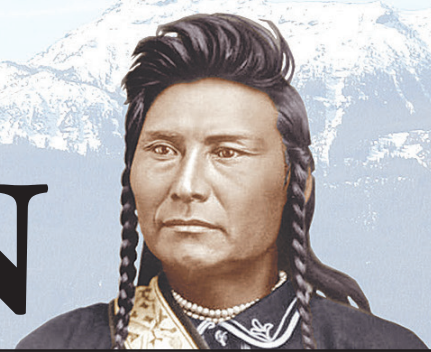




WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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Wallowa County Voices



Jim Pace
Enterprise

Favorite Christmas song is 'Silent Night'

ENTERPRISE — Jim Pace has lived in Enterprise his entire life, and he's not the first generation.

"This is home for me," he said. "My dad was born out on Prairie Creek."

Now retired, he worked for the Wallowa County Grain Growers for 45 years in a variety of capacities.

"Growing up here, I've known a lot of people and that's one thing I really enjoy about being here, all the people that I've grown up with, to be able to see them and how they're doing, along with the newcomers coming in, being able to meet them and see how they're doing, how they're adjusting to the community."

He and his wife, Leslie, who worked in medical billing for many years, have two daughters, a son and five grandchildren. Although some of the grandkids are nearing marriageable age, there aren't any great-grandkids yet.

"We're hoping it'll be a while longer," he said.

He recently shared his thoughts about living in Wallowa County.

What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

I enjoy looking out every day and thanking the Lord I get to live here.

What does Christmas mean to you?

A lot of things. Bringing back memories from when we were kids and creating new memories with our own families. And, of course, (it's about) the birth of Christ that we celebrate who came into this world to save us from our sins.

Do you have a favorite Christmas song? Why?

"Silent Night," it's one of those that actually brings everything to a head and relates the story of Christ and His birth and how we're to be reverent about it.

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

Leave everything they didn't like behind. Don't bring any bad baggage. Be kind to one another.

— Bill Bradshaw
Wallowa County Chieftain

Elane Dickenson

Remembering a county icon

Dickenson, a 36-year veteran reporter, died in November

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — For nearly 36 years — almost half of her lifetime — Elane Dickenson was synonymous with the Wallowa County Chieftain.

A native of Pendleton, Dickenson, who joined the Chieftain in 1978, dedicated her life to the newspaper, to the community that she called home and to her two children, Jenny (Blanchet) Herman and Matt Dickenson.

"Working at the Chieftain was really her life. She has been single since I was in the second grade. She raised my brother and I as a single mom," Herman said. "Everything was about the Chieftain and the two of us."

In the decades she served the paper and community, she gained an admiration of many as a reporter who carried herself with integrity, holding it tighter than the notepad and camera — first film and later digital — that she carried as she covered just about every event imaginable.

"One of the things that amazed me as an editor of multiple papers was that she's the only reporter I ever had that



Jenny Herman/Contributed Photo

Elane Dickenson poses for a photo in front of Notre Dame Cathedral holding a copy of the Wallowa County Chieftain, the paper she worked at for nearly 36 years. Dickenson died on Nov. 8, 2021.

no one accused of having misquoted them," said Rick Swart, who was the editor of the Chieftain — and Dickenson's boss — for more than two decades. "No one ever challenged her accuracy as a reporter. There's an old saying that says there's no substitute for accuracy. She was amazingly accurate. You wouldn't have known it by the looks of her desk, but she really

paid attention to detail. That stood out as outstanding."

In her later years, and in retirement, Herman said her mom took great joy in being a grandmother, and was one who would get on the floor with her grandkids. Dickenson's four grandchildren range in age from 17 to 1.

The much beloved reporter, who retired in 2014 and has lived

in the Portland area since 2019 in order to be treated for complications from multiple myeloma and kidney failure, died Nov. 8 at the age of 73.

"After nearly three years of battling her illness, a multitude of issues continued to worsen and she was too weak for chemotherapy," Herman said. "She ultimately decided to stop dialysis and go on hospice, where she passed with my brother and I at her side."

Ready to settle down

Dickenson was such a staple in the community that Herman noted the oddity of speaking to a reporter from that paper who hadn't met her mom.

"I would say it is a little bit weird to me to be getting interviewed by someone from the Chieftain who didn't know her," Herman said last month.

Dickenson — who at the time was Elane Blanchet — was hired in September 1978, and moved to the county with her then almost-2-year-old daughter.

It was her third newspaper gig out of college, as an announcement of her hire in the Sept. 14, 1978 edition of the Chieftain noted she had previously worked for the Burns Times Herald and the Heppner Gazette Times. She wrote she also had a brief run as a college newspaper editor. She was hired essentially on the spot by then-editor Don Swart, she recalled decades later.

Swart clearly saw something in the then-30-year-old Blanchet, and she had found a home.

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Trails group gives update to commissioners

Wallowa Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association has been hard at it clearing trails

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — A regional trails maintenance group received a positive response after an update on their activities to the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners at the board's meeting Wednesday, Dec. 1.

"The trails association has a mission to maintain trails and conserve heritage sites in Northeast Oregon," said Rick Bombaci, director of the Wallowa Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association. "It began in 2016 in a partnership that was composed of Eastern Oregon University, Wallowa Resources and the Forest Service and this, as yet, unformed organization, and the trails association became the fourth leg of that stool. We had meetings at Cloud 9 for about a year over lunch ... in 2017, we actually started doing work in the field. We are incorporated as a 501(c)(3)."

Keeping score

Since that field work started, the trails group has had 747 volunteers working 11,277 hours in the field. They've cleared 479



Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Wallowa Mountain Hells Canyon Trails Association volunteer David Cook carries a 4-by-4 across the Wallowa River en route to a new one-log bridge that the group helped the Forest Service construct across BC Creek.

miles of trails, brushed 159 miles of trails and assessed another 212 miles. They have removed nearly 3,500 trees, manufactured 44 trail signs, installed 24 of those signs, repaired three bridges and had six work sessions on historic sites.

Bombaci said those statistics are required to be kept by the group for the U.S. Forest Service since that agency is the primary source of its funding.

He described the partnership through which the trails group

works and receives its annual budget of about \$30,000. He said the group receives that funding from the Forest Service; private foundations and other organizations, such as Cycle Oregon, the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association, Travel Oregon, the Wild-horse Foundation and the Oregon Hunters Association. Other government money comes from the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance and directly from Wallowa County.

Volunteers and outreach

The group has had volunteer workers from Eastern Oregon University, the University of Idaho, Trailkeepers of Oregon and Wallowa County Community Corrections which has sent work crews doing community service.

Commission Chairman Todd Nash expressed his appreciation on behalf of the board after the presentation.

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