



Wallowa County Voices



Jennifer Hayes
Joseph

Be ready for 'crazy' winters

ENTERPRISE — A former urbanite, Jennifer Hayes is enjoying living in Wallowa County. She moved to Joseph four years ago from Reno, Nevada, to be with her husband, Casey.

She has worked at Wallowa Title Co. for more than two years as a collections escrow officer/front desk.

"I really love working there," she said.

Casey works at Valley Bronze, but right now he's deployed to Kuwait with the Army National Guard.

"He's from here," Jennifer said.

While Casey's away, Jennifer has been enjoying the company of her 10-week-old German shepherd pup.

Like many, her favorite things about the county are the scenery and the people.

"It's really beautiful here and everybody who lives here are super nice," she said. "The mountains, they're so close."

She doesn't mind all the rain we've had recently, it's the snow she dislikes.

"I like the rain, but I am over the snow," she said, adding that winter and spring have lasted plenty long enough. "I'm a city girl. I like to get out of town when I can, but it's hard to when there's snow all over the roads. I don't like driving in the snow."

In fact, now that nicer weather appears on the horizon, Jennifer hopes to get out on her motorcycle and explore more of the county.

"I want to get out on it and with the snow I can't do that," she said.

In fact, the weather is the major challenge she believes newcomers to the county will face.

"Be ready for the crazy winters," she said. "I couldn't believe how much snow we got this past winter."

— Bill Bradshaw,
Wallowa County Chieftain

FLORA SCHOOL DAYS

'Back in the Saddle Again'

Annual event returns after COVID-19 hiatus

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

FLORA — The historic Flora School was "Back in the Saddle Again" for its annual Flora School Days on Saturday, June 4, welcoming about 135 people to see old-time skills, eat good food and live a bit in the past.

Vanessa Thew Thompson, president of the Flora School Board, said the turnout was fewer than usual.

"But it was more than what we expected," she said. "The whole day was more than what we expected. It was good."

Turnout dampened

Flora School Days came back this year after a two-year hiatus because of the COVID-19 pandemic. People not used to it happening, other events scheduled the same day — high school graduations — and the weather all served to dampen the turnout, Thompson said.

See School, Page A7



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Hot coals are added to the Dutch ovens used in the chili cook-off at Flora School Days on Saturday, June 4, 2022.



Brian Cook of Irrigon drives his three-mule team in front of the Flora School pulling a wagon used for a tour around Flora on Saturday, June 4, 2022.

Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa students lend helping hand

Garden is planted, local park is cleaned up

By JEFF BUDLONG
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — Students in the Wallowa School District have spent the school year learning from a variety of sources, but as it draws to a close they took a different approach — a hands-on approach.

Students began working the morning of Friday, June 3, and spent a couple of hours doing various projects to help the community. One of the projects was planting a garden at the Wallowa River House, an 11-bed residential treatment facility for individuals with severe physical and mental health issues.

"We are planting a garden," said Brandy Bronson, a fourth-grade teacher. "A former resident at the River House passed away and there is an area filled with wildflowers, so we are going to repaint the sign



Brandy Bronson/Contributed Photo

Students from the Wallowa School District work on cleaning up and planting an area garden as part of service they performed on Friday, June 3.

there and clean it up."

The community garden will be directly behind the space dedicated to former longtime resident Doug Yarger, which will allow for a partnership with the Wallowa River House. In

addition to cleaning up the flowers, students will repaint a sign that says, "Doug's Garden."

Students planted a variety of fruits and vegetables that will be monitored and eventually used throughout

the summer and fall. Seeds and plants were donated by Oregon State University Extension Service and a nursery for the project.

"I wanted to see the garden project get up and going, but I am also doing

our summer school program," Bronson said. "Ann Bloom with Extension is going to come down to help us care for the garden, talk about the fruits and vegetables and provide some nutrition lessons."

The project also allows older students to lead and work with younger ones to make sure tasks are done while taking ownership in the work.

Bronson hopes her next class of fourth-graders will harvest the bounty of the garden in the fall. It is a learning lesson from plant to pick, Bronson said. In the future, Bronson would like high school students to build and donate some raised beds that can be used at the garden site on an annual basis.

The garden wasn't the only project students took part in. Students also took cleanup at Evans Park, helped prepare grounds for graduation and assisted in moving a piano across town.

See Helping, Page A7

