

Local & State

Baker City couple receive top honor for contributions to the Boy Scouts

■ Longtime volunteers Michele and Ed Hibbard described as ‘unsung heroes’

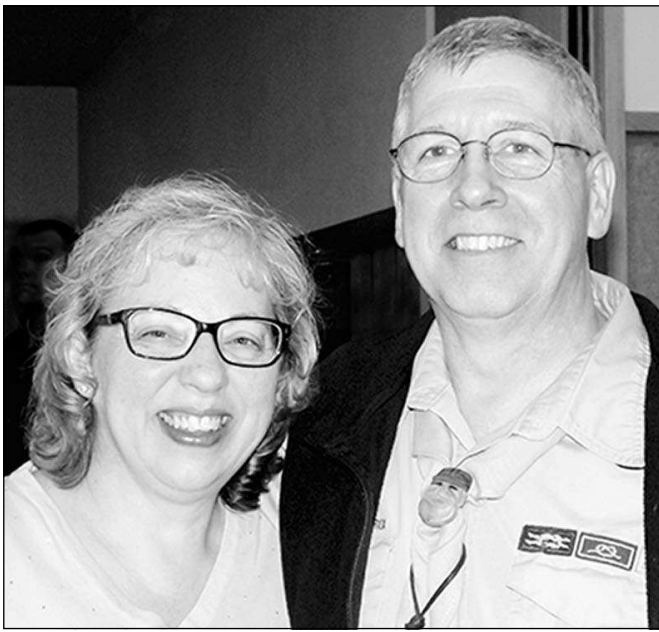
By Dick Mason
The (La Grande) Observer

LA GRANDE — The Presbyterian Friendship Center does not have a spotlight, still Ed and Michele Hibbard received the attention they deserved the morning of Feb. 6.

The Hibbards, longtime Boy Scout volunteers, were called to the Friendship Center's podium during the annual Friends of Scouting Breakfast to receive the Gene Palmer Eagle Within Award. The honor is given annually to the year's top local adult Boy Scout volunteer or volunteers.

“They are of the unsung heroes of scouting,” said Bryon Quebbeman, a La Grande Boy Scout volunteer who won the 2018 Eagle Within Award and introduced the Hibbards.

Ed and Michele were honored at the annual Friends of Scouting Breakfast in La Grande. The couple were saluted in large part for an annual day camp for Cub Scouts they put on at Antone Creek about 10 miles west of North Powder. Science is a focus of the day camp, at which Ed Hibbard teaches Cub Scouts about subjects including steam engines, airplanes, nature, cooking,



Dick Mason /The (La Grande) Observer

Michele and Ed Hibbard of Baker City received the Gene Palmer Eagle Within Award Feb. 6.

“Michele is very creative and comes up with great ideas. She makes things more fun.”

— Ed Hibbard, talking about his wife and fellow Scouting volunteer, Michele

crafts and the art of making root beer. The root beer is made with substances including flavoring and dry ice, which provides carbonation.

“(Putting on the day camps) is always fun. We

try to get (the Cub Scouts) excited about science,” said Ed Hibbard, who teaches the science classes.

Ed Hibbard is an engineer who works in La Grande for Anderson Perry and Associates, and Michele is a registered nurse who works at Baker Technical Institute in Baker City where she teaches Certified Nursing Assistant classes.

Michele is the program director of the three-day Cub Scout day camp, organizing its classes and much more.

“Michele is very creative and comes up with great ideas. She makes things more fun,” her husband said.

The Hibbards started putting on the day camps seven years ago. Today many Scouts who attended the camp still refer to Ed Hibbard as Mr. Science.

“When someone calls you Mr. Science that is great feeling. You know that you made an impression,” Ed Hibbard said.

Day camps are just one of many Cub Scout activities the Hibbards have been involved in. Ed was earlier a cub master for a pack, and Michele was a den leader.

The Hibbards are the parents of four sons, all of whom have been in scouting, and two daughters.

The couple, who have come to every Friends of Scouting Breakfast since 2007, said they had no idea they were in the running for the Eagle Within award.

“We were shocked,” Michele Hibbard said of their reaction to learning they had been selected.

Ed said the award is particularly meaningful because he holds its past recipients in such high regard.

“I really look up to them,” he said.

OREGON LEGISLATURE

Bill would eliminate vaccine exemption

By Fedor Zarkhin
The Oregonian

Thousands of Oregon children would have to get vaccinated or stay out of school under a bill being prepared by Rep. Mitch Greenlick, D-Portland. The proposal comes amid a measles outbreak that has infected 52 children in Clark County, Washington, and has spread to Oregon, where four people have been infected.

People in Bend were exposed to measles when a Clark County patient visited Bend in January before having symptoms.

Greenlick's bill, which is still being finalized, would eliminate nonmedical exemptions for unvaccinated schoolchildren.

The goal, Greenlick said, is to protect those children who can't get vaccinated for medical reasons.

At least 93 percent of children must be vaccinated to prevent outbreaks. One in five Oregon schools have measles vaccination rates below that threshold, according Oregon Health Authority data, with rates at some schools as low as 30 percent.

About 15,500 Oregon schoolchildren have nonmedical exemptions, according to state data. Under the law-

maker's proposal, those kids would have to either get vaccinated or be home-schooled, Greenlick said.

Opposition could be stiff. A similar proposal in 2015 was abandoned following pressure from opponents. In Washington on Friday, hundreds protested a bill that would eliminate personal and philosophical exemptions to vaccines.

COUNCIL

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Most of the ordinance deals with properties that could be deemed chronic neighborhood nuisances based on such things as accumulations of trash.

City Manager Fred Warner Jr. brought the proposed ordinance to councilors after neighbors of a home at 1975 Birch St. attended the Council's Dec. 11 meeting to complain about trash at that property.

The city has twice paid to remove refuse from the property.

During Tuesday's meeting three residents of that east Baker City neighborhood told councilors they support the proposed ordinance.

Although nobody spoke in opposition to the ordinance, Christopher Christie of Baker City submitted written comments asking councilors to consider how the more stringent ordinance could affect property owners.

“In the absence of any help offered from the community, this ordinance along with the punitive and excessive fines by the court, are just an inhumane way to put the poor and vulnerable out of their homes and out of town,” Christie wrote. “I suspect that is what it is intended to do — it is just one of the more vicious and crude forms of gentrification from well off people hoping to get a bit wealthier.”

Christie also described the proposed changes to the ordinance as “an extreme response to a problem that could have a much more humane solution.”

“In response to relatively few mean-spirited people, Fred Warner has provided the Council with poorly worded and easily abused provisions that represent an attack on the poorest and most vulnerable citizens in Baker City,” Christie wrote. “It is a form of class warfare — a true war on the poor — and if passed, it will produce many unfortunate outcomes and likely end up in the courts.”

The ordinance does include language that if the resident of a property makes a “good faith” effort to clean up their property they will not be barred from their property.

Although all seven councilors voted for the first reading, they agreed that the ordinance might not do enough to deal with properties that pose potential health and safety risks to neighbors and others.

Councilors will discuss the issue during a work session on Feb. 19 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 1655 First St.

In other business Tuesday:

Tree removal request

The council approved a request from Rick Rembold, on behalf of the First Presbyterian Church, to remove a horse chestnut tree in the public right-of-way beside the church at Fourth Street and

Washington Avenue.

The Baker City Tree Board had initially rejected Rembold's request because the tree, which is on the Fourth Street side of the church, is healthy.

Rembold appealed that decision, pointing out that the church had requested the tree's removal not because it was sickly but because the chestnuts it drops pose a potential safety hazard to pedestrians, as well as the possibility of damaging vehicles.

The Tree Board wasn't comfortable determining whether the tree poses a hazard so it forwarded the matter to the City Council.

The church will have to plant a tree to replace the horse chestnut.

Council goals

The council also approved their goals for the 2019-2020 fiscal year with only one small change since their last meeting. The council also discussed that they may decide to revise the goals sometime after they have finished work on next year's budget.

Electric installation

The council also approved a \$95,000 purchase order to hire Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative to install power to the Elkhorn Industrial Park.

The money will come from a \$127,700 grant the city received from the state. The remaining grant dollars will be

used to install the power lines, which will be buried, in places where they lines go under the street that runs through the industrial park near the city's northwest corner.

Peek-a-Boo Enterprises, a fabric and sewing pattern business that bought a lot in the industrial park last year, is set to start construction as soon as weather permits. The deadline for installing the project is March 25.

The city also received a \$137,000 grant from Business Oregon to install broadband service at the industrial park.

For the broadband installation the city will still be receiving bids until Feb. 26. The city didn't need to solicit bids for the power installation because OTEC is the only power provider within the city.

Board appointments

The council appointed Dennis Dougherty to the Budget Board, Tom Van Diepen, Charles Tracy and Dan Patton to the Airport Commission, and Gina Clark to the Public Works Advisory Committee. This leaves seven vacancies on city committees: one on the Budget Board, two on the Historic District Design Review Commission, one on the Public Works Advisory Committee and three on the Tree Board.

The council also scheduled a work session to discuss updates to the city's capital plan for March 6 at 5:30 p.m.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Valentine's Day dinner in North Powder

NORTH POWDER — The Wolf Creek Grange in North Powder will have a Valentine's Day dinner on Feb. 14 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The five-course meal includes Cornish game hen or pork roast. Cost is \$15 and reservations are needed in advance by calling June at 541-786-3927.

This is a fundraiser for the Grange. Delivery is available in North Powder.

First meeting for YHEC set for Thursday

This year's first class meeting for the Youth Hunter Education Challenge program is set for Thursday, Feb. 14 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. The classes convene each Thursday at the Powder River Sportsmen's Club building, 2690 Broadway St.

The program allows for new students to join at any time throughout the course of the year. Young people, aged 12 to 18, wishing to sign up are welcome to attend any Thursday, with a parent.

A comprehensive program, YHEC offers a varied curriculum for the annual fee of \$25. YHEC includes multiple events, including shooting with shotguns, .22 rifles and muzzleloaders, as well as navigating with a map and compass and identifying wildlife species. All studies are self-directed, the instructors aiding in their progress. For information call Buck Buckner at 541-523-6109 or Glenda Staebler at 541-519-1147.

BHS Class of '74 reunion meeting set

The Baker High School Class of 1974 has scheduled an organization meeting to help plan for its 45th reunion this summer. The meeting is scheduled for Feb. 21 at 6 p.m. at Lefty's Taphouse, 1934 Broadway St.

The reunion is set for July 5-6. More information is available by calling Kent Bailey at 541-523-4471.

Social media classes rescheduled

Two seminars focusing on helping businesses use social media and digital media originally scheduled for Feb. 13 and 20 have been rescheduled for Feb. 20 and 27 due to wintry weather this week.

The classes will be at the Blue Mountain Community College Baker City campus, 3275 Baker St.

The courses, through the Small Business Development Center, will be led by Michael Mettler, founder and director of possibilities at MCM Strategic + Communications at Walla Walla, Washington.

• Feb. 20, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. — “Next Level Digital Advertising: Cost Effective Marketing Strategies In Rural Markets”

• Feb. 27, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. — “Content is King: Building a Two-Way Conversation Online”

Each seminar costs \$59, payable to the Small Business Development Center. More information is available by calling Andrea Fowler at 541-278-5833 or at the Small Business Development Center's Facebook page.

MISSING DOG

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Madson said she bought Honey in part because she had owned a Sheltie about 25 years ago.

There was some confusion with the purchase at the Portland dog show, however.

Madson, a former Baker County Justice of the Peace, brought home not Honey but a different Sheltie from the same breeder.

When the breeder discovered the mistake, Madson had already left for a vacation, leaving Honey in Baker County in the care of friends.

The breeder drove to Baker County to drop off Honey and pick up the other dog. Madson said she returned from her vacation earlier this month and had less than a week with Honey before the dog leaped from the deck.

HEART TO HEART

Horse owner thankful for efforts of Baker City veterinarian, staff

I would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the staff and veterinarians of The Animal Clinic in Baker City, particularly Dr. Mark Berthelesen.

I recently experienced an acute veterinary emergency on a Friday night, in the midst of a cold, windy, bitter snowstorm. Dr. Mark came out immediately and treated my horse, and followed up the next morning at 7 a.m. I am extremely grateful to him and all that he did, despite the very challenging conditions. This sort of professionalism and integrity needs to be recognized, and I am proud to live here because of people like this. A man that will forgo comfort and the coming weekend to help in time of dire need is such a blessing. Thank you Dr. Mark and the Animal Clinic.

Linda Kotz
Baker City