

Local & State

LOCAL BRIEFING

What's new at the Baker County Library

Baker County Library Director Perry Stokes recently received a request in the suggestion box at the library, 2400 Resort St., to have a list of some of the newly arrived books and other materials published in the Herald.

This is the third installment in the weekly feature. The titles below were supplied by John Brockman, tech services librarian.

FICTION

- "A Justified Murder," Jude Deveraux
- "I Owe You One," Sophie Kinsella
- "Out of the Dark," Gregg Hurwitz
- "The Other Woman," Sandie Jones
- "Loving on the Edge" (series), Roni Loren

NONFICTION

- "Grateful Americans," Gary Sinise
- "The Threat," Andrew McCabe
- "Brave Love," Lisa Leonard
- "5 Ingredients," Jamie Oliver
- "Best Self: Be You, Only Better," Mike Bayer

DVDS

- "The Bookshop" (drama)
- "The Old Man & The Gun" (comedy)
- "Overlord" (horror)
- "Robin Hood" (action)
- "A Star is Born" (musical)

LIBRARY HOURS

- Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.
- Friday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Sunday, noon-4 p.m.

Ex-husband charged in murder of Cove woman

By **Cherise Kaechele**
The (La Grande) Observer

An arrest has been made in the November homicide of Loretta Williams at her home in Cove.

According to a press release from the Union County Sheriff's Office, Ronald D. Lee, 71, was arrested on a charge of murder by the Northeast Oregon Regional SWAT team at 9 a.m. Thursday.

Lee and Williams were married until July 2018, according to court records.

"They were in the process of divorcing," said Union County Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen.

The investigation into Williams' murder, which



Lee

occurred Nov. 17, 2018, was a lengthy process, according to the release.

The sheriff said hundreds of hours have been devoted to the investigation, headed by the case's lead detectives, UCSO Det. Jason McKaig and La Grande Police Department Det. Mike Harris.

"It wasn't steady, but it was consistent," Rasmussen said of what he called a "complex and taxing investigation."

The arrest was made based on an indictment issued by a Union County Grand Jury after an investigation by the Union County Major Crimes Team. The Major Crimes Team consists of members from the Union County Sheriff's Office, the La Grande Police Department, the Oregon State Police and the Union County District Attorney's

Office.

In November, The Observer reported that Loretta Williams called 911 to report a man in her backyard at approximately 1:40 a.m. on the 17th. The dispatchers heard her confront the man and then heard a loud noise. Deputies and troopers arrived within minutes and found Williams dead of one or more apparent gunshot wounds.

Rasmussen said that when Williams was talking to dispatchers before she was killed, she told them "she might know who it was."

Rasmussen said he could not comment on what precipitated the homicide and noted that the investigation is ongoing.

Lee's arraignment will likely happen today.

CHARGE

Continued from Page 1A

Shirtcliff said the couple used dishes and threw trash on the floor during their stay. And they were charged with third-degree theft for drinking beer kept at the house. Both charges are Class C misdemeanors.

"Because they were in the home for a period of time, we can't prove their intent was to steal (or to vandalize)," Shirtcliff said.

Now, the law requires proof of "specific intent" that "at the point in time when they went in, they intended to commit a crime," he said.

Prior to the 2018 rulings, which Shirtcliff said he had just recently discussed with local law enforcement officers, first-degree burglary could be charged if a suspect entered a home illegally and later committed a crime while inside.

The Durkee house is owned by Thomas Bludworth, who lists a mailing address of Scappoose, according to the

"This is causing prosecutors grief all over the state. I don't agree with it. I don't like it. But it is the law."

— Matt Shirtcliff, Baker Co. district attorney



Baker County Assessor's Office. His relatives, Olive and Lessie Phillips, and their neighbor, Cindy Fortin, called dispatch Monday night to report that someone was in the house without authorization. Lessie Phillips had first called her relative to verify that nobody was supposed to be in the house.

Cindy Fortin and Olive Phillips, who brought a shotgun with him, returned to the house, which sits on the west side of the freeway at Durkee, and called for the suspects to come out. Olive Phillips, with the help of Fortin's husband, Mike, who also was armed with a shotgun, held the two at gunpoint until deputy Eric Colton arrived to arrest the suspects.

The Baker County case closely mirrors the cases —

State v. McKnight, Lincoln County, and State v. Henderson, Multnomah County — on which the rulings were made, Shirtcliff said.

In both cases, the appeals court found that the lower court erred in finding that the defendants intended to commit a crime at the start of an initial trespass. As a result, the court reversed first-degree burglary convictions and remanded them for entry of judgments of first-degree criminal trespass convictions and resentencing.

"This is causing prosecutors grief all over the state," Shirtcliff said. "I don't agree with it. I don't like it. But it is the law."

Only an Oregon Supreme Court ruling reversing the appeals court decisions could change the situation at this point, Shirtcliff said.

BAKER CITY HISTORY

Remembering more local merchants from the 1930s

By **Phyllis Badgley**
For the Baker City Herald

Longtime merchant Frank Baird established Baird's IGA (International Grocery Association) at the southwest corner of Broadway and First streets. In addition to grocery supplies, the store featured cold storage lockers, connected to the meat department.

An early morning fire erupted in the grocery structure. The heat was so intense that it damaged insulated storage lockers.

Harley King photograph studio occupied a portion of the Baird building, near the alley. King, in 1939, was the primary photographer for Baker High School graduation pictures. Baird's daughter, Aileen, is remembered as an excellent violinist in the BHS orchestra. She was a member of the Class of 1940. Baird's IGA was sold to Clayton Jackson. He and his wife were original proprietors of a corner grocery store in the Knights of Pythias building at First Street and Washington Avenue.

During the 1930s, Gracie Toy operated a Chinese cafe upstairs on the west side of Main Street in the 2000 block. Later the Clover Leaf cafe was located there. Toy moved to a street level site on Court Avenue between Main and First streets. The cafe abutted the alley.

As lone proprietor, Gracie

cooked, served as hostess and carried on interesting conversations with customers. She served food family-style for parties. Toy was never without her authentic jade pendant. Her living quarters were established above the cafe.

Baker residents respected Toy as a merchant. Her final resting place is at Mount Hope Cemetery.

Merchants Howard Jones and Harvey McCord operated Jones-McCord Hardware at the corner of Main and Broadway. The brick building abuts the "one-way" section of Broadway between Main and Resort. They sold home merchandise items. The store moved to the northwest corner of Main and Church

streets.

Jones utilized a vacant lot to display farm equipment at First and Church streets. This area was vacant before construction of Pollock Clinic, which currently houses a beauty shop.

Several generations of the Jones and McCord families continue to reside in Baker City.

Baker's Western Union telegraph office was located in

the 1900 block of Main Street, next to the Geiser Grand Hotel. Lila Mack managed the office prior to her unfortunate demise.

The office moved to First Street between Broadway Street and Washington Avenue. Gladys Boyce became manager. Teacher Gladys Bayliss opened a yarn shop in the vacated Main Street space.

Telegrams were delivered

locally by youths on bicycles. Most messages were brief, for a fixed rate of 10 words.

On one occasion a typing error occurred. Our family sent a telegram to daughter in San Diego. The telegram stated, "GrandPa died this morn." When delivered, the message caused much concern, as it stated, "GrandMa died this morn."

W.E. Kimberling operated a service station at the corner

of First Street and Washington Avenue. He was well known for his ability to braid horse hair. He mastered the art form that is seldom seen today. The former station location is currently occupied by a bank.

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