

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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\$1



FROSTY SURRENDER

Ellen Morris Bishop

Cindy and Derek Bowker, who live up Hurricane Creek Road, are as tired of snow as the rest of us. (Maybe more.) Last week, on the one day they did NOT have to shovel or plow, they decided to have some fun. With temperatures forecast near 60 degrees later this week, their surrender evidently worked.

Enterprise fire damages home

By Ellen Morris Bishop
Wallowa County Chieftain

A fire that started when Robin Hamilton and a friend tried to thaw frozen pipes damaged Hamilton's house at 705 Greenwood in Enterprise Thursday evening. Both Enterprise and Joseph fire departments responded, along with the Wallowa County ambulance. No injuries were reported. Hamilton, her cat, and her dog Lucille were back in their home Friday afternoon. "I just can't believe those big guys and all their gear were so careful with everything," she said of the firefighters. "They were wonderful!"

Hamilton called 911 when the pipe-thawing project, using a diesel-fueled blowtorch, started to go bad. "The beam started smoking," she said. "I threw some snow on it, but it didn't stop and then the smoke started coming more from under the house and from the wall. I just wasn't really prepared for a big problem."

The Enterprise Fire Department responded with 15 firefighters, two engines



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Enterprise volunteer firefighters access the second story and attic to douse flames in the house at 705 Greenwood, Enterprise, Thursday evening. The fire started when the residents tried to thaw frozen pipes. The structure sustained severe damage.

and a rescue unit. "We were at the scene within about three minutes of getting the call," Enterprise Fire Chief Paul Karvoski said. "The fire climbed up the outside wall at the back of the house. Then it got into the

interior and the attic." What started as a pipe-thawing effort quickly became a full-fledged house fire.

Within about 10 minutes, the Joseph Fire Department provided reinforcements of ten volun-

teers with an engine and a rescue unit. The combined fire-fighting force had the fire under control quickly and out within about two hours.

See Fire, Page A10

Joseph council gives thumbs-down to Saturno variance

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Joseph City Council's March 7 meeting saw fireworks fly as it unanimously voted to deny a housing variance to Douglas Saturno, a Walla Walla resident who owns property in Joseph and other parts of Wallowa County. Mayor Teresa Sajonia announced that Saturno sought a variance permit for the north side of his property at 802 Engleside Ave to allow for placement of a rental unit on the parcel, which already features a home.

Saturno's attorney, Rahn Hostetter, first addressed the matter. He said that the Saturnos purchased the property in 2017 and worked with the city and Wallowa Associates to create a partition. The city granted the application under former mayor, Dennis Sands. Hostetter said the area in question was difficult to work with as it didn't face a street and it wasn't clear what constituted the front and back of the parcel.

According to Hostetter,

during the placement of the housing unit, a 22-foot setback was violated. The attorney called the unit a "construction," although it is a triple-wide mobile home. He did say the foundation that was poured also did not comply with the setback, but it wasn't intentional and he apologized. He added that because the foundation was already poured, and because it wasn't clear what constituted the front or back, he hoped the council would allow the variance from the 22-foot setback.

Bruce Ginsel, Saturno's property manager, said that a previous employee had done much of the permit work. He added that the foundation was poured shortly after he was hired and he hadn't seen the plans and was unaware of any setback issues. He assumed the contractor was aware of any setback requirements, although the contractor admitted he hadn't seen the plans either, so he poured the foundation to line up with an existing home.

See Council, Page A10

Blythe Cricket hops onto the restaurant scene

By Ellen Morris Bishop
Wallowa County Chieftain

If you're looking for king-sized burgers with piles of French fries, don't stop here. But if you want a healthy, delicious homemade meal served in reasonably-sized portions, the Blythe Cricket, newly opened at the north end of Joseph, is for you.

Owners/chefs Margaret Lamm and Rachael Nutter have transformed their catering service into their dream: a full-fledged restaurant that serves breakfast, lunch and once-per-week special Italian dinners. Their espresso machine serves up Nossa

Familia, a Portland-roasted fair trade coffee from Brazil. And like their new building, all their food is made from scratch.

"Food is nutrition," Lamm said, "not just a burger and fries." She should know. Before opening the Blythe Cricket with Nutter, Lamm was the Director of Nutritional Services at Wallowa Memorial Hospital. "Our foods are wild caught or farm-raised, and made with simple ingredients," Lamm said.

The restaurant's "made from scratch" philosophy means locally sourced as well. The menu for breakfast and lunch includes

in-house baked English Muffins, bacon and ham that are uncured and nitrate-free, and beef raised by Wallowa County rancher Rod Childers. The portions are generous, but not overwhelming. "We don't like to waste food," Nutter said. "So we provide servings that are about the size you'd be eating at home."

The "eating at home" and locally-sourced philosophy extends to the china and tableware, and even the building itself. Every single dish, bowl and plate in the Blythe Cricket is "second-hand," purchased used from someone's home or estate sale. "We like to pay



Ellen M Bishop

The meatloaf sandwich is made with locally-raised beef, caramelized onions, and Havarti cheese.

homage to the cooks and families who came before us," Lamm said. Some are vintage, others just from the sturdy settings of the 80's

or 90's. Each plate seems to offer a story of a local family, and of the many dishes it

See Restaurant, Page A10

