

JO Paddle rowing into the future



By Bill Bradshaw

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA LAKE — An Enterprise couple who have taken over the popular JO Paddle at Wallowa Lake are hoping to expand it and are even considering a storefront location.

Right now, Joshua and Hannah Shoffner operate the business out of their home, taking reservations online for their clear-bottomed hybrid kayaks and all accessories. Then they deliver them to a designated spot at the north and south ends of the lake.

The Shoffners took over the business in August of 2020 from the former owners, who also owned the Joseph Branch Railriders.

JO Paddle

The name itself is unique, as well as what it offers. The “JO” stands for Joseph, Oregon, the Shoffners said.

Last year was their first full season, Hannah said.

“It went really well. A lot of people enjoyed it,” she said. “It’s a blast out there, especially the night tours were really popular with the kayaks lighted up and completely see-through. You get to go out on a guided night tour with about five other boats for about an hour and a half or two hours on Wallowa Lake.”

Josh, Hannah and 16-year-old daughter Samantha all are registered guides and have taken state-required safety courses to care for their customers and regu-



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa Lake’s JO Paddle is truly a family affair, owned and operated by, from left, Hannah, Samantha, Joslyn and Joshua Shoffner.

larly bring along safety equipment.

They also have communications from boat to shore that includes flashlight signals in case cellphones malfunction during an emergency.

Their youngest, 4-year-old Joslyn, is still a bit young to help out, but she goes out on the lake with her family.

The watercraft

The boats are a combination of kayak and canoe.

“They’re actually a hybrid, partially a canoe and partially a kayak,” Joshua said. “It basically means it looks like a canoe but it paddles like a kayak. They’re transparent polycarbonate like an aircraft windshield.”

This past year, they also added another feature.

“We added four clear, stand-up paddle boards last year,” Hannah said.

She said that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the paddle boards were difficult to obtain — as many businesses have experienced.

The tours

JO Paddle offers daytime rentals where customers can arrange to rent boats and any accessories and go out on their own.

The Shoffners always keep a close eye on the weather and the conditions at the lake so they know what safety cautions to advise. But often, customers can just go off on their own without a guide.

“On days when there’s no worry about the conditions on the lake, we usually just tell them where they can go to see (various things),” Hannah said.

But they do tours during part of the season.

“We added the Glacier Clear

Morning Nature Tour last year and we do that on the south side of the lake,” she said. “We start about 9 in the morning ... we run that June and July because the water levels get so low on the south side of the lake.”

But the Shoffners are particularly excited about Glacier Clear guided nighttime tours.

“This is the best part: We take them out a way from shore late at night and I have a remote control that turns off the light on the boats,” Joshua said. “It’s one of the most peaceful, amazing things.”

He said Samantha usually works with him as a nighttime tour guide.

“We try to wait for every single boat to come off the lake,” he said.

And their teenage daughter is both enjoying it and learning from the experience.

“It’s been a really good experience, especially for me,” Samantha

JO PADDLE

Who: Joshua and Hannah Shoffner

Phone: 541-886-0086

Email: Jopaddle808@gmail.com

Where: South end of Wallowa Lake

Online: <https://jopaddle.com>

said. “Seeing my parents as entrepreneurs and I want to be an entrepreneur. It’s really eye-opening seeing what my parents have done. ... It’s definitely fun to be out on the lake all night. It’s pretty cool to look at the stars with my dad and my family.”

The future?

As for the storefront, they’re still looking for an acceptable place in Joseph, but it won’t mean an end to operations from home.

“That’ll be in addition to what we do now,” Joshua said.

He even would like to expand their season.

“I would like to get into the winter, but people are probably going to have their own wetsuits and other gear,” he said. “It’s all smiles and a lot of fun.”

Hannah agreed, adding that a JO Paddle tour is particularly amazing for those new to Wallowa Lake.

“You’re on a glacier lake at 4,000 feet elevation,” she said.

“You think about that experience, people from Portland are just amazed; it’s an eye-opening time when they’re out there with the stars and the moon is coming over the moraine. It’s beautiful.”

Bill Bradshaw is a reporter for the Wallowa County Chieftain. Have a business tip? Contact him at 541-398-5503 or bbradshaw@wallowa.com.



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CLUES ACROSS

1. ___-fi
4. Beats by a long shot, say
11. TV show with a cold open
14. Sheet-___ dinner
15. “Gotta have that!”
16. Seydoux of “No Time to Die”
17. *Campaign strategist’s targets
20. Wilson of “The Office”
21. Where clouds “hang out”
22. Annoy
23. Language family including Ukrainian
25. Season for sledding
26. Cuatro + cuatro
28. Religious act
29. Appealing to hipsters, perhaps
32. High-five invitation
34. Baker’s measurements: Abbr.
38. Apt anagram of a flower symbolizing love
39. Benefit of a promotion, often
40. Exchange
41. “ur hilarious”
42. Cream-filled pastries
44. “Rocks” at a bar
45. Letters before 15 or 30, on some tubes
46. DVD predecessor
47. Luka Doncic’s league
48. In mint condition
49. Sea creature such as Sebastian in “The Little Mermaid”
51. Not short
53. Coca-___ chicken
55. Kagan who was Harvard Law’s first female dean
59. Opposite of 48-Across
62. Border on
63. Adored
64. Ctrl+Y, on a PC
65. Ear projection
66. Baggy
67. Mix
68. Result of a spill
69. Leopard’s markings
70. “Como ___ usted?”

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CLUES DOWN

1. Cowboy boot accessories
2. Gondolier’s waterway
3. Country with the highest rail bridge (in Jammu and Kashmir)
4. Occasion for eating out?
5. Sea urchin, in Japanese cuisine
6. Rx purchases
7. Timid
8. Whirling water
9. Actress Tyler
10. “Enough of that!”
11. Frozen rain
12. Gumption
13. Beam from a high-tech alarm
18. Foreign representatives
19. Central beliefs
24. *They ring at Notre Dame
25. *Pair on a front windshield
27. Staines with a fire variety
28. Violinist’s block
29. Fish that can swim backward
30. Let fall
31. *Caddie’s bagful
33. Spanish for “aunt”
35. Common playground fixtures ... or the starred clues’ answers?
36. Salsa brand
37. Erupt
42. “Casino Royale” actress Green
43. ___ Paulo
50. Prices that are set
52. Frontline health professional
53. Relaxed
54. Double-reed instrument
56. Play on repeat
57. Salad dressing staple: Abbr.
58. Warbler’s digs
60. Proofreader’s change
61. Explorer with a talking map



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