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Dave Edinborough with his canine companion, Dina (on utility vehicle), who loves to come with. GALLEGOS PHOTO

## Sierra ag farm is in good hands

By PAT GALLEGOS  
 Mountain Press contributing writer

The Sierra High ag farm has been in the hands of Dave Edinborough since he became farm manager three and a half years ago, and during these trying times he continues to stay busy, taking care of things he usually doesn't have time for. There are no classes now that school is closed, but other than that it's "business pret-

ty much as usual" around the farm.

The farm usually hosts several student animals being readied for the Fresno Fair, but currently there are only two project animals at the site. The rest are pastured at their owners' homes. Edinborough does still have a student come in on weekends when he is off-duty to take care of the animals and work on various projects.

Part of Edinborough's job

requires him to keep track of costs for the animal projects that the students are involved with—such as food—and he does the accounting for those projects. He jokingly says, "Paperwork is not my forte, but it is coming along."

During an active school day, school buses bring FFA kids to the farm from the campus to work with their project animals. Edinbor-

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Seth Chrisman has gone from Sierra High to Cornell University and back again over the last year. (Above) Chrisman stands near the SHS sign wearing his "Cornell" sweatshirt on a very warm day last week. CATCHPOLE PHOTO

## Surprise hiatus thanks to COVID

By THOMAS W. CATCHPOLE  
 Mountain Press contributing writer

Tollhouse resident Seth Chrisman has been attending Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Everything was going great for him until the COVID-19 pandemic forced the college to close in early March. Chrisman, son of Julie and Josh Chrisman, is a 2019 Sierra High School graduate and was honored to be accepted into Cornell. Very few SHS grads have ever attended Cornell.

Chrisman choose Cornell because it is one of the best agriculture colleges in the world. "I knew I wanted to go into something with international relations and agriculture. Cornell has a program directly in that field," noted Chrisman. He is majoring in International Agriculture and Rural Development, with minors in Plant Breeding, Genetics, and Fungal Biology.

Most SHS student don't go out of state for college; Chrisman had to learn a new application process called "Common App." The process is fairly

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## Problem solved!

By TAMI JONES  
 Mountain Press contributing writer

Dennis and Janice Llewellan moved to the mountains in 1992. Dennis' father built their house amongst the clear, crisp smell of pine and wild lavender lupine that sprout within the sacred Sierra Nevada. After he passed, the couple decided to make a permanent move. They soon became one of "us."

At the height of the last drought, and subsequent bark beetle infestation, their three-acre property became a timber boneyard. Agencies approached and did their jobs. PG&E felled trees close to power lines. Cal Fire felled the culprits that could spark a State emergency. Five years later, the hazardous litter remained.

In September of 2019, the Sierra Resource Conservation District (SRCD) sent a flyer to homeowners seeking permission to access properties for wildfire assessments. It's the organization's mission to work with local landowners for solutions. Janice Llewellan received the flyer and approached husband Dennis about contacting the group.

"I remember my wife telling me she was going to call the number on the flyer. I told her, 'There isn't anyone who's going to help us. Especially not a state agency,'" Dennis recalls. "We'd been down this route before and at the expense of our finances."

He was referring to the money they'd already poured into the log decks being cut

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Luke Allen hard at work on the Llewellans' log deck. JONES PHOTO

## Deadly crash on 168

By PAT GALLEGOS  
 Mountain Press contributing writer

Mid-afternoon on Wednesday, April 22, the violent crash of a 1996 red Acura claimed the life of 17-year-old Alex Ounmano, a Clovis High School student, and sent his 17-year-old female passenger to Community Regional Medical Center (CRMC).

This was a single car crash but there were three cars more or less involved in the incident. According to California Highway Patrol, three cars were involved in a speed contest racing each other down the hill on the four-lane section of Highway 168. It was reported the cars might have been traveling as fast as 85 to 100 miles an hour when the crash occurred.

For some reason, the driver of the Acura oversteered toward the right side of the road, causing the car to rotate 180 degrees; it continued its downhill trajectory but backwards at an estimated speed of 85 miles an hour or more. When the car rotated it hit the rocky side of the mountain, destroying the back end of the car and blowing out the rear window. The occupants were wearing seatbelts but, due to the impact, the back of each seat broke and laid down flat;

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With a cooperative effort between Sierra Resource Conservation District and others, Janice and Dennis Llewellyn will finally be able to address the "eyesore" on their mountain acreage. JONES PHOTO

## Downed timber

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and stacked.

Janice persisted and reminded her husband they had nothing to lose. She made the call and Blaire Duncan, Forestry Field Operator for SRCD, answered.

"We perform free property assessments for local landowners to help mitigate wildfire hazards," explains Duncan. "The dead trees are scattered throughout the Sierra and pose a real problem for property owners. When Janice and Dennis responded to our flyer, I knew we could find a way to help."

The property assessment took a call from concerned citizens, their permission to access the property, and about 90 minutes of everyone's time. After viewing the property, Duncan enlisted the help of his colleagues and formed a plan. SRCD enlisted locals Matt and Luke Allen, owners of a local logging company, and the San Joaquin River Conservancy

to tackle this challenge.

In the early morning hours of April 26, staff, community, and agency partners came together to help the Llewellyns remove the hazardous eye-sore. Equipment and brain-power were employed, public participation was crucial, and people worked together to solve problems.

"I can't believe we're finally going to get our property back," sighed Janice, as the Allens stacked and loaded the debris. "We're just so thankful for everyone's help. It's hard to believe this mess has been sitting here for five years and now we're not going to have to worry about it anymore. We almost didn't even notice half of our property was occupied anymore. You just get used to it," she concluded.

Logistics are always a challenge but the group served in the spirit of this great mountain range: Working together always has a more favorable outcome. Sometimes it truly takes a village.