

Wallowa County Voices



Casidee Harrod
Enterprise

Rodeo queen heavily involved

ENTERPRISE — Casidee Harrod has lived in Enterprise most of her young life — the past 12 years — and now is a senior at Enterprise High School.

After she graduates this year, she hopes to go on to Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls to become a dental hygienist and return here to practice once she gets her certification.

"I just love this county. I like everybody who lives here and I want to help support the community," she said.

Her dad, Ron Harrod, manages the Wallowa Fish Hatchery in Enterprise and her mom, Cheryl Harrod, works at a bank in Joseph. Her older brother, Boone, also lives and works here.

She recently shared her thoughts about living in Wallowa County.

What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

Definitely, I'd say it's the supportive community. I've been involved in a lot of things here, actually I'm one of the Chief Joseph Days royalty and everybody's super-supportive with all of that. I've been involved in 4-H with horses and livestock, I've played basketball since I was a fifth-grader and I've played volleyball and I'm the president of FFA for Enterprise.

What challenges do you believe Wallowa County faces?

With youth members who sell animals at the fair, I hope we always have enough support of people buying all the animals so that it can keep going.

Now that the pandemic has been going on about a year, how has it affected you?

It's affected me in a lot of ways. Being a senior in high school, it's affected a lot of activities for youths, it's affected all my rodeo seasons, it took away my sports seasons and all that.

Do you plan to get the vaccine against COVID-19 as soon as you can?

I don't know. I will definitely get it if it means I can go to college, but I don't know. ... It's super new and kind of risky, so I don't know.

What have you learned from living in Wallowa County?

I've learned what a small community can do. There's not a lot of things for youths to do if you're not involved with animals and agriculture. I think it's important for our community to be supportive of all the things that the youths can do.

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

It's a beautiful place to visit. I would love to keep the community small and not turn it into a big area. I am super for people coming to visit to support our small businesses, but I don't know about people moving here.

— Bill Bradshaw,
Wallowa County Chieftain



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County Sheriff Joel Fish, right foreground, watches as Deputy Jeff Baty hands a bag containing the ashes of late 911 dispatcher and Reserve Deputy Bret Bridges to Bridges' parents, Dolores and David Bridges, at their Joseph home Friday, March 12, 2021. Fish and Baty escorted the ashes home from Portland, where Bridges died March 2 of COVID-19.

Latest COVID victim honored by officers

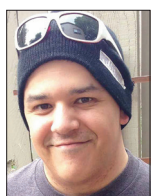
Bret Bridges gets 'last call' on 911; ashes get police escort

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — The ashes of a 911 dispatcher and reserve Wallowa County deputy were delivered by police escort to his parents' Joseph home Friday, March 12, and a special "last call" over the county's 911 system was issued for Bret Bridges.

The 47-year-old Bridges died March 2 at Portland's Legacy Emanuel Medical Center after testing positive for COVID-19 on Jan. 25. He reportedly had underlying issues, according to a press release from the Oregon Health Authority.

The "last call" was to be



Bridges



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

An escort of police and other emergency vehicles arrives at the Joseph home of David and Dolores Bridges bearing the ashes of their son, Bret Bridges, a 911 dispatcher and reserve deputy who died in Portland on March 2 of COVID-19.

issued at 1 p.m. Tuesday.

"It's a very honorable thing to do in the 911 world," said Brenda Micka, administrative services director for Wallowa County. "We've lost one of our own. It's nice to do that, to do the 'last call' on the radio."

On Friday, Sheriff Joel Fish and Deputy Jeff Baty went to Portland to retrieve Bridges' ashes. They were joined by other local law enforcement and emergency vehicles once they arrived

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Wallowa coach resigns amid official complaint

Outcome of complaint filed by football team in review

By **ELLEN MORRIS BISHOP**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — Wallowa High School Principal David Howe resigned his position as the school's girls basketball coach Monday night, March 15, in the face of an official complaint filed by the school's football team with the Wallowa superintendent of schools March 2.

The outcome of the complaint is pending and still in review.

Head football coach Matt Brockamp, Wallowa Superintendent of Schools Tammy Jones and Wallowa School Board Chairman Woody Wolfe all declined to comment or provide the *Chieftain* with the text of the March 2 complaint or a second complaint filed with the school board on March 8.

"My duties as principal and my duties as the girls basketball coach seem to be in conflict with each other and therefore I will be resigning my position as girls basketball coach, effective immediately," Howe said in a prepared statement to the Wallowa School Board on Monday, March 15.

Howe's resignation was precipitated by the complaint as well as allegations of encouraging and supporting Wallowa High School athletes to participate in high school tournaments in Idaho earlier this year. Under Oregon School Activities Association rules, participation in out-of-state sports events requires student athletes to self-quarantine for two weeks after the out-of-state games. Brockamp had protested Howe's action, out of concern that students who participated in the Idaho basketball games would not be able to play the first, and possibly other games in Wallowa's short, five-game football season.

"As a head coach, I made my concerns known to WHS about unsanctioned, out-of-state basketball tournaments jeopardizing our opportunity to play an OSAA-sanctioned football season," Brockamp stated at an emotion-charged school board meeting March 8. At that meeting he called for "... a fundamental change in Wallowa

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Young gamer is programming his own

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — While the picture of a young gamer that often comes to mind is a 30-year-old living in his parents' basement spending all day playing computer games, Enterprise's Shepherd Newton is far from that.

For one, he's a 12-year-old sixth-grader. Second, he not only plays games, he's already created one and has a business model in mind for how he can make a career of it.

"I consider myself a 'dev' because I haven't earned the 'eloper' yet," he said during an interview Wednesday, March 10. "I have to successfully sell a game to earn the 'eloper'."

He explained he's working at becoming a developer of computer games — and possibly other programs — that could earn a tidy living.

In fact, he comes by his interest naturally. His dad, Tim Newton, is a professional, work-from-home programmer who currently is helping school districts around the country — and the world — with software that helps them send their data to departments of education and management. Now, he is working with the California Department of Pub-



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Having already learned much of computer programming on his own and from his programmer father, Tim Newton, 12, already is expecting he won't have need for college. "All I need is tutorials," he said. "Actually, I might go to college just to get the degree."

lic Health with COVID-19 support calls.

Mom Crystal Newton is a graphic artist and online marketer.

Both parents are extremely supportive of Shepherd's endeavors.

"It's very encouraging to see him doing computer development as opposed to seeing just word processing or just playing computer games," Tim said. "He's actually creating something that could be

useful or foundational for later on. It demonstrates how early someone can begin developing."

Noting that Shepherd already has a business plan in mind that many independent developers use, Crystal told some of what he's learned.

"It's not just for games," she said. "(Developers) will talk about a product they're developing and post information in videos on YouTube, they'll gather subscribers, then they'll start a Patreon account to get themselves support for what they're doing. They'll get subscribers to pay something — normally something low, like \$5, but if you get 100,000 people giving you \$5 a month, you're doing well."

Shepherd isn't far behind figuring out what that's worth.

"And that's \$500,000 a month," he said.

In January, he participated in a "game jam" — short for game jam session — a contest where participants try to make a video game from scratch working independently or in teams. Contests usually last from 24 to 72 hours. Participants are generally programmers, game designers, artists, writers and others in game development-related fields.

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