

Two step down from county posts

By Steve Tool

Wallowa County Chieftain

In the final days of 2016, two long-time Wallowa County employees stepped down from their posts: County assessor Gay Fregulia and interim county commissioner John Lawrence.

John Lawrence had already retired from Wallowa County's juvenile department when he found himself volunteering for the commissioner position in January 2016, after the sudden resignation of former lead commissioner Mike Hayward. The commissioners appointed Lawrence to the post in February.

"I worked here 15 years, pretty closely with the com-

missioners, and I thought I knew everything they were responsible for and what they did. For some reason they decided I'd be a good person to appoint," Lawrence said.

Despite all that experience, Lawrence was surprised by how much work the commissioners do.

"It was an eye opener. I thought I knew everything the commissioners were responsible for, but they're responsible for so much more," he said.

Balancing the budget proved a challenge.

"When your revenue is (increasing) three percent and your costs are (increasing) four percent and other things pop up — and you don't have the

funds to cover it, it can be frustrating," he said. Still, Lawrence revealed in the experience.

"I think the biggest accomplishment of the last year was obtaining the funds to get the roof on the courthouse completed. It was a high priority topic for a number of years," he said.

Lawrence also mentioned his efforts to reverse rising costs at the county landfill, which proved a challenge because it involved a fee hike.

"That was a big challenge, and I'm not sure it's a com-



Fregulia



Lawrence

plete answer yet, but it was something that needed to be done," he said.

Lawrence is looking forward to his retirement, which will really begin after his wife Karen retires from teaching English at the Wallowa School District this spring.

"Until then, I'm chief cook and bottle washer," he said with a laugh.

Todd Nash, who also won election to the post in the May primaries is succeeding Lawrence.

"The citizens of Wallowa

County elected a very qualified person to assume the position," Lawrence said. "He's very comfortable in natural resources ... I think he'll do an excellent job."

Fregulia started her assessor post in 1999 after working in the office for several years.

"The assessor at the time left Wallowa County for Deschutes County and the position was offered to me as an appointment, which I accepted. I ran in the subsequent year," she said.

Fregulia said the years in her office proved a blessing.

"I enjoyed my time here very much," she said. "There's always something new; it changes every day, even though you wouldn't

think it would, but it does."

Of course, the job had its challenges as well. There were a constant parade of new laws, the chief offender being Measure 50 in 1997, which limited property tax increases.

"It's still a challenge, and it has been almost 20 years since that came along," she said.

Fregulia isn't sure what she plans to do with her spare time when she retires, although one thing she isn't planning to do is hit the road.

"I really like Wallowa County — I don't need to travel," she said.

Randy Wortman, who ran unopposed and won the assessor's slot in May 2016, is succeeding Fregulia.

Fire damages Lostine home

By Tim Trainor

Wallowa County Chieftain

An early-morning fire Friday in Lostine damaged a home on Warnock Lane.

Both Lostine and Wallowa rural fire districts responded to the blaze in the 68000 block of Warnock. Upon arrival, Lostine fire chief Dusty Tippet said firefighters found a single-family home with a roofline and crawl space fully engulfed in flame.

The two people who live there were safely out of the home and there were no injuries.

Tippet said it appeared to be an electrical fire that started in the walls of the house. Crews cut a hole in the building and sent a lot of water inside, but Tippet said the home was saved and remains standing.

Red Cross responders arrived about 10 a.m. and helped provide temporary housing for the couple.



Contributed photo

Community Bank staff and Connie Guentert, Wallowa County Community Connection Manager, celebrate a rush of donations that helped area food banks serve the needy during the holidays.

County food banks in good shape this winter

By Tim Trainor

Wallowa County Chieftain

In September, the Oregon Food Bank announced warehouse supplies were growing thin, and that it could face a statewide food shortage this winter.

Community Connection food bank coordinator Lisa Hollingsworth said food banks in Wallowa County were preparing for the worst, but local business and individuals came to the rescue.

Winter is the busiest time of year for most food banks in the area. In the summer, Wallowa County banks served 50-100 families each month. In the winter — because of the demands of the holidays, energy costs and seasonal employment — Hollingsworth said those numbers often double.

To help deal with the increase, Wallowa County food banks have received record amounts of both monetary and food donations, according to Hollingsworth.

"The rise in donations is really great," she said. "So many more organizations stepped up to help then we're used to."

Just to name a few of the donors and events that have raised funds for the food bank, here are just some examples of support from our local area:

- The Community Bank Food Bank Drive netted \$7,827 between Joseph and Enterprise branches

- Stangel Industries raised more than 600 pounds of food and \$800 from their Annual Christmas Party

- U.S. Forest Service employee food drive in Joseph netted more than 190 pounds of

food, and came with a promise of one brave employee to jump into the freezing waters of Wallowa Lake

- Joseph Hardware raised \$1,937 in donation funds from their Men's Night Out event

- Don Ward Trucking donated \$200

- Wallowa High School collected 255 pounds of food and, just to show the older kids how it's done, the elementary school delivered 385 pounds two weeks later

- The Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness raised more than \$180 in cash donations and 67 pounds of food

- The Methodist Church in Joseph collected 82 pounds of food and donated \$40 in December alone

- Eastern Star donated 107 pounds of food

- Wheatland Insurance collected 114 pounds of food

- North End Grange donated \$100 to the Food Bank

- Alpine Chiropractic and Affordable Integral Medicare donated \$200

- Individuals donated \$565

"Places in Wallowa County" exhibit opens

Josephy Center show will feature all new art

The Wallowa County Chieftain

The Josephy Center for Arts and Culture will ring in the New Year with a new exhibit: "Places in Wallowa County."

The show opens Friday and will run through Feb. 27.

The idea of celebrating the place where we live originated with local painter Mike Koloski, and will feature a variety of places — from farm to forest, home to business.

"This is a unique opportunity to showcase not just landscapes, but other scenes that make Wallowa County special," said Casey Holmes, JCAC's resource coordinator. "Thousands of tourists come through here and many of them only experience a glimpse of what we see every day. And many who live here walk or drive by not noticing what the photographer, painter, or sculptor sees as something special."

Several local artists, including Ellen Bishop, Rick Bombaci, and David Martin, have submitted artwork for the show, which will be juried by Tim Norman, Vice President of the JCAC Board of Directors.

An opening reception will be Jan. 6 at 7 p.m.

"We will only be showing artwork that has not been displayed here previously," Holmes pointed out. "So for us, it will be an entirely new, fresh look at Wallowa County."

As with all Josephy Center shows, this one will be accompanied by Brown Bag programs and workshops. On Tuesday, Jan. 10, the noon Brown Bag will celebrate the work of historian Grace Bartlett. Bartlett was the original curator at the Wallowa County History Museum and wrote several articles and two books about the county from the

1930s to the 1990s.

The Josephy Center is also coordinating Saturday morning workshops for January and February. Prospective guest speakers include Geologist Ellen Bishop, who will explore "local rocks" and visitors are invited to bring their own rocks for discussion. David Wheeler will address early

Wallowa County photography; visitors are also encouraged to bring old photos for this event. Finally, Rich Wandschneider invites you to bring any Wallowa County story you might want to turn into a poem, essay, or video story. Times and places for these workshops will be announced in the coming weeks.

Tenth Annual Digital PHOTO Contest



Who can enter?

All amateur photographers who live in Wallowa County either full-time or part-time, or who have ever vacationed in Wallowa County, are eligible. Exceptions: Members of the Wallowa Valley Photo Club, the staff of the Chieftain, and their immediate families may not submit entries. "Immediate family" includes only spouses, parents, and children.

Public display of photos: All submitted photos will be displayed on the Chieftain's web site as they are received. After judging, winning photos will be featured on the Chieftain's web site, and as many winning and non-winning photos as space allows will be featured in the Chieftain's print edition. Selected winning and non-winning photos may also appear in a single issue of the Wallowa Valley Photo Club's monthly newsletter and on the Photo Club's web site in the context of informing members of the Photo Club about the contest.

Awards: There will be two categories of awards.

1. The People's Choice awards for the most popular submitted photos, with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places in each division. Everyone can vote by browsing to the Chieftain's contest web page and choosing their favorite Student Division photo and their favorite Adult Division photo. Prizes are \$40, \$20, and \$10, plus certificates.

2. Overall best photos, with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places in each of the two divisions as determined by the judges. Prizes are \$40, \$20, and \$10, plus certificates. Honorable Mentions may be awarded at the discretion of the judges. Prizes for honorable mentions will be certificates.

The Wallowa Valley Photo Club is solely responsible for all awards.

Deadline: Submissions to the contest may be made beginning Sunday, January 1, 2017 and will be accepted through **Saturday, January 21, 2017**. Voting for the People's Choice award is from Sunday, January 22, 2017 through Sunday, February 5, 2017. Winners will be announced in the Wednesday, February 15, 2017 issue of the Chieftain.

Submissions: All submissions must be digital — prints and slides are not accepted. However, prints and slides may be scanned and digital copies submitted.

- Digital photos may be submitted via the Chieftain's online submission form or emailed to **PhotoWallowa@gmail.com**. CDs may also be dropped off at the Chieftain (209 NW 1st, Enterprise, Oregon).

Complete List of Rules: Please see the website for a complete list of the contest rules at **www.wallowa.com/photocontest**

Births

A daughter, **Lola Rae Bohnsack** was born December 20, 2016 in Enterprise to Veronica Warnock and Jesse Bohnsack of La Grande. Grandparents are Michele Story, William Warnock, and Chris and Jim Bohnsack.

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