

Fair

Continued from A1

About halfway through the final round of Wednesday's rabbit show competition, judge Patrisha Malby did something unexpected — she asked the contestants to switch rabbits.

"A good handler should be able to handle any bunny," Malby said.

She added, "I want to see how they handle something that isn't their own."

In prior rounds, Malby had asked contestants an assortment of questions and assigned different tasks to see how well the kids handled their rabbits.

Kaaen, for example, won the intermediate division round after she explained to Malby that a 30-day quarantine is necessary for any new rabbits acquired in order to prevent the spread of RHDV2 virus, a hemorrhagic disease in rabbits.

In that round, she also made sure, when asked to hoist her Holland Lop by the skin around its neck, not to grab any part of the ears — which could break or be damaged when grabbed.

Kaaen performed a health check of her rabbit — checking the ears for damage, the eyes for blindness, the teeth for defects, the toenails for chips, the hocks for sores, the fur for fleas, the belly for swelling — and also checked the sex and straightened the tail.

But that was all with her own Holland Lop rabbit.

Now, Malby was asking Kaaen to handle her competitor Chase Myatt's larger Californian rabbit. Kaaen said that when she is asked to switch rabbits, she "just hopes they have a good temperament."

In this case, she was in luck — Kaaen knew what to expect out of this particular bunny.



Clayton Franke/Baker City Herald

Sage Baker, right, and Riley Schuette, left, handle their rabbits before the rabbit showmanship competition Wednesday morning, Aug. 10, 2022, during the Baker County Fair. Baker, who was in her first year of rabbit showmanship, said she was nervous before the event. After the competition was over, however, she said the show went "really well."

"It was nice because I have watched him handle (that rabbit) before," Kaaen said of Myatt.

She scooped it up with ease.

Meanwhile, on the end of the show table, a particularly rambunctious brown rex rabbit was giving Tyler Myatt, 11, who would win overall reserve champion, some trouble by kicking and squirming as he attempted to corral it.

It even nipped him, he said.

And it was apparent that judge Malby wanted all the contestants to have a turn handling the squirrely ball of fur.

She wasn't judging based on how energetic the rabbits were, she said.

"What I'm looking at is how gentle you are."

But that troublesome brown rex rabbit wasn't supposed to be on the show table in the first place.

Tyler Myatt said that before the round, contestant Skye Smith accidentally grabbed the rabbit from its pen not knowing it was a different rabbit from the one she had just handled when she won the grand champion award in the senior round — although the two looked the same. The one she brought to the table was much harder to handle.

At this point in the contest, Kaaen was the only con-

testant who hadn't handled the brown rex.

"A good handler should be able to handle any bunny. I want to see how they handle something that isn't their own."

— Patrisha Malby, judge

Malby instructed her to do so.

And when Kaaen cradled the bunny, it bit her in the palm, its teeth puncturing her skin.

Either the wound didn't hurt or she didn't show it — she handled it well enough to earn her the award of grand champion.

After the biting, she went on to handle her own rabbit again and answer a few more critical questions, composure unwavering.

"It's satisfying to win," Kaaen said.



Ian Crawford/Baker City Herald

Sarah and Matt Heiner recently opened their early morning cafe, the Mother Lode, at 791 Campbell St. in Baker City.

Cafe

Continued from A1

Since their retirement, parked there some time in the 1960s, the dining cars have been the launchpad for so many restaurateurs that for Baker City it's almost tradition to see a new face in the window.

The faces you'll see today are Matt and Sarah Heiner, and while the building itself is nearing a century old, Sarah brought history of her own to match, and it's delicious. She maintains a sourdough starter, or "mother," that's been in her family for four generations, passed down from her great-grandmother.

"We have Americana diner food, fresh made sourdough bread, and we also have sourdough pancakes," Matt said. "It's our specialty."

The sample pancake they brought out was true to form, crispy with a sour tang and served with Grade A maple syrup, in itself all part of a century old design.

There was, though, a singular stumble as the couple prepared to open.

Hoping to keep the pancake recipe safe as they set up shop, Sarah had pulled its card out intending to put it somewhere secure.

Instead she accidentally lost it.

"I had to call my grandmother," said Sarah, laughing. Fortunately, her grandmother chuckled as well and still had the original recipe handy. Sarah re-copied it and put it to good use.

Matt and Sarah decided they wanted to focus on early morning diners, setting their hours from 5 a.m. to 2 p.m. every day.

"Even in the winters there's working crews that go off to work before daylight, by the time most restaurants open they're all at work," said Sarah, hoping their breakfast availability will fill the niche others haven't.

As well, the easy distance from the interstate will have its benefits among all-hours truckers.

"Also it gets way too hot here during the summer," said Sarah, noting that they'll be saving on AC when other restaurants will be baking throughout their shift. "It's a metal box."

The two say they've considered selling the sourdough bread itself, but they have limits to mixing equipment and baking space.

"Three loaves at a time, that's all that'll fit in my oven," Sarah said. "If we did that we'd just run out."

But don't fret.

"We do sell starters!" she said.

The Thursday, Aug. 18 wine walk in Baker City will focus on books that have been banned or challenged.

Jeana Phillips/Contributed Photo



Bans

Continued from A1

The walk starts at 5 p.m. at Launch Pad Baker, 2019 Main St. A donation of \$10 gets a commemorative glass and map of participating locations.

Each month, a portion of proceeds goes to a local organization.

The Aug. 18 walk will support the Baker County Library District in starting a Banned Books Club, in which members would read books that have been banned or challenged

and then critically discuss each work, said Perry Stokes, library director.

"Banned Books & Buns" will be held at Sweet Wife Baking, 2028 Resort St.

Jeana Phillips, owner of Betty's Books, will be there with a selection of books that have been challenged in the past, accompanied with the reason for the challenge, the location and the date.

She said awareness of efforts to ban books — and the reasons for the challenge — is important for "access and representation."

Techniques

Continued from A1

The mandate is part of Senate Bill 762, which the Oregon Legislature passed, and Gov. Kate Brown signed into law, in 2021.

The legislation deals with multiple issues related to wildfire risk and prevention in the state.

OTEC, which is based in Baker City and has about 31,000 customers in Baker, Union, Grant and Harney counties, submitted its 17-page plan earlier this summer.

Eric Wirfs, director of operations for OTEC, said that for the cooperative the new requirement was largely an exercise in compiling existing policies into a single document.

"I would say 80 percent of what's in there was already being done as prudent utility practices," Wirfs said on Wednesday, Aug. 10.

A key part of that effort, he said, is trying to prevent a common cause for both power outages and for sparks that can ignite wildfires — a tree or tree limb falling onto a line.

To reduce that risk, OTEC maintains corridors along its transmission lines that are cleared of trees close enough to potentially fall into a line. These rights-of-way are generally 120 feet wide, Wirfs said.

Naturally, the transmission lines at highest risk are those that pass through densely forested areas. Local examples include the line that runs from Baker City through Sumpter Valley and on to Granite, and the line leading to Anthony Lakes.

Wirfs said those lines, which were previously inspected every other year, as the PUC requires, will now be patrolled annually.

OTEC's plan also explains how the utility makes changes during the fire season — generally July 1 through Oct. 15, depending on conditions — that are designed to reduce the risk

that a power line damaged by a tree or other cause will ignite a fire.

Transmission and distribution lines are equipped with "reclosers," Wirfs said. Those are electronic devices that are designed to restore power to a line within a second or two if the "fault" — for instance, a tree limb that hits the line but then falls to the ground — is brief.

The purpose, Wirfs said, is to ensure that a small problem, such as a single limb that strikes a line but doesn't damage it, doesn't result in a long outage.

Outside the fire season, reclosers are set to operate up to four times in rapid succession, Wirfs said.

But on lines in higher risk areas, such as forests, reclosers are limited to operate just twice during the fire season.

The reason, Wirfs said, is that if a fault remains on the line, the more often a recloser operates and reenergizes the line, the greater chance it might spark.

Limiting the recloser to two operations reduces that risk, he said. That also increases the chances that a fault that doesn't damage the line will result in an extended power outage, but Wirfs said that tradeoff is necessary to reduce the fire threat.

The fire-related settings for reclosers is not a new policy for OTEC, Wirfs said.

Intentional power shutoffs

The mitigation plan also addresses "public safety power shutoffs" — when a utility intentionally turns off power to a transmission line during periods when the fire risk is extreme.

Wirfs said OTEC has not had to do so. He called that a "last resort" situation.

OTEC's plan lists the criteria the cooperative would use to determine whether to order a public safety shutoff, once of which is "immediately

predicted winds of 50 mph or higher within the vicinity of OTEC facilities subject to shut-off."

Fortunately, Wirfs said, winds of that strength are rare in OTEC's territory.

Moreover, he said a survey of the cooperative's tree-caused power outages showed that most — 10 of 13 — happened during the winter or otherwise outside fire season.

Both last year and again earlier this summer, OTEC sent letters to members who have service in areas at high risk for wildfire to alert them to the possibility, however remote, of intentional power shutoffs.

About 2,200 members — around 8.5% of OTEC's total — have service in those areas, said Joe Hathaway, the cooperative's communications manager.

OTEC's wildfire mitigation

plan states that the cooperative's dispatch center monitors weather forecasts and each day assigns a risk level. When the National Weather Service issues a red flag warning — meaning that any fire that starts could spread quickly — OTEC delays routine work on transmission lines. The cooperative might delay such work on other days when thunderstorms or other severe weather is possible, but a red flag warning is not in effect.

Town halls scheduled to discuss fire mitigation plan

OTEC has scheduled town halls for its members later this month, in each of the four counties it serves, to review the cooperative's fire mitigation plan.

The town halls will last one hour. The Baker County event

Margaret Kingman

April 9, 1946 - August 3, 2022

Margaret Kingman, 76, of La Grande, Oregon, died on August 3, 2022. A private family graveside service will be held at Grandview Cemetery in La Grande.

Margaret was born on April 9, 1946, to Robert and Helen (Michael) Kingman in Batesville, Indiana. The family later moved to Baker City, Oregon, where she graduated from Baker High School in 1964.

Margaret's favorite color was lavender. She loved the colors of Spring and enjoyed playing guitar. She was a Majorette for the Baker City Drum and Bugle Corps. Margaret would like to be most remembered for her sense of humor.

She was preceded in death by her parents. Margaret is survived by her brothers, Louis (Pat) Kingman and John Kingman; and her sisters, Mary (Mark) Karl and Nancy (Dusty) Simonis.

The family would like to thank Bullock's Country Care for her excellent care these last 7 years.

For those who would like to make a memorial donation in memory of Margaret, she suggested La Grande CHD Senior & Disabled Services (Mental Health) through Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, Oregon 97834. Online condolences may be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com.



will be Friday, Aug. 19 at 9 a.m. at the Baker Rural Fire Protection District station at 3855 23rd St., near OTEC's headquarters.

The Union County town hall will be Friday, Aug. 19 at 2 p.m. at the La Grande Fire Department, 1806 Cove Ave.

OTEC also urges its members to stay updated on wildfire-related information. To

access to ideas, which is vital to democracy?"

"There's a reason why free speech is first in the Bill of Rights," he said.

Banned Books Week

This event is a precursor of Banned Books Week, which is Sept. 18-24.

According to the Banned Books Week Coalition, the week is a way "to increase awareness of the annual celebration of the freedom to read."

To learn more, visit banned-booksweek.org.

Nelda Marshall

July 7, 1931 - August 5, 2022

Our dear friend Nelda Marshall, 91, went to be with our Lord and Savior on August 5, 2022. A service will be held at the Haines First Baptist Church in Haines, Oregon, on Saturday, August 13, 2022, beginning at 2 p.m. Her interment will be held at the Haines Cemetery at 3 p.m., and a reception will be held directly after at the Haines First Baptist Church. Pastor Ben Janzen will be officiating.

Nelda was born on July 7, 1931, the youngest of five kids to Shadrach and Dinah Marshall in Hillsville, Virginia. She began working for the bank in their local town right out of high school. Later she transferred to California and worked her way up through the ranks to become associate vice president of the First National Bank of California before retiring and moving to Oregon.

She was always happy to see kids and greeted them with a treat. Nelda loved helping with the youth in church throughout the years and helped support several missionaries. She also loved animals and raised horses, rabbits, goats, and chickens, as well as a huge garden and fruit trees. But her primary purpose in life was to help lead people to the Lord!

She will be missed by all who knew her.

Nelda was a devoted aunt to her nieces and nephews in San Pedro. She was a constant source of love and support throughout their childhood. Her nieces and nephews affectionately referred to her as "Nellio."

She is survived by nieces and nephews and many friends.

Memorial contributions may be made to Ethnos 360 (a missionary training group) or to a charity of your choice through Gray's West & Co. Pioneer Chapel at 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814.

To leave an online condolence for friends and family of Nelda, please visit www.grayswestco.com.

