

## Outdoors

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“You’re outside, no screens. They’re actually interacting with each other,” she said.

In 2020, as the coronavirus prompted schools to close, she said some outdoor schools went online and livestreamed programs.

“We didn’t go online,” Gustafson said.

In response to the hardship faced by outdoor school providers, OSU developed grant programs in December 2020 to help improve accessibility and inclusivity.

Gustafson said the grants they received are funding two new accessible restroom facilities, and will revamp two cabins.

### Students study multiple subjects

The spring of 2021 brought day camps back to Camp Elkanah, with schools coming from La Grande, Union, Umatilla and Irrigon.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

**Sixth graders at Camp Elkanah’s outdoor school sort through puzzle pieces to build models of dinosaurs.**

This spring, they’ve welcomed two schools every week for overnight experiences.

“We provide the structure, content, food and lodging,”

Gustafson said. “The schedule changes based on group size and when presenters are available.”

School staff members are

responsible for managing the students.

For the Baker School District students, day one involved challenges — a zip line, climbing tower, swing and team-building ropes course.

On day two, small groups rotated through six stations: entomology, fishing, weather, dinosaurs, botany and DEQ.

“We piece together who’s available,” Gustafson said.

As people return to more normal work schedules, she said calendars are filling up quickly for those who usually teach at outdoor school.

The weather has been tough, too.

“This spring has been especially challenging with the weather,” she said. “We had everyone inside at times — we had to get out of the snow.”

But Tuesday, May 24, was a sunny day that found everyone outside, looking at trees and plants and inspecting water samples collected from the creek.

At the DEQ station, Phil

Richerson and John Dadoly taught about surface water and groundwater.

“How we make a mess, and how can we minimize that mess?” Richerson said. “How can we live our lives but leave as small a mess as possible?”

These two have been frequent presenters at Camp Elkanah.

“We’re probably going to talk to 900 or a thousand kids this year,” Richerson said.

Staff from their Pendleton office rotate turns at outdoor school.

“We’ve done this for 20 years. This is our biggest year yet,” Dadoly said.

This station heard frequent giggles and groans as Richerson demonstrated surface water sources with his three-dimensional model.

On the fake landscape, he sprinkled excess dirt (the kids suspected it was actually cocoa powder), too much fertilizer and pesticide (it looked like salt), and dripped simulated oil on the roadways.

And then the sewage treatment plant overflowed into the stream.

“Ewwwwww!” came the response to the brown sludge flowing across the model.

Richerson simulated a rainstorm — with a spray bottle — to show how all the contaminants washed into the lake where the town sourced its drinking water.

When he finished, the lake was brown with chunks from the cattle pasture.

But then he cleaned it up, and showed how a few changes could minimize the mess, such as hay bales around the construction site, a fence around the cows, upgraded equipment at the treatment plant, and recycling motor oil instead of dumping it down the drain.

This time, when it rained, the lake wasn’t nearly as murky.

“Can it be perfectly clean? No, we’re always going to make a mess. But we can minimize it,” he said.

## Threat

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During a lockdown, all entrance doors are locked, and students and staff remain inside the school. Classes and other indoor activities continue as usual.

A lockdown is a different procedure, intended for an active threat. In a lockdown, students are told to stay out of sight and be quiet, and interior doors are locked and lights turned off.

During Thursday’s incident, which lasted about an hour, police officers were posted outside the front entrance to each school.

At about 1 p.m., the school district sent automated notices to parents stating that the lockdown had ended.

### Details about the threat

The situation started late the previous afternoon, Wednesday, May 25, about the time schools let out for the day, Baker City Police Chief Ty Duby said.

A Baker High School male student had been expelled, Duby said. A teacher overheard a student who allegedly had heard the expelled student threatening something similar to what had happened in Texas, Duby said.

School officials reported the threat to Lance Woodward, the Baker City Police school resource officer.

Duby said he decided, rather than unnecessarily alarm students at the start of classes on Thursday, to have unmarked police cars parked near the expelled student’s home before school started that morning.

Police also interviewed the student and his parents, Duby said.

He said the student denied making the threat.

Duby said he concluded that police couldn’t charge the student with a crime because the teacher who overheard the other student talking about the alleged threat wasn’t sure who that student was, so police didn’t have a student to interview about the threat the expelled student allegedly made.

Duby said police were familiar with the expelled student before this week, and that he has made inappropriate comments before.

After interviewing the expelled student, Duby said police determined the alleged threat was not substantiated.

However, late Thursday morning Woodward learned about social media posts from Baker Middle School students referring to a threat of a shooting, Duby said.

Initially, police believed those posts were not related to the earlier alleged threat from the BHS student, Duby said.

The posts by BMS students prompted Mark Witty, Baker School District superintendent, to institute the lockdown at all district schools.

“We chose to err on the side of caution, for sure,” Witty said on Thursday. “A lockdown is a fairly easy thing for us to deploy fairly quickly, which we did, and it certainly locks everything so somebody can’t get into the school at that point in time and then again, law enforcement went to each facility and were present right away and of course we’re grateful for that, to have that collaboration.”

As police investigated the social media posts from BMS students, officers determined that the posts were not re-

ferring to a separate threat at BMS, but were related to the earlier threat at the high school, Duby said.

Because police had concluded the BHS threat wasn’t credible, the school district ended the lockdown around 1 p.m.

With many high school students off campus during lunch when the lockdown started, and with many worried parents arriving at schools to pick up their children, students at all schools were allowed to leave early if their parents chose that option.

Duby said the recent Texas school shooting undoubtedly affected reactions to Thursday’s incident in Baker City. However, the actions by police and school officials were “standard procedure” given the circumstances, and he believes the situation would have been handled essentially the same had the Texas tragedy not happened.

### A second, unrelated threat leads to a citation

Late Thursday afternoon, after students had gone home, Woodward, the school resource officer, learned of another alleged threat, this one made by a 12-year-old BMS male student about a shooting at the middle school.

Duby said this threat was “totally unrelated” to the threat the expelled BHS student had made.

Duby said Woodward quickly identified the BMS student who made the threatening post, and talked to him both at the school and, later, at his home.

Police cited the student for first-degree disorderly conduct, a Class A misdemeanor.

Duby said police decided not to take the student to a juvenile detention facility in part because the student didn’t have a prior disciplinary record.

### BHS students describe their experiences

Anthony Christopher, a junior, said he usually leaves campus during lunch, but on Thursday he “didn’t feel like driving.”

When the lockdown was announced, and students who were eating lunch outside told to return to the school, Christopher said “in the moment it was kind of scary, but they handled it really well.”

He said the Texas shooting “probably went through my head like twice.”

Freshman Jayden Whitford said she was also thinking about what happened in Texas when the lockdown started.

“I was outside at lunch with a bunch of my friends when we saw cop cars and police enter and (Skye) Flanagan (BHS principal) told everyone to go inside,” Whitford said. “Then we just were told to stay in our next class until further notice and we weren’t allowed to leave the class. It was scary since I didn’t know what was going on. I made sure I told my loved ones about it cause I was just scared. I did think it was a real threat but I tried not thinking about it cause it would probably freak me out even more.”

### School superintendent talks about response

Witty said school district officials will have a debriefing with police about Thursday’s incident, and talk about what worked and whether improvements can be made.

“There’s always things that I think we can learn and so I



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

**Students play during recess at South Baker Intermediate School after a lockdown, prompted by an unsubstantiated threat of a shooting at Baker High School, ended on Thursday afternoon, May 26, 2022.**

want to pull the team together and just kind of walk through those things from the multiple lenses of people that are involved,” he said. “From a building level lens, a district office lens, a communication lens, a law enforcement lens, and hopefully take any learning that we can and move them forward as we proceed.”

Witty said he was pleased with how quickly the school district was able to get information to parents and others, through automated phone calls, emails and other online platforms.

He said the district was already making available coun-

selors to students who had questions or concerns about the Texas shooting, and that service will continue to be available in the wake of Thursday’s episode in Baker City.

He said he understands that parents were worried during the lockdown, prompting many to come to schools. The district sent out a notification during the lockdown asking parents to not come to schools at that point, since the doors were locked until police had determined the threat was not credible.

“I recognize how challenging that is for families, I do,” Witty said. “I’m a father and

grandfather myself. But the systems are in place to keep your children safe and adding to the number of things that we’re trying to manage by coming to the site is not necessarily helpful to law enforcement or staff in being able to actually secure the area and keep it safe.”

He said he appreciated the cooperation and patience from parents during the situation.

### School district planning security upgrades

The \$4 million bond measure that school district vot-

ers approved in May 2021 includes money for security improvements at all district schools.

That will include building new entry vestibules at Brooklyn Primary and South Baker Intermediate schools. The vestibules will make it easier for school staff to identify people before they are allowed to enter the schools, Witty said. The new vestibule at Brooklyn will be built this summer, with the South Baker project planned for the summer of 2023, he said.

Installing similar vestibules at Baker High School and Baker Middle School would be much more expensive, Witty said, due to the design of the entrances and the higher number of students and staff entering the buildings.

In addition to the vestibules at Brooklyn and South Baker, all schools will have new security cameras and a communication system that allows employees to summon police in the event of a threat, Witty said.

New public address systems will cover the whole school grounds, allowing staff to communicate with students wherever they are.

### Robert “Bob” Pollock

May 17, 1934 - May 17, 2022

Robert “Bob” Pollock, 88, died at his home in Halfway on May 17, 2022. A celebration of Bob’s life will be held June 11 at Pine Valley Fairgrounds in Halfway, Oregon, at 11 a.m. Please come and join us as we share good food and stories.

Robert L. Pollock was born in Shelton, Washington, on May 17, 1934, to Milton and Ellen Pollock. Raised in Pierce, Idaho, he spent a lot of his time with Albert and Mabel Frazier and his lifelong friends Bob Richel, Jim Dundas and Darrol Frazier. He graduated from Pierce High School in 1952. After serving a tour as a medic in the Army in the Korean War, he returned home to the woods.

Logging was the bond of all. He started his logging years at the age of 6, assisting his father in skidding logs with horses. His childhood friendship turned to a business partnership with Bob Richel and family. The company flourished and operated in the Pierce area until 1969 then they relocated to Cambridge, Idaho. Bob went his own way in the 1980s and then took up a forestry contracting business for the Forest Service for a number of years. He finally settled in as a timber manager for Widows Creek Ranch in the Mount Vernon area.

His fondest memories included a time of outfitting guided hunts and flying for Moose Creek in the Bitterroot Mountains. There was never any place to be but in the woods for Bob. Hunting, fishing and work all happened in the same place. If he was working, he was watching big game. If he was fishing, he was studying the trees. If he was hunting, he was spotting fishing holes.

One of his favorite sayings was “Anything over 24 hours is too far to plan!”

After 70-plus years in the woods he finally retired to Halfway, Oregon, where he enjoyed his family and friends.

He married his soul mate, Sharon Carpenter, in 2005, and they shared many wonderful adventures traveling throughout the country.

Bob is survived by his loving wife, Sharon; daughters, Susan and Peggy; son, Dan; stepchildren, Ron, Damon, Stuart and Carrie; and a long list of grandchildren, great-grandchildren, in-laws and outlaws. His list of “family” and friends is too long for print but one of his most prized possessions.

A long full life ended quietly at his home in Halfway, Oregon, on his 88th birthday. He was preceded in death by his parents and a sister, Jean Fisher.

Those who would like to make a memorial donation in memory of Bob may do so to the charity of your 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](http://www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com).



### Larry Vernon Haney

April 1, 1947 - May 10, 2022

Larry Haney, 75, of Halfway, OR, died Tuesday, May 10, 2022, at Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise, ID. A graveside military service and celebration of Larry’s life will be held on June 25, 2022, at 1 p.m. at the Wallowa Cemetery in Wallowa, Oregon.

Larry Vernon Haney was born on April 1, 1947, in Enterprise, OR. He was raised and educated in Wallowa, OR. He graduated from Wallowa High School in 1965.

Fresh out of high school, Larry entered the Navy on June 8, 1965. He served 4 years active duty as a radio operator on the USS Franklin D Roosevelt (CVA42). He was released from active duty June 6, 1969, and transferred to the Reserves where he served 2 more years. He was honorably discharged April 25, 1971. Larry was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

In 1968, Larry married Mary D. Gornto in Jacksonville, FL. Together they had 3 children. They later divorced in 1989. Larry found love once again when he married Judith Miller in 1995 after a 2-year courtship.

Larry worked various jobs throughout his life including being a mechanic at a trailer factory, logging, and working as a farm machinery manager and as a licensed gun dealer. He had his own business selling farm equipment and he sold real estate.

Larry was a member of the NRA, trapshooting clubs, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the VFW.

Hobbies he enjoyed were trapshooting, reloading ammo and working on the property. His favorite season was fall, because, you guessed it, “hunting season!” Larry loved the song “Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain,” and he especially enjoyed spending time with his dogs, Amber and Pippen.

Memorable dates in Larry’s life included serving in the Navy, getting married, and having children and grandchildren. He was also proud to have made it into the Boone and Crockett for antlers. He was a proud Navy veteran, a hard worker, and was very handy at all things; there wasn’t much he couldn’t do. Larry lived by the philosophy that you should work hard, nothing should be handed to you. He loved his family, hunting and fishing. He loved to say, “Gone Fishing!” He will be greatly missed by his family and close friends.

Larry was preceded in death by his parents. Stanley and Gladys Haney; and his brother, Vernon Haney.

He is survived by his wife, Judith Miller of Halfway, OR; children Amanda Haney of La Grande, OR, April Haney of Salem, OR and William Haney of Welches, OR; brother Charlie Haney; sister Patricia Hamann; stepsons Kelly Brennan and Brian Miller; grandchildren Tiffani Heitz and Kalysta Majerak; 2 great-grandchildren, Eleanor and Stetson Heitz and another on the way.

For those who would like to make a memorial contribution in memory of Larry the family suggests Hunt of a Lifetime through Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.O. BOX 543, Halfway, Oregon 97834. Online condolences can be shared at [www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com](http://www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com).

