

Open house creates memories at the lake

Camp for disabled children opens its doors

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA LAKE — Memories were created Saturday, May 29, when the Creating Memories for Disabled Children camp held a Founders Day open house attended by more than 100 people.

“It’s just an open house for people to come and see the place,” said Jack Burgoyne, a Creating Memories board member. “We’ve had it closed for so many years. Now we’re open up to the public; people have complained that we closed the way to walk to the falls ... but you couldn’t open it to some people and not others.”

In fact, the former Boy Scout camp with a trail to Wallowa Falls remains closed to the public, since its primary purpose is to provide a place for an outdoors vacation for the disabled.

“It’s not just for kids; it’s families,” Burgoyne said.

Creating Memories began as a nonprofit in 2012. The group took over the former Scout camp in 2014 and has a 50-year lease on the property with an option for another 50-year lease from the Blue Mountain Council of the Boy Scouts.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Music provided by a group organized by Jay Connolly, owner of J’s Place in Enterprise, entertained the more-than 100 people who turned out Saturday, May 29, 2021, for the Founders Day event at the Creating Memories for Disabled Children camp above Wallowa Lake.

A founder

The organization to assist disabled children can be traced back to 1960, when Ken Coreson, one of the founders of Creating Memories, worked to do just that in Alaska, taking kids hunting and fishing.

“That’s been my whole career,” Coreson said Saturday.

He dismissed the idea of being honored as a founder.

“They just want somebody to blame when something goes wrong,” he joked.

He moved to Oregon in about 2004 and his work with children developed

into Creating Memories in 2012.

Work to rebuild

But when the nonprofit took over the camp, it had deteriorated after years of neglect.

“We’ve had the park closed because when we took it over, there was a lot of graffiti written on the walls, there’d been a campfire set in the lodge, the walls were all blackened from smoke,” Burgoyne said. “It was terrible.”

Now, they have three A-frame cabins and five tepees that can be used by handicapped children and

their families. One of the A-frames and the lodge are still works in progress.

“We’re looking at about \$350,000 to finish it,” Burgoyne said of the lodge.

The lodge and the cabins are being completely refurbished, mostly through donations of cash and volunteer labor, although some specialized work has been done by contractors.

“We basically gutted out all the cabins ... they’re named after different people,” Burgoyne said.

One of the cabins, called Jenny’s Cabin, is named for Jenny Spaur who was killed at 10 years old.

“Her folks have taken on refurbishing that cabin,” he said.

Karen’s Cabin is named for the daughter of a woman killed in a car crash between Enterprise and Joseph. Her family donated \$17,000 to refurbish the cabin.

Scarlett’s Cabin is named for Scarlett Russell, a preemie twin died when she was just 4-5 days old, Burgoyne said.

Contact for a stay

He said families can contact him online to reserve a free stay at the camp. All they need to do is bring their own bedding, towels and food. In addition to the lodging in a beautiful forested campground alongside the upper Wallowa River, there is a pontoon boat that takes visitors out on Wallowa Lake from the nearby marina for fishing or just a ride on the water.

For those who are able, a short hike to Wallowa Falls is nearby.

“We have taken some hunting; we have kids who want to go hunting,” Burgoyne added.

In fact, some of the disabled have become volunteers. One youth, who lost both arms in a hay-baling accident at age 17, now helps at Creating Memories’ fishing derby on Brownlee Reservoir. Equipped with prosthetic arms, he helps run the derby including tying fishing tackle.

On Saturday, one handicapped boy was packed in on his father’s back and another handicapped man who serves on the group’s board, joined as a singer with a seven-person band organized by Jay Connolly, owner of J’s Place in Enterprise. After listening to the music for a while, many enjoyed a free barbecue of hamburgers and hot dogs.

Burgoyne said he believes the lower-than-hoped-for turnout was largely because the event was scheduled for the same day Wallowa County schools held their graduations.

“Doing it on graduation weekend was a big mistake,” he said. “We won’t do that again.”

However, he did deem the event a success.

“It was successful because people saw for first time and said, ‘What can I do to help?’,” he said.

In fact, Creating Memories received cash or pledged donations and offers of volunteer labor. Others signed up with their email addresses to help at the camp or on the pontoon boat on the lake.

But the main thing was to show what’s available at the camp for the handicapped and their families.

“It’s a great thing for families of children with special needs,” Burgoyne said.

For more information, call Burgoyne at 541-398-0169 or visit the camp’s Facebook page.

Iwo Jima memorial makes stop in Wallowa

By **RONALD BOND**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — A wooden carved replica of the Iwo Jima flag-raising during World War II was on display in Wallowa during Memorial Day weekend.

But for those who missed it, it will be back soon.

Laureano Mier, owner of Milenckos Aero Cafe in Wallowa, had the wood carving displayed in front of his cafe and museum on the corner of East 1st Street and Holmes on the east edge of town.

“It’s an honor,” Mier said. “It’s truly an honor to be able to display that here in Wallowa, Oregon.”

The wood carving, done in about 2008 or 2009 by Jesse Leavitt, is a memorial to World War II veteran Howard “Stubbs” Brandon. Brandon was not among the six individuals who raised the flag on Iwo Jima on Feb. 23, 1945 — forever immortalized in the iconic photo — but was among those who died fighting on Iwo Jima, being killed in



Ronald Bond/Wallowa County Chieftain

A wood-carved memorial of the flag-raising at Iwo Jima was on display over Memorial Day weekend at Milenckos Aero Cafe in Wallowa.

action two weeks later on March 9.

His sacrifice inspired his brother, P.E. “Gunny” Brandon, who went on to have a decorated military career in the Marines and who fought in numerous conflicts.

Mier called Gunny Brandon, who died in 2016, a

“very dear friend.” He said the Brandon family wanted the memorial put on display, and Mier was more than happy to have it up in Wallowa.

“A very special thank you to the Brandon family and their estate for letting us display this rich Marine Corps history here in Wallowa, Oregon,” he said.

The carving was one of two on display for the weekend tied to Gunny Brandon. The other — of soldiers saluting Marilyn Monroe — is in the back of Brandon’s personal vehicle from the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines.

Mier has more items connected to both Brandons, too.

“We also have the original notification to the family, the telegraph” of Stubbs

Brandon’s death at Iwo Jima, Mier said. He also has a copy of Gunny Brandon’s book, “Gunny,” which he wrote late in his life.

“Our whole focus here is kids and family, and sharing history,” Mier said of Milenckos. “Rich American history. That’s critical.”

Mier said the Iwo Jima Memorial to Howard Brandon will be on display again on Independence Day.

“We’ll be bringing it back on the Fourth of July,” he said. “One of the things the Brandon family loves, and so did Gunny, was parades, and celebrating American history. They are very happy to know that his history and the history of Howard ‘Stubbs’ Brandon is being shared in the all-American city of Wallowa.”

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IN BRIEF

Commissioners to consider routine items

ENTERPRISE — Several routine matters are on the agenda for the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners at its Wednesday, June 2, meeting.

The meeting begins at 9 a.m. at the courthouse.

The commissioners are expected to:

- Accept the resignation of Mackenzie Walters from the county Planning Department.
- Consider a resolution to appoint Garrett Lowe to the Wallowa Railroad Authority Board of Directors.
- Consider two permit applications for easements, for Andy Munsey on Golf Course Road and for John Harris on Lake Shore Drive.

— Chieftain staff

While gambling can be fun, it also carries risk. In Oregon, over 84,000 adults meet the criteria of a problem gambling disorder. Reflecting on your personal gambling behaviors and those of others is important. There are many resources available through the Oregon Problem Gambling Resources to learn how to prevent gambling problems, how to recognize signs or symptoms of a problem, and how to get help for yourself or a loved one

#ReflectResourceRenew

Tips for Having Conversation with Adults About Gambling Behaviors:

- * Show concern - Let them know you care about them and are concerned.
- * Keep talking - Let them know exactly how their gambling behavior concerns you.
- * Discuss the impact - Let them know how their behavior is impacting you and others. Be specific.
- * Set clear expectations - “I want you to talk to someone about your gambling and what they can expect from you - I won’t cover for you anymore.”
- * Listen - Approach the conversation with a non-judgmental attitude.
- * Be proactive - Let them know you are willing to help.
- * Provide information - Let the professionals provide the advice.
- * Provide encouragement - Give them the information to contact

OPGR.org or call the helpline at 1-877-MYLIMIT

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