

Local

Local teachers head to China

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Baker High School Language Arts Teachers David Laws and Tom Joseph traveled to Xi'an, China for ten days over the summer.

They had previously gone to China in the spring and were invited to return and teach at a summer camp by a headmaster Joseph had met.

"It's a major city for its history," explained Laws. "Because 1,000 years ago, during the Tang Dynasty, it was the capitol of all of China and, so, we got to see some incredible sites. They took us all over the place, we taught every day, we taught English, and we prepared them for a performance for parents."

Laws explained the camp they went to was organized by a successful private school in Xi'an and they went to a military academy where they were doing basic military training as middle school and high school students.

Laws and Joseph had prepared the students for a recitation of vocabulary and grammar patterns they had taught them for a performance on one of their last days in Xi'an for all of the parents.

The students recited things in English that they had learned in their class.

"It's an up and coming private school in Xi'an," explained Joseph. "It's very rigorous; a lot of stress on the kids, a lot of stress on teachers to perform. So, they take getting into high school very seriously and they run this kind of military-style boot camp where the kids, from 7:30 a.m. until noon, are in military fatigues, out in the heat, lining up marching, listening, respect, all of these kinds of drills, getting them ready to function as efficient high school students. That was their morning, they'd take lunch, a little bit of rest, and then they'd come in and they'd have English classes."

There were about 10 English teachers at the camp and Laws and Joseph were the only two Ameri-



Samantha O'Conner / The Baker County Press

David Laws and Tom Joseph.

can teachers at the camp and they taught classes of about 50 students.

Laws explained that the summer camp helped another project the district is working on, to establish a cultural exchange.

Their first trip was organized by Superintendent Mark Witty that was focused on establishing stronger relationships with the sister schools.

Leading up to that, there was one sister school in Shiquan and for four years, Witty has organized travel groups from that school to come to Baker County and visit important sites. In their spring trip, they established a sister relationship with the private school in Xi'an.

"That's really part of the relationship," explained Joseph. "The conversation I had with that headmaster that inspired us coming over there was just about that; he was talking about some methodologies that we would use teaching English in an American school, where the breakdown is, do those things work when you're working with 50."

"Their methodologies typically are everybody sit down, be quiet, look up at the board, and just a lot of seat work and 'stand and deliver' is what teachers

would call it; the teacher stands and delivers and you just sit and receive.

"Where American classes are much more interactive and small group collaborations that breaks down for them, sometimes, like how do you manage that with 50?"

"Even we would struggle to do those methodologies with classes of 50. So, that's where the conversation started and that's why they invited us to come over there and, just groups of teachers talking about best practice methods and seeing what works teaching kids English."

"All of this sort of organizes around the dream of the Superintendent to have a Chinese Cultural Exchange Program in place with different program offerings for the Chinese interest groups, for people who are interested," said Laws.

Joseph explained that there are students in China who are interested in not just coming here for college but for coming over and doing at least part of their high school years in America.

"A lot of major cities have exchanges right now," said Joseph. "So, Baker's just trying to start something similar with the goal

of us getting some Baker students then to go back and, maybe not do a year of high school, but just get over there for the travel experience and get to see some of the awesome sites that we've seen."

While in China, Joseph and Laws they went to see the Great Wall, the Famen Temple, sacred Buddhist sites, and the Terracotta Army.

"The most important and probably most memorable—don't get me wrong, the magnitude of history is what is impressive when you look at something that is that old and just realize how young American history is when you think about it—but also just some of the awesome exchanges with working with the kids," said Joseph. "They're very, very interested in Americans, they're very appreciative of teachers, and they're just so respectful and just truly enjoy the interaction. It's been awesome to see just how they react to our teachings and their curiosities and all the questions that they ask."

Laws and Joseph are planning a return trip for the spring and they are planning to go back if they have their summer camp again.

Missing hunter located

On September 11, 2017, Baker County Dispatch received a report of an overdue hunter at approximately 9:57 p.m.

The reporting party stated that he and his hunting partner, John Ladd (DOB 8/20/54), had been scouting in the Monument Rock Wilderness when Ladd decided to return to their camp near Onion Springs. He was last seen at approximately 5:30 p.m. The reporting party searched for Ladd but was unable to locate him.

Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash and Baker County Search and Rescue Team Coordinator, Chris Galiszewski, responded to the Monument Rock Wilderness area.

The Search and Rescue Team was activated early this morning. Ladd was located at approximately 6:53 a.m. Once located, his condition was assessed and it was determined that he did not need medical attention.

Man dies in Hwy. 86 crash

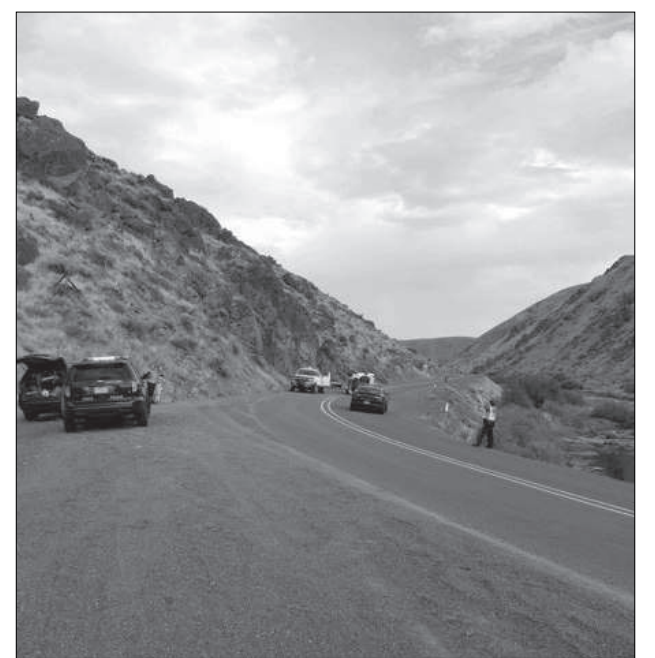


Photo courtesy of OSP

This single-vehicle fatality accident closed Hwy. 86 for both directions Tuesday for hours.

On September 12, 2017 at approximately 1:20pm, OSP responded to a fatal motor vehicle crash on State Route 86 near milepost 25, near Baker City.

Preliminary investigation revealed a 2006 Dodge 2500 pickup was traveling eastbound on State Route 86 near milepost 25, when for an unknown reason the vehicle left the roadway, struck an embankment, and came to a rest on the driver's side in the middle of the roadway facing westbound.

The driver, identified as Jimmy Hilderbrand, age 87 of Halfway, Oregon, was pronounced deceased at the scene. There were no other vehicles involved in the collision.

At the time of the collision, Jimmy Hilderbrand was wearing his seat belt and there was airbag deployment.

Next of kin notification was made to Hilderbrand's son. OSP was assisted by Baker County SO, MEDEX, Baker County Fire Department and ODOT.

No further information was to be released at this time.

Feeding the firefighters

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Crippen said, "Through those solicitations we'll get information back what they can provide and the prices they provide them at.

"We will send that information to local vendors pre-season and we set up preseason agreements with local vendors to provide that. Little Pig is one of those that we have been using this summer, we do have some others that we use also in the local area and we've been feeding from, on a couple of our different fires, from 20-50 folks. It's really good to be able to utilize local folks and local vendors to do that, we like to keep our business local."

Crippen said they have had people camped out remotely and they will send them MRE's—Meals Ready to Eat—and supplement them with local vendor's sack lunches and breakfast items, such as breakfast burritos.

A lot of times, firefighters are remote and have to have their food flown in to them.

This year, firefighters were camped in the North Fork John Day Wilderness and all of their food had to be flown in by helicopter from the Wildlife Feeding Station.

"It's really good to utilize local folks and the folks here have been really good for us in the past," said Crippen.

This year is the third year Little Pig has prepared meals for the firefighters.

They prepare around 70 meals for the firefighters, making dishes like beef kabobs and grilled chicken.

"We try to make everything homemade and lots of protein and lots of carbs," explained Little Pig owner Erin Hansen. "We bake dessert for them fresh every night too."

"The folks at Little Pig we were working with did a great job feeding the firefighters," said Crippen. "They went above and beyond for them."

Judge Baxter files for reelection

On September 7, 2017, Baker County Circuit Judge Gregory L. Baxter filed for re-election. The Primary Election will be on May 15, 2018. Baxter, 57, has served as circuit judge since January 1, 2001.

"As a youth, becoming a judge was my dream job. I feel the same way about the position today. Though I don't like everything that I hear or see, I do enjoy each day I get to serve the public. I love the law and enjoy my interactions with people in finding correct legal solutions. I look forward to continuing that work," Baxter said.

Judge Baxter was awarded the Chief Justice's

Juvenile Court Champion Award in August 2004 for his work with abused and neglected children. He is a member of the Judicial Engagement and Leadership Institute and, from 2013 – 2015, served on a subcommittee that reviewed adoption processes in Oregon.

Judge Baxter graduated from Baker High School in 1978. He served a two-year mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in North Carolina from May 1979 – May 1981.

He received an Associate's Degree in Accounting from Ricks College in April 1982; a Bachelor's Degree in Business Man-

agement and Finance from Brigham Young University in December 1983; and his law degree from Northwestern School of Law, Lewis and Clark College in May 1989.

Baxter worked at the law firm of Silven Schmeits and Vaughan for two years before becoming the Baker County Deputy District Attorney.

He was appointed the district attorney by Governor Barbara Roberts after Doug Johnson resigned the position. He was elected the Baker County District Attorney in May 1992 and served in that position until he was elected onto the bench.

Judge Baxter and his



Photo courtesy of Ballotpedia.

Judge Gregory L. Baxter.

wife, Karen, have been married for 33 years. They have 5 children: Greg, Sam, Zack, Courtney, and Jake, and 12 grandchildren.

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