

Local

DAR talks cemetery, library

By Todd Arriola

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The Lone Pine Tree Chapter of the Oregon State Society Daughters of the American Revolution (OSSDAR), of the National Society of the Daughters Of The American Revolution (NSDAR) held its regular monthly luncheon at the Best Western Sunridge Inn, in Baker City, at noon last Friday.

Present from DAR were Meschelle Cookson, Regent (President), Roberta Morin, Vice Regent, Shirley Simons, Treasurer, Wilma Johnson, Chaplain, Lynne Zwanziger, Registrar, Carol Guthrie, Theona Hambleton, Secretary, Dorothy Robertson, Historian, Lillian Densley, Dory Fleshman, Joan Smith, Katherine Smutz, Ethelyn Williams, Nancy Wilson and new member Kathryn Pitcher.

Guests included Barbara Borello, and Melissa Shafer, Baker County Library Children's Librarian.

Cookson called the meeting to order, and welcomed everyone, followed by introductions, recitals of the Pledge of Allegiance and The American's Creed by the group, and the Opening Prayer, led by Johnson.

DAR is heavily involved with the promotion of education, and Guthrie introduced Shafer, who brought several photo albums of children's programs associated with the Library, for the group to look through while she spoke. "I have programs all year long," she said, emphasizing that she's involved with more than just the major summer events. She talked about Story Time, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. She also talked about the winter programs, which usually took place from January through spring break, and explained that



The DAR ladies discussed everything from historic undergarments to cemetery markers to expanding library services last Friday.

on Fridays beginning this week, she planned to have the children attendees start growing a fairy garden, an idea inspired partly by the movie *Maleficent*. This Friday program is scheduled for preschool-aged children at 10 a.m., and elementary-aged children at 3 p.m.

"I also go out to the YMCA and have Story Time four times a week, with the preschool," Shafer said. But, because she's unable to get to every location she'd like to in order to provide this service, this year she's seeking volunteers to train as Outreach Storytellers to help out with the programs.

She discussed a current program at the Library, called Ready 2 Learn, which began about a year and a half ago. The program was set up to assist children in the 0 to 6 age group.

Morin asked Shafer about extending some programs out to Unity, Hereford and some other areas, and Shafer said the Library is working on providing that service. Shafer also mentioned some genealogy resources available at the Library.

Minutes were approved

and the Treasurer's Report, showed all members' dues currently paid, and that the group's Chapter account shows a balance of over \$3,000.

Cookson discussed with the President General's Report, from Lynn Forney Young, NSDAR President General, concerning the 125th anniversary of the founding of the DAR, on October 11, 2015. This celebration includes the Celebrate America Cruise some National Administration members and guests will be on, sailing from New York to historic New England and Nova Scotia ports, from October 10 to 17, 2015.

Cookson discussed the National Defender, a resource with chronicles of service by DAR members nationwide, and information about homeless veterans programs.

Zwanziger gave a Registrar's Report, stating that currently, the group has 43 members. Cookson said that usually, the group has membership drives in July, August and December, and thanked Zwanziger for her efforts to recruit new members.

Cookson said the Chapter's Wingville Cemetery

Historical Marker application was approved. The cemetery, owned by the Baker County Parks and Recreation Department, will be recognized with most likely a stone marker, and a ceremony in the spring, she said.

"Oh my gosh, they were jumping at the chance," Cookson said, speaking about the enthusiasm from the Department concerning the marker. Cookson spoke with Charles and Howard Payton of Wingville in order to gather documents and photographic evidence about the cemetery and area for the application. The wording on the marker is currently pending.

Cookson displayed a quilt that she assembled, and discussed possibly selling packages with pattern blocks like those in the quilt as a fundraiser.

Wilson shared her thoughts about corsets and bras during Points to Remember, a segment of the meeting in which she usually has an informative and entertaining historical story to tell.

The Chapter's meetings are on the second Friday of each month alternating between Baker City and La Grande.

Orchestra to begin spring season

The Baker Community Orchestra began weekly rehearsals on Thursday, January 15. Music handout at rehearsals will begin at 6:15 and rehearsal will begin at 7:00 p.m.. Rehearsals will be in the Baker High School Band Room and continuing on Thursdays through the Spring. All interested musicians are welcome come join in. There is no charge to participate, though free will donations to help pay for music are welcome. No auditions are required. We welcome all orchestra or band instruments, guitar and bass guitar as well. The Orchestra always has a need for strings, particularly cello, viola and bass. The orchestra is also in need of trumpets and percussion. The Orchestra welcomes "drop in" musicians to come in and see what we are doing and participate for the fun of it at any of our rehearsals.

The purpose of the Orchestra is to provide the opportunity for community members to participate in making music, in particular, adult "comeback" players. Many of our members enjoyed playing in high school or college, then quit playing for some time, often due to no opportunity to play. Others members have recently learned to play an instrument to join in. There is room for all in the Orchestra.

If you are interested and would like more information or to chat about joining, please call Brian Watt at 541-523-4662. If you have never played an instrument and would like to learn, give us a call and we will see if we can help you out.

La Grande ranks highest risk for radon

New Oregon radon data show that many regions of the state are at moderate risk of having high radon levels, with several pockets of high-risk areas around the Willamette Valley, and in eastern and southern Oregon.

Oregon's areas of highest risk for radon are in Scappoose, Banks and North Plains, as well as Boring, Parkdale, Dundee, Turner and La Grande, according to the data published at www.healthoregon.org/radon. A large swath of Portland was found to be at high risk. Baker City is at moderate risk.

Radon is odorless, tasteless and invisible. It is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that comes up from the ground and is drawn into buildings, where it can build up to dangerous levels. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year in the United States. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after cigarette smoking, and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

The Radon Program is joining the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in urging Oregonians to take action and test their homes for radon during January as part of National Radon Action Month.

Testing homes for radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased at local hardware and home improvement stores, or online, and are priced between \$15 and \$25. Radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that of many common home repairs, such as painting or having a new water heater installed. The best time to test for radon is during the heating season, when the windows and doors are closed up tight. This is when you would expect to find the highest radon levels in your home.

Radon levels vary throughout Oregon depending on the underlying geology. Residents can see what levels have been detected in their neighborhoods by visiting the Radon Program website at www.healthoregon.org/radon, which lists radon test data by city and Zip code. Residents can visit the Radon Program website to see if they are eligible for a free test kit. Those living in Zip codes where there are fewer than 20 test results can send an email to radon.program@state.or.us to receive instructions on how to get a free test kit.

For more information on radon, radon testing and mitigation, radon-resistant new construction, or to order a test kit online, call the Oregon Radon Program at 971-673-0440 or go to www.healthoregon.org/radon or visit the EPA's website at www.epa.gov/radon/nram.

Three move forward in 5J search

Tuesday night the 5J School Board narrowed the superintendent search down to three candidates. They will be interviewing Betty Palmer from Baker, Mark Witty from John Day and Robert Vian from Orofino, Idaho on February 20.

The candidates will tour the district in the a.m. and interview in the p.m. There will be a "Meet and Greet" at the high school from 4 - 6 p.m.

Baker City Council

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Minutes from the December 9, 2014 meeting were approved as was a liquor license application for Lefty's Tap house doing business in the former Bull Ridge Pub location on Broadway.

The Surface Transportation Program Fund Exchange Agreement was also presented for approval. Upon approval, the city will receive \$105368.36 in a cooperative agreement with Oregon Department of Transportation to exchange federal dollars to state dollars.

The money will be used to fund the thin overlay project and was anticipated during the development of the 2014 pavement management plan. Council voted to approve the STP agreement.

Appointments were made to fill vacancies on the airport commission. Those appointed were David Davidson, Gordon Conrad and Troy Woydziak.

Appointed to fill planning commission vacancies were Ned Ratterman, Kenneth Rockwell and Alan Blair, all of whom currently serve on the planning commission and wish to serve another term.

With the ending of her term, Councilor Johnson who served as the Council

representative on the public works advisory committee will no longer be on that committee.

It was advised by Michelle Owen that the council consider finding a replacement as soon as possible as that committee tends to be very active this time of year as the City prepares capital plans and budgets.

Council was addressed by Public Works Director Michelle Owen in regards to the watershed management plan.

She first addressed awarding the Water Facility Master Plan contract to Murray Smith and Associates.

David Stangel of MSA was present at the meeting and introduced himself to the Council.

Mayor Moiser asked Stangel if he would be available to the council should they need information regarding the project at any time.

Stangel assured that either himself directly or through Owen would be available for discussion or to answer any questions on the project as they may come up. Council voted to approve the Water Facilities Master Plan Contract.

Owen next spoke of some comments she had received from members of the community and with those comments Owen

had a couple of suggested changes to the Watershed Management Plan. Specifically, "the city, by resolution is a cooperating agency," and Owen suggested adding that to the acknowledgements on the first page of the plan so that "the public is aware that we are an agency and we are required to communicate with the Forest Service and other State and Federal Agencies."

Another update Owen proposed to add was an additional strategy to the goal of working toward fuel reduction. "The public comment that we received is that the goals related to fuel reduction were not strong enough," Owen told the Council. "People want to see action sooner than what we had documented. I suggest that we begin as soon as possible by having Baker City request assistance from State and Federal elected officials, which may include requesting an emergency declaration by the Governor requesting dollars be allocated federally to assist with fuel reduction costs."

Commissioner Harvey expressed concern about language in the document stating the Forest Service owns the property.

"It is federally owned property managed by the US Forest service," Owen stated.

Harvey responded by saying, "It is not U.S. Federal government land. It is State land entrusted by the Federal Government."

In his address to the Council he advised the council, "You are in joint management with the Forest Service. You have the right as well to go in and do forest health issues and management. The City has jurisdiction over the watershed."

Councilor Langrell motioned to table a vote until all amendments had been made. That motion failed 4:3. The Council went on to pass the adoption of the Watershed Management Plan with Owen advising she will make all revisions and update all copies immediately.

Mike Kee addressed the council briefly noting financial reports enclosed in council packets and labor trends.

Newly hired Fire Chief Mark John introduced himself to the council and invited council members to the fire station at any time telling them he had "an open door policy and would be happy to show you around the station."

He said he feels being in Baker City is a "great privilege."

With that the meeting adjourned.