

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



A word from your editor

The Wallowa County Chieftain boasts a long history of exceptional community journalism. Overwhelming community support and a long legacy of extraordinary editors and publishers account for its lasting success.

While the Chieftain has seen a number of influential editors, Gwen Coffin's legacy, cemented in time, seems to stand above the herd. Not unlike myself, Coffin came to the Chieftain with a legal background but little to no journalistic experience.

Through profound integrity and a diligent work ethic, Coffin kept the paper alive through the most difficult of circumstances. As the editor of a small, rural, west coast paper, Coffin took a bold and risky stance of opposition against Japanese internment. In time, this calculated risk would prove that he was only one of a few on the right side of history.

I wouldn't presume to compare myself to Mr. Coffin; however, whenever I embark on new adventure, I strive towards humility and principled values. I can only hope to find the courage to stand strong in my convictions whenever our community needs it the most.

My ability to serve Wallowa County's diverse community, to foster a venue of safe but challenging communal dialogue and promote a vibrant and civil marketplace of ideas will be the benchmark that defines my success.

Through this process I seek to listen attentively, learn much, and with an open and flexible mind reflect on the collective opinions of all Wallowa Countians. We can never forget that while we may disagree from time to time, we are all neighbors who care about one another in a profound way.

As such, I call for a continued era of civility, of virtue, and of collegiality. We are all in this together. As a community we have enormous shoes to fill, but together we can and will achieve amazing things.

I look forward to hearing from each of you. Please share with me your thoughts and concerns, and together we can strive to meet the exceptionally high standard of trustworthy journalism that we all adore and expect from our amazing community paper.

Best regards to all,
Christian Ambrosion

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Ambrosion



Ellen Morris Bishop/Chieftain

Dr. Jereld Rice's family congratulates him after crossing the finish line in the Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race to win with a time of 18 hours, 20 minutes.

SECOND TIME'S THE CHARM

Enterprise veterinarian triumphs in Eagle Cap Extreme

By Ellen Morris Bishop
Wallowa County Chieftain

Dr. Jereld Rice is not a quitter. After finishing dead last in the grueling 2018 Eagle Cap Extreme 200-mile race, Rice changed tactics and won this year's 100-mile event. Only a second year musher, he beat a field of eight experienced mushers with a time of 18 hours, 20 minutes. "It was a real race," he said. Second place winner David Hassilev of Priest River, Idaho was only six minutes behind Rice, with third-place finisher Roy Etnire of Seeley Lake, Montana another 20 minutes behind.

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Ellen Morris Bishop/Chieftain

Spencer Bruggeman wins the Eagle Cap Extreme 200 mile race as a Oregon Field Guide camera captures the action. Bruggeman's father, Brett Bruggeman, finished two minutes behind him.

Awards banquet brings community leaders together

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Wallowa County Chamber Citizens Awards Banquet proved the usual success this year with citizens providing nearly wall-to-wall coverage of Clover Leaf Hall.

The annual event celebrates the selfless works of citizens who have given of themselves to make Wallowa County a unique and caring place. Residents filled 30 tables and ate prime rib, chicken or a vegan plate provided by Heirloom Catering while staff from La Laguna restaurant manned the no-host bar.

Along with the President's and Past President's award, nine citizens were chosen

for their service in such varied categories as Business Leader Award, Leader in Natural Resources award to the Unsung Hero award.

The event took place on the evening of Jan. 26, and "Once Upon A Time" served as the event theme. President Jessie Cunningham of the Rockin J Ranch served as the Emcee and is also the chamber's president.

When it came to the President's Award, sponsored by the chamber, Cunningham chose Joseph Charter School Family and Marla Dotson, who teaches consumer studies and is an adviser for the Family, Career and Community

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Steve Tool/Chieftain

Happiness is a warm quilt! — Hope McLaughlin (center), Wallowa County citizen and Unsung Hero Award winner at the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce Citizens Awards Banquet shows off a gift from the Wallowa Mountain Quilters Guild of which she is a member. Fellow member, Linda Koloski, who nominated McLaughlin for the award, stands just to her left.

