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What was old is new again



BEAUTY CREATED AND RESTORED – La Conner artist Maggie Wilder reprised her work from 1999, repainting, repairing and brightening the mural under the Rainbow Bridge last week. She recruited artful souls for the several day restoration project.

– Photo by Marissa Conklin

Rainbow Bridge mural restored by volunteer artists

By Bill Reynolds

Creating one of La Conner’s most popular works of public art back in the day was no walk in the park.

But it began with one.

The idea for sprucing up the walking trail beneath the Rainbow Bridge with a colorful thematic mural project evolved from a hike there by La Conner resident Jane Stephens nearly a quarter-century ago.

“I’ve always walked there,” Stephens told the Weekly News Sept. 1 during a phone interview from Corvallis, Oregon, where she was

visiting family.

“Our son Andy, was going to graduate in 1999 and the seniors (at La Conner High School) needed public service hours as part of their graduation requirement,” she recalled. “There was so much graffiti, a lot of it offensive,” added Stephens, “that I got the idea to see if we could replace it with some public art there and give the seniors an opportunity to do the public service they needed to graduate.”

So, Stephens turned to La Conner artist, Maggie Wilder, local service clubs and then-La Conner Superintendent of Schools Tim Bruce

to make the mural idea a reality.

Wilder, assisted by the high school seniors –Anni Mizuta, most notably – adorned the cement pillars and wall area below Rainbow Bridge with images highlighting the park’s foliage and animals, a part of the area seemingly forever.

Fast forward to last week and Wilder was back on the scene leading a corps of “artists and aspiring artists” in a long-planned mural restoration effort.

“It’s been fabulous how people have showed up to help,” Wilder said of the

(continued on page 8)

Port requesting ‘industrial zone’ for La Conner Marina

By Ken Stern

The Port of Skagit’s plans for redeveloping its La Conner Marina will be discussed at the Town of La Conner Planning Commission public hearing Sept. 20. A new zoning district, Port Industrial, will be unveiled as part of 27 pages of “suggested 2022 code changes” planner Michael Davolio and town staff have been developing based on proposals from Port staff.

If the planning commission agrees and the town council adopts the recommendation, a new chapter will be added to Title 15 of the town’s uniform development code: Chapter 15.42, Port Industrial Zone, added after Chapter 15.40, Industrial Zone.

The stated goal is to support a strong maritime economy by providing “areas for marine manufacturing and maritime services that require facilities and or waterfront access available to port properties.” Twenty-seven uses are permitted in support, including aquaculture and seafood processing, warehousing, public parking, parks and trails and temporary events. Housing is not a proper use and not included. The only retail space defined is related to products made on site.

Buildings 60 feet high, the height of Mavrik Marine’s new building, are allowed, Buildings higher than 35 feet must meet five conditions. The draft code was reviewed by Town Fire Chief Aaron Reinstra in August.

Minimum landscaping area for the zone is 10%, buildings and impervious surfaces may cover 90% of the area.

This chapter is five pages.

Port staff in January asked the Town to consider changes to its comprehensive plan for “increase

(continued on page 6)

Multiple fatal crashes in 24 hours

La Conner resident causes fatal car collision Friday

By Marissa Conklin

On the foggy morning of Friday, Sept. 2, Washington State Patrol responded to a fatal car crash at the intersection of State Route 20 and Avon Allen Road.

The Washington State Patrol press release states that at 7:55 a.m. 28-year-old La Conner resident Julie Johnson was driving east on SR-20 and ran the red light, causing a collision with a south-bound vehicle. That vehicle’s driver, 42-year-old Burlington resident John Burke, was not wearing his seatbelt and ejected from his vehicle upon impact. He was pronounced dead at the scene. No drugs or alcohol were involved.

Two other fatal collisions occurred on SR-20 within a 24-hour period last weekend.

Under the same foggy weather in Hamilton, around 8:30 a.m., a vehicle crashed into a bridge near Cabin Creek Road, local press reports. A 33-year-old California man was pronounced dead on the scene.

Earlier, about 12:30 a.m. Sept. 2 in Sedro-Woolley, a car rear-ended another car on the highway causing a three-way collision.

According to local press reports, the second car hit a car driving the opposite way head-on.

The third driver, 26-year-old Michael Warnke-Sedano, was pronounced dead at the scene.

National Public Radio reported Monday, Sept. 5 that traffic fatalities in the U.S. are at their highest levels in two decades.

August had 5 days of record hot temperatures

By Ken Stern

August was a dry month in an increasingly dry, and warm, year. It rained once – like July – this time 0.2 inches on the 4th. The real news was the six record-setting daily temperatures. The five record highs were the month’s hottest day, Aug 18, 86.1 degrees, and the month’s last week: Aug 24, 81.4 degrees; Aug. 25, 84.6 degrees; Aug. 30, 82.6; and Aug. 31, 85.3 degrees. This followed three record high days in July.

Twelve days topped 80 degrees, 39% of the month. The average daily maximum temperature of 77.8 was the highest this century, 3.7 degrees above the century average. The 64.7 average daily temperature was 2.1 degrees above the average since 2000. The average daily low temperature of 52.8

was 0.6 degrees also above the century average, though a record low was set Aug. 5: 45.6 degrees,

The 0.2 inches of rain was an inch under the normal August rainfall for this century. It was the fourth driest August in that time, one of seven years with less than one-half inch of rain.

Less than 1 inch of rain has fallen 14 times since 2000, and eight of the last 11, including the last six years. The 0.04 inches in 2017 was the second driest year of the century. There has been nine years of more than 1 inch of rain, with 2.9 inches in 2016, the second most after 2004’s 6.3 inches. In 2021 almost an inch of rain fell, most of it in a three day period.

The 16.3 inches of rain this year is 2.3 inches below, 12.2%, the century average. June’s abundant rain, 3.1 inches skews the data.

Statewide, 6% of area, in the central Cascades is in moderate drought and 30% is classified as abnormally dry, 13 counties in total, as measured by the U.S. Drought Monitor Aug. 30. All the counties west of the Cascades are labeled “None” for drought intensity.

Data measured at the WSU Mount Vernon Memorial Highway weather station.

Rain Report: August 2022

Rain last week: 0
 Rainfall for month: 0.22
 Number of rain days: 1
 Average rainfall 2000-2022: 1.19
 Least rain: 0.01, 2012
 Most rain: 6.29, 2004
 Rainfall last month, July: 0.3

All totals in inches. Data from WSU Mount Vernon, Memorial Hwy.

Langley’s mayor works for a sustainable and equitable future

By Ken Stern

What about Langley? Mayor Scott Chaplin is bullish on this seaside town of just over 1,100 residents. Like La Conner, it is a magnet for tourists seeking fine art, eating and shopping. Unlike La Conner, Langley has “Langley Creates,” one of 11 certified Washington Creative Districts, a program that helps communities turn their artistic, artisanal and cultural/historical assets into economic growth.

During conversation with Chaplin in August, he championed his “village-by-the-sea.” “Our progressive community values art, history, diversity, social justice, culture and the environment,” noting the Whale Museum, a Dismantling Systemic Racism Commission and a historical society.

Like La Conner, residents are older, but “a real crunch with housing” means young people cannot afford living there and businesses face employee shortages and some have closed or cut back hours. The workforce pool is limited: Whidbey Island’s entire population is under 70,000 and local jobs are a ferry ride away from Everett.

What works in Langley? The Brookhaven senior housing near the center of town from which residents can walk to stores, the post office, library and movie theater. Like La Conner, there are no traffic lights.

There are two co-housing projects in the community, a nine-home tiny housing project and a 7-unit Habitat for Humanity project. The planning director is halfway through a public

(continued on page 8)



CITIZENS CALL FOR PROGRESSIVE SPIN – Langley Mayor Scott Chaplin is proud of his city’s embrace of all people, whatever their color, gender or sexuality. Last month he reflected on the Pride Flag hung at city hall in June – and discussed much more of his community’s vision.

– Photo by Ken Stern

From the editor —

The view from Langley

All mayors love their towns and champion them. Surely that is the case in La Conner.

The same with Langley, that “village by the sea,” a 90 minute drive from our town on the Swinomish Channel.

Comparisons abound. There will be a side-by-side table in a future issue. Did you know their 1,200 residents fit in one mile footprint while La Conner’s 974 residents squeeze into 0.4 square miles? Those numbers come from censusreporter.org.

While Mayor Ramon Hayes was first elected in 2007, Langley Mayor Scott Chaplin was appointed in 2021 when the then mayor moved out of the city. But this is not a tale of two mayors, or even of two cities. It is a view based on a day in Langley and a conversation with Chaplin. He shared hopes and plans as much as facts and accomplishments. Read the page 1 story.

The website summary of Langley’s government reads like it could be La Conner’s:

“The City of Langley has a Mayor-Council form of government. The City Council is the legislative branch of city government and the Mayor is the executive branch responsible for city administration. The City Council sets policy with the Mayor responsible for policy implementation and overseeing the daily operations of the City.

“Five Council members are elected at-large to staggered four-year terms. The Council enacts ordinances and resolutions, holds public hearings, approves development plans, receives citizen suggestions and complaints, authorizes payment of City funds, approves contracts, creates committees and boards to assist in the operation of city government, and much more.”

Langley’s mayor is the city’s administrator. Chaplin terms it a strong mayor system. The La Conner mayor’s responsibilities are posted on the Town’s website:

“The Mayor hires and oversees the work of the Town Administrator and each of the Town’s four department heads and two contracted departments. The Mayor assures that the Town’s human and financial resources are managed to effectively address Town policies and procedures, in a responsible and accountable fashion.

“The Mayor chairs Town Council meetings and can break ties of the Council but cannot veto a Council decision.”

Langley has an almost year old ad hoc Climate Crisis Action Committee, formed after the council passed a resolution declaring a climate emergency. Its mission is “to promote, finance and implement rapid, just, and measurable actions and advocacy that fully meet the scale and urgency of the climate crisis.”

A group of La Conner residents have formed the Skagit Valley Clean Energy Cooperative. Its goal is to encourage energy innovation, using locally available resources. While Councilmembers MaryLee Chamberlain and Mary Wohleb participate, the venture is private, not endorsed or directed by the town government. At least not yet.

Langley has a slew of other boards, commissions and committees, including the Design Review Board, Dismantling Systemic Racism Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission. That is not nearly a complete list, only several flavors. There are also several disbanded and inactive panels. That shows the ebb and flow of a community’s priorities.

There is also the Planning Advisory Board and Parks and Open Spaces Commission. Their Arts Commission is inactive. These three line up with La Conner institutions.

This summary is informational, not advisory or competitive. There are lots of ways to slice and dice the interactions and workings of a small community, lots of facts, hopes and opinions to pick through.

In every community opportunities await. The times necessitate involvement. The future demands solutions.

There is a big world out there beyond the Rainbow Bridge and roundabout.

— Ken Stern

LETTERS

Change conditional use permits

An open letter to the town planner:

Dear Planner:
No more administrative permits. No more administrative conditional uses and no more administrative variances. These give too much power to the planner and too little oversight from the community.

The code should be:
15.10.043 Conditional use
Conditional use” means a use addressing a limited or specific need but, due to a potential adverse effect upon permitted uses or public services and facilities, is only allowed subject to the review AND APPROVAL OF the planning COMMISSION AND the criteria in this code and advertised in the paper, the library, the post office and sent by request to people who sign up for notifications.

(b) Variances. The planning director shall have the authority to grant variances from the following development standards when the hardship has been demonstrated to have not been created by the applicant and only with the review and approval of the planning commission in a meeting that has been advertised in the paper, the town library and the post office and sent by request to people who sign up for notifications.

This has been abused in the past.

Residents – this should be on the agenda for the Sept. 20 planning commission meeting. Please make your presence and your words be heard.

Linda Talman
La Conner

New airport alternative

Recent news publicity has announced that a state-legislature appointed ad hoc committee, the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission that was tasked with identifying potential regional airport sites to accommodate anticipated future regional growth, recommended two potential sites in Skagit County. The primary impetus for seeking future airport sites for development is that the primary airport, Seattle-Tacoma International, is already at capacity and other, alternative airport sites will be needed.

The Greater Seattle region is currently served by three existing major airports (Sea-Tac, Paine Field and King County/Boeing Field). Both Paine Field and Boeing Field are currently underutilized by commercial airlines. Another possible option needs

A citizen’s view —

Local schools need local families

By Frank Liddell

La Conner is rich with generational wealth. I have neighbors that have spent their entire lives in this community and are descendants of families that practically built this town. I have been a La Conner resident for almost 20 years. I’m lucky to have lived here this long. I pull it off because the people I have rented from actually believe in fair, affordable rent.

All of my kids have attended La Conner schools. My youngest is starting middle school this year and by the time he graduates I will have been involved with the school district for almost 30 years. Now I have read that the school has eliminated full time positions, made major budget cuts and enrollment is down. This is bad news for the staff and faculty that rely on the district for their employment and careers.

The proposed building at 306 Center Street will not provide housing for families which is greatly needed in La Conner. The new “affordable housing” built on the old ball field on Maple Avenue has houses too close together and are extraordinarily expensive. I don’t see how a family earning an average Skagit County annual wage could afford to buy a home there or for that matter anywhere in La Conner.

Without families, school enrollment will plummet. La Conner invested a ton of money in the new school. It should be the town’s top priority to encourage families to move here and invest in the community by enrolling kids at the school. Allowing this condominium building to take place is a slap in the face of every resident who paid into the school tax levy. It blows me away that this is even being considered.

La Conner is in danger of losing its generational wealth. The cost of La Conner is beyond my neighbors’ and my own kids’ means. They are unable to live in the community that their family has been a part of for generations.

I live across the street from the lot that is now being considered for an apartment building to be built. It appalls me that a nonresident would expect the residents to embrace a change that will destroy what makes La Conner a great neighborhood/community.

Center Street doesn’t need any more traffic. It already has rush hour traffic in the morning with cars speeding by to work at the marina and boat yards. If the town allows the Atkinson condominium building to exceed the 30 foot height, the Port of Skagit has plans to build more apartments/condos.

Good grief! I know of nobody who supports this building proposal. Who in La Conner would like to have a three story 20 unit condominium and vacation rental built next door to their home? It has been placed in the hands of the “Town” to determine which historical codes are to be enforced in determining the height of this condominium vacation rental building.

Who is the town? You are the town. I am the town. Make some noise! All of La Conner is a historical district!

What is the relationship you, Mr. Atkinson, wish to build with this community? Maybe reconsider and build homes for families.

Choose future dental patients over an elevator.

to be considered: Create shared commercial facilities at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma or NAS Whidbey Island as currently exist at several other joint-use civil/military airport sites around the country.

Both sites are well within the service area of interest and both have adequate space for separate commercial expansion and minimal interference with the military and its mission. The superior advantage is these sites exist, with major infrastructure components – e.g., runways/taxiways, control towers, fuel availability, etc. – already in place, thus significant cost savings and much less local objection that an entirely new airport site somewhere else would generate.

The logical commercial terminal site at Lewis-McChord is on the eastern boundary, easily

separated from military operations with relatively easy access to existing freeways and future light rail. NAS Whidbey Island has sufficient available land space for a commercial terminal on the west side of the base with separate access possible, but off-island access presents a much larger challenge (new roads, likely a new bridge link to Camano Island, etc.), all at huge cost. And of course that is more reason for the NIMBYs in the area who constantly squawk about jet noise to complain!

The ongoing airport search supports the thesis that in 25-30 years, the Puget Sound region will look like the San Francisco Bay area does today: Wall-to-wall people! To their credit, the CACC is actively planning ahead.

Bruce Elliot
La Conner

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. **Send to: editor@laconnernews.com**

Locals advancing energy transition solution in the Skagit Valley

By Greg Whiting

Do you want more control over your electric, heat and fuel bills? More stable energy bills? A more reliable and resilient power grid? Less dependence on foreign oil? Less acid rain? Reduced emissions of particulates and carbon soot (which cause lung issues)? Reduced carbon dioxide (which is a factor in climate and ocean acidification issues)?

Such outcomes are nOt science fiction or an environmentalist’s fantasy. They are attainable now, using existing, proven, cost-effective new technologies.

For fifty years, energy security and climate issues have been well-publicized. Throughout that time, much less-publicized development of innovative energy systems has been underway. Thousands of private companies, universities and government labs

have achieved major breakthroughs.

The R&D is paying off, now. Many new energy technologies are available, now. They are cost-effective, today, in many markets. Their costs are still falling. Their performance is still improving. These inventions affect electric generation, electric grid management, lighting, heating and cooling, cars and many other energy-related systems.

Innovation and policy changes are continuing. More changes are inevitable.

Energy professionals call major changes like these an “energy transition.” We haven’t had a big energy transition in a long time, but they have happened before. We moved from oars and horses, to sails and steam, to internal combustion engines, for transportation. We moved from wood, to whale oil, to town gas and

kerosene and then to electricity for artificial light.

Don Huberts, a Shell executive, said, in 1999, “The stone age did not end because the world ran out of stones and the oil age will not end because we run out of oil.”

We aren’t out of oil, but the oil age is in the process of ending. So is the coal age. Environmental and energy security, policies are relevant. They are helping to accelerate the transition, but they aren’t the only factors. The market has been successful at creating new technologies which can meet customer needs and which will reduce the use of oil and coal. Large-scale adoption of new technologies is now being driven mostly by economics and performance.

A transition away from fossil fuels cannot happen overnight. It takes time to replace exist-

ing technologies. It takes time for raw material sources and factories for new products to be developed and for workers to be trained. It takes time for individuals, governments and businesses to learn about, budget for and start using new products and services, even when new systems have been proven elsewhere.

Decisions to use innovative technologies, whether in homes or public facilities or businesses are made by individuals, who must learn about the inventions and then take action to use them.

To help speed up the energy transition in Skagit County, the Skagit Valley Clean Energy Cooperative was founded by Terry Nelson, Mary Wohleb, John Leaver, MaryLee Chamberlain and Bob Raymond. SVCEC’s goal is to encourage energy innovation, using locally available resources. SVCEC will

become a source of information and resources to help the Skagit Valley’s individuals, businesses and communities make the local energy transition faster.

As with other cooperatives, like the Skagit Valley Food Coop or REI, people can join as members. I recently joined as the first non-founding member. A website will launch soon.

This series of columns written exclusively for the Weekly News is intended to help readers understand the energy transition. They will address questions like: How will these changes affect me? Are they long-term changes driven by sustainable economics? What technologies are relevant? Can changes happen faster? What can I do? What can businesses, communities and governments do?

Call Terry Nelson for information and to get involved 360-399-6059.

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New Skagit COVID-19 cases drop dramatically

By Ken Stern

New reported coronavirus cases in Skagit County dropped dramatically in August, to 578, 55.7% of July's 1,078 reported cases. Fewer cases were reported weekly, from 148 infections Aug. 1-7 to 105 new cases Aug. 22-28. While not all people infected get tested or report results, only 27 people were hospitalized in the county's three hospitals last month. There were two deaths the entire month, both Aug. 1. Hospitalizations for COVID-19 were declining at month's end. After 21 the first three weeks, with 10 of those Aug. 15-21, there were six new hospitalizations the last 10 days. At the end of July, 41 people were hospitalized with COVID-19. For August, the Washington

state Department of Health listed Skagit County's 7-day case rate the last week at 102 cases per 100,000, down from 145 cases per 100,000 people the last week of July, a 30% drop. The federal Centers for Disease Control reported different data, rating Skagit County low for the COVID-19 Community Level Aug. 31, with a case rate of 79.7 for the weekly metric. The county's 7-Day Case Rate declined dramatically, from 113.4 Aug. 1-7 to 68.2 Aug. 25-31, state data show. Washington has 111 new coronavirus infections per 100,000 people the week ending Aug. 31. Skagit County is one of 20, of the state's 39 counties, with 7 day case rates above 100 per 100,000 people, the state health department reports. In the region, only Snohomish

County is reporting higher 7 day case rates, at 125 per 100,000. For that metric last week, Whatcom County had 96.1 new cases, Island County 73.7 new cases and San Juan County 28.8 new cases. Skagit County Public Health has not offered a new update since June 22, having announced a bi-monthly schedule.. COVID-19 prime, pediatric and booster vaccinations are available at the downtown Mount Vernon Skagit Public Health office, 700 South Second Street. The clinic is open Wednesdays-Fridays 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2-4 p.m. Make appointments at skagitcounty.net/COVIDvaccine or call 360-416-1500. Walking-in is an option.

Salvaging Aleutian Isle continues

By Ken Stern

Since last Wednesday, divers contracted with the Washington Department of Ecology or the U.S. Coast Guard made dives to the sunken Aleutian Isle, probably daily, according to posts on Ecology's website. Removing netting has been a primary project to both ensure the divers safety and to prevent fouling when the vessel is lifted. By the end of their shift on Sunday, Sept. 4, the "dive crews finished cutting away free-floating netting from the vessel and securing all remaining entanglement hazards" Ecology

posted. Drones, or Remote Operating Vehicles, have been used in each dive. By Friday, Sept. 2, divers secured all valves and capped all fuel vents that they could locate. They reported no fuel leaks. Sunday divers began to attach the rigging that will be used to lift the vessel. Ecology reports that visiting boats have daily intruded on the 1,000-yard safety zone established around the wreck site. The parties of the unified command are communicating that there is a maximum civil penalty of over \$94,000 per day for violating the safety zone. Violators can

be reported to the Coast Guard crews on VHF marine-band radio channel 16. The temporary flight restriction around the Aleutian Isle wreck site also remain in place. The Aleutian Isle sank Aug. 13 off Sunset Point, San Juan Island, initially in 100 feet of water. By Aug. 15 it had shifted and slipped down to 200 feet below the surface. The Swinomish tribe is part of the unified command because the boat is tribal owned. The Coast Guard, the Washington State Department of Ecology and the San Juan Office of Emergency Management also comprise the unified command.

No environmental impact from comp plan amendments

La Conner residents have till Sept. 28 to comment on the Notice of Application and Proposed Determination of Non-Significance that the Town of La Conner published on page 6 of today's Weekly News. The Town is conducting its

annual update of its Uniform Development Code and will propose amendments. State law requires staff to determine and announce that significant environmental impacts are unlikely to result from amendments. The public, and

institutions, may comment on the application, receive notice and request a copy of the decision once it is made. Questions or more information: Michael Davolio, planner, 360 466-3125, planner@townoflaconner.org.

Skagit Stream Team volunteers wanted for training

Volunteers for the 2022-23 Skagit Stream Team Program are needed. This is a citizen science opportunity for adults, age 18 and up, to participate in "hands on" water quality monitoring and to gain an understanding of the relationship between natural factors, land use impacts and a stream's health. Participants will work in the Samish Bay, Padilla Bay, Kulshan Creek, Trumpeter Basin, Gages Slough, Ace of Hearts or Nookachamps watersheds. The time commitment is approximately two to four hours a month through June 2023. Training, equipment and supplies are free. Applications are due to the Skagit Conservation District by Friday,

Sept. 16. The training will be held 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 21 and Thursday, Sept. 22, and Saturday, Sept. 24 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. New volunteers must attend all training sessions. To register or for more

information, contact Cindy Pierce at the Skagit Conservation District, 360-428-4313 ext. 1025 or cindy@skagitcd.org. Source: Skagit Conservation District

Larson hosts phone town hall today

Today, Sept. 7, Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Everett) will host a live telephone town hall to provide an update on his work representing Washington's 2nd Congressional District and answer constituents' questions. Listen to the live stream at larsen.house.gov/live or dial 855-962-0954 at 5:30 p.m.

Layne Westbrook vigil this Saturday

Sept. 10 marks two years since Laynee Westbrook went missing. A candlelight vigil Sept. 10, 7 p.m. at Causland Park in Anacortes has the goal of keeping her story alive in hopes of finding answers. Candles and beverages will be provided. There will be a Facebook Live link the day of if you cannot attend. Information at facebook.com/whereislayne. Source: Justice for Laynee Facebook page

First responder breakfast Sunday

First responders can enjoy a free breakfast Sunday, Sept. 11 from 8-11 a.m. at the Burlington Senior Center, 1011 Greenleaf Ave. All others can eat by donation. The American Legion Memorial Post 91 and Marla & Company are sponsors. Source: American Legion Memorial Post 91

Planning commission public hearing

The Port of Skagit's proposed Port Industrial Zone will be discussed by the Town of La Conner's Planning Commission when it holds a public hearing on proposed municipal code changes at its 6 p.m. Sept. 20 meeting in Lower Maple Center, 104 Commercial Street. To attend via Zoom, click on Sept. 20 of the calendar page of the Town's website: townoflaconner.org. To call in: 253-215-8782; Passcode: 49643

Town talk time: what's on your mind?

Please come and join in a community conversation with your neighbors. The Town of La Conner Communication Committee, an advisory and ad hoc town council committee, will provide an opportunity for community members to come together and talk about our town. We want to hear from citizens and listen for celebrations, concerns, trends, hopes and ideas. Join us if you can! Monday, Sept. 19 at Maple Hall 6:30-8 p.m. Source: Councilmember Chamberlain

Join walk to end Alzheimer's Saturday

The Alzheimer's Association invites Skagit Valley residents to join this year's Walk to End Alzheimer's on Saturday, Sept. 10, 9 a.m. at the Burlington Chamber of Commerce. In Washington, there are more than 120,000 people living with the Alzheimer's Disease and 297,000 caregivers. To register, visit alz.org/walk. Source: Alzheimer's Association

Art commission ceremony celebrates public art donated during pandemic

By Bill Reynolds

Lord knows, the COVID-19 pandemic has been nothing to celebrate.

But what can be celebrated is what has proved immune to the virus crisis: The sustaining nature of public art.

Since early 2022, the Town of La Conner has received donations of new public artwork designed to enhance the creative spirit for which the community is known. Those donations were formally celebrated during ceremonies held by the arts commission at Maple Hall Saturday, Sept. 3.

A one-hour program coordinated by arts panel member Sheila Johnson and including remarks from Mayor Ramon Hayes, preceded a self-guided tour of new art along historic First and Second streets.

Participants viewed pieces created by Richard Nash, Tom Pemberton, Donald Rothwell, Jay Bowen, Milo White and Tracy Powell.



PEACE DOVE LANDED IN PEACE PARK – Sculptor Tracy Powell donated “Peace Dove,” and its stone base, to the Town of La Conner. The park is just south of La Conner’s post office. – Photo by Ken Stern

They also visited the site at the base of the Benton Street stairway where Roger Small’s “The Visionary,” donated by Marilyn Thostenson, will be installed, and the Butterfly Garden on the La Conner Civic Garden Club grounds, future locale of Powell’s and Stan O’Neil’s “Tudor Rose Fence,” gifted by Jean Wharton. In addition to Thostenson and

Wharton, donors Emily Geyman, George Drake, Powell (who gifted his Peace Dove sculpture to the downtown Peace Park) and Bob Patterson, Patterson’s daughter, Deanna, were acknowledged by Johnson and Hayes.

Patterson’s colorful four-canvas quadriptych of the waterfront as it appeared nearly a decade ago hangs on the front of the

Maple Hall balcony.

Johnson said that Patterson, a Los Angeles native who began pursuing art full-time following a career in construction, devoted more than 700 hours to the waterfront mural project. She noted that he settled in La Conner after having established one of the largest art galleries in Alaska.

“He and Mayor Hayes discussed capturing the La Conner waterfront as it was in 2014,” Johnson said, “and Bob set out to paint a depiction of the town, from the marina to the Rainbow Bridge.”

Johnson shared biographical sketches of each of the artists and of their work and thanked donors for making possible public enjoyment of that art for years to come.

She pointed out that Powell – best known for his carving of the famed 24-foot Maiden of Deception Pass – had taken up whittling as a Boy Scout.

Hayes, himself a professional pianist, praised the artists, donors and arts commission members

while officially accepting the new works on behalf of the town.

“Being an artist is often a vulnerable path,” Hayes stressed. “You make something so deeply personal and then present it to the world with an open heart. Not everyone is so fearless. Thank you for reminding us of what’s possible. By pursuing these passions despite the risks and fears, you inspire us to do the same. Thank you for your mentorship. Thank you for what you create.”

He thanked donors for their “appreciation of what gives meaning, beauty and context to our world.”

Hayes extended appreciation to the commission for its dedication to ensuring that “these works – and others like them – receive the prominence and respect they deserve.”

Johnson also showed a 15-minute film on late ceramic artist Clayton James, a view of “Old La Conner,” James’ home and studio, with the artist explaining his transition from painting to three-dimensional work.

Lady Braves soccer team big on enthusiasm

By Bill Reynolds

Christian Warman is rarely at a loss for words but the veteran La Conner High School girls’ soccer coach says he cannot say enough about the players on this year’s roster.

“I could say something about all of them,” he told the Weekly News during one of the team’s pre-season workouts Aug. 25. “Our numbers are small, we have a lot of players who are young and inexperienced, but they bring a lot of energy.”

There might be times this fall when La Conner is forced to play what Warman calls “Ironman Soccer” with few or no subs to call upon, yet that does not faze either him or his players.

“They’ve got a fair amount of heart,” Warman said. “They’re fantastic. I couldn’t have asked for more.”

The team faces a conference

schedule featuring traditional NW2B/1B powers Friday Harbor and Coupeville, whose programs have longer rosters, often with players who compete off-season at the club level.

The Lady Braves will counter with senior co-captains Raegan Lee and Emily Smith and returnees Lydia Grossglass, Baylee Smith and Kendall Lee. All have the potential to be impact players, said Warman.

Younger students include Yamileth Ocampo Contreras, who according to Warman “looks very promising.”

The La Conner mentor anticipates his club will rely on its ability to thwart foes looking to score in transition or off set plays.

“We expect to play to our strength, which is defense,” Warman said. “That’s not to say we won’t break out of that when those opportunities present

themselves.”

La Conner’s September slate features home dates with Friday Harbor on Sept. 22 and Coupeville on Sept. 29. On Sept. 20, they will visit Mount Vernon Christian.

Warman said the Lady Braves full schedule is still under construction. The team is tentatively set for non-league road trips at Kamiak on Sept. 8 and Nooksack Valley on Sept. 20.

Though the schedule is somewhat in flux, of one thing Warman is quite certain. His team will come to play regardless of who is on the opposite sideline.

“We’ve got a lot of character,” he said. “We have some solid X-factor players who when they get in a groove will be able to turn some heads, that’s for sure.”

Braves open against Forks Saturday

By Bill Reynolds

The La Conner High School football team has its season debut against Forks at Whittaker Field Saturday, Sept. 10.

Second-year mentor Charlie Edwards’ team will spread the field and rely on speed and athleticism.

The home team will be looking to capitalize on potential game-breakers like junior Tommy Murdock, the reigning state 300-meter hurdles champion.

The Braves are looking to benefit from an extra week of preparation as their Sept. 3 non-conference home opener with Morton-White Pass was taken off the schedule. Kickoff is 2 p.m.

School district has monthly community meetings

La Conner Schools leaders want to meet you and hear your questions, concerns and suggestions starting Sept. 15 at 7 a.m. at Stompin’ Grounds Coffee, on Morris Street. Join Superintendent Will Nelson, Director of Special Programs

Andy Wheeler, Business Manager Brian Gianello, Teaching and Learning Director Beth Clothier and Director of Operations and Planning Bobby Vaughn, the district’s five-member cabinet.

The Oct. 14 outreach will be at 12 p.m. at the Swinomish Education tents at John K. Bob Ball Park.

After the Nov. 15 (2:30 p.m.) meeting at Northwest Fuel, there will be a holiday break until Jan. 19 at 7 a.m., at Beaver Tales Coffee. The school group is back at Stompin’ Grounds Feb. 21 at 4:30 p.m.

The Waterfront Café will host a March 20 coffee hour at 2 p.m. The April 11 (6 p.m.) gathering is set for the Swinomish tents. The May 15 outreach takes place at Northwest Fuel at 2 p.m.

The cabinet started with meetings Aug. 25 and 29.

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PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST AS A MATURE WOMAN – Janet Laurel has her collection of 1980s Sumi paintings of nudes hanging at Skagit Cellars' wine bar the month of September. Titled "A Woman's Gallery," many of the primarily black and white works are matched to poems she wrote. – Photo by Ken Stern

'Grease' opens Thursday in Oak Harbor

By Ken Stern

Life too serious? The 21st century too complex? Take a break from it, by traveling to Oak Harbor and back to the 1950s and Rydell High School and relax with Whidbey Playhouse's production of "Grease," opening the in-person 2022-2023 season Friday, Sept. 9.

The large, generally teenage cast holds its own, singing and dancing through the 18 numbers, several which you know and will want to sing.

The story is simple, opening at the start of a school year, with boy, gang leader Danny Zuko (Chris King), bragging to his cohorts of his summer beach romance. Meanwhile, the girl transfer student, Sandra Dumbrowski (Karina Andrew) tell her new classmates about the dreamy guy she met on the beach. Sandra, as square as Danny is cool, is the worst of outsiders. When the two meet in the hall, Danny splits from her like she has cooties, leaving her hurt and confused.

Will they come together by play's end? Can Danny maintain his cool while liking an establishment girl? Will Sandra morph into Sandy Dee, drinking wine from a bottle and smoking without choking? So the plot line is not complicated. Neither is the dancing or choreography, which is not a criticism, as it is crisp, lively, stylized and in synch throughout.

The opening scene brings on the T-Birds en masse stage right in black leather jackets and cuffed blue jeans, singing, dancing and snapping their fingers to "Grease is the Word." In turn, the Pink Ladies, the girls come on stage left. Some basic

teen issues get sung out: "We can be who we are." / "Grease is the way we are." / "Life is an illusion." / "Confusion." / "What are we doing here?" It is basic teen angst and makes visible the process of growing up.

The rest of the scenes in Act I introduce a host of characters: Kenicke (Cory Gregerson), a good singer and dancer. His sometimes girlfriend, Betty Rizzo (Sara Hampton), holds her own. Marty (Erin Tombaugh) gets to shine, and does. The story tends to pair actors up, boy girl, and gives many a spotlight number, often a duet. Rump, Roger's (Andrew Huggins) nickname, sings why he earned it in "Mooning," much to Jan's (Jordan Spanovich) delight.

Frenchy (Marianne Campas) has stage presence even as she flunks out of high school and beautician school, singing "Beauty School Dropout."

Patty Simcox (Elizabeth Rud), the school nerd, in glasses and with a ponytail, is a pretty good baton twirler as a cheerleader. She has the confidence to chase after Danny, too.

The guys rev up the stage with "Greased Lightnin'."

By the end of Act I the lead members of the cast show themselves to be more street savvy than scholars, smoking

and drinking and talking about making out.

Through pairing up and breaking up and Sandy being rejected, the plot makes it way to the closing scene, where Sandy finds herself and breaks out in a costume that has to be seen. The last scene is worth the price of admission. You might find yourself agreeing, if not singing "You're the One that I Want." Or maybe you will join in in "We Go Together."

This high school musical of high schoolers requires a big crew. They amply direct and support the production. Allenda Jenkins and Eric George co-direct. They designed the set. Jenkins designed the costumes and was a choreographer, along with Micki Gibson, Claudia Samano Losada, Jan Wright and Daunne Zinger. Musical co-directors are Jamar Jenkins and Andrew Huggins. Grab a program to acknowledge the rest of the production team.

This is the 50th anniversary of the Broadway production. It was nominated for seven Tony awards. Book, music and lyrics were by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey.

"Grease" plays Sept. 9-Oct. 2, Thursdays-Sundays. For tickets and times: 360-679-2237, whidbeyplayhouse.com.

Poet Laureate Rena Priest read at Lincoln Saturday

By Anne Basye

"When you are poeting, you are making the world, creating the universe out of nothing," Washington State Poet Laureate Rena Priest said last Saturday at the Lincoln Theatre.

That's because the word poet comes from the Greek word poesis or "maker," she explained.

During the 90-minute reading and workshop, Priest introduced herself and her work to an audience of about 50. Several La Conner-area residents were among those listening as she shared stories from her own life, wisdom from other poets and her own work.

Dr. Seuss's "Red Fish Blue Fish" was an early influence on the state's first Indigenous poet laureate. After the local newspaper published her poem when she was just seven years old, she told herself, "I'm going to be a poet."

"My teacher said I should be a lawyer' and I thought, 'I'll show you.'"

Today the Western Washington University graduate and 2022 Maxine Cushing Gray Distinguished Writing Fellow likes to write in the middle of the night when she is fully awake but her filters are down. Writing on road trips when someone else is driving is also fruitful.

Appointed by Gov. Jay Inslee, the state's sixth poet laureate brings poetry to communities throughout the state. During her two-year tenure she plans to celebrate poetry in Washington's tribal communities and to use poetry to increase appreciation of the natural world and the many threats facing it.

"In my culture, when you are confronted by the awful, you dance," she said, introducing her new collection, "Dancing to the Ticking of the Doomsday Clock." "We recognize what we love and hold dear in order to change. This gratitude is urgency."

The poems she read from her book, "Patriarchy Blues and Sublime Subliminal" probe the awful with humor and grace. Her first selection, "Welcome to Indian Country" appears in this month's Poetry magazine. Lifting and humorous, it ends with a punch – "because humor tells the truth quickly and directly and in poetry, that happens even faster," she said.

One poem looked at the inner life of a glass of water, while "Nail Salon" dove into the dizzying array of shades of red. Between poems she talked about how she chooses words and uses metaphor.

"The wit of her brilliant mind and the subtle humor in her poems captured both our Indian perspective and the modern," said attendee "ska je tah lo" Lona Wilbur, who shares many family connections with Priest.

Priest's teaching skills were evident during the second half of the evening. Her workshop, "How to Catch a Salmon Poem," sought to inspire poems for an anthology of salmon poetry.

"By celebrating salmon through poetry in every corner of the state, I hope to raise goodwill and a feeling of reverence for the salmon, a feeling that my people have felt since time immemorial," says Priest on her website. Salmon poems can be submitted until Sept. 18 at www.renapriest.com.

"I once heard an elder say of another that 'her presence graces us,'" said Wilbur. "I feel like Rena's presence graces us and her works as a poet grace us as tribal people."

After "catching" more salmon poems in workshops at Hugo House in Seattle, the Suquamish Museum and the Lummi Library at Northwest Indian College, Priest will come to La Conner for the Skagit River Poetry Festival, Oct. 6-8.

La Conner Street Fair

Saturday, Sept. 17
11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



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MoNA 'Arrequin' tour Saturday

Matthew Kangas will lead a tour of the exhibit and discuss "Arrequin: Painter from the New World" at the Museum of Northwest Art Saturday, Sept. 10, 2-4 p.m. Kangas will also review artist portfolios, spending 10-15 minutes discussing and making suggestions with each person. Present portfolios on laptops with photos or videotape or bring a physical portfolio. Artists must be at least 18 years old. Reviews will occur on a first-come, first-served basis after the exhibition walkthrough. For the review RSVP on MoNA's website: monamuseum.org.

Port... (from page 1)

allowed height of structures on Port-owned properties within the Town." The Port requested "the Town to consider updates to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning regulations governing allowed uses on properties owned by the Port within the Town." This was the only 2022 comprehensive plan request received.

Since at least June, Heather Rogerson, Port director of planning and development has been working with Davolio on developing this new chapter.

The Port made a public presentation to town council, the planning commission and residents in May, having consultants share a proposal for several potential futures, including a mixed used development, with a residential component, The proposed zoning changes do not include that option.

In a Sept. 1 email to Mayor Ramon Hayes, Davolio writes the Port is "putting off any consideration of Commercial zone changes until next year." For profit housing is a commercial use.

Tiny homes

A definition of tiny homes, permanent housing that are "a single-family residential dwelling measuring not more than 700 square feet in total area" is added to Chapter 15.110: Accessory And Temporary Structures And Uses.

Tiny home standards are defined. In 15.25 Planned Unit Residential Development, a third purpose is added: "Encourage the development of affordable housing styles, such as tiny home developments."

Sign Regulations

Chapter 15.10, on signs, is amended, a project Town Administrator Scott Thomas brought up in 2021 to ensure compliance with state or federal regulations. The last 14 pages of the suggested code changes covers signs.

Nontidal wetlands

Four pages addressing specific buffer requirements for nontidal wetlands are part of the proposed code changes.

AGENDAS

LA CONNER PARK COMMISSION AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 14TH 2022 9:30 AM MAPLE HALL FIRESIDE ROOM 104 COMMERCIAL STREET, LA CONNER AND BY ZOOM Information Below and on the Town Website
Public comments
Old Business
A. Pavilion Update
B. Fish Slide Repairs
C. Maple Street Park Grant Update
D. La Conner Rotary Donation to Maple Street Park
E. Update on Roger Small Sculpture at Benton Street Stairs
F. Repaint Pioneer Park Mural under Rainbow Bridge
New Business
Meeting ID: 841 4460 7796
Passcode: 3nW7is

TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA September 13, 2022, 6PM 104 Commercial Street Upper Maple Center And by Zoom Information is below and on the Town Website
I. Call to Order
II. Pledge of Allegiance
III. Public Comments (Limit: 3 minutes per person)
IV. Presentations:
V. CONSENT AGENDA
A. Consent Agenda (Approved without objection 5/0)
1. Approval of the Minutes of August 23, 2022
2. Finance: Approval of Accounts Payable Approval Payroll
B. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda
VI. REPORTS
1. Chamber Report
2. Revenue / Expenditure Report
3. Department Head Reports
4. Mayor's Report
5. Council Committee Reports
VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
1. Center Street Project
VIII. NEW BUSINESS:
1. Agreement – Land Acquisition (Jensen)
2. Agreement – City of Mount Vernon Yard Waste Extension
2. 2023 Budget Discussions – Public Works & WWTP Presentations
IX. Mayor Roundtable:
X. Executive Session:
There may be an executive session immediately preceding or following the meeting as allowed by RCW 42.30.110 and as announced by the presiding officer.
Meeting ID: 890 4755 0251
Passcode: M5MXp7

TOWN OF LA CONNER NOTICE OF APPLICATION (NOA) / PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE UNIFORM DEVELOPMENT CODE UPDATE APPLICATION ID: Uniform Development Code Update APPLICANT Town of La Conner PROJECT DESCRIPTION: In compliance with the section RCW 36.70A.070 of the Growth Management Act (GMA) the Town of La Conner proposes amendments to the Town of La Conner Uniform Development Code. PROJECT LOCATION: Uniform Development Code provisions apply Townwide. TOWN CONTACT PERSON FOR COMMENTS Michael Davolio, AICP; Planning Director Town of La Conner; PO Box 400; La Conner, WA 98257; (360) 466-3125; planner@townoflaconner.org. OPTIONAL DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE (DNS): As the Lead Agency, the Town of La Conner has determined that significant environmental impacts are unlikely to result from the proposed project. Therefore, as permitted under the RCW 43.21C.110, the Town of La Conner is using the Optional DNS process to give notice that a DNS is likely to be issued. This may be the only opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of this proposal. Comment periods for the project and the proposed DNS are integrated into a single comment period. There will be no comment period following the issuance of the Threshold Determination of Non-Significance (DNS). A 10-day appeal period will follow the issuance of the DNS. Agencies, tribes, and the public are encouraged to review and comment on the proposed action and its probable environmental impacts. CONSISTENCY OVERVIEW: Environmental Documents that Evaluate the Proposed Project: SEPA Checklist dated September 1, 2022. Development Regulations Used for Project Mitigation: The projects are non-project and are subject to the following portions of the Town's Municipal Code (LCMC): 13.10 State Environmental Policy Act 15.05.030 Applicability 15.05.040 Findings 15.05.060 Relationship to Comprehensive Plan. Comments on the Notice of Application and Proposed Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) must be submitted, in writing, no later than 4:00 p.m. on September 28, 2022. Comments should be as specific as possible. Any person may comment on the application, receive notice and request a copy of the decision once it is made. Questions about this proposal and requests for additional notification should be directed to the contact person listed above. The application and materials submitted by the applicant are available for review at Town Hall. If you have any questions concerning this project, contact Town Hall at (360) 466-3125 or email planner@townoflaconner.org. Published in the La Conner Weekly News September 7, 2022.

LEGAL NOTICES

THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SKAGIT Estate of Christopher HILLSON, Deceased, Michael HILLSON, Petitioner. Case No. 22-4-00346-29 NOTICE TO CREDITORS TO: ALL CREDITORS OF THE DECEDENT. YOU AND EACH OF YOU TAKE NOTE that the Personal Representative named below has been appointed as Personal Representative of this Estate. Any person having a claim against the decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner as provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing to the Personal Representative or the Personal Representative's attorney at the address stated below a copy of the claim and filing the original of the claim with the Court. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) Thirty days after the Personal Representative served or mailed the notice to the creditor as provided under RCW 11.40.020(3); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of the notice. If the claim is not presented within this time frame, the claim is forever barred, except as otherwise provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective as to claims against both the decedent's probate and nonprobate assets. Date of First Publication: September 7, 2022. Personal Representative: Michael Hillson Attorney for the Personal Representative: JOSEPH D. BOWEN, #17631 Address for Mailing or Service: JOSEPH D. BOWEN ATTORNEY AT LAW, P.S. 401 South Second Street Mount Vernon, WA 98273 Published in the La Conner Weekly News September 7, 14, 21, 2022.

If the claim is not presented within this time frame, the claim is forever barred, except as otherwise provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective as to claims against both the decedent's probate and nonprobate assets. Date of First Publication: August 31, 2022 Personal Representative: Donna Moodie 8710 214th Street Langley, B.C. V1M 1Z9 CANADA Attorney for the Personal Representative: KATTI ESP 301 Prospect Street Bellingham, WA 98225 Address for Mailing or Service: KATTI ESP 301 Prospect Street Bellingham, WA 98225 Court of Probate Proceedings Superior Court of Whatcom County and Cause Number: Cause No. 22 4 00819 37 Published in the La Conner Weekly News August 31, September 7, 14, 2022.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY In the Matter of the Estate of Matthew W. Gifford, Deceased. Cause No. 22-4-00437-29 PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS (RCW 11.40.030) The Personal Representative named below has been appointed as Personal Representative of this estate. Any person having a claim against the decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner as provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing to the Personal Representative or the Personal Representative's attorney at the address stated below a copy of the claim and filing the original of the claim with the court. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) thirty days after the personal representative served or mailed the notice to the creditor as provided under RCW 11.40.020(3); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of the notice. If the claim is not presented within this time frame, the claim is forever barred, except as otherwise provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective as to claims against both the decedent's probate and non-probate assets. Date of First Publication: August 31, 2022 Personal Representative: Adrienne E. Nydegger Attorney for Personal Representative: Aaron M. Rasmussen, WSBA #29496 Address for Mailing or Service: Barron Smith Daugert PLLC, 300 N. Commercial St., Bellingham, WA 98225; Phone: 360-733-0212 Published in the La Conner Weekly News August 31, September 7, 14, 2022.



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- Bullet Train**..... (R) Brad Pitt, Joey King
- Beast**..... (R) Idris Elba, Liyabuya Gongo
- Top Gun: Maverick**..... (PG-13) Tom Cruise, Jennifer Connelly
- Dragon Ball Super: Super Hero**..... (PG-13) Masako Nozawa, Toshio Furukawa
- DC League of Super-Pets**....(PG) Dwayne Johnson, Kevin Hart
- Three Thousand Years of Longing**..... (R) Tilda Swinton, Idris Elba
- Minions: The Rise of Gru**....(PG) Steve Carell, Pierre Coffin
- Thor: Love and Thunder**..... (PG-13) Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman
- Where the Crawdads Sing**..... (PG-13) Daisy Edgar-Jones, Taylor John Smith

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Super Crossword

Answers

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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POLICE BLOTTER

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sunday, August 28
11:49 p.m.: Seahawks fan prowling – Report of a male wearing a Seahawks jersey jumping a fence and prowling the area. A deputy checked the area but could not find him. 3rd St., La Conner.

Monday, August 29
9:47 a.m.: Catalytic converter theft – A vehicle was parked at the boat launch for two days while the owner was on a boating trip. When they returned the catalytic converter was removed from their vehicle. It appeared a saw was used to cut the converter away from the vehicle. Boat Launch Rd., Greater La Conner.

11:42 a.m.: Burglary – A suspect entered a detached shop sometime overnight by prying the side door open. Taken from inside the shop was a green air compressor and a cordless drill. 4th St., La Conner.
6:30 p.m.: Found kitten – A kitten was picked up and taken to a representative for the Humane Society to be placed in a new home. McLean Rd., Greater La Conner.

Wednesday, August 31
3:04 p.m.: Abandoned jet ski – A

derelict jet ski was seen floating in the channel. It was later found beached near the Downey Road access. Boat Launch Rd., Greater La Conner.

4:12 p.m.: Missing purse – A dark blue Kate Spade purse was lost near the public restrooms. The purse contained the owner's ID, passport, cash and debit card. 1st St., La Conner.

8:31 p.m.: Screaming man – Report of a man yelling and screaming on the road. The area was patrolled by a deputy but the subject was not located. McLean Rd., Greater La Conner.

Thursday, August 25
1:46 a.m.: Suspicion – The area was patrolled by deputies for reports of suspicious activity by homeless people. Morris St., La Conner.

5:44 p.m.: Dog loose – A dog described as black and brown, medium size, with short hair, wearing a collar and not aggressive was running into traffic on SR-20. Deputies made several attempts to catch it, however, it would not let them close. The dog finally ran off into a field. La Conner Whitney Rd., La Conner.

Bridge. . . (from page 1)

project, which had been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. "Their skills levels have been great and it's been just the right size crew."

She has been aided in the mission by Annabelle Vergne, Lynn Federspiel-Young, Lynn Beebe, Susan Schanen and Patty Klamsner, among others, including those who donated paint.

Wilder said the original paint had weathered well over time. Some mural imagery had been dulled through the years, however, from debris having spilled and fallen from the span above.

The restoration took Wilder up on a ladder and had her leaning perilously over a wall top to refresh mural surfaces.

"Next time," she quipped, "they'll probably have to get somebody else. I don't know that I'll be up for being on a ladder then."

Wilder recalled Stephens had initially proposed painting a mural beneath the bridge in late

1997 after a major windstorm had snapped off trees in the park. Apparently, some healthy cedars and firs were mistakenly removed during the clean-up work.

"Jane felt these trees needed to be commemorated and her idea grew," Wilder said. "Then, it was decided that an inventory should be taken of the trees and creatures that had lived in Pioneer Park in our lifetimes."

That inspired the shapes and symbols selected for the mural. A formal description of the project, entitled "A Place of Dancing Cedars," was painted prominently on a bridge pillar.

"During the winter of 1998 we began our search for a vision of a mural that would replace idle graffiti and honor the natural world our city park provides," reads the message, penned by Stephens. "Completed the following August, the mural you see commemorates the shadow-play of forest foliage, cedars and maple. The band of animals represents friends we revere, present, past and future who we hope will continue to inspire us

with awe and wonder and who are blessed by this place, as we are."

Stephens gained the support of La Conner Rotarians and Kiwanians. Mizuta and her classmates answered the call, mindful of their school-mandated public service commitments.

Mizuta, said Stephens, "was very dedicated and creative."

Bruce helped navigate the necessary paperwork and permit process with Skagit County, which owns Rainbow Bridge, Wilder said.

"He (Bruce) is always for the arts," insisted Stephens.

"He had some clout," added Wilder. "He made the magic happen."

Stephens stressed that Wilder, too, is a magician – especially when grasping a paintbrush.

"Maggie wanted to get it done right," Stephens said of the mural designs. "And people have respected the mural. I'm absolutely glad that Maggie and the volunteers are doing this. There's nothing quite like public art.

MARINA MOORINGS

Port of Skagit

Labor Day is traditionally a busy boating weekend, and this year is no exception. The inside of F dock is reserved for a yacht club and the outside was filling up by mid-afternoon Friday. G dock is almost entirely reserved, both inside and out. This is probably the busiest weekend of the year.

One of the reasons G dock is so heavily reserved is the presence of the largest vessel of the year calling on La Conner. The Sea Jewel has 114 feet reserved for a single night, taking up over 20% of the dock. This is the largest vessel to dock at the marina this summer by about 20 feet. We have had a few other large vessels, two that come to mind are regular visitors at 96 and 88 feet, and their sheer size makes me think about the channel and the waters our visitors operate in.

The Corps of Engineers works hard to keep the channel clear of obstructions and dredged to 12 feet below Mean Lower Low Water. Mean Lower Low Water is where a tide level of "0" is set, so a minus tide is anything below our average lower low tide. This of course only makes sense if you consider we have two low tides per day, and one is lower than the other – hence the "Lower Low." The Corps of Engineers surveys the area regularly and plans dredging when they see sediment start to accumulate in the channel. They are currently working to set up dredging for November 2023, if all the permitting goes well and the funding is in place.

If you want to see for yourself what the Corps is looking at as they plan you are more than welcome to see their bathymetric data. They post it at: <https://navigation.usace.army.mil/Survey/Hydro>. This links to a database organized by "USACE District" and "USACE Channel." We are the Seattle District, and the Swinomish Channel. The latest data is from the survey they did in June of this year, so it is very current. It shows a few areas of concern, especially for deep draft vessels like the larger yachts that got me thinking about this in the first place. This is a very good resource for anyone with a draft over five feet or so to review before going through the channel.

– Chris Omdal, harbormaster

Mayor. . . (from page 1)

involvement project to create a housing action plan, which will help bring additional funding. He received "criticisms for overstepping my role, mostly around housing issues and short-term solutions."

Residents have championed addressing the climate crisis, with a group originating from high school students asking the city council to declare a climate crisis. Sea rise is a concern. Solar panels on city hall and the library, "Zero waste" and a significant decrease in the community's carbon footprint are often discussed goals.

"In theory, council sets policy and I administer," he said, but he has brought "a lot of policy options to council."

"This fall I will switch gears and wait for them to bring issues." He will be offering regular communication with each council member between meetings to engage and support them.

The mayor is Langley's chief administrator in a strong mayor governance system. It is a full-time load on a part time salary. He suggested he get fired and a full-time city manager hired. A tight budget means limited support staff.

A police car went by on our walk back to city hall. Langley has its own police force of three,

with the island's first Black police chief. They will be hiring a fourth officer, Chaplin said.

The city has hydrology issues. The area's shoreline is sand bluffs, which occasionally slide, once closing a road down to the marina. Some commercial buildings are above the seashore and a protective seawall which shows signs of deterioration. Chaplin plans a complete analysis of area watersheds and hydrogeology in order to prevent future damage and improve stormwater management. His expansive vision includes restoration to "original conditions," recreating salmon habitat in the three creeks that run through the city if feasible.

He is sensitive to Indigenous Peoples (very few still live

on the island) and is building relationships with some local tribes. After the city took down two non-native "totem" poles, a former chair of the Tulalip tribe thanked the city by presenting the council with a ceremonial canoe paddle. Langley Creates is developing a "canoe culture" theme for a large piece of public land on a bluff that faces the Tulalip reservation.

Chaplin lamented "unfortunately most people in our community, myself included, are almost completely unaware of our Indigenous people's history."

All this from an accidental mayor appointed by the council in June 2021 when his predecessor stepped down after moving out of the city.

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