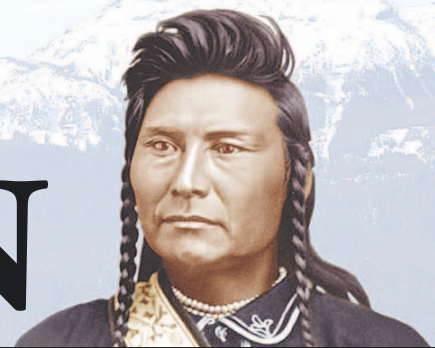


# WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



**By Steve Tool**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Phillips Creek Fire, the cause of limited visibility in Wallowa County on Monday when its size was at 1,100 acres, grew overnight and

was reported at 1,538 acres by Tuesday morning. The blaze, which started Aug. 1, is located seven miles northwest of Elgin and burning on Umatilla National Forest and state-protected private lands. As of Tuesday, the fire

was 2 percent contained with no estimated date for full containment.

The fire is being fought by an inter-agency team led by the U.S. Forest Service, which has deployed 276 personnel divided into 10 crews,

as well as two helicopters and 11 engines. Fire management agencies transitioned to a Type 2 Incident Management Team late in the day on Aug. 3.

See FIRE, Page A7

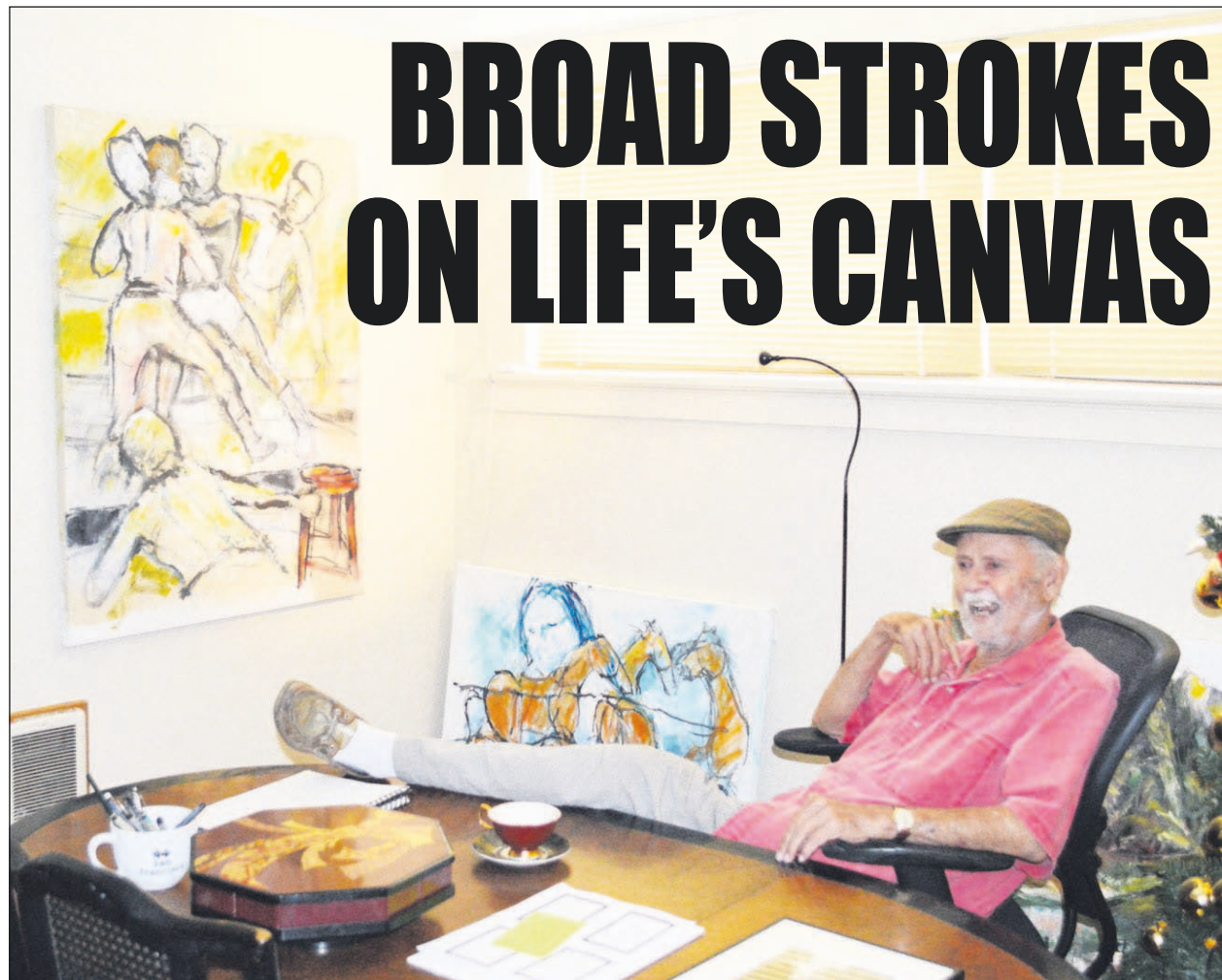


Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Two Adirondack chairs with a view through the big fir trees to Wallowa Lake and the moraines beyond await the new owners of Wallowa Lake Lodge.

# BOB FERGISON:

## BROAD STROKES ON LIFE'S CANVAS



Steve Tool/Chieftain

Bob Ferguson isn't afraid to display his sense of humor during a discussion about art in his apartment.

**By Steve Tool**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

**D**apper: adjective (typically for a man) neat and trim in dress, appearance, or bearing. Dapper is a word that easily comes to mind when you meet local artist Bob Ferguson.

In nicer weather, you can see the 82-year-old Ferguson in the vicinity of the EM&M building wearing his British flat cap at a rakish angle, generally in the company of several women and his dog, Shorty. Ferguson adores women and the feeling appears to be mutual.

In celebration of the artist's 82nd birthday, Ferguson's friend and fellow

**“ I DON'T COMPOSE PAINTINGS. I JUST START. A LOT OF CREATIVITY OCCURS ON THE CANVAS.**

Bob Ferguson

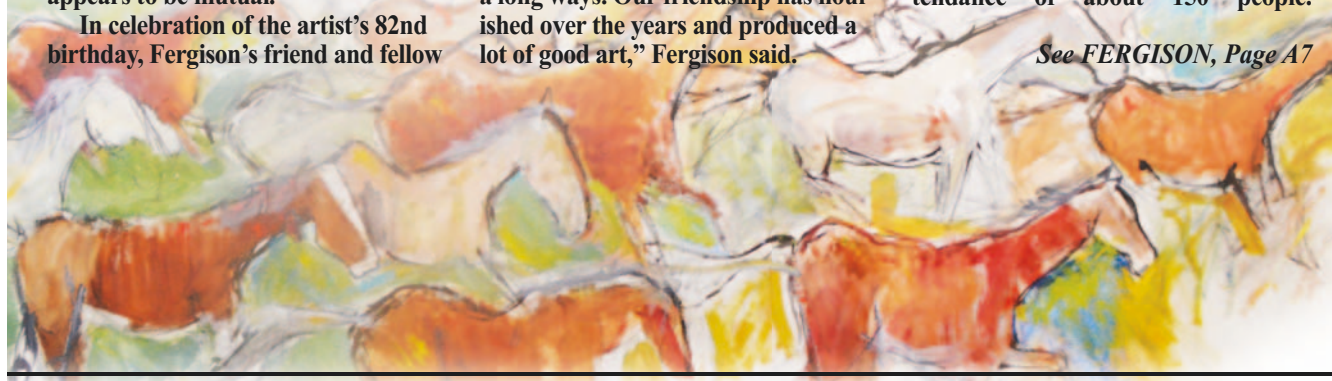
artist, Mike Koloski, with the help of the Zeise family yoga studio in Enterprise, is throwing a one-man exhibition for Ferguson at 105 E. Main Street on Aug. 7 from 4-8 p.m. and Aug. 8 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Private viewings are available by calling 206-450-1439.

Ferguson and Koloski are old friends, and the two have occasionally painted together. "Mike and I go back a long ways. Our friendship has flourished over the years and produced a lot of good art," Ferguson said.

**What: Exhibit**  
**Where: 105 E. Main, Enterprise**  
**When: Aug. 7, 4-8 p.m.**  
**Aug. 8, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.**

Ferguson hopes for more success than he had at two previous shows which had a combined attendance of about 150 people.

See FERGISON, Page A7



# Investors take lodge off market

**By Kathleen Ellyn**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Out back of the Wallowa Lake Lodge on your way to the lake sit a couple of nice Adirondack chairs just waiting for the new owners of the lodge. Take a seat.

The Wallowa Lake Lodge has been taken off the market and the new owners could be local investors who buy into the newly formed Lake Wallowa Lodge, LLC.

The group made an all-cash offer of \$2,750,000 with deposit and no contingencies last week. That offer was accepted, and the LLC now has until January 2016 to come up with the balance.

Lake Wallowa Lodge, LLC is a partnership of local investors, individuals with a love for and history with the lodge, and Eastern Oregon Legacy Lands Fund. The new LLC is spearheaded by James Monteith of Joseph.

The LLC was thrown together in fewer than 10 days when a discussion at a party at the Joseph office of Wallawology, the education arm of Eastern Oregon Legacy Lands Fund, revealed that persons with an interest in keeping the lodge in local hands were willing to actually put up money.

"It's pretty amazing what people did," Monteith said.

See LODGE:, Page A7

# For blues fest 19, jam moves

**By Steve Tool**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Music is coming to Joseph's City Park, and not just any music. This music features a dominant 7th tonality and is easily distinguishable from any other genre after hearing only a few bars. It's the blues. The 19th annual Bronze Blues and Brews Festival featuring top-notch blues music as well as cast bronzes and the finest in microbrews is slated for Aug. 7-8.

Chuck Garrett, president/director of the festival, is particularly pleased with this year's lineup and one major change. "This year, the Friday Night Jam is at City Park. The park is easiest because we don't have to move any equipment," Garrett said. He described the jam as a mini-festival with fewer beers and minus the headliner and fourth act. Local musicians can ask to play but are



Steve Tool/Chieftain

**Chuck Garrett, director of the Bronze Blues and Brews Festival, is already psyched for this year's festival, now in its 19th year.**

not guaranteed a spot. This year's acts include headliners Royal Southern Brotherhood, followed by the Sultans of Slide, Roseland Hunters, Polly O'Keary and the Rhythm Method, the duo Ben Rice and Lucy Hammond, and Franco Paletta and the Stingers.

See BLUES, Page A8

# Joseph Branch Railriders thrive in year two

**By Steve Tool**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Joseph Branch Railriders, a local business specializing in Joseph Branch Railroad tours in pedal-driven cars, is thriving in its second season at 304 N. Main St. in Joseph. JBR owners, Kim and Anita Metlen, are pleased with their success. The couple originally owned Mountainworks Bike Shop in La Grande.

"Things are going well this year. In our opening year last year, our best day was maybe 42 people, but we've expanded this year," Kim Metlen said. The business expanded in 2015, with a new journey: a 26-mile, round-trip tour from the confluence of the Minam and Wallowa rivers to the town of Wallowa. Still on offer is JBR's original journey, a 13-mile round trip from Joseph to Enterprise and back.

"We're running basically full pretty much every day. That amounts to



Steve tool/Chieftain

**Joseph Branch Railriders employees, from left, Haley Rygg and Kagan Coehn, enjoy a Saturday morning on the job, making sure the railriders are in working order.**

60-70 passengers," Metlen said. The business is also contributing to the local economy, hiring three employees

for the season.

In a show of Old West resourcefulness and ingenuity, Metlen in-

dependently designed, and with the help of Barreto Manufacturing in La Grande, built the special rail units, simply called railriders. JBR owns 18 of the vehicles.

Each tour is guided by employees. "We're there to make sure everyone gets back safely and take care of anything that happens along the way. It's like the military: We guide from the rear," Metlen said with a laugh. He added that he follows in a motorized railrider and can push a few, but not all, tour participants back if need be.

The Joseph/Enterprise trip is a two-hour journey while the Minam/Wallowa trip leaves Minam at 9 a.m., arrives in Wallowa at noon, and returns to Minam around 3 p.m.

JBR is open for business from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday through Monday and will run through the summer, shutting down operations on Oct. 1. Metlen added that he and his wife are contemplating holding a New Year's Day run.

