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Wallowa County Voices



Rod Schnabel
Enterprise

Alaskan found a new home here

ENTERPRISE — Rod Schnabel grew up in Alaska, but he's found a new home in Wallowa County. He's lived in Enterprise for about 20 years.

"I was born in Alaska when it was a territory," he said.

He has no family here, but he has a sister in Oak Harbor, Washington, and brothers in Challis, Idaho; Haines, Alaska; and Phoenix.

Schnabel is no longer working, being on disability, he said.

He recently shared his thoughts about living in Wallowa County.

What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

The sunshine, the nice weather during the summertime. In Juneau, it's raining every day. There's a lot of strange people here, but I like a lot of them.

Are you getting cabin fever yet?

Yeah, if you stay home a lot you do.

What are you looking forward to once the weather warms?

I just sit on the park bench and watch the people go by.

What do you think of Russia's invasion of the Ukraine?

I'm not in favor of it.

Do you think it's affecting the high price of fuel?

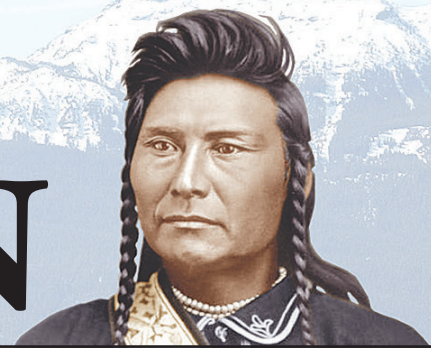
Yes, because Russia exports a lot of oil products.

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

My brother is thinking of it. (He should) get prepared because of the weather.

— Bill Bradshaw,
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



Demo work underway

Cougar Dome retrofit project scheduled for fall completion

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — It looked like a bomb went off in the Wallowa High School Cougar Dome on Thursday, March 17, but it was the result of workers getting hard at it in their efforts to demolish and retrofit the structure.

Efforts to replace key portions of the structure began in earnest March 7, Superintendent Tammy Jones said Thursday, March 17.

"The seismic is about gutting the gym," Jones said. "They're tearing out the walls and roof."

She pointed out "hinge points" that make the building unstable in case of a seismic event — spots where the walls don't extend from floor to ceiling.

The fault line

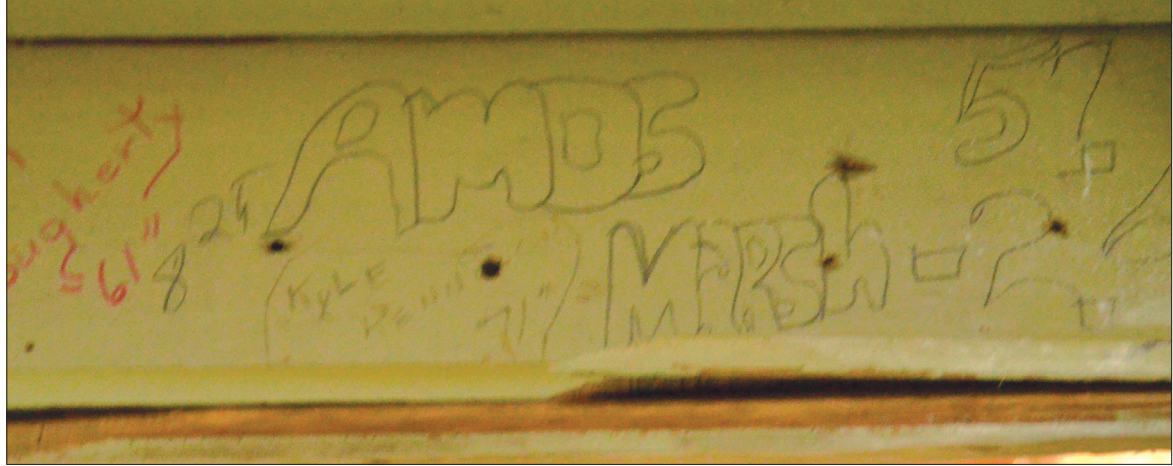
Last year, the Chieftain reported that the Wallowa School District received a \$2.3 million seismic retrofit grant from the Oregon Department of Education. The funds will be used to make the Cougar Dome stable and safe in the event of an earthquake. The grant will fund primarily structural improvements so that the large gym building can serve as public shelter in the event of an earthquake or other disaster.

The school and the town of Wallowa are along the western end of the Wallowa fault. That structure has uplifted the Wallowa Moun-

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Workers clean up Thursday, March 17, 2022, during the demolition work at Wallowa High School's Cougar Dome. It's part of the work toward the seismic retrofit the school district received a grant to pay for.



Former Wallowa athlete and NFL player Amos Marsh's signature was uncovered recently during the demolition work underway at the Wallowa High School's Cougar Dome. It's part of the seismic retrofit of the structure.

Controversial animal rights proposal won't make ballot

By ALEX WITTWER
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — A controversial proposal on animal cruelty laws appears to be off the table, for now, but proponents of the initiative say their campaign isn't over yet.

"We just submitted the initiative for 2024 and are waiting for confirmation from the state," an organizer with the Yes on IP13 campaign said. "At this point, it does not look like we will gather enough for 2022. I believe the plan is to shift gears to the newly numbered initiative as soon as we have it."

Initiative Petition 13, otherwise known as the Abuse, Neglect and Assault Exemption Modification and Improvement Act, would remove exemptions to the Oregon animal abuse laws that protect hunters, farmers and anglers from abuse violations. That means hunters could possibly be prosecuted for killing and harvesting wild animals, as could farmers who send their livestock to slaughterhouses.

David Michelson, the author of the initiative and the lead organizer for the campaign, acknowledged the proposal's long road, and said that like other social justice reforms throughout history, it will take time.

"This is asking for quite a shift from the norm, and I think, like with any social change, it's controversial," he said. "But every social justice movement in history has been met with controversy, unfortunately."

Michelson noted a petition to allow women to vote in Oregon faced similar political headwinds



Cattle graze the field at a ranch on Airport Lane, La Grande, on Thursday, March 17, 2022. A controversial animal rights initiative, known as IP13, appears to have stalled as organizers failed to gather the signatures necessary to put it on the ballot this November.

in the early 20th century, but the story of how women fought for suffrage in Oregon has been inspirational to the Portland-based activist, who said he would "like to see this (initiative) as being part of that history of progressive ballot measures that push us forward."

But even if the initiative fails to muster the signatures necessary to reach the ballot this November, Michelson has his eyes set on 2024.

"We are planning, as we have always planned, to submit our initiative for 2024 with the anticipation that even if we qualify for 2022, it is unlikely that it'll pass on the first attempt," Michelson said. "Speaking back to the initiative that gave women the right to vote, it was voted on in six consecutive election cycles before it finally passed. It was voted down five times. If our initiative does not pass this November, we want to

make sure it's on the ballot again in 2024."

'Their hearts are in the right place'

Farmers balked at the proposal, stating it wouldn't be worth the effort or the ink to do a story about the initiative. Prominent La Grande hunter Steve West, of the TV show "Steve's Outdoor Adventures," said the proposition likely would fail to gather enough signatures to make it on the ballot.

"The people who come up with this, their hearts are in the right place because they're so attached to animals," he said. "The reality is they will never get enough votes to pass something like this. I just don't see any chance in hell that they even get 100,000 signatures to even get it to a ballot. It's just so out there."

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Enterprise, Joseph to be in indie film

'New Life' filmed here to resemble Canada

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Wallowa County is going to be a star. At least, several locations in Enterprise and Joseph will be in the upcoming independent film "New Life," which capitalizes on the county's resemblance to Canada.

"Today we are filming in downtown Enterprise," said Hannah Cumming, associate producer and production coordinator for the film, on Thursday, March 17. "We're shooting on the sidewalk along Main Street, by the courthouse and near the city park."

She said the previous day the crew shot at a ranch near Joseph.

"It was beautiful there," Cumming said.

She said the film is about Jess Murdoch, who gets infected with a virus that is "causing serious side effects, and she's being pursued by an official, Elsa, who is trying to figure out why the side effects are not affecting her the way they're affecting everyone else."

Murdoch is portrayed by Hayley Erin of Los Angeles, while Elsa Gray is portrayed by Sonya Walger of the United Kingdom.

Enterprise is doubling as a town in Alberta, Canada, near the U.S. border.

"We were trying to find a place in Oregon that looked like Canada," Cumming said. "The

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