

YEAR

Continued from Page A1

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife officers killed four wolves in the Imnaha pack that had made a habit of preying on livestock.

That cull was ordered just after Governor Kate Brown signed a bill affirming ODFW's decision to remove wolves from the state endangered species list.

The state bill didn't change much — gray wolves are still on the federal Endangered Species List in much of Oregon — but it was perhaps an important symbolic step. In Wallowa County, seven years after the first reintroduced wolf set foot on our soil, their numbers have recovered to sustainable levels, at least in the state's eyes.

3. WALLOWA AVALANCHE CENTER DIRECTOR KIP RAND DIES IN AVALANCHE

Kip Rand, director of the Wallowa Valley Avalanche Center, died March 8 after a steep fall and avalanche on Mt. Joseph.

Rand was just 29 years old, yet had made an outsized mark on the backcountry ski community. He grew up in Boise and had been director at the center for only a few months before the accident. Board members said he was on his way to giving the center a stronger sense of direction and toward sustainability when the freak avalanche occurred. As we reported in today's paper, the director position was vacant until just this week, and looks to recapture the direction Rand had set them on.

Rand's death was a reminder of the dangers of backcountry activities, especially in the wilds of a Wallowa County winter.

4. ENTERPRISE GETS POLICE CHIEF

It took awhile, but Enterprise found Joel Fish and Joel Fish found Enterprise.

Fish took over as police chief for the city in May, helming a department that had been

through a long, rough patch. Former police chief Wes Kilgore resigned in March 2015, and the department was slammed by an Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police report later that year. That report said Enterprise PD had "a protracted history of accepting mediocrity" and a "lack of ethics."

It showed in the department, which had a hard time filling positions — none harder than the chief spot.

Stops and starts in a nationwide search left the job open for a full year until Fish was found 3,000 miles away in Hickory, North Carolina.

The department's staffing levels have since improved, as well as its relationship with the community. Fish made a good impression off the bat, and in his seven months on the job has helped return continuity and professionalism to the department.

5. INAUGURAL DRAGON BOATS RACES

Wallowa Lake seems to have everything.

But there was always something missing: Dragons.

2016 took care of that, however, with the inaugural 7 Wonders Cup dragon boat races held on the lake in August. A dozen teams took part, including a ragtag band of locals that held their own against visiting crews from Portland. The event brought in hundreds of competitors, along with their supporters. Few visitors left without wanting to return, both to row and to vacation. Photos from the event are stunning, and aesthetically pleasing. Wallowa Lake is perhaps the perfect venue for the aesthetically pleasing boats. Maybe a new tradition was born, one that will continue to expand the tourism season from the Fourth of July.

6. COMMISSIONER MIKE HAYWARD STEPS DOWN

Changes are rare at the top of Wallowa County government. But a major one took place in 2016.

Chairman Mike Hayward decided in December 2015 to step down after 19 years as a Wallowa County Commission-

er, leaving to become general manager at Wallowa County Grain Growers.

Hayward was first elected to the board of commissioners in 1997 and became the board chair after only a few years of service. He was the guiding force on the board for much of his political career.

His position was filled, on an interim basis through much of 2016, by John Lawrence. In the May election, Todd Nash was chosen to be Hayward's full-time replacement, winning by a large enough margin not to require a November run-off. Nash, a local rancher, takes office next month.

7. JOSEPH SETS BAN ON SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS

Back in February, Joseph City Council voted narrowly to ban short-term vacation rentals within the city's residential zones.

It was a controversial 4-3 vote, and it may shape the city for years to come.

Such unauthorized but not illegal vacation rentals were popping up in Joseph's residential areas — some were causing problems and some were good examples of entrepreneurship. But more homeowners had begun to inquire about creating such vacation rentals, and city council decided to study and then take action on the matter.

Some saw the ban as government cracking down on free enterprise, while others saw it as a necessary protection to keep the Joseph community intact.

In in-demand parts of Oregon and in tourist destinations around the world, short-term rentals can be lucrative for homeowners. But perhaps too lucrative — often they price out many working class people from renting space and purchasing properties.

The issue is likely to be discussed in the future in Joseph, but for now the ban is in place.

8. BRETT BRUGGEMAN REPEATS AS EAGLE CAP EXTREME SLED DOG RACE WINNER

They say staying on top is

harder than getting there. Not so in 2016 for Brett Bruggeman.

Back in January, the Montana musher led the Eagle Cap Extreme 200-mile race from start to finish — taking the title for the second year in a row.

Bruggeman completed the course in 32 hours and 24 minutes, more than 2.5 hours faster than his nearest competitor. He then donated his \$1,700 first-place award to the event's trail crew and revealed that when his wife had asked him earlier where he wanted to retire, he said "Joseph, Oregon."

One thing he's not ready to retire: the Eagle Cap Extreme title.

9. LOSTINE TAVERN CLOSSES

One of Wallowa County's iconic gathering spots, an experimental restaurant in Lostine, closed in March.

The Lostine Tavern, owned by Peter Ferré and Lisa Armstrong-Roepke, had received rave reviews after it reopened, partly due to the crowd-funding organization ChangeFunder. Through that website, more than \$27,000 was raised to help remodel the 1902 building that was first home to a pharmacy and doctors office. It has been a tavern since 1940.

The restaurant opened as the first farm-to-table eating establishment in Eastern Oregon. It was an example of how agri-tourism, in particular culinary tourism, could be conducted in rural locations. In addition to featuring local produce, meats and spirits, the business attracted top chefs. It employed approximately 10 people during the winter and 15 during the high seasons months.

10. MAJOR RAILS TO TRAILS PLAN GETS GO AHEAD

In February, the Wallowa Union Rail Authority gave the green light to start the first stage of a planned \$20 million, 63-mile paved trail from Joseph to Elgin.

The first six-mile pilot segment, from Joseph to Enterprise, is the southernmost part of the planned trail. It is expected to cost \$2 million. Many decisions still must be made about the exact route and where bikers and walkers will access it, but the long-discussed ball is now officially in motion.

Numerous individuals and organizations — led by the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority and Joseph Branch Trail Consortium — spent 2016 working out details and legalese. Construction is expected to start in 2017.

It's an important first step to what would become a defining feature of the county, once and if it gets completed.

HONORABLE MENTION:

Hometown boy wins Chief Joseph Days bull riding competition

Longtime Enterprise schools superintendent Brad Royse retires; Erika Pinkerton hired to replace him

Joseph girls win 1A track title

Pendleton man drowns in Wallowa Lake
Joseph Charter School launches aviation program

Chief Joseph Days shatters ticket sales record

Wallowa gets lights for football field

DICKENS

Continued from Page A4

The merits of a broken speculation, or a bankruptcy, or of a successful scoundrel, are not gauged by its or his observations of the golden rule, 'Do as you would be done by,' but are considered with reference to their smartness..."

"The following dialogue I have held a hundred times," Dickens continued. "Is it not a very disgraceful circumstance that such a man as So-and-so should be acquiring a large property by the most infamous and odious means, and, notwithstanding all the crimes of which he has been guilty, should be tolerated and abetted by your citizens? He is a public nuisance, is he not?"

"Yes, sir."
"A convicted liar?"
"Yes, sir."
"And he is utterly dishonorable, debased, and profligate?"
"Yes, sir."

"In the name of wonder then, what is his merit?"

"Well, sir, he is a smart man."

Perhaps I am just acutely sensitive these days to the word "smart" after having heard our president-elect make the self-congratulatory claim to that attribute on the basis of his avoidance of federal income taxes, but I cannot help but find current relevance in Charles Dickens' words of wisdom regarding the merits and foibles of our national character.

John McColgan writes from his home in Joseph.

SAVE ON HOME BASICS AND POWER TOOLS



SAVE 40% or more
\$5.99
18-in. x 30-in. Floor Saver II Mat
W 321 372 B10
White supplies last. Boots not included.



SAVE 25% or more
\$199
M18 Compact Brushless Drill/Impact Combo Kit
R 212 364 3. White supplies last.

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 12/31/2016

Wallowa County HEALTH LINE



519 W. North Street, Enterprise
541.426.3413
Mon-Thurs 9 to Noon/1-5pm; Fri. 9-1



Keycode Entry
Weight Room • Cardio
Women's Circuit • Tanning
202 W. Main, Enterprise
541-426-0313



Specializing in Anti-Aging Skin Therapy
Customized Facials
Waxing Services, Brow Sculpting
Body Polish-Back Facials
High-Performance Products
541-398-0759 | Located @ beecrowbee 01 Main Joseph



758 NW 1st Street, Enterprise, OR
(541) 426-4848

We offer services to all ages and income levels including: WIC, family planning, immunizations, flu shots, restaurant and hotel licensing, community tobacco prevention and education, chronic disease prevention. We provide equal opportunity programs.

New Year's Eve Wallowa Lake Lodge!

Hors d'oeuvres, Party Food, Libations & Live Music!

Jimmy Bivens and Friends
9:00 pm to 12:30 am

\$20
at the door
Cash Bar

Lodge rooms available for New Year's night.

HAPPY NEW YEARS

from all of us at Carpet One



800 S. River St. • Enterprise, OR
9am-5:30pm Monday-Friday
9am-noon Saturdays
541-426-9228



Beautiful. Made Affordable.