

Baker City Herald

December 4, 2021

Serving Baker County since 1870 • bakercityherald.com



IN THIS EDITION:

Local • Outdoors • Sports • TV

\$1.50

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Mark Ferns of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Baker City Police hosting Angel Tree

The Baker City Police Department is hosting, in partnership with The Salvation Army, an Angel Tree decorated with gift tags in the front entrance of the Police Department at 1768 Auburn Ave. Angel Tree gift tags are special wished-for items given during the holiday season to children in need within our community.

If you would like to pick up an Angel Tree gift tag and purchase the gift for a local child, you can then return the unwrapped gift to the Police Department.

The last day to turn in a gift is Friday, Dec. 17.

For more information, call Phoebe Wachtel at 541-524-2014, extension 603, or Susan Bland with The Salvation Army at 541-523-5853.

Garden Club meeting Dec. 8

The Baker County Garden Club will meet Wednesday, Dec. 8 at 10:30 a.m. at the Loennig home, 1638 Broadway St. There will be a brunch, and members will plant amaryllis and paperwhite bulbs.

WEATHER

Today
50 / 28
Partly sunny



Sunday
38 / 24
Cloudy



Monday
37 / 13
Rain showers



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

Wanting her son back

■ Melissa Fulfer talks about her 18-year-old son Joshua's mental health issues

By JAYSON JACOBY
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Melissa Fulfer can't drive from her mind the thought of her 18-year-old son, Joshua Mark Kelly Fulfer, alone in a cell in the Baker County Jail, raving about demons speaking in his head.

Such scenes have plagued her for more than two months.

"It painted a picture in my mind that was like the most horrific picture," Melissa said during a recent interview.

She wonders when she will see Joshua again.

Moreover, she wonders when she will see the kind, normal young man she remembers and raised, a teenager who played football and basketball and hung out with friends and hoped to own motels when he grew up.

Melissa scrolls through photos on her cellphone, stopping on the scene from Christmas 2020.

She is sitting beside Joshua.

Both are smiling. "I hope I can see him back like he was in that picture," Melissa said.

She is more optimistic about that prospect today than she has been in months.

On Nov. 22, Judge Matt Shirtcliff ruled in Baker County Circuit Court that Joshua, due to mental disorder, is not fit to assist in his defense against assault, criminal mischief and other charges he faces from a July 22, 2021, incident in Baker City.

Shirtcliff ordered that Joshua be sent to the Oregon State Hospital in Salem for treatment. That order was based in part on reports from the jail staff about Joshua's actions



The Fulfer family in December 2020, from left: Joshua, Darren, Melissa and Hannah.

during his incarceration, including, as Melissa puts it, "acting crazy."

"He's actually going to get treatment now," she said.

And although Melissa said officials at the state hospital told her there might not be an available bed for Joshua for a month or two, she found out early Friday morning, Dec. 3, that Joshua was en route to Salem.

But even as she hopes that Joshua, with professional help, will get better, Melissa laments the ordeal that her family has gone through this year.

She wishes that her son had been required to undergo treatment sooner.

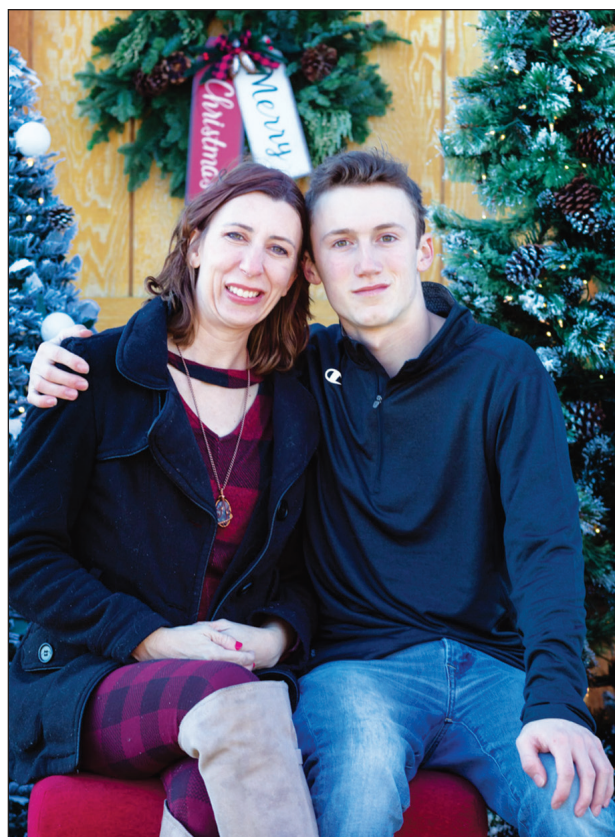
Melissa said Joshua's condition has deteriorated during his time in jail — and most notably since he was confined to an individual cell in late September.

"Prior to that he didn't seem as disturbed," she said.

She said she last visited him at the jail on Sept. 23.

Melissa said Joshua's older sister, Hannah, who's 20, called the jail on Thanksgiving, hoping her brother could call her.

It didn't happen.



Melissa Fulfer with her son, Joshua, then 17, in December 2020.

'Taxing' situation for jail staff

Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash, whose duties include overseeing the jail at 3410 K St. in Baker City, said that although he can't talk specifically about Joshua Fulfer, he agrees with Melissa that the jail is not a suitable place for the long-term incarceration of a

person with mental health problems.

"We're not set up to deal with the extreme mental health issues," Ash said on Wednesday, Dec. 1. "But we're at the mercy of the state hospital. We're just waiting for the state hospital to call with an opening."

See, **Joshua** / Page A3

BAKER CITY STEER WRESTLER JESSE BROWN

Brown 5th in first round at National Finals Rodeo

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

The National Finals Rodeo is back in Las Vegas, and Jesse Brown could not be happier.

The Baker City steer wrestler competed in his first NFR last year in Arlington, Texas, but he said there is something special about Thomas & Mack Center.

There must be after Brown turned in a time of 4.5 seconds to finish in a two-way tie for fifth place with Tyler Waguespack in the first round on Thursday, Dec. 2. Each man won \$5,661 for his efforts.

"It's way different than Texas," he said. "Everyone is right on top of you here. It's where it belongs. It was awesome."

In an October 2021 interview, Brown said he was excited to compete in Las Vegas.

"I can't wait," he said. "It's a completely different rodeo. I think the electricity in that building — you're not going to be able to match that."

See, **Rodeo** / Page A5

OSP says eight wolves killed with poison

The (La Grande) Observer

Oregon State Police are asking for the public's help in identifying individuals responsible for the poisoning deaths of eight wolves earlier this year in Eastern Oregon.

OSP in a press release reported that Fish and Wildlife Division troopers received information in February from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) about a dead, collared wolf. Troopers responded to the area and found five dead wolves — three males and two females. It was later determined the wolves were from the Catherine Pack, with all known members of that pack present and deceased.

The wolves were southeast of Mount Harris, in Union County. Troopers and ODFW personnel with the assistance of a helicopter searched the area for anything of evidentiary value and found a dead magpie in the vicinity of the dead wolves.

The five wolves and magpie were collected and transported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Forensics Lab in Ashland to determine the cause of death.

Fish and Wildlife troopers again received information in March from ODFW personnel of an additional wolf collar emitting a mortality signal in the same general location. A search of the area located a deceased female wolf, a skunk and a magpie, all close to the scene. All animals were collected and immediately submitted to the USFWS lab for testing. The female wolf was dispersing from the Keating Pack.

See, **Wolves** / Page A3

Baker ranchers join legal battle over race-based USDA loan forgiveness program



Kathryn and James Dunlap with their daughter, Evelyn, at the family's ranch near Baker City. The couple has filed a lawsuit over being excluded from a USDA loan forgiveness program for minority farmers.

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

The possibility that USDA would forgive their farm loans seemed like a godsend for James and Kathryn Dunlap.

But shortly after hearing of the agency's new program, the Dunlaps learned they didn't qualify — only farmers from racial minorities were eligible.

"It kind of blew our minds," James said.

The couple has taken out about \$280,000 in loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency for cows and equipment to expand

their ranch business near Baker City.

"Until that's paid off, we're just trying to survive," James said. "The goal was to grow. Unfortunately, while you're growing, it's very difficult."

Though they wouldn't have taken out debt they couldn't pay back, the Dunlaps found it troubling they'd been excluded from the loan forgiveness program for being white.

"If they want to offer a program, it should be available to everyone," he said.

See, **Lawsuit** / Page A5



TODAY
Issue 87, 12 pages



CalendarA2
Classified B2-B4
Comics..... B5

Community News.....A3
Crossword.....B2 & B4
Dear Abby B6

Horoscope.....B2 & B4
Jayson Jacoby.....A4
News of Record.....A3

Obituaries.....A2
Opinion.....A4
OutdoorsB1 & B2

SportsA6
Turning Backs.....A2
Weather B6