Local school counseling takes many forms

Being a school counselor requires compassion and patience as well as good interpersonal, listening and communication skills. School counseling has shown to have a positive impact on youth, teachers, administrators and families.

Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness has had a presence in Wallowa County Schools for nearly 20 years. The center originally collaborated with the Education Service District to

provide preventative services in the form of curriculums related to violence prevention and bullying. Over the years, funding and programming



changed, however; counseling and screening services continue two days a week in each of the three schools.

School counselors provide screenings and brief services to determine a child's needs. Counselors may also connect with families and provide support to teachers so that behavioral plans created with a child can also be implemented in the classroom as well as at home.

In the event of a crisis, the school counselor may be first to respond. The center has a mobile crisis team trained in threat assessment along with a broader team of people in the community including folks from the Enterprise School District, the county's juvenile department and law enforcement. The team assess a threat with school personnel, school counselor, child, youth and family to plan services according to the need.

Several programs are offered throughout the school year. One of our longest running programs is called Natural Helpers. This program is a researched-based, peer support program where trained students provide interact with other students and make referrals to people who can help. This program began approximately six years ago and has

trained many students in all three schools ages 13-18 to provide support. Natural Helpers is a collaboration with the Prevention Coalition and Building Health Families.

Training is provided each summer before school begins for both new students and trained students. Natural Helpers meets monthly with a facilitator who shares educational materials about typical problems youth face as well as mental health topics and substance use topics.

This year we are focusing on enhancing services for substance abuse in youth.

Among school counseling challenges is hiring staff. Oregon is experiencing a workforce shortage with many graduate degree positions. Other challenges historically have been with funding but are somewhat resolved by providing services at the current level.

If more funding were available, we could potentially be in the schools more often.

Lastly, a generalized challenge is carving out counselor time for relationship-building with teachers, staff and administrators

Mental health prevention begins with our youth population to raise personal awareness of mental health issues and lower the stigma often associates with receiving mental health services. If you know a youth who is struggling, please call 541-426-4524.

Chantay Jett is executive director for Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness.

etters to the Editor are subject to editing and ✓should be limited to 275 words. Writers should also include a phone number with their signature so we can call to verify identity. The Chieftain does not run anonymous letters.

Writers should refrain from personal attacks. We do not routinely run thank-you letters, a policy we'll consider waiving in unusual situations.

You can submit a letter to the Wallowa County Chieftain in person; by mail to P.O. Box 338, Enterprise, OR 97828; by email to editor@wallowa.com; or via the submission form at the newspaper's website, located at wallowa.com. (Drop down the "Opinion" menu on the navigation bar to see the relevant link).



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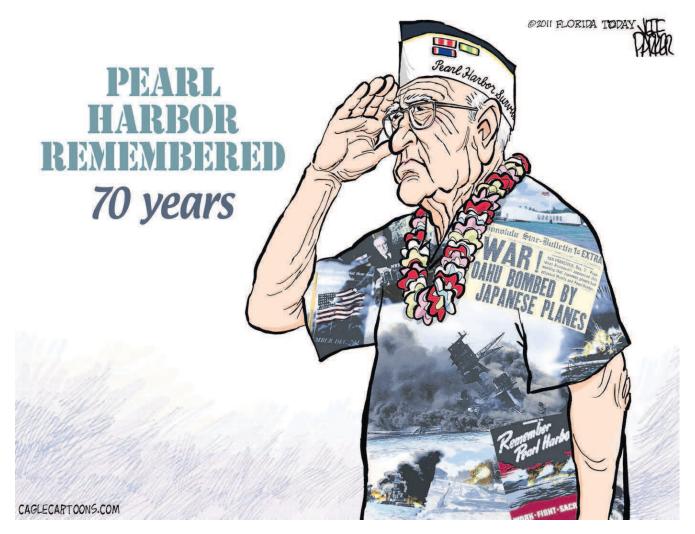
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Volume 134



Anticipating the birth of a book

The Wallowa County Museum's history book, "Wallowa County - A Continuation," is available for pre-sale. Though we're nearing the end of final editing, and the publisher will have it back to us by first quarter of 2018, we thought it would make a great gift idea.

That is, when you purchase it as a gift, you will receive a decorative gift notification to hand to your loved one.

The stories are fascinating. Many of those who settled this place served in the Civil War. Perhaps those veterans found the isolation and beauty of this landscape a place of peace, a place to get on with their lives as best they could.

The family histories reveal spouses who pulled together like a matched pair, carving a life and a family out of this hard land, getting each day's work done. There are the children who died and the marriages that didn't last. In family photos, I examine the women's faces — as honest, as worn and as beautiful as the canyons of lower Imnaha.

In reading and formatting these stories for printing, I see the difficulties that plowed the hearts of these people left crevasses filled with passion. When they sang and danced and loved, they shared the joy of making it another season.

They helped neighbors who had been burned out or couldn't plant because of a



farm accident, for on any given day, they could be next.

"Who owns the land?" is often debated. To me, the better question is, "Who gets to manage it?" Anyone who has been through a natural disaster, such as an earthquake or a wildfire or tornado, knows the utter powerlessness in the face of earth's forces.

Scientists and academics strive to define and explain every minutiae of the earth's activities, positing that greater knowledge grants greater privilege of ownership. Yet the seasons which bring moisture, or not, the winds that let trees stand, or not, the mountains that hold snow, or not — the earth is going to allow what it will tolerate, until it doesn't.

Lifelong Wallowa Countians who made a life here learned to cooperate with what the land provided. As many who succeeded, there were that many who departed.

Beneath the materialism of this month, another story is heralded, told in a book that has been the No. 1 best-seller since its initial printing. "Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth" leads the reader on a wild tale describing an unseen power.

He creates teachable moments and love-filled solutions for people whose backs are against the wall, who don't know which way to turn, who rail at God then are answered with quiet whispers of

If a person is looking for a Joseph Campbell narrative arc, stay away from this book. If a reader anticipates a John Wayne kind of character, "Shoot 'em all. Ask questions later," this story won't make sense. If logic is sought, forget about

But, if you like mystery and romance and adventure and murder and betrayal and redemption and can consider that love made itself known in the birth of an unlikely baby, read The Book.

Study the lyrics of Christmas hymns or visit a Christmas Eve service. Afterward, go to Wallowa Lake and listen to "O Holy Night" on your player as you gaze upon the stars illuminating Chief Joseph Mountain. For those with eyes to see and ears to hear, it's a wonderful story with a happy

Merry Christmas to all.

Katherine Stickroth is a freelance writer who blogs at awallowagal.com.

Thanks for the memories, and the milkshakes

This Thanksgiving I realized how thankful I was for a milkshake I had around five years ago. It was peach-lemonade.

I'd never heard of that flavor combo before, but this particular milkshake was without question the finest I've had in my life, so since then I've made it a point to order peach-lemonade milkshakes from Boggan's Oasis. Sadly, Boggan's burned Nov. 19. Nobody was hurt. Bill and Farrel are OK, but the restaurant is reported to be a complete loss.

A handful of Fourth of July's ago, I helped take some folks down the Grande Ronde for a rafting day trip. Fun was had, and everyone was excited to get back up top for barbecues and fireworks.

We pulled the boats in at Boggan's, and I went to fetch the van and trailer. They weren't there. I was tromping up to the cafe in something of a mood and, as I'm walking up, Farrel comes out the door just like a gunslinger and puts her hands on her hips, saying, "Betcha wonderin' where your van is, huh?"

I told her she read my mind. She told me her shuttle driver had spent a good portion of the morning searching for the key I was supposed to leave but didn't. Not good news.

On the bright side, Boggan's had world-famous milkshakes the guests could enjoy while Farrel drove me upriver to get the van, with the key I forgot to leave earlier. That is not exemplary river guide behavior.

So we get the van, I start driving back



and hit a deer 90 seconds later. I mean, c'mon. Doe just bee-lined out of the bushes.

I hit the brakes, but there was definite contact. I got out and found she was caught under the front of the van, with a front leg tangled in a steering arm. She was not pleased. Wide-eyed. Nostrils flared.

Ready for a hoof-fight, staring me down and making lunges in my direction. I didn't know what to do. Wasn't going to move the van for fear of causing more harm. Certainly wasn't crawling under there to get a hoof in the face.

Farrel got out of her truck behind me and shouted, "Well, at least you didn't hit the baby!" Oh, man. This day had been going so good until an hour ago.

I crouched down to take another look, just as the doe freed her leg and scooted out from underneath on her back, just like she'd finished an oil change. She was fast. But not as fast as me sprinting to the driver's door, jumping in and slamming the

The windows were up, but I could still hear Farrel's laughter. It went on for a while. The deer, I'm happy to report, went on her way and didn't appear to be seriously injured.

Back at the boat ramp I was hurrying to help get loaded, mad at myself, sweaty, wondering what else could go wrong and I heard behind me, "Mister Jon?"

I did not need one more single thing to happen that day. That day had already had enough things. I turned around, and Valerie from up at the restaurant was standing there, holding out a cup. With a straw. She said, "We thought you could use a milkshake."

It was peach-lemonade and it was the finest milkshake ever made in all the

Everybody got to their 4th of July parties on time, and I like to think that momma deer and her young one enjoyed the fireworks from the top of a hillside.

Boggan's really was an oasis. In place of shady palms and water in the midst of sand, Boggan's provided hashbrowns, cheeseburgers and peach-lemonade milkshakes to white-knuckled travelers coming off the Rattlesnake Grade.

A hub for fishing, hunting, boating with a top-notch shuttle service, provided you remembered to leave a key. A lot of activity, as river crossings go.

Bill and Farrel have been running the Oasis for 34 years. Last I heard, they were waiting to see about rebuilding. Whatever happens, thanks for all those milkshakes. Especially the magical peach-lemonade

Jon Rombach is a Wallowa County-based columnist for the Chieftain.

Red-faced Rotarians lose to the Soroptimists

I and my fellow Rotarians are in mourning this week, having lost the competition with the Soroptimist International of Wallowa County to see who could raise the most money for the Community Connection Food Bank in Wallowa County.

This friendly rivalry has been going on for some years. Rotary really took a beating this year.

The real winner, of course, was the food bank, which received in excess of \$4,000 from both clubs including a generous match from Community Bank.

If you are so inclined, the food bank is in need of money more than nonperishable goods at the moment. Community Connection can stretch a dollar further than anyone when it comes to maximizing monetary donations.



Paul Wahl

WE TOOK some time Friday evening to attend the Jingle Through Joseph Block

Party. A group of a dozen or so businesses along Main Street opened their doors to all comers, dimmed the lights and served food and drinks. It was a terrific event. Kudos to the organizers.

For us, it was our first time visiting several of the stores, and we came away impressed. The warm and friendly atmosphere coupled with an amazing selection of gift ideas made for an enjoyable experi-

If you missed it, you missed one of the season highlights in Wallowa County.

ence. Turnout appeared to be strong.

A QUICK glance at our calendar on Page 2 of this edition will let you know that we are in one of the busiest periods of the year. There are holiday events and activities everywhere you turn.

Please take a moment to check the schedule and see which of the events you might wish to attend.

Thanks to all of the organizations who took the time to submit events so we could provide this unique listing for our readers.

If your group, club, church or organization has a holiday event upcoming, please email the details to editor@wallowa.com. We'd love to hear from you.