

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN

137th Year, No. 1

WINNER OF THE 2020 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Wallowa County Voices



Sheena Nebergall
Enterprise

She just got her kids back

Enterprise — Although born in Texas, Sheena Nebergall has lived most of her life in Wallowa County. And, she has good reason to call the county home.

Not only do her grandparents live here, she kept the county as a home base when her two middle children were kidnapped by their father for five years. Last year, they were found with him and his girlfriend in Florida and after a bit of a struggle with the state of Florida, Nebergall got them back in December.

Married to Jeremy Dodd, they also have a 15-year-old and a 5-year-old. Dodd works for Eastern Oregon Landscaping.

Their four children keep them busy, Nebergall said.

"What else is there to do here in the mountains?" she said. "It's been wild, but it's been fun."

Nebergall works at Wallowa Valley Senior Living as a medication tech and got her COVID-19 vaccine early.

She recently shared her thoughts about living in Wallowa County.

What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

The mountains. Some things always change, but they never change.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you?

Since I work in an assisted living center, I have to wear a mask and a face shield all the time. They just released us from the face shield and have started letting more people in.

Which COVID vaccine did you get and how did it go?

The Moderna. I had no symptoms except a sore arm.

What have you learned from living in Wallowa County?

Don't sweat the small stuff. Slow down.

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

Don't bring your city ways to our little town.

— Bill Bradshaw,
Wallowa County Chieftain



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

World War II and Korean War veteran Lee Cutler stands on his front porch in Joseph on his 96th birthday Thursday, April 8, 2021, after receiving a U.S. flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol and a new Marine Corps flag honoring his service and his birthday.

'I was lucky'

WWII vet missed the worst of the action

Lee Cutler values time spent in Marine Corps, Army

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — To honor his military service and his 96th birthday, one of Wallowa County's last World War II and Korean War veterans, Lee Cutler, was presented Thursday, April 8, with a U.S. flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol and with a new Marine Corps flag.

Cutler has flown one of each from a pole outside his Joseph home for years.

Glenn Smith, a community health care worker from Winding Waters, said Cutler "displays his flag proudly," but they're getting worn so they were being replaced.

Kim Hutchison, president of the Eagle Cap Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, made the presentation of the flags Thursday. The national flag was obtained by U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Oregon, to honor Cutler's service and his birthday.

A couple dozen or more people joined Hutchison during the presentation, including fellow veterans, county Commissioner Susan Roberts, Joseph Mayor Belinda Buswell



U.S. Navy/Contributed Photo

The Curtiss Helldiver, a two-seat scout bomber and dive bomber, was the first airplane Lee Cutler flew in during his World War II service with the U.S. Marine Corps.

and members of the Joseph Fire Department — complete with a fire truck with lights flashing.

Hutchison said the honor was prompted by Smith.

"The driving force behind this is one of the care team and he got it from a local congressman," Hutchison said.

While Cutler values his time in the military, he doesn't see his service as particularly heroic. Although his unit followed in the steps of much of the island-hopping campaign to drive the Japanese out of territory they'd conquered in the Pacific, he didn't see any serious action.

"We seemed to be just one step behind everybody," he said. "We weren't there when they took the island; we were there after for the

mop-up operations. I always said I was lucky."

He added that most veterans don't want to discuss the horrors of war and he's no different. But he was fortunate in not having to witness much.

"I didn't do much fighting," he said.

Cutler admits his memory isn't what it used to be, but he does recall much from boot camp. The Detroit, Michigan, native took a train to San Diego after enlisting in late 1942 — with his parents' consent — at age 17. It was at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot he learned some valuable lessons.

"I thought it was all a big game at first until a sergeant came out one

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County rejects state contract for mental health funding

Proposed contract would put county on the liability hook

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — A lengthy intergovernmental agreement between the state and Wallowa County was rejected by the county commissioners Wednesday, April 7, upon advice of county Counsel Paige Sully.

The approximately half-inch-thick document would have detailed how the county would receive state Department of Human Services funds for community developmental disabilities services. That is usually handled through a third-party subcontractor, the Wallowa Valley Center for



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County Counsel Paige Sully, left, advises the county commissioner, against signing an intergovernmental agreement with the state, while Brenda Micka, center, and Commissioner John Hillock listen Wednesday, April 7, 2021.

Wellness, which handles mental health and addiction treatment here.

But after a thorough review of the contract, Sully advised the commissioners to reject it.

"We are responsible, whether we perform these services or whether we subcontract them out to a third party," Sully said. "As with most of these contracts, the money comes to us and we

have an obligation to pay it, regardless of whether we get the required reporting from the subcontractor."

She said the proposed contract makes no allowances for county expenses.

"This contract, in particular, doesn't even provide any administrative costs to the county; we don't get paid at all for monitoring this contract," she said.

Under the proposed contract, if the county makes a payment to the subcontractor and doesn't get accountability reports back, the state "becomes unhappy with county," Sully said. "We're on the hook for repaying the state."

She read a portion of the contract that discussed the state subcontracting directly with a vendor.

"I think that's exactly what they should do," she said. "Let the state subcontract with the vendor and then they could pay, they could monitor compliance and we are totally out of the middle on this thing. ... We

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OHA urges halt of J&J vaccine

Chieftain staff

SALEM — The Oregon Health Authority has asked all of the state's vaccine providers to immediately stop administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, after an announcement from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Federal Drug Administration early Tuesday, April 13.

All the health authorities note this move is out of an abundance of caution as the CDC and FDA review six cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot in women ages 18-48 after vaccination with the J&J vaccine. The FDA said the adverse events currently seem to be extremely rare. It noted that through Monday, there have been 6.8 million doses of the one-shot J&J vaccine administered nationwide.

The press release from the FDA states that the blood clot in this case was called a cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST), and the patients also had low levels of blood platelets, a condition called thrombocytopenia. These effects happened 6-13 days of the vaccine being administered, according to the FDA.

"CDC will convene a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) on Wednesday to further review these cases and assess their potential significance," the press release stated. "FDA will review that analysis as it also investigates these cases. Until that process is complete, we are recommending a pause in the use of this vaccine out of an abundance of caution."

"People who have received the J&J vaccine who develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination should contact their health care provider," the release also stated.

The OHA will be sending out more detailed information soon.

