

Board adopts 2015 excursion train schedule

By Rocky Wilson
Wallowa County Chieftain

Meetings of the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority board are normally well attended, but its gathering on Tuesday, Jan. 13, proved an exception.

With all eight board members being present either in person or by phone – including new board member Garrett Lowe of Wallowa, who was attending his first meeting – their efforts were monitored by an audience of five.

Possibly most significant of a handful of items addressed on the short agenda was the board's decision to accept an Eagle Cap Excursion Train schedule for the 2015 season.

Although details still remain to be tweaked, Peggy Weishaar, owner of Allegra Travel, the La Grande firm that books rides for the train, says that the endorsed schedule will include 14 regular runs, typically lasting about four hours each. What routinely is the most popular annual run for an excursion train that began operating yearly in 2004, the Mother's Day Run, again will launch the season, on May 10. Runs will continue periodically throughout the year with the final run for the season scheduled on Halloween, Oct. 31.

Janet Dodson, involved with the excursion train in varying capacities from the launch of that train service, says the overriding philosophy for the excursion train has not wavered through the years. "Our goals have remained the same," she said in a telephone interview. "We want to provide

an opportunity for anyone who wants to see the beautiful scenery along the track."

From an economic standpoint, Dodson said, "The train brings a lot of people as tourists to Union and Wallowa counties who might not otherwise come."

Attempts to fill train runs next year, as endorsed Jan. 13 by the WURA board, include a new Wine & Cheese Train Run set for Sept. 12 and five Saturday runs in October when fall colors regularly enhance the scenery.

A resolution was introduced into WURA minutes commending Marc Stauffer, a longtime member of the WURA board who stepped down from his post Jan. 1. The resolution noted that Stauffer had served on the WURA board effectively both as a representative from Union County, having previously lived in Elgin, and later from Wallowa County, where he lives in Enterprise.

Lowe was selected to replace Stauffer on the board.

An attempt to draft a right-of-way easement policy for the 63 miles of track WURA owns between Joseph and Elgin was tabled until the next meeting. The purpose behind such a policy is to better clarify issues facing a feasibility study currently underway regarding the possible addition of a recreational trail alongside the existing trails.



Lowe

'Dollars for Scholars' nets thousands for scholarships

By S.F. Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

More than 100 people crowded into Cloverleaf Hall to attend the seventh annual "Dollars for Scholars" dinner auction on Tuesday, Jan. 20. The dinner auction, jointly sponsored by the Wallowa County Agricultural Resource Foundation and the Wallowa County Stockgrowers Association, raises funds for Memorial College Scholarships, awarded to college students pursuing natural resources degrees. The WCARF also awarded its Stockgrowers Rodeo Heifer Scholarship.

The evening started with a 5:30 p.m. silent auction which featured numerous tables lining the walls and stacked with mainly ranch or western-style items. Tables on the other side of the hall featured the live auction items and contained at least two dozen homemade desserts as well as western tack, much of it hand-crafted.

Dozens of people strolled by the display tables to examine the items as the hall quickly filled with attendees, while others gathered into small groups. The murmur of voices grew in volume with anticipation as the time of the dinner and live auction drew near.

Alan Klages, WCSA president, opened the ceremonies with a short speech about the purpose of the event and thanking the audience for its attendance. Rancher Todd Nash followed with a brief invocation and short prayer before the awards portion started. Saralynn Johnson shared the microphone in a quasi-emcee role.



S.F. Tool/Chieftain

Retaining the top spot on the Wallowa County Most Unwanted Species List, this genuine (and legal) wolf pelt from Canada sold for less than \$100.

Nash delivered a Powerpoint presentation of the Rodeo Heifer scholarship, which started with one heifer awarded to a student in FFA or 4-H to start a cow-calf herd with the purpose of providing college funds. The association now awards three heifers — one bred, and two yearlings — to three students. Nash also outlined a plan for the future that will eventually involve 50 heifers.

This year saw 18 students vying for a heifer. The foundation judged applicants on an interview and outlined plan on their prospective beef herd development.

Maddi Traci of Wallowa won the bred heifer while Timothy Wells and Deidre Sch-

reiber, both of Enterprise, garnered the two yearling heifers.

Randy Garnett of Appleflat Catering served up a tri-tip dinner with all the trimmings and Dave Yost lent his auctioneering skills to the actual dinner auction which included both the desserts and tack. Several desserts went well

over the \$200 mark in bidding. The tack, extra tri-tip and a catered tri-tip dinner for 10 fared equally as well.

According to Extension Agent John Williams, the auction netted at least \$6,700. "Another great night supporting kids in Wallowa County," Williams said.

Joseph Band to return for benefit

ENTERPRISE – Making their third appearance in Wallowa County as a three-sister singing group, this time in early February, will be Portland-based Joseph Band. On Tuesday night, Feb. 3, the granddaughters of former Wallowa County resident Jo Hallam will stage a benefit concert to raise additional funds for the construction of a longhouse at the Tamkaliks grounds, in Wallowa.

Hallam, who attended the initial Tamkaliks celebration at the Wallowa school in 1990, currently sits on the Tamkaliks Board of Directors.

When Hallam lived locally, the sisters paid visits to their grandfather and, when they formed a singing group that specializes on harmonies and folk

music, decided to name their group after their grandfather, whose given name is Joseph.

The concert will come at a good time for the Wallowa Band Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center, which is in the stretch run of raising funds to finance the longhouse. According to Interpretive Center office manager Mary Hawkins, grants in the amounts of \$150,000 and \$40,000 have been secured from the Meyer Memorial Trust and Collins Fund, respectively, but an additional grant in the amount of \$125,000 from the Ford Family Foundation remains contingent on Hawkins and her organization raising about \$15,000 in community funds by March 15.

Of the local community's

matching total, Hawkins says, about \$10,500 already is in the bank. Most of that money has come through individual donations, adds Hawkins. She said additional fund-raising events could be scheduled if proceeds appear short as March 15 nears.

Native hand drummer Fred Hill, better known as the recent emcee of the Tamkaliks celebration, will provide music prior to Joseph Band Feb. 3 in the OK Theatre. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the concert will start at 7 p.m.

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BIRTHS

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and Lori and Dan Butterfield.

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Auction @ 5:30 p.m. Music by Last Call

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