

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



THE WEEK IN PHOTOS
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137th Year, No. 11

WINNER OF THE 2020 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

Wallowa County Voices



Debbie Lind
Wallowa

Retired librarian now into photography

ENTERPRISE — Now retired, Debbie Lind, of Wallowa, focuses on her photography these days.

Until a year ago, she was librarian at the Wallowa Public Library where she worked for 13 years. She's lived in the county since 1991 and in Wallowa since 1994.

But now she's more into photographs.

"Of course, I photograph Wallowa County in all its beauty," she said. "But I do fish, flowers, animals — I don't stick with just one genre, and even do people sometimes."

Debbie and husband, Ken, have a son and a daughter who were raised in Wallowa, and now live outside the county. They have four grandchildren by their daughter.

She recently shared her thoughts about living in Wallowa County.

What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

I like the no-rush, where there's no tall buildings. The "tall buildings" I refer to are our mountains, and they're beautiful. You can really have a comfort zone here with mountains instead of tall buildings.

What fun plans do you have in the county for this summer?

We're going to see our children; they're coming here for the Fourth of July. We haven't seen them since the pandemic. That'll be fun. That's our big treat for the summer so far.

What are your thoughts on the beginning of fire season?

It's scary. We live near Green Hill and fire is something we're concerned about. We live on what we call "Papa Bear's Forest," that my husband maintains.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you?

I'm a social person. I like to hug and I like to meet people. For me, it's been hard, I feel trapped sometimes. I'm glad to not have to wear masks. We got our shots and we feel we've done our part to stave off the pandemic.

What have you learned from living in Wallowa County?

The people who become your friends, like when you go into a store, most likely you're going to find someone in there who you know and is friendly. You can catch up on the day and how their life has been. It's not a sterile community. Also, we've adapted. If you want to buy a tomato, you've got to plan ahead and go to the store before it closes.

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

Try not to change the atmosphere of our county too much and what brought you here. Accept our atmosphere for why you came here.

— Bill Bradshaw,
Wallowa County Chieftain

Letter surfaces of accusation by Joseph councilor

Merchant denies claim made by Bingham, wants her removed

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — The dysfunction in Joseph City Hall continues.

Another executive session to deal with complaints against city officials and/or employees is scheduled for 5 p.m. Monday, June 28 at the Joseph Community Events Center. The executive session will be followed by an open session to make any decisions desired by the City Council.

The most recent complaint aired was a letter shared with the Chieftain on June 15 by local businessman Gary Bethscheider. The Feb. 21 letter states that Councilor Kathy Bingham accused Bethscheider of making an obscene gesture at her during a February council meeting.

"This past week, I was approached by Mayor (Belinda) Buswell, who made me aware that Kathy Bingham had accused me of 'flipping her off' at the last City Council meeting," Bethscheider's letter states. "Kathy made these false claims to (then) city Administrator Larry Braden days after the City Council meet-

ing. In turn, Larry asked Mayor Buswell to inquire further with me about this accusation."

In his letter, Bethscheider denied Bingham's accusation and repeated the denial in an interview with the Chieftain last week. In the letter, he said there were three other people with the same line of sight as Bingham who said they didn't see any such action.

In his letter, Bethscheider said he believes such a "false accusation" by Bingham is "absolutely unacceptable" and that Bingham should be removed from the council. He said such an accusation could damage his reputation both as a person and

as a businessman.

Bethscheider said in a June 18 email he has yet to hear from the city on his complaint against Bingham other than that the city is trying to investigate in in the "proper manner."

Bingham declined to comment on the issue. When contacted by phone on June 16, Bingham hung up. She did not respond to other emails and phone calls.

Buswell has not responded to emails and phone messages.

Following a June 3 executive session, Pro-Tem Administrator/Recorder Brock Eckstein said he

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A MEDLEY OF MUSTANGS



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Dawn Medley reins in "Girlfriend," Medley's wildest mare at Medley's Mustangs, the ranch she runs in the Imnaha Canyon with her husband, Eddy Medley, on Thursday, June 10, 2021. Girlfriend was only a couple of weeks out of the wild. The Medleys train wild horses and adopt them out to new owners.

Horse ranch in Imnaha rescues the overpopulated mustangs

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

IMNAHA CANYON — It's not the average horse that you'll find at Dawn and Eddy Medley's ranch in the Imnaha Canyon. In fact, it wasn't so long ago many of the horses were running wild as mustangs throughout the West.

"I love doing this because they (the mustangs) have no choice," says Dawn Medley, co-owner of Medley's Mustangs. "They lost their families, and that's what these horses are all about — family. I want to be able to connect them to a 'family' and to love them for as long as they live."

Medley's Mustangs is an operation just downriver from Imnaha that helps train and adopt out mustangs gathered from the overpopulated herds descended from once-domesticated horses brought to the New World by the Spanish. They've since reverted from their domesticated state to become feral animals — and their numbers are growing like crazy.

"The herds can double in four to five years if not managed properly," Dawn says. "You could have 1,000-1,200 horses where they say you could only manage 150-250 horses. Horses eat (available forage) straight down to the ground, unlike cows, where they'll leave some of the grass. (Horses) are pretty hard on the ground."



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

By nature skittish animals, horses often are uncomfortable having their heads and faces touched. Dawn Medley demonstrates how 4-year-old CoCo has been gentled to the point she can pet her Thursday, June 10, 2021, at Medley's Mustangs ranch, which she operates with husband, Eddy Medley, in the Imnaha Canyon.

Roaming largely on land managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management, regular attempts are made to cull the herds and find owners and trainers to take them under the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program. The Medleys' nearly 18-acre operation is one of those where they currently have a half-dozen or so horses.

"We originally started in September of 2018," Dawn says. "I became a TIP (Trainer Incentive Program) trainer and we got our first (mustang) in October, so through the Bureau of Land

Management, I'm basically a self-contractor. The BLM partners up with the Mustang Heritage Foundation and they help fund the program throughout the United States."

Overpopulation and slaughter

It's the rapid growth of the herds that makes for an issue involving both the government and horse lovers.

"They can double in four to five years," Dawn says.

For example, she says, at the Beatys Butte Herd Management

Area near Lakeview the last gather was in 2015. The BLM gathered 100 horses, removed 50 and returned 25 mares using fertility control. She adopted one in 2015.

In another herd, 1,500 were gathered in 2015 and returned only 100 — 60 studs and 40 mares to the range.

"Now, six years later, they're gathering them again," she says, though she's unsure of the herd's current numbers.

"There are a lot of horse advocates out there for the wild mustangs, too, who say, 'Hey, this is an American heritage, a living symbol of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West.' But you really have to look at it as overpopulation," she says. "It's just like with people. You have to manage it somehow or it's just going to get out of control. I don't want to say I believe in slaughter, but..."

Dawn said she's aware of three horse slaughterhouses in Canada and five in Mexico. The last three in the U.S. closed in 2007 under pressure from animal-rights groups. But was that the best solution?

"Even the loving horses that you've raised from birth, people will take quarter horses ... and unfortunately, there's a bad rap going on for the (BLM's Adoption Incentive Program) right now," Dawn says.

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