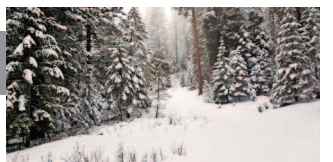


Baker City Herald

December 28, 2018

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In **OUTDOORS**, 1B
Surprised during a snowshoe hike

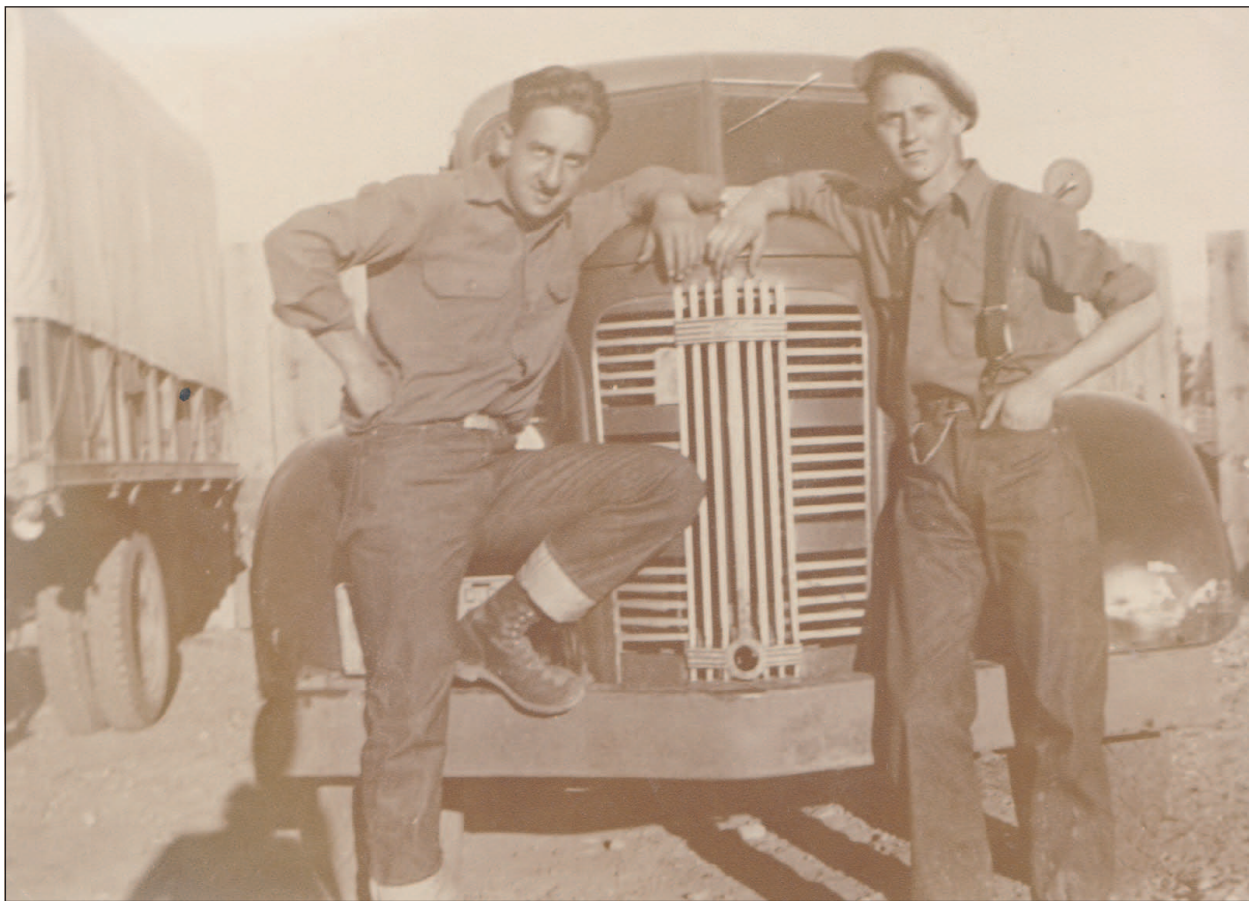
IN THIS EDITION: Local • Health & Fitness • Outdoors • TV **\$1.50**



2018: THE YEAR IN PICTURES

Letters, Photos Document Civilian Conservation Corps Work In Baker County

Depression Duties



Submitted photo

Howard Deschner, right, and his friend Frank Chappo during their stint working at a Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Halfway in the late 1930s.

By Lisa Britton
For the Baker City Herald

To help ease rampant unemployment during the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933.

Known as the CCC, the men planted trees, built flood barriers, fought forest fires and maintained roads and trails.

Most of the men were between the ages of 18 and 25. They lived in military-style camps across the nation and earned \$30 per month.

One CCC camp was established in Halfway, about 52 miles east of Baker City. Whit Deschner, who lives in Baker City, saved the memorabilia of his father, Howard, who was stationed at the Halfway CCC camp.

Whit believes his father helped build what is now the nordic center at Anthony Lakes — it was originally a Forest Service guard station — and worked on a Forest Service building in Halfway. The CCC crew mainly built trails in the Wallowa Mountains, but members also fought wildfires.

Among the documents that Whit Deschner inherited are letters Howard wrote to his parents back in Portland. In his cursive hand, the young man told tales of his time in Eastern Oregon.

In his letter dated “9th Sunday (Easter) 1939,” Howard recounts how he and a few friends headed out, on foot, to the Snake River 12½ miles away.

“We had one pack sack with 1 can of beans, 1 of corn, a loaf of bread and 1 lb. of cheese and a small fruit cake that Grandma sent me and a small can of jam. Just hardly enough for one meal.”

After reaching the river, the boys decided to visit Copperfield, a mining town 16 miles to the north.

“We hiked from 2:30 to 8:30 straight and hiked 16 good long miles of the most deserted God-forsaken worthless ornery piece of country I have ever laid my two eyes on,” Howard wrote.

Along the way they caught and milked a cow to supplement their



Submitted photo

Howard Deschner, right, and a fellow CCC member stand beside a highway sign near Halfway. Robinette no longer exists, having been inundated by the waters of Brownlee Reservoir in 1958.

meager rations. Finally, in the “pitch blackness,” they came upon Copperfield.

(The town no longer exists, but it was near the current site of Oxbow, where Highway 86 reaches the Snake River.)

“No post office, no store, no nothing, just 3 or 4 houses strung out over about 2 miles along the Snake,” Howard wrote.

He and his CCC buddies took refuge in a horse stable “without hay or straw or nothing except horse manure and bats.”

The next day — sore, tired and hungry — they walked back to Halfway.

“In all we hiked 46 miles with barely enough grub for one meal.”

The letter ends with a P.S.:

“It really was a swell Easter in spite of everything.”

When he wrote home on May 14, 1939, Howard told his parents about the infestation of Mormon crickets in Halfway and how the CCC helped save the town.

“The crickets are sure bad up here now. The whole valley is out fighting them,” Howard wrote.

He goes on to tell of the various ways devised to trap and kill the crickets. One of the more successful ideas was to capture the insects in the irrigation ditch, then dump them in a bathtub with gasoline. The dead crickets were tossed in a pit.

See Corps / Page 2A



Submitted photo

Baker City is gradually replacing its stop signs with larger versions that also have a reflective red pole.

Stop signs gain size

By Casey Crowley
crowley@bakercityherald.com

Baker City’s public works department is replacing stop signs with larger ones to meet federal requirements.

The city will move from signs with a diameter of 24 inches to 30 inches to meet new minimum requirements.

Public works crews have been installing the new larger signs as weather permits. If the temperature drops below 25 degrees before the concrete around the sign’s post has hardened, the concrete can freeze, making it less durable.

See Signs / Page 2A

Federal shutdown affects local offices

The Oregon Trail Interpretive Center near Baker City remains closed due to the partial federal government shutdown, and some other agencies’ offices are also closed.

The Interpretive Center, about five miles east of Baker City along Highway 86, is operated by the BLM, an agency of the Interior Department.

That’s one of the nine federal departments affected by the partial shutdown.

Another is the Agriculture Department, which includes the U.S. Forest Service, one of the major federal employers in Baker County.

See Shutdown / Page 2A

INSIDE MONDAY'S ISSUE

The Herald’s annual 14-page Year In Review special section, featuring a page of some of our favorite photographs from 2018, as well as a page for each month including excerpts from the year’s top stories.

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Bettie Schmidt of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Baker Heritage Museum open today, Saturday

The Baker Heritage Museum, 2480 Grove St., will be open today and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Admission is \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors and military members, and free for those 12 and younger.

Christmas bird counts planned Dec. 29, Jan. 5

The Audubon Society’s annual Christmas bird counts are scheduled for the Baker City area on Dec. 29 and Jan. 5. Volunteers interested in participating can call Bruce Raffety at 541-523-2551 or by email at bbraff820@yahoo.com. Volunteers will be doing bird feeder watches and driving on selected routes in the area.

Drug- and alcohol-free New Year’s Eve party

The Teens for Change Drug- and Alcohol-Free New Year’s Eve party is set for 9 p.m. on Dec. 31 at Churchill School, 3451 Broadway St. All middle school and high school students are welcome to attend the free event, which will run until 12:30 a.m. on New Year’s Day.

WEATHER

Today
33 / 26

Increasing clouds

Saturday
36 / 32

Rain or snow

Sunday
38 / 20

Snow showers

TODAY
Issue 101, 14 pages

Calendar.....2A
Classified.....4B-7B
Comics.....3B

Community News....3A
Crossword.....5B & 6B
Dear Abby.....8B

Horoscopes.....5B & 6B
Jayson Jacoby.....4A
News of Record.....2A

Obituaries.....2A
Opinion.....4A
Outdoors.....1B & 2B

Senior Menus.....2A
Sports.....6A
Weather.....8B

MONDAY — GREET 2019 WITH HOMEMADE FORTUNE COOKIES

