

Baker City Herald

May 17, 2019

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Gloria Schott of Baker City.

History, 6A

Part two of a four-part series by Baker City historian Gary Dielman about the Founding Fathers of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Hayley Sanders wins scholarship

Hayley Sanders was awarded a \$1,500 scholarship from the Saint Alphonsus Auxiliary-Baker City Scholarship committee.

Sanders is a 2003 graduate of Pine-Eagle High School at Halfway. She is enrolled in the nursing program at Treasure Valley Community College and lives in Halfway. She will graduate in 2020.

Committee members Marilyn Bloom, Marilyn Delfatti and Peggy Payton award the scholarship annually to a student who is in the health care field such as RN, LPN, Radiology, Medical Lab Technician, Physical, Respiratory or Occupational Therapy or similar areas.

More information about the Auxiliary is available by calling Peggy Payton at 541-519-8118 or Laura Hugins at 541-524-7732.

WEATHER

Today

57 / 33



Rain showers

Saturday

64 / 39



Mostly cloudy

Sunday

55 / 40



Rain showers

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24-Day Dry Spell Boosts Demand For Irrigation Water

Bog to Bone-Dry



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Crop irrigation in Baker Valley is in full swing after a 24-day dry spell that ended Wednesday.

By Jayson Jacoby

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Mark Ward has rarely if ever seen his family's farm fields in Baker Valley go from boggy to bone-dry so fast.

During the first week of April the ground was still so soggy that it was a challenge to get machinery out in the fields of wheat, alfalfa and other crops.

Six weeks later there's scarcely a cultivated acre hereabouts that isn't being sprayed by sprinklers.

"It's one of the strangest years I've seen," said Ward, who's been farming here for more than 30 years. "It's a whole new mix this year."

There are multiple culprits behind the rapidly changing conditions that have prompted widespread irrigation and greatly reduced Ward's and other farmers' expectations for how much water Phillips Reservoir, a key source for summer irrigation in Baker Valley, will end up storing.

The most obvious is the lack



"It's one of the strangest years I've seen. It's a whole new mix this year."

— Mark Ward, longtime Baker Valley farmer

of rain.

There was no measurable rainfall at the Baker City Airport for 24 straight days, an unusually long dry spell that ended Wednesday when a meager .03 of an inch splashed into the airport rain gauge.

The abrupt shift to rainy weather continued Thursday, when 0.22 of an inch fell at the airport, and the National Weather Service predicts the trend will continue as a parade of sodden Pacific storms sweeps across Oregon over the next several days.

The arid period that spanned April and May was especially conspicuous because it followed an abnormally damp episode that started with the wettest February on record, when 1.92 inches of precipitation was

recorded at the airport.

March was also soggy than average, and April reached its average rainfall of 0.80 of an inch barely halfway through the month.

But then the spigot stopped. The ensuing 24-day dry spell was also marked by temperatures well above average on most days.

The temperature at the Airport topped 70 degrees on 12 straight days through Tuesday.

The high temperature had risen to average or above every day in May, including three straight in the 80s (Saturday, Sunday and Monday), until rainy Thursday, when the high was 55 degrees, below the daily average of 68.

See **Dry Spell**/Page 5A

5J OKs teacher contract

■ The 2-year deal includes salary increases of 3% the first year and 2.5% the second

By Chris Collins

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The Baker School Board has approved a two-year contract with its certified staff that includes salary increases of 3% in 2019-20 and 2.5% the next year.

The Board voted unanimously to adopt the agreement when it met Tuesday night. Director Andrew Bryan was absent.

Dawn O'Grady, Baker Education Association president, said a majority of the teachers also voted to ratify the contract.

The District was represented in the contract talks by Superintendent Mark Witty, Board Chair Chris Hawkins and Peggy Stock, director of Labor Services for the Oregon School Boards Association. O'Grady, who teaches at South Baker Intermediate School, was joined on the bargaining BEA team by Toni Myers, a Keating Elementary teacher, and Britta Scott, an Oregon Education Association consultant who works in the unified service field office at Pendleton.

See **Contract**/Page 5A

Wolves kill calf near Halfway

Wolves from the Pine Creek pack in eastern Baker County killed a 300-pound domestic calf on private land earlier this week, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has confirmed.

The rancher found the three-month-old calf on Tuesday morning, and the carcass had been mostly consumed, according to an ODFW report. The report didn't name the calf's owner. This is the second calf killed by Pine Creek pack wolves this spring.

See **Wolves**/Page 3A

Local artist wins award for sculpture

By Lisa Britton

For the Baker City Herald

Baker Valley artist Terri Axness' creation "Pedaling Potter" earned Best of Show in the 2019 Ceramic Showcase held in Portland in late April.

The show drew more than 140 potters from Oregon and Washington.

The event is put on by the Oregon Potters Association. Participants each have a booth, and submit their best piece for the gallery show.

That's where Axness' sculpture was voted Best of Show by the members of OPA.

"I was blown away," she said of the honor.

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MONDAY — BAKER TRACK AND FIELD, TENNIS TEAMS AT STATE