

Haunt Camp teaches artistic skills with career hopes

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Finishing just in time for Halloween, JR Rymut's Haunt Camp students completed their sometimes-ghoulish prosthetic masks that look more like something you'd find in a Hollywood makeup department.

Eleven students in Joseph and four in Wallowa spent six weeks learning the tricks of the trade from Rymut at the Haunt Camp: Creature Creation Workshop, sponsored by the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture. The students learned to safely create plaster copies of their faces, sculpt a character mask and transform it into realistic silicone pieces with the same techniques used in Hollywood today.

"For years I've been working on bringing this class to high school students in Wallowa County," Rymut said of the workshop as it got underway in September. "I'm so grateful it's finally happening. Molding and casting is rarely taught in art classes, and we're creating high-quality prosthetic makeup the same way special effects shops in the film industry do. And that's the point of the class: Not only are we making really unusual, exciting projects, as a professional creative fabricator I want to introduce teens to career paths in the arts they may not know exist."

Going pro?

A few of the teens actually hope to be able to use the skills they've learned professionally.

Possibly the most excited about a potential career is Tristin Witherup, of Wallowa. He already has his sights set on a top-notch special effects school in Pennsylvania.

"He's a major movie buff and this is his character sculpt," Rymut said Wednesday, Oct. 27, showing a photo of Witherup's work. "It's Jason from 'Friday the 13th,' a classic horror movie."

And he didn't just do the usual one-piece mask.

"He did a multi-piece prosthetic. . . . The top part and the chin were molded separately," Rymut said. "The more prosthetic pieces that you divide your sculpt into, the more realistic the effect. He's going to have a really dynamic mouth effect because we're going to be applying this in two different stages."

Piper Larison, of Enterprise, who attends Joseph Charter School, hopes to put her new skills to work, but it's still a maybe for her.

"I'm hoping to go into theater production, you know, plays and stuff, so I could maybe apply it to that," she said. "I'm not sure if I will need it, but it's fun."



JR Rymut/Contributed Photo

Tristin Witherup, of Wallowa, shows his character mask, which is an homage to the classic horror movie "Friday the 13th," at Haunt Camp's Creature Creation Workshop on Oct. 19, 2021, in Wallowa.

Catherine Zeigler, of Joseph, doesn't plan a career in the entertainment field. But the face she created could be found on a tree, so in a way it did connect to her chosen profession — she plans to go into forestry or wildlife biology.

"It's kind of like a tree brought to life," she said. "It'd be like something you'd see in Alice in Wonderland."

The mask Parker Siebe, of Enterprise, created came from a source one might expect from an artist.

"This came from an inspiration of a fantasy novel called 'An Ember in the Ashes,'" he said, adding that the mask portrays one of the silver-faced special forces in the novel.

"They're called the masks because of the masks they wear," he said. "I did not get the silvery tone I was hoping for, but I like it."

The future?

Rymut hopes to expand Haunt Camp to more than

just a few weeks before Halloween.

"I'm trying to get partnerships with other schools and nonprofits in order to have this program," she said.

Her goal is to provide an artistic education that translates into practical job applications, both in the arts and beyond.

"I'm hoping to run the full course, in which we would build an entire haunted house attraction for Wallowa County," she said. "Learning these skills, they are analogous skills to all sorts of industries. Even our bronze industry here is all molding and casting. So once kids learn these principals of molding and casting, they can use those skills in a bunch of positions. One very specific way to get an entertainment industry job is knowing how to make these prosthetics. Next year, I'm hoping to run an entire course, that way I can teach set design, set carpentry, scenic painting, a bunch of these other creative skills."

Tribute to veterans



Photos by Alex Wittwer/The Observer



Above, World War II veteran Dan Kramer, center, rests against a shop window to watch the Veterans Day parade in downtown La Grande on Thursday, Nov. 11, 2021. A crowd braved the rain to honor veterans as the La Grande High School marching band and several other organizations made their way down Adams Avenue. At left, military equipment and soldiers join the parade in a tribute to all veterans.

Red Cross blood drive set Nov. 16-17

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — An American Red Cross community blood drive is planned for Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 16-17, at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1802 Gekeler Lane, La Grande.

The blood drive will operate from noon to 6 p.m. Nov. 16 and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nov. 17.

Each unit of donated blood can save three lives, according to information provided by the blood drive's coordinators, Linda and Sheldon Strand.

To date 714 units have been donated locally in 2021 during four two-day drives held in January, March, June and September, up from the 643 units drawn in 2020.

In 2019, 465 units were drawn at La Grande blood drives. A unit of blood is about a pint.

One reason the donation rate is much higher than in the past is that the blood draw sessions in La Grande, all conducted at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, are now two days instead of one. The extra day was added to accom-

modate the greater number of people who want to give blood in Union County.

Most of the blood drawn at community drives stays in the region in which it was donated. However, sometimes it is sent outside the region when there are emergencies, according to the American Red Cross.

People can register for the Nov. 16-17 blood drive at www.redcrossblood.org. Walk-ins who have not preregistered will also be welcome.

For additional information call Linda Strand at 541-963-4261.

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HONORING OUR VETERANS

On Veterans Day November 11th we celebrate and honor American veterans for their patriotism, love of country and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good. Please join us in honoring those who have served our nation at all cost and given so much. On this day, we stand united in respect for you, our veterans. Thank you for your service to our country and our community.

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