

# Invasive weed of the week

By Jeffrey Pettingill

## The enemy

Japanese yew (Taxus cuspidata)

## The strategy

Also known as the “Tree of Death.” This perennial ever-green tree grows to a height of 25 feet if in the right site. This pest is planted all over the U.S. in landscapes and as an ornamental. It is quite often used in Christmas wreaths. Its needles are arranged flat on the stem, on which forms red berries. The plant grows in sunny or shady sites as long as there is a medium amount of moisture and well-drained soil. The plant is native to Asia. Due to the types of sites it is planted in it does not generally develop a very deep taproot.

## The attack

This plant does not spread very rapid as many other plants do. Its biggest attack



Contributed Photo

Japanese yew produces clusters of red berries.

on our environment is its toxicity to animals. News stories can be found where 50 antelope were found dead or the elk that were found dead in the Boise foothills. Many livestock producers have had livestock die where they were found to have fed on the yew tree. Dogs have known to have been killed by eating the stomach of animals that

have eaten the tree.

## The defense

Don’t plant it. In fact, due to wildlife issues in certain areas, the local officials listed it as a noxious weed and landown-ers have agreed to remove it from their properties and landscape companies are no longer planting it. If you cut it down, ensure that you treat

## Series Continues

Jeffrey Pettingill, weed control supervisor for Baker County, will be writing an occasional article about a common noxious weed in the area. Pettingill encourages people to call him if they have weed questions or see a species they’re not familiar with. His office number is 541-523-0618 and his cell is 541-519-0204.

the stump immediately after-ward. Products to use would include Garlon 4, Vaslan (the new Garlon 3), Crossbow, or Roundup if nothing else is available. Most often you can go to your County Weed Control Office for more infor-mation.

# Police find two local men dead of natural causes in separate incidents

By Chris Collins  
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

Baker City Police Chief Ray Du-man said officers, in separate incidents earlier this week, found two Baker City men in their vehicles, unresponsive, and both were later confirmed as having died of natural causes.

The two men, Donald H. Phillips, 90, of 44484 Deer Haven Road, and Christo-pher Christie, 72, of 1985 15th St., both were found in the driver’s seats of their vehicles.

Duman said Phillips was found in his 2018 Ford pickup truck about 9:05 a.m. Monday at Resort Street and

Washington Avenue. The pickup, which was facing east on Washington, was still running when police responded to find Phillips slumped over the wheel in the locked vehicle. Emergency responders from the Baker City Fire Department were called to extricate Phillips, Duman said.

CPR was administered and Phil-lips was taken by ambulance to Saint Alphonsus Medical Center where he was pronounced dead. Duman said it ap-peared that Phillips had experienced a medical event.

Phillips was a longtime Baker City businessman. He owned the Ford deal-

ership in Baker City for 44 years before selling the business in 2002.

Christie was found in his 1990 Honda Civic sedan at 1:46 a.m. Tuesday in the 3200 block of 17th Street, near the railroad tracks.

It appeared that Christie had died at the scene after also experiencing some type of medical event, Duman said.

Christie’s vehicle left the roadway and landed in a ditch. The headlights on his car, which were shining across a field, drew the attention of a deputy who was patrolling in the area, Duman said.

Baker City Police and a Baker City ambulance also responded.

# BHS grad coaching in national golf event

By Jayson Jacoby  
jjjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Dan Brooks won’t be in Baker City on Christmas Day for the first time in decades, but the pandemic isn’t the only reason for his absence.

And his second reason for missing the holiday with his mother, Colleen Brooks, is one he’s eagerly anticipating.

Brooks, 62, will be busy in the days leading up to the holiday, adding another

accolade to a coaching career that features enough awards and trophies to fill multiple display cases.

Brooks has coached the women’s golf team at Duke University, in Durham, North Carolina, for 36 years.

He has amassed an unmatched record during his tenure, including seven



Brooks

NCAA national champion-ships and 137 team victories, the most for any women’s golf coach in Division I history.

Next week Brooks will join three other coaches oversee-ing a team of 12 women and 12 men golfers from U.S. colleges and universities who will compete in the annual Arnold Palmer Cup.

Brooks, a seven-time na-tional coach of the year, is one of two head coaches for the American squad.

The event pits the Ameri-can college golfers against a team of players who are from outside the U.S. but who also compete for a college in the U.S.

“I’m pretty excited about it,” said Brooks, a 1976 Baker High School graduate who played golf at Oregon State University and earned a bachelor of science degree in history there in 1981.

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# School board approves bid exemption

By Chris Collins  
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

Members of the Baker School Board, acting as the 5J School District’s public contract reviewers, on Tuesday approved a plan to allow the District an exemption from the competitive bidding process for seismic upgrades to the Helen M. Stack middle school gymnasium.

During a special noon meet-ing, Cassie Hibbert, project manager for the Wenaha

Group which has an office in Pendleton, presented her find-ings of fact on how the alterna-tive process will benefit the Baker School District and its patrons. The process is known as the Construction Manage-ment/General Contractor (CM/CG) contracting method.

Hibbert has worked with the Baker School District on other long-range facility plans. Most recently she was the proj-ect manager on the remodel of part of the North Baker School

building to serve as the Baker Early Learning Center.

The seismic work at the middle school will be paid for by a \$2,365,785 state seismic improvement grant. Planning

and design on the project al-ready has begun, Hibbert said Tuesday via a Zoom meeting with the Board.

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## OBITUARIES

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### Sharon Jaensch

Baker City, 1945-2020

Gary and Sherry had two children, Timothy B. Jaensch, born on Nov. 19, 1968, and Lisa M. Jaensch, born on May 14, 1972.

Sherry was blessed with six grandchildren: Rylen Jaensch of Baker City, Ashlee Possen (Landon), Casey Jaensch (Kelli) and Kaylee Jaensch of Minot, North Dakota, and Kody Younger (Ashley) and Lillyanna Wil-son of Baker City. She was also blessed with five great-grandchildren: Brantley and Addison Younger (Kody) of Baker City, and Ryker, Braylee and Kenlee Possen (Ashlee) of Minot.

Sherry dedicated her life to

being a foster parent and be-ing a child advocate through CASA of Eastern Oregon.

She is survived by her chil-dren and their spouses, Tim and Erica Jaensch, and Lisa and John Wilson; along with her six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents, John and Bertha Lee; her grandmother, Lida E. Howe; and her hus-band, Gary Jaensch.

Memorial contributions can be made to CASA of Eastern Oregon through Gray’s West & Co. Pioneer Chapel, 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814.

To leave an online condo-lence for Sherry’s family, go to www.grayswestco.com

## Rachel Pregnancy Center

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10 AM - 5 PM  
(closed for lunch)

Baker County  
Veteran Service  
Office will be  
closed December  
14th through  
the 18th



Travel Baker County

Baker City Downtown is offering local kids a chance to meet safely with Santa this Saturday, Dec. 19, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 2024 Main St.

# Safe visits with Santa Saturday

By Lisa Britton  
For the Baker City Herald

Baker City Downtown is hosting an event where chil-dren can still see Santa while following the state safety guidelines for social distancing.

Santa Claus will be safe behind glass at 2024 Main St. from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 19. While there is no official photographer, families are welcome to take photos posing in front of the window.

The first run-through went really well last Saturday, said Amy Briels.

“Everyone was really excited,” she said. “We had babies literally kissing the glass.”

She said Santa is equipped with a microphone and wireless speaker so he can talk to visitors. Also, a rein-deer mailbox will be set up so children can mail their letters to Santa.

## New At The 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 Kingdom,” Jo Nesbø
- “The Dirty South,” John Connelly
- “The Princes of Texas,” series Julia London
- “All Things Left Wild,” James Wade
- “A Lush and Seething Hell,” John Hornor Jacobs

### NONFICTION

- “Do You Feel Like I Do?,” Peter Frampton
- “One Vote Away,” Ted Cruz
- “The Color of Money,” Mehrsa Baradaran
- “Across That Bridge,” John Lewis
- “Modern Comfort Food,” Ina Garten

### DVDS

- “Big Little Lies, Season 2” (TV Series)
- “The Irishman” (Drama)
- “Once Were Brothers: Robbie Robertson and The Band” (Documentary)
- “Paw Patrol, Mighty Pups” (Juvenile Video)
- “What They Had” (Comedy)



## Annual Christmas Day Dinner!

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11:00 to 5:00**

**Prime rib, brisket, ham,  
turkey, mac and cheese,  
mashed potatoes, green  
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