

Grange event nets \$2,435 for 4-H programs

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County 4-H Leaders Association supporters were busy in their kitchens in advance of a lunch box social Feb. 24 at Cloverleaf Hall.

When the tables were cleared, 30 boxed lunches and 36 desserts had been sold.

Auctioneer Randall Eschler of Joseph kept the energy high and bid on some goodies for himself. Around \$2,435 was collected to help 4-H leaders finance travel and other expenses related to supporting their 4-H groups.

Top bids for lunch boxes went up to \$55 per box. Wallowa County has a sweet tooth, too, and the top bids on desserts topped \$65 — for pretty much anything with huckleberries in it.

Awards were given for the best decorated boxes with



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Alisha Melville packs out one of the fanciest boxes for bidders to see up close as the bidding commences at the lunch box social fundraiser for the Wallowa County 4-H Leaders Association Feb. 24 at Cloverleaf Hall.

the Rusty Spurs 4-H Club winning for best 4-H theme with a box that looked like a horse; and Cammie Hale winning for the funniest box that looked like a dinosaur.

Rusty Spurs Club took another award for the most creative box in the shape of a John Deere Tractor; Crazy H Club won for an open basket decorated with real flow-



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Who can choose from all this goodness? Thirty-six desserts were donated for the lunch box social fundraiser for the Wallowa 4-H Leader's Association. Attendees pretty much decided to just have it all, with most tables going home with multiple desserts.

ers as prettiest; and Judges Choice went to a Rooster Box decorated with paper feathers made by Curt and Heather Melville.

Hurricane Creek Grange

produced the event in answer to a state Grange challenge to do a fundraiser for a local organization.

The event ran more like a picnic than a traditional lunch



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

James Royes, 9, left, of Enterprise, and Vincent Finlayson, 10, of Enterprise, check out the lunch boxes prior to the bidding at the lunch box social fundraiser for the Wallowa 4-H Leaders Association Feb. 24 at Cloverleaf Hall.

box social where a fella buys a box made by a gal and they share lunch. At the 4-H event, bidders at tables purchased multiple boxes and spread a feast for family and friends.

Fishtrap 'New Agrarians' fundraiser dinner brings in \$15,000

By Kathleen Ellyn
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The Winter Fishtrap "New Agrarians" event not only packed in participants Feb.

16-18 but won big financial support from the community.

The program was capped by the first-ever Winter Fishtrap fundraiser, a dinner and auction held at Hurricane

Creek Grange Feb. 18, which raised approximately \$15,000 to help maintain the program going forward.

Organizers were thrilled to see how many members of the

agricultural community came to the fundraiser. It was sold out.

"I heard a lot of talk about agricultural issues and books," said Fishtrap Executive Director Shannon McNeerney. "No topic is a barrier to interacting with Fishtrap. What I love is there was a mixture of people — the level of conversation was high — nobody was dumbing it down."

"New Agrarians" Panel Moderator Nellie McAdams, farm preservation director for Rogue Farm Corps, was impressed by the intersection of literature and agriculture in Wallowa County, and the grasp of both story and policy concerns demonstrated by attendees and organizers.

"I think, given that this is a community of writers and storytellers, it was good to have

everyone telling their own story," she said.

That storytelling continued throughout the fundraising dinner with conversation so thick that attendees had to lean across the tables and shout to be heard over the buzz.

"It was great," said McNeerney. "We saw lots of Fishtrap friends and new friends — lots of love. We felt a lot of support from the community."

The fundraiser followed the return of Winter Fishtrap after a seven-year hiatus and the success bodes well for continued programming.

The group auctioned off youth summer and adult winter Fishtrap registrations and books and art created by local artists. Individuals also donated in a paddle race during which attendees began bidding at \$1,500 and little by

little got the opportunity to donate down to \$25.

The Paddle race brought in \$7,500.

An anonymous donor had agreed to match funds up to \$2,500.

The dinner, which served 80, was prepared by chefs Lynne Curry and Paula Austin.

Fishtrap is a literary nonprofit centered in Enterprise that encourages "clear thinking and good writing in and about the west." Among the many programs offered by the group are Summer Fishtrap writer's conference, Winter Fishtrap lecture series, the Imnaha Writer's Retreat, Story Lab youth program and The Big Read community-wide examination of a work of literature and the issues revealed through the story.

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