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Monday

Find the crossword puzzle on page A6

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WALLOWA COUNTY SENIOR MEAL MENU

*Meal sites are open for in-dining!
 Meal site information: Wallowa 886-8971, Enterprise 426-3840, Home delivered meals 426-3840.*

Mon. Mar. 21: Asian chicken rice bowl on a bed of rice, roasted vegetables, mandarin oranges & fortune cookie (sponsored by Lostine Presbyterian Church & Resale Store)

Wed. Mar. 23: Beef stew, corn bread, cottage cheese, peaches & ambrosia salad (sponsored by City of Wallowa)

Fri. Mar. 25: Cheese ravioli with meat sauce, seasoned green beans, green salad, French bread & mixed fruit (sponsored by Wallowa Assembly of God)

To sponsor a senior meal, call 426-3840 or stop by the Community Connection office.

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Community Connection of Northeast Oregon brings support to the region

By ANN BLOOM
 For the Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA COUNTY — Older adults in Wallowa County are supported by a strong web of services to help them remain in their homes for as long as they want — from congregate meal sites, to in-home care services, to family caregiver services to home-delivered meals.

All are offered through, or can be coordinated through, Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, and are as close as a phone call away.

“It is a misconception that the meal program is for low-income people,” said Connie Guentert, manager of Community Connection. “It’s about socializing and congregating,” and all are welcome, she said.

“We are super lucky to have two meal sites in the county,” Guentert said.

One is in the senior center in the Community Connection building, and the second is in Wallowa at the senior center. She said the meals are prepared to be “as flavorful as possible.” The focus is on taste and visual appeal.

The meals are based on

the U.S. Department of Agriculture 2020-25 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. They are portion-controlled and meet the dietary guidelines for older adults drawing on foods from the five food groups necessary for health. The five food groups that comprise the senior meals at the sites include lean proteins, low-fat dairy products, fruits and vegetables (fresh, canned, dried, frozen and 100% juice) and whole grains. The menus are available in the Chieftain and are broadcast on KWVR radio.

For those attending the meal site who are over 60, the suggested donation, which is voluntary, is \$4. If one is under 60, the cost is \$6. The Meals on Wheels Program is for homebound seniors. Both Meals on Wheels and the Congregate Meal Program are funded through the Older Americans’ Act.

In addition to the meal programs, Community Connection offers other senior support programs designed to help seniors stay in their own homes for as long as possible. For example, Oregon Project Independence is “designed to support seniors in their own home and

remain independent as long as possible with assistance of in-home care assistants,” explained Guentert.

“It all comes down to dignity. (We want to) support a senior who’s lived in their home remain in their home with respect and dignity with minimal funding, which is what we should aspire to. The alternative is a facility,” Guentert said.

To qualify for nursing-home care, a person must spend down, or spend their resources to qualify for Medicaid, a federal program in which the government pays for a person’s care. The program is income-based. Guentert said that is not what families want to do. They want to leave their homes and their resources to their families.

Another senior program that partners with OPI is the Family Caregiver Program which “supports the caregiver, not the care receiver,” Guentert said.

She refers to this web of support services for seniors as “wrap-around support services” to allow older adults to remain healthy and independent.

“Our community is so remote. Our parents and grandparents grew up in this community, and they want to stay here,” she said.

She goes on to explain that the support services offered are to help seniors, “age in their communities and thrive. There is a difference between thriving and existing.” She noted that aging in place involves a healthy, livable community and that a livable community includes mental, physical and emotional health.

“Senior programs have grown in this community. It’s a blessing to our citizens,” she said.

Guentert stressed the importance of older adults in the Wallowa County community cannot be underestimated.

“Our community is made up of many components,” she said.

Those components are a diversity of ethnicities, races and ages.

“The seniors are a major part of that,” she said. “They have worked all their lives to live here. They’re an important aspect that should never be forgotten. We can’t have a community without them.”

‘No logical explanation’ in cattle mutilation

By STEVEN MITCHELL
 Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A mutilated bull mysteriously turned up dead at a ranch in Bear Valley last month with surgically removed body parts.

According to a Feb. 28 entry of the Oregon State Police log, a rancher called a John Day Wildlife Trooper to report a bull had been killed and mutilated on his ranch with its testicles, scrotum, tongue and lips precisely removed.

Mat Carter, a rancher from the Crown Cattle Company, said he reported the mutilation to the state’s wildlife trooper after discovering the dead bull roughly a quarter to half a mile from his house.

The cause of death is unknown. When Carter found the bull, it had likely been dead a few days and was already decomposing. The 24-hour window during which an autopsy could have been performed on the body had passed.

According to Carter, there were no signs of vultures, coyotes or other scavengers around the bull.

“There’s no tracks, there’s no signs, there’s no nothing,” Carter said.

He said it is hard to imagine anyone would have come on to his property, killed a bull, drained its blood, and then cleanly cut out specific body parts.

According to Carter, with no evidence or leads to follow up on for law enforcement, the incident remains a mystery.

And this was not the first cow mutilation on his ranch, Carter said.

Several years ago, Carter said he was almost sure one of his cows had been mutilated. However, he said, there was no way to say with certainty because he did not get to it quickly enough before flies and other scavengers made it impossible to determine what happened.

He said a similar situation occurred in August, which is why he tries to inspect cattle deaths a little more closely

when they occur.

Indeed, Carter’s situation is not unique. According to FBI records, since the 1970s, thousands of killings and mutilations of cattle have happened across the U.S. Last year Wheeler County had five cases while Harney County had four in four years, with the previous two occurring in May and June.

The cases, the data reports, are similar to Carter’s case.

A cow or bull is found dead in a remote area with no signs of how someone might have made it onto a property undetected. There are no footprints, tire tracks or fingerprints. There is very little — if any — spilled blood and no visible puncture wounds, bullets or strangulation marks.

The bizarre nature of the mutilation and lack of evidence makes it all the more baffling and frustrating for Carter.

Meanwhile, theories abound about who is behind the cow mutilations, be it aliens, demons or cults.

However, in the thousands of cases since the 1970s, no one has ever been caught.

For his part, Carter said he does not try to speculate on it, nor does he believe in UFOs or any other kind of strange phenomenon.

“It’s really odd, Carter said. “There’s no logical explanation.”

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