With a sudden buzz like a swarm of bees, the drone takes flight straight up to hover over the Baker High School track.

Abby Hobbs, a junior at Baker High School, squints against the sun to see the drone, a grin spreading across her face as she maneuvers it forward and backward in the sky.

“It’s a lot of fun to fly,” she says.

Abby first learned about drones in her engineering class at Baker Technical Institute in the spring of 2017. Her interest sparked, she wanted to learn more and this year is honing her skills and knowledge during independent study for advanced engineering students.

She plans to take a test this spring to become an FAA-certified drone pilot. (Drones are considered "small, unmanned aircraft."))

“Abby’s done so much of this on her own,” said Burke Smejkal, engineering instructor at BTI.

She, along with several classmates, rewrote the manual for flying the school’s drone.

“It’s way easier to read the one that we wrote,” she said.

She’s also worked on several projects to map school district property, such as the BTI greenhouse complex. In October, she programmed the drone to fly a route above Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort to map a future terrain park.

That project was a bit nerve wracking, she said, when the drone disappeared over a hill.

Continued on Page 3
Thanks, Amanda!
I have a shout out to Amanda Washington. She taught a snowflake art lesson while I was sick! I appreciate her help and love for our students!
Jill Johnson, Brooklyn

Science duo
I'd like to give a shout out to Marge and Helen Loennig. This mother and grandmother combination has been in our classroom teaching mini science lessons and experiments/activities.

I'd like to thank them for their dedication to our students, as well as for purchasing all materials required. They have been in our class a couple of times and our students already love them!
In December, students learned about seeds and bulbs as well as what plants need to grow. Students were then able to take this science project home and present it to a parent as a Christmas gift.
Megan Berry, Brooklyn

A good crew for Bulldog Club
A huge shout out to Tracy War ner, Tami Goddard, Amanda Washington, Christie Randall, Heather Vaughn, Janet Conant, Karen Emmons, Kisha Dunlap, LeAnn Cripe and Rochelle Adams for their leadership in running our Bulldog Club after school program.
These amazing Brooklyn paraprofessionals took control of the program and organize fun STEM related activities as well as ensure every child engages in reading during the last hour of their day. Evidence of their work and commitment can be seen on the smiles of the students who partake. Our students are lucky to have such a dedicated group!
Phil Anderson, principal, Brooklyn

Paraprofessionals are 'vital to success'
I wanted to send you a quick email of something very positive that I just witnessed in the 6th grade hall, right outside of my classroom door.
As I am interacting with students in the hallway, I notice that there is a 4th grade class standing outside of Mr. Carpenter's door waiting for music with Mrs. Megan Curry supervising them. Just as I start to shut my classroom door a 4th grade student decides that she doesn't like her situation and decides to throw a temper tantrum. Needless to say this is already a tricky situation and Mrs. Curry totally stays calm and helps the student back down from the fit she is having. As I watch and observe this whole interaction, Mrs. Curry does an amazing job with this student and let me tell you this was probably more than just her first encounter like this for the day.

Our paraprofessionals here at South Baker are vital to our success and they need recognition for the jobs that they do and excel at every single day. Thank you!
Zach Kimball, South Baker

Lots of Top Dawgs
I was in the Brooklyn front office the other day when a boy came in clutching a Top Dawg positive referral in his hand. Mrs. Angela Lattin, the dean of students, met him with a big grin and immediately played the song "Who Let the Dogs Out?" Then they made a call to his mom to share the good news. Principal Phil Anderson said he hears that song all day because kids are getting recognized for good deeds on a regular basis. The joy on this boy's face — and how everyone around him celebrated too — was so wonderful to see.

These awards, plus the reminders of how to "fill other people's buckets" by doing good deeds, is really creating a wonderful, positive vibe throughout Brooklyn's hallways and classrooms.
Lisa Jacoby, parent

Thank you, Fred
Fred Dobbs deserves a BIG shout out for all his hard work at the district office. He has been a lifesaver for many of us. Fred takes on any task with a smile, from washing windows to running Bulldog Pride flyers to businesses, and the shipping and receiving area has never looked better! Fred has taken organization and flow of food service inventory and deliveries to a whole new level. We count on him a great deal and appreciate his willingness to help. Thank you, Fred!
Jessica Dalton, Sandy Harper, and Sandy Mitchell

Shout Outs

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.

Thanks, Robin
Shout out to Robin Mawhinney who recently retired from Baker High School. Ms. Mawhinney served the district for over 20 years in multiple capacities. She loved our students and was a tremendous asset to our school.

As a testament to that fact, when her retirement was announced at an all-school assembly, the entire student body gave her a well-deserved standing ovation. Thank you, Robin, for your years of service.
Greg Mitchell, principal, Baker High School

To Officer Woodward:
Shout out to SRO Officer Lance Woodward. Your connections with our students at Brooklyn Primary creates bonds that will last a lifetime. Thank you!
Angela Lattin, dean of students, Brooklyn Primary

Improving the culture
Shout out to Toni Zikmund for her leadership in our high school culture. Ms. Zikmund is our ASB Advisor, Cheerleading Coach, FBLA Advisor, and teaches multiple college-level courses in our Business Technology department. In addition, she will be spearheading our initiative to improve school culture through the Josten’s Renaissance program next year. This program is geared toward promoting a healthy climate in schools by focusing on the education of core internal values.
Greg Mitchell, principal, Baker High School

Community partners
Shout out to Sweet Wife Baking and Charley’s Deli and Ice Cream for supporting the Brooklyn Primary School Student of the Week program with treat coupons. You put a smile on faces each week!
Angela Lattin, dean of students, Brooklyn Primary
Students place in Patriot's Pen contest

Two students from Haines Elementary earned honors for their essay in the Patriot's Pen contest, sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

All students in grades 6, 7 and 8 were eligible to participate. The essay competition "gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on an annual patriotic theme."

The 2017 theme was "The America I Believe In."

Essays are judged at the local level, and first-place writers advance to state level judging and then national.

In Baker City, the top three winners in the local Patriot's Pen competition were:

• First: Naomi Potter, Harvest Christian Academy
• Second: Eleanor Lamb, Haines Elementary, grade 6
• Third: Wade Hawkins, Haines Elementary, grade 6

The essays are judged on how well the writer understands the theme. "Knowledge of the theme" is worth 30 points; "theme development" is worth 35 and "clarity of ideas" is worth 35 points. The length was 300-400 words.

We have been through tough times, the world against itself, along with our country. But our veterans have fought for our generation, and our future generations, and that's what matters."

- Excerpt from essay by Wade Hawkins

This generation is used to having freedom, but we don't realize how much freedom we have. I feel that in the dictionary, the word free should be under the United States of America."

- Excerpt from essay by Eleanor Lamb

Alumni spotlight: Travis Cook

Travis Cook graduated from Baker High School in 2003. He attended Oregon State University and graduated in 2007 with a bachelor's in horticulture and an option in viticulture (cultivation of grapevines) and enology (study of wines).

"I was the second graduate from OSU with this designation of study," he said. "The viticulture and enology program was in its infancy while I was a student there."

Travis wanted to focus on growing grapevines.

"That meant horticulture was my degree instead of food science and technology," he said. "From the time I was 12 or 13, viticulture and enology was what I wanted to study and becoming a winemaker was my life goal."

In 2004, he started planting wine grapes on the family homestead in Keating Valley.

"At the time this was completely experimental. My hope was to come back to Baker once I had enough tools in my bag to make it work," he said. "It was always a dream to be a pioneer of an old industry but in a brand new location. It's still in its infancy, but it has great potential. The vines struggle every year, but the wines are truly amazing."

He was away from Baker City for 13 years while he worked as a senior vineyard manager in the Willamette Valley — during which he established 10 vineyards, managed 35 and worked with 80 different wineries.

"My plan was to make as many industry connections and learn as much as I could before returning to take on the winery project which I had started as a hobby," he said.

He moved home in 2016 with his wife and two children, and soon after opened the Copper Belt Winery tasting room on Main Street.

"It's not easy doing this anywhere, but especially here," he said. "I have a great support system behind me and my industry connections back in the Willamette Valley are still pulling favors for me."

Drone:

"I was actually scared when I couldn't see it," she said.

But it came back. Abby downloaded the images to create a map — both two-dimensional and three-dimensional — that another class will use to make a model for the proposed terrain park.

To control the drone, Abby uses an iPad app called Drone Deploy. If she needs to map a specific plot of land, she sets points at the corners, then programs the drone to make a certain number of laps over the land.

Although it will fly on its own with this program, she can still override the controls to steer clear of obstacles such as power lines or trees. It generally takes three people for a successful flight — one to watch the drone, one to watch the iPad and a third to be the "side pilot."

Last summer, she used her drone experience at a STEM course for women offered by BTI at the Eastern Oregon University campus.

"I was able to fly that and take pictures of all the students," she said. "I was the only one who knew how to fly it."

Aside from the flying technique, Abby has learned where drones can fly — there are designated no-fly zones, such as airports and hospital helicopter landing pads.

"BTI has a unique opportunity to train in the drone industry because Baker City is located in one of the six approved flying areas in the country," Burke said. "We hope to expand our program significantly over the coming years to include a focus on the design, construction and maintenance of these types of equipment. The industry is exploding in the Pacific Northwest, giving students with these skills a great opportunity for employment."

To learn more about BTI, visit bakerti.org.
Once a week, Ma'lena Wirth sets out snacks, covers the whiteboard with an assortment of words in Spanish and English, and then she waits.

She never knows how many parents will show up for this informal English lesson.

Four come, then two more. By the time the lesson is under way, 16 adults are crowded around a table and carefully taking notes.

Ma'lena is an interpreter and translator for Baker School District. She works with English Second Language (ESL) students and their parents.

During these evening sessions once a week, she teaches in a conversational style to help the parents learn English, especially when written.

"They understand the English, but don't recognize it in print," she said.

Words that sound alike and look alike are also a big focus, including a-an-and, their-there-they're, quite-quiet-quit and thought-taught.

Some English sounds don't exist in Spanish, such as the "th" blend. To help her students learn the proper way to make certain sounds, Ma'lena has them practice by looking in a mirror (making the "th" sound requires the speaker to stick out the tongue).

Some words also sound different to individual ears. For Fernando Rosales, instead of "change" he heard "chain" because English speakers tend to drop the last sounds of a word.

"That's why you need to see it," Ma'lena said.

Her lessons cover words and sentences that have a practical use, such as money.

"Money — dinero — is something you use every day," she said.

The class is mixture of languages. Ma'lena often says something in English, then repeats it in Spanish. More often than not, her English questions are met with Spanish answers.

And that's okay with her. "I want to hear English or Spanish — I just want to hear your voice," she said.

One approach she uses is to role play. She asks Nico Duran to pretend she is shopping, while Bertha Garcia plays the part of a store employee. Their goal is to use the night's featured words: buy, much, cost, change and pay.

In English.

"I want to buy a box of cereal," Nico said.

Next Ma'lena brings out sentences with a missing word, and five volunteers must hold a sentence, read it out loud, and then rearrange themselves in order.

Throughout this process many side conversations pop up as the students ask for clarification or offer a comment.

"It's never too late to learn," said Juan Macias.

Fernando Rosales fills in answers in his English language workbook under the watchful eye of his son, Luiz Rosales, a fourth grader at South Baker.

Rural Community Grant will Help Youth Soccer

Northwest Farm Credit Services has awarded a $1,000 grant to Baker School District 5J to help fund the Soccer Field Lighting project.

This award was made possible through the Northwest Farm Credit Services Rural Community Grant Program.

"This project wouldn't be possible without the dedicated coordination effort of Pat Flanagan, and community partners like Farm Credit Services. These grant funds will support our youth soccer programs by lighting the soccer fields and provide safety and flexibility for games and practices. On behalf of Baker School District, I’d like to thank Northwest Farm Credit Services for supporting our students and community through this donation," said Mark Witty, superintendent.

The lighting project goal for completion is fall of 2018.

Chinese students visit Baker

In February, a group of students and teachers from Zhejiang Province, China, will be visiting Baker City.

The 15 students will be divided among the schools. Three will be attending grade 6 at South Baker Intermediate, and 12 will take classes at Baker Middle School.

The visitors will be in Baker City through February 24.

The two teachers will be hosted by superintendent Mark Witty, and the students will be hosted by families in the Baker School District community.

As part of this exchange partnership, a group of 18 — students, staff and community members — will visit China this spring.

To learn more about the exchange program, email david.laws@bakersd.org, thomas.joseph@bakersd.org or mark.witty@bakersd.org.
Assessing the district's facilities

By Kevin Cassidy
Chair, Baker School Board

Having been a student, a parent, a community member and now on year five of serving on the Baker 5J Board of Education, I have had a life-long interaction with the facilities that we enjoy through our local school district here in Baker. However, it has been apparent to me from my more recent involvement the impacts these facilities have on student success and community vitality. Baker finds itself at a crossroads regarding the future investment in our public school facilities.

We are not unlike many of the 197 public school districts in Oregon trying to answer the question of how we take aging infrastructure that was largely built prior to the Great Depression of the 1930s and again post World War II, and make it viable to the needs of students and our community for generations to come. This is a difficult question when considering any solution relies on a community to support the investment of making significant and sustainable changes.

Many of you are now aware of the great work being done by our staff, parents and community members in becoming familiar with the issues our facilities present in offering a quality educational experience and a viable asset to support community functions. Our Board refers to this as the “Long Range Facilities Planning Process” (LRFPP).

This process involves conversations with staff, parents, consultant groups, business owners, and a group of 25 community members representing various groups throughout our District. We have labeled this group the “Long Range Facilities Planning Committee” (LRFPC).

Two years ago, our Board asked the District to move forward and obtain grants that would support a facilitated process to evaluate facility needs, involve our stakeholders and ultimately make a recommendation to our Board as to a direction we could take to address our aging schools.

To date, much time has been spent touring our schools, touring other schools in neighboring districts, meeting with stakeholders and working with professional consultants to formulate a list of priorities the Committee agrees must be addressed in order to provide our students and community with quality facilities for years to come. I would like to take a moment and share with you a list of the priorities that have been identified through the LRFPP:

- Capacity
- Safety and Security
- 21st Century Learning Environment
- Operational Costs and Energy Efficiency
- Deferred Maintenance and Repair Costs
- Community Facilities
- Technology
- Limiting Transitions for Children and Families

These priorities are now being factored into various options for consideration. The LRFPC is evaluating these options and related cost estimates in formulating recommendations to present to our Board in the next few months.

Mark Witty, superintendent, commented on how the committee has taken the time to fully study the district’s facilities through a process that started with the first meeting on March 6, 2017.

“I am greatly appreciative of each member’s commitment to the process, which will translate into a thorough and balanced recommendation to the school board,” he said.

The LRFP committee anticipates the Board will survey the community on recommendations before moving to a final plan of action. I ask that you reach out and share your thoughts as this discussion continues. After all, these facilities belong to all of us. Our schools represent and identify who we are as a community!

The Long-Range Facilities Planning Committee began meeting in March to start assessing the school district’s instructional facilities. The committee met several times a month, and also toured the district’s buildings and visited neighboring districts. The committee anticipates making a recommendation to the school board this spring.

Timeline of process for Long-Range Facilities Planning Committee

January 2016
Created Facilities Master Planning (FMP) Committee to review the district’s instructional facilities and make a recommendation to the board

June 2016
District assessed all instructional facilities, and reviewed the final Facilities Assessment report identifying various needs of the buildings. The FMP committee presented a final report to the school board in November 2016

January 2017
Approval to form a Long-Range Facilities Planning Committee

March 2017
LRFPC created with 24 community members, key stakeholders and district staff. Objective: review FMP findings then address the question of "what next?"

February-March 2018
LRFPC makes a recommendation to the school board

Long-Range Facilities Planning Committee members

Rosemary Abell, Aletha Bonebrake, Kevin Cassidy, Charlene Chase, Richard Chaves, Tabor Clarke, Josey Gaslin, Sonny Gulick, Pat Heriza, Mark Johnson, Chris Knoll, Katie Lamb, Tammie McEnroe, Kim Mosier, Bruce Nichols, Dawn O’Grady, Beth Shirtcliff, Tim Smith, Dan Srack, Jeff Tomac, Jim Tomlinson, Craig Ward, Ma’lena Wirth, Mark Witty, Jason Yencopal
Science was the theme for the Christmas party in Karen Tannehill's first grade class at Brooklyn Primary School. Above, Liam Dougherty, left, and Allison Sandoval make slime. Below, Juniper Joseph, Ty Price and Gemma Petrik choose a color of bells and attempt to pick up only that color using magnets. The magnets were part of a STEM cart Tannehill put together with the help of a grant from the Baker Valley Education Foundation.

RIGHT: Third-graders from Brooklyn Primary School were able to tour various departments at Baker Technical Institute during a field trip last fall. Here, Evan Bigler let the younger students take a turn at driving a robotic car down the hallway. Evan and his classmates built the robot and can program it to pick up a box — similar, he told the kids, to devices used on Mars. During their afternoon at BTI, the third graders learned about robotics, aquaponics, welding, heavy equipment, agriculture and culinary arts — all courses offered at BTI. The field trip was organized by Sharon Defrees, who as a "teacher on special assignment" is creating more science field trips for elementary students.
Meet the school board

Kevin Cassidy

Tell us about yourself:
I am a lifelong resident of "Baker" City. I was born in 1970 at what is now the St. Elizabeth Towers. I attended school at North Baker (K-2), Brooklyn (3-6), BMS (7-8) and BHS (9-12). I graduated in 1988 from BHS.

After attending and graduating college and a brief stint being self-employed, I returned to Baker in 1996 and have made this my home ever since. My wife Darnel graduated from BHS in 1984 and came back to the community after graduating from college. We met at the local grocery store and married two years later in 1998.

Do you have a child in school?
We have a son, Kale, who is currently a sophomore at BHS and taking additional classes at the Baker Web Academy and BTI. Kale is a strong student and has utilized the various educational platforms Baker 5J offers to keep him engaged and growing in his thirst for education. Kale also started running cross country and track as a freshman and has thrived in that sport. He lettered in both cross country and track as a freshman and was a GOL Scholar Athlete. This year he won the GOL District Cross Country title and finished ninth at state. He again was named a GOL Scholar athlete this past fall. We couldn't be prouder of his overall growth and accomplishments.

Why did you choose to be on the school board?
My grandfather, Duane Cassidy, was a strong influence in my childhood and young adulthood. He served in World War II and was a prisoner of war in Germany for 18 months of that service. He was a significant part of the Ellingson lumber family as the CFO and only non-Ellingson serving on the company board. He also served on the Baker 5J School Board in the early 1970s and was chair for two of those years.

Grandpa always spoke highly of his service on the school board, which made a lasting impression on me as something I could do as a community service. In 2013, the school board was in a state of challenge that was having a negative impact within the community and statewide. I felt that I could be a part of a solution to correct those leadership challenges and take our District in a positive and productive direction.

On January 1, I became the OSBA Vice President for 2018. It is rare to have a rural voice serve on the OSBA Executive Board. I hope this service will provide opportunities to assist our students with better funding and program supports.

Andrew Bryan

Tell us about yourself:
I first visited Baker in 1996 while dating Ann (Heriza). We were married in June of 1997 at St. Francis Cathedral and had our reception as the first wedding in the newly renovated Geiser Grand Hotel!

We moved from Seattle to Boise, and then to Baker in 2003 to open Mad Matilda's; essentially, we kept circling in on "returning" to Baker. When Ann and I met I was on my way back to Las Vegas, New Mexico, or Alpine, Texas, so Baker was a good stand in for wanting to live in an historic ranching community.

Ann and I are both children of ranchers, which means we have cousins who still ranch to this day, and agricultural interests ourselves, but have lived the life of micropreneurs. We maintain a cluster of little enterprises, from Mad Matilda's and Queen City Modern, to Baker City Realty, and my educational consulting interests, Trek Epic, Core Gift Institute, and Emerge Gap Year.

Do you have a child in school?
Our daughter, Josie, graduated this last spring from Baker High School. She spent her entire schooling years in Baker, and is now a freshman in the Honors Program at Oregon State!

Why did you choose to be on the school board?
I filled a vacancy on the board in 2010 at the bequest of Ginger Savage and Damien Yervasi...given my now nearly 30 years as an educator in proprietary settings and private practice, the school board has been a good fit in terms of community service.

The combination of a background as an educator and entrepreneur has melded well with Baker 5J's dynamic and enterprising system. Our school system is now recognized across the state and region as a novel approach to how a district can impact a community and local economy through developing a diverse set of programs and services with an eye to best practices and the application business world like acumen.

Katie Lamb

Tell us about yourself:
My husband, Eric, and I moved to Baker sixteen years ago. We choose to live in Baker for the pace of lifestyle, vibrant community, and access to recreational activities.

Do you have a child in school?
My daughter Sydney is 13 and attends Baker Middle School and Baker Technical Institute. My daughter Ellie is 11 and attends Haines Elementary School.

Why did you choose to be on the school board?
I choose to serve on the Baker 5J school board for many reasons.

After having two children in the district for several years now, I became increasingly involved with discussions and issues within the district. I started attending board meetings as well as meeting with board members and Superintendent Mark Witty outside of the board room. I realized our goals were very similar. We all want what is best for the children in Baker. The timing was perfect for me to run for the open school board position, and eventually join the board.

The most important reason I choose to serve is for the students in Baker County. Every child in our district deserves the best educational opportunities we can provide. Innovative and exciting things are happening in our district. I look forward to seeing our students grow and enjoy successes within our district as well as their further educational journeys.

Chris Hawkins

Tell us about yourself:
Our family moved to the Baker City area in 1994. We moved to Baker City for the small-town atmosphere, outdoor activities and scenic setting.

Do you have a child in school?
We have two boys attending school in the Baker 5J school district. One is attending Haines Elementary School and the other is attending Baker Middle School.

Why did you choose to be on the school board?
Education is the foundation of community vitality and prosperity. I choose to be on the school board to promote these ideas and to be a part of bettering education for Baker 5J students.
A head start to middle school
Sixth-graders are taking music classes at Baker Middle School

The raucous chatter fades away as seventh- and eighth-graders settle in to their third period classes.

Then more footsteps enter the hallways of Baker Middle School — sixth-graders, arriving for their lessons in choir and band.

This is the first year that sixth-graders from South Baker Intermediate School have taken classes at BMS.

"I like being in choir because Mrs. Violette is very nice," said Trinity Palmer. "And we feel like big kids."

SBI has four sixth-grade classes. Each day, two classes are bused to BMS at 9:40 a.m. and return by 10:50 a.m.

At the beginning of the year, all sixth-graders had the chance to experience both choir and band, then rank which was their first choice.

"Only two people did not get their first choice," said Hannah Violette, who teaches choir.

As one group of students rehearses songs with Hannah, the other half is in the band room under the instruction of Hope Watts.

The BMS music room had to be separated this year so both choir and band could be held concurrently, Hannah said.

As for their music class of choice, a few based it on their family ties.

"My mom took band and played a bunch of different instruments. I really like to play instruments," Evangeline Torres said.

Providing this opportunity to sixth-grade students has two goals, said Nanette Lehman, South Baker principal.

"The goal in providing the BMS music opportunity is to expose students to choir and band prior to their movement to BMS, and enable them to make an informed decision when selecting their electives as seventh graders," she said.

"It is also a method to assist students in the transition to another building by getting to know some staff, expectations, building layout prior to becoming seventh graders."

Music is required for sixth grade, but is an elective at the middle school level. Skye Flanagan, BMS principal, said he surveyed the sixth-graders, and a big percentage said they’d be interested in taking either choir or music as a seventh-grader.

"I think it’s been working well," he said of the program. "It’s nice to mix it up and give them exposure to different avenues of music."

Giving the sixth-graders a glimpse of middle school routines also helps prepare them for the transition next year.

"It’s nice for them to see how it works on a minute level," he said.