo by Jenn Procacci, taken from Inspiration Point.

### RVIHC & RVUSD Partnership Brings Trauma Informed Martial Arts to Round Valley Youth

by Jenn Procacci

A partnership between Round Valley Indian Health Center and Round Valley Unified School District has facilitated a new therapeutic martial arts program in the middle and high schools here in Round Valley. Izzy Arkin, martial arts instructor, and Owen Lawyer LMFT, work in conjunction with the RVIHC and RVUSD to bring this program to our youth. I sat down with Izzy Arkin on Monday to learn more.

Izzy Arkin - "At the Round Valley High School we run trauma informed mindfulness martial arts programs for grades 5th through 12th. The program happens on site at the school and we coordinate with the school leadership to do this program during the school day, which we find is most effective. We focus on building strong relationships not only with the school leadership but with the parents as well. The type of martial arts we do is Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, which is a ground based grappling type of martial arts. In Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, you identify angles and leverage to protect yourself from someone larger and stronger than you, which makes it excellent for kids because you can have kids of all sizes practice together. It is grappling based, not striking based, so it is great for teaching kids how to protect themselves without having to strike someone. We want children to learn very effective martial arts so they are able to protect themselves in a dangerous situation.

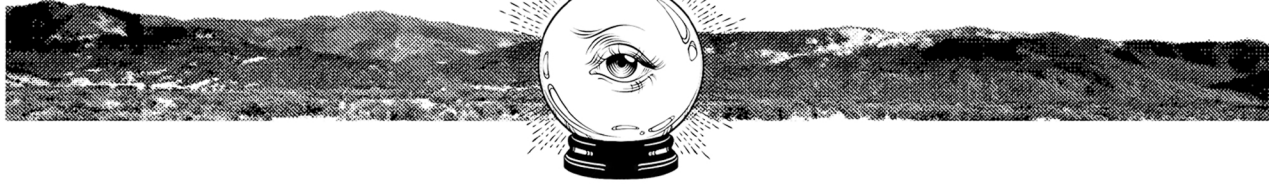
The number 1 goal of the program is character development. We want these kids to be excellent human beings. We teach focus, respect, discipline. We don't want to give a martial arts power to someone who would use it in the wrong way. Working together to get better at this martial art and feeling it in your body is very powerful. It's not only something you learn with your mind, you also learn it physically in your body, and we find that learning in that way really ignites the interest of the students. As you practice you focus, and as you focus you learn nuance and you learn the martial art. We teach the children meditation practices as well. We do a sitting meditation at the beginning of class. This teaches children how to calm themselves, focus themselves and they can use these skills in a dangerous situation to not be reactive, but instead center themselves when under duress. The kids see and feel the benefits - kids have noticed that when they go to sleep earlier they have better reaction times and perform better in jiu jitsu. In this way it encourages a healthy lifestyle. It is a major advantage when practicing martial arts if you are in good physical condition, so it motivates kids to take care of themselves in that sense. This gives kids real time motivation to get good sleep, good nutrition, etc. That's an example of a natural improvement.

This is our first year here in Covelo - we want to do things that are genuinely helpful and effective. Last year we were invited by one of the school staff to do a self defense class with her group of kids. The kids were very responsive and wanted more. That planted the seed for doing a larger program here in Covelo. We want to provide services to underserved areas. We also work in Laytonville, at juvenile hall, in various locations in Ukiah, and soon we will be working in Fort Bragg.

15 years ago, I was in Teach for America and was teaching in Los Angeles when I got involved in martial arts. After that I left teaching and lived in Japan for 4 years and studied Aikido, eastern martial arts. I came back to the US and moved back home here to Mendocino county. This is where I connected with Owen Lawyer LMFT, who also has a martial arts background.

I think it's important that it's clear that it's a partnership with the RVIHC and RVUSD that has made this program possible. They partnered in order to be able to bring us there. It's a great partnership and we are very grateful for that. We are so appreciative for the support. There is attention on us because we are the teachers, but our program would not exist or be effective if we did not have strong partnerships with the partnering organizations.

It's been such a positive experience partnering with RVIHC and RVUSD. We are so grateful for the communication and the commitment that we see to the kids. The administrators and teachers at RVUSD are so committed to the students. They know every kid. It is so inspiring. It is really really exciting for us to be a part of that. We want to shed light on positive things in these communities. People who haven't been to Round Valley tend to make judgements and it's unfortunate. We have loved working in this community.



## Native American Poetry

### The Trees Address The Poet

by Anita Endrezzi-Anderson, Yaqui

"Communication is not taken lightly among trees ... trees being attacked by insects give off chemicals that trigger protection mechanism in other trees." Dr. David Rhodes

#### Madrone:

Trees have voices without sound  
yet are clamorous  
as the crows that cleave the sky.  
Listen to me: we grow in constant  
circles, binding the earth's core into us.  
You wear your branching bones inside.  
sloughing cells into the wind.  
Your voice has only one dimension  
and yet when you cup my leaves  
in your hands, our blood trembles together.  
If I could conceive a woman,  
it would be you,  
but my fruitfulness is a knot of orange-red berries  
bursting at your feet like pagan hearts.

#### Willow:

I am a torn widow in a veil of aphids.  
Light breathes through a scaffold of leaves.  
The sun is weakened by a blaze of grasshoppers.  
I will tell you about love: it is only  
a matter of seed and tap root.  
Or water  
fanning the tense air into forgiveness.  
I dream of water. I was married to it once.  
I carved this stream with my awkward teeth,  
these roots that wing into red trees.

#### Yellow Pine answers:

Willow, the stream is shrieking away from you,  
exposing roots, flushing mud into the crevices of my bark.  
Tent caterpillars festoon your long-eyed leaves,  
weighting the air with their graceless dance.  
I am scabious from pine borers,  
their snout-like heads burrowing deep  
until I will be nothing but a husk of papery rind.  
It is only right that I speak of death.  
Madrone, pine flesh has been axed and squared,  
enfolding dead humans like legends of tree-spirits.  
But their voices are stilled,  
while our elegies seed the meadows,  
crumbling bones, choking the empty spaces  
without praise or sacred wisdom.

#### Helix Aspersa

The typical garden snail breathes  
and excretes through the same orifice,  
reducing the loss  
of moisture which has sifted through  
the nets of conifer needles, diminished  
to mist by the time it clings to the green collar  
of trillium leaves. The snail is without  
false expectations: whatever's left over is life.  
I am not dissatisfied with things as they are  
but I wonder if it thinks the moon is a spindle-shaped shell,  
smearing a glistening trail of stars?  
And does it consciously fear thorns, droughts,  
the windless volcanic ash? Or does it believe  
the whole world is underneath, where the porous air  
is full of fluid circles,  
and weathering is a natural mercy?  
No, it has no insight; it's as common as clover.  
Observe its two front tentacles  
which scent leaf-mold and lance leaf.  
Its two longer tentacles are feeble eyes,  
sensing only the light which fogs its lusterless shell,  
and the shadows that are boneless and flourishing.  
I'm not without compassion  
but I can't accept this inability to dream  
beyond one's self. Yet the snail  
has a special knowledge: creeping 23 inches an hour  
it shifts its perceptions slowly.  
Does it bore even itself?  
Or is it enough that its evolutionary patience  
has awarded it with practical intelligence:  
it seeks decay on its own level.  
And, finally, here is a curious fact:  
although it travels great distances,  
over liverwort, slime streams, and stone,  
it tends to return to its point of origin,  
where it contours its body-foot

to the fertile soil and observes life  
revolving around it in concentric seasons  
of earthly abandonment and need.

#### Owl Hill

We live on Owl Hill,  
our nights a measured calling  
across a thickened darkness.  
We are caretakers.  
The Great Horned Owl molts,  
his feathers grey and white like split storm clouds.  
We tie each lost feather to a new twig, chanting it whole  
until it's golden-eyed, moon-bitten.  
Under Owl Tree mice bones click in a low wind.  
The branches are fur-clotted.  
Owl Tree is a sky-pipe of hoots.  
We sit at its roots,  
our eyes unblinking,  
our whispers sudden wings.

#### Talisman

Age embroidered a river in this stone.  
A river of purple swans and sand  
the color of compressed clouds.  
Look — there are two rocks: the aura and the essence.  
This is the aura: a flake of light  
smelling like clay and violets;  
a circlet of moss, grey-green with dinosaur bones;  
and a halo of veined ginkgo leaves,  
crushed by paleolithic suns.  
The essence is in our prophecies:  
Flood and Last Days,  
fire and angels, meteors and chisels.  
The essence is a voice all tribes will remember  
when the sky flows like lava and the stars speak our names.  
Listen. This rock is singing the heart of earth's magic spell.



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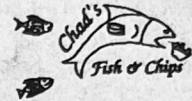


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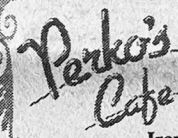
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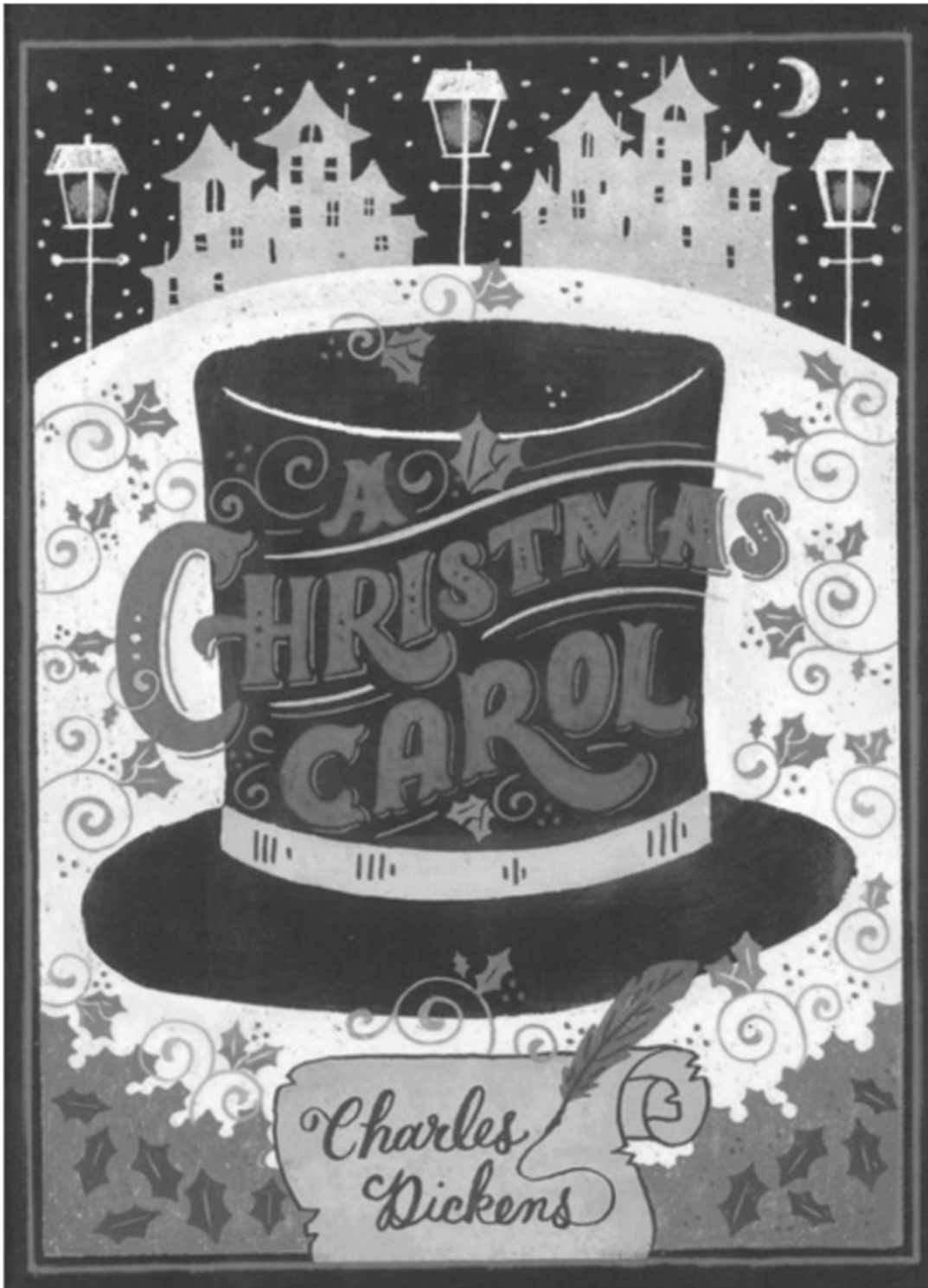
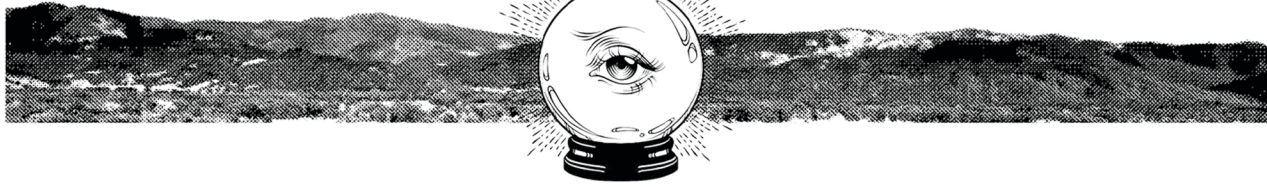
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## THE COVELO PLAYERS PRESENT A (COVELO) CHRISTMAS CAROL

BY MICHELLE PEÑALOZA

DECEMBER 15, 2023

The Round Valley Playhouse was lively with applause and holiday cheer on the opening night of *A Christmas Carol* put on by the Covelo Players, Round Valley's one and only theater group.

The Covelo Players was formed back in 2033 by local performers and couple Ivo Lopez and Kiersten Morgan. Lopez and Morgan were successful beyond Covelo, acting in TV shows and movies, in addition to their lives and work in Round Valley. As their children, Gigi and Desi, grew they founded a youth acting group to create a fun activity for their kids and their peers. From there things grew, as things do in Covelo, with the youth acting group becoming an all ages acting troupe, expanding to include young adults, middle-aged folks, and elders who had also caught the acting bug. This rag tag group of charismatic, humble thespians named themselves The Covelo Players, first performing Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* in the spring of 2035, in the Walnut Grove, where folks set up temporary seating and blankets on the grass for Covelo's very first "play in the park." With the great success and reception of that performance, the number of burgeoning actors in Round Valley increased and the selection of plays and parts grew as well.

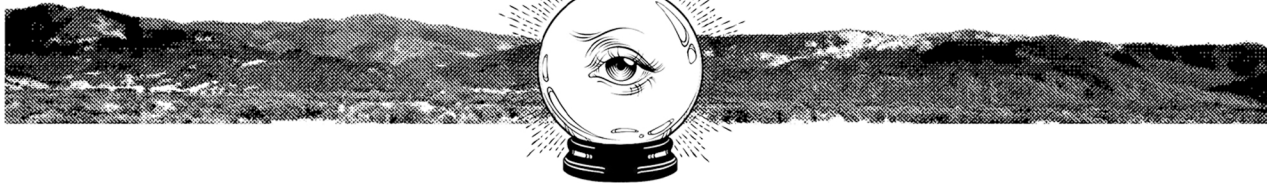
Since that first performance, The Covelo Players have put on a number of productions, working hard to put on one play each year. Some of the most favorably remembered performances: *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Steel Magnolias*, and *Animal Farm*. (People try not to bring up the lackluster year they did *Death of a Salesman*).

With support from the Community Foundation and The Arts Council of Mendocino County, The Covelo Players were able to create more elaborate sets and costumes, and even send a few players to acting and set building classes in the Bay Area, to learn and bring their skills back to Round Valley. Eventually, in 2049, The Covelo Players raised enough funds and resources to begin building The Round Valley Playhouse, a humble, black box theater, bringing the performances inside, which allowed for more elaborate sets and stage effects.

The addition of a holiday show began only a few years ago, as the number of actors, set makers, costume designers, and stage hands as well as the community's overall interest grew and grew. With the playhouse, The Covelo Players can perform inside during inclement weather and since 2060 have alternated between putting on the stage versions of *It's a Wonderful Life* and *A Christmas Carol*. In the future, there's talk of folks adapting the holiday classic, *Home Alone*, into a live theater version. Maybe next year! And to quote Dickens: "God bless us, every one!"



The article written above is fictional, and does not represent actual events happening in Round Valley. It is an imagining of what our community could look like in the future. The Round Valley Reader project is designed to encourage us all to reflect on the past, examine the present, and imagine a positive future for our community. How might we be affected by factors such as climate change and the need for water and energy conservation? What would healthier social activities look like for our community? What do we need to improve our public healthcare? What opportunities do we want to provide for future generations in Covelo? Please let us know what your ideas are for the future of Round Valley by emailing us at [coveloarts@gmail.com](mailto:coveloarts@gmail.com), or stop by our table during the farmer's market on Fridays. There is also a collection box for ideas inside the library, next to copies of The Round Valley Reader. Thank you and enjoy!  
Jenn and Michelle



This activity is funded  
in part by the  
California Arts  
Council, a state agency,  
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