

Live jazz concert Friday at Churchill

A new tradition of showing movies outside Churchill School, 16th and Broadway streets in Baker City, has led to a live jazz concert this Friday, Aug. 21.

The show, featuring saxophonist Rob Scheps and pianist Matt Cooper, will be streamed on the big screen outside Churchill. Parking is limited and donations will be appreciated through Venmo (Robert-Scheps-2) or at the concert.

The parking lot opens at 7:30 p.m. The music will start around 7:45 p.m. The audience can tune into FM 91.1 to hear the music. To stay updated on events at Churchill, follow their Facebook page (Churchill School Art, Music, Recreation-Baker City, OR). Baker County Safe Communities Coalition also posts about drive-in movies.



Submitted photo

Saxophonist Rob Scheps, right, and pianist Matt Cooper will perform a concert that will be livestreamed on a big screen outside Churchill School Friday evening. Spectators can also tune in to hear the concert on the radio.

RESOURCES

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“If there are not very many ongoing fires, the chances of getting the resources you request are higher than if everyone is busy at the same time,” Crouch said.

Other factors also affect how many aircraft, if any, are available for a particular fire.

For instance, fires that threaten people and property always have the highest priority, Crouch said.

A recent example is the fire near Mosier, in the Columbia River Gorge, that destroyed 36 structures and threatened about 660 others.

When the Indian Creek fire started late Sunday morning in Malheur County, along Highway 20 between Jun-tura and Vale, aircraft were immediately available from several bases, said Larisa Bogardus, public affairs officer for the BLM’s Vale District.

On Sunday, nine aircraft, including six single-engine tankers and three multi-engine tankers, dropped retardant to try to stem the spread of the flames.

Aircraft have been dispatched from Ontario, Burns, John Day, La Grande and Redmond in Oregon, as well as from Boise, Idaho, and Moses Lake in Eastern Washington, Bogardus said.

Having those aircraft available to work on the Indian Creek fire, which has burned about 14,000 acres of grass and sagebrush, also ended up augmenting the initial attack capability on a new fire sparked by lightning Monday evening.

Several airplanes dumped retardant ahead of the Baldy fire north of Ironside, near the border between Baker and Malheur counties, Bogardus said.

“The ability to get aircraft support to the incident as quickly as possible is incredibly important in slowing the spread of the fire,” Crouch said.

Despite the aerial assault, the Baldy fire, aided by gusty winds, hot temperatures and low humidities, grew to an estimated 5,000 acres on Tuesday.

Crouch said the increasing competition for firefighting resources resulting from the rash of new blazes affected efforts to slow the Baldy fire on Tuesday.

Although single-engine air tankers were available, larger tankers, which



Bureau of Land Management photo

Crews conduct a burnout on Wednesday morning at the Indian Creek fire.

can drop considerably more retardant, were working on other fires Tuesday afternoon and evening.

Ultimately it’s ground-based firefighters who extinguish blazes, Crouch said, but aircraft, which travel considerably more rapidly than a pickup truck or a fire crew that has to hike to the scene due to terrain or a lack of roads, can make the ground crews’ task much easier.

“It’s a great tool in our toolbox,” he said, meaning both airplanes that drop retardant to stem the forward movement of fires, as well as helicopters, which can dump water directly on flames.

Meyer said the ability to summon aircraft has been especially important this week, with lightning likely to spark new fires in grass and sagebrush dried by the past several weeks of mainly dry weather.

“This is kind of the worst that we’ve seen so far this summer,” Meyer said. Fire managers closely watch the computer model that estimates how much heat a fire would release — known as the “energy release component.”

This index, rendered as a number, fluctuates based on the amount of moisture in various types of fuels, ranging from grass, which burns readily but quickly, to mature timber, which isn’t as easily ignited but can burn for a long time.

There are separate numbers for each of six regions in the Blue Mountains, a system that reflects the considerable differences in terrain and fuel types.

The energy release component tends to be higher, for example, in the “juniper-sagebrush” region, which includes some

of the lower, hotter and drier parts of the Blues.

On Tuesday the number for the juniper-sagebrush area was 76 — higher than for any of the five other regions.

The average for mid-August is about 69.

The energy release component numbers for the other regions ranged between 70 and 75. Those are slightly above average for four of the five regions, the exception being the canyon grasslands area — mainly in Hells Canyon — where the number is just about average.

Meyer said the fire season has been about average so far.

The Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center in La Grande catalogs fires on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and parts of the Umatilla National Forest, parts of the BLM’s Vale District, private and state lands on which the Oregon Department of Forestry is the lead firefighting agency, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Through Tuesday the Dispatch Center reported 125 fires for the year — 79 sparked by lightning and 46 human-caused.

The total acreage burned was 580.8 — 433.9 acres burned in human-caused fires, and 146.9 acres burned by lightning-sparked blazes. Those numbers are well below average.

The annual average for the Wallowa-Whitman alone, from 1970 through 2018, was 23,381 acres burned total.

Of the 6,617 fires reported on the Wallowa-Whitman from 1970 through 2018, about 78% were caused by lightning.

BOND

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Students in Grades 3-4 would have moved to South Baker and kindergartners through second-graders would have remained at Brooklyn.

Safety and security upgrades would have been made throughout the District along with other improvements.

During a meeting earlier this month, Superintendent Mark Witty asked Board members for permission to gather information about the possibility of proposing another bond measure for May 2021. Districts must seek a bond of at least \$4 million to qualify for the \$4 million matching state grant, Witty said.

In November 2018 voters rejected by a more than 2-to-1 margin a \$48 million bond that would have raised money to build a new elementary school.

At the time of the Board’s last meeting, the deadline to apply for the state grant was set for Sept. 1, which would have put the District on a fast track to prepare its application. Directors had planned to schedule a special meeting soon to consider the District’s next move.

But Witty said Tuesday

that the deadline to apply for the grant has since been pushed back to December, which will offer more leeway for decision making.

One proposal might be to seek voter approval of a \$4 million bond, to be paid off in five years, with the adding of the matching state grant for total funding of \$8 million.

The District would use the money for safety and security improvements as well as basic infrastructure work such as that underway at the former North Baker School this summer.

The building at 2725 Seventh St. is being re-modeled for use as the Baker Early Learning Center, which is scheduled to open in October. Improvements at the site include new windows, electrical upgrades, fresh paint and new flooring. Ground improvements and a new parking area also are part of the renovation project.

That work is being paid for by grant money along with state and district contributions.

Witty said the Board will continue the discussion about placing a bond measure on the May 2021 ballot at its next regular meeting, which is set for Sept. 17 at 6 p.m. The Board meets using the Zoom computer app.

NEWS OF RECORD

DEATHS

Juanita May Martin: 87, of Baker City, died Aug. 18, 2020, at her home surrounded by her loving family. Contributions in honor of Juanita can be made to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital through Gray’s West & Co. Pioneer Chapel, 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814. To light a candle in memory of Juanita, or to leave a condolence for her family, go to www.grayswestco.com

FUNERALS PENDING

Mary Morin: There will be a graveside service/dedication at 11 a.m. Friday, Aug. 21, at Mount Hope Cemetery in Baker City. Due to COVID-19, those attending are asked to bring their own chairs and masks. Arrangements are under the direction of Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services. Online condolences may be made at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

Elizabeth “Betty” Wood: There will be a celebration of her life at 1 p.m. Friday, Aug. 21, at the Baker Christian Church, 675 Highway 7. The family suggests memorial contributions to the Baker City Fire Department or the Baker City Ambulance Fund, the Rachel Pregnancy Center or the Baker City Christian Church through Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home and Cremations Services, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, OR 97834. Online condolences may be made at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

Raelene Florene Maddox:

Her memorial service will take place Sept. 5 at 11 a.m. at Gray’s West & Co. Pioneer Chapel, 1500 Dewey Ave., with Pastor Lennie Spooner of the Baker City Nazarene Church officiating. To light a candle for Raelene, or to leave a condolence for her family, go to www.grayswestco.com

POLICE LOG

Baker City Police Arrests, citations

STRANGULATION: Bran-

don Ray Davis, 33, of Baker City, 1:02 a.m. Wednesday, on Campbell Street; jailed.

HINDERING PROSECUTION (Baker County Circuit Court warrant): Tamara Kay Fine, 46, of Baker City, 9:20 p.m. Tuesday, on Elm Street; cited and released.

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF INTOXICANTS: Dale Lawrence Lyman, 53, of 1635 Cherry St., 8:29 p.m. Monday, in the 2300 block of Resort Street; cited and released.

CRIMINAL TRESPASSING AND UMATILLA COUNTY WARRANT: Dominic Michael Silva, 27, a transient resident of Pendleton, 12:18 p.m. Monday, at 1226 Washington Ave. Police Chief Ray Duman said Silva was transported to Pendleton where authorities agreed to hold him in the Umatilla County Jail on the outstanding warrant.

CRIMINAL TRESPASSING: Justin Shelton, 30, 400 Second St.; and Mariam “Evee” Collard, 19, of Baker City, were both cited and released at 12:18 p.m. Monday, at 1226 Washington Ave.

Crime report
FIRST-DEGREE THEFT: At the Super 8 Motel, about 1:45 p.m. Monday, a male subject reportedly entered the lobby of the motel and took a brass colored statue valued at \$500.

Baker County Sheriff's Office

Arrests, citations
UNAUTHORIZED USE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE: Kyle Andrew Waldron, 35, of Baker City, 2:39 p.m. Tuesday, at the Green Acres Apartments, 1560 Indiana Ave. in Baker City; cited and released.

Waldron is accused of taking a Chevrolet S-10 pickup truck from the home of Bernt Anderson, 34, of Haines. The pickup truck was recovered and returned to Anderson.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT (Baker County Justice Court warrants): Larry Keith Cornwall, 44; and Heidi Mary Kaffon, 44; both were cited and released at 7 p.m. Monday, at their home in Huntington.

New program issuing \$500 relief checks for COVID-19 income loss

By Gary A. Warner
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon residents facing financial hardship from the COVID-19 crisis are eligible for \$500 one-time checks in a program beginning Wednesday, Aug. 19.

The \$35 million plan created by the Legislature will use federal coronavirus relief funds to issue checks to up to 70,000 residents. The program is separate from regular state and federal unemployment programs.

Checks are available by visiting one of 150 locations of participating financial institutions and filling out an application. If approved, a cashier’s check or in some cases, cash, will be issued on the spot.

Participants include Umpqua Bank, Columbia Bank and members of the Northwest Oregon Credit Union Association.

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be a current resident of Oregon and 18 or older.
- Be able to provide documents, such as a driver’s

license, that prove they are currently living in Oregon.

- Attest that they are experiencing severe financial hardship directly or indirectly due to the Governor’s “Stay Home, Save Lives” executive orders issued in March.

- Have earned \$4,000/month or less pre-tax prior to their income loss due to COVID-19.

- Not received all unemployment payments they are owed.

For information on the program, go to emergencychecks.oregon.gov or dial 211 and ask for information on the “Emergency Relief Check Program.”

The program requires in-person visits to participating banks and credit unions in order to reduce the risk of fraud in the program. While applying, applicants must adhere to public health rules, including wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing.

Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, and House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland said in a joint

statement announcing the program that it was intended to be a faster way for Oregonians in need to receive relief funds amid a backlog caused by over 400,000 people filing for unemployment since March.

The Employment Department has experienced long delays — in some cases months — in getting aid to applicants.

“The Governor’s order prevented thousands of COVID-19 cases and saved hundreds of lives,” Courtney said in the statement. “But it also impacted many people’s income. With such a huge jump in unemployment, some people are still waiting for their benefits. We know \$500 isn’t going to solve all of these problems, but if we can help a family buy groceries for the month, pay for child care, or cover an unexpected repair, it’s worth it.”

Kotek spokesman Danny Moran said each branch of an institution is limited in the number of checks it can issue.

“There will be a daily capacity limit in the sense that each

Local options

Two Baker City financial institutions are participating in the program to distribute COVID-19 aid:

- Umpqua Bank, 1990 Washington Ave.
- Old West Federal Credit Union, 2036 Broadway St.

branch can only take so many in-person applicants per day,” Moran said. “Those who developed the program went to great lengths to ensure there was statewide representation in all regions of the state. We’re hopeful this will provide an opportunity for Oregonians in all corners of the state to access the funds.”

Residents are strongly urged to check with the banks and credit unions to verify that they are involved in the program and that walk-in service is available. Some branches may require an appointment to ensure social distancing and room capacity limits are met.

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Ratification of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution

“The Suffrage Movement in America”

A Reader’s Theater

Written by Gloria Holland, Salem, Oregon
Sharing the Stories of Remarkable Women
Told in the Voice of the Women and Their Time



Performances

Park Pavilion in Geiser-Pollman Park
6 p.m. August 15, 2020
6 pm. August 21, 2020

Oregon Trail Interpretive Trail Center
1:30 p.m. August 27, 2020

Baker City, Oregon