

Mural

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Collaborating with the building owner, she tapped local artist and cyclist Andrew Gettle, who has worked on large murals. Together they discerned the rules of the placement, including size and colors, and made a proposal for a unique, interactive mural to cover the wall.

"There are grants specifically for beautifying small towns," Tiedemann said. "We applied for some and received them. Also a private donor donated another \$1,500 toward the project. And one of the best parts is that the artist



Ian Crawford/Baker City Herald

Be Tiedemann displays the proposed design, at left, for the back wall of The Trailhead. The building is at 1828 Main St., but the mural will be on the east wall, facing Resort St. Artist Andrew Gettle started work on the mural on July 1.

gets paid for their time." Gettle spends time working for the school district as well

as shifts at the Corner Brick Grill on Main Street. Painting began on July 1, when initial

grids and outlines were put down. For this project he has designed stencils and equipment specifically for the mural construction.

"Got a lot of stencils down and looking good," Gettle said. "Had to make a brush on a 9-foot piece of PVC because I won't be able to use the (scissor) lift with the kids."

The mural will feature, among other things, a winding trail with hikers and bicyclists.

Gettle and Tiedemann plan to open part of the creation to the public to contribute paint strokes to the final artwork during the Fourth of July weekend to allow kids

and passers-by to make their mark.

"I want to say thanks to everybody for seeing our vision," Tiedemann said. "And a big thanks to Carol Phillips and all of the Baker City Downtown design committee members for all their support."

The process to get a mural painted downtown starts with a fee to the city. From there it must meet certain design criteria, including a mockup to start, no paint on historic brick, no words and following approved colors. Last but not least, the project needs a willing artist.

You can contact Tiedemann at 404-993-0116 for details, or

email Cabincowboy.bt@gmail.com directly.

"(We want to) create lasting partnerships between Baker City, the artists and the business community," Tiedemann said.

She feels that murals and public art bring palpable value to buildings, help to drive foot traffic, and bolster tourism.

"Public art benefits the community," she wrote in her proposal for the mural. "The animal (sculptures set up in several places downtown) have brought such joy, the people that take pictures of them put them on facebook, the kids that laugh at them and want to see more."

Letters

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Several other Baker County residents, who like the Blands are Republicans, received similar letters.

The letter to the Blands begins with this line: "RE: Notice to Cease & Desist from Harassment and Intimidation."

In the letter, Mannix writes that he is assisting another Salem attorney, Vance Day, who "has been retained by the Baker County GOP Executive Committee."

Day is a former Marion County judge who lost in his bid for a seat on the Oregon Court of Appeals in the May 17 election.

In the letter to the Blands, Mannix writes that "This letter has been issued to you because of your involvement in disrupting a private meeting held at the offices of the Baker County Republican Central Committee on June 7, 2022."

But Jason Bland said the couple didn't attend, or try to attend, that meeting.

He said he and his wife knew about the meeting and parked near the Baker County Republican Party office at Main and Broadway streets. Jason Bland said they never left their vehicle.

In the response letter, Susan Bland wrote, in reference to the June 7 meeting, "we were not there."

"Your correspondence is defamatory," the Blands' letter continues. "Unfounded accusations and lies are not free speech."

Susan Bland writes that, like Mannix and Day, she is an attorney, although she is not practicing now.

"I understand that making accusations and involving the legal system are serious matters, requiring research and some due diligence," Susan Bland wrote. "I question whether either of you looked into this matter in a serious fashion."

Mannix wrote in his letter to the Blands that "Failure to discontinue the harassing and intimidating activity will result in legal action being taken against you as you have no right to be present at a private meeting or harass or intimidate those who attend or who are members of the Baker County Republican Cen-

"Failure to discontinue the harassing and intimidating activity will result in legal action being taken against you as you have no right to be present at a private meeting or harass or intimidate those who attend or who are members of the Baker County Republican Central Committee or the organization's Executive Committee."

— Letter from Kevin Mannix, Salem attorney, sent to several Baker City residents on behalf of the Baker County Republican Party executive committee

tral Committee or the organization's Executive Committee."

Mannix's letter continues: "If the above activity continues, Judge Day will be forced to petition the Baker County Circuit Court to issue a temporary restraining order against you and the accomplices involved in the above activity. He will also be obliged to sue for monetary damages that will be proven during legal proceedings. Hopefully, there will be no need for this type of recourse, but if Judge Day has to protect his client's interest, he is prepared to do so in a court of law. This is the first and final warning letter."

The letter concludes: "You may confirm receipt of this letter and your commitment to cease any disruptive behavior by sending an email to Vance Day. ..."

In her response letter, Susan Bland requests "a retraction of your defamatory statements, in writing, from both of you and your client."

Bland also uses the same phrase that Mannix included in his letter: "This is the first and final warning letter we will send you."

Bland's letter continues: "If you fail to confirm this request or fail to respond to this letter we will have no choice but to consider filing a lawsuit against you and your client immediately."

The letter sets a July 8 deadline to respond by email.

Jason Bland said in an interview that he and his wife drove to the GOP office on June 7 because they had heard that a meeting had been scheduled and that some elected Republican precinct committee people planned to attend.

"I did want to see what was going to happen," Jason Bland said.

Bland, who has multiple sclerosis and has trouble walking, said they parked in a handicapped space. He said he had no intention to try to enter the GOP office.

He pointed out that the June 7 meeting was the second time this

year that Baker City Police were called to a possible disturbance at a GOP event.

On March 25, two officers responded to a complaint about audience behavior during a forum featuring several Republican candidates for Oregon governor at the Baker Elks Lodge.

They escorted a few people from the Elks Lodge early in the forum, but police didn't make any arrests or file any charges.

Two other couples received similar letter

Rick and Penny Rienks were among those escorted out of the March 25 forum.

They also received a letter from Mannix regarding the June 7 meeting that's identical, except for the addressee, to the Blands' letter.

Rick Rienks wrote in an email to the Herald that he and his wife went to the GOP office on June 7 because as elected precinct committee people, "we all expected we would be welcome."

Rienks claims that Suzan Ellis Jones, chair of the Baker County Republican Party and a member of its executive committee, told the Rienkses and others that they hadn't been officially elected and that she was going to call police if they didn't leave.

Baker County Clerk Stefanie Kirby certified election results, including for GOP precinct committee people, on June 9, two days after the meeting.

Other members of the executive committee are vice chairman Julie McKinney; treasurer Joanna Dixon, who is a Baker City Council member; secretary Justin Langan; and delegates Tom Van Diepen and Keith Jones, who is Suzan Ellis Jones' husband.

Rienks said he told Suzan Jones during the June 7 incident to go ahead and call police, saying "they already don't like you for all the trouble you've created," referring to the

March 25 forum at the Elks Lodge.

Rienks said a representative of the owner of the Main Street building where the GOP had its office then asked the group to leave.

Rienks said he replied "of course we will. You asked politely."

He said the group then left the building "in orderly fashion."

According to police records, two Baker City officers responded to a reported disturbance at the GOP office at 3:33 p.m. on June 7. The incident was settled with no arrests.

Debbie and Calvin Henshaw, registered Republicans from Baker City, also received a letter from Mannix on behalf of Day.

Debbie Henshaw said she considered the letter "extremely laughable," not least because her husband was at work during the June 7 incident.

Calvin Henshaw noted his absence in an email to Day, who responded, in part, "If my clients were mistaken about you being present at the June 7 meeting, please accept my apologies."

In a subsequent email to Calvin Henshaw, Day wrote: "It appears, based upon your responses, that the information I was provided was in error. For that I apologize. The letter and the notice is hereby withdrawn. Thank you for clarifying this matter. My hope is to see this whole matter resolve in an amicable manner. We shall see."

Debbie Henshaw said that unlike her husband, she did go to the GOP office on June 7, where she told Suzan Jones that, as a registered Republican, she wanted to attend the executive committee meeting.

Henshaw said Jones told her she couldn't attend.

Henshaw, like the Rienkses, said she left when the building owner asked her to.

"I was very composed," Henshaw said.

She said she considers the letter from Mannix a "bluff" and a "threat to try to get me to leave

them alone,"

"I am not afraid of threats," she said.

Henshaw said she believes the GOP executive committee, by blocking people from meetings and now having an attorney send letters threatening lawsuits, is engaged in the harassment and intimidation that the letters attribute to Henshaw, the Rienkses and the Blands.

"I have not been involved in disruptive behavior," Henshaw said.

Jones, in a text message to the Herald, said that Day is the executive committee's attorney, and that she would give him a contact number for the newspaper.

Day hadn't responded to a request for a comment by press time on Friday, July 1.

Letter recipient wants accountability for those who called police

Jason Bland said that although he and his wife didn't enter the GOP office on June 7, he thinks whoever called police for what he considers an invalid reason "should be held accountable."

"We're not violent, radical people," he said.

Bland also said he is upset that he and his wife have been falsely accused, since they were in their vehicle during the June 7 incident.

"This is another example of people who don't do their homework and start defaming me around town," he said. "I really don't understand, unless you're afraid of losing your power."

Bland was referring to an incident in October 2021 when he wrote a letter to Baker City Mayor Kerry McQuisten, who is a GOP precinct committee person, claiming McQuisten defamed him by suggesting he was drunk when he left voice mails on her cellphone.

Bland, who is a member of the Baker City Budget Committee, said he sometimes speaks with slurred speech due to multiple sclerosis.

McQuisten disputed that she had defamed Bland when she told Baker City Manager Jonathan Cannon about Bland's voice mails, a meeting that led Cannon to send an email to city councilors that referenced Bland's slurred speech.

Library

Continued from A1

Winnie-the-Pooh was the camp's night counselor, and after a story the animals "sat around the campfire and sang some camp songs and made s'mores!" The next library campout for stuffed animals is July 14 — animals need to be at the library before 7 p.m.

Reading challenge

Grammon has a full calendar with activities for all ages centered around the summer

reading program.

The reading challenge runs through Aug. 26, and minutes can be tracked online through Beanstack (for a link, go to www.bakerlib.org/kids-teens/summer-reading-program).

Those who read five hours will earn a free book. As readers log more minutes, they become eligible for more prizes.

Adults can participate too for the chance to win gift cards to local businesses.

Here's a highlight of the offerings at the library, 2400 Resort St.:

Books, Babies and Bubbles in the Park

10 a.m. on Tuesdays in Geiser-Pollman Park, just across the Powder River from the library, through Aug. 30

Library Book Camp

Held Fridays at 10 a.m. at the library.

Reading Rebels Book Club

This summer book club for ages 10-12 meets at 3 p.m. every other Friday (July 8, July 22, Aug. 5 and Aug. 19).

D&D in the Library

This role-player game is held every other Thursday at

3 p.m. (July 14, July 27, Aug. 11 and Aug. 25).

Book Buddies

This book club for ages 7-9 meets at 10 a.m. July 13, July 27 and Aug. 24

Stuffed Animal Overnight Campout

July 14 (bring animals between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.)

Teen Crafternoon

July 19 and Aug. 16, 4 p.m.

Teen Movie Night

July 22 and Aug. 26, 6 p.m.

24-Hour Readathon

This challenge, to see how many books can be read in 24

hours, begins at 5 p.m. July 22

and concludes at 5 p.m. July 23.

Hike It Baby

This activity, in partnership with Building Healthy Fami-

lies, happens July 27 and Aug. 24 at 3:30 p.m.

Flashback Friday

Family Movie July 29 and Aug. 12, 2 p.m.

COVID-19

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Baker County had a record 646 cases during January 2022, the peak of the omicron wave. Case totals dropped rapidly thereafter, to 230 during February, before the even more precipitous decline during March and April.

Baker County's trend is similar to statistics across Oregon, where case rates have been rising since mid April.

The number of people in Oregon hospitals who have tested positive for COVID-19 — not all of whom came to the hospital due to the virus — has risen from a low of 89 on April 12 to 418 on June 29.

The latter number is well below the peak during the omicron surge and the delta wave in September 2021, when more than 1,100 people in hospitals tested positive for COVID-19.

Baker County has reported two COVID-19-related deaths since mid-March. There have been 50 deaths in the county related to the virus during the pandemic.

On Thursday, June 30, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

raised the COVID-19 level for Baker, Union, Wallowa and 12 other Oregon counties to high. A total of 24 of Oregon's 36 counties are at that level, which refers to the level of community spread.

The CDC recommends these precautions for counties at high level:

- Wear a mask indoors in public.
- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines.
- Get tested if you have symptoms.

• Additional precautions may be needed for people at high risk for severe illness.

Although health officials have said the reported numbers of infection dramatically underestimate the actual rate, since many people are testing themselves at home, the results of which don't have to be reported, the number of reported tests has been increasing in Baker County.

The daily average has increased from about 20 per day during the second half of May, to about 27 tests per day in June.

Chancey said that although residents aren't required to report the results of home tests, some people have been doing so.

"That's very much appreciated, because we want to have the most accurate information possible," she said.

Although Chancey didn't have any detailed information, she said that anecdotally, what she's hearing about the severity of symptoms locally is comparable to what's being reported across the state and nationally — that in general, people who test positive are having less severe cases than during previous surges.

She said that's likely due to multiple factors. The current omicron variants are less virulent, and many of the people who are being infected have some level of protection either from previous exposure, vaccination or both.

Chancey also noted that hospitals and clinics have a variety of effective antiviral treatments.

"As we have seen across the country, the COVID cases coming into the hospital are milder than what we saw early in the pandemic and earlier this year," said Mark Snider, media, public relations and digital strategy coordinator for the Saint Alphonsus Health Care System. "Most inpatients are able to

receive treatment and return home after a shorter stay than what we experienced with the delta variant. Additionally, with the availability of outpatient therapies and anti-virals, the vast majority of COVID cases can be treated at home if caught early.

"We continue to urge everyone to get their COVID-19 vaccine or booster shots, wear masks in indoor spaces and large gatherings, and maintain distancing as much as possible," Snider said. "We encourage everyone that if you are sick and have COVID-like symptoms you should take a COVID-19 test and stay home. These precautions will help protect the most vulnerable in our community."

Vaccinations

Chancey said the health department continues to administer COVID-19 vaccines.

The department recently received 100 doses of the vaccine for children ages 6 months to 5 years, who became eligible for inoculation in June.

She said the health department has scheduled at least half a dozen or so vaccination appointments for that age group.

Pamela Lee Haney

October 1, 1955 - June 21, 2022

Pamela Lee Haney, 66, of Baker City, Oregon, and formerly of Echo, Oregon, passed away at her residence on June 21, 2022. A service will be held on August 12, 2022, in Echo, Oregon, at the Echo Cemetery at 10 a.m., with a reception following at the Echo Ridge Winery.

On October 1, 1955, Pamela was born in Baker, Oregon. She was raised by her parents, Cyril "Kaye" McAtee and Jessie L. (Boyer) McAtee. Pamela graduated high school in 1974 from Echo High School in Echo, Oregon. She retired from her career with the United States Post Office in Hermiston, Oregon, as a rural route mail carrier in 2013 after more than 25 years.

Pamela was a great fisherwoman, and she loved playing pinball. She also liked bowling, playing cards, and watching game shows. Her favorite television programs were "Little House on the Prairie," "Bonanza" and "Gunsmoke."

Her most significant accomplishments were raising her daughters, Kimmy and Kelly, and being a grandmother and great-grandmother to six grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She loved playing with her grandchildren and watching them grow.

Pamela is survived by her daughters, Kim "Kimmy" Evans of Boise, Idaho, and Kelly Melo of Baker City, Oregon; siblings, Ted McAtee, Rob McAtee, Scott McAtee, Donna Bradbury, and Brenda Hunter; six grandchildren, Kaitlyn, 24, Jaylee, 20, Hudson, 16, Marnie, 15, Gracie, 14, and Carter, 11. She is also survived by her great-grandchild, Evelyn, who is one year old.

She was preceded in death by her father, Kaye McAtee, her mother, Jessie McAtee, and her brother, Greg McAtee.

Should friends and family desire, memorial contributions may be made to Tyler Campbell Memorial Scholarship Fund through Gray's West & Co. Pioneer Chapel at 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, Oregon 97814.

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

