



Baker City Herald

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IN THIS EDITION: Local • Business & AgLife • Go! magazine \$1.50

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Carl Sullivan of Baker City.

Local, 3A

Savannah Potter, a senior at Harvest Christian Academy in Baker City, placed second in the statewide Voice of Democracy speech contest sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

BRIEFING

Compassion Center banquet set for Saturday

The Northeast Oregon Compassion Center's annual banquet is set for Saturday, Feb. 2 at 5:30 p.m. at in the Family Life Center at the Baker City Nazarene Church, 1250 Hughes Lane. There will be silent and live auctions, and a tri-tip dinner.

Baker County Garden Club meets Feb. 6

The Baker County Garden Club will meet on Wednesday, Feb. 6 at 10:30 a.m. for a meeting and fun at Baker Botanicals, 3797 10th St. Please bring a chair, sack lunch and beverage. New members are always welcome.

Community choir practices begin on Monday

The Baker Community Choir begins rehearsals for spring performances on Monday, Feb. 4. Rehearsals are Mondays at 7 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, Fourth Street and Washington Avenue. Please arrive at 6:45 p.m. on Feb. 4 to pick up music. Those who can't attend Feb. 4 can join the next Monday. Concert dates are May 3 and 4 at 7 p.m. and May 5 at 3 p.m.

No experience is necessary. High school students and older are welcome. Those in middle school can participate if accompanied by a parent or guardian. Cost is \$15 per person. More information is available by calling LaVonne Yeomans at 541-523-2347.

WEATHER

Today 40 / 23 Mostly sunny
Thursday 43 / 29 Mostly cloudy

Correction: Jayson Jacoby's column on Page 4A of the Jan. 25 issue contained an error. The disease outbreak in Clark County, Washington, involves measles, caused by the rubella virus, not German measles, which is caused by the rubella virus.

New Rockhounding Group Formed In Baker City

Ready to Rock



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Dick McClarin displays how a chunk of petrified wood can be transformed into a sphere of stunning art.

By Jayson Jacoby
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Anna Stafford loves to talk about rocks, but after 15 minutes or so of animated conversation mere words simply can't convey the depths of her affinity.



Stafford

She needs an actual rock.

And Stafford never leaves home without one.

Her hand disappears briefly and then she plunks a smooth and shiny black stone on the table, with the sort of flourish a magician might display.

This chunk of iris obsidian, Stafford says, is her "pocket rock."

Which is nothing at all like the Pet Rock, the silly 1970s fad.

Stafford smiles often and punctuates her stories with frequent laughs, but she is quite serious about the hobby of rockhounding.

Serious enough to have recently started Baker Rockhounds.

Stafford, who grew up in McCall, Idaho, and moved to Baker County about five years ago, emphasizes both what Baker Rockhounds is —



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Obsidian is found in many colors besides the common glossy black. This one is called Candy Rock and hails from New Mexico.

and what it most assuredly is not. "It's not a club," she said.

The word club, Stafford believes, implies bylaws and monthly dues and other formal trappings that run counter to her goal to cultivate a more inclusive bunch of enthusiasts.

She prefers to call Baker Rockhounds a "group."

"A group of like-minded people

who have a hobby which we feel is just soul-searchingly fun," Stafford said. "Why have dues for something that's supposed to be fun?"

Jarri McClarin, a longtime Baker County resident who had been urging Stafford for a couple of years to start the group, agrees.

See Rocks / Page 6A

County might challenge gated road

By Casey Crowley and Jayson Jacoby
Baker City Herald

The Baker County Commissioners will officially

decide during their Feb. 6 meeting whether to file a legal complaint arguing that a disputed road in eastern Baker County is a

county road that can't be blocked by a locked gate.

But based on the commissioners' meeting Tuesday they are ready to

proceed with legal action regarding the road near Lookout Mountain.

See Road / Page 3A

City Council discusses property rules

By Casey Crowley
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The Baker City Council is one step closer to making changes to the city's Property Maintenance Ordinance in an effort to deal with properties that have

chronic accumulations of trash or other issues.

Councilors met in a work session Tuesday to discuss a draft of the ordinance that they likely will vote on during their next regular meeting, Feb.

12. A revised ordinance couldn't take effect any sooner than Feb. 26, as the Council can't approve all three required readings of an ordinance in a single meeting.

See Council / Page 2A

BHS grad rate rises

By Chris Collins
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Baker High School has shown a 5-percent increase in the number of students who graduate on time in four years over last year's numbers, according to the latest Oregon Department of Education report issued last week.

About 84 percent of Baker High School seniors graduated on time in 2018. That included 112 students. The number who dropped out before graduation day totaled 16, the report states.

The Baker statistics are 5 percentage points above the state average of about 79 percent of students graduating in four years.

The BHS on-time graduation rate has fluctuated over the past three school years — 84 percent last year, 79 percent in 2016-17 and 87 percent in 2015-16.

See Graduation / Page 2A

Halfway man gets 9 years for sex abuse

A Halfway man was sentenced Monday to nine years in prison after pleading guilty to two counts of first-degree sex abuse and one count of luring a minor.



Minner

James Orion Minner, 22, was sentenced in Baker County Circuit Court by Judge Greg Baxter.

The charges stem from Minner sexually touching a 12-year-old girl he knew. He was charged with luring a minor because he sent online messages to the girl, according to a press release from District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff.

Minner was arrested Oct. 29, 2018, after an investigation by the Baker County Sheriff's Department prompted by a report from the Baker School District, where the victim is a student.

"The victim and her family were very pleased with the result of the sentencing," Shirtcliff said in the press release. "Rich Kirby with the Baker County Sheriff's Office did a great job investigating the case."

TODAY
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FRIDAY — PLANNING A FEAST FEATURING WILD GAME

