

# Imnaha Bridge School sees population boom

By Kathleen Ellyn

Wallowa County Chieftain

Imnaha School District teacher Shari Warnock is stretching her abilities this year, preparing eight lessons plans for eight students — each at different grade levels.

It's challenging, but but she says it's fun.

"I almost canceled free kindergarten when I learned I was going to be having eight students," said Warnock.

She didn't cancel kindergarten, but preparing her day requires some help.

There is a lot of help, Warnock said. Not only does librarian Keith Kirtz help out, but Joseph Charter School's Spanish and Jr. High Science teacher, Tim Bombaci, starts his day with the Imnaha students before driving the 30 miles on to Joseph.

And there are the volunteers. "The Grandmas" include Randie Guthrie and Barbara Warnock who come any time they're needed and bring homemade cookies.

It's been 11 years since Warnock has had this many students. Back in 2006 she had nearly a dozen students.

If you go back 20 years, you'd be in the heyday of Imnaha school. Back then two teachers worked full-time in two rooms with 22 students. Teachers who traveled to Imnaha stayed in the attached

studio apartment teacherage.

For most of its history, Imnaha was the school for ranch kids. Ranches in the remote valley were owned by the folks who worked them, and families were raised there. Some still are, but more commonly, ranches are being purchased by absentee owners who hire a farm manager and some ranch hands. There are fewer families and thus fewer kids in the school.

It's not surprising that kids raised on ranches with plenty of open space are accustomed to a lot of independent time and solitude. This year's crop of Imnaha school kids said they like their school small. They visit Joseph several times a week so they can meet classmates, but they find classes in Joseph "noisy."

"There are more friends to play with," allows Adam Lopez, 11. "So, there's good and bad."

Lopez is the Imnaha school veteran, having been a student there through both thick and thin — thin being a year when there were two students in the school. Now, his brother Aaron has joined him along with the other students.

Waylon Witherrite, 7, has earned the award for being the continuation of the longest line of students from a local family that remains in the valley and stretches back generations. Warnock is pretty sure



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

The great big student body at Imnaha School District: Eight students in eight different grades. Front row, from left, are Gabe Neveau, 7, Bella Cervantes, 7, Waylon Witherrite, 7, Avery Morgan, 5, and Aaron Lopez, 6. Back row, from left, Librarian Keith Kirtz, Adam Loetz, 11, and teacher Shari Warnock. Not pictured: Shawndra Kirkpatrick, 11, and Jesse Kirkpatrick, 8.

Waylon's great granddad went to Imnaha back in the day.

There are plenty of joys to teaching at a small school,

which offset the challenges of the range of grade levels a teacher must master, Warnock said.

"When you teach years in a row, you've taught students almost since they were born — that brings a lot of joy," she

said. "When you get down to the end of the month or quarter and see how far they've come — that's a joy."

## Joseph senior finds rewards in helping refugees survive

By Kana Oliver

Special to the Wallowa County Chieftain

Joseph Charter School has been putting its seniors to the test with large-scale projects for more than 10 years. The projects demand students to involve their career interests while benefiting the community and personal growth.

While most projects are aimed at Wallowa County, Will Caldwell has his sights set on a relief trip to Ghana and Kenya.

Caldwell, 17, hosted a "Dinner at the Lake" fundraiser Oct. 15. The menu of steak, pasta, potatoes and dessert was prepared by the high school senior with assistance from his friends. Live music was provided by Brian Oliver, Caleb Samples, Laura Skovlin and John Reins to help round out the night.

The ended up netting significant proceeds for his upcoming trip and served 28 guests.

This will be Caldwell's third relief trip. Throughout high school, he has been working with refugees abroad and fundraising for them in the United States. Caldwell enjoys the work.

"Saving a life is the most rewarding and humbling experience in the world," he said.

He believes working with refugees has changed his life forever and now has a duty to help those who are less privileged.

Caldwell is drawn to relief trips as they are rewarding to both himself and the community he visits.

He hopes to major in premed at Johns Hopkins University, Harvard or University of California Berkeley. He's also interested in journalism and videography.

Caldwell will leave Dec. 15, traveling with Solutions for Life Initiative Ghana and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He will stay in Ghana for three weeks. He plans to help out wherever he is needed but will focus on working in a clinic.

Immediately after, he will stay in Kenya at Dadaab Refugee Camp for a week and work on a documentary about the lost generation of the Somali refugees.

"The living conditions are so dire that the United Nations classifies Dadaab as a danger level four, making it one of the most dangerous camps in the world," Caldwell said. "My main goal



Kana Oliver/Special to the Chieftain

Will Caldwell was the chief chef for a dinner on Oct. 15, which was held to raise funds for a trip to aid refugees in Ghana and Kenya.

### YOU CAN HELP

People who want more information or are willing to contribute to Will Caldwell's Senior Project Fund may send checks to Joseph Charter School, attention: Will Caldwell Senior Project Fund, P.O. Box 787, Joseph, OR 97846; call 208-874-2359 or email mountaindh451@gmail.com.

for the film is to expose the reality of life in the camp for Somali refugees, and share that with American citizens. The current political narrative has focused on and furthered negative stereotypes pertaining to refugees, and I believe there is no better way to share the truth than through videography. If a picture is worth a thousand words, how many is a documentary worth?"

Caldwell's goals are ambitious.

"Senior projects have become vital in giving Joseph Charter students unique experiences and involving them in the community," said Liza Strickland, senior project adviser. "They prepare them for the real world by developing their professional attitudes and skills."

## Boost your business success with classes at Blue Mountain

Blue Mountain Community College Small Business Development Center has three classes planned in the coming weeks.

- "Accounting Is The Language of Business" will be 6:30-8 p.m. Nov. 7 and 9, and Nov. 14 and 16 at Wallowa Resources, 401 NE 1st St., Enterprise

The course is designed to help improve "language" skills by learning or refreshing fundamental accounting concepts.

What are the major types of accounts? How do I create and read an income statement or balance sheet? What is the difference between cash flow and profitability?

- "Marketing Basics," 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 28, at Wallowa Resources.

How do you attract cus-

tomers to your door? The class introduces fundamental concepts, gets students thinking about Unique Value Propositions and target markets as well as explore strategies and tools and developing a marketing plan to increase customer base and sales.

- "Public Relations and Advertising," 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 16, at Wallowa Resources.

How do you attract community attention for your business? The workshop will run through the difference between public relations and advertising, when each is appropriate and provide tools to excel at both. Leave with a press release ready to send to the media.

More information and registration: bluecc.edu.

## Healthy Futures dinner and auction planned

Wallowa Valley Health Care Foundation will sponsor the 22nd Annual Healthy Futures Dinner Auction Saturday, Nov. 11, at the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise. Funding will go towards the \$350,000 purchase of the new Genius 3D Mammography System.

"When breast cancer is caught early enough, the survival rate is nearly 100 percent," said the hospital's imaging director Josie Conrad.

The Healthy Futures Dinner Auction was started in 1995 to raise funds for new hospital beds. That first year, more than \$19,000 was

raised for the new Resident House to house the OHSU residents in the newly established Rural Rotation program, founded by now-retired doctors Lowell Euhus and Scott Siebe.

Last year, the Auction raised a record \$93,000, thanks to three \$10,000 donations, in addition to what was raised at the live and silent auctions.

Tickets are \$60 each and include an elegant catered dinner provided by Backyard Gardens. Tickets and more information can be obtained by stopping by the Foundation office or calling 541-426-1913.

## WALLOWA COUNTY Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings

**ENTERPRISE**  
**MONDAYS**  
 7 p.m. Enterprise Group  
 113.5 E Main St.  
**TUESDAYS**  
 12-1 p.m. Enterprise Group  
 113.5 E Main St.  
 7-8 p.m. Enterprise Group  
 (Big Bk Study)  
 113.5 E Main St.  
**WEDNESDAYS**  
 7 p.m. Enterprise Group  
 113.5 E Main St.  
**THURSDAYS**  
 12-1 p.m. Enterprise Group  
 113.5 E Main St.  
 7 p.m. All Saints  
 (Mens Mtg)  
 113.5 E Main St.  
**FRIDAYS**  
 7 p.m. Enterprise Group  
 113.5 E Main St.  
**SATURDAYS**  
 7 p.m. Enterprise Group  
 113.5 E Main St.

**JOSEPH**  
**MONDAYS**  
 6 p.m. Grace and Dignity  
 (Womans Mtg) Joseph  
 United Methodist Church  
 301 S. Lake St., Church  
 Basement  
**WEDNESDAYS**  
 12 p.m. Grace and Dignity  
 (Womans Mtg)  
 301 S. Lake St., Church  
 Basement  
**WALLOWA**  
**SUNDAYS**  
 7 p.m. Wallowa Assembly  
 of God Church  
 205 S Alder St.



PORTLAND JAZZ COMPOSERS ENSEMBLE PRESENTS

### FROM MAXVILLE TO VANPORT

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION EVENT

The Portland Jazz Composers Ensemble is creating a new piece of music inspired by the history of Maxville and Vanport for performances in Wallowa County in April. Join us to hear stories about these towns and an original song from the project. Then share your thoughts in an open discussion about the future of the project.

**Saturday, November 4th • 7pm**  
**Joseph Center for Arts and Culture**  
 403 MAIN ST, JOSEPH, OR 97846  
 FREE ADMISSION

THE OREGON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION | WOREGON UNIVERSITY | MAXVILLE HERITAGE | FISHTRAP AUDIX | JOSEPH CENTER FOR ARTS AND CULTURE | MUSEUM ALLIANCE

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