Raising a flag

South Baker honors Col. Robert D. Allen

In total silence, the 350 students at South Baker Intermediate School watched a flag raising ceremony on November 2.

When the flag reached the top of the pole, all eyes looked upward and voices joined together to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

The way this flag came to fly at South Baker started when Trish Everson stopped at Debi Geddes' yard sale. Trish saw folded flags and, being from a military family, knew it had a story.

It did. The flag honored Debi's dad, Col. Robert D. Allen, who passed away in 2004.

Debi gave two flags to Trish, who in turn donated one to the City of Baker City, and the other to South Baker where Debi attended school as a child.

Prior to raising the flag, Duncan Pierce, First Sgt. (retired), led an assembly to share some history of the flag — Betsy Ross did not sew the first flag — and etiquette about how to present and honor the American flag.

Duncan is with the VFW, which has developed a program about flag history and etiquette.

Debi attended the assembly, and smiled through tears as Principal Nanette Lehman talked about her dad, who served in Vietnam and also during Desert Storm.

"I didn't want it just sitting on a shelf," she said of the flag. "He would be super excited; I'm sure he's smiling."

And now she has a reason to glance at South Baker on her way to work.

"What a wonderful thing — every day I drive by I can see it," she said.
A help all the time

Pam Zemmer is willing to help wherever and whenever with whoever needs it! She is an amazing dedicated member of the South Baker Team!

Lisa Davis, South Baker

Always encouraging

I would like to give a Shout Out to Tracie Smith at Eagle Cap for the amazing job she does with her students. In my son's own words "She is always encouraging us and helps us in any way we need, and if we don't understand something she finds another way to explain it to us so that we do." For the first time in a couple of years I don't have to fight him to go to school. Thank you Tracie!

Pam Zemmer, South Baker

Peer Mediation

Cathy Colton, Nicole Miller, and Amanda Grove deserve a shout-out for organizing the Peer Mediation program. Students under their supervision and training are learning life-long skills for problem-solving, understanding of diversity, and supporting peers through difficult situations. These ladies assisted students in presenting to the School Board in October; which was well done. South Baker Intermediate student body has experienced positive results from the implementation of this program. Kudos to their belief and dedication to this program.

Nanette Lehman, principal
South Baker Intermediate

Always creative

For Pam Zemmer, for being so creative in LRC room for the kids. She comes up with so many cool art ideas, and you can tell the kiddos enjoy it too. It's hard to get kids involved sometimes but Pam always has a way. Thank you!

Samantha Overton, South Baker

Submissions welcome!

We welcome “Shout Out” submissions from teachers, parents, community members - anyone who wants to recognize someone for a job well done.
Submissions can be 100 words or less, and include a photograph if available. Email entries to shout.out@bakersd.org.

Great kitchen crew

A huge shout out and thank you to Debbie White and Rochelle Stoaks. Brooklyn is fortunate to have you both. Thank you for all you do for kids and staff!

Kathy Mitchell,
Brooklyn Primary

Bulletin board help

Big shout out to Amanda Washington for helping me with our school-wide birthday bulletin board! It looks amazing. You are greatly appreciated!!!

Jill Johnson,
Brooklyn Primary

Outstanding

Anne-Marie Popa does an outstanding secretarial job of keeping staff, parents and students on an even keel EVERY DAY. She is cheerful, kind, and calm. She dispenses ice packs and band-aids, pills and sympathy efficiently. Many smiles reassure people that the front office is a safe, friendly place to get your current needs met. She is bilingual as a bonus. Best of all...she makes her job LOOK easy!

Donita Culbertson,
Brooklyn Elementary

Outstanding partner

The Baker School Board recognized Dorothy Mason as an Outstanding Business Partner in the City Council Chambers during their November 16 meeting. Over the past two decades, Dorothy has volunteered time, effort and capabilities teaching (and later, coordinating) the Baker 5J Outdoor School Program. The combined impact this one program has had on Baker students across the years cannot be adequately measured, however if one interviewed former Baker students, memories of this program would likely surface as a high point in their school experience.

Dorothy has played an instrumental role in cultivating and sustaining the community and organizational partnerships that lead to a quality, hands-on, fun experience for our 6th graders. We are indebted to the leadership and commitment to outdoor education she has modeled over the years. Thank you, Dorothy, for your service to students and to the Baker School District.

Betty Palmer,
assistant superintendent

Lots of shout outs

Shout out to Heidi Jones for her positive attitude as secretary at Brooklyn Primary. Good luck in the future. The entire staff is going to miss working with you.

Shout out to Christy Settles. The entire transportation staff at Baker 5J is amazing, but Christy has truly gone above and beyond recently. Her level of care, love, and compassion for some of our truly struggling students surpasses all expectations. A bus driver has the power and privilege of being able to help kids start and end their days on a positive note. Christy's smiles and "I love yous" make a daily difference. Thank you.

Shout out to the entire Friday Academy staff - Melissa Garner, Holly Miller, Makenzie Dyer, Jamie Lovell, Ayisha Vidales, Deserie Christensen, Michelle Coley, Corie Bogardus, Mandie Rose, Karin Seward, Joelene Oberlander, Carla Aichele, and the substitute staff that helps us all out. This program is truly making a difference for our students and cannot happen without a strong, willing, dedicated staff of teachers and paraprofessionals. Thank you!

Angela Lattin, dean of students
Brooklyn Primary

A welcoming space

We'd like to give a big THANK YOU to district office staff Sandy Harper and Sandy Mitchell. These ladies took the lead in renovating our front entry last month. With a few cans of paint, a lot of elbow grease and a little help from their friends they created a brighter, more welcoming environment for all those who visit the District Office. The District will have holiday treats on hand during December to encourage staff and patrons to stop by.

Spectacular effort with incredible results — thank you Sandy and Sandy!

Mark Witty, superintendent
Betty Palmer, assistant superintendent

Shout Outs

Submissions welcome!
A world of learning

Educational tours are available to middle and high school students

A group of 42 — including students, parents and teachers — are heading to Costa Rica in June 2018 with Education First for a tour focused on science and language. Chelsea Hurliman, vice principal at Baker High School, and Nicole Sullivan, BHS science teacher, have traveled with students through EF for the past several years. They alternate age groups — one year to Washington, D.C. for middle school students and the next year a European trip focused on history and art for high schoolers.

The spring break 2019 trip is an 11-day World War II tour through England, France, Belgium and German (see image at right).

Sullivan said they will repeat the Costa Rica tour in the summer of 2020 because it has been so popular.

During the trips, the group has a tour guide the entire time who is fluent in all languages and history of the countries. The price of the trip includes all travel expenses, hotels, breakfasts, and dinners (some tours include all lunches as well like Costa Rica).

Sullivan said EF offers a variety of payment plans, such as a monthly plan of $200 payments.

"Which makes world travel for your students more attainable than having to come up with all of it at once," Sullivan said.

Students also fundraise for their trips, including a gift certificate fundraiser through Sorbenots.

"Chelsea and I absolutely love traveling with our students; it truly makes education come alive, and I feel that there is no better education than what travel can offer," Sullivan said. "I also love that it reignites a passion for learning, both for my students and for myself."

For more information about future trips, send an email to nicole.sullivan@bakersd.org or chelsea.hurliman@bakersd.org.

Alumni spotlight

T erri Axness graduated from Baker High School in 1967, and headed off to college to pursue a degree in education. She spent two years at Oregon State University, then finished her bachelor’s in education at the University of Oregon with endorsements in PE, reading and art. She later earned a master’s from Eastern Oregon University.

She student taught in Eugene, and wanted to stay there but got a job in Tigard — in a year when "Portland had so much rain that everyone was discussing ark building," she said.

She returned to sunny Eastern Oregon and taught in the Baker School District for 30 years — North Baker Elementary, South Baker, Churchill School’s talented and gifted program, and finished her career teaching art at BHS for one year.

Along with teaching full-time, Terri still found time to work on her own art late at night after papers were graded, her family was in bed, and the house was in order.

"My passion has always been art," she said. "I am a firm believer that artistic expression is a vital part of any thriving culture and it feeds my soul. Throughout my career I integrated art into the curriculum and enjoyed watching my students enjoy the process of creating art and solving problems with multiple solutions that were always unique, original, and personal."

After she retired, she returned to local schools as an artist-in-residence and led students in creating 2-D and 3-D projects that related to the curriculum of each grade level.

After fully retiring, she focused more on her own art. Her husband, Dennis, converted their dairy barn into a studio for painting and clay.

"Life is good — playing in the studio seven days a week sketching, painting, potting, sculpting, printmaking. How could anyone ask for more than that?" she said.
Oregon Supreme Court visits Baker City

Although the Oregon Supreme Court Justices reigned over serious cases during a session Oct. 17, Jesse Johnson discovered, during a lunch of Mexican food, that these justices are regular people who are very approachable.

"We were eating chips and salsa and talking with them," he said.

Juniors and seniors at Baker High School were treated to front-row seats while the Oregon Supreme Court reviewed two cases referred from previous decisions by the Oregon Court of Appeals.

The first case involved a package that had been marked suspicious by a police officer and then postal worker. It contained marijuana money from a BHS senior, noticed that the justices were debating their personal opinions — "defining the law and interpreting it." This was different, she said, from Mock Trial, which mimics a circuit court.

"In Mock Trial, we're very factual," she said.

Jesse was also struck by how knowledgeable the justices must be on a variety of cases.

"They have to be experts, then 30 minutes later switch and be experts on another case," he said.

Following each Supreme Court case, students were allowed to ask questions — but not about the cases under review.

The Court's visit to Baker City was part of a tour to rural areas that brings exposure about the proceedings of the Oregon Supreme Court.

"They said they'd come back in a few years after they'd made their rounds," Kaiza said.

It also opens the Supreme Court proceedings to a general audience who may not travel to Salem.

"So it's not some distant thing that happens in a closed room," Kaiza said.

Mock Trial members had the chance to eat lunch with the justices after the cases were finished.

In their conversation with Justice Jack Landau, Kaiza and Kailyn McQuisten realized how serious the justices take their decisions, which will affect lives and society.

"How important it is to be as fair as possible," Kaiza said.

In his lunchtime visit, Evan Bigler learned how Mock Trial works in bigger schools, where entire class periods are dedicated to practice and so many students want to join that the leader has to make cuts.

Isabella Evans also talked about Mock Trial with the justices, and found that not many had that experience in high school.

"Some didn't, but then they went into law and wished they'd done Mock Trial," she said.

Agriculture classes added for 8th-graders

When voters passed Measure 98 in 2016, it mandated money allocated to schools for career and technical education. In Baker City, Baker Technical Institute (BTI) is using a portion of the funds to expand agriculture classes to eighth-graders at Baker Middle School.

The measure named three specific uses: establish or expand career and technical education (CTE); establish or expand college-level education; establish or expand drop-out prevention strategies. While the measure focuses on interventions for high school students, a portion of the funds can be used to support programs for eighth-graders.

One way Baker 5J plans to do this is by expanding CTE offerings for eighth-graders at Baker Middle School.

"We want to provide opportunities that align with relevant, in-demand college and career skills," said Doug Dalton, BTI president.

Next semester BTI will offer "Discovery of Agriculture" as an 8th grade elective. Topics will include horticulture, animal systems, food processing, natural resources and leadership.

"Students will see that just because they don’t have a direct tie to agriculture doesn’t mean they don’t have a tie to it," said Bibiana Giffit, agricultural science teacher and FFA advisor at BTI.

Eighth-graders enrolled in the class will be bused to BTI and returned to BMS before the final bell rings.

"The plan is for students to participate in this class at BTI where we have access to equipment, labs and facilities in an ag-based environment," Doug said.

Doug said plans are in the works to also establish an FFA program for eighth-graders this winter.

"We’re really excited to expand the agricultural opportunities," he said.

Bibiana said the middle school program will give students a jump start into high school opportunities.

"They will see a variety of choices and careers in agriculture, and the opportunities FFA provides," she said.

"FFA not only helps students build skills in the agriculture industry, but it also promotes development of leadership and soft skills that will help them be more successful in the workplace,

no matter what field they choose to go into."

BTI hopes to offer several other introductory courses for 8th graders in 2018-19, including introduction to construction and introduction to robotics.
Helping influence the next generation

Although their reasons for going into education vary, these future teachers are all in it for the kids.

"I just enjoy kids beyond belief. To see their excitement, and know that's the future you're helping create," said Teagan Wick, who is working with sixth-grade teacher Cynthia Stevens at South Baker Intermediate.

Baker School District has 11 pre-service education students in classrooms this fall — five at South Baker Intermediate, two at Brooklyn Primary and four at Haines Elementary.

Practicum students, enrolled as juniors at Eastern Oregon University, spend two days a week observing and helping in small groups. The rest of their week is spent in classes at EOU.

Student teachers in their senior year of college are in the classroom four days per week. These students are close to earning their degree, are much more involved in the day-to-day operation of the classroom, including teaching.

"We expect them to take over responsibility more," said Dr. Ronda Fritz, clinical partnership coordinator at EOU. "Our hope is it can be mutually beneficial."

By providing more time in the classroom during college, the hope is that new teachers aren't as overwhelmed when they enter the profession.

Although these college students say it can be intimidating when they are facing the entire class, they are finding ways to cope with that trepidation.

"If you're excited about what you're talking about, they're excited to learn about it," said Bethany Van Cleave, who is in Mandie Rose's sixth grade class at South Baker.

For Garth McCaleb, seeing students learn a new concept is the best part.

"When you teach them something and they get it — the lightbulb goes on," said Garth, who is in Jill Johnson's third-grade class at Brooklyn.

Lane Zacharias, who is in Victoria Howard's fifth-grade class, also enjoys the learning process.

"They are struggling for the higher achievement," he said. The fifth-graders have taught him a few things, too.

"I like being surprised — they come up with something I've never thought of," he said.

Lane didn't always want to be a teacher, even though everyone told him he'd be great at it.

" Originally this was a profession I swore I'd never do," he said.

However, his business major didn't work out and he started visiting with friends who were majoring in education.

He switched, and found his niche.

"I got into the classroom and realized why people said I should do it," Lane said.

Student teachers who are in Baker City this fall will be placed in a district near La Grande for winter term, then moved again for spring term.

"We want to give them exposure to multiple districts," Ronda said.

When considering placement options for students, Ronda meets with principals to discuss possible mentor teachers.

"To make placements in a purposeful way," she said. "Personalities also come into the decision."

"You're going to work very closely together," said Phil Anderson, Brooklyn principal.

In addition to her role as an instructor, Ronda supports her students through their student teaching and after graduation. Following up, she said, helps identify gaps and strengthen EOU's program to support student success.

After graduation, these student teachers could potentially return to the districts where they student taught.

"EOU has a good program. We want these teachers in our building," said Nanette Lehman, South Baker principal.

Mentoring

New this year is a program that pairs beginning teachers with mentors who provide support as they enter their profession.

The district hired five retired teachers to mentor teachers in their first or second year of teaching.

"There are a million nuts and bolts, how do I do report cards? First-time teachers are figuring out systems, and the first two years is identifying yourself as a teacher," Phil said.

Update: Long-Range Facility Planning Committee

The Baker School District’s Long Range Facility Planning (LRFP) Committee hit an exciting milestone last month. On Wednesday, November 15, Committee members held an engaging, collaborative conversation around potential scenarios addressing the District’s facility needs, including how each scenario might best serve the educational needs.

The LRFP Committee, formed in March 2017, consists of 24 community members and district staff representing a wide variety of Baker City’s citizens. The goal of the Committee is to build upon the work of the Facilities Master Planning (FMP) Committee by reviewing the FMP Committee’s factual findings of the District’s aging instructional buildings, addressing concerns about student and building capacity and safety, and crafting a vision of how to best deliver 21st century education in the Baker School District.

"Reviewing those results along with taking tours of our overly crowded, deteriorating schools, it is easy to conclude that our district needs to address serious issues and address them soon," said Beth Shirtcliff, LRFP committee member.

A wide variety of options were discussed in the November meeting, from renovations of existing buildings, to exploring possible new construction, and how to address the needs of the current facilities. As part of the planning process, the Committee toured neighboring facilities, gaining insight into what regional communities have done to improve their educational delivery.

"One of the highlights was touring the Pendleton Early Learning Center," said Chris Knoll, committee member.

"This beautiful facility was previously an elementary school, which has been completely renovated to deliver care and education from birth to kindergarten."

The Pendleton center collaborates with several agencies to deliver multiple services under one roof, including health care, mental health, family support, special education, WIC, childcare, Head Start, preschool and kindergarten.

"It would be great to bring a similar facility to Baker," Chris said.

The LRFP Committee meets again in December to continue discussions on viable solutions for the District with the intention to provide a comprehensive report to the Board of Directors in early 2018. It is expected that the Board will discuss possible next steps, specifically how to share LRFP Committee findings with the Baker community and engage a broader representation of citizens in this discussion.
The end of the annual Color Run found everyone throwing colored chalk in the air to celebrate. This event benefits a different family every year. This time proceeds will go to Hearts for Binghams and the Bingham family, whose three of five children have had heart transplants.

First graders in Karen Tannehill’s class experiment with gear kits, which were funded by a grant from the Baker Valley Education Foundation.

Carson Lien found herself quite colorful after the Color Run at Baker High School on Nov. 9. Each year, the run is organized by the leadership class.

Kindergartner Tabitha Bradford pairs up with her sister Anne Bradford, her reading buddy from sixth grade, at Haines Elementary. Each grade has reading buddies: Pre-K and 3rd, K and 6th, 1st and 4th, 2nd and 5th.
“Take one upbeat conductor, 28 third-graders, 10 fun-filled Fridays, 8 remorseful reindeer and 5 exhausted elves and you have mayhem and laughs in "Twas the Week After Christmas."

The small group of third-graders from Brooklyn Primary School showcased their hard work during a performance December 9 for family, and also for Brooklyn's entire student body the following week.

"The performance for the whole school is really the icing on the cake for me," said Tanner Denne, who teaches music at Brooklyn. "Sharing the students' hard work with their classmates and younger students is great experience for both the performers and the audience members."

This musical was part of the school district's Friday Experience program, which offers enrichment workshops and opportunities. This play, however, is unique because the students attended every Friday for 10 weeks, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. each time. The three hours included time for lunch as well as recess.

"In total, we will have had 10 rehearsals, one dress rehearsal, and one evening performance," Tanner said.

The musical introduces trouble at the North Pole, where the elves and the reindeer do not get along.

But when the elves decide to take a vacation to a tropical resort, they discover that the reindeer had the same idea.

Which creates more misunderstandings, mayhem and competition about who is most helpful during the Christmas season.

The play is filled with songs and many jokes that leave the young actors smiling when they finish their lines.

Oh, and don't forget the Second-Tier Reindeer — "the least famous reindeer of all" — who get left behind at the North Pole while everyone else heads south.

"If only our names were shorter, we'd be pulling those reins," the children sing.

"Instead we're second-tier reindeer with three syllable names." (Bet you've never heard of Barnaby, Roberto, Gideon, Telulah, Leopold, Luigi, Miriam and Medula.)

But a vacation that forces all of them to get along might be what the elves and reindeer need to find their Christmas spirit again.
Giacomo Rigueiro scrunches his nose as he stirs the gloopy mixture. Gretchen Morgan peers in but doesn't get too close. "It's chunky," he says, scraping the sides to fully mix flour and water into the sourdough starter.

Which smelled, of course, quite sour.

These two seventh-graders are in Sustainable Living, a new class at Baker Middle School offered by science teachers Laura Morley and Kate Johnson.

When explaining the class concept, Kate jokes "We're two science teachers running a culinary arts class."

Using local, seasonal ingredients, the students learned how to make and can salsa, and how to use an abundance of zucchini in a variety of dishes — both sweet (muffins and cake) and savory (zucchini with parmesan).

"We were on zucchini for like a month," said eighth-grader Paul Still.

"Not really," Jordan Bryan, another eighth grader, said with a smile. This class, he said, wasn't what he expected. "I thought it was going to be all papers," Jordan said. Instead it is hands-on, with the kids reading recipes, cooking and tasting the results. In addition to salsa and zucchini, the students made refrigerator pickles and also sourdough starter, which they used to make pancakes (topped with homemade grape jelly) and loaves of sourdough bread.

"The kids just love it," Kate said. Their science rooms aren't equipped for baking, so they've swapped canned goods for use of the culinary arts classroom.

Kate and Laura connected their classes with local businesses Sweet Wife Baking and Lone Pine Cafe to tour the eateries and learn more about the food industry (and eat some samples, too).

Kate said she'd like to expand this part of the course. "I'd like to bring in more community partners," she said.

The class also addressed environmental issues. "We are showcasing activities that lower your carbon footprint, improve your health and support the local economy," Laura said. "Next semester's class will look quite different as the seasons drive the content. I predict we will be growing vegetables rather than canning them!"