

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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Court revives Ann Rule's lawsuit

Judge dismissed suit last year, saying it violated anti-SLAPP law

By Rob Ruth

Wallowa County Chieftain

True-crime author Ann Rule's defamation suit against former Chieftain editor and publisher Rick Swart has been given new life by the Washington (state) Supreme Court's May 28 decision striking down the state's anti-SLAPP law, upon which the suit's dismissal a year ago was largely based.

On Monday, June 22, a three-judge panel in Washington's Court of Appeals remanded the case to trial court for further proceedings, with instructions to vacate an earlier judgment entered against Rule.

In 2013, the author brought suit

against Swart, the Seattle Weekly, and a former Seattle Weekly editor who was with the publication at the time it ran Swart's 2011 freelance article criticizing Rule's information-gathering for her 2003 book, "Heart Full of Lies," about Liysa Northon's October 2000 killing of her then-husband, Chris Northon, at a campsite on the Lostine River.

Swart's article also complained that Rule had inaccurately portrayed Liysa Northon's character. Although Liysa Northon was convicted of manslaughter and received a 12-year prison sentence in her husband's shooting death, Swart argued the woman was really a victim of spousal abuse and the criminal justice system had failed her.

Swart, who would later marry the convicted killer, didn't tell the Seattle Weekly when he submitted his article that the pair were romantically involved.

In February 2014, a King County Superior Court judge dismissed Rule's suit, agreeing with the defense that it violated Washington's Anti-SLAPP law, which protects individuals from "Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation" — suits that essentially silence critics and penalize free speech in the public arena.

Washington enacted the law in 2010. In the recently written view of the state's high court, though, the law was fatally flawed in that it sought "to protect one group of (citizens') constitutional rights

of expression and petition — by cutting off another group's constitutional rights of petition and jury trial."

Rule is represented by attorneys Anne Bremner and James Lobsenz, both based in Seattle. Bremner said Rule's suit is important because "truth is really her badge of honor with what she does."

Lobsenz said the anti-SLAPP law had been "the only thing at issue in the appeal" of the 2014 Superior Court decision to dismiss Rule's suit, and that 2014 dismissal had been rather immediate, preventing the case from going through normal discovery. So, "now the case can go forward like a normal case," he said.

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Steve Tool/Chieftain

Wallowa Memorial Hospital Chief Executive Officer Larry Davy saw his contract renewed June 22 by the health care district's board.

Davy's contract renewed

By Steve Tool

Wallowa County Chieftain

The Wallowa County Health Care District board voted unanimously to retain the services of Wallowa Memorial Hospital Chief Executive Officer Larry Davy at its June 22 meeting. This is a renewal of Davy's previous contract.

Davy has twice been selected to serve as WMH's CEO. He started his medical career on the WMH nursing staff in the 1980s when he was fresh out of Walla Walla University, worked his way his way up to director of nursing, and became the hospital's CEO in 2001, departing for a CEO job for Adventist Health (associated with the Seventh Day Adventist church) in Tillamook in 2007. He returned to WMH in 2013.

Davy said he spent nearly 22 years of his medical career with Adventist Health between stints at Portland and Tillamook.

"I loved my time at Adventist Health, but we have kids and grandkids in this region, and it was time to be more

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JULY 22 AT CJD ARENA

RIDE, LITTLE BUCKAROO

Special needs rodeo comes to Chief Joseph Days

By Kathleen Ellyn

Wallowa County Chieftain

Jonathan Jones of Joseph is not entirely a beginner with horses. Several seniors at Joseph High School have done senior projects working with Jonathan and therapy horses. But Jonathan, 15, is a beginner at cowboying, and he's looking forward keenly to learning new skills. He competed in the Pendleton Children's Rodeo when he was 7, but he doesn't recall a lot of that. This year, he's more mature and had dozens of questions about rodeo. And, this year, he'll be able to enjoy rodeo at Chief Joseph Days, with the help of his mentor for the day, Barrie Qualle.

Thanks to Debbie Scudder of Enterprise, the Chief Joseph Days board is pleased to offer the Chief Joseph Days Little Buckaroo Rodeo, July 22 at 10 a.m. in the Harley Tucker Memorial Arena at the CJD grounds in Joseph.

Providing this special opportunity to kids with developmental disabilities is not a new idea in rodeo. Special needs rodeo began clear back in 1983 when PRC A Cowboys adopted it as a fun way to give back in their sport. Special education teachers, like Scudder, and persons interested in therapy horses have been involved in the process ever since.

"Special needs rodeo has always been an interest," Scudder said. "This year I took the bull by the horns researched how to put on a special needs rodeo and went to the rodeo board."

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Jonathan Jones, 15, of Joseph, smiles as his new friend and mentor, Barrie Qualle, drives away. The two met at the Harley Tucker Memorial Arena at the Chief Joseph Days Rodeo Grounds earlier this week and will be partnered at the Little Buckaroo event during CJD.



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Repairs begin on compound

By Kathleen Ellyn

Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — The City of Wallowa is tackling the responsibility of upkeep on the Forest Service compound it inherited through an act of Congress back in 2012. Two of three buildings in the 1.1-acre compound are slated for roof repairs, which city officials believe will cost approximately \$40,000.

City residents voted to authorize the city to begin repairs at a May 19 Town Hall meeting and the city recently announced that they had made progress in meeting the cost.

"We found a little money in the general fund," said City Recorder Carol Long. "We transferred that to the new roof fund and we'll be looking for a grant for the other \$20,000."

Volunteers to serve on the committee to oversee the repairs also stepped up at the May 19 meeting. They are: Juanita Rolan, Ron Gay, Kate Wheeler, Dennis Reinke, Megan Wilson, and Marcie Sheehy.

The transfer of the Forest Service compound to city ownership was originally undertaken to provide a historical setting for the Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center (MHIC).

Inspection of the compound, however, revealed a host of repairs necessary to bring it up to a usable condition.

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Georgia Wilson 2015 grand marshal

What's going on this holiday weekend

Wallowa resident Georgia Wilson will be honored Saturday morning as grand marshal of the community's Independence Day parade.

Wilson, who has a reputation for independently launching projects to benefit the community and seeing them through to completion, is perhaps best known for her purchase and donation years ago of a building to house the Wallowa Public Library, the library's home today. Only a few years ago, she paid to paint the building that became home of the Wallowa Resale Store.

In addition to Wilson, the July 4 parade has two other dignitaries: Little Miss 4th Kaydance Payne, daughter of Davin Payne and Kuulei Delatoro, and Mr. Liberty Gavin Schaeffer, 5, son of Travis and Angie Schaeffer.

The parade starts at 11



Chieftain file photo

This scene from a past Shake the Lake calls to mind Francis Scott Key's line about the "rockets' red glare" in the National Anthem.

a.m. from the Wallowa football field. Entrants are asked to arrive there no later than 10:30 a.m. to line up. Those who haven't registered in advance can also sign up at that time, becoming eligible for an assortment of cash prizes. Awards in the Adult Division this year are \$150, \$100, \$50 and \$30; Children's Division entries vie for prizes of \$50, \$30, \$20 and \$10. Additional-

ly, winner of the City Choice Award will receive \$200, and Community Bank awards \$50 for Most Patriotic entry.

Organizers of the annual 4th of July Co-ed Softball Tournament plan a break in the action at Kirk Jones Field, allowing players to come downtown to view the Cayle Krebs Memorial Float. Krebs, a friend to many of the players, died in a June 20 vehicle accident (see

obituary on A2).

Also on tap at Wallowa on Saturday is a barbecue the WHS cheerleaders will host at the Fire Hall immediately following the parade, FFA sales of pie by the slice, the Wallowa County Photo Club's first signing party for its 2016 calendar, and live music performed by the band No Boundaries.

Following is a brief rundown of other activities planned around the county this holiday weekend. The Wallowa County Humane Society wishes to remind everyone that pets should be kept well away from celebrations involving fireworks, which cause animals stress.

LOSTINE

The popular Lostine Flea Market returns for three days this year, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and members of the Southfork Grange will be serving a pancake breakfast all three mornings from 7 to 10:30 a.m. on the lawn by the Community Center.

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