

# Behold the ravenous goshawk



E.H. Van Blaricom

Goshawks come down from the northern forests in the winter to feed.

I have here a photo of a female Goshawk. Goshawks are the largest of the accipiters. The other two are Coopers hawks and Sharp-shinned hawks. These three species of hawks fly extremely fast when pursuing their prey, which are mostly birds. I have watched Sharp-shinned hawks catch Mourning Doves right out of the air even though they are both about the same size. The Coopers hawks are the most common here in this part of Oregon and they feed almost entirely on song birds, but they won't pass up a chipmunk.

But the Northern Goshawk is fairly rare and they tend to prey on larger birds such as grouse, chukkers and quail. I have seen goshawks in winter where they would just about wipe out every ruffed grouse along a brushy canyon. The females are somewhat larger than the males but the males are very helpful in feeding the chicks. Their nests are always quite high in an evergreen tree and are difficult to see from the ground. They tend to have four chicks in their nests and they have gluttonous appetites.

The parents have to hunt continuously to bring in game birds, cottontail rabbits and squirrels. Like all hawks, their keen eyesight allows them to spot even the most camouflaged prey. They tend to live in the northern forests but we will see more of them in winter when they migrate down where there are more birds and small game.

The ones I see in winter are usually perched at the very top of an evergreen tree where they can watch for their next meal. When I was a teenager I hated Coopers hawks and Goshawks because they would kill and eat my pet pigeons.

# The pleasantry, the beauty of this county

Barrie Qualle  
For The Chieftain



Upon meeting people here in Wallowa County I often ask how they came to live here. I am continually surprised at how often the answer is something like: "My great-grandfather walked in here from Kentucky in 1878." There are a great number of people descended from pioneer families living in this county.

Others, like myself, stumbled on this oasis accidentally. In my case, I was summering steers in Saskatchewan, where I lived until 1953, and after checking the cattle in June I was returning to my home in California. I left the ranch in Saskatchewan and drove to Lewiston and spent the night.

The next day I looked at a map and saw a road that ran south that I had never been on. Not being encumbered with my wife, who hates shortcuts I sometimes take, I took it and after the horror of Rattlesnake Grade I discovered the most beautiful place I had ever seen. Being June, all the creeks were full, the grass was green and

there was still snow on the Wallows. The country sure had its Sunday clothes on. I pulled over near the Top Hand Cafe and just looked. I remember thinking that I had been to all the pretty places west of the Mississippi and this topped all of them. It reminded me of Gardnerville, Nev., in the 1950s before it filled up with people, or Jackson Hole, Wyo., when it was the size of Enterprise.

It was always in the back of my mind to somehow live here.

It took 10 more years to accomplish the feat and come up with the wherewithal to make it work. At one time there was no better place than California, but that was no longer the case — too many rats in the cage. It was not just the uncrowded beauty of Wallowa County; I was to discover many other reasons to love living here.

Visit the Social Security Office in Modesto, Calif., NS you will go to the counter and get ticket number 256 as they

are serving number 34. At the same office in La Grande I was told by the guard I had to get a ticket prior to being served. I wondered why, if I was the only one there, that I needed a ticket. I got one and was promptly served by a pleasant civil servant. Last week I renewed my tags for one of the vehicles at the local DMV and was again at the front of the line and had a pleasant visit with the girl working there.

Contrast this to the last time I got my drivers license renewed in California. I trapped my brother into going with me for company.

There was a serpentine line at all the windows and after a 30-minute wait I got the test to take. I answered all the questions and had another 40-minute line to get it graded by a cranky clerk. I passed, and then got in the 40-minute line to have my picture taken.

My brother's mood had deteriorated to the point that I wished I had left him at home.

We were 15 minutes from the camera when I decided to enjoy some bladder relief. I handed brother Bill my papers and told him to hold the place in line while I went to find el baño.

The line at the men's room wasn't that long and I headed back to get back in the photo line. My brother intercepted me on the way and said "let's go."

Apparently the line had sped up and for six years I had my brothers picture on my drivers license.

Since he was younger and better looking than me I was OK with it. I also noticed that cops don't really look at driver's license pictures.

Columnist Barrie Qualle is a working cowboy in Wallowa County.

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**Thursday, January 21**  
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**THE BIG READ**  
2016 Schedule of Events

**Thursday, January 21**  
**KICK-OFF—w/ Amos Tappan Wilder,**  
Thornton Wilder's nephew and literary executor  
Hurricane Creek Grange Hall  
7pm, Free admission plus PIE!

**Thursday, January 28**  
**FILM—OT: Our Town**  
Three locations—Wallowa City Hall,  
Fishtrap in Enterprise,  
Joseph Center in Joseph  
7pm, Free admission all locations

**Thursday, January 4**  
**PANEL DISCUSSION—When the Bridge Breaks: What Then?**  
Joseph United Methodist Church  
7pm, Free admission

**February 12, 13, 14 & 19, 20, 21**  
**Our Town Reader's Theatre**  
Various locations (see [FISHTRAP.ORG](http://FISHTRAP.ORG))

**Sunday, February 28**  
**FINALE—Our Towns**  
Potluck and short films by Wallowa County Students  
Enterprise HS Multi-Purpose Room  
5pm, Free admission

The Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest

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