

# Local

## BAKER COUNTY CALENDAR

### TUESDAY, DEC. 8

■ **BAKER CITY COUNCIL:** 7 p.m., City Hall, 1655 First St.

## TURNING BACK THE PAGES

### 50 YEARS AGO from the Democrat-Herald December 4, 1970

ONTARIO — Where is Hells Canyon?

Is it the wild and rugged 70-mile-long slash carved by the Snake River between the rugged Wallowa Mountains and the equally rugged Seven Devils Mountains on the east to separate Idaho and Oregon? Or is it a very small canyon only four miles long draining into the larger canyon?

### 25 YEARS AGO from the Baker City Herald December 5, 1995

New. That word is being used a lot when describing the 1995-96 Baker boys basketball team.

The Bulldogs not only have several new players, but a new coach, a new offense and a new spirit.

The new coach, Mike McDowell, is a familiar face to most of the Bulldogs. McDowell coached the JV team for Coach Mike Doherty last season.

### 10 YEARS AGO from the Baker City Herald December 6, 2010

"It's a great day to be a Bulldog," said Baker football coach Dave Johnson shortly after his team had won its first Class 4A state football championship Saturday afternoon.

The Bulldogs (12-1) defeated Douglas (11-3) 34-20 at Hillsboro Stadium to claim the first OSAA football title in school history.

### ONE YEAR AGO from the Baker City Herald December 6, 2019

The Baker City Planning Commission voted 5-2 Wednesday to deny Verizon Wireless' application to build a 70-foot cellphone tower on the north side of town.

Several people who live in the area north of Leo Adler Field and the Fairgrounds testified at previous Commission meetings this fall that they believe the proposed tower would mar their views and reduce their property values.

And although federal rules prohibit the Planning Commission from considering health issues related to cell towers, several residents also objected to the tower based on their concerns about the health effects from radio frequency emissions.

Holly Kerns, director of the Baker City-County Planning Department, said Verizon officials have 14 days to appeal the Commission's decision to the Baker City Council.

In an email to the Herald this morning, Heidi Flato, public relations manager for Verizon Consumer Group, wrote that "We are disappointed by the Planning Department's decision to deny our conditional use permit application in Baker City. We're evaluating our next steps."

During Wednesday's meeting commissioner Larisa Bogardus first made a motion to approve the 70-foot tower, with an added 5 feet for green, tree-like "branches."

## OREGON LOTTERY

### MEGABUCKS, Dec. 2

5 — 28 — 29 — 32 — 42 — 45  
Next jackpot: \$5.3 million

### POWERBALL, Dec. 2

28 — 31 — 40 — 41 — 46 PB 4  
Next jackpot: \$243 million

### MEGA MILLIONS, Dec. 1

7 — 33 — 53 — 61 — 65 Mega 14  
Next jackpot: \$244 million

### WIN FOR LIFE, Dec. 2

6 — 12 — 58 — 62

### PICK 4, Dec. 3

• 1 p.m.: 9 — 7 — 8 — 2  
• 4 p.m.: 4 — 7 — 6 — 5  
• 7 p.m.: 5 — 7 — 6 — 6

• 10 p.m.: 1 — 3 — 2 — 0

### LUCKY LINES, Dec. 3

3-8-9-14-20-22-28-31

Next jackpot: \$43,000

## SENIOR MENUS

- **MONDAY:** Boneless chicken with cream gravy, mashed potatoes, roll, baby carrots, ambrosia, lemon squares
- **TUESDAY:** Chicken cordon bleu, rice pilaf, mixed vegetables, roll, brownies
- **WEDNESDAY:** Hot turkey sandwich, mashed potatoes, broccoli-blend vegetables, macaroni salad, cookie
- **THURSDAY:** Pork tips over fettuccine, cauliflower, roll, fruit cup, pudding
- **FRIDAY:** Beef pot roast, red potatoes, mixed vegetables, roll, broccoli-bacon salad, cheesecake

Lunches at the Senior Center, 2810 Cedar St., 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; \$4.50 donation (60 and older), \$6.75, under 60. Meals must be picked up; there is no dining on site.

## CONTACT THE HERALD

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## SIZZLING

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The jump in values has been driven in part by an influx of buyers from metropolitan areas who have considerable equity due to the much higher average prices in those urban markets, Briels said.

Although those buyers can potentially outbid local residents, a factor that partially offsets that, and benefits local buyers, is the "incredibly low interest rates" that allow people to buy a more expensive home without incurring a significantly higher monthly payment, Briels said.

Typical annual percentage rates for a fixed, 30-year mortgage are running around 3.2%, according to Bankrate.com

Andrew Bryan, owner of Baker City Realty, said the affordable interest rates are enabling local residents to either buy their first home, or to upgrade to a more expensive property.

Bryan said the swelling prices have all but eliminated what was, just a couple years ago, a fairly robust segment — smaller homes worth less than \$100,000.

"Our under-100,000 market has almost disappeared," Bryan said.

At a higher level, he said, homes that might have been listed for \$115,000 two years ago might sell now for as much as \$160,000.

Overall, Bryan said, sales prices have risen by 5% to 15%.

He provided a Market Trend Report to the Herald that showed the average sale price for properties rose from \$150,175 in January 2020, when 12 units sold, to an average of \$286,165 in October, when 33 units sold.

The report shows that the monthly sales averaged 13 units per month for the five-month period December 2019

through April 2020.

For the next six months, May through October, the monthly average more than doubled, to 28 units. That included a peak of 33 units sold in October.

Briels said she's also seen an increase in purchases of bare land, mostly home lots.

### Properties selling quickly

With so many more potential buyers looking at real estate in Baker County, homes are selling more rapidly than usual, agents said.

In the past few years it wasn't uncommon for a house to be on the market for several months, Briels said.

But during this summer and fall, she said, many homes are selling within two weeks of being listed.

"A lot have sold even faster than that, with multiple offers in the first day," she said. "It doesn't even matter what the price point is."

Bryan's Market Trend Report shows that the average days on the market for homes sold in February 2020 was 87 days.

Since then that time has fluctuated from as few as six days, in October, to 23 days in July. The average from March through October was 11 days.

### Good time to sell as well

Although buyers are continuing to feel the heat of the market, this is an ideal time for those looking to sell property, as well, agents said. Briels encourages sellers to list their properties even though winter tends to be a slower period in real estate.

"I always try to encourage my sellers to try and not hold off listing their properties in the winter because they think there won't be any buyers," she said. "We have buyers year-round."

Lien agrees. "If they are motivated to sell,

this is a good time to sell," she said.

### Buyers advised to arrange financing first

Bryan encourages potential home buyers to do preparatory work before starting their search.

"I think that's the coaching we do with our clients, is to be prepared so have your pre-approval if you are utilizing a mortgage," Bryan said.

Mary Jo Grove, co-owner of the Grove Team agency in Baker City, expressed the same sentiment.

"They need to start the process, get with the mortgage broker, get with the bank, get with whoever they are going to use as a lender well before they get started looking at houses," Grove said.

Preparing is particularly important in a hypercompetitive market such as Baker County's, with so many properties drawing multiple potential buyers.

"Everyone assumes a market like this is all roses and sunshines, but as you can imagine we can get four offers on a property, one guy is really happy and three people are very unhappy," Grove said.

To that end, local agents say the Multiple Listing System, MLS, is an excellent tool for buyers.

"We have this really great system with MLS, so we could put our buyers into a system so if they say 'gosh, I'm looking for a three-bedroom, two-bath that needs to be a stick built home, preferably newer and my price range is \$200,000-\$300,000;' when we set them up, any time a new listing hits the market hitting that criteria, that buyer gets an email with a direct link to it," Briels said. "So they aren't having to sit on those websites like Zillow hitting refresh every ten minutes."

## OBITUARIES

### Debbie Davis

Formerly of North Powder, 1962-2020

Debra Kay "Debbie" Davis, 57, died unexpectedly at her home in Island City the afternoon of Nov. 1, 2020.

Debbie was born on Nov. 27, 1962, at Baker to William Fred Davis and Sandra Joyce Lare. She grew up in North Powder on the family cattle ranch.

Debbie attended elementary through high school in North Powder where she played the trumpet in band and was active in sports. She played basketball and volleyball until diagnosed with linear scleroderma, which caused muscle loss in her leg, making it too weak for Debbie to continue playing sports or to ski. Debbie dearly missed these activities.

Debbie enjoyed riding horses and was active in 4-H. She was a princess on the Catherine Creek Junior Rodeo Court in 1979-80. She loved to help her dad and the other ranch workers herd the cows and calves for annual vaccinations and branding. Debbie practically lived on a horse until she got her first car, a red Mercury Cougar. She traded her saddle for 137 horses under the hood that took her on many adventures.

Debbie moved with her family to La Grande in May of 1980 after the family sold its North Powder ranch, but her adventurous spirit took her to many places! While living in Nampa, Idaho, she met her wonderful friend, Wanda. They worked together at Freddy's bar with many great people and remained lifelong friends.

In 1986, Debbie met Vance Motz, and their daughter, Breanna, was born in

1988. In 2013, Debbie's grandson, Ayden, joined their family. He was his grandma's pride and joy! She loved spending time with him, watching him grow. Debbie was fiercely proud of her family and enjoyed being with all of them. She also loved animals, especially her cats and dogs.

Debbie enjoyed a variety of jobs during her life, including working as a nurse's aide for Valley View Manor and Evergreen Health and Rehabilitation Center in La Grande, and at Smith Nursing home in Walla Walla, Washington, where she cared for her own great-grandmother. She also worked as a server at the Farmhouse Restaurant, as a cook and bartender at the Long Branch, and as a manager at Subway in the Pilot Travel Center as well as in Chowchilla, California. Debbie and her daughter Breanna worked together for a guide company in Elk City, Idaho, where they lived at the company's bear camp and cooked, took care of guests, and even helped skin bears. Debbie also worked for New Day Enterprises, where she enjoyed working with clients with mental health disabilities. She was a caregiver most of her life, helping friends, family and clients, and she loved her caregiving jobs.

Debbie was a mother, daughter, sister and grandmother. Her life was a living example of Christ's love for family and friends. Her faith carried her through obstacles and helped her celebrate victories throughout her life!

Debbie is survived by her daughter, Breanna Marie Davis, and grandson, Ayden William Davis, both of Island City; her father and stepmother, William and Marilee Davis of Nampa, Idaho; her mother, Sandra Davis, and her brother,

Jeffrey Davis, both of La Grande; her aunt, Jessie Cox of Spokane; and her uncle, Gayle Ramey of Murrieta, California.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, William Ernest and Vivian Clare McGrath Davis, and Harrison Earl and Marie Miller Lare.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Scleroderma Foundation, 300 Rosewood Dr., Suite 105, Danvers, MA 01923, or to a charity of choice.

### Martha Jane Strange Douglas

Formerly of Baker County, 1930-2020

Martha Jane Strange Douglas, 90, of Stanfield, and a former Baker County resident, died on Oct. 22, 2020, at her daughter's home, surrounded by family.

Martha was born on April 29, 1930, at Sparta to Charles Hurbert and Inez Strang. She attended school with her older sisters in Sparta. In 1942 the family moved to Stanfield, and she attended school at Umatilla and Hermiston, where she met and married Wolford Douglas in 1945. They had three children.

Martha was active in the senior citizen center in the area. She did embroidery, crocheted and liked to watch golf on TV. She planned family reunions, which she had done until she turned 90.

Martha is survived by her children, Wanda Jean and "Gary" Zumwalt of Albany, Susan Kay "Mac" Able of Stanfield, and Brook "Carolynne" Douglas of Beaverton; two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; her sisters, Audrey Ann Parker of Clackamas, Donna and "Matt" Nitzel of Bouse, Arizona, Cecile Denman of Vancouver, Washington, and Linda and "Jim" Brodbeck of Bouse, Arizona.

## NEWS OF RECORD

### DEATHS

**Tahnee Lynn Main:** 36, died on Nov. 30, 2020, in an automobile accident on the outskirts of Baker City. Her graveside service will take place Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 1 p.m. at the Hagerman Pioneer Cemetery in Hagerman, Idaho. Pastor Wayne Crownover of the River City Church in Boise will officiate. To offer an online condolence to Tahnee's family, go to [www.grayswestco.com](http://www.grayswestco.com)

### POLICE LOG

**Baker City Police Arrests, citations**  
CONTEMPT OF COURT (Baker County Justice Court warrant): Ayla Rose Hubert, 26, of Baker City, 4:17 p.m. Wednesday, in the

3300 block of H Street; cited and released.

**FOURTH-DEGREE DOMESTIC ASSAULT:** Brandon Douglas Culbertson, 32, of Baker City, 9:07 p.m. Wednesday, in the 3200 block of Court Avenue; jailed and later granted a conditional release.

**Baker County Sheriff's Office Arrests, citations**  
PROBATION VIOLATION (Two

Baker County warrants): Zachery Ryan Chayse Smith, 25, of Enterprise, 6:08 p.m. Wednesday, at the Sheriff's Office; jailed.

**PROBATION VIOLATION and IDENTITYTHEFT,** two counts (Baker County warrants): Marlene LaVonne Pfeiffer, 30, of Baker City. Pfeiffer is being held at the Baker County Jail on charges of violating her probation and writing letters she forged using names of doctors, one in Pendleton and one in Washington, to claim

that she could not comply with requirements of her probation because she had tested positive for COVID-19 and had been placed in quarantine. Pfeiffer was picked up on the warrants by the Spokane, Washington, Police Department on Nov. 11. She was returned to the Baker County Jail on Dec. 3 and remains in custody. Union County Circuit Court Judge Thomas P. Powers set bail at \$10,000 during arraignment Thursday, court records stated.

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