

Breaks

Continued from A1

“As an incident commander, it’s a huge benefit for us because a lot of us know where these lines are and have a good idea of where we can catch them when the fires start to go extreme,” said Johnson, who’s a wildland fire technician for the Vale District.

“Any fire that started on your urban interface area, we’re just trying to keep it off federal land and vice versa — if we have a fire on federal land, we really don’t want to push it onto the urban interface,” he said.

Fire breaks are created using tractors with metal disk attachments that remove vegetation and expose bare dirt, which deprives flames of fuel. Workers also mow grass and use herbicides to control grass.

When built near roads, the breaks create a 50-foot buffer — a zone where fire crews have a better chance to stop advancing flames.

Each spring or summer, typically in May or June, BLM workers maintain the fire breaks, Johnson said. They bring in heavy machinery to clear out vegetation in preparation for fire season. Johnson said they completed this year’s maintenance on the breaks in the Willowcreek fire area just two weeks before it ignited on a 100-degree day with gusty west winds.

“We’ve been maintaining these man-made fuel barriers over the last two decades,” said Justin Robinson, fuels technician for the Vale District. “We’re making it safer for our firefighters and our communities.”

Fire break history

The idea for the fire

breaks that helped stop the Willowcreek fire dates back almost 22 years.

In 2000, the Jackson fire burned about 80,000 acres — twice as many as the Willowcreek fire — of similar terrain in Malheur County.

That fire prompted local residents and BLM officials to talk about wildfires, and residents created the Malheur County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

That plan included building fire breaks across public and private land.

Johnson said the system of fire breaks “gives our personnel something to work off of,” but it’s not guaranteed, because of varied weather patterns, that the breaks will stop a blaze dead in its tracks.

“It’s all dependent on fire activity, because you can have fire whirls that bring embers across the road,” Johnson said.

But with the Willowcreek fire, the breaks fulfilled their purpose despite the gusty winds.

“Being proactive saved us from having a fire twice as big,” said Toby McBride, a volunteer with the Vale Rangeland Fire Protection District who helps maintain the fire breaks and was on the ground during the Willowcreek fire. “The wind was blowing pretty good, but the fire burned right up to the lines and went out. I don’t think we would’ve held it at the road without them.”

Robinson agreed. “Fuel breaks helped firefighters contain the Willowcreek fire without bulldozers or other heavy equipment,” he said. “This project’s success shows us how important collaboration can be to protect local communities from wildfires.”



Contributed by Adam and Angela Robb

Dysan actively wards off a cow at the rodeo nationals in Gillette, Wyoming on July 18, 2022.

Rodeo

Continued from A1

“I was excited to be there since I had worked hard all year and that was my goal. I was also nervous and anxious,” Robb said, “the top four of every state are chosen to represent their sport and I wanted to make Oregon proud.”

He qualified in cutting, a horseback act of separating cattle, and first participated on July 18 before a crowd of hundreds inside the Cam-Plex Arena. Performing twice, Robb managed 138 points in his first and 132 in his last, scores based on efficiency as well as quality and showmanship.

“I have been cutting for three years. Our family friend, Bert (Siddoway), asked if I wanted to try it, so I did,” Robb said. “I have been doing it ever since.”

The rigors of the rider event required weekly travel to Emmett, Idaho, where Robb and his horse, Kit, met with trainer Summer Housely for refreshers before and between events, Housely even hauled Kit to the Wyoming nationals.

“Summer helps me in the arena and makes

sure I have a good turn back crew,” Robb said. “I can’t hear very good so she gives me advice before I enter the arena and then she goes to the side of the arena so that I can hear her best when I am competing.”

“I was lucky she could go with and help me.”

Robb’s combined score of 270 placed him at 47th in his first national event, and he hopes to exceed that next year with some improvements and training.

“I am going to work on breathing while I am riding. I get nervous and hold my breath and then I am not as relaxed as I should be to make a clean ride,” he said. “My first goal always is to not lose a cow. If you work hard all year and make sacrifices, it pays off in the end.”

He reflected on enjoying the event in his downtime with his family and watching others compete.

“The national finals is a chance to make friends and have good experiences,” Robb said. “This community is really supportive of myself and my family and I want to also make them proud.”

Child care

Continued from A1

Another challenge is time. Most child care is available only during the day. But some people work night shifts or are on call and cannot respond to work unless they have a place to send their children.

Preschools Provide Partial Solutions

Preschools provide some supervised time for three- and four-year-olds, and have the benefit of including an educational foundation. Programs are offered by the Baker County YMCA, Haines Elementary School, and some churches and other organizations and by individuals. In addition, Head Start serves children who meet certain criteria.

However, these programs generally operate on half-day and alternating day schedules, leaving significant gaps to be filled by working parents. In addition, some of the programs are usually full and have waiting lists.

Community Partners Come Together to Start YMCA Child Care Center

Because of the high need and the impact on hiring, several employers have looked for ways to provide child care for their employees or families in general. However, until recently, they have found that the needs and regulations for facilities and staffing made their potential programs unaffordable for most families.

Since then, the Y and the Baker 5J School District have worked together with several partners to open a certified childcare center at the Baker Early Learning Center (BELC) this year. The YMCA Childcare Center serves children from six weeks old to five years old.

Several other programs are also housed at BELC, which is in the former North Baker Elementary building at 2725 Seventh St. These include Head Start, YMCA preschool, and District 5J kindergarten.

Martinez, who helped guide development of the project, said it “took the stars to align” to make the certified childcare center a reality.

The program is operated by the YMCA on property owned by the school district. Other key partners in developing the center included Saint Alphonsus Medical Center, St. Luke’s EOMA Clinic, Eastern Oregon Child Care Resources and Referral, Eastern Oregon Early Learning Hub, and Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative. Financial support came from many of these partners as well

as the Ford Family Foundation, Wilson Cattle Company and other donors.

Tony Swart, financial director for Saint Alphonsus, said the hospital’s involvement was based on the commitment to community health and the view that child care is “a social determinant of health and well-being.” In addition, the shortage of care has hindered the hospital’s recruiting of employees. He is glad that some medical staff are able to access the center.

Allisa Brown, who became director of the Y Child Care Center in January 2022, said the process of running a new facility has required continual learning. One of the biggest hurdles, ironically, has been recruiting and training new staff. The existing rooms are filled to capacity, and slots for another room in the fall are already spoken for, and there is already a waiting list, as well. One of the greatest needs ahead, in addition to space and staff, will be a plan for emergency drop-in services and staff absences.

Other Care Options

Another new opportunity for some families is the Baker Relief Nursery, at 1925 16th St. It is operated by a non-profit organization with state support in order to provide childcare for vulnerable families in an effort to reduce child abuse and neglect in our area. The program serves children from birth to five years old. In addition to caring for children, the staff offers a variety of supports for parents to help them cope with wide range of stressors that affect their children.

Most other child care in Baker County takes place in private homes. Non-licensed sites can care for up to three children. Larger operations must meet state licensing guidelines. When Martinez gets calls for childcare information, she often asks if the caller has thought about providing care in their home and explains the supports available, including subsidies that may be paid directly to the providers.

Making Child Care Affordable

Child care is expensive, especially in a certified child care program, but Martinez said she has never seen as much support as there is right now. A major piece of the funding comes from Pre-school Promise, a program through the Oregon Department of Education’s Early Learning Division which will provide grants up to \$13,650 per child for care providers. There are also funds to help cover startup costs. A pilot

program called Baby Promise, for infants and toddlers, is being tested in select locations.

Another resource, focused on supporting working parents, comes from the Oregon Department of Human Services. It is called Employment Related Daycare and also pays subsidies directly to care providers to help working parents maintain their jobs. The families are responsible for a copay based on their income and family size.

Other Resources

While state regulations are often seen as hurdles to providing childcare, Martinez emphasizes the need for safety and quality service. Part of that is the importance of adult to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision. Funding and support are also available in meeting state requirements for such things as lead testing, first aid supplies, and food handlers training.

Martinez said providers in

rural areas such as Baker County have access to “lots of support every step of the way.” This includes resources, training, licensing help and program coaching, according to the Eastern Oregon Child Care Resources Facebook page.

Information about child care resources is available at 541-709-5930.

Patsy Knox

December 19, 1933 - July 19, 2022

Patsy Knox, formerly of Baker City, OR and Santa Rosa, CA, passed away peacefully in Goodyear, AZ on July 19, 2022, with her daughter Kelly in attendance. Patsy was born on December 19, 1933, to David and Ima Bowser in Glendale, CA. She and her older sister, Betty (Fiscalini), grew up in Santa Barbara, CA. Patsy attended Chico State College and earned her degree in Lab and Radiology Technology. She enjoyed her job and worked for various medical practices around the country, finally retiring at the age of 72 in Santa Rosa, CA.

Patsy married Alva Raymond Knox, Jr. on January 26, 1957, in Sparks, NV and they raised a family of four children in Oregon, California, and Nebraska. Patsy lost her husband in 1982, just shy of their 25th wedding anniversary. Later, she spent a loving 20 years with her partner, Gordon Bunker (deceased 2008). She was an active member of the International Sorority Beta Sigma Phi from 1968-1995, holding various offices over the years. Patsy loved beachcombing, swimming at the YMCA, dancing, and very dry vodka martinis with olives!

Patsy is survived by her daughter, Kelly Tronnier & son-in-law Peter Tronnier of Buckeye, AZ, her son Steven Knox of Murrieta, CA, and son-in-law Shawn Jarvinen (Debbie) of Friant, CA, nine grandchildren, John McMillan (Katie) of Caldwell, ID; Jason McMillan (Megan) of Rancho Cordova, CA; David McMillan of Kentwood, MI; Drew McMillan of Rancho Cordova, CA; Dr. Amy Tronnier of Providence, RI; Stacy Tronnier of Salem, OR; Eric Tronnier, currently serving at Mildenhall Air Base, England; Raymond Knox of San Diego, CA, and Sara Knox of Riverside, CA. Also survived by three great-grandchildren, Mattias McMillan, Emily McMillan, & Douglas McMillan, a niece, Gloria Fiscalini, and a nephew David Fiscalini, as well as numerous cousins.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Raymond; her partner, Gordon; her parents; her daughter, Pamela Jarvinen (2007); her son, Kevin Knox (1992); her sister, Betty Fiscalini, brother-in-law Louis Fiscalini, and niece Patricia Fiscalini.

A visitation will be held at Chapel of the Valley-L.B. Hall Funeral Home on August 4, 2022 from 12:00-4:30 p.m. 2065 Upper River Rd.; Grants Pass, OR 97526 541-479-7581

Graveside service and burial will be at Wilderville Cemetery, 5145 Fish Hatchery Rd., Grants Pass, OR on August 5, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

The family suggests that donations be made to: Hospice of the Valley at www.hov.org or National Alliance on Mental Health at www.donate.nami.org



Women can get free map training

BY IAN CRAWFORD

icrawford@bakercityherald.com

The Women Owning Woodlands Network has set out to host a free women’s forestry and hiking event, upcoming out of Halfway, Oregon on July 30 at 8 a.m.

The objective of the hike is to teach essential map skills and real-world application of charting compass travel. The event is open to public enrollment and hosted by Tiffany Hopkins at Oregon State University.

“The plan is to learn the basics of compass, including finding directions. Learning to read maps, including commonly used map technology, both paper and digital, finding your pace and measuring distances,” said Hopkins. “Then going on the hike to put all of this into practice.”

“The compass and mapping portion will be indoors in a classroom setting, which would likely be hard for young children.”

Mature children are welcome to attend and gain forest skills of their own.

Hopkins has a list of to-bring items for registrants, but generally participants should prepare for a hike in the mountain air.

“WOWNet is a diverse, enthusiastic, group of women who are interested in woodland management,” said Hopkins in a press release, “The group encompasses many different knowledge sources and diverse management goals.”

WOWNet was launched in 2005 with help from Oregon State University and the Natural Resource Extension Program to reinforce woodland skills and operates with a set of goals:

- Learn about forest management
- Share forestry and natural resources experiences
- Exchange personal knowledge with other women who are going through similar experiences

To register, email Tiffany at tiffany.hopkins@oregonstate.edu before the gathering event.

Frank William Hermann

July 15, 2022

Frank William Hermann, 65, of Baker City, passed away July 15, 2022. A celebration of life will be held on September 9, 2022, at 1 p.m. at the Harvest Christian Church, 3720 Birch St. in Baker City, Oregon.

Frank was born in Wichita, Kansas, to Erwin “Erv” and Mary (McMurphy) Hermann. Frank attended school in Thornton and Northglenn, Colorado, eventually graduating from Northglenn High School. Throughout his youth, he played many sports with his brothers, but baseball was where he excelled the most. Frank attended and played baseball during junior college in Trinidad, Colorado, then transferred to Eastern Oregon University in La Grande, Oregon, where he continued playing for the Mountaineers. For many years he held the home run and slugging average for the EOU Mountaineers. It was also at EOU that he met his wife of 41 years, Josie Bates. They were married in Vernal, Utah, on August 30, 1980.

After graduating from EOU, Frank and Josie moved to Vernal, Utah, where Frank began working in the oil fields for Haliburton. In 1981, they decided to return to La Grande, Oregon, and Frank got a job at UPS soon after. Frank worked for UPS as a driver and supervisor for many years. In 1987, UPS promoted Frank and moved him to Bend, Oregon. This was also the same year that Frank and Josie welcomed their daughter, Erin Nicole, and then their son, William Cody, in 1990. There were many memories in the Bend house of dancing to Fleetwood Mac and swimming in the hot tub with Frank and his kids. In 1993, UPS allowed Frank and his family to move to Baker City, allowing them to be closer to Josie’s family and their college friends. Frank ended up leaving UPS and working as an officer at Powder River Correctional Facility. He worked for PRCF for 20 years before retiring.

Baker City has been home to Frank and his family for over 30 years. He spent many years watching, coaching, and enjoying his kids playing sports and participating in other activities. Frank enjoyed working on his home, taking time to relax in the mountains, and golfing at as many Eastern Oregon courses as possible. He also helped his wife, Josie, with her business and enjoyed the many trips around Eastern Oregon that being her “bodyguard” held. Frank was an avid Colorado sports fan, the Broncos, and John Elway being his favorite. One recent highlight for Frank was the birth of his grandson, Oxley William Justus. He was looking forward to seeing Oxley play sports one day. Frank’s children and his grandchild were the loves of his life.

Frank will be leaving behind his wife, Josie Hermann, children Bill Hermann and Erin Justus (Daniel), and grandson, Oxley Justus. He will also be leaving behind his mother, Mary Hermann, brothers Ed Hermann (Carol), Tim Hermann (Lynn), and Chuck Hermann (Stacey), his mother-in-law, Joan Bates and brother-in-law, Frank Bates (Riza), and many nieces and nephews. Frank was preceded in death by his sister, Anne Marie, father, Erv, father-in-law, Glen Bates, and favorite aunt, Helen McMurphy.

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

