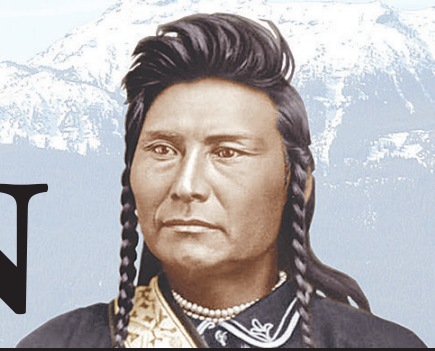




READY TO HIT THE BIG-TIME

Local rodeo cowboy Hanley "Noodle" Miller has earned a slot at the National Junior High Finals Rodeo | **A9**

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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OLD BARRELS FOUND IN WALLOWA LAKE COME UP CLEAN

No herbicides or other toxins found in barrels to date

By Ellen Morris Bishop
Wallowa County Chieftain

After a week of exploration, diving, and retrieval, the potential hazards posed to Wallowa Lake by a barrel labeled "2,4-D or 2,4,5-T" and the approximately 70 other old metal barrels strewn about the bottom of Wallowa Lake's southwest end have proved to be vanishingly small. The herbicide barrel reported by Blue Mountain Divers last fall turned out to be a rusted, punctured container, empty of its former contents, and filled only with water, said Mike Boykin, project manager for the EPA. And it certainly did not contain "Agent Orange" at any time in its history, according to its label. Agent Orange is a combination of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T. The label on the barrel clearly indicated that it once contained one or the other of these herbicides. But not both, and hence not Agent Orange.

Examination of another six intact barrels that divers have recovered revealed that they probably once held petroleum products. But they lost their original content long ago, likely entered the lake as empty containers, and now are filled principally with lake water and some sediment. The EPA has examined the content of these barrels, and will also sample the four barrels that lie in deep water and will be removed from the lake as soon as Tuesday, Boykin said.

See Barrels, Page A7



Photos by Ellen Morris Bishop
Global Diving and Salvage workers and an EPA crew pull a containment drum that holds the first of about a dozen hazardous or intact barrels from Wallowa Lake Sunday afternoon. This barrel, marked 2,4-D or 2,4,5-T proved to be old, rusted and punctured, and held only lake water.



One of the dozen more or less intact barrels raised from the lake bottom is poised out of its containment overpack drum for sampling on Monday evening. "It's a really old barrel, judging by the markings," said EPA site manager Mike Boykin.

THE BARRELS IN THE LAKE

What's in them?

The barrel did not contain "Agent Orange" at any time in its history, according to its label. EPA officials opened it and inspected the suspect herbicide barrel. "Upon opening the drum, the contents appeared to be lake water," said Oregon DEQ spokesperson Laura Gleim.

Where did they come from?

Used, empty barrels were resealed and served as floats for docks through the 1970s. Barrels were also commonly filled with rocks and used as anchors for buoys or other purposes.

Where do they go now?

The remaining intact barrels were scheduled to be removed from the lake on Monday. The contents will be inspected at the EPA site at the marina once they are in a safe area that will contain any hazardous spills. The barrels will then either go to the landfill, to a metal recycler, or an appropriate EPA disposal site, depending upon their contents.

WHAT ELSE IS ON THE BOTTOM OF WALLOWA LAKE?

By Ellen Morris Bishop
Wallowa County Chieftain

During the past week of intensive sonar, video, and visual inspection of part of Wallowa Lake's bottom, Wally (our equivalent of the Loch Ness

monster) seems to have gone into hiding. But there appears to be a lot more than mud, rocks and barrels on the bottom of Wallowa Lake. Blue Mountain Divers' SCUBA teams have been

See Bottom, Page A8

Making firewood from fire

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Newly elected county commissioner, John Hillock, had an idea he'd been chewing on for awhile. In January, Joseph loggers Tom and Seth Zacharias, had planted a bug in his ear about visiting parts of the 2015 Grizzly Bear Complex fire that nearly destroyed the town of Troy and put more than 80,000 acres to the torch.

Hillock called the Walla Walla District Ranger, Mike Rassbach.

"Of course it was snowed in, so we made an agreement

to meet out there in May, which we finally made on the last day of May."

Hillock thought it was important for the board of commissioners to not only foster a good relationship with the federal government, but to also have good relationships with local businesses providing local jobs.

Commissioners Nash and Hillock, along with Integrated Biomass owner, Dave Schmidt drove down to Troy by way of Flora and met with USFS employee, John Williams, who then escorted

See Firewood, Page A8

Joseph Center installs new bronze by Nez Perce sculptor

By Rich Wandschneider
For Wallowa County Chieftain

Joseph Center to feature new Nez Perce bronze sculpture at its entry.

On Saturday, June 22, the Joseph Center will celebrate the installation of a new sculpture in its courtyard in a Joseph. Talks and a drum ceremony begin at 2 p.m. There will be a salmon feed for the public at 4 p.m.

See Sculptor, Page A8



Nez Perce sculptor Doug Hyde stands next to a clay model for his life-sized sculpture 'etweyé-wise, which means, in the Nez Perce language, "I return from a difficult journey."



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