

# Baker City Herald

August 7, 2021

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QUICK HITS

### Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Cathy Johnson of Baker City.

BRIEFING

### Fundraiser set for local toddler

A fundraiser to help Ben and Emily Bechtold's daughter fight leukemia is happening Friday, Aug. 13. The couple's 14-month-old daughter, Naomi, is currently with her mom at Seattle Children's Hospital.

The fundraiser starts at 6 p.m. at the Baker City Elks Lodge, 1896 Second St. The evening includes a pulled pork dinner, cornhole tournament, and silent auction. All proceeds will benefit the Bechtold family to help with medical and travel expenses. Dinner tickets are \$15, and available at the event. There is a limit to 200 meals. Entry in the cornhole tournament is \$10 per person or \$20 per team. There are slots for 32 teams. JR Streifel said donations are still coming in for the silent auction.

"It's awesome to see the community support and rally around one of ours in need," he said.

To donate, call Streifel at 541-379-5174. For monetary donations, an account has been set up at Old West Federal Credit Union under the name Naomi Bechtold Benefit Fund. Donations can also be made through Venmo: @NaomisVillage

WEATHER

**Today**  
89 / 54  
Sunny

**Sunday**  
75 / 41  
Partly sunny

**Monday**  
81 / 45  
Sunny

The space below is for a postage label for issues that are mailed.

## 2 Queens, 1 Town



Contributed Photo

Chelsie Thompson, 11, of North Powder, is the West Queen for the East-West Shrine All-Star Football Game.

By Samantha O'Conner

soconner@bakercityherald.com  
The two queens for the East-West Shrine All-Star Football Game, which will be played Saturday evening, Aug. 7 in Baker City, both hail from the same small town — North Powder.

West Queen Chelsie Thompson, 11, and East Queen Adelynn Klundby, 16, have both been helped by Shriners hospitals for many years.

They will represent their respective teams when the players compete at Baker Bulldog Memorial Stadium.

Tickets to the football game are \$15 and can be purchased at the stadium starting at 5 p.m. Pre-game events start at 6 p.m., followed by kickoff at 7 p.m.

The game will be livestreamed by EOActive on <https://eoalive.tv/>.

### Chelsie's story

Chelsie was six years old on June 3, 2016, when she was hurt in an accident with a riding lawnmower at her family's home.

"She had her left leg amputated from that accident," Chelsie's mom,

Erin Thompson said. "About a month and a half after her accident, we were able to start attending Shriners and they've actually helped her get all of her prosthetics."

Chelsie spent many nights in the Shriners Hospital in Portland during the summer of 2016, where she experienced the nurturing atmosphere that the Shriners hospitals across the country are renowned for.

"They were really nice," Chelsie said.

She has needed a new prosthetic every year since her accident, and the Shriners have continued to help the Thompsons over the past five years.

"They are definitely a blessing for us because I don't know how we would be able to make it all work with having a prosthetic once a year," Erin said. "Being able to go there has been really nice."

### Adelynn's story

Adelynn's mother, Casey Townsend, said her daughter was first treated at a Shriners hospital when she was just a year old.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

East Queen Adelynn Klundby waves to the crowd during the Miners Jubilee parade on July 17, 2021, in Baker City.

That was in Sacramento, California.

Adelynn was born with a birth defect called proximal femoral focal deficiency (PFFD), in which her right femur — the thigh bone — and right hip joints didn't develop.

From all of this, she has an above-the-knee prosthetic.

The family moved to Oregon when Adelynn was three, and she's been an occasional patient at the Portland hospital since.

"She's had several surgeries, she wears a prosthetic," Townsend said. "They also got her involved with Challenged Athletes Foundation where she's learned about sports and how to adapt to that."

Thanks to the Shriners, Adelynn received a grant from Challenged Athletes that helped her get a prosthetic leg designed to allow her to run.

"It's been very positive. It's been great for her," Townsend said.

Townsend said she knew Adelynn wouldn't have to worry about being in pain from surgeries and treatment thanks to Shriners.

## School board talks masks, virus

### Parents say masks harm rather than help students

By Joanna Mann

[jmann@bakercityherald.com](mailto:jmann@bakercityherald.com)

About 80 people attended a Baker School Board meeting via Zoom on Thursday, Aug. 5, including members of a group that oppose a state requirement that students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, wear face masks when classes begin Aug. 30.

Board Chair-

man Chris

Hawkins also expressed concern about the mandate, which Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced last week in response to a surge in COVID-19 cases statewide driven by the more contagious delta variant.

Superintendent Mark Witty made a presentation about the mask issue during the early afternoon meeting.

"The top priority for us is the safety of staff and students," Witty said. "If we can't maintain a healthy workforce, we will be very challenged to keep schools open."

In-person classes were canceled for the entire spring term in 2020 due to the pandemic, and the 2020-21 year started with students taking classes online.

Elementary students returned to in-person classes four days per week on Oct. 14, 2020, and they were required to wear masks.

Middle school and high school students returned to their schools for one day per week on Nov. 9, 2020, with the in-person scheduling expanding to two days per week on Jan. 25, 2021, and to four days on April 12. Masks were also required in those schools.

See, **Schools** / Page A3

## COVID ravages Baker City family

### Trinidad Navarro, 59, and his mother, Mary Hurtado, 93, both died in July

By Jayson Jacoby  
[jjacoby@bakercityherald.com](mailto:jjacoby@bakercityherald.com)

For more than a year, Chuck Brown and his sister, Hope Brown, worried about COVID-19 breaching the Baker City home where their mother, Mary Hurtado, lived with four relatives.

And for more than a year, the siblings' concerns were kept at bay.

But then July arrived.

And when the virus did get into that home, it wreaked havoc.

All five residents got sick, four of them seriously.

The Browns' brother, Trinidad Navarro, 59, died on July 14 at Saint Alphonsus Hospital in Boise.

Their mother, Mary, died on July 29, also at Saint Alphonsus Hospital in Boise. She was 93.

Their sister, Donna Valentine, 65, spent time in the hospital, as did their nephew, Greg Valentine, 42, who's Donna's son.

Both Trinidad and Mary had underlying conditions.

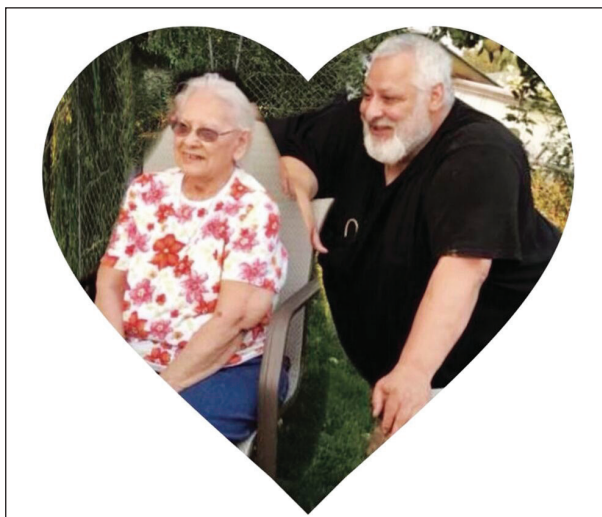
But the youngest member of the household, Carlos Grove, 21, who is Chuck's grandson, Mary's great-grandson and Trinidad's great-nephew, believes both would still be alive if not for the virus.

"It killed my (great) uncle and it killed my great-grandmother," said Grove, who was the first member of the household to feel ill, in late June. He tested positive for COVID-19 on July 7.

"It's a deadly disease," Grove said. "If that isn't enough to scare people, honest to God, there's really no hope of getting out of this pandemic."

Trinidad and Mary are among the 18 Baker County residents whose deaths are related to COVID-19 infections.

Although the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) doesn't list names of people



Contributed Photo (original photo included heart-shape frame)

Mary Hurtado, 93, left, with her son, Trinidad Navarro. The two Baker City residents died in July after testing positive for COVID-19.

who died, the agency's reports coincide with the family's situation — a 59-year-old Baker County man who died July 14 at a Boise hospital, and a 93-year-old woman who died July 29 at Saint Alphonsus Hospital in Boise.

The family's experience is not limited to the virus' potentially fatal consequences.

So far as they can tell, the problems started

with what's known as a "breakthrough" case — a fully vaccinated person who becomes infected.

Carlos became sick in late June, about six weeks after he said he received the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

He said he had trouble breathing the night of June 26.

See, **COVID** / Page A5

## Rain helps crews douse local fires

By Jayson Jacoby

[jjacoby@bakercityherald.com](mailto:jjacoby@bakercityherald.com)

Thunderstorms swept across Baker County and other parts of Northeastern Oregon most days this week, bringing fire-starting lightning bolts but also rain that helped fire crews quickly douse most blazes in Baker County.

"We've had a significant amount of lightning across Northeastern Oregon but a lot of it has had rain with it," said Jana Peterson of the Oregon Department of Forestry office in Baker City.

Rain tends to keep fires from growing rapidly, giving firefighters an advantage during initial attack, Peterson said.

The downside is that rain can also quell, but not extinguish, lightning fires, which then smolder for days or even weeks before reviving on a hot, windy afternoon, she said.

See, **Fires** / Page A5



TODAY  
Issue 38, 12 pages

Classified..... B2-B4  
Comics..... B5  
Community News.... B3

Crossword.....B2 & B4  
Dear Abby..... B6  
Horoscope.....B3 & B4

Jayson Jacoby.....A4  
News of Record.....A2  
Obituaries.....A2

Opinion.....A4  
Outdoors..... B1  
Senior Menus.....A2

Sports.....A6  
Turning Backs.....A2  
Weather..... B6

TUESDAY — COVERAGE FROM SHRINERS WEEKEND IN BAKER CITY