



Always a storyteller

Karen Haas shares tales from the Oregon Trail

By Lisa Britton
Go! Magazine

BAKER CITY — Karen Haas is a storyteller at heart, and she combines that skill with music to share tales of the Oregon Trail.

"I've always been a storyteller, even as a kid," she said. "History is not just dates."

She'll be in Baker City this weekend to perform both at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center and in Geiser-Pollman Park.

The center is 5 miles outside of town on Highway 86. The park is on Campbell Street in Baker City.

Haas first performed at the center in 2009. She's returned every year since, with the exception of 2020.

Her programs on Friday, Sept. 3, will be outside at the center at 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

On Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 4-5, Haas will join the wagon encampment at Geiser-Pollman Park. She'll perform at 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. both days.

In addition, she will give a special presentation at 5 p.m. Saturday, also in the park.

Haas will bring three different shows to Baker City. In "Wagons West," she talks about the "treas-

ures and tools of the trail."

"Like the wonderful things you can make out of a horn," she said. "And I mix it up with stories and songs from the trail."

For "Eliza Jane Meeker," she takes her audience back to 1852 to meet this woman with a well-known husband.

"A lot of people have heard of her husband, Ezra Meeker," Haas said. "She started the first library in Puyallup."

In her third program, "Tales & Tunes of the Trail," Haas portrays a woman traveling the trail who is sharing stories around the campfire.

"She's telling stories and gossip, and singing songs they all know," she said.

Haas taught music for 10 years, and worked as the curator of education at two historical sites near Tacoma, Washington.

"I found I'm still a teacher, but I'm bringing the past to life," she said. "I love sharing history."

Although she delved into storytelling by Zoom over the last 18 months, this weekend she'll be back to screen-free presentations.

"I'm looking forward to having a live audience," she said. "I've really missed that."

Travel Baker County
Storyteller Karen Haas performs Friday, Sept. 3, at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, and in Geiser-Pollman Park on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 4-5.

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