



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Last one in is a rotten egg! The countdown helps, as does holding hands with your neighbor so that you're in this foolishness together, but several plungers just couldn't make themselves go until they'd seen that people came out alive. The "rotten eggs" went in after the initial plunge and redeemed themselves.



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Amy Roseberry, 25, of Austin, Texas and her mother Leila Barlow, 55, of Joseph are ready for the new year after completing the 1016 Polar Plunge. "I just got my AARP Card," Leila said. "I'm celebrating that."

The COOL crowd

The courageous and the 'crazy' converge for chilling start to new year

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

The crowd mills in restless anticipation of the 10 a.m. start. The event is "unplanned" other than the start time, so no count was taken of either participants or crowd, but it was a healthy crowd — only a fraction of it is pictured here.

The shortest social event of the year took place at 10 a.m. Jan. 1, 2016 on the north end of Wallowa Lake. Hand in hand, a group of self-proclaimed "crazy people" counted down from 10 and made their rush into the freezing waters of the lake for the 9th annual Polar Bear Plunge.

It's over in a blink; the event takes about 10 minutes from the time folks drive in and strip off until they bundle up and drive away. But in that blink of time, participants leave the dregs of old unfulfilled resolutions, worries and griefs — and attachments to wayward projects — out in the lake. All left behind. Participants come out of that water beaming; refreshed and new.

"It's Wallowa County's version of the fire walk," said Karl Doss, 44, of Enterprise.

"I do it because I can," said 70-year-old Ralph Swinehart

of Enterprise. "Last year I was in the hospital with pneumonia. But I did it twice one year when a friend came five minutes late and I volunteered to do it again with him."

"It's stupid!" said Mike Ribich, 53, of Enterprise, with a grin. "Here I am being stupid."

Lauren Dodson, 28, of Portland called it "A little bit of crazy."

Nobody is disputing that. The polar plunge seems to be the moment when one realizes it's never too late to "take the plunge" and be the kind of stupid they could be (without a second thought) in their 20s. It is, in fact, an exercise that rejuvenates: Polar plungers often are over age 50 and into their

70s, and that short trip down the boat ramp appears to strip years off guys and gals alike.

We can only estimate the number of people who were stupid with Mike or "a little bit of crazy" with Lauren. There are no entry forms, nobody counts the attendance. Nothing is officially organized except the time and place.

What is known about this year's plunge is that the air temperature was around zero degrees and the lake was not iced over — making the lake warmer than the air. Veteran

plunger Rodd Ambrosion volunteered to take the temperature of the lake and waded out a few feet and put his fingers in. The dogs that had accompanied their owners to the event stopped on the boat ramp and refused to put even a toe in the water.

"Yep, it's cold," Ambrosion said.

The first "organized" plunge was made by Rich Wandschneider, Rodd Ambrosion, Beth Gibans, Jim Shelley and Mary B Fort. Mary says she's now "smarter than that," and stays home and reads about the event in The Chieftain.

But Rich, Rodd and Beth are no smarter than they were in 2007 and continue to demonstrate more guts than brains — along with dozens of other folks.

Wallowa BUSINESS
Serving 892 entrepreneurs creating new jobs since 2001

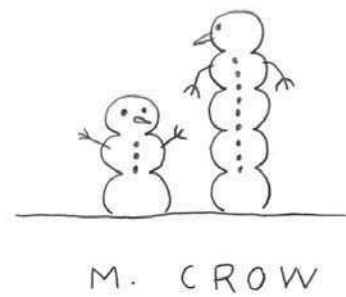
Now Supporting Free and Confidential Business Counseling & Services of
Wallowa County Small Business Development Center

Marc Stauffer, Small Business Advisor

To begin your free and confidential business consultation call Marc at 541-398-2393



Wallowa Business is the new name of Wallowa County Business Facilitation




STILL RUNNING OUT TO FETCH THE PAPER?

6 months **\$26.00**
1 year* **\$40.00**
1 year, online **\$40.00**

Subscribe Today!

541-426-4567 • wallowa.com

* \$40.00 is the in county price, \$57.00 for out of county subscribers.

The **Wallowa County Chieftain**

Fleece Lined Leggings Restocked!

\$12 each,
One size fits most

Last chance this season!

Open Daily 10 am - 5 pm



Uptown Clothing & Accessories
in Downtown Joseph
12 S. Main St. • 541-432-9653

MAN STREET Motors


Old Fashioned Values Sales & Services
541-426-2100
311 West Main St., Enterprise

FEATURED INVENTORY


- 2012 Chevrolet Equinox LTZ \$21,500**
Stock # 10408 • 56,949 MI. • AWD, A/C, PW, PS
- 2000 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 CALL FOR PRICE**
Stock # 10331B • 187,714 MI. • 4WD, A/C, PW, PS
- 2007 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 Hvy Duty \$24,885**
Stock # 10402 • 96,225 MI. • 4WD, A/C, PW, PS
- 2011 Chrysler 300C \$23,999**
Stock # 10207 • 27,721 MI. • RWD, Sporty Handling
- 2007 Dodge Nitro SXT \$10,987**
Stock # 10350E • 68,984 MI. • AWD, A/C, PW, PS
- 2008 Dodge Ram 1500 ST \$12,985**
Stock # 10353 • 79,039 MI. • 4WD, A/C, PS
- 2012 Dodge Ram 2500 Laramie \$35,999**
Stock # 10377 • 49,190 MI. • 4WD, A/C, PW, PS
- 2008 Dodge Ram 3500 SLT \$26,999**
Stock # 10351A • 138,829 MI. • 4WD, A/C, PW, PS
- 2009 Ford Explorer Eddie Bauer \$12,799**
Stock # 10274A • 125,774 MI. • AWD, A/C, PW, PS
- 2001 Ford F150 Supercrew \$8,485**
Stock # 10398A • XLT, 4x4, 4WD, A/C, PW, PS
- 2015 Ford F150 Supercrew \$36,899**
Stock # 10413 • 7,881 MI. • 5.0 V8, 4x4, Heated Seats
- 2013 Ford F350 Super Duty \$51,750**
Stock # 10394A • 25,543 MI. • 4WD, A/C, PW, PS Crew, Diesel, Loaded Lariat
- 2009 Ford Flex SEL \$17,885**
Stock # 10409A • 85,986 MI. • AWD, A/C, ABS, PW
- 2014 GMC Yukon XL 1500 SIT \$41,999**
Stock # 10218A • 35,548 MI. • 4WD, A/C, PW, PS
- 2010 Volkswagen Touareg TDI \$20,885**
Stock # 10411A • 82,311 MI. • AWD, AC, PS, PW
- 1999 Barrett 3 Slant Pull Horse/Stock Trailer \$6,900** Stock # 10406
- 2003 Eagle Cap 8 1/2' Camper \$9,500**
Stock # 10387
- 2000 FORD RANGER SUPER CAB \$6,188**
Stock # 10396B • 176,251 MI. • 4WD, A/C, PS
- 2014 GMC YUKON XL 1500 SLT \$41,999**
Stock # 10218A • 32,548 MI. • 4WD, A/C, PW, PS, Pwr Locks
- 2013 Volkswagen CC SPORT CALL FOR PRICE**
Stock # 10412 • 60,094 MI. • FWD, A/C, PW, PS
- 1999 Ford WINDSTAR LX \$2,350**
Stock # 10320 • 182,362 MI.
FWD, A/C, PW, PS, AM/FM Pwr Locks
- 1994 LINCOLN MARK VIII \$1,950**
Stock # 10281 • 161,802 MI.
FWD, A/C, PW, PS, Pwr Locks
- 1967 OLDSMOBILE VISTA CRUISER STATION WAGON \$5,900** Stock # 10389 • 73,524 MI. • RWD
- 1965 OLDSMOBILE CUTLASS F-85 \$16,900** Stock # 10382 • 60,882 MI. • RWD
- 2009 GMC ME6500 C7D064 \$73,885** • Stock # 10394A • 119,076 MI. • RWD, Low Miles, Non-Smoker, Powerful Strong Running Engine, Mechanically Sound, Clean Exterior, Clean Interior
- 1984 FREIGHTLINER M120V BUSINESS CLASS \$7,999** • Stock # 10234
RWD, Good rubber, 40' hd boom, diesel powered truck.
- 2010 HARLEY DAVIDSON FLHTC ELECTRA GLIDE CLASSIC \$15,489**
Stock # 10347 • 10,910 MI.

MORE INVENTORY IN STOCK
main-street-motors.com

GIVE US A CALL!
541-426-2100



BENNETT INSURANCE AGENCY
Locally owned & operated.



Kathleen Bennett
Bennett Insurance Agency LLC

In October 2004, Leroy and I had the opportunity of our lives. With a hug and a handshake we purchased Stenkamp Insurance Agency from Vette Stenkamp and we never looked back. 11 years later, I find myself the sole partner in Bennett Insurance Agency, but looking to the future. Wallowa County is my home and I plan to stay right here making sure, with the help of a fantastic staff, that all of your insurance needs are taken care of.

Bennett Insurance is open and ready for business. Bring us your insurance policies. Give us a chance to quote them with no obligation. The beginning of the new year is the perfect time to take another look.

Kathleen invites you to give her a call at 541-426-4208 or stop by the office at **Bennett Insurance Agency, 616 W. North Street**

