

Fundraiser

Continued from A1

The program currently has an open position for a teacher/home visitor. For information and details, contact Butler at 541-239-5054 or email her at raeann@bakerreliefnursery.org.

The relief nursery also depends on volunteers to help in the classroom, work on fundraisers, or serve on the board of directors.

"We will always take volunteers," Butler said.

In addition to classroom time for children, the program includes home visits, parent education, and ensures families are connected with community resources.

The nursery also offers a diaper bank, food bank, and baby clothing bank — all stocked with donated items.

Information

For more information, visit the Baker Relief Nursery page on Facebook, call 541-239-5054, or email raeann@bakerreliefnursery.org.



Baker Relief Nursery/Contributed photo

The Baker Relief Nursery has an infant class on Wednesday mornings, and toddler classes on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Both classes are currently full, and more volunteers are welcome.

Fire

Continued from A1

Firefighters "knocked down" the fire in about 20 minutes, and then spent about two hours mopping up, Kiyokawa said Tuesday morning, Feb. 1.

There were people in the home, and all were evacuated without injury, he said.

No firefighters were injured.

The cause of the fire is

undetermined, but Kiyokawa said it was not "suspicious" in nature.

He said Casey Kump of the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office would oversee any further investigation.

Cold temperatures — it dropped into the teens while firefighters were working — complicated the effort, Kiyokawa said.

Firefighters had to keep their hoses running to prevent water from freezing.

They also had to swap breathing apparatus when

valves got clogged with ice.

"Eastern Oregon winter," Kiyokawa said.

He said crews would return to the site Tuesday, Feb. 1, to douse any remaining hot spots.

With the partial collapse of the home's roof, and widespread ice, it was too dangerous to continue working last night, he said.

Kiyokawa didn't have any estimate of the value of the damage.

The two-story, 697-square-foot house was built in 1900 and the owner is Jerney O'Neil Wheeler, according to the Baker County Assessor's Office.

The house is valued at \$7,720, and the land, which covers 10,500 square feet, is valued at \$25,460.

The Baker City Public Works Department, OTEC and other utilities also responded to the fire, Kiyokawa said.

Closures

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Snow spread southeast through the evening, and there were accidents in Baker County in addition to the crashes farther north, Strandberg said.

Heavy snow fell in Baker City between around 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

The eastbound lanes of the freeway reopened about 11 p.m., and the westbound lanes around midnight.

The westbound lanes had been closed to trucks between Ontario and Baker City due to a lack of truck parking space in Baker City and La Grande.

Other traffic was allowed westbound.

The bus carrying the Baker High School girls and boys basketball teams, which played Tuesday night at Nyssa, was able to make the trip without delay.

But the reprieve from closures was shortlived.

Two commercial trucks collided in the westbound lanes near Milepost 299, about 5 miles north of Baker City, around 4:37 a.m.

Diesel spilled from one of the trucks, which necessitated calling out a clean up crew, Strandberg said.

That closed the westbound lanes until about 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 2.

Somewhat surprising storm

The National Weather Service didn't predict any significant snow accumulations in valleys from the storm.

A forecast discussion posted Tuesday afternoon, Feb. 1, by the National Weather Service's Boise office, which issues forecasts for Baker County, noted that "a minor wave embedded in the flow



Oregon State Police/Contributed Photo

Two commercial trucks collided early Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2022, about 5 miles north of Baker City, blocking the westbound lanes of Interstate 84.

will support a slight chance of snow showers this evening across the mountains of Baker county and southwest Idaho while some lower elevation sites will see flurries through this evening."

It turned out to be rather more than flurries, at least in Baker Valley.

Tom Fisk, operations supervisor for the Baker City Public Works Department, said two city trucks spread salt and sand at busier intersections Wednesday morning, Feb. 2.

He decided not to call out the fleet of snowplows and graders because the snow was so light and powdery that traffic packed the snow to a thin layer.

The plow blades wouldn't have had much snow to scrape from more heavily traveled streets, Fisk said.

He said he would reassess the situation Wednesday night — if much more snow falls, plowing of downtown and other higher-priority streets could start early Thursday, Feb. 3.

The National Weather Service was forecasting a slight chance of snow in Baker City during that period, with little or no accumulation.

Act

Continued from A1

The county has 57 miles of such streams now, including reaches of Eagle Creek in the southern Wallows, the lower Powder River between Thief Valley Dam and Keating Valley, the North Powder River on the east side of the Elkhorns, and the North Fork of the Malheur River in the county's southwest corner.

"A resolution is a statement of belief in essence, it's how we feel about something," Baker County Commission Chairman Bill Harvey said. "It is not an ordinance, like a local law. So, resolutions don't have any, let's use the term, teeth in it to enforce something. It's basically a statement of our position on something."

Commissioners have previously submitted letters to the senators raising concerns about the River Democracy Act.

Commissioners in three of the counties bordering Baker — Wallowa, Union and Grant — have also formally objected to the River Democracy Act.

The resolution that Harvey and commissioners Mark Bennett and Bruce Nichols approved on Wednesday, Feb. 2, cites several of the same complaints that their colleagues in other counties have mentioned with regard to the River Democracy Act.

These include the lack of detailed maps.

"We've asked for two years for maps for this to delegate where these sections of rivers are being proposed in Baker County and all across Oregon," Harvey said.

He said the purported length of some of the Baker County stream reaches in the River Democracy Act overstates the actual distance.

Killamac Creek, for instance, a tributary of Rock Creek on the east slopes of the Elkhorn Mountains, is listed as 4 miles in the Act.

Harvey contends the stream is less than 2 miles long.

He had similar complaints about two other streams in the Elkhorns — Rock Creek and the North Fork of Rock Creek.

"These are the issues that we keep bringing up and we don't get responses," Harvey said.

The resolution also states that segments of some of the streams on the list are intermittent, and don't have water year round.

"Others can be stepped across without getting wet feet," the Baker County resolution states. "None of these proposed river and streams went through any screening or evaluation process required under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968), rather the list was developed by the Senators surveying the public to nominate their favorite stream."

Wyden and Merkley have touted the public involvement in creating the River Democracy Act, noting that they received more than 15,000 nomi-

nations from 2,500 Oregonians.

Baker County's resolution contends that the River Democracy Act would harm the county's economy.

"Use of the Wilderness Act and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act or other protected designations has resulted in an increased burden on local Baker county communities, including adverse impacts on grazing allotments, mining, and forestry, loss of tax revenues and increased costs to operate local government," the resolution states. "The River Democracy Act, if implemented, is likely to cause significant harm to economy of Baker County and injure the County's businesses and its citizens by depriving them of access to public lands, rivers, streams, and preventing

the productive use of their resources."

"This is not workable," Harvey said. "That is why I came to writing a resolution in defense against the River Democracy Act."

Bennett said commissioners have talked to a variety of county residents about the Act.

"We talked to the irrigation districts, it's a concern to everybody," Bennett said.

Nichols said Congressman Cliff Bentz, the Republican whose district includes Baker County, asked his opinion on the bill.

Nichols said he responded to Bentz with a single sentence.

"This bill, as it is written, should not ever see the light of day."

"That's how strongly I feel

that this bill is not good for Baker County, it is also not good for Oregon. Period," Nichols said.

County commissioners aren't the only elected officials who have objected to the River Democracy Act.

Bentz expressed his opposition to the bill during a floor speech in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 11.

Bentz noted — as does Baker County's resolution — that the River Democracy Act would designate protective corridors along streams that are a mile wide, twice the usual width.

Wanda Ballard of Baker City told commissioners to continue to oppose the River Democracy Act.

"I hope the resolve stays firm," Ballard said.

In response to complaints from Bentz, county commissioners and others that the River Democracy Act would severely restrict what can be done in protected corridors, Wyden said the Act would not affect private property within the corridors, nor would it prohibit logging and other work on public land designed to reduce the risk of wildfire.

Wyden said the bill would require land management agencies such as the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to assess wildfire risks in each wild and scenic river corridor.

Wyden's website includes a list of testimonials from elected officials, business owners and residents in Oregon who support the bill.

The list includes Mike Higgins, a farmer and retired science teacher from Halfway, who wrote: "As a fifth-generation eastern Oregonian I'm a strong supporter of Oregon's clean wild rivers. I applaud Senator Wyden for his leadership and vision in thinking about protecting our clean drinking water sources and the lifeblood of our wildlands as wild and scenic rivers. This is a gift to our children and their children for generations to come."

Wayne Arthur Erickson

February 10, 1947 - January 26, 2022

Wayne Arthur Erickson, 74, a resident of Baker City, Oregon, passed away on January 26, 2022, at St. Alphonsus Medical Center in Boise, Idaho. His loving family surrounded him as he touched the hand of God. His celebration of life will be held on February 4, 2022, at the Baker City Church at the Nazarene at 2 p.m. A dessert reception will follow the service in the Fellowship Hall.

Wayne was born in St. Helens, Oregon, to Walter M. and Mary Louise (Blodgett) Erickson. He graduated from St. Helens High School in 1965 and received both his Bachelor of Science and Master Degrees in Education from Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon. He began his 30-year teaching career for Baker Middle School in 1970, teaching social studies/history and P.E. He enjoyed coaching middle school and high school basketball and was asked to be part of the Mike Doherty boys basketball teams of the 1991, 1992, and 1993 seasons.

Wayne was married 49 years to his love and best friend, Sharla Rae DeMeyer, on November 24, 1972. Together they raised two awesome children, Jason Lee Erickson and Staci Marie Erickson.

Wayne was an active member of the Baker City community - being a part of various clubs and organizations. However, dear to his heart was when he became a member of the Baker City Church of the Nazarene in 1997. There he served on the church board, took part in the Nazarene Church District Assemblies, was on various church committees, went to Work and Witness trips (Honduras twice, Costa Rica, and Ukraine), and gave of himself by volunteering in many, many ways. He enjoyed people, making new friendships wherever he went. He was known for his laughter, his ability to have a song or quote for every situation, his jokes, his yogi-isms, and movie quotes. The way he led his life told all who crossed his path of his caring nature and all-encompassing love for others. He was and will remain an incredible son, husband, father, and friend.

He is survived by his wife Sharla, his son and daughter-in-law Jason and Robin Erickson, his daughter Staci Erickson, sister-in-law Alena Erickson, his niece Karen Taylor (husband Tom and sons Alec and Luke), cousins Barbara Freeman, Brian and Rick Love, and their families.

Celebrate Wayne's life with us in person (feel comfortable by wearing masks) or by connecting on livestream at: <https://www.youtube.com/c/bakercitynazarene>.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Northeast Oregon Compassion Center or the Baker City Nazarene Upward Sports Program through Gray's West and Co. Pioneer Chapel at 1500 Dewey Ave, Baker City, OR 97814.

To leave an online condolence for the family of Wayne, please visit: www.grayswestco.com.



Pearl DuMars

January 30, 1934 - January 21, 2022

Pearl DuMars, age 87, peacefully passed away January 21, 2022, while listening to country music with her daughter. We're sure she was dancing her way back to Vern.

On January 30, 1934, Dan and Blanche Forsea were blessed with one last child - a baby girl they named Pearl Edith. Pearl joined her other siblings - Harold (1915), Bob (1918), Margaret (1921) Walt (1924). And so began Pearl's adventures growing up at Home, Oregon on the family ranch on the Snake River,

Pearl loved growing up there. She wore her favorite little coveralls with a pocket on the bib where she carried her treasures. Occasionally, Pearl would wander off with the family dog to Blanche's dismay. But Dan would say "Don't worry, I have been watching where she went!" One day, while Pearl was sitting by the field while Dan and the boys worked - she proceeded to use up the whole can of drinking water to wash her doll clothes! Besides working on the ranch, the Forsea's always went on road trips. Pearl got to see Old Faithful in Yellowstone Park when she was just a little girl!

Pearl went to school in Home, Oregon for grades one through three. She went to Huntington, Oregon for grade four where Dan took her to and from school every day. For grades five through eight, Pearl went to school in Richland, Oregon where she stayed with Jessie Cummings during the school year. There she met a lifelong friend, Dorothy (Williams) Randall. In Pearl's own words, Pearl was the shy instigator of their shenanigans and Dorothy was the implementor! Next, Pearl went to boarding school for grades 9 through 12 at St. Francis Academy in Baker, Oregon. While there, Pearl wrote a school column for the Record Courier. She loved everything about writing. A big highlight every fall was a school trip to Gonzaga College in Spokane, Washington for journalism seminars. Pearl said her time at St. Francis broadened her horizons. She met and made many friends from around the whole area. Pearl also said that there were never enough boys in her class to go to Prom with so she would just invite other boys she knew from spending time with her brothers, Bob and Walt.

After Pearl graduated in 1952, she worked for Dr. John Higgins in Baker, Oregon. She said that sometimes trying to translate some of his dictations was quite a

challenge!

Pearl first met Vern DuMars when he was dating one of her best friends, Millie. When Vern got back from serving in the

U.S. Army in Korea, he said to his mother "For two bits, I oughta call up Pearl." Well, folks - his mother gave him a quarter and that was the start of Pearl's next adventure!

Pearl and Vern were married April 19, 1953 in Baker, Oregon. She loved telling the story about their big beautiful wedding cake. It was made in Richland by Mrs. Nave then transported to Baker on that curvy road and arrived still intact!

Pearl and Vern first lived in Union, Oregon where Vern was employed. They started their family With Bob (1954) and Margaret (1955). Later Pearl and Vern moved to Snake River to work for the Forsea family ranch. Their daughter, Chris (1956), joined them there. When the dams were going to be built on the Snake River, Pearl and Vern moved to Richland in June 1958. Their daughter, Barb, arrived that summer. In 1961, their last child, Dana, was born.

Eagle Valley was their final and forever home. Pearl and Vern started a dairy which they ran together for many years and raised their kids. They always made time to go dancing. After the kids went to bed, Pearl and Vern would put on their favorite country music and dance.

Pearl never met a stranger. She and her big smile would start a conversation with anyone, anywhere. People were always very interesting to Pearl. Pearl may be gone but she will never be forgotten. We can all just imagine how happy she is to be holding Vern's hand again and dancing.

She was preceded on death by her husband of 59 years, Vern; her daughter, Dana Lynn DuMars; parents, Dan and Blanche; siblings, Harold, Bob, Margaret and Walt.

Pearl is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Bob and Pam DuMars of Richland; daughter, Margaret of La Grande; daughter and son-in-law, Chris and Rob Stacey of Richland, and daughter and son-in-law, Barb and Bill Ephrom of Vanderhoof, British Columbia; also many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Donations may be made to Eagle Valley Ambulance Fund or charity of one's choice through Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services PO Box 543 Halfway, Oregon 97834. Online condolences may be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

