



THE WEEK IN PHOTOS
LOCAL, A15

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



136th Year, No. 31

WINNER OF THE 2020 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

Wednesday, November 11, 2020

Wallowa County Voices



Matt Kurtz
Joseph

Observe the 'Golden Rule'

JOSEPH — Matt Kurtz has only lived in Joseph about six months, but has lived in Wallowa County his entire life.

The father of two nearly grown sons, he drives a truck hauling fuel from Portland to Wallowa County.

"A lot of the gasoline and diesel that gets used here in Wallowa County, I bring it," he said.

He also has a brother, sister and girlfriend here.

What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

There are so many things. I love the culture. I love the people. I love the natural beauty. I don't think I can pinpoint one between those things. Between the wonderful people and the physical beauty, it's my favorite place on Earth.

Did you vote Nov. 3?

I did, yeah.

What did you think of the outcome of the mayoral race where incumbent Teresa Sajonia lost to Belinda Buswell?

I know Teresa and I like her. I don't know Belinda; I've never met her so I don't have much of an opinion on her.

What do you think of the city passing a 3% tax on marijuana sales?

I'm for that tax, but I'm also for people's right to, for the most part, to do what they want when it comes to issues like that. But I think it's not such a bad thing that we have so-called "sin taxes," as well. I'm happy that people can have the freedom to do as they please with their own bodies, but I think it's OK if you take a little off the top to fund programs with it.

Another ballot issue was to direct the county commissioners to consider the pros and cons of making the county a part of Idaho. How do you feel about it failing?

I'm opposed to moving the county into Idaho. I'm a proud Oregonian. I like this state. I don't agree with everything politically in Oregon, but I do enjoy being an Oregonian.

What's your advice for people who are thinking about moving here?

I'm not real big on telling people what to do. The Golden Rule: Be kind to one another and treat people as you'd want to be treated. One of the other things I like about Wallowa County is that regardless of our differences, for the most part people respect one another around here. We respect the right to live how we want to live without others telling us how to do it. So I'd advise folks coming here to please, do the same. But again, I don't want to tell anyone what to do.

— *Bill Bradshaw, Wallowa County Chieftain*

Remembering the 'FORGOTTEN WAR'

Bill Norman was at 'Frozen Chosin' with Marine Corps

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — It may have been dubbed "the forgotten war," but 90-year-old Bill Norman has never forgotten it.

"We didn't think so, the ones who were there," the Wallowa County Senior Living resident said. "Nobody who was in Korea has forgotten it, that's for sure. You were in a country where you got worms. ... There was a lot of man-made disease."

While World War II a few years earlier may have been bigger and Vietnam a decade later was more controversial, veterans of the "police action" in Korea, as then-President Harry S. Truman dubbed it, always remember. The war ran from June 1950 to July 1953 in what was the hottest of the early Cold War conflicts.

"We haven't forgotten it," the Marine Corps veteran said.

And that's not to mention the combat.

"You've heard of 'Frozen Chosin'? We were trapped up there," Norman said. "We had to fight our way out of there when it got down to 50 below. We lost a lot of guys whose fingers and toes were frozen. We had no trucks to haul the wounded. But that's all we could bring out because we didn't have enough trucks to bring everyone out. So we got the wounded out, and then got up on the mountain there."

He was referring to the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, where United Nations troops were nearly surrounded in a fight that lasted from late-November to mid-December 1950.

He also has not forgotten the most-decorated-ever Marine who led them.

"Heard of Chesty Puller? He was our commander," Norman said.

Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller was a career Marine Corps officer who enlisted near the end of World War I, began fighting guerrillas during the "Banana Wars" in the 1920s and 1930s and went on to serve with distinction in World War II and Korea. Puller retired from the Marine Corps in 1955.

It was during "Frozen Chosin" that Puller said the famous line, "We've been looking for the enemy for some time now. We've

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Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County Senior Living resident Bill Norman gets wistful when recalling his Korean War service with the U.S. Marine Corps. "I always think the politicians are the ones who ought to go to war," he says.



Bill Norman/Contributed Photo

Bill Norman's training platoon poses at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. Norman said he and others who trained together used to hold reunions, but that ended about 25 years ago as their numbers dwindled.

2020 ELECTION

Buswell unseats Sajonia, will lead city of Joseph

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Joseph will have a new mayor with the new year, as challenger Belinda Buswell defeated incumbent Teresa Sajonia, 437-327, in the 2020 general election on Tuesday, Nov. 3.

"I was pleasantly pleased that the citizens of Joseph got what they wanted," Buswell said. "I was very humbled."

She said she had been approached by about 20 different friends and residents of Joseph to pitch her hat in the mayoral ring.

"I'm a bit overwhelmed. When they approached me and asked me to run, I took a step back and asked, 'Are you sure you want me?'" she said, adding that they told her, "We need someone who can win."

Among Buswell's first orders of business are to "get the city operating on an ethical and transparent manner," she said. She also wants to take a good look at the water and sewer plan projects the city is undertaking.

A former city recorder until her job was eliminated in July,

Buswell has lived in the area her whole life.

Sajonia declined to return calls for comment.

In the other contested race in Wallowa County, that for Enterprise City Council Seat No. 6, Rick Freeman beat Rob Taylor 473-397.

"I'm very honored the people put their trust in me and I'm looking forward to making a difference," Freeman said. "I'm glad to be back where I grew up, and look forward to serve the county I love."

Freeman said he has nothing in particular on his agenda.

"I just want to help out and do best I can," he said.

Taylor was gracious in defeat, commenting on what a close election it was.

"I stopped into his store and we wished each other luck," he said. "I felt whoever won would do good job. I'm glad to know Rick is going to be serving in that position."

He said he will continue to volunteer in the city as he has in the past.

"The city does have some

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Enterprise school bond, Joseph marijuana, pass

By **KATY NESBITT** and **RONALD BOND**
EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE — Enterprise voters passed the \$4 million levy Tuesday, Nov. 3, approving the funds to conduct repairs at the school district — funds that will be matched.

"I am incredibly grateful for our community's support and their investment in their schools," Superintendent Erika Pinkerton said.

The bond passed with nearly 57% of the vote with 1,222 yes votes to 927 no votes.

The money raised through a bond will pay for what Pinkerton called a much-needed roof as well as other repairs to make the school more accessible and safer for students, staff and visitors.

The bond also will pay for asbestos abatement, remodeled locker rooms and updates to the science rooms. Much of the work will begin as early as next summer.

Pinkerton said the day after the election she would be posting a request for proposal for a project manager to oversee

the construction.

"To the community — we are humbled by your vote of confidence and your investment," said Heather Melville, a school board member.

An investment in the school's education and infrastructure is never wasted, Melville said.

"We can now use the \$4 million OSCIM grant match to ease the overall financial burden to our community," Melville said. "We have a lot of work ahead, but we will be smiling all night long, for sure."

The city of Joseph, meanwhile, overwhelmingly passed ballot measure 32-004, placing a 3% tax on marijuana sales within the city.

The initial count saw the measure winning with about 73% of the vote, 575-211.

A race that was nearly a dead heat — the measure requiring county commissioners to discuss the pros and cons of Wallowa County joining Idaho — fell by fewer than 50 votes. The measure received 2,519 no votes, and 2,478 yes votes.

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