

# A nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all

## VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

The 74th annual Chief Joseph Days Rodeo is now in the record books. The cowboys' big horse trailers with living quarters have left. We can cross the street in Joseph again. And getting a meal at your favorite restaurant doesn't require a long wait. Finally, we can all relax.

Oh, wait. The fair starts this week.

For most of us, Chief Joseph Days is one of summer's most eagerly anticipated events. For some, that's because it's the time they choose to go backpacking to be far, far away from the traffic, tumult, and maddening crowds. For others, there's joy and camaraderie when the cowboys come to town. For the volunteers—and it's all volunteers—there's hard work and long hours, and a rodeo too-often witnessed only remotely—courtesy of the announcer's voice on the loudspeakers. For Terry Jones, there's a whole lot of exercise and fence-climbing every time he opens one of those chute gates. It's a mid-summer community party, albeit sometimes a raucous one, that celebrates the ranching roots of Wallowa County.



Ellen Morris Bishop

Tuckerettes present dual American flags at the 2018 Chief Joseph Days.

Like virtually all rodeos, Chief Joseph Days honors the American flag and celebrates patriotism. On Saturday, many in the sold-out stands quietly joined in with Jessie Borgerding's beautiful and inspiring rendition of the Star Spangled Banner. The

preceding PRCA video recounted the long and proud tradition of our military's defense of the American flag. But for all its good intentions, the video fell a bit short. Those who gave their lives were not defending just a flag. They were defending the people

of the United States and specifically the precious freedoms guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence — that all men are created equal — and the U.S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights which specifies the right to free speech, a free press, to freedom of religion, and the right to peacefully assemble. Those freedoms importantly include the right to bear arms, the freedom from unwarranted arrests, and the right to due process of law.

This is a lot to include in a three-minute video. And it's likely that we are all thinking of these things while we are standing hands over hearts, remembering, what the American flag really stands for.

As a nation, and even as a community, we are no strangers to divisiveness. But we have overcome divisiveness in the past and we can now and in the future. The American flag is a symbol we all revere. We need only remember what it actually stands for.

Rodeo announcer Jody Carper expressed this well when he said "The trouble with Congress is that they are too busy being Democrats and Republicans and they've forgotten that they are Americans." We are, after all, a nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

## The case of the purloined dreadnought

All units, be on the lookout for a hot Gallagher Dreadnought guitar, swiped from the Fishtrap writers gathering just a few weeks ago. This guitar belonged to Frank Conley, one of the pillars of the early Fishtrap years. Is pillar too strong of a word? I don't believe it is. When I started loitering around Fishtrap in the late '90s, Frank and Rich Wandschneider ran the show, and it was pretty magical. Still is, of course. Fishtrap 2.0 continues the tradition. But I recall sitting in meetings back then as a community board member and Rich would conjure up a grand scheme or a bold vision and everybody would say, yeah, that sounds amazing — pause — then someone would raise their hand and ask if there were enough funds to pull it off. All eyes would turn to Frank, the nuts and bolts guy of the operation, who would be frowning at the financial statement. Rich would say, Oh, there's never enough money, but we always figure it out. And he was right.

Rich and Frank reminded me very much of an Oscar and Felix dynamic, set in the world of a scrappy literary non-profit in the mountains of Oregon. Rich would see a shape in the clouds, Frank would convert that into budget numbers, battery cables were hooked up to a network of creative folks who also wanted to see this happen and, by golly, that notion out of the ether would appear in little ol' Joseph, Oregon. It was really something to behold.

Frank had these great little fun facts about nature stuff in Wallowa County to close out meetings for the good of the order. He was a naturalist and fishing guide, knew an awful lot about butterflies as I recall, and was just so good at distilling what makes the Wallowas special that you wanted to leave that meeting room and go wander up the nearest trail to take it all in. I was doing a variety show on the radio at the time and said, Frank, hey, we should do these on the radio. Come in and record these little nature nuggets and they'll be perfect to close out the show. He said let's do it. I was jazzed.



AND FURTHERMORE  
Jon Rombach

Later he called to say he wouldn't be able to do the radio thing after all. I cajoled and said, Aw, c'mon man and all that. But it was no-go. And it wasn't too long afterwards I learned that Frank had run into a serious health issue and then that was it. Frank Conley isn't with us anymore.

But his guitar was.

Music was another talent of Frank's, and his guitar lived on at Fishtrap. Every year that guitar attended the writers gathering to be played, enjoyed, strummed, picked and reverberated. The rest of the year it lives — lived — in the Fishtrap house, where Janis Carper and Mike Midlo would pick it up and make pretty sounds come out of it, in between the work of helping run Fishtrap these days along with Shannon, BoDean, Cam and Whitney. Such a nice, simple, fitting, touching legacy. I'm so angry about this guitar being ripped off.

So here's my offer, whoever you are that walked off with Frank's guitar from the Wallowa Lake Lodge sometime on Saturday, July 13 or early Sunday. I'll buy

it back from you. Unless it has dawned on you that taking something that's not yours is not nice, in which case you can tiptoe up to the back porch of the Fishtrap house under the cover of night and leave the guitar propped against the house where it belongs. The address there is 400 East Grant Street in Enterprise.

Or I'll pay a ransom. Frank was also really good at doing taxes, which he was kind enough to help me with back in the day and his talent for knowing what to do with a 1099 surely saved me some money. Seems like a good time to put that money to use. Guitar stealer, I suggest you set up an anonymous email account and send me your terms to the new email I just set up, [purloineddreadnought@musician.org](mailto:purloineddreadnought@musician.org). We can do the exchange under a bridge or something. Seriously. I want to buy it back. That email works. I just tested it. Stealing this guitar is about the worst course of action you could devise for your karmic credit line. Saint Peter just yanks a lever to open the trap door straight to Hades when something like this pops up on your resume. Let's make a deal.

Everybody else, if you see a suspicious Gallagher Dreadnought guitar floating around, or have a tip, send out the alert. The ransom fund will work just as well as reward money. I'd love to see and hear this guitar back home.

Jon Rombach is a local columnist for the Chieftain. His stolen guitar hotline is [purloineddreadnought@musician.org](mailto:purloineddreadnought@musician.org).



## LETTERS to the EDITOR

### Timber/Grazing zone IS for Timber/Grazing

The Letter to the Editor authored by Rodney and Linda Botts (July 23, 2019) corrected several factual inaccuracies in Mr. Tool's article concerning Mr. McKee's aborted conditional use permit application to build a campground on Timber Grazing zoned land. Not mentioned was that 24 county residents showed up for the May 28 Wallowa County Planning Commission meeting scheduled to hear Mr. McKee's proposal. This robust turnout, along with over 50 letters of opposition noted by Botts, sends a clear message that encroachment of non-agricultural commercial interests into agricultural lands are unwelcome and will meet stiff headwinds. Protection against such encroachment is rooted in the stated goals and policies of the county's Comprehensive Plan that aims "to preserve and maintain agricultural lands" and "preserve the scenic attractiveness and living conditions desirable to farm families and other county residents." The commitment of our county Commissioners to realizing these objectives is codified in Article 16 of the county's land use Ordinance, stating that "The intention of the Timber Grazing Zone is to guarantee the preservation of the areas so classified for farm and forest use free from conflicting non-farm, non-forest use." Mr. McKee wisely withdrew his application for the aforementioned conditional use permit. The effort was not wasted because valuable lessons were learned along the way. First, threats to develop agricultural land for non-agricultural commercial interests are very real and may increase with time. Second, a coalition of residents willing to voice their concerns can effectively repel such threats.

Miles and Yun McFall  
Joseph

## BPA power rates to hold steady for the 2020-21 fiscal year

By Jessica Pollard  
East Oregonian

PORTLAND — The Bonneville Power Administration, which provides wholesale power to Umatilla Electric Company, Hermiston Energy Services, Pacific Power and other area utilities, has reported that the average wholesale base power cost will remain flat for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

The cost will remain at \$35.62 per megawatt-hour.

"If we have rate changes, it doesn't necessarily mean there will be changes to your

retail rate," said Maryam Habibi, a public affairs specialist for BPA.

Habibi said that retail rates are determined by local utilities, and while the average cost will remain flat, some products will experience a rate change.

Flattening the base power rate was made possible by reductions totaling \$66 million in projected program costs.

Last year, the BPA's Integrative Program Review accrued \$56 million in savings, in part due to a \$30 million annual reduction to Fish and Wildlife program expenses.

There is an increasing chance, however,

that the average rate could rise by 1.5% — below the rate of inflation — in the future due to a surcharge that will initiate if the BPA has less than 60 days worth of money for both its power and transmission lines.

"When BPA makes a change in their rates, it becomes one of the many factors that go into figuring out our rates," said Tom Gaunt, a spokesman for Pacific Power. "Any BPA rate (change) should not have any major effect on people who get their power from us."

Starting Oct. 1, with interim federal approval, BPA's average transmission rate

will increase by 3.6%, which was lower than initial estimates.

Earlier this week, the *Seattle Times* reported that BPA had raised its rates by 30% over the last nine years, and that some regional public utility executives are considering other producers as contracts expire in 2028.

"Through collaboration with our customers and partners throughout the region, we have worked hard to bend the cost curve and keep base power rates flat," BPA Administrator Elliot Mainzer said in a recent press release.

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