

Baker City author set to publish novel

By Lisa Britton
For the Baker City Herald

Stephen Howard’s novel was years in the making but it only took him a month to get into book form.

“I busted out 50,000 words in 29 days,” he said.

That was in January of 2019. All told, he ended up with about 56,000 words for his first draft.



Howard

He and his family moved to Baker City in May 2019 and he started working on the second draft.

At the same time, he began work as a freelance editor for New Degree Press, a publishing company that works on a hybrid model where authors use crowdsourcing to fund publishing costs. The author retains 100% of creative rights to the book.

“The students I worked with went on to get their books published,” he said.

He also had a book.

On June 1, 2020, he submitted his own manuscript to the publisher.

It was accepted June 28.

Howard is nearing the end of his crowdsourcing. His goal is \$5,000 which will result in paperback copies, an ebook, editing, cover design, layout, format, and copy editing.

Every supporter receives a signed copy of his book.

If he raises \$6,000 he will print hardcover books. Hitting \$8,000 will add an audiobook that he will narrate.

He plans to release “The City of Snow and Stars” in December under his author name S.D. Howard.

Here is the link to his pre-order campaign: <https://igg.me/at/the-city-of-snow-and-stars/x/24124975#/>

About the book

“The City of Snow and Stars” reflects hardships Howard has faced himself.

The book addresses three

main challenges. The first is abuse.

“Abuse is prevalent in today’s society and it’s not talked about,” he said.

He is a survivor of abuse. His book addresses various forms, including physical, mental, verbal, emotional and sexual.

The second component of the book is human trafficking.

“No one talks about it because it makes them uncomfortable,” he said.

The third addresses this question: Why does God let bad things happen?

“That’s something that I’ve struggled with,” he said.

Looking at his own life, he said he would not change what happened — if he hadn’t endured those experiences, he wouldn’t have made the strong connections through his recovery.

“The City of Snow and Stars” is the first book of 12. He said the series will be divided into several trilogies.

“This book was supposed to be a stand-alone book,” Howard said. “I’ve been working on this world since I was 16 — this one is an introduction.”

His main character is Trinia.

“The fate of her people rests in her hands,” he said. “Everyone has access to a magical ability, a gift from God, that awakens when they turn 16.”

Her gift is to make perfect duplicates of herself.

Except her father, the antagonist, wants to exploit that gift to create an army.

“He’s the worst,” Howard said.

He describes the book like this:

“I hope that in reading this book you will discover the pieces of the flawed and broken characters who are looking for the answers in yourself the same as I did. Their story is our story in so many ways because the truth is this: We are all a little broken.”

School registration

Baker School District students will register for classes at their own schools this year rather than gathering at Baker High School for a Parent Resource Fair as has been done in the past.

Here is the schedule for individual schools:

- Baker High School, Brooklyn Primary and South Baker Intermediate School students will register at their schools Monday, Aug. 10, though Thursday, Aug. 13, from 8 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. BHS registration will be in the large gym, which should be entered through the student parking lot on the building’s west end.
- Baker Middle School students will register from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 10; from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 11; and from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12.

(School photos for BMS students only will be taken during Monday and Tuesday registration times).

- Eagle Cap Innovative High School students will register at BHS on Monday, Aug. 10, and Tuesday, Aug. 11, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Wednesday, Aug. 12, and Thursday, Aug. 13, from 8 a.m. to noon.
- Haines Elementary students will register at their school from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Aug. 10, and Tuesday, Aug. 11.
- Keating Elementary registration will be from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday, Aug. 10, and from 8 a.m. to noon, Tuesday, Aug. 11, at Keating School.

Immunizations will be available at the Baker County Health Department, 3330 Pocatontas Road. Call 541-523-8211 to schedule an appointment.

MOTHS

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Spiegel, who has worked as the federal entomologist in the Blues since 2001, said tussock moth population rises are periodic, usually happening every seven to 13 years. Most episodes last for two to four years.

Not every such surge results in what entomologists consider an outbreak, in which the bugs kill a significant number of trees, Spiegel said.

The most recent population surge on the Wallowa-Whitman, for instance, in 2010, didn’t turn into an outbreak, she said.

Forest managers monitor tussock moth populations with a network of traps set out each year.

Spiegel said this “early warning” system started across the West after a major tussock moth outbreak in the early 1970s.

During that outbreak tussock moths proliferated on about 700,000 acres in Oregon and Washington. On about 17,000 acres the moths killed almost every fir tree.

Traps are baited with pheromones — a scent that attracts tussock moths.

Because the female moths don’t fly, the traps collect only male moths, Spiegel said.

She first noticed an uptick in moth numbers in 2017, in the Fish Lake area north of Halfway, in eastern Baker County. Spiegel monitors eight trapping locations in that area, each consisting of five traps.

Spiegel said that when individual traps nab 25 or more moths, there’s reason to believe that a population surge has started.

The moths fly for only about a month each year, usually during August and early September, she said.

Surveys in 2018 showed relatively little defoliation — trees with red or brown needles that have been munched by tussock moth caterpillars, Spiegel said.

Defoliation was more widespread in 2019, affecting trees on both sides of East Eagle Creek, a total of about 3,000 acres.

This year the effects of the moths are noticeable along the Fish Lake Road, primarily in Douglas-firs between about 5,000 and 6,000 feet elevation, Spiegel said.

She said she’s also heard from forest visitors about defoliation in the Boulder Park area along main Eagle Creek, but she hasn’t inspected that area yet this summer.

The defoliation can “make the forest look really bad,” but Spiegel said most trees likely will recover. That’s not the case with some other insects, such as pine beetles, which can kill a large percentage of trees.



U.S. Forest Service photos

Photos above and at upper right show tussock moth caterpillars. Photo at lower right shows the allergic reaction, called tussockosis, that can result when people touch a caterpillar. The reaction can affect skin, eyes and the respiratory tract.

Spiegel’s belief that the current population surge is waning is based in part on the condition of tussock moth caterpillars she has examined recently in the Halfway area.

Many caterpillars were smaller than average.

Others showed more, well, graphic evidence that insect numbers are likely to be declining, Spiegel said.

Caterpillars that explode don’t exactly exude good health.

The issue is a virus.

(No, not that virus.)

This virus is a naturally occurring pathogen that affects only tussock moths, Spiegel said.

The virus, she said, is the main reason that moth outbreaks tend to peter out after a few years.

When caterpillars are infected they tend to swell, and to hang from tree limbs in a distinctive way, Spiegel said.

“When you touch them they sort of explode,” she said.

Spiegel said she also has

examined fir trees that were defoliated last year but have produced green needles this year, another bit of evidence

that the current population expansion is reversing.

“I think this is the last year,” she said.

A periodic problem

Spiegel said entomologists know far less about what might trigger tussock moth outbreaks than about how to monitor for them.

There is no apparent correlation, for instance, between drought, which can stress trees and make them more susceptible to insects and diseases, and tussock moth populations, she said.

Nor is it clear why tussock moth numbers seem to increase in certain areas, the Halfway area of eastern Baker County being one such example, Spiegel said.

Spiegel said it can be a challenge to deal with large outbreaks in a timely way.

In 2000, for instance, the

Forest Service sprayed the naturally occurring virus on about 40,000 acres in the Blue Mountains.

But subsequent surveys in 2001, which turned up almost no tussock moths in both sprayed and unsprayed areas, was compelling evidence that the outbreak had already peaked in 2000 and that the spraying wasn’t necessary, Spiegel said.

“In 2000 we were a year late,” she said.

One issue is that the Forest Service has to conduct an environmental study before it does widespread spraying to control tussock moths, Spiegel said.

Those studies can take more than a year. And if the evidence of an outbreak appears only the year before the infestation peaks, the environmental study that makes spraying possible tends to be finished too late, she said.

New At The Baker County Library

Patrons can reserve materials in advance online or by calling 541-523-6419. Drive-in hours at 2400 Resort St. are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

FICTION

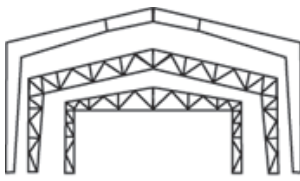
- “The Geometry of Holding Hands,” Alexander McCall Smith
- “A Private Cathedral,” James Lee Burke
- “The Midwife Murders,” James Patterson
- “Choppy Water,” Stuart Woods
- “The Silent Wife,” Karin Slaughter

NONFICTION

- “Too Much and Never Enough,” Mary Trump
- “Trump and the American Future,” Newt Gingrich
- “Sight Lines,” Arthur Sze
- “Race of Ages,” John Bruning
- “The Sentient Machine,” Amir Husain

DVDS

- “UFO Chronicles” (Documentary)
- “Galveston” (Action)
- “Bachelor Party” (Comedy, 1984)
- “Playmobil” (Family)
- “Black Christmas” (Horror)



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LIVE AUCTION



Highland Dr Real Estate:

3120 Highland Dr, Baker City, OR

August 15th, 2020 @ 10 AM

Preview: August 14th, 2020 10AM-6PM

Dream location overlooking the City. This amazing 2.32 acres is a must see. Beautiful custom built home with over 3400 sq/ft. Wonderful floor plan with open kitchen and family room with city views. The kitchen offers a large island and dining area with custom oak cabinets. Along with the living room off the entry there is a large master bedroom with city views, with a large walk in closet and walk in shower. A nice second bedroom and office/bedroom plus a large utility with bathroom on the main level. Lower level offers a large bonus room, bedroom, cold storage. Nice private back yard. Outside you'll find a fantastic 40 x 50 shop with tack room and storage, plus a 35' x 47' covered RV storage. Lots of parking. This is a wonderful property.

TERMS: This property to be sold at LIVE auction on Aug. 15, 2020 at 10:00 am (pst). Sold As-Is, Close in 30days. 5% earnest money day of the auction, non-refundable. 5% buyer's premium. Seller to provide title insurance & 1/2 of closing doc fees.

* Call Larry with any questions. You do not have to have an agent to participate. All real estate agents must register at least 2 days prior to auction and be present day of auction.

PERSONAL PROPERTY AUCTION TO FOLLOW!
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