

MEADOW

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The road is also a popular route for snowmobiles, and the machines, over the course of the winter, compress the snow so thoroughly that, by mid April, the surface is nearly as firm as concrete, except frozen and a bit slippery.

In each of the previous five years, snowshoes were superfluous on this solid surface. It's not an easy stroll, to be sure. The round trip distance varies depending on how far up the canyon the snow has receded, but it's never been less than six miles — we walked about seven and a half miles this year — and the elevation gain is about 1,100 feet. But despite the lingering snow the hike, in the previous five years, was little different from walking on bare ground.

Not in 2022.

On the morning of Saturday, April 16, three inches of snow accumulated in Baker City. We figured it would be deeper still in the mountains.

It was.

Hence the snowshoes. The moderate grades, which are scarcely noticeable when you're walking atop the snow, seem grueling when you're wearing snowshoes and plunging through half a foot of slightly congealed slop with each step.

Within a mile I was wheezing, and I could feel the initial drops of sweat making their way down my back.

Then there was the episode with the snowshoe. But it was still a fine morning in the mountains, as most mornings there are.

A light snow was falling when we started but it stopped not long after. The temperature was in the low 30s — almost too warm

IF YOU GO ...

From the railroad tracks in Haines:
• Drive west on Anthony Lakes Highway for 1.7 miles to the first major corner. Turn left onto Pochontas Road, then stay right, after about two-tenths of a mile, on South Rock Creek Lane.
• Follow paved South Rock Creek Lane for about 3.7 miles, then continue into the mountains when the road turns to well-graded gravel.
• Continue on gravel for about 2 miles to a Forest Service sign for Killamacue trailhead and Rock Creek Lake trailhead. The road becomes a dirt track here, suitable for four-wheel drive, high-clear-

ance vehicles. Snowdrifts likely will continue to block the road, at some point below Eilertson Meadow, for at least a few more weeks.
• From the Forest Service sign, the Killamacue Lake trailhead is 2 miles, and Eilertson Meadow 3.5 miles. The Snotel is just east of the meadow, on the south side of the road
• The Rock Creek Road is a public route. However, it passes through private land near the Killamacue Lake trailhead, and at Eilertson Meadow, so stick to the road.
Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative owns the property at Eilertson Meadow, including the cabin at the meadow's eastern edge.

for strenuous work but not unpleasant.

The latest in our recent caravan of spring cold fronts was sweeping through that morning and although the winds were gentle along the road, we could see, on the ridges above, swirls of snow propelled by the westerly gusts.

When we got to the measuring station at

Eilertson the snow wasn't far below the lower rail of the fence. Only in 2019 was the snow deeper.

Later in the day I checked the official record — Snotels beam their data every hour by radio signals, thence to a website — and the water content in the snow, in the hour that included our visit, was 3.8 inches. Only 2019, with

9.5 inches on the day I was there, April 21, had more.

Curiously, the first year I made the trip — 2017 — followed the snowiest winter, in the region's valleys, in more than two decades. Yet the mountain snowpack that winter wasn't as bountiful as the valleys' deep drifts would suggest. On April 22, 2017, the water content at Eilertson was 3.1 inches.

The most distinct difference, though, revealed by photographs from the six years, wasn't snow on the ground.

It was snow on the trees. There wasn't any in the photos from 2017-21.

The 2022 images, though, depict a decidedly wintry scene, the trees laden with snow and the peaks of the Elkhorns, which seemed almost etched against the blue sky in the previous five Aprils, were cloaked in cold fog and snow squalls.

We snacked on pretzels and cheese curds and chocolate chip cookies. I loitered, on the childish belief that a cavalcade of snow machines would roar past while we waited, packing the snow into the unyielding surface I had come to expect along Rock Creek in April.

But the only sound was the wind, souging through the pines and spruces and tamaracks, the latter looking as forlorn as only that deciduous conifer can look before its yearly crop of new needles erupts, painting the slopes with a green that exists on no palette.

We enlivened the hike back to the rig by discussing the restaurants where we might indulge our caloric deficit that evening, a sort of fever dream.

No burger tastes better than the one you daydream about while trudging through the implacable snow.

Published by The Observer & Baker City Herald - Serving Wallowa, Union and Baker Counties



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HOROSCOPES

by Stella Wilder

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2022

YOUR BIRTHDAY by Stella Wilder

Born today, you are both a student of tradition and a proponent of the new, one who isn't limited in any way by the way things should be or how they have been in the past, while always moving forward into a future that encourages the creation of that which is untried and quite challenging.

SUNDAY, APRIL 24

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- You may sense the difference in the way you do certain things today, but that's what sets you apart. Trust your methods!

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- You are seeing things through a lens that distorts them ever so slightly at this time. Making a judgment call today may be somewhat risky.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- You can

profit from another's losses today -- but only for a moment. You must be ready to abandon your position very soon.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Self-awareness is on the rise today, and you suspect that now is the time to make that decision you've been putting off. Who can help you?

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- You may feel disconnected from a friend or loved one at this time, but this gives you a rare chance to reflect honestly on the relationship.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) -- Your own independence is very important to you, and today it may be threatened by someone who doesn't understand what you have to lose.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) -- You must follow your own path today, or choose a different destination altogether. You'll have time to give a key issue the consideration it deserves.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) -- It's

time to mount an official search for something that's been missing for far too long. The trick is to let someone else make the plan.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- You'll have much more energy in the beginning of the day than usual, perhaps, and you'll want to get things done quickly and efficiently.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) -- You will surely benefit from a kind of "second sight" today, as you anticipate certain important developments with uncanny accuracy.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) -- You'll be inspired to do something quite unusual during the latter portion of the day. The risk of failure may be smaller than you think.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- You must take your own decision-making seriously today, or no one else will -- and it's important that you be taken seriously at this time.

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SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2022

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- 1 Part of a circle
4 Taj —
9 Joule fraction
12 —'wester
13 — board
14 Princess
15 Give a concert
17 Give in
19 Meyers of "Kate & Allie"
20 Attendee's shout
21 Boastful knight
23 Magnetism
27 Second-story man
29 Hertz rival
30 Wallet item
31 Radio enthusiast
32 "Ghosts" playwright
34 Vitamin monitors
35 Nome loc.
36 Hard to understand

- 37 Shine
39 Congeniality
42 Winner's cry
43 Boys
44 EMT technique
46 New Zealand language
48 Lurches
52 Duryea or Marino
53 Paris river
55 Aurora, to Socrates
56 That woman
57 Brings to a boil
58 Possess

DOWN

- 1 Nile reptile
2 Fish eggs
3 Mongrel
4 Wasteland
5 Mr. Goldfinger
6 Male
7 Foyt of auto racing
8 Salon technique

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Grid for crossword puzzle with filled-in letters:
J A B S P C A L O U D
O L E M O A N A S T I
E A R L I E S T G U A M
L I G H T K I T E
A H A O R A T E
M A P S P E R T K O A
A G U A S L Y D I G S
Y O M L E I A I N S T
A G A T E N O V
Y A L E M A C O N
A T O P A L I E N A T E
S A F E R A N G M T S
H U T S A N K A P O T

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Large empty crossword puzzle grid for Saturday, April 23, 2022.

- 9 Fencers' blades
10 Aunt or bro.
11 Wander about
16 Dunaway of films
18 Orchidlike blossom
20 Not lack
21 Tough fabric
22 Focus
24 Diary locks
25 Golden-touch king
26 Bede or Sandler
27 "Better late — never"
28 Extremely cruel
33 Hive occupants
34 Lawyer's charge
36 Letter starter
38 Old harp
40 Biological double
41 Meager
45 Chief exec
46 ER staffers
47 Open-wide word
48 Government org.
49 Fair-hiring letters
50 Currently
51 Common ID
54 Wide shoe

103 Announcements



PULL TABS ACCEPTED AT THE FOLLOWING BAKER CITY LOCATIONS

- Baker City Herald
Dollar Tree
Black's Distributing
Ryder Bros
VFW
Baker Elk's Lodge
Main Event
Lefty's Tap House
Baker City Fire Dept.
Haines Sell-Rite
Idle Hour
Salvation Army

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PEOPLE READ THE CLASSIFIED

You've just proved it to yourself! Remember us when you need efficient, economical advertising.

Check out our classified ads.

104 Community Calendar

VFW POST 460
Every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 7pm.
Corner of Main at Birch in Union

LA GRANDE LIONS CLUB
Meets 2nd & 4th Monday of each month @ 12 PM
Union County Senior Center
1504 N. Albany St., La Grande

PINOCHLE
Fridays at 6:30 p.m.
Senior Center
2810 Cedar St., Baker City
Public is welcome

Call 541-963-3161 or 541-523-3673 to place your ad.

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Sell your unwanted car, property and household items more quickly and affordably with the classifieds. Just call us today to place your ad and get ready to start counting your cash. The Observer 541-963-3161. The Baker City Herald 541-523-3673

Too many kittens? Find them a home through the classified.

104 Community Calendar

Baker County United "freedom rallies"
3rd Thursday each month
6 p.m. at the Sunridge
1 Sunridge Lane.
The public is invited

KEY OF DAVID
Starting May 7th - 2PM
Baker County Library
Taught by:
Gary Robinson
& Blaine McKnight

Kiwanis Club of Baker City
Tuesday at 12:00 PM
Sunrise Inn Restaurant
1 Sunridge Lane
For more information call:
(541) 523-6027

ROTARY CLUB of Baker City
Meets every Monday
Noon - 1 PM
Baker Towers Meeting Room

POWDER RIVER SPORTSMAN'S CLUB
Meets 1st Tuesday of every month
8th & Broadway, Baker City
6 PM - Pistolettes
7 PM - Regular Membership

114 Group Meetings

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
541-805-2229
neo-na.org

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
Monday, Thursday, & Friday
at 8pm. Episcopal Church
2177 First St., Baker City

AA MEETINGS - La Grande
Wednesday Nights, 7-8:15pm.
Fort Union Grange Hall, corner of McAlister & Gekeler Lanes. For more info, call 541-786-1222

AL-ANON
Keep Coming Back Family Group
Mondays, 7 pm
at NKWest, 1208 Adams, La Grande, OR

CELEBRATE RECOVERY
Calvary Baptist Church
Third & Broadway
Baker City, OR
EVERY THURSDAY
6:15 - 8:00 PM

DO YOU HAVE...HURTS, HABITS and/or HANG UPS?
12 Step Biblical Support
Harvest Church
3720 Birch St. Baker City
Thurs., 6:30 - 8:30 PM

LA GRANDE GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS
Every Friday Night @ 5pm, 2107
Gekeler Ln, LG, Church of Christ
basement. For more info please
call 971-219-8411

Someone's drinking a problem?
AL-ANON Meetings
are available by phone
Info for Baker City Meetings
Call: 541-239-7323

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
Goin' Straight Group
Meetings:
Mon., Tues. Thurs. & Fri.
Start at 8 PM
Episcopal Church Basement
2177 1st Street, Baker City

PEOPLE with PARKINSON'S
Caregivers, Family, Friends
SUPPORT GROUP
Contact Judith at
208-855-9199
Meetings resume @GRH
when restrictions ease.

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