



SPRING FORWARD

Come downtown Saturday: Pet Parade • p 5
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LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

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A hail of a storm



MARCH BEGAN LIKE FEBRUARY ENDED – First the Monday, Feb. 26 hailstorm swept over the western Fidalgo Island peninsula and through La Conner. Then Saturday, March 2 an even bigger hail storm deposited at least half an inch of pellets in the early afternoon. That turned to a snowy slush before 5 p.m. The Weekly News was on the story. — Photo by Ken Stern

Shelter Bay board to be questioned

Judge approves discovery against defendant directors

By Ken Stern

The five Shelter Bay Community board directors sued by former community resident Jan Henrie almost a year ago are making another attempt to dismiss Henrie's Skagit County Superior Court civil complaint alleging breach of fiduciary duty and malfeasance.

Defendants Wendy Poulton, Monte Hicks, Louise Kari, Elaine Dixon and Joseph Hurley filed a motion for reconsideration Feb. 20, arguing she has no standing, or right to bring her claims.

Their attorneys' motion for reconsideration follows a Feb. 8 order by Judge Laura Riquelme stating "the Court found that the Plaintiff has standing" at its first hearing, April 14, 2023. Riquelme decreed she "finds no basis to change that ruling."

Still claiming Henrie does not have standing, the defense for the fourth time sought summary judgment, or dismissal of the case in favor of the Shelter Bay directors. Summary judgment motions were denied in August and December. The defense relied on its argument that Henrie lacks standing.

Henrie's attorney's March 1 response point out that the defense motion represents the "fifth attempt at a bite of the apple" of "re-argu(ing) issues

(continued on page 8)

Author Egan advocates for new MV Library

By Bill Reynolds

During his celebrated career as an award-winning newspaper columnist and author, Timothy Egan has traveled the globe in search of the stories that connect him to his readers.

For a much longer time – dating to childhood – he has made shorter treks to public libraries and rural bookmobile stops to discover stories that would shape and define Egan as one of the nation's most powerful voices on behalf of literacy.

The University of Washington alum, a former op-ed writer for the New York Times and author of 10 books, brought his support of libraries to Mount Vernon on Saturday.

Egan keynoted a 90-minute program at the historic Lincoln Theatre, of which the Weekly News was a primary sponsor, honoring libraries in general and construction of the \$53 million multi-use Mount Vernon Library Commons Project specifically. "This project," Egan said of the spacious and eco-friendly new Mount Vernon library, due to open in late June, "is a special place on the planet. It's the product of dreamers. The new library will be a keeper of your culture."

Egan, a Seattle native with Irish Catholic roots who grew up in the Spokane area, reveres libraries. He calls them "churches of books."

"We've seen an unprecedented number of book bans in recent years," Egan said. "But not reading books is worse than banning books. If you're not offending someone, you don't have enough books on your shelves."

Egan, 69, expressed gratitude for the bookmobile program that ventured out to his remote boyhood home.

"Because of the bookmobile," he said, "Indian Trail Road could go from black-and-white to Technicolor."

Egan sprinkled humor throughout a presentation that

(continued on page 5)



BEST SELLING AUTHOR CAME TO TOWN — Timothy Egan spoke at the Lincoln Theatre Saturday for a fundraiser in support of the Mount Vernon Library Commons. He packed the place. After his talk fans lined up the aisle waiting for him to sign his name to the book they had bought, or brought. — Photo by Bill Reynolds

Mount Vernon offers public first look inside new library commons

By Bill Reynolds

The public got to peek into the Mount Vernon Library Commons Project, under construction across from the Skagit County Courthouse, with a series of tours on Saturday afternoon.

Designed for climate resiliency and as an integral community hub for the next 100 years, the \$53 million facility will feature a 4,000-square-foot children's library, the largest one north of Seattle; a teen and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) center; study rooms; a computer lab; and quiet reading spaces.

The building's commons area will be highlighted by a 300-plus person conference center, large meeting room, and commercial kitchen. Construction is expected to be completed in June.

Over \$50 million has been raised for the project. Additional fundraising is under way to furnish and equip the library.

"It's a legacy for all of us and a statement of our community values," former

(continued on page 5)

Legislature OKs three initiatives

Voters will decide three others

By Laurel Demkovich, Grace Deng, Jerry Cornfield and Bill Lucia
Washington State Standard

OLYMPIA – Three citizen initiatives designed to lift restrictions on police vehicle pursuits, prohibit income taxes and establish a "bill of rights" for parents of K-12 students are set to become law in Washington after winning approval in the state House and Senate on Monday.

The initiatives do not require the governor's signature. They will take effect 90 days after the legislative session ends – so in early June if lawmakers wrap up their work for the year as expected on Thursday.

Passage of three initiatives in one day is historic in Olympia. State lawmakers have only enacted citizen initiatives about a half-dozen times during the past 110 years, according to the secretary of state's office. Only once – in 1995 when two were approved – did the Legislature approve more than one of these initiatives in a single year. The group Let's Go Washington, with financial support from investor Brian Heywood, gathered hundreds of thousands of signatures for six initiatives sent to the Legislature this year.

Democrats, who hold majorities in both the House and Senate, agreed to advance three of the measures to floor votes. The three other initiatives – to repeal the state's capital gains tax, scrap the Climate Commitment Act and its carbon market and make it easier for workers to opt out of Washington's new long-term care insurance program – are headed to voters this fall.

Approval of the three initiatives marks a win for Republicans in the Legislature, who generally support all six of the measures and fought to get them hearings and floor votes.

Income tax

Initiative 2111 would prohibit Washington state and its local governments from imposing taxes on personal income.

In the Senate, 38 lawmakers voted for the initiative and 11 – all Democrats – voted against it. In the House, it passed 76-21.

"This initiative is designed to do one thing, which is to codify in law the state's longstanding tradition of not having a tax based on personal income," Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair June Robinson, D-Everett, said.

The proposal will not change any current laws.

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From the editor —

The right side in Shelter Bay

To those wondering whatever happened to that March 2023 Skagit County Superior Court civil complaint against five Shelter Bay Community board members, alleged to have breached their fiduciary duty and for malfeasance by a property owner, an update is on page 1. It was last April that the court denied an injunction and temporary restraining order that would have prevented the board members from making financial decisions.

But Judge Laura Riquelme did not dismiss the case, though in August she issued a stay, preventing the plaintiff's attorneys from deposing the board members, questioning them under oath and using subpoenas to gain information. She repeatedly — four times now through February — rejected the defense attorneys' call for ending the case in their favor on the basis of standing, the right to bring claims against their clients.

The judge lifted the stay on discovery Feb. 8. The defense lawyers, doing what lawyers do, filed yet another motion asking for reconsideration for dismissing the case based on the same argument of standing. The plaintiff's attorneys are crying foul, that "five bites of the apple" are not allowed. The cliché is a legal term for a second effort using the same reasoning that failed once.

Last May, when the defense first filed for dismissal, the plaintiff appeared on the ropes, arguing that the court erred in ruling the defendants had no fiduciary duty to his client and that the judge applied the wrong standard of law. Whether he convinced the judge that she was in error, she kept the lawsuit active, just pausing, not ending the question of proper or improper handling of fiduciary duty.

If the judge again rules that the defense is wrong on the issue of standing, depositions under oath will take place by early April. That will provide evidence, that evaluated in the light of day, will validate one side or the other. If these board members have acted correctly, the presented facts will exonerate them. If the evidence shows these board members manipulated information and the rules of governance, the criticisms by many Shelter Bay residents will be found to have been accurate.

The roughly 1,800 people living there reside in the Shelter Bay Community. That is its name, with a capital "C." It is twice the size of La Conner and about a third of the population living within the 98257 ZIP code. La Conner is a town, a municipality governed and regulated under the laws of the state of Washington, with its own elected officials. One tool — and rule — available to its citizens — for that is what they are, residents within a political jurisdiction — is the state's Public Records Act. A second regulation is the Open Meetings Act.

Both of these laws are available to everyone, whether or not they live within the town's boundaries. Then there is the local newspaper, that odd watchdog of democracy anachronism that, as long as it is in business, attends and reports on meetings and ask questions of elected and professional staff during the course of developing — if not investigating — stories.

Across the channel? The property owners of Shelter Bay are members and sort of owners of the Shelter Bay Community, a nonprofit organization and have a role with the Shelter Bay Company, which the Shelter Bay Community owns.

But membership organization or owning stock, both are private organizations, not municipal governments. Shelter Bay's residents are not citizens of Shelter Bay. While the state governs both corporations and homeowners' association, these residents and their governing body only have judicial recourse, as all citizens do.

And the La Conner Weekly News covering the activities, events and news of Shelter Bay? It is by invitation only. Venturing onto that private property, reporters can be asked to leave meetings, hearings, even parades, concerts and barbecues. That limits the fun — and the inquiry — for everyone. When access to information — to oral discussions or financial records are blocked off, it is fair to wonder if people are being blocked out.

— Ken Stern

Musings — On the editor's mind

Attending the Mount Vernon Library Foundations fundraiser in support of building the Mount Vernon Library Commons got me thinking — again — about libraries in my life. And right, I wrote about libraries within the first 90 days I was in La Conner. Here is that musings.

Lucky me. I keep getting to find out new things. Did you know September is Library Card Sign-up Month?

I learned about this reading the Weekly News.

Nerd or not, I love libraries. I remember going with my family as a kid. Weekly, I stacked the books to be returned on the stairs of the house.

I was crazy about sports, and war, and read biographies and histories. Go Yankees. I read books twice.

I bought my first typewriter — parents, explain — at a sales and repair store across from the downtown library. It's a 1920s Smith & Corona. Come to the office and take a look.

My college typewriter was a portable Underwood, with a

hard, boxy case. Probably more for efficiency than frugality, the "1" was the "l" key. Explain that to your kids, also.

I have spent more time in libraries than any place except home and school. This is true over the decades, before free WiFi.

Downtown Seattle or downtown Mount Vernon, I have been in both libraries. The downtown Minneapolis library was designed with a wing roof, to add a signature building to the city scape.

Same with Toledo's library.

It's a WPA project, first, which is not only handsome but provided years of work for thousands of people during the Depression. The 1990s addition was again a commitment to employing people and revitalizing the downtown.

Remember card catalogs? And long wooden tables with brass lamps on them? That's the library through my young adult years.

Remember the murals and sculptures and embossed reliefs

Fighting for our environment and tax credit for our farmers

As our communities face harsher climate effects including droughts, heatwaves, and floods, it is important for all of us to work together towards ensuring a healthier environment. That's why we are dedicated to pursuing two approaches to environmental protection.

First, I am committed to investing in clean energy technologies that create good-paying jobs, lower energy bills and support a path toward energy independence.

House Bill 1924—which supports fusion technology—passed the Senate and will be signed into law. By incorporating this technology into our state's clean energy policies, we can more easily meet our energy needs.

Fusion is among the most environmentally friendly sources of energy with zero carbon emissions and no long-lived radioactive nuclear waste. By clashing atoms together, fusion can release a million times more energy than burning fossil fuels. In essence, with fusion, we are creating stars on Earth — and a cleaner, better future.

House Bill 1768—which incentivizes the use of green hydrogen—passed the House but unfortunately did not get enough



support in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. By providing a public utilities tax exemption to light/power businesses using green hydrogen, this bill fosters private-public partnership and innovation that spurs local economic development.

Through a chemical process known as electrolysis, we can use electrical currents to separate hydrogen from oxygen in water. Green hydrogen is a clean energy source that only emits water vapor—and uses our existing infrastructure, it is 100 percent sustainable, storable, and a viable form of energy.

Second, I am committed to ensuring our farming community is meaningfully involved in environmental protection. Our farmers feed us and the world, and we must do everything to support them.

House Bill 1936—which

provides a tax credit for farmers in a conservation program—unfortunately did not move out of the House. This tax credit could go towards new equipment, seed, feed, and other expenditures.

This helps farmers keep natural resources and farmland healthy for all—while also ensuring farms prosper with a tax credit. This is a win-win for everyone.

Our legislative district is beautiful. We have a lot to be proud of—and a lot to protect.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue my life-long dedication to public service. As a veteran having attended the U.S. Naval Academy, graduated from Naval Nuclear Power School, trained at a naval nuclear reactor plant, and served in the Middle East and Southeast Asia as a public affairs officer, I am honored to serve you here in the Washington State Legislature.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Laws target youth

On Feb. 7, 16 year-old sophomore Nex Benedict went into the girls' bathroom at the high school in Owasso, Oklahoma. An altercation occurred in the bathroom which ended in Nex receiving a serious head injury. Three students were involved in the altercation. The school did not call an ambulance nor did they report the incident to police. Nex had been consistently bullied since school started last fall because they identified as non-binary. This means that Nex considered themselves neither a boy nor a girl. Nex was just Nex. Family members took Nex to the hospital where they were released that same evening. No CT scan was done to assess them for

a concussion, in spite of the fact that Nex had blacked out during the assault. The next morning, Nex died.

Oklahoma has the most anti-LGBTQ+ youth legislation. Their laws force youth to use the bathroom which matches their birth certificate gender. That is what Nex did.

The governor of Oklahoma has supported legislation to discriminate against all LGBTQ+ youth. The school superintendent produced a video that says the schools will not tolerate any gender diverse youth. This same superintendent appointed an incendiary blog poster to be on the Advisory Committee for the Oklahoma schools. These adult actions set the stage for what happened.

These laws that target our youth have real life consequences. Nex is dead. The other students' lives will be forever changed no matter the legal outcome. All of these students in Oklahoma were pawns in an "adult" political game. It isn't a game. Every student has the right to feel and be safe at school. How do we help this be the case in our school districts? This merits some hard questions.

PFLAG Skagit is a local non-profit that supports, advocates for and educates about the LGBTQ+ community. Our passion is making the world community a more welcoming place for our community.

Melanie Moonstone
Linden Jordan
PFLAG Skagit

If Trump's trials start after Nov. 5

Much concern has been raised regarding the former president's attorneys' attempts to delay, delay, delay his pending criminal trials. Some fear that unless the former president is convicted in a court of law prior to election day, the conduct alleged against him may not be considered by voters.

As a retired prosecutor, I believe the law applies equally to all. Also, the due process clause of the Constitution accords every criminal defendant the presumption of innocence unless proven

guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

As a conscientious citizen and voter, however, my responsibility differs importantly from the responsibility of a juror. More often than not, highly relevant facts regarding a candidate's character, honesty, past performance, etc., have not been litigated in a court of law.

Nevertheless, I have to make my best voting decision.

Say, for example, I heard a recorded phone conversation between a recently defeated La Conner candidate and our Skagit County Clerk. Say the candidate threateningly pressures her to find him just enough votes to change

the result of the election in his favor. Say the candidate does not deny the call. How would you describe this behavior? Anti-democratic? Disgusting? Disqualifying?

The former president made just such a recorded call to the secretary of state of Georgia and threateningly pressured him. Disqualifying? Or is this sort of behavior by a president now acceptable in America?

A similar non-legal analysis can be made of many uncontroverted events of January 6, 2021. I hope to address those events in a future letter, the editor willing.

Shunji Asari, Shelter Bay

naming Art, Music, Literature, Philosophy, and Science in libraries of that era? Those murals and sculptures are designed into the fabric and bones of old libraries. Spend a day, well, half a day, in the Library of Congress and be slack jawed at the esteem ideas and values were once given in our society.

Maybe that is why I revere knowledge and ideas as well as words. I imprinted on all those ideals in my formative years.

Libraries are like shoes, or the ground. If we don't use them, if we don't stand in — by — them, our mobility is limited.

Hard to go far, then.

So God bless librarians and library cards. Words, ideas and knowledge are still a child's best ticket to a sustainable future. Whether or not we promote a yes to the offer is up to each of us.

LETTER POLICY

Please write! Letters up to 350 words are welcome as are longer analyses and statements. Write a 450 word guest column. **Deadline: 5 p.m. Sunday for next issue.** Include your name, address and phone number for verification. Letters are edited for civility clarity and style.

Town yard waste pick up set

The Town of La Conner's Public Works Department will be picking up yard waste the week of March 25- 29. The crew will pick up small branches, clippings and other yard waste, but cannot take large limbs, grass clippings or anything in a plastic bag. If you live within the town limits of La Conner and are interested in scheduling a pickup, please call Town Hall at 466-3125 by Wednesday, March 20th. Your one-time pickup is not to exceed one pile at 60 cu ft. e.g. 5 feet x 4 feet x 3 feet.

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OBITUARIES

Donna Kay Cushing
January 19, 1945
February 21, 2024

Donna Kay Cushing (Griffin), 79, of La Conner, passed away in the evening of Feb. 21, 2024, of heart failure. Donna was the second child of four born to Jack and Elva Griffin on Jan. 19, 1945, in Kalamazoo, Mich. Donna spent her young years in Otsego, Mich., attending school, enjoyed dancing with friends at the town hall, and visiting her dear grandparents in Otsego, and up north in Mikado, Mich.

Donna married Richard Cushing in 1971. Their marriage lasted 53 years. Donna enjoyed a 30-plus-year career at GTE/Verizon. Some of her positions there started in customer service on a telephone rotary helping customers calling in for new phone service or for repairs. She progressed to managing Phone Mart Stores, and then Marketing Event manager. Donna traveled the U.S. to host GTE customers who sponsored sports events such as baseball, football, basketball, senior golf. The Seattle-based sports teams sponsors were also her responsibility.

Donna's people personality, kindness, humor and communication skills made longtime friends, and that experience at GTE became a highlight of her life's memories.

Donna lived in a very friendly neighborhood where she helped put on the Fourth of July get-together with some truly great neighbors. Donna enjoyed interior decorating her home, and shopping for decorations



that went together. She also enjoyed creating pots and hanging baskets of flowers. Donna made delicious meals for the family's holiday get-togethers. After Donna retired, she enjoyed raising puppies two times: first Oliver then Anton. Donna enjoyed 30 plus years of sailing Puget Sound and the Gulf Islands with Rich.

Donna is survived by a sister Carol (Jack) and family, and niece Buffy (Roy) and family in Michigan; husband Rich, daughter Debbie and son David (Nancy); grandchildren, Brittany (Serian), Cole (Kaitlyn), Mitchel (Cassidy); great-grandchildren, Angela, Aiden, Landon, Mila Ann, Zoey Lynn and Rhett; great-great-granddaughter Hayleigh Mae; sisters Sheila (John) and Louise; and many nieces and nephews.

Donna was a very kind, thoughtful, loving, caring person with a wonderful heartwarming smile. Donna did not wish to have services. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the charity of your choice.

Phyllis Fiege

Phyllis Fiege, mother of Gale Fiege of Pleasant Ridge, and grandmother of Jesse Mann and Emilie (Mann) Snitily, died Feb. 26 at Skagit Valley Hospital.

A longtime Snohomish County resident, Phyllis had lived with Gale and son-in-law Jon Bauer for nearly four years.

A local memorial gathering is planned for Sept. 14, which would have been Phyllis' 100th birthday.

A full obituary is online at www.kernfuneralhome.com under obituaries.



Duane Allen Carpenter

Duane Allen Carpenter, 64, passed away on March 1, 2024, in La Conner, Washington. Duane was born on Oct. 10, 1959, in Hamlin, West Virginia.

Duane had a passion for travel and made many lifelong friends during his adventures around the globe, and while living in Pennsylvania, Arizona, Alaska, Indiana, Hawaii, Maryland, and Washington. His career as a cartographic technician at Minerals Management Service and later as a meteorologist at the National Weather Service showcased his love of maps and all things weather. In his free time, Duane enjoyed traveling, cooking, music, and weather forecasting.

A celebration of Duane's life will be held at 5 p.m. Thursday, March 14, at Hellams Vineyard in La Conner. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the La Conner Food Bank in honor of Duane's memory or bring a nonperishable food donation to the event.

He was a beloved brother and friend, and is survived by his sister, Linda Slade, and two grand nephews, James and Joseph Prince. Duane was preceded in death by his father, Edward Carpenter, mother, Katherine Carpenter, and two nieces, Stephanie Slade and Cheryl (Slade) Prince.

Duane will be remembered for his kindness, love of exploration and culinary arts, and his commitment to teaching his friends new weather terms. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

If I ran the zoo

By MEL DAMSKI



I've always been a bird lover. I grew up with birds in cages in my house and now I have feeders in the front and the back of my house. My dog Rosie loves to sit by the window and watch the birds come and go.

When you drive around Skagit County, you see many photographers holding cameras with very long lenses patiently waiting to get wonderful shots of birds.

Bird populations have been decreasing on a regular basis, but lately I've noticed enormous numbers of white birds gathered in the fields of Skagit. I checked in with my friend Libby Mills who is a bird expert and takes groups bird watching throughout the state. Libby said that those are snow geese but other populations of birds are still diminishing.

I looked it up and found that half of the world's 10,000-ish bird species are in decline. One in eight species faces the threat of extinction. The problem has been worsening for decades, which has allowed scientists to be able to estimate roughly how many fewer birds are around today than half a century ago.

Why? Because as human populations grow birds are losing the habitats they need, places to live, find food, rest and raise their young. They face many other threats as well – from free-roaming cats and collisions with glass to toxic pesticides and insect declines.

A recent comprehensive assessment of net population changes in the U.S. and Canada reveals across-the-board declines that scientists now call "staggering." All told, the North American bird population is down by 2.9 million breeding adults, causing devastating losses. Forests alone have lost 1 billion birds.

Fortunately, we live in a place where we can drive around and take in the sight of many birds. And we can do a few things to help preserve them, such as keep our cats indoors. Indoor cats live longer, healthier lives and outdoor cats kill more birds than any other native threat.

Watch birds, share what you see. Bird watchers are one of science's most vital sources of data on how the ecological world is faring.

Tracy Winder

Tracy Lynn Winder (née Page), age 61 of La Conner passed away on Feb. 26, 2024. Tracy was born on Dec. 4, 1962, in Olympia. She was a beloved wife, mother, daughter, sister, and friend.

Tracy was a vibrant soul known for her happy, funny, friendly and outgoing personality. She was generous, helpful and popular and she cherished her family, friends, and life.

In her career, Tracy started in the grocery business working for her father before transitioning to waitressing. She worked locally at Judy's At's A Pizza in the mid 80's to Boomers, Barclay's and then bartending at the Light-house. She eventually took an offer from one of her beloved customers and went to work for Erickson & Svendson Gravel Pit, where she had dedicated herself since 1996.

Outside of work, Tracy enjoyed walking her dog, cooking with her granddaughter Savannah, music, singing, playing the piano, and spending quality time with loved ones. She was always willing to lend a helping hand to others.

Tracy is survived by her husband Jeff Winder, her daughters Breannan Winder and Carly Wil-



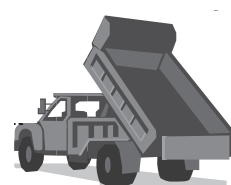
son, her grandchildren Lane and Savannah, her parents Bill and Doris Page, her sister Barbara Love, and a large extended family. She was preceded in death by her brothers David and Michael Page and her sister Terri Lavon.

A Celebration of Life for Tracy will be held beginning at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 16, at Pioneer Park in La Conner. The celebration will be a potluck-style gathering with the meat supplied. Guests are encouraged to bring their favorite side dish. Fires and patio heaters will be provided, but please dress for the weather.

Tracy will be deeply missed by all who knew her, but her memory will live on in the hearts she touched.

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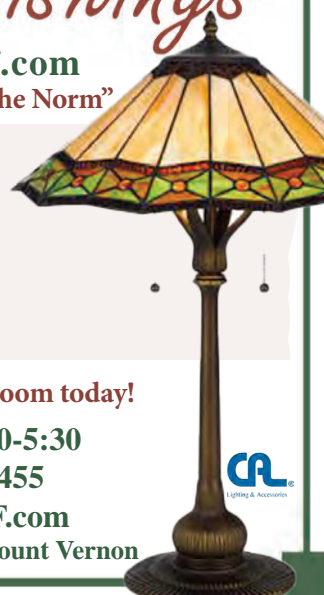
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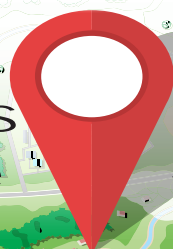
LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

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Spring teams meet as winter clings

By Bill Reynolds

Longtime La Conner High School baseball coach Jeremiah LeSourd has a favorite saying this time of year.

“You know it’s the start of baseball season,” he often notes at the end of February and start of March, “because there’ll be snow on the ground.”

Mother Nature has been true to form this year.

The first week of practice for Braves baseball, Lady Braves softball, and La Conner track and field and golf teams was met variously with snow, hail, wind and rain. All that plus a couple brief sun breaks.

La Conner athletes did their best to warm to the occasion, as they were greeted to workouts by LeSourd and baseball co-coach Andy Otis, head track coach Peter Voorhees, softball coaches Loran James and Taysha James-Sherman, and golf coaches Jamie Carroll and Galen McKnight.

“At this point, there are over 80 athletes out for high school spring sports,” Athletic Director Christine Tripp said. “We’re looking forward to strong showings in all sports with returning athletes and leaders.”

The highest profile La Conner High School spring sports returnee is defending state hurdles champion Tommy Murdock.



FRIGID FASTBALL — La Conner Braves senior pitcher Ivory Damien wrapped up a typically cold first week of the spring sports season with a Friday throwing session while donning winter gear. The Braves’ home opener is at 4 p.m. March 14 with non-league foe Evergreen of Seattle.

— Bill Reynolds photo

He captured both the 110- and 300-meter hurdles at the 2023 Washington State 2B Track Meet, setting personal bests and school marks.

Throwers Alexander Martin and Flint Huizenga, and versatile

Morgan Huizenga are back as well for the La Conner track program, which opens with a home meet at 3:30 p.m. March 13 at Whittaker Field.

(continued on page 8)

School board approves switch to 8-man football

By Bill Reynolds

La Conner Schools officials tackled the status of Braves football and student enrollment to kick off a lengthy hybrid school board meeting Monday night.

District financial chief David Cram reported to board members that K-12 enrollment had dipped from 497 to 485 full-time students since the start of the calendar year, with most of the losses coming in the fifth and 12th grades.

“It’s not unusual at this time of year,” Cram told the board, noting that student movement tends to increase during semester breaks.

Enrollment is a major driver when it comes to state funding support for La Conner Schools. But the district cushioned itself for a possible mid-year enrollment decline by budgeting for 490 full-time students during the 2023-24 academic year.

“We should be fine,” said Cram, who also noted that the district now has around \$700,000 cash on hand at the Skagit County Treasurer’s Office.

“I’m pretty happy with where we are,” he said.

The district, which implemented a series of painful budget cuts last year to get its reserve fund back in the black, also anticipates receipt this spring of federal impact aid monies. Those funds are designed to assist school districts that have lost property tax revenue due to having exempt federal property such as military installations or Native American lands within its boundaries.

“What we’re waiting on now,” said Cram, “is for Congress to pass a continuing resolution.”

Cram doesn’t know when or how much federal funding the district will receive.

“We received it mid-March last year,” he said, “but it could come in May. It’s a significant

amount of funds.”

Tied to declining enrollment, which has seen La Conner in the span of a generation drop from 1A to the smallest 2B high school in the state, is a downsizing of the Braves’ football program. The board on Monday, following extensive public comment, approved a plan for La Conner to play an independent eight-man schedule the next two seasons.

In doing so, members also endorsed a recommendation by La Conner High School Principal and Athletic Director Christine Tripp that a benchmark committee be formed to monitor progress by the grid program ahead of the 2024 season.

“We need to have things done before summer vacation is over,” said Tripp, who will serve on the panel with Cram. Its other members will be determined later.

Tripp identified a weight program, summer camp, and off-season training as key benchmark standards going forward.

“We can use eight-man ball to try to grow the program back,” Tripp said.

Tripp said under the new format there likely will be fewer home games for La Conner this fall.

Football head coach Charlie Edwards thanked the board for retaining La Conner football rather than eliminating the sport or combining with defending 2A state champion Anacortes.

“We don’t want to lose our program,” said Edwards. “As much as I appreciate our friends from Anacortes, I want our kids to wear the blue.”

In other district business:

- The La Conner Rotary Club gave a \$2,000 donation toward food and snacks at the Braves Hub and another \$600 earmarked for the end-of-year senior class trip. “We’re blessed that La Conner Rotary supports our programs,” said La Conner Schools Superintendent Will Nelson.

Soroptimists name Udlock their March student

Abigail Udlock, a senior at La Conner High School, was recently chosen as the Soroptimist International of La Conner Honored Student for the month of March.

Abigail is a very busy young woman, balancing school and the Running Start Program online at Skagit Valley College. Ceramics, sociology and psychology are among her favorite classes. Her studies have qualified her as a member of the Honor Society at the high school. Along with her academics, Abigail is the ASB executive treasurer. This follows her role as ASB executive



Abigail Udlock

secretary her junior year and class representative as a sophomore.

When Abigail is not keeping up with schoolwork, she is involved in volleyball and golf. She has been playing volleyball since second grade. She played for the high school and competes with a club team in Bellingham, as well as a rec league in Mount Vernon.

During the summer months and weekends during the school year, you can find Abigail at the Waterfront Cafe where she works as a hostess and kitchen helper.

Abigail hopes to continue her education at a two-year or four-year college where she wants to study psychology as a major.

Abigail’s proud parents are Grant and Emily Udlock. She also has an older brother, Owen. Abigail will receive a gift certificate to Vintage La Conner, a thrift store run by volunteers to support local women and girls and made possible by generous donations from our community.

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Timothy Egan

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

addressed the serious themes of his books – environmental protection, racial strife, religion and economics, among them.

He joked about having spent seven years at the UW. “And that was as an undergraduate.”

The time on campus, especially at Suzzalo Library, was well spent.

“I did some of my best thinking there,” Egan said.

Suzzalo and the many other libraries Egan has visited have allowed him to pursue fortunate strokes of serendipity.

“You have to trust serendipity,” he said. “In a library, you’ll never know who or what you’ll bump into. They allow you to open your mind to something you never imagined.”

Egan lauded the lasting power of books in an ever more technology-oriented society.

“Books,” he said, “have survived technology for centuries.”

Egan cited libraries as a key guardrail against misinformation, which he said is an immense threat in a social media environment often marked by rapid and non-vetted communication.

As a Times correspondent, Egan shared a Pulitzer Prize in 2001 with a team of reporters that produced the series “How Race is Lived in America.” As an author, he has won acclaim for several of his books, including “Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher,” an account of photographer Edward Curtis, and “The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire that Saved America.”

Egan’s topics are often edgy. He exposed the Jim Crow north in “A Fever in the Heartland:



Timothy Egan speaks at the Lincoln Theatre on March 2.

The Ku Klux Klan’s Plot to Take Over America and the Woman Who Stopped Them.”

“We shouldn’t be afraid of our history,” said Egan, who contended that studying the nation’s more difficult chapters can help readers learn from those misadventures and avoid repeating them.

There were several La Conner connections related to Egan’s appearance. He was introduced by Mount Vernon Library Foundation President Suzanne Butler, a former La Conner bookstore owner. In his remarks, Egan praised iconic La Conner novelist Tom Robbins.

He also extended kudos to residents of Skagit County, where Butler pointed out that three new libraries have been built in the past three years, including the La Conner Swinomish Library.

“The Library Commons Project shows that books aren’t dead, stories aren’t dead, and history isn’t dead. May your grandchildren grow old, cherishing this new-born in your community,” Egan said.

Mount Vernon Library Foundation President Suzanne Butler, who once owned a bookstore on First Street in La Conner, praised the yeoman work required to transform the new library from what many saw as an impossible dream.

The four-story structure is being counted upon to take downtown Mount Vernon to the next level – literally and figuratively.

“Well done, Mount Vernon,” Butler told those attending Egan’s presentation. “Every one of you has skin in the game and it’s the best game in this town for a long time.”

2ND ANNUAL LA CONNER MURDER MYSTERY

THE CASE OF THE BUMPED-OFF BOOTLEGGER

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2024

Find clues throughout town to solve the whodunit
Interrogate flappers, speakeasy owners, rumrunners, and prohibitionists

LA CONNER

All based on the region's real history of 1920s rumrunning!

Get dolled up for Daffodil Pet Parade

By Judy Booth

“I blackmail people now! You gotta show up [for the pet parade] – or you don’t come into my shop!” joked Gina McCarthy, owner of Enchanted Locks and volunteer coordinator for the La Conner Chamber of Commerce’s third annual Daffodil Pet Parade scheduled for Saturday, March 9.

“This is the Daffodil Festival – but each year nothing happens – so this year we are having this [the pet parade,] then the firemen’s ball and then the Murder Mystery event – all part of the festival,” said McCarthy.

“It’s the perfect opportunity to get the community together, show off our pets and get kids involved,” Chamber of Commerce Director Mark Hulst said. Several boys and girls from La Conner’s schools will be volunteering.

By Katryna Barber

So much is happening at the La Conner Swinomish Library this month!

March is Women’s History Month. Come check out our Women’s “Herstory” display to find a good selection of nonfiction books about spunky, smart women.

We are participating in Library Giving Day, now through April 4, and invite you to join in keeping the library a vibrant, welcoming place for all. Your gift, through our Foundation, will benefit your library as we look toward the youth summer reading program, ongoing use of our meeting space, author readings, musical events, and more.

The Foundation’s goal this year is \$15,000, with the first \$5,000 matched thanks to a very generous donor. You can reach the Foundation at laconnerlibraryfoundation.org.

It is honestly inspiring to witness the miracle of a public library in use. The Braves’ Hub comes in every Monday after school and fills the space with laughter, questions, and eagerness to check books out and explore the shelves. It’s opportunities like this that our Foundation is engaging in Library Giving Day to support, and it matters.

Library events

12:30-2 p.m. Saturday, March

Last year all 50 registration slots were filled – considerably more than the first year. The goal is for more in 2024.

So, get your dolled-up pets to the south end of the La Conner Marina parking lot by 10 a.m. Saturday. The parade begins at 11 a.m., starting at the Marina, and heads up First Street to Maple Hall, then turns around – dogs yapping, spectators clapping, proud owners beaming – back to Gilkey Square for the Red-Carpet Costume contest complete with judging and photographs.

Prizes will be given for best dressed, the funniest and the happiest. All pets are welcome. Last year a hen and a rabbit paraded in addition to the dogs.

La Conner school kids will make a calendar for next year from photographs they will take.

Festivities will include a pet trivia game with audience participation. The Vintage La Conner Thrift Store has donated jewelry for the winner.

Beware! Stiff competition will be had from the Retirement Inn. They love their pets and want to show them off. And while you’re at it, “Dress to impress – the more fun, the better,” said McCarthy.

If your beloved pet is in pet heaven, stop by Enchanted Locks and drop off a photo of your beloved pet to be displayed on a poster at the festival.

Donations will be accepted by SPOT, the Burlington animal rescue and placement adoption service, at Gilkey Square. Photos will be displayed of pets available for adoption as well.

Information: La Conner Chamber, 360-466-4778.

Library Happenings

9, Gardening for Pollinators: Master gardener Virgene Link will talk about necessary steps to take to attract and keep beneficial insects in your garden. She will leave time for questions.

5-6 p.m. Wednesday, March 20, Armchair Travel to Ireland: Learn what it is like to grow up in Ireland from La Conner’s own Gina Torpey.

3-4 p.m. Friday, March 22, Rope Beehive Adult Craft Event: Come make a jute rope beehive to add some spring fun to your home décor.

3-4 p.m. Friday, March 26,

Humanities Washington speaker: Mike VanQuickenborne- Keeping it Real: How Conversation Creates Truth: A philosophy teacher at Everett Community College, Mike VanQuickenborne uses everyday language and examples to question our assumptions about what is real.

The library’s Winter Reads theme this year is Around the World in 80 Days. Come pick up a reading list and instructions on how to read and play. It ends March 21.

Story Time is every Friday at 11 a.m.

Mount Vernon

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

could happen in a city of 36,000 people. And we’ve done this project without raising property taxes.”

Boudreau said more than 40 grants-in-aid were sought throughout the library planning process.

The new library is envisioned as a place where people can gather and learn together, sporting more shelving and reading areas than available in the present library building a couple blocks away.

Weekly News correspondent Adam Sowards, among those who participated in Saturday’s tour, has reported that the new Mount Vernon library is planned as a “community connector.” Founding Father Benjamin Franklin considered libraries as sources of civic improvement.

“It will be flexible for all sorts of different gatherings,” Huffman said. “We’ll have as many opportunities for interaction as possible.”

Mount Vernon Library Foun-

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LA CONNER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

DAFFODIL PET PARADE

Red Carpet Costume Contest
Come for Photos and Games!

March 9th 11am-2pm

The parade will go from the marina down to 1st Street to Maple Hall. Pet registration will begin at 10AM in the south marina parking lot.

By: Faith Jenkins
LaConner Middle School-7th grade

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Council OKs code of ethics for town

By Bill Reynolds

It was a four-letter word that defined a briskly paced, 45-minute hybrid Town Council meeting at Maple Hall on Feb. 27.

That word was code. As in the council's approval of both a formal town code of ethics and update to La Conner's uniform development code.

The ethics code was one of Mayor Marna Hanneman's first initiatives upon taking office in January.

"In this climate of people not being civil to each other – not that this is happening here – I asked for a code of ethics," Hanneman said.

Upon adoption of the code, following a motion by council member Annie Taylor, Hanneman implored all who will be bound by it to prioritize civility.

"Let's all be just a little kinder to one another," she said.

The code is designed to affirm the dignity and worth of public service, stressing the importance of dedicating that service to the highest ideals of honor and integrity. It emphasizes that the chief function of town government is to always serve the best interests of the public.

One section of the code calls upon the town's elected and appointed officials and employees to conduct municipal business "in a manner which is not only fair in fact, but also in appearance."

Moments later, the council approved a proposed code update submitted by Town Planner Michael Davolio that would help ease conversion by the Swinomish Tribal Community of its apartment complex and a single-family residence on S. Maple Avenue to a secure and staffed care facility for those who have undergone treatment at Didgwalic Wellness Center.

The code amendment allows medical and dental facilities in the Maple Avenue residential zone with a conditional-use permit so long as they are located at least 400 feet from each other. "It's a model program," Hanneman said of the Swinomish plan, which is being studied by other agencies near and far. "It's the full-meal deal."

The town has a full plate of its own when it comes to future major utility and public works projects, said Town Administrator Scott Thomas. He listed seven key items, leading off with \$20 million in mandated upgrades to La Conner's wastewater treatment plant. All projects total more than \$36 million.

"These are conservative numbers and we'll get grants, we'll have assistance, but the grants won't cover everything," Thomas said. "I don't want to be depressing, but we have projects coming up. We don't have room to ignore these projects. They must be done."

In addition, Thomas said the town is looking at replacing the Channel Drive and La Conner-Whitney Road water lines, relocating the Town Public Works office and shop, extending First Street southward, installing new downtown utilities, and acquiring a fire engine.

Council member MaryLee Chamberlain said town officials have been positioning themselves to address the pressing needs Thomas identified.

"We have a strategic plan in place," Chamberlain said. "We can recalibrate and prioritize to bring these (projects) to the finish line."

Thomas also addressed hours of operation at Town Hall. With staff short-handed, he suggested having Town Hall open to the public Monday through Thursday with staff working on site or remotely half-time on Fridays.

"This would create more time for staff to get work done," said Thomas, who pointed to the four-day week at Langley's City Hall.

Mayor shares tribe's wellness plans

By Bill Reynolds

Word is getting out on one of Skagit County's best-kept secrets.

That's thanks to La Conner High School alum and former Swinomish Tribal Community Senator Leon John, now the outreach director at Didgwalic Wellness Center northwest of town along Highway 20.

The Didgwalic facility is a rehabilitation center for anyone,

tribal and non-tribal, dealing with addiction or other challenges to mental and physical health.

John outlined the Didgwalic mission as guest speaker for the second in a series of Meet the Mayor sessions at La Conner Swinomish Library last Saturday.

Mayor Marna Hanneman, starting her third month in office, invited John to update the public on Didgwalic's acquisition of the Conner Place Apartments and adjacent single-family residential

home on S. Maple Avenue.

John said Didgwalic plans to convert the property to fully staffed and secure transitional housing as part of a model project that has drawn the attention of social services entities from around the country.

"Our mission," said John, "is to remove barriers to care. We do remove barriers. We don't want people to not be able to receive their needed care. I could talk all day about the great people who

provide our services. All our professionals are really great with our clients."

Town officials have approved an update to La Conner's Uniform Development Code that will enable Didgwalic to transform the apartments, which are zoned for residential use, to a health care and wellness venue.

"It will serve as transitional housing," Hanneman said,

(continued on page 10)

Seventh-wettest February was also pretty mild

By Ken Stern

Suddenly, the fields around La Conner are puddling up.

February's 3.2 inches of rain is the third above average rainfall month in a row. There was over 2 inches of rain the last six days: 1.2 inches Feb. 28-29 after 0.8 inches Feb. 24-25. With three days of sprinkles, 2.2 inches fell Feb. 19-29, 71% of the month's precipitation, and continued March 1-3. Most of the rest, 0.5 inches, came down Feb. 11-12. Rain came down on

17 days. No measurable snow fell.

This was the seventh-wettest February since 2000. The four wettest Februaries have been since 2016 with 5.8 inches of rain in 2018 the most.

The month was slightly warmer, with an average daily maximum temperature of 47.8. The 59.0 degree reading Feb. 1 was the month's warmest day. It only frosted twice, on Feb. 16 and 26, February's low, at 31 degrees. The month's average daily minimum of 36.2 degrees

was 1.5 degrees higher than the century average. February's daily average temperature of 41.1 degrees was 2.1 degrees above that average for the last 25 years.

January's rain total of 4.6 inches was 0.6 inches above the century average. December's 4.6 inches of rain was 1.5 inches above the century average.

No temperature or precipitation records were set.

Measurements and data are at Washington State University's Mount Vernon weather station on Memorial Highway.

Rain Report: February

Rain Feb. 25-March 2: 2.1"
Rainfall in Feb.: 3.2"
Number of rain days: 17
Least rain, one day: 0.01", Feb. 9
Most rain, one day: 0.6", Feb. 28, 29
Least rain: 1.25", 2009
Most rain: 5.78", 2018
Avg. rainfall, 2000-2024: 2.9" *
Rainfall last month, Jan: 4.6" *
* 24 years: no data, 2005
Data from WSU Mount Vernon.

Another Shelter Bay Community director resigns board position

By Ken Stern

Shelter Bay Board of Director Dan McCaughan resigned in late February.

An email to residents from the Shelter Bay Community announced his resignation Feb. 28 and broadcast the "immediate board position opening" seeking applicants to replace him.

The deadline is no later than May 25 for a term through June 30, 2026. An earlier deadline may be set to fill the seat sooner.

McCaughan resigned for personal reasons, the email said.

At its Feb. 21 board meeting, the Shelter Bay Community directors – the same as the Community's board – sanctioned McCaughan for six months for

violations of the Company Good Faith Statement for dissemination of confidential information.

Board Director Gary Ladd resigned Jan. 17, also for personal

reasons.

Pat McGarry was appointed to replace him at a special board meeting Feb. 13. His term runs through June 30.

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LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2024

An unhappy start to the new year

Large turnout at Concrete anniversary hoops night



By Patricia Aqimuk Paul, Esq., Food Editor

Roast Pork

Low and slow is my motto for cooking pork. Use a low temperature and roast it for hours. I had a frozen 5.5 pound, bone-in shoulder pork roast. This recipe also includes time and temperature of a thawed pork shoulder roast. The day before, I roasted slices of red cabbage, or, you could sauté cabbage. I also used my homemade red cabbage sauerkraut. They were the perfect combination to nestle the pork roast into.

Ingredients

- Bone-in pork shoulder roast, 5.5 lbs
- Red cabbage, sliced/roasted or sautéed
- Red sauerkraut, 1 pint
- Olive oil, 1 table-spoon



Preparation

Preheat oven to 250 F for a frozen roast. For a thawed pork roast, preheat oven to 325 F. Oil the bottom and sides of a cast iron Dutch oven. Layer the bottom with the cooked cabbage. Then layer with the sauerkraut. Nestle the roast into the cabbage mixtures. Add more

cooked cabbage along the sides of the roast. Cover with lid.

For frozen pork, roast for 6 hours. Remove the lid for the last 30 to 40 minutes. To roast fresh/thawed pork, allow 30 to 45 minutes per pound. Either way, you want an internal temperature of 170 degrees.

I love color, so I served this with sweet potato and white potato that I boiled separately.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR
Complete Events Calendar on laconnerweeklynews.com

NOT TO BE MISSED

La Conner Chamber of Commerce Daffodil Pet Parade, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, March 9. Photos, games, red-carpet costume contest. Parade route follows First Street from the La Conner Marina to Maple Hall. Register your pet beginning at 10 a.m. in south marina parking lot.

Skagit Habitat for Humanity Raise the Roof Gala and Benefit Auction, 5 p.m. Saturday, March 9, Swinomish Casino and Lodge. Skagit Habitat for Humanity's annual fundraiser offers dinner, drinks, live entertainment, silent and live auctions, a raffle and more. Purchase tickets at skagithabitat.com or call 360-428-9402.

LIBRARIES

La Conner Swinomish Library. 520 Morris St., La Conner. 360-466-3352. www.lcilib.lib.wa.us. Open 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. Storytime for Children. 11 a.m. every Friday.

- Tech Help. Noon to 2 p.m. every Tuesday. One-on-one support in 30-minute blocks.
- Dungeons & Dragons Club. 3-5 p.m. every Tuesday. No gaming experience necessary.

Mount Vernon Public Library. 315 Snoqualmie St., Mount Vernon. 360-336-6209, [mount-](http://mount-vernionwa.gov)

vernionwa.gov.

- Seedling Storytime: 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays. For young ones who may be shy or who like more caregiver support.
- LEGO Building: 1-5:30 p.m. Wednesdays and 1-3:30 p.m. Saturdays. Family fun for all ages. LEGO bricks supplied.
- Board Games: 1-5:30 p.m. Tuesdays. Classic board games for a variety of ages.

Anacortes Public Library. 1220 10th St., Anacortes. 360-299-8067, CityofAnacortes.org.

- Family Storytime: 10-11:30 a.m. Fridays. If the first session is full, visit the children's desk for a ticket to the next one. For ages birth to 5, siblings welcome.
- Maker Time: 4-5:15 p.m. Thursdays. Ages 8-12. Maker Time is all about STEAM. Challenges include robotics, circuitry, chemistry experiments, engineering marvels, art and design.
- LEGO at the Library: 3:30-5:30 p.m. Mondays. Bricks provided.

Burlington Public Library. 820 E. Washington Ave., Burlington. 360-755-0760, burlingtonwa.gov/library.

- Bilingual Storytime: 10:30-11:30 a.m. Saturdays. For ages 6 and under and their caregivers. Enjoy stories and songs in English and Spanish. Craft or STEM-based play

follows.

- Knitting Club: 6 p.m. Wednesdays, all ages.

MUSEUMS

Pacific Northwest Quilt & Fiber Arts Museum. 703 S. Second St., La Conner. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. qfamuseum.org, 360-466-4288. Current exhibits:

- Birds of a Fiber: Through March 24. A celebration of all things ornithological and in collaboration with the La Conner Birding Festival.
- Art Evolved: Intertwined Stone Portraits and Sacred Stone-capes: Artwork by Denise Labadie, through May 5.

Skagit County Historical Museum. 360-466-3365 or skagitcounty.net/museum. Hours 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursday-Sunday. The museum is seeking donations of vintage, holiday wares, craft supplies, collectibles and unique items for their annual Sale at the School in April. Contact jwolf@co.skagit.wa.us. Current exhibits:

- Barber Historians: Just a Little Off the Top
- Maybe She's Born With It: Maybe It's the History of Hair and Makeup

Museum of Northwest Art. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday and Monday. monamuseum.org, 360-466-4446. Current exhibits through May 12:

- Silva Cascadia: Under the Spell of the Forest features 2- and 3-dimensional works by Northwest women artists inspired by forests and trees.
- At the Seam: The exhibition asks to look not only at the individual works but also at

the "seams," where works representing different artistic trends and cultural identities come in touch with each other.

- My Roots: Honoring the Cultural Identity of Skagit Valley's Under-Resourced Children: Outside In Gallery

SERVICE & VOLUNTEER

Pacific Northwest Quilt & Fiber Arts Museum is looking for museum host and gift shop volunteers to donate 6 hours of time per month. Complete a volunteer application at www.qfamuseum.org or visit the museum, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday, 703 Second St., or call [Jacque Chase 360-466-4288 x 101](tel).

La Conner Sunrise Food Bank. Food distribution from 2:30-5 p.m. every Monday, 602 S. Third St., La Conner. 360-488-3878. laconnerfoodbank.com.

Swinomish Helping Hands Food Bank. Food distribution from 2-5 p.m. every Thursday. **Non-essentials every first** Thursday. 17444 Snee Oosh Road, La Conner. 360-856-2211. helpinghandsfoodbank.org.

Skagit Valley Humane Society. 18841 Kelleher Road, Burlington. 360-757-0445. Find volunteer and donation opportunities online at skagithumane.org.

MEETINGS

Town of La Conner Council Meeting, 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 12. For current agenda, go to www.townoflaconner.org. Sign up for "Notify Me" to get current town information.

Super Crossword ADDITIVE-FREE

ACROSS

- 1 Not suitable
- 6 "Sorry to intrude ..."
- 10 Capricious ideas
- 15 Cartoonist Addams, informally
- 19 Payments to the IRS
- 20 Oscar winner Robert De —
- 21 Capital of Vietnam
- 22 Sword handle
- 23 Fifth Avenue skyscraper
- 26 Other, in Acapulco
- 27 Identity hider
- 28 Altitudes: Abbr.
- 29 — -C (PC copy command)
- 30 What a groom may toss
- 32 "Uh-huh"
- 34 Pioneer Boone, informally
- 35 Orthodox Jewish movement
- 37 Rapper — Rida
- 40 Technique for viewing a slow process quickly
- 43 Cattle farm
- 45 Prefix with nourished
- 46 In a daze
- 47 First first lady of the U.S.
- 51 Gets close to
- 55 Sesame seed paste
- 56 Pucksters' org. with the Calder Cup
- 57 Newspaper think piece
- 60 Born as
- 61 Toon sheet
- 62 Hedy of "Ecstasy"
- 66 Rome's — Fountain
- 67 Dollar bill
- 68 Advance inquiry into a crime, e.g.
- 72 Israeli city close to Ben Gurion Airport
- 73 Big name in life insurance
- 74 Decrease
- 75 Doc for the neck up
- 76 D-H linkup
- 77 FDR or HST
- 78 Former "Idol" judge
- 79 Bob of play-by-play
- 82 Wolfed down
- 84 Launching of people into orbit
- 88 Insurance payment
- 92 "The Simpsons" shopkeeper
- 93 Was overlong
- 94 Dual-focus course about bodily structures
- 100 Some kitchen appliances, for short
- 101 From a northwest Italian port
- 102 Certain South African
- 103 Arena level
- 105 "Hallelujah Chorus" composer
- 106 Rough-— wood
- 107 City vehicle
- 108 Gas brand
- 112 Water, in Acapulco
- 113 What love is, per a Four Aces #1 tune, with "a"
- 118 Crate piece
- 119 Capital of South Korea
- 120 Actress Best
- 121 Really mad
- 122 The "T" of 66-Down
- 123 Day divisions
- 124 Bargain
- 125 Restaurant notice that's applicable to this puzzle's seven longest answers?
- 18 Tempestuous
- 24 Spicy cuisine
- 25 — Reader (magazine)
- 31 Carrier based in New Delhi
- 33 Hawke of film
- 34 Salvador of surreal art
- 35 Spicy
- 36 From — Z
- 37 Sig Nu, e.g.
- 38 Video game tomb raider
- 39 Teetering
- 41 — -di-dah
- 42 Attila follower
- 44 Refrigerate
- 48 More artful
- 49 — a soul
- 50 "— in Manila" (Ali-Frazier fight)
- 52 Consecrating
- 53 Nevada airport
- 54 In view
- 57 Mining finds
- 58 Sampras of the court
- 59 Show plainly
- 63 Poker cost
- 64 Supplies with personnel
- 65 Coach Parseghian
- 66 LG or RCA products
- 68 Petition
- 69 "Thumbs-up!"
- 70 Gas in signs
- 71 Gasless car
- 78 Tipoffs in hoops, e.g.
- 80 Christie's "A Pocket Full —"
- 81 Depots: Abbr.
- 83 Not old-fashioned
- 84 Cabinet dept. since 1965
- 85 Twosome
- 86 Abbr. on military mail
- 87 Societal
- 89 It might have mascara on it
- 90 Pas' mates
- 91 Opal ending
- 94 Horror-struck
- 95 All-Star pitcher Denny
- 96 Yearly
- 97 Gordie of hockey
- 98 Itched (for)
- 99 Seine feeder
- 104 Trendy again
- 106 Stimulate
- 107 — fide
- 109 Phony
- 110 Creates a lap for short
- 114 Prefix with pagan
- 115 Part of TTYL
- 116 HST follower
- 117 Loud noise

DOWN

- 1 Bit of news
- 2 Wine valley
- 3 Allies' rival
- 4 Sprightly
- 5 Mao — -tung
- 6 Object of hate
- 7 Thwacks
- 8 Before
- 9 Woman's quaint headpiece
- 10 Jacuzzi, e.g.
- 11 Recital venue
- 12 Not Rep. or Dem.
- 13 Mimi's "me"
- 14 Celebrates with a tune
- 15 Animal with a backbone
- 16 Relative of a shout-out
- 17 Anew

CLASSIFIEDS

To run an ad, please stop by the office (119 N. Third), call 360-466-3315, or email: production@laconnernews.com **BEFORE NOON ON FRIDAYS**

DOWNTOWN LA CONNER, COMMERCIAL OFFICE SPACE FOR LEASE. 125 E. Washington St., Suite B. 240 square feet, shared restroom, tenant parking lot. \$525 per month. One-year minimum agreement, includes water, sewer, gas, electricity, grounds maintenance, property taxes, building insurance, limited trash removal. Call 360-466-4446 ext. 103

BUSINESS MANAGER OR BOOKKEEPER: Which job do you want to take at the La Conner Weekly News? Minimum need is to manage deposits, invoicing, payroll and taxes for award-winning, financially robust weekly newspaper. Good pay. Good work environment. Good way to support your local community. Call Ken: 360-466-3315.

CLEANING SERVICES OFFERED: Home or office. Estimates provided. Good quality work. Reasonable rates. Call for estimate. References available. 360-202-1288.

FIND CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS ON PAGE 8

Weekly SUDOKU
by Linda Thistle

		4	7					5	
5						9	6	4	
	6			8					2
		8			3	9			
	5			2				3	
7			4		6				1
	1		8						6
6				1				2	
		2			5	3			

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆
◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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POLICE BLOTTER

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Monday, Feb. 19

8:01 a.m.: Plowing with a car – A line of cars was stopped on McLean Road at La Conner Whitney for the stop sign. A driver traveling west was not paying attention and ran into the back car causing a chain reaction of 3 cars being shoved into one another. This was a 4 car collision caused by the first car not stopping. McLean / La Conner Whitney Rds., Greater La Conner.

Tuesday, Feb. 27

4:21 p.m. Finally taken away – Deputies again responded to the abandoned van on Downey Road that had been there for several weeks. The Owner had failed to remove it and the deputy had it

impounded as abandoned. Downey Rd., Greater La Conner.

Thursday, Feb. 29

5:53 p.m.: Some harm, no ticket – Vehicle backing out of Pioneer Market hit another car and cause minor damage. The deputy helped with info exchange but did not issue any citations. Morris St., La Conner.

Friday, March 1

12:21 p.m.: Another First Street MVA – A subject parked on First Street opened their door right as another vehicle was passing. Opening the door into the other car caused damage to the passing cars door and mirror. 1st St., La Conner.

Initiatives

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

Washington does not have an income tax and there are no serious proposals in the Legislature to impose one.

The Washington Supreme Court has long ruled that a statewide graduated income tax in Washington is unconstitutional. On 10 occasions since 1934, Washington voters have shot down ballot measures that could have allowed the state to adopt personal or corporate income taxes, according to the secretary of state.

Opponents of the tax initiative said an income tax could be a tool to help make Washington's tax code less regressive, where the tax burden is heavier for lower earners.

Parental rights

Initiative 2081, or the "parents' bill of rights," would require public school materials, such as textbooks, curriculum and a child's medical records, to be easily available for review by parents. It would also allow parents to opt their child out of assignments and other activities involving questions about the student's sexual experiences or

their family's religious beliefs.

It passed unanimously through the Washington Senate.

Many of the rights outlined in the initiative are already in state or federal law.

Police pursuits

Initiative 2113 would give police in Washington more leeway to pursue suspected criminals by erasing restrictions on when they can undertake vehicle pursuits.

The Legislature put limits in place in 2021 as part of a suite of policing changes passed in response to the 2020 murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis and other high-profile police killings – reforms aimed at reducing the potential for violence and death in police responses.

Under the initiative, an officer will be able to engage in a pursuit if they have reasonable suspicion a person has violated the law.

The Senate passed the measure 36-13 with only Democrats opposed.

In the House, floor speeches spanned an hour before the measure passed 77-20.

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Group offers new solar power program

Skagit Valley Clean Energy Alliance (SVCEA) announces the launch of Solarize Skagit, a new solar energy program available now through July 4.

This program will support Skagit residents to install solar panels on their homes, businesses and farms. You can reserve your free solar assessment online at Solarizeskagit.org

Installing solar can seem daunting, from perceived costs, to technical details, to figuring out which installers to choose. SVCEA is sponsoring Solarize Skagit, a solar group purchasing program in partnership with Olympia Community Solar. Olympia Community Solar's

Solarize Skagit

To learn more about the Solarize Skagit campaign, attend a free community workshop hosted by the Museum of Northwest Art (MONA) at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 9.

previous Solarize programs have resulted in over 250 solar installations around the Puget Sound.

To launch the campaign, SVCEA participated in a competitive bidding process to find installers. It vetted contractors for equipment quality, business practices, and negotiated special

pricing with Western Solar, Truly Electric & Solar, Northwest Electric & Solar, and Blossom Solar. By purchasing materials in bulk and partnering with trusted installers, SVCEA is making the process of going solar simple, secure, and accessible.

Sign up for a free solar site assessment at solarizeskagit.org. An installer will provide a virtual or in-person site assessment of your home or business and provide a detailed solar proposal at the campaign's discounted group rate. If you choose to contract, the solar installer will schedule the date of your solar installation.

Source: Skagit Valley Clean Energy Alliance

Solar installation costs will keep on dropping

By Greg Whiting



The Skagit Valley Clean Energy Alliance will be sponsoring a new Solarize program this year, to help facilitate and accelerate the installation of new rooftop solar generation systems throughout Skagit County. When final details are available, I'll write a whole column about this year's Solarize program, including details on how you can participate, starting with a no-obligation analysis of your home by one of the pre-selected participating contractors.

In the meantime, though, we've gotten the bids from the contractors, and they had exciting news. Installed costs will be up to 16% lower than they were just last year – as low as \$2.35/watt before tax incentives - a little under \$5,000 for a 3-kilowatt system, after a 30% federal tax credit.

It's not necessary to install enough solar panels to power your whole house to make good use of a new solar installation. For instance, it may take 10 kilowatts of photovoltaic (PV) energy to power your house, but only 3 kilowatts to power your car.

A 3-kilowatt PV system in La Conner can be expected to generate about 3,300 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year. A typical

new all-electric car, driven 12,000 miles/year, uses about 3,300 kilowatt-hours of electricity a year. Adding a car charger to a house typically costs \$2,000 to \$3,000.

A typical new gasoline or diesel internal combustion engine car, driven 12,000 miles/year, uses about 472 gallons of fuel. Fuel here costs about \$4/gallon, so an internal combustion engine car costs about \$1,900 a year for fuel alone, plus around \$100 a year for two oil changes, or \$2,000/year total for costs that inherently aren't incurred with an electric car.

So, adding just enough solar energy to your home to fully power an electric car, plus the car charger, would cost about the same as four years' worth of gas and oil. After that, your fuel would effectively be free for the life of the solar system.

By the time a new solar system is 30 or 40 years old and needs to be replaced, the cost of solar panels is likely to have fallen very substantially again, and the price

of fuel is likely to have gone up again.

Solar panels are a manufactured product. Tariffs targeting manufacturers in certain countries, and various supply chain issues, can drive solar prices up during any given year. However, over several years, the performance of solar panels goes up and their costs come down, due to competition that drives improvements in manufacturing technology and mass production. This trend has been underway for decades. There is no reason to believe it will stop any time soon. Solar power – and batteries – will inevitably become less and less expensive.

Oil is a discovered product. The price of oil has to go up in the long run. Newly discovered oil has to be produced from more and more remote and expensive locations, like deep offshore or northern Siberia, because all of the less remote locations in which any significant oil may exist have already been developed. Enhanced production techniques (including fracking) used in less remote fields are more expensive than conventional production. Either way, oil producers that want to get a reasonable return on future oil will have to do so by relying on ever-higher oil prices.

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Didgwalic

■ ■ ■ (from page 7)

“while housing is being built on Swinomish Reservation.”

While residing in the transitional housing, Didgwalic clients will be able to confer with counselors, enroll in life skills courses, and prepare for re-entry into society and become productive citizens, John said.

“The thing to me that's impressive,” said Hanneman, who has toured the main Didgwalic campus where 150 staff members are employed, “is that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. That's what's happening (at Didgwalic). This is very exciting to me. We're a village and we want to help each other out.”

“I'm glad she was able to tour our facility,” John said of Hanneman's visit to Didgwalic. “Going there and seeing it is way different than what you hear about it.”

John said he delayed his planned senate retirement an additional term at the behest of longtime Swinomish Social Services Director John Stephens, now retired, to help get Didgwalic open in 2017. It's in the former Bayside Fitness Building. “We renovated it to suit our

specific needs,” said John. “We added offices, a dental clinic, and a child watch center. We immediately outgrew ourselves.”

Didgwalic has subsequently purchased the former site of the Circus Drive-In to accommodate expansion. The center now maintains a fleet of more than a dozen vans that provide client transportation in Skagit, Whatcom, Island and Snohomish counties.

“On a slow day, 250 clients will come through,” said John, “It's amazing to see the broad range of people who come in.”

John said being inclusive is the foundation upon which Didgwalic is built.

“One of the most misunderstood things is that it isn't just for native people,” John said. “We're open to everyone and we take drop-ins.”

John said it's not always easy to recognize those in need of care for addiction or who are struggling with mental health issues.

“We could probably walk through town and find four or five people who could use our services,” John said.

Hanneman encourages people to tour the main Didgwalic facility, while John said those wishing to obtain further information about the wellness center's programs may contact him at leon.john@didgwalic.com.

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