

Opinion / Local

— OBITUARIES —

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

The family came together over the last week in support and to say goodbye after her unexpected trip to the emergency room and the heart wrenching news of her impending death. Her daughter, Margie and her grandson, David were by her side as she left us. A celebration of her life will be held during the Family Reunion scheduled in June.

Joyce, as she was known by her children for so many years, was a hard-working wife and mother. She was raised in Lynchburg, Virginia with her siblings. She married young and had two children with Lloyd Spoon, and then married George Henry Voyles moving out west, mainly living in Baker. She loved to dance, take walks, listen to music, and had the most infectious smile, which will greatly be missed! Even when her thirty-one grandchildren,

fifty-three great-grandchildren, and two-great-great grandchildren began to arrive, she had enough love to go around to each and every one of them!

Although she lived with Alzheimer's Dementia, the last years of her life were spent taking trips to Reno, California, Washington, and along the Oregon Coast with her daughter Margie and three of her grandchildren—going places that she never had the opportunity see. For the last two years, Joyce was tirelessly cared for by her family, mainly her daughter Margie and Margie's daughters, Heather, Krista, and Michelle for the last two years. The rest of the family would like to thank them for their selflessness.

She is preceded in death by a young sibling; sons Kenneth and Lloyd Spoon Jr.; parents, Blanche and Lucian Hurt; George her husband of 32 years; two great-grandchildren, and

most recently, an adult granddaughter.

Joyce is survived by her children Betty and her husband Rick Rickerd of McMinnville, Leonard Voyles of Baker City, John Voyles of Ontario, Emery and his wife Linda Hankins of New Mexico, George Voyles, Jr. of Mount Vernon, Nancy Jackson of Reno, Nevada, Margie Gately of Baker City, Linda and her husband Lloyd Wallingford of La Grande, Brenda and her husband Rod Martin of Baker City, and Debbie Voyles Smith Flippin of Elgin.

For those who would like to make a donation in memory of Joyce the family suggests Alzheimer's and/or Diabetes OHSU research through Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home and Cremation Services PO Box 543 Halfway, Oregon 97834. Online condolences may be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com.

First Friday meeting held

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Harvey said that's true, but the community benefited, because there are two stores now at least, which gives customers more space and selection, which alleviated some of his concern. While he noted that people are certainly free to shop where they would like, for example, Walmart and Grocery Outlet in La Grande, he and Baker County Economic Development Director Greg Smith have been working on more grocer options for the community.

Wanda asked about a Sutton Creek Road incident from several months ago, involving a gate

blocking access along the road. Harey said that the gate had been removed, that the road is a right-of-way, and that the person who installed the gate will obey the law, because it will be enforced.

This led to the topic of RS (Revised Statute) 2477, enacted in 1866, which grants "the right-of-way for the construction of highways across public lands not otherwise reserved for public purposes..." according to the statute. Harvey said that the granted right can't be removed, and that the USFS can't arbitrarily close County roads (RS 2477 was repealed under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, FLPMA, in 1976, but any

existing right prior to that remained in effect).

He said that the USFS and the County are working on both entities' maps, in order to have a permanent, accurate record of County roads and other rights-of-way, such as pathways and railroads, and the maps will be adjusted accordingly. Noting the lack of public acknowledgment regarding the progress, and giving the USFS due credit, he said, "We're making some great headway; it's just not in the papers."

First Friday with the Commissioner is held on the first Friday of every month, and the public is welcome to attend.

City-County joint meeting talks Dispatch Center

BY TODD ARRIOLA
Todd@TheBakerCountyPress.com

The Baker County Board of Commissioners held a work session on Wednesday, February 1, 2017, 5:30 p.m., which had as its primary matter the continuing conversation with Baker City Council members, regarding the Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement for Dispatch and Records Keeping Services, between the City and the County, which remains in the discussion stage.

County Commission Chair Harvey said, "In my understanding, I think we're just at a current impasse of who's going to be appointed to the two positions available on the 911 Board, and then, the cost share—correct me, if I'm wrong, sir." Baker City Manager Fred Warner, Jr. said he agreed, and he noted the color of his recommended changes to the agreement, as did Harvey.

Harvey said that the process to resolve issues with

the agreement has been a lengthy one, and there is still confusion.

Warner, Jr. said, "We need to get this done, and move on. Folks have done a great job with the (Baker County 911 Consolidated Dispatch) Center, and we need to figure out how we're going to finance ongoing operations..." Part of the City's position on the makeup of the 911 Board is that it should include more representation from the City, since the City would pay a majority of the shared costs.

Harvey said he'd recommended that the City pay 75% of the cost of shared services, while the County would pay 25%, because Center Director Hope Lindsey studied the utilization of those services, and, in addition to extra costs incurred by the County, the City sat at 80% utilization, while the County sat at 20%.

He didn't want to recommend the City pay 80%, because it would be too

large an increase, from the current 71% (which will remain in effect until June 30, the end of the fiscal year).

Harvey said his recommendation is that the makeup of the 911 Board would include the County Commission Chair, the City Manager, an EMS representative (Fire or Emergency), and two people appointed by the City and the County.

He said he prefers to have at least one representative from the public, because he values highly that input also, which he noted is a significant part of other meetings and processes.

During a discussion about the calls received by the City, versus the County, and the costs incurred and the facilities provided, Harvey emphasized the County's role, costs, and budget issues

SEE CITY-COUNTY PAGE 5

— SPECIAL COLUMN —

So I was thinking ...

Phone addiction

By Jimmy Ingram
Special to The Baker County Press

A few months ago my family and I were waiting to be seated at a restaurant in Portland.

Personally I think few places are worth waiting 30 minutes to be seated, but after traveling with two kids all day, we weren't about to leave.

My wife, tired of sitting all day, said she'd take our daughter and stroll through the mall adjacent to the restaurant until a table was available.

My son and I stayed, seated on a long booth across from another long booth. No less than 30 people sat there waiting with us and they all had one thing in common: they were all using their cell phones in one way or another.

Every person there, ranging from age 8 to 80 sat hypnotized by something that didn't really exist even 20 years ago, maybe even as recent as 12 years ago in their current form.

It was like an eerie scene out of a science fiction movie where everyone had been brainwashed by aliens.

I watched my son take in the surroundings fearing what he might ask.

Then he did. "Dad, can I play on your phone?" he asked.

I instantly responded, "No, let's do something else. Let's play Rock Paper Scissors." He agreed and we sat there amongst lighted screens and tapping fingers, dueling each other for the next 20 minutes.

Ironically, we were the ones getting strange looks from everyone.

Moments like the above are proof of what most of us already know: our culture is being taken over by phones. Grabbing your phone every couple minutes to look at it has become a nearly universal habit.

Did someone text me?
Do I have a Facebook notification?
Maybe someone snapchatted me.
Did I miss a call?

What time is it? Ohh, good. Only 10 minutes til my break and I can go stare at my phone for 15 minutes.

Phones have become almost like an appendage for some people. Ringers and notification chimes go off during weddings, funerals, and church services.



Submitted Photo

Jimmy Ingram is a local farmer and father of two who enjoys people watching within our wonderful community and beyond.

People carry on phone conversations while going through the check-out line in stores.

We complain as a culture about being "too busy" and yet we fill in all the blank spots in our days staring at a lighted screen to give us some sort of feedback.

The irony is that while smartphones are supposed to keep us in touch with the world, we tend to ignore everything around us when we use them.

Now I'd like to admit that I've evolved enough as a human being enough to go against the grain and only use my phone when necessary.

The truth is, at times I'm as guilty as anyone else. It's convenient being able to check the weather instantly. It simplifies life being able to text my wife to see if I'm responsible for dinner.

I enjoy scrolling through Facebook at times to see what my "friends" are up to. But there will never be a substitute for interacting with people on a personal level.

An actual smile is better than an emoji. Seeing someone and asking them how they've been offers a sincerity not found by checking their Facebook status.

And shopping? Last time I checked there were hundreds of local brick and mortar stores that would love your business.

I won't lie and say I preferred the days when I didn't have a smartphone. It's a modern convenience that is here now and will probably never go away.

But don't forget to take your eyes off the screen for a while and enjoy the people around you without distraction.

Play Rock Paper Scissors, tell jokes, go have a quiet lunch with a friend and leave your phone at home.

Disconnect your brain and your fingers from technology for a while.

There's a whole world out there beyond that 4" backlit LCD screen.

— CONTACT US —

The Baker County Press

PO Box 567
Baker City, Ore. 97814

Open Monday-Thursday for calls
9 AM - 4 PM
Open 24/7 for emails

Phone: 541.519.0572

TheBakerCountyPress.com

Kerry McQuisten, Publisher
Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Wendee Morrissey, Advertising and Sales
Wendee@TheBakerCountyPress.com

David Conn, Advertising and Sales
David@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Published weekly every Friday.
Subscription rates per year are \$29.95 all areas, e-mail delivery. \$39.95 print issue, home delivery, Baker City city limits only. \$49.95 print issue, mail delivery, outside Baker City city limits only.
Payment in advance.

A division of
Black Lyon Publishing, LLC

Copyright © 2014 -2017

YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

President Donald Trump

202.456.1414

202.456.2461 fax

Whitehouse.gov/contact

US Sen. Jeff Merkley

503.326.3386

503.326.2900 fax

Merkley.Senate.gov

US Sen. Ron Wyden

541.962.7691

Wyden.Senate.gov

US Rep. Greg Walden

541.624.2400

541.624.2402 fax

Walden.House.gov

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown

503.378.3111

Governor.Oregon.gov

State Rep. Cliff Bantz

503.986.1460

State Sen. Ted Ferrioli

541.490.6528

Baker County Commissioners Bill Harvey; Mark Bennett; Bruce Nichols

541.523.8200

541.523.8201

Letter to the Editor Policy: The Baker County Press reserves the right not to publish letters containing factual falsehoods or incoherent narrative. Letters promoting or detracting from specific for-profit businesses will not be published. Word limit is 375 words per letter. Letters are limited to one every other week per author. Letters should be submitted to Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com.

Advertising and Opinion Page Disclaimer:
Opinions submitted as Guest Opinions or Letters to

the Editor express the opinions of their authors, and have not been authored by and are not necessarily the opinions of The Baker County Press, any of our staff, management, independent contractors or affiliates. Advertisements placed by political groups, candidates, businesses, etc., are printed as a paid service, which does not constitute an endorsement of or fulfillment obligation by this newspaper for the products or services advertised.