



# Wallowa County Voices



**Gerry Martin**  
Enterprise

## He spent years working fish screens

ENTERPRISE — Gerry Martin is a lifelong Wallowa County resident who has lived on Alder Slope for 30 years.

Now retired, he spent decades working for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife maintaining fish screens to ensure steelhead and salmon have safe passage to the sea.

"It was a good job. It had a purpose," he said. "It kept the fish from going out into the fields and dying, those little smolts that migrate to the ocean and stay down there two or three years and come back."

Since retiring, he focuses on raising cattle, sheep and hay and keeping in touch with his son here and daughter in Bend.

He also likes the scenery here and the people.

"The old-time people," he specifies. "I don't get along with all the new people coming in, but the originals with their morals, are good people."

Once weather warms, he's got some farming to do and plans to go visit daughter. But rising fuel costs could put a hitch in that.

Martin believes the increasing price of fuel is the fault of President Joe Biden's administration.

"Basically, he's gotten rid of all of Trump's policies, the Keystone pipeline, drilling, cutting fracking down," he said. "(He's done) everything he could to ruin it — energy stuff — if it had 'Trump' on it."

Personally, he's seeing it affect him with both the cost of fuel and other energy.

"The cost of energy goes up, everything goes up. That's where inflation's coming from," he said. "You shop, you know how much things cost that it didn't a year ago."

Martin suggests that people considering moving here might think twice.

"It's probably not a good idea. It costs more to live here," he said. "Unless you've got a business or a job, you're not going to find employment or a place to live. It costs you half again more to live here than it does in Portland."

But, he said, everyone can have their own opinion.

"My friends will agree with me and people who don't know me will argue, but that's fine — freedom of choice," he said.

— Bill Bradshaw,  
Wallowa County Chieftain

# ODFW approves killing two wolves in NE Oregon

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
Capital Press

JOSEPH — The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has issued a kill permit for up to two wolves from the Chesnimnus pack in Wallowa County.

State wildlife biologists determined members of the pack were responsible for two confirmed attacks on livestock between April 25 and 27 on a public grazing allotment north of Joseph, resulting in three dead calves.

ODFW can authorize lethal take of wolves that prey on livestock

after two confirmed depredations in nine months. That is the current standard for "chronic depredation" in Eastern Oregon, where wolves were removed from the state endangered species list in 2015.

Tom Birkmaier, who ranches along Crow Creek, said Tuesday, May 3, that he received the kill permit April 29. He is allowed to take two Chesnimnus pack wolves in Dorrance Pasture or Trap Canyon Pasture, where the kills were confirmed.

The kill permit is good through May 24.

"I asked for the removal of

the pack," Birkmaier said. "They issued me a kill permit for two."

He said his latest wolf attacks were on April 30, when a cow took wolf bites to protect her calf.

"She saved her calf ... she had two bite marks on her ribs," he said. "I walked that cow and her calf down 7 miles to my ranch and I'm now taking care of them."

He said his losses from the killed calves and the one injured Saturday — which he said likely won't be marketable — amounts to an estimated \$4,000.

Birkmaier said he's been working 20 hours a day over the previ-

ous eight or nine days to protect his cattle and use nonlethal methods to deter the wolves.

Ranchers must also remove all carcasses, bone piles and other attractants and be using nonlethal deterrents such as range riders to qualify for lethal take of wolves.

In this case, ODFW reports the livestock producer has a history of using nonlethal deterrents to haze wolves in the area, including flashing lights, radios and hiring a range rider with funding provided by a nonprofit organization.

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## Celebrating 100 years



Wanda McAlister, left, waves a finger at daughter Liza Jane McAlister on Thursday, April 28, 2022, at Wallowa Valley Senior Living in Enterprise. Wanda turns 100 on Friday, May 6.

# 'Just have fun'

## Centenarian shares secret to long life

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Ranch mom. Teacher. Award-winning journalist. World traveler and adventurer. Veteran of the Office of Strategic Services — the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency. And all that in just 100 years. Yes, Wanda McAlister turns 100 years old on Friday, May 6.

### Lifelong Oregonian

Born in 1922 in Gladstone to school teachers Earle and Wanda Turner, she went from there to study at Oregon State University in Corvallis where she was a member of the Pi Beta Phi sorority. She began her journalism career there first, reporting football scores and highlights for the local paper.

After graduating from OSU in 1942, she married Enterprise-area rancher James McAlister, who then went off to serve in the U.S. Army in World War II.

"Jim really liked the Army," Wanda said.

She said he stayed in the Army after the war, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel. He started doing training programs in agriculture that got him into the Extension Service. He also taught history here and was the school boxing coach.

But Wanda didn't just sit home during the war. She did her part for the war effort by listening to Japanese propaganda on the radio for the OSS, notably from Tokyo Rose.

"I listened to the radio and what they were saying in English," Wanda said during an April 28 interview. "We listened to what they said to Oregon and Washington. It was propaganda. Tokyo Rose was quite the thing some time."

Daughter Liza Jane McAlister, who helped her mom with her memory, recalled hearing the story of a



Liza Jane McAlister/Contributed Photo  
**Wanda McAlister, at age 1, is held up by her mother, Wanda Turner. The younger Wanda turns 100 years old Friday, May 6, 2022.**

man who used to give Wanda a ride to work regularly — until the police apprehended him. It turned out he was a spy for the Russians, tentative allies of the U.S. during the war. The women believed he and his family were deported.

Wanda may be 100, but she's not unaware of current events. She's heard the talk of moving Oregon's border so some counties could become a part of Idaho.

"They'd better not!" she said. Liza Jane agreed.

"I'll always be an Oregonian, no matter what," she said.

### On the ranch

As matriarch of the well-known 6 Ranch just west of Enterprise, Wanda moved there after the war, living there from 1946-57. It was there, she had her four sons, Scott, Jeff, Rick and Bob.

As Liza Jane said, they were born "all in that log cabin you built. Then we moved to Redmond where I was born. ... After the war, they lived in the century house, the big white house, in the winter and you built a log cabin to stay in

### HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY

**Thursday, May 5**  
2 p.m. Wallowa Valley Senior Living  
**Friday, May 6**  
1 p.m. 6 Ranch, off Sunrise Road  
Anyone who knows her is welcome.

during the summer."

The ranch left Wanda with some fond — and not so fond — memories.

Like the time a neighbor's boar hog got loose.

"She had her four little boys (to mind)," Liza Jane said. "She put one in a crib, one in a high chair and got them all secured. And Mom is like this big (signaling to show how small Wanda is), you're just a little, tiny thing. This boar was out stopping traffic and you got it over to the railroad tracks, and she kept trying to push it to the left and he didn't want to go."

"Jim came back and I was crying," Wanda said. "It was terrible. I couldn't get that thing to go back. Actually, it wasn't our pig at all. ... It was the neighbor's pig that was out."

Liza Jane said her mom was trying to get the hog to go a direction other than home.

"The problem was she was trying to get it to go away from its home," she said.

"It wouldn't do it," Wanda said. "I was so frustrated."

On the ranch, she didn't help with the cattle and horses, but had enough to do minding the kids and gathering eggs the chickens produced.

Wanda said she was horse-shy from an early age when one of her brothers swatted the hindquarters of a horse she was sitting on and she ended up on the ground. She didn't ride much after that.

"You rode with me once when I was in high school, but you

# Dragon boats prepare to return to lake

Work day planned May 7 to refit

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA LAKE — After being mothballed since 2019 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the dragon boats that regularly appear on Wallowa Lake are getting ready to breathe fire again.

The Dragons on the Lake Paddle Club had a meeting Tuesday, April 26, and is planning a ceremony to "resurrect" the boats in coming weeks, said Trudy Turner, one of the organizers of the club.

She said this time around, the club is to include more than the dragon boats. It is to include kayaks, outriggers and canoes, as well. The boats also will focus more on physical fitness than just racing.

"We wanted a club that was more recreational and not so race-focused," Turner said.

### Work day planned

But to get the new version of the club launched will take some work. The club is planning a work day Saturday, May 7, to get the boats fit to go in the water, Turner said.

"Before we can get them into the water, we have to get them water worthy," she said.

The boats have been stored behind the old Edelweiss Inn at the base of the Wallowa Lake Tram. Turner said she needs volunteers to help move them to her place in Joseph, where there is a shop and they can sand, refinish, repair and pressure-wash the 41-foot-long crafts.

Each boat has a beam (width) of just over 45 inches and weighs 551 pounds. They have 10 seats for the oarsmen.

"We'll get them all seaworthy and ready to go," she said.

Turner said she hopes to have the dragon boats ready to go by International Dragon Boat Day that is June 12. However, if they can't make that deadline, they'll just get them ready as soon as possible.

"We will have an 'awakening ceremony' and launch right after (they're ready)," she said. "All that is

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