



Contributed Photo

Obie Simonis, left, is helped by Brian Vegter, Corrine Vegter and Matt Krabacher while installing a sculpture outside Churchill School.

Sculpture

Continued from A1

The stones were hauled to the school by Superior Towing.

"We planned the placement of them," Corrine said. "Obie picked which boulder he wanted out front."

Simonis designed his sculpture in Boston, which he titled "Mind & Matter."

Although the rock remained at Churchill, in Boston he built the stainless steel triangles that will emerge from the stone for a final height of 14 feet.

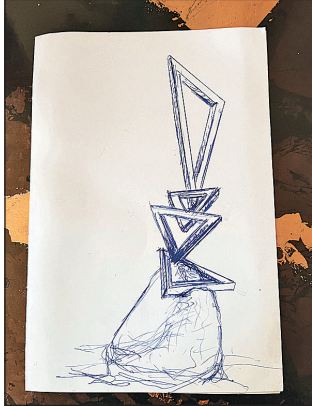
He shipped the triangles to Baker City, and this week constructed the piece with the help of friends.

It will be unveiled during the First Friday art walk, Sept. 2 at 5:30 p.m.

About the piece

Simonis said the title of "Mind & Matter" comes from the name of a book written by his favorite Cambridge University philosopher, who has written extensively on the philosophy of mind and language.

Here is how he describes the piece: "The ponderous, craggy weight of the boulder



Obie Simonis/Contributed Photo

This is the sketch for "Mind & Matter," a sculpture Obie Simonis created for the front of Churchill School in Baker City.

is a solid, primordial presence, evoking the beginnings of time. Ascending from the rock, the precise geometric elegance of stainless steel elements represent the concept of mind, revealed in the ideas and forms of mathematics, science and technology."

As for his decision on the sculpture's placement at Churchill? He has an easy answer:

"I went to first grade here, it's an artist-owned and developed art center, and because of these two," he said, speaking about Brian and Corrine.

Blaze

Continued from A1
Firefighter discusses staffing reduction

Casey Johnson, a Baker City firefighter, said that although he was gratified by the response from all firefighters, he believes crews could have doused the fire sooner but for reductions in staffing prompted by City Manager Jon Cannon's plan, which the Baker City Council endorsed, to have the fire department stop operating ambulances as of Oct. 1.

(Baker County, which is legally required to ensure ambulance service, hired a private ambulance company, Metro West, to replace the city fire department.)

In the past, ambulance calls have made up more than 80% of the city fire department's call volume. With the cessation of ambulance service, the city has reduced the staffing in the fire department from 16.25 full-time equivalent positions, to 10.5 for the fiscal year that started July 1, 2022.

Johnson said that a year or so ago, the department would have had four paid firefighters on duty at all times.

When the fire call came in Tuesday morning, there were two firefighters on duty — Johnson being one of those — along with a division chief, Johnson said.

He said the department's policy requires that at least two firefighters be stationed outside a building, as a backup, before firefighters go inside.

Johnson said he and another firefighter had to wait — he didn't have the precise time elapsed, but the fire was controlled within 28 minutes — for two off-duty firefighters to arrive before going inside the Balm Street home.

Johnson said that because firefighters had a report that the residents had left the house, the situation was less dire than if, for instance, they had reason to believe there were people inside the home.

He said it was fortunate that the fire hadn't spread into the entire attic before firefighters arrived. Had that



Photos by Samantha O'Conner/Baker City Herald
Baker City firefighters douse the burning home at 1895 Balm St. on Tuesday morning, Aug. 30, 2022.



been the case, the delay in firefighters going inside the home could have resulted in more damage, Johnson said.

City manager's response

In an email to the Herald on Wednesday, Cannon wrote: "I wish to express my sincere condolences to the family impacted by the fire. Fire damage to a home in most cases is devastating even if the home is not fully destroyed by the fire. Fortunately, I understand no one was injured and this is the most important outcome of the incident."

"I would like to commend the Baker City Fire Department and Baker Rural Fire Department for their response to the fire at 1895

Balm Street on Tuesday, August 30, 2022," Cannon wrote. "Division Chief David Blair was the first firefighter on the scene within approximately 5 minutes of dispatch. A residential dwelling was fully involved with flames coming out of the windows of a corner room, flames in the attic, and smoke throughout the entire dwelling. Two line staff firefighters arrived and began rolling hose and preparing water to fight the fire. Within two minutes of arrival (7 minutes after dispatch) water was on the fire."

"During this 7-minute time frame Fire Chief Sean Lee was on the scene to provide additional command and control. Division Chief David Blair transitioned the fire

truck from truck water to fire hydrant water and continued to assist line staff with knock down of the fire. The fire was knocked down within 9 minutes of dispatch of the fire. Additional BCFD paid part-time firefighters and Baker Rural firefighters arrived on the scene to assist with fire containment while additional BCFD line staff were en route to respond to the fire. Within 37 minutes of dispatch the fire was contained and within one hour and 10 minutes the fire was reported as out and firefighters and trucks were leaving the scene. In total 11 firefighters from Baker City and Baker Rural responded to the fire with the first 4 arriving from the Baker City Fire Department station within 5-7 minutes of dispatch. I express my appreciation and gratitude to all 11 individuals who responded. This sort of unified response is important.

"Before and simultaneous to the fire, the new ambulance service provider responded to medical calls within the community making it possible for every single fire resource we had available to remain on the scene and be fully committed to fighting the fire. Everyone played an important role in taking care of our citizens on Tuesday."



Ashley
HOMESTORE

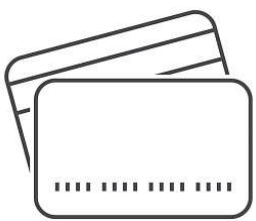
LABOR DAY SALE!

everything is on sale!







SPECIAL FINANCING OFFER
or 60 months special financing^o

\$2,999 minimum purchase required on qualifying purchases made with your Ashley Advantage™ Synchrony credit card now - 9/12. Subject to credit approval. Equal monthly payments required for 60 months. Click details for more information.



1418 Westpark Plaza, Ontario, Oregon 97914

541-823-0013 • ashleyfurniturehomestore.com

Monday-Saturday 10am - 7pm • Closed Sunday

