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Merchants' moves around town



IN A TOWN THAT LIKES ITS COFFEE – Too many to get in one story or even name are all the coffee shops in La Conner. Crusier Coffee, left, opened on Morris Street Jan. 30 in the NW Fuel space. Lulu's Espresso, right, bought Pam Field's La Conner Coffee on First Street. Raven Cup's Coffee is also on First Street, having taken the Reclamation Candle shop.

– Photos by Marissa Conklin

Morris and First street business shufflings

By Anne Basye

January and February may be quiet months for La Conner, but town businesses are in the midst of big changes.

Perhaps the most prominent is the recently opened Firehall Kitchen and Taphouse at 402 Morris Street.

Owned by Pam Alvord of La Conner Brewery, Firehall is located in – natch – the former home of the La Conner Fire Department. Old-time LCFD photos on the walls honor the building's history.

"We are growing organically as the staff settle into a new kitchen and a new menu," says manager Tessa McLeod. "It's nice that our first patrons have been people who live here and have given us lots of good feedback.

Firehall offers small plates, beer and wine from all over the Pacific Northwest, and cocktails with a fire theme. Out back are tables for people who want to dine with their pets. As the weather improves, expect some cornhole matches.

While this new town landmark is in "soft launch" mode (McLeod recommends checking Facebook for current hours) three long-time landmarks are on the market.

At the south end of town, the Hotel Planter and shops at 713-719 First Street were first listed for sale in 2020. Earthenworks Gallery and other retail

businesses are not included.

Owner Don Hoskins had some offers, but took the building off the market to get some foundation work done. Soon it will be listed again.

Owning the hotel for over 40 years makes him "picky" about prospective buyers. He turned down an offer from someone who wanted to turn the hotel into apartments.

"The Planter Hotel is an historic part of La Conner," he said. "I want someone to keep it the same or make it better."

The Go Outside store and building at 111 E. Morris is also for sale. Owner Mark Epstein purchased the store in 1990 from Jane Chesnut.

"She was a very visionary retailer who had an eye for finding things nobody else had," he remembered. "It was eclectic, and it has stayed that way. People want the experience of being in a smaller store that has been thought through."

Epstein says sales have been very good since the 2020 lockdown, when demand for cookbooks and lifestyle books featuring cabins leaped as customers hunkered down at home.

While 2021 was his best year ever, he feels that it's time to do something else. Like Hoskins, he has also turned down some offers in the search for the right successor.

The Ginger Grater building at 602-604 S. First, on the market for \$1.25

million, has two new tenants.

Last fall Mo's Eclectic Gifts and Apparel moved from Morris Street to the space previously occupied by Yalta's Custom and Sewing Shop. Owner Marjie Jensen is glad that when Yalta Mager closed her business, "she thought of me."

Jensen has rented six locations in her seven years in La Conner, and while she has no lease yet, she hopes to get one and stay awhile. "I'm really getting tired of having to move!" she said.

Jensen's new space is tucked behind the former La Conner Coffee.

In August 2022, Pam Fields sold that business to Shaylen Anderson, who now operates Lulu's Espresso and Ice Cream – named for her dog.

Anderson has been working in coffee for a few years, most recently operating the coffee stand at Skagit Speedway.

"I wanted something more full time and year round, so I started looking around," she said. "Right then, La Conner Coffee came up. It felt so right."

Family connections were one reason the purchase felt right. Anderson's grandma is La Conner elementary kindergarten teacher Judy Zimmerman.

Her plans for the future? "Pam had a great business going, and I want to keep it growing."

Electronic billboard at Conway I-5 exit proposed

By Ken Stern

The Conway I-5 interchange will have an electronic billboard sign on Cedardale Road "40-foot tall 10-foot wide by 30-foot long (300 square feet total)" owned by Pacific Outdoor Advertising if Skagit County planning staff approve a January administrative special use permit application.

The public comment period closes 4:30 p.m. Feb. 17. Submit comments via the PDS website under the "recent legal notices" tab. Email correspondence will not be accepted. A public hearing is not required and there will not be one.

Comments in opposition have already been submitted by Feb. 6, said Kevin Cricchio, County senior planner.

Bird watchers and others are organizing opposition, including La Conner residents. One outreach email called the sign an "affront to human sensibilities, but imagine the disruption to the migratory birds who visit our area. And of course it's one more blow to night skies. Remember when we used to be able to see the stars here?"

She wrote the signs "are horribly disruptive and I cannot imagine the confusion they will cause for birds."

The property address for the billboard location is 21049 Cedardale Road, Mount Vernon.

The application, including its environmental checklist and site plan, can be reviewed. There has been a SEPA (State Environmental Policy

(continued on page 8)

January cloudy and damp

By Ken Stern

January was cloudy and felt damp, but it was not wet. The 1.7 inches of rain was only 43% of the century's average for the month and 2.3 inches below the 4.0 average inches of January rains since 2000. It clusters with the other years of less than two inches of rain: 2017, 1.6 inches and 2019, 1.8 inches.

There have been four or more inches of rain 11 Januaries, with five years since 2013.

Almost half the month's rain, 0.8 inches, came down Jan. 24-27, with 0.35 inches the 27th and 0.6 inches Jan. 26-27. While there were 16 days of precipitation, nine times it was less than 0.10 inch.

The month started and ended cold, frosting Jan. 2-3 and 29-31, five of the eight frosts. The 30th was the coldest morning, 21.4 degrees. It was only the second time below 24.5, which was Jan. 29.

Eleven of the first 16 days were above 50 degrees, however, and six had highs above 55 degrees. Jan 5 set a record high temperature, 60.4 degrees, the month's high. The day's average temperature was above 50 degrees five times during that period.

This January was warmer than the century average, with the average daily minimum of 35.5 degrees almost a degree higher and the average daily high and the month's daily average temperature both 1.3 degrees above average for the past 24 years.

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

What a week: accidents, burglary, power outages

By Bill Reynolds

The full moon didn't rise until Sunday, but a lot of crazy things happened in the La Conner area days prior.

It started with a burglary at Pioneer Market and included a pair of power outages, the sinking of a boat on the waterfront and a car slamming into a house and flipping onto its top side off Shelter Bay Drive Friday night.

The early Wednesday break-in at the Morris Street grocery store didn't net the burglars much. They got away with five cartons of cigarettes and apparently had their images captured on the store's security camera system for their troubles.

"They rifled through our cash drawers but didn't find anything there," store manager Bob Carter told the Weekly News. "We don't keep anything in those."

Carter said the front-door window broken by the burglars was replaced within a couple days. He said the Skagit County Sheriff's Office has

collected all evidence in the case.

The first of the two power outages occurred Thursday afternoon when a car struck and severed a pole on La Conner-Whitney Road at the curve south of McLean Road.

"The car was wedged between the pole and the guide wires," Skagit County Fire District 13 Chief Wood Weiss, whose crews were on scene for over three hours, said afterward. "There was one driver and he was able to extricate himself and suffered no apparent injuries.

"The power lines were intact and there was no arcing or sparking," said Weiss. "PSE (Puget Sound Energy) had to shut off the power to replace the pole."

Power was out briefly for about 1,500 customers in and around La Conner, though about three dozen residents near the accident scene didn't have electrical service restored until later that evening.

The lights went out at La Conner Schools as students were preparing

baked goods in teacher Peter Voorhees' classroom for the local PTSA chapter's weekend play performances at the Bruce Performing Arts Center.

"We were in the middle of baking chocolate chip cookies," said Voorhees, who teaches culinary arts and world history. "But the kids were able to carry on the old-school way."

Voorhees said students hand-mixed dough with spoons and used their cell phone flashlights to brighten up the kitchen.

Down wires in front of Calico Cupboard on South First Street 7:40 p.m. Friday created a power outage coinciding with a Skagit Community Band concert at Maple Hall. But the show did go on.

The music continued thanks to emergency wall lights and music stand lights.

"Everyone was in good humor and stayed to the end," said Ken Stern. "Selections included Apollo 13 and that was commented on."

And, the band played an encore.

(continued on page 8)



NOT YOUR TYPICAL SHELTER BAY HOUSE GUEST – The last in a string of way too many accidents last week was Friday night's car crashing into a Shelter Bay Drive home. Whether it was a straight flush or a full house, totaling up the burglary and two power outage damages has yet to be determined. – Photo contributed

OBITUARIES



Bernice Jane Stevens
10/1/1927 – 7/10/2022

Bernice Jane Stevens, long-time resident of Mount Vernon, Washington, died July 10, 2022 at the age of 94. She was born on a forty-acre farm in Mount Vernon to James and Elizabeth. She had three older sisters: Isabelle, Joyce, and Gladys.

Bernice went to Ridgeway Grade School and she usually got there on her roller-skates.

She graduated from Mount Vernon High School in 1945. Her position as a song leader and a cheerleader in high school set her up for a lifetime of friends. The connections with her classmates continued as they met regularly in the years to come. She also met with her monthly "Lunch Bunch Crew" at Max Dale's Steakhouse.

Bernice married Wendell Dean Stevens in December of 1948, sharing 18 years of marriage's ups and downs.

While she spent many notable years as a bank teller, she held a variety of jobs in her lifetime. First and foremost Birdy worked for many years at the Skagit County Court House. She enjoyed working with Katie and the many costume parties as well as decorating for the holidays. Bernice worked at a Woolworth Department Store, Brassy's Gift Store (La Conner), Red Apple Market (as a bookkeeper), and on the local Election Board for Voting. Bernice attended First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mount Vernon for many years.

Bernice enjoyed gardening, shopping, and travelling. She consistently worked 2-3 jobs well into her 80's; anything to keep her farm on Starbird Road. She loved her birds and would feed them only the best food.

She was preceded in death by her husband Wendell, as well as her special friend Virgil. Virgil and Bernice enjoyed numerous parties, traveling, and boating trips with their many friends, as members of the Swinomish Yacht Club.

Bernice is survived by her daughters, Karen and Wendy, and her sister, Darlene, along with many cousins, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

There will be a Memorial Service with a reception to follow for Bernice at 1 p.m., Friday, Feb. 17, 2023 at Kern Funeral Home of Mount Vernon.

You may offer your condolences and share memories of Bernice to her family online at www.kernfuneralhome.com. Arrangements are under the care of Kern Funeral Home.



James (Jim) L. Frey

James (Jim) L. Frey, 83, a long-time resident of the Skagit Valley passed away in Mount Vernon on Monday, January 30, 2023. He was born in Madison, Nebraska on March 14, 1939 to Ervin and Alice Frey. He graduated from Mount Vernon High School with the Class of 1956, and earned his college degree from Bob Jones University in Greenville, SC in 1963.

In 1961 Jim married Kay Randles in Mount Vernon. He taught school in La Conner for 13 years and then started his own business as Frey Construction.

He and his wife raised their three children on Pleasant Ridge, near La Conner, and began Downey House Bed and Breakfast when their children were grown. After nine years of innkeeping, they moved to Mount Vernon. Jim continued working as a contractor until he retired, eventually settling in Heather Village where he and Kay enjoyed tending their garden and hosting neighbors, friends and family.

Jim was active in various ministries at Emmanuel Baptist Church since he began there when in high school. He enjoyed sports, both participating when younger, and coaching basketball and football at La Conner High School. Being a farm boy, cultivating a garden was a joy, as was sharing it with others.

Survivors are his wife Kay, brother Warren Frey, sister Jane Fleshman, daughter Korynn (John) Tronsdal of Mount Vernon; son Jim (Jeanette) Frey of Bellingham, and son John (Michelle) Frey of Mount Vernon. Grandchildren; Lauren (Beau) Keown, Kristen (Andrew) Clarke, and Taryn Frey. Great Grandchildren; Camden and Jackson Clarke, Noah and Emily Keown.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his brother-in-law, Kirk Fleshman.

A memorial service will be held at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Mount Vernon on February 18, at 1PM. You may offer your condolences and share memories of Jim for his family online at www.kernfuneralhome.com.

Have you seen our new website?
Laconnerweeklynews.com



AND THEY'RE OFF – Saturday paddlers headed north as the Sound Rowers Open Water Rowing and Paddling Club opened its season with its annual race in La Conner. High winds forced a course change from the traditional route around Goat Island.
– Photo by Ken Stern

U.S. EPA blocks Bristol Bay, gold mine in Alaska

WASHINGTON, DC. — The United States Environmental Protection Agency announced their final determination Jan. 30 to approve permanent Clean Water Act protections for Alaska's Bristol Bay, blocking the Pebble Mine proposal, after a 12 year-long battle.

Bristol Bay is one of the most productive salmon runs in the world; 40-60 million salmon return to the watershed every year.

The Pebble Mine proposal, which would have extracted gold, copper and molybdenum located in the headwaters of the Kvichak and Nushagak Rivers, two of the eight major rivers that feed Bristol Bay, threatened irreparable harm to the watershed.

In 2020, the EPA found that more than 191 miles of streams and 4,614 acres of wetlands would be impacted during construction of the Pebble Mine, with 185 miles and 3,841 acres of wetlands permanently damaged or destroyed.

A 2014 EPA report noted

that the Bristol Bay watershed supports the largest sockeye salmon run in the world, producing 46% of the world's wild sockeye harvest. The Nushagak River that feeds into Bristol Bay supports one of the world's largest Chinook salmon runs, which is essential to the survival of Puget Sound's Southern resident orcas.

"This is the final nail in the coffin for the Pebble Mine. The science is clear, the mine would have devastated Bristol Bay salmon and the thousands of hardworking families that depend on salmon for their livelihoods, subsistence and recreation," said Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Washington). "The EPA's decision to permanently protect Bristol Bay is the culmination of a hard fought battle and I am proud to have stood with fishing families, communities, Tribes and the whole Pacific Northwest Region to oppose the Pebble Mine for more than a decade. Now, we will have a thriving Bristol Bay salmon run for

generations to come."

Cantwell was the first U.S. Senator to oppose the Pebble Mine and for more than a decade has been the leading Senate voice against the project. In 2011, Cantwell called on the EPA to block the Pebble Mine proposal if the EPA found that the development would harm Bristol Bay salmon, which she called "economic lynchpins" for commercial fishermen in Alaska and the State of Washington.

Her office notes that harvesting, processing and selling Bristol Bay salmon generates \$1.5 billion in annual economic activity across the United States. Bristol Bay salmon generate an annual value of at least \$500 million for commercial and recreational fisheries in the State of Washington. Bristol Bay salmon support over 5,000 fishery jobs in Washington state and 14,000 jobs globally.

Source: Sen. Cantwell's office

Rep. Rick Larson reflects on raising debt limit

By Ken Stern

Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Arlington) has a solution for Congress reaching the debt ceiling: pass legislation removing the budgetary ceiling.

Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL) has again introduced a bill, The End the Threat of Default Act, that strikes from the U.S. Federal Code the term "debt subject to limit" and inserts "the face amount of obligations whose principal and interest are guaranteed by the United States Government."

The U.S. is one of two democratic countries that has a statutory limit that, being set, has to be raised, Larsen says.

The bill has 42 cosponsors, all Democrats. It will not pass

in the Republican controlled House of Representatives, Larsen said while in La Conner Jan. 26.

The 13 term congressman had little to say about Republican intransigence and political crisis creation, though he experienced the 2011 government shutdown.

He noted that though the debt ceiling was reached Jan. 19, it will be May or June before the federal government runs out of money and that the Biden administration has initiated discussion early.

"The amount of hair I have, it is not yet on fire," the balding Democrat remarked.

Happy birthday Lisa!

It is not every day that someone has a birthday, but Lisa Simpson in St. Petersburg Florida has one the week. This is a major milestone year, too. Happy birthday, Lisa!

This unique Lisa Simpson is not to be confused with the other one..

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Boys basketball —

Braves secure playoffs with comeback win

By Bill Reynolds

Funny the difference a few days makes. The La Conner Braves started last week suffering one of their toughest defeats Jan. 31, a humbling 56-31 home loss to Mount Vernon Christian. They rebounded quickly, first winning Feb. 3 over Friday Harbor, clinching a 2B bi-district playoff berth. They earned a earned a moral victory the next night in a hard-fought loss to 2A Burlington-Edison. “These kids play hard, real hard and it’s starting to pay off,” head coach C.J. Woods said after the B-EHS game Saturday night. “I think a lot of it comes back to all the games this group played during the summer,” said Woods. “We’re at the point where we really know who we are.” That identity as a relentless, never-say-die ball-hawking defensive unit was shown Friday night with a 38-17 rally erasing a seemingly hopeless 19-point

halftime deficit, securing an improbable 59-57 victory. All seemed lost at the break. The first two quarters Friday Harbor banked in long three-pointers, gathered in every 50-50 ball and scored off putbacks and turnovers in transition. The Wolverines built their largest lead, 35-15, on a bucket with 3:20 left in the half. La Conner barely survived thanks to three-pointers from Brayden Pedroza and Braden Thomas. The second half was a different story entirely. The Braves emerged from intermission employing a full-court press, spurring an immediate 9-0 run fueled by two free throws each from Ivory Damien and Isaiah Price, a three-pointer by Thomas and an inside score by Price off a Damien assist. Price scored six straight points — including two charity tosses courtesy of a technical foul on the visitors’ bench — to pull within 42-36 with two minutes

remaining in the third frame. That advantage extended to eight points, at 55-47 on a C.J. Edwards layup at the 4:17 mark. Friday Harbor then responded with a 10-2 spurt capped by a Drake Goodrich floater to tie matters at 57-57 in the final minute. Thomas, who finished with a game-high 23 points, provided the winning margin with a deft post-up move with 0:25 left. Price (12) joined Thomas in double figure scoring for La Conner. Damien (9), Eisen (8), Pedroza (5) and Edwards (2) rounded out the Braves attack. The following night, B-EHS prevailed behind 25 points. La Conner kept within striking distance with its perimeter game, delivering eight treys, three each by Thomas and Price, who led the hosts with 15 and 13 points, respectively. Damien (7), Pedroza (4), Edwards (4) and Eisen (3) also scored. La Conner (9-11 overall) wrapped up regular season play at Coupeville last night.

Josie Harper joins 1,000-point club —

Lady Braves hoops team wins thrice

By Bill Reynolds

Though shorthanded at times, the La Conner High School Lady Braves held the upper hand in three lopsided hoops wins last week. La Conner defeated 1A Meridian and NW1B/2B rivals Mount Vernon Christian and Friday Harbor by double digits to improve to 16-4 going into last night’s late action at league foe Coupeville. The 65-18 weekend home victory over Friday Harbor was especially impressive since the team was without injured point guard Shaniquah Casey and leading scorer Ellie Marble saw only limited duty while nursing a lower back strain. Marble scored a game-high 23 points in La Conner’s 60-41 win at Meridian Feb. 1. Casey, who took a blow to the head in a physical contest, finished with seven points. Josie Harper meshed 13 points against Meridian. She joined Marble in the 1,000-point career scoring club two nights later. The Lady Braves were stingy on defense, holding Meridian to just 15 second half points after trailing the hosts 26-23 at intermission. That defensive intensity carried over from their 48-28 romp over MVC last Tuesday. La Conner held the Lady Hurricanes to just 13 points through three periods, avenging an earlier one-point loss. “They hurt us with three-pointers against our zone when we played over there,” coach Harper said of the December 46-45 loss. “So we went with a man-to-man defense this time around.”

With Marble (19) and Makayla Herrera (10) combining for 29 boards there were few opportunities for visitor offensive rebounds. Against Friday Harbor, Marble made just a brief cameo appearance and Casey was sidelined for the entire non-contest. Other players picked up the scoring slack. Harper, who as a sophomore took top county scoring honors, paced the winners with 26 points, hitting five deep treys and several coast-to-coast left-handed layups. Herrera delivered 21 points on nine of 16 shooting from the floor and a perfect three-for-three night at the foul stripe. She also grabbed a game-best 16 rebounds. Kennedy Miller contributed 11 points, highlighted by a trio of first half three-pointers. Maeve McCormick rounded out the scoring with a perimeter trey and seven points. The team shot 45 per cent (24 of 53) from the floor and was eight of nine (89 per cent) on free throw attempts. Friday Harbor, held scoreless in the fourth quarter, was led by senior guard Mia Blackmon, who scored her nine points before halftime. Coach Harper, mindful of his club’s nagging injuries, was grateful last night’s date at Coupeville was the only scheduled tipoff until mid-month bi-district play. “It gives us some time to heal,” he said. After that, the plan is for La Conner to put a hurt of its own on whoever it draws in post-season brackets.

Senior moment: Marble passes career 1,000-point scoring mark

By Bill Reynolds

In an age of specialization, senior Ellie Marble is having a ball as a multi-sport standout. The proof was provided Jan. 31 before a standing room only crowd at Landy James Gym. That’s when Marble, a prized Central Washington University volleyball recruit, was presented a commemorative basketball in recognition of having passed the elite 1,000-point career hoops scoring mark. Marble, the reigning state 2B Volleyball Player of the Year, was honored in front of the scorer’s table by Lady Braves head coach Joe Harper as part of Senior Night festivities and prior to her delivering 19 points and 19 rebounds in a 48-28 La

Conner rout of Mount Vernon Christian. Among those offering Marble congratulations was former La Conner High School boys’ basketball coach Nate DuChesne, now the principal at Snohomish High School. “I love that an all-state college-bound volleyball player is still playing high school basketball,” DuChesne said in a social media post afterward. That’s not all. Marble is also a state qualifier in track and field, having represented the school in the 300-meter hurdles, shot put, high jump and 4x200 meter relay at the state tournament 2B meet in Cheney last spring. The Marble presentation was part of a full slate of senior

night ceremonies. Class of 2023 members who have participated in boys’ and girls’ basketball, cheerleading, Knowledge Bowl and Associated Student Body leadership were introduced by middle and high school principal Christine Tripp. Tripp acknowledged each student’s accomplishments and shared their future plans. A class raffle fundraiser featuring items donated by local businesses was held throughout the evening. The monies collected will help defray costs of the senior class trip at the end of the school year. Another of the night’s highlights was the unfurling of the 2022 state 2B volleyball championship — the seventh in program history, all under the guidance of Ellie Marble’s mom, state hall of fame coach Suzanne Marble. Lady Braves volleyball players were likewise saluted holding the state title trophy and acknowledged as the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association Team of the Month for November 2022. “We’re proud of you guys and want to thank the community for all the love,” said coach Marble, who is retiring after having completed her 30th season as head coach. Tripp joined in the praise. “We’re so proud of our La Conner Lady Braves volleyball team.”

Jan. 23 school board meeting —

Marble recognized for WIAA Hall of Fame

By Bill Reynolds

On a night when La Conner School Board members were recognized for their service to the district, the panel first deflected attention to retiring faculty member and coach Suzanne Marble. At its two-and-one-half hour Jan. 23 hybrid meeting, the championship volleyball mentor was lauded for her upcoming induction into the Hall of Fame of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association, the state’s governing body for schools athletics and extracurricular programs. Marble joins the 2023 WIAA Hall of Fame class in a May ceremony. She guided the high school volleyball program to seven state title over a 30-year career. “It’s really a huge honor,” said

board president Susie Gardner Deyo. “It’s a very big deal.” Marble last fall surpassed the 550- career win mark and earned her fifth state coach of the year award last fall her team won the 2022 Washington 2B crown. Deyo spent several minutes citing the long list of Marble’s career highlights. Still, she didn’t get to every detail. **Board meeting summary** Teachers Jan Auman and Liz Baun reported math performance has improved using the new math curricula. “Student comprehension of math concepts is improving,” Auman said. High school senior Hadley Shears made a statistics class (continued on page 5)

‘Barefoot in the Park’ at Whidbey Playhouse

By Ken Stern

The timing is perfect to go see “Barefoot in the Park,” playing for two more weekends at Whidbey Playhouse after opening Feb. 3. It is set in a New York City brownstone in February 1963. It is February here and even more so in the apartment there, which has a hole in the skylight, allowing snow in.

Don’t worry. Neil Simon’s script is taken to heart in this well acted and directed production. You will keep warm from laughter. The cast uniformly hits all their cues and play well with each other. The action swirls around Corrie (Karina Andrew), married for all of six days in the opening scene. Corrie is everything a male imagined an early 1960s pre-feminist era bride to be: young, innocent, energetic and overly romantic. Andrew exudes all that and more, confident in her love and loving making love. Her husband Paul (Connor Magnoli, equally strong in his portrayal), however, is a literally buttoned-down newly minted lawyer, who, while loving Corrie, is more comfortable with being an early 1960s lawyer. Magnoli’s performance defines straight-laced.

The only backstory is the newlyweds are newly in their top floor apartment after their six night honeymoon at the

Park Plaza Hotel. The two are an odd pair, but that is Simon experimenting with his odd couple formula.

Don’t worry about the plot, which is improbable, a mere device for comedy sketches.

The near full house audience did not. They enjoyed the show as much as the cast did.

No sooner does Paul enters his new living space, out of breath – a running gag throughout – than he sees the potential for his mother in law being unwilling to visit. The apartment, and more so, the building, is also a character, experienced and referenced by each person trudging up its five floors, plus stoop. The barebones apartment could hardly be smaller and the bathroom and bedroom are criticized plenty.

But the newly installed princess model telephone rings. Mom is on the line, in the neighborhood and soon to huff and puff her way up the stairs.

Mom (Shealyn Christie) is widowed, worried about her only daughter and lives to be helpful. Daughter Corrie immediately sees the match meeting potential in attic dwelling Victor (Steve DeHaven, with an enthusiastic, and European accent, and bold worldly experience). Here is odd couple number two, but a generation older and thus mature.

Andrew has a wide range, going from full-throated goofy

laughter to heart-wrenching sobbing. She is, metaphorically, the lead sax player. Cast members, in turn, riff with and off her, each getting chances to shine with laugh lines. They do.

Corrie confidently, cluelessly and ineptly as a bartender, hosts a foursome dinner party date with her mom and Victor. The evening ends with Victor driving Ethel home in her car and Paul blowing up at Corrie. Divorce is the argument clinching term, with screaming, door slamming, Paul ending up on the couch and Corrie sobbing uncontrollably in the bedroom.

Paul is accused of not understanding going barefoot in Washington Park. That line will come up again.

Will the married couple stay married? Will Ethel surprise her daughter, showing depth and nuance?

Chris Kehoe and Lachlan Waterbury made large contributions in their small roles.

Credit Director David Frazer and his assistant, Ben Honeycutt, for a tight, crisp, smartly paced production. The simple, open set could be 1960s New York.

Mike Nichols won a Tony Awards for directing the Broadway production. The 1967 movie starred Jane Fonda and Robert Redford.

For show dates, times and ticket reservations: 360-679-2237; whidbeyplayhouse.com.

Kiwanis January students of month



NATHAN HALEY



EVA PORTER



RORY BIRD

The La Conner Kiwanis Club’s High School Student of the Month for January is Nathan Haley. Nathan’s parents are John Haley and Bonnie Beddall. He is a freshman at La Conner High School. Nathan enjoys his English and art classes. He has been part of ETC – a service club at school. Outside of school he enjoys video games and drawing. He is not sure what his future career will be but plans to go to college.

Middle school Student of the Month is Eva Porter. Her parents are Brian and Laura Porter. She is in eighth grade at the La Conner Middle School. She plays soccer on the school team. Her favorite class is computer science. Outside of school she enjoys baking for family and friends. After graduating she would like to attend the University of Washington and study design engineering.

The Elementary Student of the Month is Rory Bird. Her parents are Nate Bird and Paige Zimmer. Rory is in fifth grade at the La Conner Elementary School. She likes math, reading, writing and science. She plays the clarinet in the school band. She also participates in soccer and basketball outside of school. After graduating she would like to study to be a doctor.

Source: La Conner Kiwanis

The honor rolls for the La Conner middle and high schools will be online later this week at laconnerweeklynews.com.

Marble . . .

(from page 4)

assignment presentation, saying, “I had felt some anxiety about math, but she (Baun) has helped me increase my confidence and has made math fun.”

The playing surface at Landy James Gym will sport a new look: The board approved a bid of \$141,165 by the Edmonds-based Gifford firm to repaint the gym floor. The work will include placement of the new Braves logo at midcourt. It is paid out of \$852,000 in state funds to remove images deemed

offensive to Native American culture.

The board accepted and thanked the Town of La Conner for its \$10,000 donation to the Braves Club.

The district administration and staff offered gifts and kudos in recognition of School Board Appreciation Month. Several administrative staff read aloud the proclamation issued by Gov. Jay Inslee saluting the work of school board members.

The public support of arts education at the meeting was reported in the Feb. 1 Weekly News.

Juna Swanson earns dean’s list

Juna Swanson has been named to the fall semester Pacific University dean’s list. A freshman at the Forest Grove, Oregon school, she earned a grade point average of at least 3.7 (of 4.0) while completing 12 or more credit hours.

Swanson participates in women’s basketball at Pacific, which competes at the NCAA Division III level.

Pacific University has nearly 4,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs..

Clothing drive

Drop off coats, socks, hats, gloves and shoes and women’s supplies at the La Conner Washington Federal Bank through Feb. 17 for the Winter Daytime Shelter in Mount Vernon. There is a dire need for women’s supplies.

The Winter Daytime Shelter is open and located at First United Methodist Church, 1607 East Division, Mount Vernon.

The bank is at 620 Morris Street. Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Valentine & Poetry Workshop Feb. 11

Join poet Jeffrey Morgan and paper artist Nancy Scagliotti to create love poems and valentines 1-3 p.m. Feb.11 at Habibi, 407 South First Street, Mount Vernon. Fee of \$10 includes supplies. Families welcome.

Register: directorsrpp@gmail.com.

Source: Skagit River Poetry Foundation

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POLICE BLOTTER

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Tuesday, January 31

7:58 a.m.: Broken glass – Sometime overnight a section of glass on the front door of the business was broken. No entry by a suspect into the building was reported. A suspect has not yet been identified. Morris St., La Conner.

6:56 p.m.: Suspicious drivers – An unknown vehicle pulled into the driveway and left. About 30 minutes passed and another vehicle did the same thing. It was determined the vehicles might have been going to a nearby business and went to the wrong driveway. McLean Rd., Greater La Conner.

Wednesday, February 1

3:14 a.m.: Public disturbance – An intoxicated female who was causing a disturbance was provided a courtesy ride by law enforcement to the Swinomish Casino where she was staying. 3rd/Morris Streets, La Conner.

4:34 a.m.: Cigarette heist – A paper delivery employee noticed the front door to the Pioneer Market glass was shattered. Sometime overnight a burglary suspect entered the store

and took most of the Marlboro Red cigarettes out of a glass case. The suspect then fled the store. See story page 1. Morris St., La Conner.

Thursday, February 2

1:39 p.m.: Utility pole crash – A vehicle collided into a utility pole on La Conner Whitney Road. The utility pole was broken, and wires were hanging low to the ground. The driver of the vehicle was checked by Fire and EMS personnel on scene. As a result of the downed pole and wires La Conner Whitney road was closed until the hazard could be removed. See photo to right. La Conner Whitney Rd., Greater La Conner.

3:14 a.m.: Dog rescued from boat – An unoccupied boat docked in the Swinomish Channel partially sunk. The cabin portion of the boat was above water when fire and law enforcement personnel heard a dog bark inside the boat. The dog was rescued and returned to its owner. A crew from the Department of Ecology recovered the sunken boat. 1st St., La Conner.



DIDN'T SLOW DOWN; MOVED TOO FAST – Twice in the past year vehicles have missed the curve on La Conner Whitney Road south of McLean Road. A vehicle collided into a utility pole around 1:30 p.m. Feb. 2. Power was out in La Conner Shelter Bay and the Swinomish Reservation briefly.

– Photo by Marissa Conklin

Ag Summit Friday

The Skagit County Ag Summit is Friday, Feb. 10 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at WSU NWREC, 16650 SR-536, Mount Vernon. This

event is free to the public and no registration is necessary. Discuss water, economic viability, innovation and leadership. Questions: 360-395-2357 or dmemoran@wsu.edu. Source: WSU NWREC

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Outages. . .

(from page 1)

La Conner Fire Chief Aaron Reinstra said the outage was due to a bad line at the south end of First Street. “The line had to be replaced and PSE took care of it,” he said.

La Conner resident Vernon Washington, Sr., who often walks the waterfront boardwalk, called in the downed line and stood by until the fire department arrived.

The fire department was among numerous agencies that earlier Friday responded to the sinking of a 22-24-foot vessel. Swinomish Police, Fire District 13, the Port of Skagit, Skagit County Sheriff's Office, Department of Emergency

Management, Washington Department of Ecology and U.S. Coast guard were all involved. DOE took charge of the boat's removal, Reinstra said.

Late Friday night residents along Shelter Bay Drive between Skagit Way and Elwha Drive heard what sounded like a loud explosion in their neighborhood. “There was this big boom,” said a neighbor, who stepped outside her house and heard someone yell to call 911.

The unsettling noise was from a car crashing into a house's kitchen area after the driver lost control. Those rushing to the scene said they found the driver had exited the car and was conscious and communicative, having suffered what Weiss termed non-life threatening injuries.

Billboard. . .

(from page 1)

Act) review: County staff anticipate issuing an MDNS (mitigated determination of nonsignificance). The DNS process is being utilized.

To be a party of record, submit written comments, including a mailing address, to the Skagit County Planning & Development

Services Department.

Review the application and case file at the planning department, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon 98273. A decision on this application will be made within 120 days from the date of completeness.

Information: Kevin Cricchio, 360-416-1423; kcrichio@co.skagit.wa.us.

Submit comments: skagitcounty.net/pdscmments. The proposal ID is PL23-0007.

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