



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Santa Claus (aka Donavon Shaw) gets a little assistance to the seat where he would greet kids from his helpers, Jenni Word, left, and Ashley Sullivan on Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021, at the Enterprise Winterfest.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Alicia Hayes hands down a warm drink from her All-American Coffee truck to a Winterfest-goer Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021, at the Enterprise Winterfest.

Winterfest:

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There were 12 hand-blown Christmas Ornaments that were given away and more than 75 businesses and individuals donated either gift certificates, gifts for the giveaways or time to help make the city-sponsored Winterfest possible.

Santa and Mrs. Claus — aka Donavon and Margie Shaw — were on hand in Warde Park to greet children eager to tell him what they want under their Christmas trees and find out if they were on the “naughty” or “nice” list. First up was Rhyatt Neil, son of Trenton and Jessica Neil, for his first visit to Santa. He was immediately proclaimed on the “nice” list.

One difference this year, McQuead said, was that all events were held outdoors. Santa met kids in a tent at Warde Park in a tent to shelter all from the chilly wind blowing during the day and evening. Previous

Winterfests have included some events indoors, but COVID pandemic restrictions precluded this.

“All in all, it made it that much more special having everything centered around Warde Park,” McQuead said of the event. “We had to wait to find out what the current COVID guidelines would be.”

Santa arrived about 2 p.m., but the parade didn’t start until around 5:30 p.m. The idea was to encourage people to visit stores on Main Street during that time.

“We wanted people to patronize stores so we bought hand-blown glass ornaments they could enter a drawing for that would be awarded after the parade,” McQuead said. “Our goal was to push shoppers toward the businesses and for kids to have a place to build crafts, color, visit Santa, and to enjoy Warde Park.”

Mayor Ashley Sullivan was one of “Santa’s Helpers” at the park. It was her first Winterfest

as mayor, as last year’s was canceled because of the pandemic.

“It’s wonderful to finally be able to do these things,” she said. “Hopefully, next year will be even bigger and we’ll be able to do some things inside. The city needs this.”

Last year’s replacement for Winterfest came in the form of the “Fair Lights” drive-thru display at the Wallowa County Fair-

grounds. That will be conducted again this year, running from 5-8 p.m. Dec. 17-26. The free event will offer bags of donated merchandise to the first 100 attendees on the opening night. Attendees enter the fairgrounds at a gate on Medical Parkway near Les Schwab Tires, drive past Christmas displays set up around the track and exit near the indoor arena off Lyle Street.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Reindeer on bicycles made up the float promoting a proposed bicycle playground at Wallowa on Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021, at the Enterprise Winterfest.

Programs:

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“I thought it was fantastic,” Crane said. “The students did a fine job combining putting on a great Christmas program while following the state’s COVID requirements. We also asked parents to wear masks as they came to watch the program.”

Enterprise Junior/Senior High has no music program, Crane said.

“We’re doing everything we can to help kids get back to normal,” he said. “We’re doing everything we can to keep the kids safe. We want to reduce any needed quarantine time. ... We want them to enjoy being in school.”

Earlier, elementary students squared off for a Christmas tree-decorating contest Wednesday, Dec. 8. Second- and sixth-graders decorated the “Santa’s Workshop Tree” at one end of the school’s central hallway, while the “North Pole Tree” was at the other end of the hallway decorated by fourth- and fifth-graders in a Christmas tree contest held at the school.

Christmas isn’t the only event the school’s trying to return to normal. Crane said they’re also preparing for the annual sixth-grade trip to the coast in the spring.

“Last year they couldn’t go, so this year we’re trying to do it again,” he said, adding that it will

be headed up by teacher Donna Yost.

“She’s pretty excited they’re doing it again,” Crane said.

“It’s just part of trying to make school normal again,” he said, adding, “Merry Christmas.”

Joseph

Joseph Charter School also has held programs. Superintendent Lance Homan said he was pleased to see his students perform. The kindergarten through third grade turned out in their favorite Christmas pajamas and slippers Wednesday, Dec. 8, to recite and sing songs to the theme of “Twas the Night Before Christmas.” The fourth grade through high school put on a program the night before.

“I thought it was great,” he said Thursday.

He added that it was a bit of a return to normal and not have to repeat what the school had to do last year with an online program.

“It’s nice to see people in the gym and have a concert that was somewhat normal,” he said. “I thought the kids were really excited to be doing their Christmas concert again.”

He noted that schools are still under state guidelines to social distance and wear face masks. He said the kids did so and many of the parents did, too.

“It was nice to see everybody and see our kids out there singing,” he said. “(Music Director) Mrs. Homan always does a good job.”



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Pajama-clad kindergarten-through-third-graders at Joseph Charter School recite “The Night Before Christmas” and sing accompanying songs led by music director Michelle Homan before a packed house of parents Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021, at the school.

Wallowa

Tammy Jones, superintendent of the Wallowa School District, was thrilled with a program put on Wednesday, Dec. 8, by the kindergarten through fourth grades.

“It was wonderful,” Jones said. “The whole community sang ‘Silent Night’ with the kids.”

She, too, was pleased with a semblance of normalcy the program allowed. She said kids wore their face masks walking up to the risers, took them off to sing and replaced the masks as they came down.

“We were able to do it in a safe way and still showcase our kids

and what they can do. My heart was very full,” she said. “Just watching the parents and the pride and joy they felt and the giggles watching their kids. ... It was touching.”

Jones said Thursday that this week is full, as Wallowa students have numerous Christmas-related activities.

“Monday we’re doing ‘Grinch Day.’ Tuesday it’s wear your crazy socks or Santa hats,” she said. “Wednesday is ‘Polar Express Day’ where we’ll watch the movie and have cocoa while wearing PJs and slippers. On Thursday, it’s wear your favorite or ugly Christmas sweater.”



Ellen Morris Bishop/For the Wallowa County Chieftain

Dusty Holz plays “Hot Cross Buns” with the rest of her recorder ensemble. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the group has been learning the instrument for only about six weeks. Their tune drew repeated and wholehearted applause at the Wallowa School’s K-fourth grade Elementary Christmas concert Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021.

Also, she said, the Rotary Club will be taking kids to go shopping and high school students will be decorating doors and holding a gift exchange.

Christmas break for all three districts starts Friday, Dec. 17 and they return to school Monday, Jan. 3.

Pet of the Week

MEET DUNCAN!

Duncan is a neutered, male black mini panther born approximately August 8, 2021. He is up-to-date on vaccines, dewormed and is litter box trained. Duncan was found trapped in a dumpster along with his siblings starving and scared, sadly one didn’t survive. Duncan is a sweet boy who dreams of a fur-ever home before Christmas.

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Will Ogden took care of business on the mat last weekend at the Calhoun Classic in Nyssa. The Enterprise wrestler took down all three of his opponents by fall to win the JV 195-pound weight class at the tournament, finishing with a win by fall over Sam Buck of Emmett, Idaho, in the title match.

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