

# FIRE: Highway open FERGISON: Artist enjoys experimenting

Continued from Page A1

The fire is burning in tall grass, brush, slash and heavy timber. Approximately 37 residences and 95 minor structures as well as fish habitat and livestock are threatened.

Union County Officials issued a Level 1 evacuation notice for about 50 residents west of Elgin on Aug. 3. Level 1 indicates residents should

be ready to immediately evacuate their homes upon notice.

Highway 204 remains open although officials urged driver caution of fire agency vehicles traversing the route. The U.S. Forest Service cited weather concerns that high winds and thunderstorms over the next several days could adversely affect fire-fighting efforts.

Cause of the fire is under investigation.

## LODGE: Group to keep building in local hands

Continued from Page A1

"We had a couple of weeks to realize we could do this and a couple of weeks to convince the owners we could do it and basically 72 hours to come up with more than a quarter of a million in cash for the deposit — and the people got it done just like that."

Owners Marc and Nancy Zwierling were impressed by the speed with which Monteith's group organized and found early investors, and by the comments of locals. The Zwierlings, who own the property along with and the estate of Steve Larson, visited the county just two weeks ago.

On that recent visit, Marc Zwierling said, the couple stopped in to see friends in the area.

"Wow," he said. "A lot of people knew about James (Monteith) and his group and were excited. While we were there, we stopped to see Duane and Jane Wiggins, who used to own the entire south side of the lake and the lodge. They'd heard about the group and they were very excited about the possibility of (the lodge) staying local."

Lake Wallowa Lodge, LLC now begins a whirlwind capital campaign to raise the remaining 90 percent of the purchase price. It's a daunting goal, but Monteith is heartened by early response.

"This may be one of the largest community efforts in the western United States to purchase this type of historic legacy property," said Monteith. "Our community has a remarkable opportunity to keep the lodge running in local hands, and also protect the open ground around the lodge and lakefront as important habitat for people, fish and wildlife at the head of the lake."

The community has been reaching out for that opportunity, Monteith said.

"We've had a lot of people offering to volunteer to help us to raise funds," he said. "One guy even called me up and was mad I hadn't called him. I'd never met him and didn't know who he was. He said, 'Well, you ought to know me because I care about the lodge.'"

That love of the lodge seems to be far-reaching, Monteith said. People who have visited the lodge, even once, seem to cherish their memories there and want to be part of this new effort to keep the lodge in the hands of locals dedicated to preserv-

ing it. So far, Monteith said, when he has asked these various individuals if they would like to buy into the LLC "no one has said no," he said. "They've all said 'I'll find a way. I want to be part of this.' That's one of the things that are so exciting — I can't believe how this place has touched people so deeply."

Those lovers of the lodge come from very diverse backgrounds and political stances that one would not expect to mix well. Which may go to show that it just takes the right idea to bring them together, Monteith suggested. Monteith compared the incongruous partnerships to what happens at Chief Joseph Days every year. "Everyone wears the Chief Joseph Days T-shirt no matter their background," he said. "They're all volunteering side-by-side. The lodge may be one of those places where diverse values merge. A common theme I've noticed when talking to people about the lodge was that it was something they could always count on. It was always there. It allows people to see the different kinds of values in a single place."

An organizational meeting for investors and volunteers was being scheduled for August.

Wallowa Title will handle the closing of the sale. Pendleton attorney Steve Corey assisted Monteith in the preparation of the purchase offer and the establishment of Lake Wallowa Lodge, LLC.

To inquire about investing or to volunteer to assist in fundraising, call James Monteith at 541-432-3044.

Continued from Page A1

Those events featured Ferguson's cooking as well as his art — a combination which hurt sales. "We didn't sell any paintings! People were too busy eating and drinking. I cooked roast beef, made my own baguettes and Biscotti. I was more interested in getting rave reviews on my pâté than on my paintings," Ferguson said.

Ferguson was born in Seattle but raised in Portland. Other than a couple of years in the Army and occasional travel, he remained in Portland, where he worked in the business world before moving to the Wallowa Valley in 1989. "I came here because I wanted to quit drinking and had pretty much succeeded, but I felt a change of scenery couldn't hurt," Ferguson said.

Although encouraged by his father to become an artist, Ferguson went to both Reed and Lewis and Clark colleges and obtained a literature degree. He eventually entered the business world, building a career as an executive in the saw chain and metals industries. "The saw chain company was very interesting work. My area was marketing/planning and training," Ferguson said.

After souring on the business world, he attended cooking school in Portland, which he called a huge mistake, although he loves to cook. "I associated fine dining with being a diner, not a chef," Ferguson said.

Shortly after cooking school, Ferguson made his way to the Wallowa Valley, where he arrived soaking wet on a Memorial Day weekend in 1989 with \$40 and a bicycle. He pedaled the bicycle to Wallowa Lake, where he spent the summer as a chef before returning to Portland — but not for long. "I looked around and realized, 'There's nothing for me,' and I came back up here. Over time, good things happened, and some really wonderful women were part of my life here. Strong, intelligent and educated women," Ferguson said.

He did not resume his career as a chef or in business, as he desired more structure in his life. He went to work for Parks Foundry in Enterprise making slurry, which he called the best job he's ever held.

At the foundry, Ferguson enjoyed interacting with a different class of people. "I



Steve Tool/Chieftain  
**The always-relaxed Bob Ferguson discusses his concept of art while sipping coffee in his bedroom, also filled with art.**

learned that guys with no advantages would sweat blood over their jobs, doing it right — it impressed me," he said.

Although the business advertising world allowed Ferguson to dabble in art, he did not embrace becoming an artist until the mid-1990s. Starting out with landscapes, Ferguson eventually graduated to female nudes before branching off into boxing and horses. Boxing, because of the synergy of more than one person being depicted as well as the energy of the sport. The horses honor his father, a devotee of legendary western artist Charlie Russell. Ferguson names artists Cy Twombly, Mark Rothko and Max Beckmann as major influences on his own work.

Depending on his mood, Ferguson uses models and does preliminary sketches for his highly original paintings. Spontaneity is also a factor. "I don't compose paintings, I just start. A lot of the creativity occurs on the canvas," he said.

Ferguson enjoys experimenting with his art. "I like using a four-inch house painter's brush. You can really model with a big brush

like that, then you can come back with details and lines," Ferguson said. He also prefers using the canvas as his palette and paints with a variety of implements including brushes, cloth, knives and even a dog's hair brush.

Borrowing a figure from a completed painting and transplanting it to another painting is another Ferguson trick. "Don't be surprised if a figure looks familiar from another painting," he said with a laugh.

Hardly the tortured artist, Ferguson enjoys interacting with the community and even headed the Wallowa Valley Arts Council for a time and was awarded "Leader in the Arts" award by the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce in 2005, an experience he relished. "Because of that, I was able to deliver a speech to over 200 people who were stuffed to the gills with prime rib. I got to say all the things I wanted to say, and I consider it a very successful speech," he said.

A quick look at Ferguson's book cases will show he appreciates other forms of art including literature and music, but he said it doesn't

influence his visual art. "I watch a lot of C-Span when I'm painting. A lot of my best work is the result of my being angry at some politician," Ferguson said.

A dedicated partier, Ferguson threw legendary parties, including one at his previous apartment that drew over 100 people. "I'm a good cook, and I like to do that, but I'm suffering from fatigue these days," he said.

Because of ill health, including two cancers and eye problems that have nearly rendered him blind, Ferguson hasn't painted in six months. "I can't do pen and ink life drawing anymore, but I have a number of paintings I can finish, even with my poor eyesight," he said.

True to his innate good nature, Ferguson isn't bitter about his health and would like to inspire others. "I'd love to do some testifying and tell people about my experience. I don't want my obit to say I struggled or fought against cancer. I own my cancer — it's part of me. I'd just like to be remembered as someone who could relax and have fun with art," he says.



M. CROW · LOSTINE, OR

### Moffit Tours

1-800-533-5222 or 541-569-2495  
moffittours@gmail.com  
P O Box 156 Lostine, OR 97857  
\*\*Since 1948\*\*

#### "Stockmen's Casino/Hotel - Elko, Nv."

4 Days & 3 Nights Sept 16 - 19 Nov 11 - 14  
\$139.00 ppdo \$164.00 single

#### "Model T Casino/Hotel - Winnemucca, Nv."

4 Days & 3 Nights Aug 12 - 15 Oct 14 - 17  
\$139.00 ppdo \$164.00 single

Pickup locations: Lostine, Elgin, Imbler, La Grande, Union, North Powder, Baker City, Ontario  
Includes: Trans, 3 Nights Lodging, 3 Breakfasts, & \$10 Gaming  
"Call for pickup schedule and reservations"  
(Must be 21 years of age)  
Non smoking and Non alcohol Luxury Coach



**Art Photography Workshop**  
A 1-day workshop with Kendrick Moholt  
Friday, August 7 from 12 to 5 p.m. Cost is \$95.  
Bring DSLR camera and camera manual (if possible).

**Refresh and Refine Photography**  
3-day workshop with Karyl Kolb  
Friday, Aug 14-16. Cost: \$125 - Limit 10 students



More details on our website:  
[www.josephy.org/classes](http://www.josephy.org/classes)  
or call 541-432-0505

Photo credit: Karyl Kolb

**Lostine Tavern**  
WALLOWA VALLEY OREGON

COME TO THE LT FOR A TASTE OF WALLOWA COUNTY FARM TO TABLE FARE: LOCAL MEATS, PRODUCE, BEER & WINE GROWLERS FILLED - 7 ROTATING TAPS

OPEN 11AM-10PM, WED-SUN  
HIGHWAY 82, LOSTINE  
541-569-2246  
STAY CONNECTED ON FACEBOOK

**OLIVIA**  
Country Music at the Fair!  
Wed. Aug. 5 at 6pm

Come join friends and family on the grass as singer Olivia performs on stage! This event is provided for your entertainment at no charge by the Wallowa County Fairboard!

Compassionate | Convenient | Confidential

The Destination for All Your Outdoor Summer Needs!

Stop in and check out our selection of sun care needs, first aid items and allergy treatment and prevention

**Give us a call today!**  
541-426-7455  
306 W. North Street, Enterprise

**Olive Branch**  
compassionate convenient confidential  
FAMILY HEALTH and PHARMACY  
Hours: 9 AM - 6 PM • Mon - Fri • 541-426-7455

**Sterilite**  
SAVE 35% or more  
**5.99**  
YOUR CHOICE  
64-Qt. Latch Storage Box  
Assorted colors. W 197 697, 698, 699, 700 F6  
While supplies last. Contents not included.

**HOT DEAL! YOUR CHOICE 2/\$5**  
18-Oz. Flying Insect Killer or 14-Oz. Wasp, Hornet & Yellow Jacket Killer  
L 174 011, 018 B12  
While supplies last.

**AUGUST BARGAINS OF THE MONTH!**

M-F 8AM-6PM • SAT 8AM-5PM • SUN 9AM-3PM

Hurricane Creek Road Enterprise, Oregon 541-426-3116

**WALLOWA COUNTY GRAIN GROWERS**  
True Value.  
START RIGHT. START HERE.  
Sale Ends 8/31/2015  
©2015 True Value Company. All rights reserved.