

REMINISCING ABOUT THE SHEEP BUSINESS IN NORTHEASTERN OREGON

A wild and woolly past

■ Walter Saunders and Marvin Lovell share stories about working with sheep

By Lisa Britton
For the Baker City Herald

Walter Saunders hasn't been in the sheep business for decades now, but his stories still bring a smile to his face.

"I was born into the sheep business," he said to the crowd gathered at Baker Heritage Museum Monday night.

Saunders and Marvin Lovell shared their stories of the sheep industry during a special event organized as part of the "Color Gone Wild" exhibit at Crossroads Carnegie Art Center. Through July and August, Crossroads has hosted special demonstrations and talks related to the fiber arts industry.

Saunders may have grown up in the sheep business, but it didn't become his career until he and his brothers bought out their father. They ran sheep until 1967 — 1,500 ewes and two herders.

Many of his shared stories were prompted by questions from the audience. For instance, were dogs helpful?

"They're wonderful, like having an extra man around the sheep," he said. "It's so incredible how intelligent they are — the dogs trained the herders."

He did deal with predators a few times.

"A cougar got in our sheep one night and killed or maimed 75 sheep," he said.

A government trapper caught the big cat the next day.

"He was huge," Saunders said of the cougar.

He shipped sheep out of Robinette, a town along the Snake River that was unin-



Lisa Britton / For the Baker City Herald

Walter Saunders of Richland reminisced recently about his decades working on a sheep ranch.

"We'd throw them in — like on a wool blanket — and they'd push the sheep to the corner."

— **Walter Saunders, remembering how he enlisted young people to help coax sheep into railroad cars for shipment**

dated by Brownlee Reservoir in 1958. Here he smiles as he remembers trying to coax the sheep back into the corners of the railroad car.

Saunders always enlisted the help of the youngsters hanging around.

"We'd throw them in — like on a wool blanket — and they'd push the sheep to the corners," he said with a smile.

He also talked about the markers in every herd — sprinkling 25 black sheep in among the majority of white.

"Count the black sheep — if there are 25, you got them all. If you're missing a couple, you better go look for more sheep," he said.

When he'd answered all the audience's questions, Saunders gave the floor to Marvin Lovell, who grew up in Wallowa County and sheared sheep for 42 years.

He had a crew of 10, and was on the road for six months of the year.

They were paid per sheep — 30 cents each at the beginning. In one season, Lovell sheared 227,000 sheep. On his biggest day of shearing, he sheared 237 sheep in eight hours.

He retired from the business in 1997.

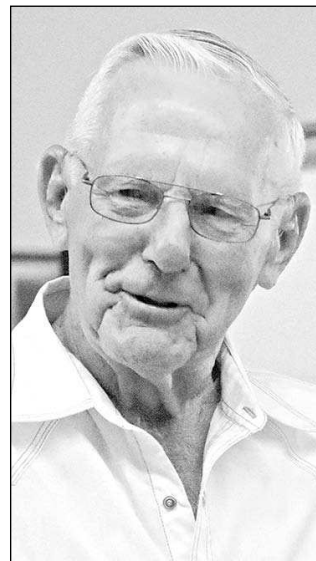
"It was a good occupation for me," he said. "I enjoyed it."

More events at Crossroads in August

"Color Gone Wild" events continue in August at Crossroads Carnegie Art Center:

• Aug. 6, 10 a.m.: Saori Weaving Demonstration with Carol Etchemendy of Summerville

• Aug. 11, 10 a.m.: Needle Felting Demonstration with Pam Miller of Cove and



Lisa Britton / For the Baker City Herald

Marvin Lovell

Elaine Wagner of La Grande

• Aug. 13: Kumihimo Braiding Workshop with Kirsten Badger of Sparta. Pre-register by calling 541-523-5369.

• Aug. 13, 7 p.m.: Sheep Ranching History Talk at Baker Heritage Museum, hosted by Baker County Historical Society. Featured speakers are Gordon Colton and Jack Jacobson, who were both raised on sheep ranches in Baker County.

• Aug. 17 and 20, 10 a.m.: Pine Needle Weaving Demonstration with Pam Petterson.

• Aug. 24: Tree Branch Loom Workshop with Margaret Mead of La Grande and Vicki Wares of Baker City. Supplies will be furnished for the first eight participants. Pre-registration required by calling 541-523-5369.

• Aug. 27, 10 a.m.: Pine Needle Basket Weaving Demonstration with Pam Petterson.

DROUGHT

Continued from Page 1A

Rainfall for 2018 at the airport totals 4.77 inches, which is 25 percent below the average for the period Jan. 1 through July 31.

For the water year, which runs from Oct. 1 through Sept. 31, rainfall at the airport is 31 percent below average.

This was just the fifth July since 1943 in which no rain fell at the airport.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, most of Baker County is in the "abnormally dry" category.

A section in the county's southwest corner is in a "moderate" drought, and the extreme southwest corner is in "severe" drought. The scale also includes two even worse levels of drought — "extreme" and "exceptional."

No part of Oregon is in either of those categories.

Perdue's announcement follows two earlier drought declarations.

In June 6 the Baker County Board of Commissioners asked Oregon Gov. Kate Brown to declare a drought emergency for the county following a winter with a below-average snowpack and a relatively dry spring — normally the wettest period in the county.

Brown declared a drought emergency in Baker County on June 18.

According to a letter Perdue sent to Brown this week, "farmers in eligible counties have 8 months from the date of a Secretarial disaster declaration to apply for emergency loans. FSA considers each emergency loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of production losses on the farm and the security and repayment ability of the operator."

The federal disaster declaration makes Baker County ranchers eligible to apply for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program, said Trent Luschen, executive director for the Farm Service Agency in Baker County.

That program pays ranchers who lost forage on private land for their livestock due to the drought.

For beef cattle the base payment is \$28.07 per bull or cow, and \$21.05 for calves weighing 500 pounds or more.

More information about federal assistance is available at the FSA office at 3990 Midway Drive, or by calling 541-523-7121.

The eight primary counties in the federal drought designation are: Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Grant, Harney, Lake, Malheur and Wheeler.

The 10 contiguous counties in Oregon are: Gilliam, Jefferson, Klamath, Lane, Linn, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa and Wasco.

The disaster declaration also includes several counties in adjacent states that border on one of the affected counties in Oregon — Modoc County in California; Adams, Canyon, Owyhee, Payette and Washington counties in Idaho; and Humboldt and Washoe counties in Nevada.

CATHEDRAL

Continued from Page 1A

Initial tasks included removing the old shingles, prepping the wood, adding a layer of watertight sheeting, and finishing metal work.

Swain expects to start installing shingles next week, which he said is a quicker part of the job.

The crew uses several lifts to reach the roof, and workers are secured with ropes and harnesses, even when

inside the lift basket.

"There's no worries — just a little paranoid," Swain said.

The lift does sway a bit, and the workers must come down if the wind blows faster than 27 mph.

The crew varies from four to six, and they work Monday through Thursday.

Swain said quite a few people have stopped to watch them work on the roof.

"Everybody in town has a picture of me," he said.

Paying for the project

Plans have been in the works for a while to replace the roof, which was more

than 30 years old. Leaks had recently caused damage to the lathe-and-plaster layer, resulting in the loss of three tiles inside the cathedral.

The project cost of \$300,000 was raised by donations, grants, and a contribution of \$100,000 from the Diocese of Baker.

The Catholic Diocese of Baker was established June 19, 1903, by Pope Leo XIII. The cornerstone for St. Francis de Sales Cathedral was laid in 1906; the church was complete in 1908.

The cathedral was built of tuffstone from the Pleasant Valley quarry near Durkee.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Baker School District registration set

Registration for the Baker School District is scheduled during August.

Baker High School, South Baker, Baker Middle School and Brooklyn

- Monday, Aug. 13 — 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Baker High School, 2500 E St.
- Tuesday, Aug. 14 — 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Baker High School

Keating Elementary

- Monday, Aug. 13 — 8 a.m. to noon at the school
- Tuesday, Aug. 14 — 8 a.m. to noon at Baker High School

Haines Elementary

- Monday, Aug. 13 — 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Baker High School
- Tuesday, Aug. 14 — 8 a.m. to noon at Haines Elementary

Eagle Cap Innovative High School

- Monday, Aug. 13 — 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and noon to 3 p.m. at Baker High School
- Tuesday, Aug. 14 — 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Baker High School

Immunizations

- Please bring your insurance card and immunization records
- Monday, Aug. 13 — 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Baker High School
- Tuesday, Aug. 14 — 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Baker High School

NEWS OF RECORD

FUNERAL PENDING

Douglas Lee Smurthwaite: There will be a visitation at 1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 4, in the Relief Society Room at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2625 Hughes Lane. His funeral will begin at 2 p.m. Aug. 4 at the church. Following the funeral, a procession will lead family and friends to Mount Hope Cemetery for Air Force honors and the vault interment. A reception will take place afterward in the multi-purpose room at the church. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society or the charity of one's choice through ColesTributeCenter, 1950 Place St., Baker City, OR 97814. To light a candle in honor of Doug, go to www.colestributecenter.com

Janet Elaine Shepardson: Her funeral will be at 11 a.m. Friday, Aug. 10, at Coles Tribute Center, 1950 Place St., in Baker City. The Rev. Don Hanna will officiate. Friends are invited to join the family for a reception at the Baker United Methodist Church, 1919 Second St., immediately after the service. Memorial contributions may be made to the United Methodist Church Memorial Fund or to Heart 'n' Home Hospice through Coles Tribute Center. To light a candle or leave a condolence, go to www.colestributecenter.com.

Myldred R. Perrine: Saturday, Aug. 11, at 10 a.m. at the McEwen Bible Fellowship, 15403 Highway 7. Interment will follow the service at the Sumpster Cemetery, where Myldred will be laid to rest next to her husband, Clyde. Memorial contributions may be sent to McEwen Bible Fellowship through Gray's West & Co. Pioneer Chapel, 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814. To light a candle for Myldred or to leave a condolence for her family, go

to www.grayswestco.com

POLICE LOG

Baker City Police
POST-PRISON SUPERVISION VIOLATION: Robert Edward Nichols, 30, of 2579 Ninth St., 3:13 p.m. Wednesday, in the 1700 block of East Street; jailed.
ATTEMPTING TO ELUDE POLICE, RECKLESS DRIVING and RECKLESS ENDANGERING: James Edward "Jamie" Grove, 41, address unknown, 5:41 p.m. Tuesday, at the Baker County Jail where he is being held on a charge of violating his post-prison supervision; police said the newest charges stem from a July 23 incident in which Grove failed to stop for police near 13th and G streets. Police ended the pursuit as Grove continued to drive recklessly through residential areas. Baker County Sheriff's deputies arrested Grove Tuesday at Medical Springs on a warrant charging him with the post-prison supervision violation.

Oregon State Police
DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF INTOXICANTS (Alcohol) and FAILURE TO PERFORM THE DUTIES OF A DRIVER IN AN ACCIDENT WITH PROPERTY DAMAGE: Kevin Paul May, 36, of Richland, 6:20 p.m. Tuesday, on Highway 86, three miles north of Richland; jailed and later released. Trooper Timothy Schuette reported in the OSP daily media log that May was arrested after investigation of a one-vehicle crash. Schuette said May fled the scene and was hiding in an irrigation ditch when he arrived at the scene. May was located by the landowner and taken into custody by Schuette after May performed poorly on field sobriety tests. May provided a breath sample of 0.20 percent blood-alcohol concentration.

ELTRYM THEATER
AUGUST 3-9

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN pg. 10
A whimsical story of a boy, Christopher Robin, who grows up to become the hero of his life.
FRI-THURS: (4:20) 7:20, 9:40

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE - FALLOUT pg. 13
Ethan Hunt and his team, along with some familiar allies, race against time after a mission gone wrong.
FRI-THURS: (4:00) 7:30

MAMMA MIA! HERE WE GO AGAIN pg. 13
Five years after the events of Mamma Mia! Sophie learns about her mother's past while preparing for her wedding.
FRI-THURS: (4:10) 7:10, 9:35

*No Tix Tuesday (Bargain Matinee)
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Baker County Veterans will be closed Thursday & Friday and will reopen Monday morning. Thank you! - Rick Gloria

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