

# Are ‘Get out of jail free’ cards a budget solution?

The Wallowa County Sheriff’s Department has begun releasing lesser bad guys on their own recognizance rather than processing them into Umatilla County Jail.

It’s a budget-saving measure. We don’t know a lot more than that because county officials are still in the denial phase. It’s still being discussed, money may still be restored to the budget and the practice may end, the budget isn’t set yet, we really don’t know any more, it’s not a story. It’s become a familiar refrain.

**EDITORIAL**  
*Voice of the Chieftain*

Regardless, this step marks a notable change in policy by the sheriff’s department, and we believe readers should be aware of it and have the opportunity to weigh in.

Anecdotally, several individuals in the community have expressed a degree of shock over the move.

According to figures The Chieftain obtained from Umatilla County, which holds Wallowa County’s contract for jail services, \$40,300 has been spent thus far into the fiscal year. Since the contract began in March 2016, a total of \$62,500 has been spent.

Sources there say 235 individuals have been processed through their facility on behalf of Wallowa County so far in the 2016-17 fiscal year. The numbers reached a high of 30 in both May and July 2016.

Everyone understands money being short. Counties particularly seem to have taken the brunt of shortfalls with little help forthcoming from state coffers for beleaguered general funds. That’s the hand that has been dealt.

The missing piece of the puzzle here is do the taxpayers of Wallowa County want scofflaws deemed to be “no threat” to the public to be walking around rather than cooling their heels in jail?

The answer may well be “yes, by all means,” but to this point, no taxpayer we are aware of has been asked. The issue appears to be a rather punitive “we’ll show you” sort of measure. “No new taxes you say ... fine. We’ll let accused criminals walk.”

The numbers have gone up over the past 17 months because of crackdowns on drugs and other violations. That apparently was at the behest of taxpayers with concerns about crime. Are taxpayers OK with the a more lax approach to drugs simply because dealing with the financial aftermath is denting the county budget?

They may be. Perhaps the message is “yes, crack down on crime, but don’t get into red ink doing it.”

And that’s a legitimate response, but who decided that’s what taxpayers wanted? The supposition here is that because taxpayers didn’t storm the Bastille when the policy was changed, everyone is fine with it.

Well, are you?

The county has just a couple weeks remaining before it finalizes a budget. It’s unknown at this point whether funding will be restored for the sheriff to continue the previous jail policy.

If you are someone concerned about this, let your voice be heard.

# Opioids for the masses: Painkillers causing their own brand of hurt

The headlines are everywhere. “The Killer Among Us.” “Inside a Killer Drug Epidemic.” “The Opioid Menace!”

Go behind the dramatic headlines and you will find that America does have a major problem with opioids. Opioids are a class of drugs related chemically to opium and include medications such as Hydrocodone (Vicodin), Oxycodone (OxyContin), Methadone and Fentanyl.

They are used for acute pain, such as that experienced after a traumatic injury or surgery but also used for chronic pain, which has lasted more than three months.

The use of opioids is wide-spread. Perhaps this is because as many as 1 in 5 American’s suffer from chronic pain. But still, the numbers are staggering.

In 2015, 26.2 percent, more than 1 in 4, of all Oregonians filled a prescription for a legally prescribed opioid drug. Since that time, the number of people receiving prescriptions has gone down to 20.8 percent, 1 in 5.

Wallowa County’s use is slightly below average, with 19.3 percent of the population filling opioid prescriptions in 2017. The rate in neighboring Union County was at 27.4 percent.

However the use of these pain medications has not been without cost. Opioid-involved deaths continue to increase in the United States.

Since 1999, the number of overdose deaths involving opioids has quadrupled. Currently 91 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose, according to the Centers for Disease Control. There are a number of other significant risks related to the use of opioids.

Patients taking prescription opioids can become addicted. Up to 1 out of 4 people receiving long-term opioid



**GUEST COLUMN**  
*Stephen Kliewer*

therapy in a primary care setting struggle with addiction, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Other side effects include withdrawal when the medication is stopped, constipation, nausea, vomiting, dry mouth, sleepiness and dizziness, confusion and depression.

One of the biggest problems is increased sensitivity to pain when opioids are used for chronic pain. Chronic pain is not just about the body, it is also about the brain and the nervous system.

This is why opiates do not always work for treatment of chronic pain. If a person has pain that is due to a problem in the nervous system itself, such as the system having become hypersensitive, and we use opioids to block a pain signal down at the point of the original injury, it does not work.

Ultimately the pain signals increase, trying to get through the block, while at the same time the brain, due to the opiates, stops producing its natural pain killing chemicals. Thus there is more pain and less capacity to handle the pain, leading to an ever-growing need for opioids.

What is the answer? Treating the crisis involves a number of responses, the first involving prescribers themselves, who are now following new prescribing guidelines developed by the

Centers for Disease Control. The guidelines have 12 specific recommendations, the first being “Non-pharmacologic therapy and non-opioid pharmacologic therapy are preferred for chronic pain.” Other strategies include better education about opioids, increased monitoring of opioid use for those who have prescriptions, pain management contracts and an initial assessment of risk for addiction.

But one of the main strategies is the development of pain management programs such as the Center for Optimal Living, a program of Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness. Such programs work with primary care doctors to support and enhance the medical management of the pain.

They provide additional tools that aid in pain management. Some are psychological, such as mindfulness, while others involve physical conditioning, using tools such as yoga. In addition they offer patient education about such critical topics as nutrition.

There are things all people can do. If you have chronic pain talk to your doctor about all your options. Participate in a pain management program.

When you are ready to stop using opioids, make sure you get rid of unused medicine properly, as these medicines are often sold illegally on the street.

Be aware of the signs of addiction in yourself and in those you love. Encourage friends you think may be addicted to talk to a doctor and seek help.

Info: 541-398-2478.

*Kliewer is a licensed professional counselor and is head of the Center for Optimal Living in Enterprise.*

# Get ready for ranch rodeo

Finally some decent weather. Between branding calves, irrigating and getting ready for the 10th annual CJD ranch rodeo, things are busy. Ten years ago, a group of civic-minded citizens gathered and put together a ranch rodeo to kickoff Chief Joseph Days PRCA rodeo.

Over the years, the ranch rodeo has contributed thousands of dollars to local scholarships. It has gone through a lot of changes over the years. Some of the events have changed, and some have been modified.

In the beginning, we had four-man teams, and two of the team members had to come from the county. In order to increase the number of teams a few years ago, it was changed to three-man teams and two members had to be from the county. Individuals who had been raised in the county but moved away were considered eligible as residents.

One like that, Justin Nedrow, will be back this year and is on a team with Rawley Bixby and Buck Haney. Buck is one of the out-of-county ringers who has competed in the Ranch Rodeo Finals in Texas and is a top hand.

J Arrow livestock team is another top team consisting of Jim Hite, Marian Yost and Jerry Cobb. I have never understood how Jim Hite can go all year without practicing and be at the top of his game when he competes.

Jerry Cobb placed in a big roping last year in Las Vegas and pocketed \$95,000. Dashing Luke Morgan is entered and is fresh off a big first-place win in a ranch rodeo in central Oregon where the winners were presented trophy rifles.



**OPEN RANGE**  
*Barrie Qualle*

The Quail Run Ranch team has won the buckles the last two years and hopes to three-peat. That team consists of locals Mel Coleman, Barrie Qualle and out-of-county ringer Brady Black. Mel moved to the county a few years ago and is a 16-time NFR qualifier and has several Canadian Saddle Bronc and All-around Championships.

Too bad most of his championships were in at the wrong end of the arena. He is also the only Olympian to be entered. Mel competed in the Olympics for team Canada in Salt Lake City in 2002.

One of the all local teams to watch is a team made up of Trevor Lewis, Clint Sheaffer and recent arrival from western Kansas Greg Seifer.

As you can see, there is some quality talent entered. There will be several other teams entered consisting of top cowboys from local ranches, and if you have been to any local brandings, you know they are real handy in a corral and any team might win.

Ranch Rodeos and the events are tailored to emphasize cattle-handling and roping in a ranch setting and corral work rather than rodeo arena type events. The events are typical ranch work but are timed.

In the past, team roping was an event, and that has now been changed to more

resemble pasture roping in that the steers are turned out at the far end of the arena.

The branding contest has been changed this year to be more like ranch branding in that there will be 12 numbered calves in the pen with six cows and the teams will draw a number, and that will be the number on the two calves they have to brand.

The festivities begin Friday, June 30, with a trail ride to the top of the east moraine. The ride begins 2:30 p.m. and should be back by 5 p.m. in time for cocktails and a dinner at the Thunder Room.

Everyone is invited to the trail ride, and it is free. Last year about 40 people participated. Everyone is encouraged to go to the beef dinner for an excellent meal for \$15. Following the dinner there will be a cowboy Calcutta where they auction off the rodeo teams and a lot of money is paid out to the team buyers if their team places.

Last year the buyer of winning Quail Run Ranch team received around \$1,200. The ranch rodeo begins 2 p.m. Saturday, July 1, at the CJD rodeo arena in Joseph. The events are ranch sorting, cut and rope, team branding and pasture-style team roping. There will also be girls breakaway roping and ranch saddle bronc riding.

You can’t find family entertainment like this for \$5, so load up the kids, and we will see you at the rodeo.

*Barrie Qualle is an all-around working ranch hand, author and ranch rodeo enthusiast. He lives in Wallowa County.*

# Vintage cars bring flood of memories

Walking through the lineup of nearly 200 vintage cars entered in the Oregon Mountain Cruise car show in Joseph Saturday, I couldn’t help but recall people I’ve known throughout my life who had owned one of the vehicles.

The station wagons remind me of several large families that lived in and around my hometown. They’d come to town on Saturday night, all five doors would swing open and a flood of humanity would exit.

It often reminded me of one of those clown cars where the clowns just keep coming and coming.

We had a number of families in our town who were rich enough to purchase muscle cars for their sons (and a few daughters) over the years. They were a status symbol. The cool guys drove the Chevelles, Chargers and Camaros. You could hear them coming before you could see them.

I was decidedly not one of the cool kids. When I came of driving age, the only vehicle left unused was a 1966 Chrysler Newport. Pale green and 22 feet long, it operated more like a boat on wheels than a car. The four-barrel carburetor was fed with garden hoses.

When you laid the accelerator to the



**WAHL TO WALL**  
*Paul Wahl*

floor, the g-forces plastered you back against the seat, and you could watch the needle on the fuel gage going down.

I didn’t mind too much because that car could safely accommodate me and seven friends on those huge bench seats without anyone being crowded. And if you needed to pull over to catch 40 winks, the back seat was as comfortable as most regular mattresses of the day.

The trunk was the size of two caskets set side by side and with those 195/75R14 tires, it was about as smooth a ride as you could hope for.

It was a car in which we felt safe, despite the rock-hard dash board and the absence of air bags.

No way was I going to take the monster off to college with me. It required two parking spaces, and spots on campus were already at a premium.

Since I was working full-time and attending class full-time, I had enough money to purchase another car. I chose a

1962 baby blue Volkswagen Beetle. It wasn’t the most ideal vehicle for the far northern reaches of the country. It was air cooled and in theory, the heat from the engine would keep the inside toasty in the winter.

Alas, it was a flawed theory. Ice formed on the outside — and inside — of all six windows. Winter driving meant having a second person along with long arms to keep the windows clear enough to see where you were going.

With it’s rear engine, however, it waded through the deepest of snow with ease. I parked in an alley at the time, and most of the residents of the block would follow me out on snowy mornings because they knew my VW would make it through.

I wish to heaven I still had it, but the parade of things that kept breaking finally forced me to sell it for parts.

Thanks to the organizers of the car show for bringing back a flood of good memories for me and, I am sure, for most people who attended. Perhaps next year I won’t have to pick sleet pellets out of my bratwurst.

*Paul Wahl is editor of the Chieftain and drives a Saturn Ion and a Subaru Impreza.*

USPS No. 665-100

P.O. Box 338 • Enterprise, OR 97828  
Office: 209 NW First St., Enterprise, Ore.  
Phone: 541-426-4567 • Fax: 541-426-3921

*Wallowa County’s Newspaper Since 1884  
Enterprise, Oregon*

MEMBER OREGON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

PUBLISHER	Marissa Williams, marissa@bmeagle.com
EDITOR	Paul Wahl, editor@wallowa.com
REPORTER	Stephen Tool, stool@wallowa.com
REPORTER	Kathleen Ellyn, kellyn@wallowa.com
EDITOR	editor@wallowa.com
NEWSROOM ASSISTANT	Jennifer Powell, jpowell@wallowa.com
AD SALES CONSULTANT	Cheryl Jenkins, cjenkins@wallowa.com
OFFICE MANAGERS	Sheryl Watson, swatson@wallowa.com

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY:  
**EO Media Group**

Periodical Postage Paid at Enterprise and additional mailing offices

Subscription rates (includes online access)	<b>1 Year</b>
Wallowa County	<b>\$40.00</b>
Out-of-County	<b>\$57.00</b>

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

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Volume 134