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**Cost makes painting bridge a dream • p 8**

Your Independent Hometown Award-winning Newspaper

# LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

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## Playing in the snow



NATURE FOLDS SILENTLY AND MAJESTICALLY INTO HERSELF — Snowgeese flying off Beaver Marsh Road last Wednesday as the temperatures dropped and snow fell. The animate and inanimate once again blended seamlessly together. — Photo by Gary Brown

## Winter cold snap closes La Conner

By Bill Reynolds

So much for El Nino. The climate pattern linked to warmer than normal sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean and which led to forecasts of above average temperatures this winter went AWOL for more than a week. A major storm swept into Skagit County last Wednesday on the heels of an arctic blast that had earlier plunged thermometers and wind chill gauges into single digits. The result was an extended stretch of icy and snowy roads and streets that forced local business closures and pushed La Conner Schools to online instruction and cancellation of after-school programs. Swinomish Indian Tribal Community offices also closed. That's not all. Power outages were reported locally due to tree limbs and snow falling on transmission lines. The extreme weather upset normal routines, though folks in greater La Conner had managed to cope by last

weekend when temperatures began to inch above the freezing point. "Darn white stuff," Town Administrator Scott Thomas posted on Thursday. "Took me an hour longer to get to work. And I'm working from home." The options of remote learning and working from home helped relieve stress on slick roadways. Highway 20 proved especially treacherous and was eventually closed at Deception Pass due to multiple motor vehicle crashes. Nearby Reservation Road was among several high-volume routes that were plowed but local law enforcement urged motorists to remain home if possible. "Enjoy the snow," advised Anacortes Police, "but try your best not to drive in it." Unfortunately for La Conner youth, a favorite traditional winter source of fun – sledding on Whitney Hill – was nixed when Washington Street was plowed. Children and parents expressed disappointment that no sledding opportunity was made by the Town.

Town officials had an explanation. "We plow unless we are asked not to," Thomas told the Weekly News. "On Washington, we received complaints from residents the last time it snowed that they were afraid of running over a child when they needed to reach their home." The school district's decision to teach remotely Wednesday through Friday was met with more widespread support. By doing so, students working online were marked present for attendance and the three snow days won't have to be made up later. Initially it was thought in-person classes could resume Friday, which marked the end of the semester and had been scheduled as a half-day of instruction. "Warming temperatures and rain didn't quite get us to a point where the roads are safe," school leaders said in a statement issued early Friday. "Surrounding districts are two hours late start. Two hours late start would only give us an hour and a half at school." Story will be finished next week

## Searchers recover body Tuesday in Swinomish Channel

By Ken Stern

It will be cold comfort to the family whose relative was found in the Swinomish Channel mid-day Tuesday, Jan. 23 but perhaps allow the start of a grieving and healing process. Employing a remote operated underwater vehicle supplied by the Seattle Harbor Patrol, staff from the Skagit County Sheriff's Office located and recovered human remains during a low tide search. The remains were found in the Swinomish Channel adjacent to the south end of First Street. This was the same area of a low tide search conducted the evening of Jan. 10, when agency staffs were operating in the parking lot west of Maple Hall. That effort led to the Jan. 23 rescue, Search and Rescue Deputy Kyle Wiggins told the Weekly News. The Skagit County's Coroner's Office has the remains and will be identifying the person and investigating the circumstances of the death. A search started New Year's Day for a missing 27-year-old Kirkland woman after the Skagit County 911 office took a 5:38 a.m. call of a suicide attempt in La Conner. The sheriff's office heard from family members concerned about her welfare. Sgt. Brad Holmes reported a shoe belonging to the subject was found the afternoon of Jan. 1 in the channel, about 50 feet from her last known phone location. Several search and rescue agencies from (continued on page 6)

## One vote determines a tribal senate primary

By Bill Reynolds

Every vote counts is no mere cliché. Just ask Bruce James, Jr. James advanced to the Swinomish Tribal Senate general election next month by a single vote, edging incumbent Brian Wilbur 84-83 and placing second in primary balloting last Saturday. Myrtle Rivas, who received 97 votes, will face James in the Feb. 10 contest for the Swinomish Senate Seat No. 10 that Wilbur had held for three terms. Meanwhile, Rodney John and incumbent Eric Day will vie for Seat No. 11 in the tribe's general election. John polled 103 primary votes while 88 voters selected Day. Jimi Bobb, with 69 votes, was eliminated from the race. James posted a statement of gratitude shortly after the election results were announced. "I would like to thank you all for taking the time to come vote today," said James. Story will be finished next week

## Small drugstores, high drug prices

By Judy Booth

La Conner Drug Store is not the first small-town, family-owned drug store to go out of business in recent years. Rite Aid, hopefully the new home of former employees from La Conner Drug and Island Drug, is itself in bankruptcy. The conservative advocacy group Association of Mature American Citizens reports that 2,000 U.S. pharmacies closed between 2017 and 2020. Forbes wrote last September, "CVS, Walgreens and Rite Aid were closing nearly 1,500 stores. Between 1980 and 2022 the number of independent pharmacies decreased by nearly 50%." Most of a drugstore's revenue comes from prescriptions. "The combined effects of insurance (companies) preventing customers from filling prescriptions locally while reducing reimbursements (to them) is not sustainable," said

Aaron Syring, owner of Island Drug in Oak Harbor and La Conner Drug Store. He closed both this week. Additionally, drug stores face stiff competition for beauty products, toiletries, snacks and household supplies from Amazon, Ebay and big-box stores. While drugstores benefited during the pandemic from COVID-19 vaccines, fewer consumers returned to these same stores to shop. Why not? Why didn't vaccinated customers return to show their appreciation and support their local businesses? Pharmacy benefit managers are middlemen hired by insurance companies to manage prescription spending, originally intended to get lower-cost drugs from manufacturers, though they claim it is the manufacturers who set prices. There are three major PBMs: CVS Caremark, Express Scripts and OptumRx and they control

a whopping 80 percent of the prescription drug market. PBMs negotiate discounts with drug manufacturers – like Pfizer or Johnson & Johnson on behalf of insurers, like Blue Cross or Medicare. In exchange, the drugmaker's products are included in the PBM's formulary, a list of generic and brand-name prescription medications covered by your health insurance plan. Not only do PBMs designate which drugs make their formulary list, but they raise costs by almost 30% due to the rebates they get back from the manufacturers. In 2019 PBM rebates totaled \$143 billion according to the National Community Pharmacists Association, adding 30 cents per dollar to your prescription drug bill. Many PBMs own their own mail-order pharmacies and mandate or steer their clients to them. There are even more ways to get your money. The biggest PBMs are vertically integrated

with drugstore chains and their mail-delivery services as well as the largest insurance companies. Within the healthcare system, vertical integration allows PBMs to call the shots from the manufacturers to the wholesalers to the drug store, your healthcare plan and your doctor. Vertical integration can create more profits for the PBMs and also create opportunity for self-dealing – quite possibly an illegal act. In addition, PBMs administer reimbursements from the payers to the providers, from the insurers to pharmacies. PBMs are raking it in from every angle. According to Syring, many insurance plans charge customers more to fill locally but make it cheap or free through mail order, often owned by the PBM. Without any legal obligations to prevent this, PBMs can favor affiliated pharmacies, including their own stores and mail order pharmacies owned by themselves, leaving mom-and-pop independent drug stores out. By requiring patients

to refill prescriptions at an affiliated pharmacy, they limit where patients can get their medicines. If patients choose their neighborhood store instead, they will pay a higher price. That pushes many customers, often elderly, to participate with a PBM pharmacy. Another source of revenue for PBMs is claw backs. Under the guise of quality-control, PBMs perform audits on independent pharmacies and mandate that funds by the stores be returned to them. During the pandemic, PBMs benefitted financially because of persnickety audits made to independent pharmacies, with whom they competed. Additionally, there is the "spread," when a PBM pays pharmacies less for a prescription than they charged payers like Medicare, they pocket the difference: a spread. The price you pay is set by the PBM – not the pharmacy and not the drugmaker. Next week: Congress and the Federal Trade Commission on PBMs.



## And then there were none

The La Conner drugstore closed Monday, as reported in the Weekly News, a victim of the ongoing corporatization of the American economy, where small companies are forced out because – in ways too many people don’t see or care to understand – the books are cooked and the game is rigged.

Small businesses in small towns closing is not a new story, of course. That has always been the American way, the thug-like pressure to get big or get out, or, more commonly, as Judy Booth writes this week on so-called pharmacy benefit managers, the pressure big companies and industry players exert, putting their thumbs on the scale with rules and structures that slowly choke the life out of the little guy. That is Aaron Syring’s story. He has given up on both his La Conner and Island drug stores.

Buying and selling – and economics – employ made up rules of exchange between people, of course. Human constructs are not like gravity, which is immutable, not artificial. The speed of light is 186,000 miles per second per second. As the bumper sticker says, it is not just a good idea, it’s the law. But the market that some speak reverently about is exactly as real as Santa Claus. Those who believe most fervently in the market are those with the most to gain by having others believe it is real.

This state’s attorney general, Bob Ferguson, does not believe that a merger between Kroger and Albertson’s, two of the nation’s largest supermarket conglomerates, is a good idea. Kroger owns QFC and Fred Meyer. Albertsons owns Safeway and Haggen. Last week the state of Washington filed a lawsuit in King County Superior Court to block the merger.

Ferguson is challenging the Kroger company line that “Kroger will not close any stores, distribution centers or manufacturing facilities or lay off any frontline associates as a result of the merger.” That’s on the official merger website.

Syring told Booth “many” of his employees would be picked up by Rite Aid. That remains to be seen. The employees say only one, a pharmacist, has been offered a job.

In her letter in today’s issue, Eileen Engelstad cites her willingness to pay higher prices “to ensure a local pharmacy,” “refusing mail-order offers of ‘convenience’ and ‘better prices.’” Mail order is the very tactic Booth emphasizes that big pharmacies use to drive out independents.

Engelstad shops based on compassion, not price. She is pushing against Adam Smith’s invisible hand. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines that hand as “mechanisms through which beneficial social and economic outcomes may arise from the accumulated self-interested actions of individuals, none of whom intends to bring about such outcomes.”

It does not take a business of any size long to get beyond the “accumulated self-interested actions of individuals.” When grocery stores or supermarket chains expand inexorably – like a cancer – they employ legions of accountants, attorneys and consultants who work toward the common good of their client, their owners. The status and the strength of an “industry” nationwide is different than the operating of a store on the edge of a small town that doesn’t even have a traffic light.

It is a different playing field when the bank, the drugstore, the hardware store, the lumber yard you – or your parents – could walk to shop at is now at an interstate intersection miles away Your town is not the same. Your life is not the same. And the culture of the community is inextricably changed.

Big businesses also abandon little towns merely because they can, as Key Bank did here in 2019. Then-mayor Ramon Hayes, level headed and without a socialist bone in his body, voiced his opinion that a “town bank” might be an option.

Everyone has to obey gravity. As for the market, it follows its own golden rule: those that have the gold makes the rules.

Count on it.

– Ken Stern

## LETTER

### Stopping gun violence

Safe and Sane Skagit members drove to Olympia last week to be present as five new legislative bills on gun responsibility were presented before the Legislature’s House Civil Rights and Judiciary Committee. Those bill are: HB 1902/SB6004: Permit-to Purchase that would ensure that background checks occur before a firearm purchase as well as at the point of sale; HB 1903: Lost and Stolen Reporting wherein stolen guns are often diverted to an underground market, making them more easily obtained without restriction; HB 2118: Dealer Responsibility ensuring that all licensed dealers in our state take necessary steps to prevent firearms from falling into the hand of bad actors; HB 2021/ SB 6001, ensuring WA State Patrol is afforded the same flexibility to destroy firearms as local law enforcement; and HB 2054: Bulk Weapons Purchase which are a known indicator of illegal firearms trafficking. Restricting the number of firearms an individual can

purchase in a given time period helps prevent firearms from entering the secondary market thus reducing the flow of illegal firearms in our state.

Each bill was debated on both sides, both in person and on Zoom. Each bill will go back to the House Committee to again be debated then decided if it should go forward, out of committee, then make its way through the legislative process. To be a part of this process is the privilege of citizens to be active members of the voting public, to help one better understand not only the process of legislation, but to hear voices on both sides of a debated bill. So begins the 60 days of this short legislative session in our capitol. We shall see where it all leads.

Safe and Sane Skagit is a grass roots organization of local people who have a concern about gun violence in our communities and is searching for ways to impact the legislative and cultural processes in order to bring more safety and sanity to firearm use and availability.

Christine Wardenburg-Skinner  
Edison

A citizen’s view —

## Drug store closing is corporations vs us

By Alan Darcy

Last Thursday I reached out to Rep. Dave Paul (and our two other state reps as well) and shared my frustrations and asked for help over the La Conner Drug Store closing. Here is the core of my message to Rep. Paul:

Don’t know if you can do anything about this but I feel you should know that Rite Aid just purchased our only local pharmacy – La Conner Drug. This little business was first established in 1877. The corporate chain operation made this acquisition only to close the store and transfer the prescription files to their store in Anacortes (why?). We are truly distraught. Between our town, the people in Shelter Bay and the Swinomish tribe, a lot of folks have depended on this drug store for decades. My wife and I are seniors and, as you know, there are a lot of seniors on both sides of the Rainbow Bridge. Many of us find it challenging to get to Anacortes or Mount Vernon. What are we to do?

How can a big company just buy an important, historic and vital service to our community, only intending to eliminate it? It may be legal to do so, but this

action certainly is neither ethical nor moral in our eyes. It severely injures us and leaves us reeling and seemingly without recourse. It appears to be nothing but pure avarice and lacks all social obligation. If corporations are really supposed to be considered “citizens” (according to the Supreme Court), then should they not also incur any/all responsibilities resulting from their actions? Citizenship has been defined as “the status of being a citizen, with its rights and duties.” What about the “duties” thing applying here? At the time of this writing, only one employee of La Conner Drug was offered a position with the new owners. The rest were told they could feel free to apply for jobs just like anyone else. Such caring, right?

I have no quarrel with anyone choosing to sell their business, but to me, this entire odious episode is yet another example of big corporate financial interests vs. the needs of small town, individual Americans. Once again we are being shafted and ignored. The big insurance interests; the big corporate medical interests; the big corporate retail chains and on and on and on. Who’s looking

out for those of us who chose to live in our wonderful little towns? Who will question this path? Where/when will some lines be drawn? You know that our La Conner medical clinic was recently sold to the Everett Clinic, who themselves were then purchased by an even larger Optum Corporation. How long before the “numbers” just don’t add up the way they want them to and they too will be closing? After all, we can all go to Anacortes for care, right? What a rosy picture we see, heh? No medical practice, no pharmacy. What’s next? No market? No bank? No post office?

These big corporations and their willing enablers count on our sympathetic passivity to just “go along to get along”. It doesn’t matter if you are a Republican or a Democrat. It doesn’t matter if you are red, black, brown or white. It matters to our parents, grandparents, our children and their children too. It does matter to all of us regular citizens.

We ask for you to assist us in any way you can to correct this intolerable and heartless move. We really need help and soon.

In “fear and loathing” in La Conner.

## LETTERS

### Keeping local businesses alive

As a long-time (14 years) La Conner resident I have appreciated having certain local services such as a local bank branch, a grocery store, a pharmacy and a local newspaper. It has meant that I don’t need to travel far for services, supplies and information. I like personally knowing the people with whom I do business. This is the advantage of small-town living.

Then I read the stunning news of the closure of the La

Conner Drug Store! I have steadfastly used their pharmacy for my several prescriptions refusing mail-order offers of “convenience,” and “better prices” with large corporations like Walmart and Rite Aid. I did my part to ensure a local pharmacy, to no avail.

Thankfully, although a few banks have come and gone, WaFd remains to continually offer personal banking services. And the Pioneer Market has remained steadfast, with a good selection of products.

Last, but not least, the La

Conner Weekly News is in serious jeopardy of being discontinued. It has been for sale for over a year, with no serious offers emerging. Thus the owner, Ken Stern, may be forced to walk away, leaving our town with no access to local news for the first time in over a century. What a travesty. We need a buyer for our paper!

Sincerely,  
Eileen Engelstad  
Shelter Bay  
Engelstad is the Weekly News longtime profreder

### AIPAC influences Washington politicians

On Jan. 16, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders introduced a resolution in the Senate calling on the State Department to investigate requesting accountability on Israel’s misuse of American weaponry in their current genocide of the people of Gaza and the West Bank. Unfortunately the resolution did not pass. It was voted down 72-11.

Eleven senators, including one Republican, voted for the

resolution. I googled the results: Low and behold, our state’s Democratic senators, Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, helped shoot the resolution down. I then googled the list of recipients of AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee – ed.) funds and Sens. Murray and Cantwell both dipped into the AIPAC slush fund to the tune of \$613,000 and \$399,000 respectively.

Hence, AIPAC’s investment paid dividends for the Israelis. I have (naively) voted for both of these senators thinking them honest and above board and

assuming they are legitimately looking after our best interests: au contraire’.

This leaves me wondering are there any politicians on the national level that are not corrupted by AIPAC or other similar corrupters? We elect these people because they promise, even swear an oath to our country, but I guess their real allegiance is to the almighty dollar.

Suffice to say I will not be voting or supporting them ever again.

John Leaver  
La Conner

### Blood donors needed

The American Red Cross is facing an emergency blood shortage as the nation faces the lowest number of people giving blood in 20 years. In recent weeks, the Red Cross blood supply has fallen to critically low levels across the country. Blood products are currently going to hospitals faster than blood donations are coming in.

Additional challenges lie ahead as winter weather and seasonal respiratory illnesses may create a more dire situation for the U.S. blood supply. A sufficient blood supply is critical to being able to provide timely care for all patients in need of lifesaving blood transfusions.

All blood types – especially platelet donors and type O blood donors – are needed throughout the winter. On behalf of the Red

Cross, I urge you not to wait. Please make your appointment to give blood or platelets by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Sincerely,  
Elaine Wolfe  
BioMed Committee chair  
NW Chapter  
American Red Cross

### Read it or lose it

Thanks to Ashley Sweeney for her letter in the Jan. 17 Weekly

News encouraging people to read. I would add a short sentence: a person who doesn’t read is no better off than a person

who can’t read.  
Beverly Haywood  
La Conner

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#### 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



## Town planning commission meeting

# Forum on parking set for Feb. 20

By Bill Reynolds

Hours before snow hit outside, the La Conner Planning Commissioners plowed through a busy agenda during their 80-minute Jan. 16 hybrid meeting at Maple Hall.

The pile of issues addressed were housing and parking issues, the status of the Talmon Project at 306 Center Street, population projections for the town and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community's plans to convert its Maple Avenue apartment complex to a staffed home recovery facility.

The tribe has designed a program for persons and families who have completed treatment at the Didgwalic Wellness Center as a federally funded pilot program. All in attendance expressed support, including Mayor Marna Hanneman.

Commissioners recommended the town council approve language that allows facility counselors to work on a conditional use basis in a house adjacent to the present apartment building.

Hanneman predicted that transitioning the site to a secure home recovery setting staffed by counselors – once all permitting is approved – will be a gradual, step-by-step process.

"It's not something that will happen next week," she said. "It will take a year or two."

Public parking will be in the

spotlight at the next community "mingle" Feb. 20 at 6 p.m. at the La Conner Civic Garden Club.

"We're hoping to hear a variety of ideas at the mingle," said Assistant Town Planner Ajah Eills. "We're excited to hear more from people about their thoughts on parking in La Conner."

Town planner Michael Davolio said the mingle will cover a wide range of parking subjects, including the width of First Street and potential use of golf carts as a downtown shuttle service.

"Everything will be on the table," said Davolio. "We take these discussions very seriously."

Longtime La Conner resident Linda Talman got a head-start on the mingle, suggesting that senior and affordable housing merit higher priority than parking.

Davolio said, "We'll spend time on both parking and housing this year," now that local population projections are in place.

Eills added that the Town is directed by Washington state to plan and provide housing for all income bands.

"One of our goals in discussions with the Port (of Skagit)," Davolio said, "is to provide workforce housing."

Growth management guidelines direct La Conner to plan for 124 additional units, said Eills.

Eills intends to inventory all available residential parcels in town and compare the number

of housing units that could be developed on them by code with the amount of future growth La Conner is expected to accommodate.

The commission will recommend two changes to rules governing Planned Urban Residential Developments. It endorsed reducing from one acre to 16,000 square feet the minimum size for PURDs. Despite caution expressed by Eills, commissioners also stood against allowing PURDs in the Historic Preservation District.

"I'm just nervous about it," explained Commissioner Sommer Holt, "because it's hard to remove it once it's allowed."

Eills, though, said she would be "hesitant to restrict housing from such a large swath of land in a residential area when it's limited already."

"I understand your concerns," Eills said to Holt, "(but) I'm always going to push for housing."

Davolio said four of five key points of contention between the Center Street project developer – KSA Investments – and the Town have been resolved. The one outstanding issue involves an elevator shaft that would exceed La Conner's 30-foot construction height standard for the planned mix of long-term and short-term rentals.

"We have not moved off of that," Davolio said. "They're going to have to revise their plans."

# Ferguson files lawsuit to stop Kroger-Albertson merger

By Aspen Anderson and Mary Murphy

Washington State Journal

Kroger and Albertsons claim a proposed merger worth 24.6 billion will result in better prices for grocery shoppers, but many fear food prices will go up and jobs could be lost as the stores eliminate competition.

Attorney General Bob Ferguson filed a lawsuit to stop the merger, which was announced at a Seattle press conference Jan. 15.

"Our job is to make sure there is a level playing field for Washington consumers and that means pushing back against the consolidation of power that destroys free enterprise and harms Washingtonians," Ferguson said.

Once they merge, Kroger and Albertsons propose to sell 413 stores nationwide, including 104 in Washington. That is proposed to counter claims they will control the market if the merger goes through. Kroger and Albertsons alone have nearly 5,000 stores and more than 700,000 employees across 49 states. Experts say Washington could be one of the states most affected.

"More than half of all supermarkets in Washington are currently owned by either Kroger or Albertsons," Ferguson said.

After reviewing hundreds of thousands of records, Ferguson's legal team uncovered internal chats among corporate executives and other employees.

Ferguson said a vice president of marketing with Albertsons wrote: "You are basically creating a monopoly in grocery with the merger."

"This makes no sense, prices will not go down," Ferguson said. "Grocery prices are already too high. These companies are merg-

ing so they can increase profits, not help Washingtonians with their grocery bills."

The official merger website claims the companies are keeping everyday prices affordable on products customers love, want and need while making grocery shopping easy.

And they say the merger is necessary if the grocery companies want to compete against even larger competitors, like Amazon and Walmart.

If approved, the companies say they will develop a "zero hunger, zero waste," impact plan for

hunger relief, donated meals and innovation fund grants.

Kroger owns QFC and Fred Meyer and is based in Cincinnati. It wants to acquire Albertsons, based in Boise, Idaho, which owns Safeway and Haggen grocery stores.

The merger is under consideration by the Federal Trade Commission. A decision is anticipated in August 2024.

*The Washington State Journal is a non-profit news website funded by the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation. More at wastatejournal.org.*

# HF Sinclair grants Skagit Bay Search & Rescue \$25,000

ANACORTES— Skagit Bay Search and Rescue has been granted \$25,000 by HF Sinclair to support the basing of a new marine emergency response boat in Anacortes. A ceremony with a representational presenting of the donation will be held at Seafarer's Memorial Park Tuesday Jan. 30 at 10 a.m. by the Lady of the Sea Memorial, 601 Seafarer's Way. The public is invited. City of Anacortes Mayor Matt Miller and Port of Skagit commissioners will attend.

Skagit Bay Search and Rescue is a nonprofit, volunteer organization founded in 2002 and

formed under the auspices of the Skagit County Sheriff's Office. Based in La Conner, SBSAR has been responding to 911-generated marine emergency calls in Skagit County for over 20 years to all marine waterways in Skagit County and aiding surrounding marine responses, as well. SBSAR is developing an additional response base in Anacortes, which will enable them to provide a better response time to marine emergencies there.

Information: SkagitBaySAR.org  
Source: SBSAR

**A View From The State House**



**Clyde Shavers**  
State Representative  
District 10



# Strengthening our democracy

Our democracy is strongest with full and equal participation in free, fair and secure elections. This means protecting your right to vote and having your vote counted.

That's why I introduced House Bill 2023, which increases language assistance in our elections.

Put simply, if an individual cannot understand the ballot, they're less likely to vote. Even for proficient English speakers, the voting process is challenging to navigate.

By expanding the language requirements in the Voting Rights Act, this bill will provide voting translation resources to Chelan, Douglas and Grant counties. This bill will also require the Secretary of State's office to establish a grant program for other counties who want to be part of this program.

This bill passed out of the House State Government & Tribal Relations committee with bipartisan, unanimous support – and it's off to the House floor.

Democrats, Republicans and Independents – we all know that language assistance has a tangible, positive impact in the rates of participation in our elections and governance.

Every bill that we introduce comes from individuals within our community, just like you. In this instance, I spoke with community members in Skagit County who want to be part of our shared democracy.

Our democracy benefits when we commit to and invest in holding elections in which all citizens can participate to vote comfortably and knowledgeably.

And democracy is hard work. That's why I'll always be committed to tirelessly working day in, day out to protect the rights of all people – including the right to vote.

I believe that further strengthening our democracy is a defining challenge. As long as all of us come together and meaningfully participate through collaboration and common purpose, I'm hopeful for a better future.

This bill only provides the tools and resources for more citizens to be part of our shared democracy – it is up to you to vote, to make your voice heard and carry this hard work of democracy forward.

As always, thank you for giving me the opportunity to continue my life-long dedication to public service.

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

# Democracy in Crisis: Taking Action

Extracurricular learning open to all takes place at Skagit Valley College this Saturday, Jan 27. The 10th Legislative District of Washington Democrats hosts Democracy in Crisis: Taking Action, a free day of inspiration and workshops, working in concert with students from Skagit Valley College Breaking Free Club, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays Skagit, FairVote WA, United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 3000, Civil Survival, Fidalgo Democrats, Skagit Democrats and additional community partners and elected

representatives, to interact with and learn about topics such as the Science of Gender, Equity and Justice for the Incarcerated, voting justice, labor justice and legislation being proposed in Olympia. The goal is for every participant to understand challenges to democracy and actions to take to support it.

It runs 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the college's Cardinal Center Cafeteria, 2405 E College Way, Mt Vernon. Refreshments, lunch and music are included.

Information: 206-755-0246; chair@10thliddemocrats.org  
Source: 10th LD Democrats

# Town solar proposal presentation Feb. 3

Residents can learn about a feasibility study for a grant to allow solar and storage of energy at the La Conner's fire department and school district campus at 10 a.m. Feb. 3 at the La Conner Swinomish Library.

The presentation explores solar and storage opportunities and how they can help build resilience and support community

needs. The Town of La Conner Emergency Management Commission will be available to discuss their work with emergency preparedness.

Information: townoflaconner.org/AlertCenter.aspx?AID=51; Marylee@skagitvce.coop or Mary@skagitvce.coop  
Source: Town of La Conner

**The Ins and Outs of: 2024 Presidential Primary**  
How is it different from regular elections?

State law requires voters to mark party declarations on the envelope in this March election

Learn why (and more!) at this community education event

**Our Guest Speakers:**

- Gabrielle Clay, Skagit Elections Manager
- Bill Bruch, Skagit Republican Party Chair
- Lynn Campbell and Nathaniel Block, Chair and Vice-Chair of Skagit Democratic Party

**When:** Monday February 12, 2024, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM  
**Where:** Skagit PUD meeting room  
1415 Freeway Drive, Mount Vernon

(Also available via Zoom. Check our website for the link <https://www.skagitlwv.org/>)

*This is not a campaign event and no candidate names will be involved*

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## Braves hoop team blister nets, win 2

By Bill Reynolds

With a frigid winter cold snap outside, the La Conner Braves turned up the heat inside gyms at Coupeville and Darrington for a pair of key NW2B/1B high school hoops triumphs last week. Fittingly, given the plunging temps, La Conner's 69-68 victory at Coupeville Jan. 16 was a classic barnburner. The Braves then scorched the nets Friday night enroute to a lopsided 76-35 decision at Darrington.

"It was a good conference win after two days off for weather," coach Lance Lopez told the Weekly News after the route of the Loggers. "The boys played hard and we got everyone in the game.

"It's always nice," he added, "to go on the road and come away with a win."

While the Darrington game was a laugher, the contest at Coupeville was filled with drama.

The Braves rebounded from a 25-9 early deficit to take a 33-30 lead at the break. The Wolves

bounced back to go in front 65-61 late in the final stanza.

La Conner was able to offset a game-high 36 points from Coupeville's Logan Downes, who entered the game averaging 25 points per outing.

Downes drained eight perimeter treys.

C.J. Edwards fueled a late rally with a mid-range jumper and two free throws that clinched the Braves' win.

Ivory Damien paced the attack with 28 points. Brayden Pedroza added 24 for the victors.

Edwards finished with nine points while Corran Eisen and Tyler Cicotte rounded out La Conner's scoring with four points apiece.

The Braves also benefitted from solid play by reserve Logan Burks.

"He did a really good job of providing a spark for us and turning up the energy," Lopez said.

Both teams played through foul issues in an often-physical matchup. Two Coupeville players fouled out.

"It was just a great effort and

huge conference win for us," Lopez said. "The boys played through some foul trouble to come away with a win."

After falling behind early, La Conner used the proficiency behind the three-point stripe that it has shown all season to shoot its way back into the game. Ignited by multiple perimeter treys, the Braves went on a 26-5 run to take a three-point halftime lead.

The longtime rivals have now played three straight nailbiters dating to last season with the Braves winning two, including the 2023 Bi-District title on the Wolves' court.

At Darrington, nine players reached the scoring column, led by Pedroza (29) and Damien (17).

Eisen and Burks added seven points each. Edwards and Kenai Zimmerman chipped in five points apiece. Kamein Lopez (3), Cicotte (2) and Jimbo Bobb (2) landed on the point parade as well.

La Conner showed no difficulty shooting in the historic Darrington gymnasium – a true gym dandy – perhaps best known for its unique half-court backboards. The gym was built in 1954 with volunteer labor and donated materials, the floor was made from Alaskan cedar.

The Braves scored 22 points in each of the first three quarters before coasting in the final period.

La Conner (11-5 overall; 5-0 in league) returned to Landy James Gym last night for a home date with NW2B/1B foe Orcas Island.

The Braves are idle until they play at Mount Vernon Christian Jan. 30.

## High school seniors seek funds for June class trip

By Bill Reynolds

La Conner High School seniors started their freshman year wearing masks and learning from home in front of their computers.

Three years later they're still playing catch-up from the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus the La Conner's Class of '24 has lagged in fundraising, not possible with the campus closed.

The class must still raise about half of the estimated \$25,000 needed for its June trip to Disneyland.

Senior class advisor Theresa James apprised school board members at their Jan. 22 meeting

that despite the yeoman efforts of class leader Josi Straathof the class is around \$12,000 short of its goal amount.

"It's very expensive," James said of the annual senior trip, "(but) Josi has a lot of ideas."

Among those being floated are a car wash at the Swinomish Casino and Lodge, a benefit dinner at the Santo Coyote Mexican Kitchen, a spaghetti feed and silent auction.

Straathof, one of the board's two student representatives, has already spearheaded popular "pop shoots" during halftimes of home basketball games.

Time, though, is running short.

The board was empathetic.

Story finished next week

## Lady Braves ace 2 league road hoops tests

By Bill Reynolds

The La Conner High School girls' basketball team saved its best for last at Coupeville.

Entering the fourth quarter deadlocked, the Lady Braves finished with an 18-4 spurt that secured a 46-32 NW2B/1B triumph Jan. 16, extending their winning streak over the hosts to 11 games dating to 2018.

Coupled with a 51-25 road victory over Darrington Jan. 19, the team is unbeaten (5-0) in conference play before last night's clash with Orcas Island.

For La Conner, the road trip to Coupeville was Valentine's Day a month early.

With head coach Joe Harper under the weather and at home watching the game online, assistant Roger Valentine – who formerly guided teams at Skagit Valley College and Mount Vernon High School – handled coaching duties.

La Conner bolted to an 11-0 lead before foul trouble allowed Coupeville to remain within striking distance.

The home team forged a 19-19 tie at halftime. The score remained tied, at 28-28, after three quarters.

That's when La Conner, despite the foul woes, amped up its defensive pressure.

"We really clamped down defensively in the fourth quarter, getting some key steals and transition buckets to finally pull away," Harper said.

Shaniquah Casey filled the stat sheet for the victors. The sophomore guard scored eight points, dished off a half dozen assists and recorded four steals.

Eighth grader Nora McCormick also came up big. She scored 12 points, seven in the decisive fourth quarter and grabbed eight rebounds while collecting three steals.

Kiana Jenkins and Jacqui Lam, also eighth graders, were key factors in the paint. Jenkins reeled in 10 rebounds and Lam blocked three shots.

Coupeville fell to 5-8 overall and 1-3 in league standings.

"Hats off to Coupeville in this one," said Harper. "They challenged us throughout and made us really work for the buckets we were able to get."

La Conner also defeated Coupeville 56-22 in the night's junior varsity matchup, the team topping the 50-point mark for the third straight game.

At Darrington, La Conner crashed the boards hard and – as against Coupeville – scored early and often in transition.

Maevie McCormick led with 23 points and 13 rebounds.

"Maevie is having a great year all around," Harper told the Weekly News. "Her scoring is consistent and she leads the team in points, rebounds, assists and steals. Very happy to see her growth in both ability and confidence."

Harper was able to employ his entire roster against Darrington.

"Everyone played on the night," he noted, "and we came away with the win, so it was a good night."

At Friday's game with the Northwest School at a halftime ceremony a banner honoring the undefeated 1968 La Conner High football team will be revealed.

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Sunday February 4th at 3:00 p.m. Anacortes - Brodniak Hall

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Skagitcommunityband.org

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## Library Happenings

By **Jean Markert**,  
library director

We hope everyone's New Year is off to a great start. It is hard to believe that January is almost over already. Our little taste of winter made for an interesting start to 2024, but now that things are finally thawing out, come to the library for a cozy day of reading or come to one of the many programs we have coming up through Feb..

Our first armchair Travels with Teri program had to be postponed due to the snow; however, we are going to reschedule. Stay tuned to our website or come by the library to get the new date.

We have tons of fun coming in Feb.!

To celebrate Dental Health Month, the Tooth Fairy will fly into story time on Friday, Feb. 2 at 11 a.m. to teach us how to brush and care for our teeth.

On Feb. 8 at 3 p.m. join us to make valentines and to celebrate Chinese New Year by decorating a paper dragon. All ages are welcome to this fun event.

Saturday, Feb. 24, drummer Ray Soriano will host a djembe drumming session at noon. This fun event is open to all ages, no experience necessary.

Our always popular ukulele group will be back for on Monday, Feb. 12 for a Valentine concert.

Looking for a fun afternoon date without the crowds on Valentine's Day? The Skagit Brass Quintet will give a special performance on Saturday, Feb. 10, 12-2 p.m.. Perfect timing for a concert and then a nice dinner out at one of the fabulous restaurants here in town.

### Birding Festival at Maple Hall Feb. 3

The La Conner Birding Festival returns to Maple Hall Feb. 3-4 with art, education and family activities for the whole family. Wildlife artist Tony Angell speaks 6 p.m. Saturday on "For Ravens, Crows, and Other Birds, Timing Is Crucial."

The La Conner Chamber of Commerce is festival host.

Doors open 10 a.m. each day. Sunday's end is 4 p.m.

A Facebook page for the La Conner Birding Festival contains more information. Email [laconnerbirdingfestival@gmail.com](mailto:laconnerbirdingfestival@gmail.com).

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## 66 birds/3 degrees lecture

By **Judy Booth**

Saturday's lecture at the Museum of Northwest Art capped off the three-month visual and sound exhibition, "Surge: Mapping Transition, Displacement and Agency in Times of Climate Change," with a disturbing look at the future of birds. "If birds aren't doing well, we aren't either," said John Bower. He had collaborated with artist Natalie Niblack for their talk, "Inside an Artist & Scientist Collaboration: '66 Birds/3 Degrees,'" as they worked together for her exhibit. They spoke before a full room of over 50 people for the last educational program before the exhibition closed Jan. 21.

Niblack's 66 paintings of endangered birds wrapped the walls of the back first floor gallery accompanied by bird song.

Niblack enlisted Bower to write a description of each bird species detailing their struggles with climate change.

Bower focused on the future survival, mostly by migration, of Western Washington bird species through three degrees Celsius of climate change: 1.5-degrees, 2-degrees and 3-degrees. He based his talk on "Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink" by the National Audubon Society listed birds as endangered or threatened in Western Washington.

Birds need particular habitat to nest in: to raise babies and to find safety from predators, high winds and heavy rain. Baby birds need protection from heat. And they need food. With forest fires, smoke and drought, all are threatened. With each increase in temperature degree, the threat of extinction increases.

Projecting future migrations by studying environmental conditions such as climate, vegetation, land use and topog-

raphy; and combing the records of 140-million bird observation records from 604 species, Bower estimated the future geographic changes for each species.

Bower tapped into the National Audubon Society's website to share a detailed chart of the future of each bird, where it might migrate and where it will lose habitation.

Bower said 64% of the 604 species are moderately to highly vulnerable to climate change right now. Almost all, 97%, are vulnerable to two or more specific climate events combined, such as fire, drought, flood. There's been a pronounced shift already in summer and winter species ranges.

Anna's Hummingbirds are new to this area in the last thirty years. Bower predicted that a population of American white pelicans, wintering in Padilla Bay in recent years, will become a locally breeding population within five years. He made the point that even humans are migrating further north.

Mitigation could reduce vulnerability for 76% of the 604 Pacific Northwest birds based on these calculations but without taking into consideration other threats such as pollution, invasive species and changes in prey species populations.

Bower said a few scientists

are seeing positive changes. The 2023 assessment put him in a "deep funk," but current assessments offer hope: if we do our part.

"Ultimately, If we save the birds, we save all of nature and ourselves," Niblack wrote for her exhibit's artist statement

We are already at 1.5 degree Celsius.

This exhibition was curated by Chloe Dye Sherpe.

Bower, a scientist, author and lecturer, is a professor at Western Washington University.

Niblack lives near Conway.

### 'Let's dance' at Feb. 2 concert

Join the Skagit Community Band when it performs music inspired by dance 7 p.m. Feb. 2 in Maple Hall. Selections include: "Four Scottish Dances" by Arnold, "Russian Sailors' Dance" by Gliere, "The Rakes of Mallow" by Anderson and "Armenian Dances" by Reed.

Free admission with donations. A second performance is in Anacortes at 3 p.m. Feb. 4 in Brodniak Hall.

Information:  
[Skagitcommunityband.org](http://Skagitcommunityband.org)  
Source: Skagit Community Band



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**LEGAL NOTICES**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**A PUBLIC HEARING** regarding updates to the Comprehensive Plan and Uniform Development Code of La Conner will be held on February 13, 2024 at 6 p.m. at Maple Hall in La Conner during the Town Council meeting. The complete proposed updates may be viewed at Town Hall. Comments may be submitted in writing to [planning@townoflaconner.org](mailto:planning@townoflaconner.org) until Feb. 12, 2024 at 11:59 pm. Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 24, 2024.

**TOWN OF LA CONNER FINAL DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE (DNS)**

Date: January 16, 2024  
Application File #: LU23-49SEPA  
Applicant: Town of La Conner  
Owner: Town of La Conner  
Town Contact Person: Michael Davolio AICP, Planning Director; P.O. Box 400, La Conner, WA 98257; 360-466-3125  
Project Description: Updates to Chapter 10 of the Comprehensive Plan, Essential Public Facilities  
Project Location: Town of La Conner  
Assessor Tax Parcel: N/A  
Lead Agency: Town of La Conner

**FINAL DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE (FDNS):** As the Lead Agency, the Town of La Conner has determined that significant environmental impacts are unlikely to result from the proposed project. The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

This DNS is issued using the optional DNS process in WAC 197-11-355. A 10-day appeal period follows the issuance of this DNS. If you have any questions concerning this project, contact Town Hall at (360) 466-3125 or email [planner@townoflaconner.org](mailto:planner@townoflaconner.org).  
Issued: January 16, 2024  
Published: January 24, 2024  
Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 24, 2024.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON AND FOR SKAGIT COUNTY**

**In the Matter of the Estate of DANNIE L. MORRIS Deceased.**  
No. 24-4-00037-29  
NONPROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS.  
RCW 11.42.030

The notice agent named below has elected to give notice to creditors of the above-named decedent. Any person having a claim against the decedent that arose before the decedent's death 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 11.42.070 by serving on or mailing to the notice agent or the agent'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 notice agent served or mailed this Notice to the creditor as provided under RCW 11.42.020(2)(c); 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 11.42.050 and 11.42.060. This bar is effective as to claims against the decedent's probate and nonprobate assets.

Date of first publication: January 24, 2024.  
The notice agent certifies under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington on January 22, 2024, at Mount Vernon, WA, that the foregoing is true and correct.  
HARRY KEITH MORRIS, JR.  
320 Manito Drive, Mount Vernon, WA 98273-3721.

Personal Representative: **ALBERT NAU Deceased**  
No. 24-4-00098-31  
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 in which the probate proceedings were commenced.

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(1)(c); or (2) four (4) 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 FILING COPY OF NOTICE TO CREDITORS with Clerk of Court: **January 19, 2024.**  
DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION:

PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE: **HEIDIA GROOMS ATTORNEY FOR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE: Amy C. Allison, WSBA #34317**  
Anderson Hunter Law Firm, P.S.  
2707 Colby Avenue, Suite 1001  
Everett, WA 98201

**COURT OF PROBATE PROCEEDINGS: Snohomish County Superior Court AND CAUSE NUMBER: 24-4-00098-31**

Published in the La Conner Weekly News Jan. 24, 31, Feb. 7, 2024.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SKAGIT**

**In re the Estate of MARY PATRICIA TURNER, Deceased.**  
Case No.: 23-4-00665-29  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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 in which the probate proceedings were commenced. 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(1)(c); 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: January 10, 2024  
Personal Representative:

Email: [LosMorris@POBox.com](mailto:LosMorris@POBox.com).

Attorney for Notice Agent: **MICHAEL A. WINSLOW**, Attorney at Law, 519 Columbine Ct., Mount Vernon, WA 98273. Telephone: (360) 770-3397. Email: [Mike@winslegal.com](mailto:Mike@winslegal.com).

Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 24, 31 and Feb. 7, 2024.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY**

**In the Matter of the Estate of ALBERT NAU Deceased**  
No. 24-4-00098-31  
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 in which the probate proceedings were commenced.

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Anderson Hunter Law Firm, P.S.  
2707 Colby Avenue, Suite 1001  
Everett, WA 98201

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Published in the La Conner Weekly News Jan. 24, 31, Feb. 7, 2024.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SKAGIT**

**In re the Estate of MARY PATRICIA TURNER, Deceased.**  
Case No.: 23-4-00665-29  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION:

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Anderson Hunter Law Firm, P.S.  
2707 Colby Avenue, Suite 1001  
Everett, WA 98201

**COURT OF PROBATE PROCEEDINGS: Snohomish County Superior Court AND CAUSE NUMBER: 24-4-00098-31**

Published in the La Conner Weekly News Jan. 24, 31, Feb. 7, 2024.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR WHATCOM COUNTY**

**In re the Estate of GREGORY JOHN ZIMMERMAN, Deceased.**  
No. 23-4-01217-37  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS.  
Judge Lee Grochmal.

The Person 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 in which the probate proceedings were commenced. 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(1)(c); 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.

Randolph Reilly  
Attorney for the Personal Representative: **Rachelle Eason**

Address for Mailing or Service: P.O. Box 1725, Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
Court of Probate proceedings: Skagit County Superior Court  
Cause number: 23-4-00665-29

SIGNED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

/s/ Randy Reilly, Randy Reilly, Petitioner  
Personal Representative of the Estate of  
Mary Patricia Turner  
Prepared by: /s/ Rachelle Marie Eason

Rachelle Marie Eason, WSBA # 29922  
Attorney for Petitioner  
Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 10, 17, 24, 2024.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR WHATCOM COUNTY**

**In re the Estate of: GREGORY JOHN ZIMMERMAN, Deceased.**  
No. 23-4-01217-37  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS.  
Judge Lee Grochmal.

The Person 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 in which the probate proceedings were commenced. 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(1)(c); 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 Filing of Notice to Creditors: January 3, 2024, with the Clerk of Court  
Date of First Publication: January 10, 2024

Name of Personal Representative: **Shelby Yates Zimmerman**  
Attorney for Personal Representative: **Genissa M. Richardson, WSBA #56339**  
Address for Mailing or Service: True North Legal Services, PLLC  
PO Box 934, Bellingham, WA 98227  
(360) 639-3393  
[Genissa@truenorthlegalservices.com](mailto:Genissa@truenorthlegalservices.com)  
DATED: January 3, 2024  
True North Legal Services, PLLC  
Genissa M. Richardson, WSBA #56339  
Attorney for Personal Representative: **Shelby Yates Zimmerman**  
Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 10, 17, 24, 2024.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY**

**No. 24-4-00007-29**  
PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS  
(RCW 11.40.030)  
**In the Matter of the Estate of Jacqueline Vannice, Deceased**

The personal representative named below has been appointed as personal representative of this estate. Any person having 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 in which the probate proceedings were commenced. 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(1)(c); 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: **January 17, 2024**  
**Marcus L. Zahrt**  
Personal Representative  
**SKAGIT LAW GROUP, PLLC**  
MEGAN OTIS MASONHOLDER, WSBA #29495  
Attorneys for Personal Representative  
P.O. Box 336/227 Freeway Drive, Suite B  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 17, 24 and 31, 2024.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: BROOKE E. VAN DE BRAKE, SR., NO. 24-4-00028-31**  
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 in which the probate proceedings were commenced. 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(1)(c); 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: January 17, 2024

Charlotte M. Van de Brake  
Personal Representative  
Attorney for Personal Representative: **Steven J. Peiffle, WSBA #14704**  
Address for Mailing or Service: P.O. Box 188  
103 North Street  
Arlington, WA 98223  
Court of probate proceedings and cause number: Snohomish County Superior Court, Cause No. 24-4-00028-31  
Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 17, 24 and 31, 2024.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: BROOKE E. VAN DE BRAKE, SR., NO. 24-4-00028-31**  
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**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: BROOKE E. VAN DE BRAKE, SR., NO. 24-4-00028-31**  
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Arlington, WA 98223  
Court of probate proceedings and cause number: Snohomish County Superior Court, Cause No. 24-4-00028-31  
Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 17, 24 and 31, 2024.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: BROOKE E. VAN DE BRAKE, SR., NO. 24-4-00028-31**  
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 in which the probate proceedings were commenced. 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(1)(c); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of the notice. If the claim is not presented within this time

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DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION: **January 17, 2024**

Charlotte M. Van de Brake  
Personal Representative  
Attorney for Personal Representative: **Steven J. Peiffle, WSBA #14704**  
Address for Mailing or Service: P.O. Box 188  
103 North Street  
Arlington, WA 98223

Court of probate proceedings and cause number: Snohomish County Superior Court, Cause No. 24-4-00028-31  
Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 17, 24 and 31, 2024.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY**

**In the Matter of the Estate of MICHAEL HENRY JONES, Deceased.**  
No. 23-4-02415-31  
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 in which the probate proceedings were commenced.

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(1)(c); or (2) four (4) 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: January 17, 2024

Charlotte M. Van de Brake  
Personal Representative  
Attorney for Personal Representative: **Steven J. Peiffle, WSBA #14704**  
Address for Mailing or Service: P.O. Box 188  
103 North Street  
Arlington, WA 98223  
Court of probate proceedings and cause number: Snohomish County Superior Court, Cause No. 24-4-00028-31  
Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 17, 24 and 31, 2024.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: BROOKE E. VAN DE BRAKE, SR., NO. 24-4-00028-31**  
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 in which the probate proceedings were commenced. 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(1)(c); 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: January 17, 2024

Charlotte M. Van de Brake  
Personal Representative  
Attorney for Personal Representative: **Steven J. Peiffle, WSBA #14704**  
Address for Mailing or Service: P.O. Box 188  
103 North Street  
Arlington, WA 98223  
Court of probate proceedings and cause number: Snohomish County Superior Court, Cause No. 24-4-00028-31  
Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 17, 24 and 31, 2024.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY**

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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 in which the probate proceedings were commenced. 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(1)(c); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of the notice. If the claim is not presented within this time

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DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION: **January 17, 2024**

Anderson Hunter Law Firm, P.S.  
2707 Colby Avenue, Suite 1001  
Everett, WA 98201

COURT OF PROBATE PROCEEDINGS: Snohomish County Superior Court  
AND CAUSE NUMBER: 23-4-02415-31  
Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 24, Jan. 31 and Feb. 7, 2024.

**Body**

(from page 1)  
Several search and rescue agencies from throughout the Puget Sound region, coordinated by the Skagit County Sheriff's Office, descended on La Conner through the Jan. 10 search.

The Skagit County Sheriff's Office thanks the King County Sheriff's Office, the Seattle Police Department Harbor Patrol Unit, Swinomish Tribal Fisheries Police, U.S. Border Patrol and all the volunteer search and rescue personnel for their assistance.

**SUDOKO**

Weekly SUDOKU  
Answer

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



# Aqimuk's Kitchen

By Patricia Aqimuk Paul, Esq., Food Editor

## Pantry Soup

This recipe evolved from a minestrone soup. It is gluten free and vegetarian. I created it from what I keep in my pantry. It makes enough for two meals for two people and stretches the food budget. The basic soup I prepared in the Instant Pot. You could prepare on top of the stove. The rice is cooked separately and added in.

### Ingredients

- Onion, two slices, chopped
- Garlic clove, one sliced
- Olive oil
- Northern beans, 1 can
- Stewed tomatoes, 1 can
- Vegetable broth. 1 carton
- Cooked rice, 1 to 2 cups



### Preparation

Add olive oil to Instant Pot. Push sauté button. Add in onion and garlic. Mix around as it browns. Turn off the Instant Pot. Add in the beans, tomatoes and broth. Scrap any bits from bottom of pot. Secure lid and push the soup button. Allow natural release. Add in cooked rice and use sauté button to heat and stir. Season with salt, pepper and Tabasco.

### NOT TO BE MISSED

Jan. 24-Mar. 24 Birds of a Fiber Pacific Northwest Quilt & Fiber Arts Museum Reception Feb. 3, 2:30-4 p.m. qfamuseum.org, 360-466-4288.

Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m. Skagit Community Band, Maple Hall, 104 Commercial St., La Conner. The Skagit Community Band Presents: "Let's Dance" Celebrating Music inspired by Dance. Admission free, donations accepted.

Feb. 3 & 4, La Conner Birding Festival. 10-6 Sat., 10-2 Sun. Guest speaker Tony Angell Sat. night. Maple Hall, 104 Commercial St. La Conner, WA 98257 For more information, call 360-466-4778 or email laconnerbirdingfestival@gmail.com.

Feb. 23, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Community Blood Drive - La Conner High School Gymnasium, 404 N. Sixth St., La Conner. Coordinated by Bloodworks Northwest and local volunteers.

Donations requested: Skagit County Historical Museum is seeking donations of vintage, holiday wares, craft supplies, collectibles and unique items for their annual Sale at the School in April. Please contact jwolfe@co.skagit.wa.us or call 360-466-3365 for more details.

Feb. 25, noon. Edison Chicken Parade. Downtown Edison.

### LIBRARIES

La Conner Swinomish Library. 520 Morris St., La Conner. 360-466-3352. www.lclib.lib.wa.us. Open 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. • Storytime for Children. 11 a.m. every Friday. • Book Club. Meets at 2 p.m. every fourth Wednesday. Info: Richard Wisniewski at wisniew10@gmail.com

Mount Vernon Public Library. 315 Snoqualmie St., Mount Vernon. 360-336-6209, mountvernonwa.gov. • Virtual Reality. Every Saturday, 1-3 p.m. Must be 12 or older.

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

Burlington Public Library. 820 E. Washington Ave., Burlington. 360-755-0760, burlingtonwa.gov/library. • Knitting Club. All ages, Wednesdays at 6 p.m.

### MUSEUMS

Pacific Northwest Quilt & Fiber Arts Museum. 703 S. Second St., La Conner. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. qfamuseum.org, 360-466-4288.

Skagit County Historical Museum. 360-466-3365 or skagitcounty.net/museum. Hours 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursday-Sunday. • Exhibit: "More than just a little off the top: barbershop historians."

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

• Teen Art Club. A free program for youth in grades 6-12, where you can bring your friends and your creativity to make art together and inspire your art. Pizza, snacks, and art supplies will be provided.

### MUSIC

Ukelele Fun & Song Circle. Meets 1-2 p.m. Wednesdays, Burlington Senior Center. For info, email yogaheartspace0@gmail.com.

Shelter Bay Chorus. Meets 4:30-6:30 p.m. every Thursday, Shelter Bay Clubhouse. No auditions required. Questions, call Joan at 360-941-7507.

### MEETINGS

La Conner Swinomish Regional Library. Library board of trustees meets at 5 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month in the library, 520 Morris St.

Skagit Cemetery District 1. Regular meetings at 5 p.m. every second Thursday, at Lori Buher's home, 17604 Valentine Road, Mount Vernon. Skagit Conservation District. 2021 E. College Way No. 203, Mount Vernon. 360-428-4313. Zoom info at skagitcd.org. Board meetings 7:30-9 a.m. every fourth Wednesday. Next meeting Jan. 24.

Rotary Club of La Conner. laconnerrotary.org. Meetings 6-7

p.m. every Monday at Shawn O'Donnell's restaurant. Optional dinner, 5:30 p.m.

Little Mountain Gamblers. Gamblers Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. every Tuesday at Mount Vernon Senior Center, 1401 Cleveland Ave.

Town of La Conner. 204 Douglas St., La Conner. 360-466-3125. Zoom info @ Townoflaconner.org/calendar.

### SERVICE & VOLUNTEER

Pacific Northwest Quilt & Fiber Arts Museum is looking for volunteers as a museum host or in our gift shop. Six hours per month. Fill out a volunteer application online www.qfamuseum.org or stop by the museum. Open Wednesday - Sunday 11 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., 703 Second Street or call Jacque Chase 360.466.4288 x 101.

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

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

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

## CLASSIFIEDS

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

## Super Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Grappler, backwoods-style
  - 8 Skylit courts
  - 13 Astronaut Wally
  - 20 "The Stranger Beside Me" true-crime writer
  - 21 Flowers in the iris family
  - 22 Some sweatshirts
  - 23 Swift warship for law enforcement?
  - 25 Finales
  - 26 Makes mother's milk
  - 27 Comic Radner
  - 29 "How about that!"
  - 30 Lugosi of "The Raven"
  - 33 Hefty books
  - 34 Defectively built flat-bottomed boat?
  - 36 Pumpkin's color
  - 38 Resident of Tehran
  - 40 Makes a choice
  - 41 Light, speedy boat transporting Oreos?
  - 45 Just barely
  - 48 Indian state known for silk
  - 49 United
  - 50 In a smoothly elegant way
  - 53 Neon, e.g.
  - 56 French mime master
  - 59 High-sterned ship orbiting Earth?
  - 61 "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" star Andy
  - 65 Central Canadian tribe members
  - 67 Upscale hotel
  - 68 Small combo
  - 69 Discovering a sharp-bowed rowboat?
  - 74 Safe, at sea
  - 75 Do a tally of
  - 77 "Get what I'm sayin', man?"
  - 78 Zealous
  - 80 Paint a passenger ship?
  - 83 Soapmaking solution
  - 86 Auditing org.
  - 87 Message on a tombstone
  - 89 Kabuki sash
  - 90 Enthusiasm
  - 95 Prison, in London
  - 96 Very fast ship decorated with shrubbery?
  - 99 Coll. reunion attendee
  - 102 Father Sarducci of old 3-Down
  - 104 Quick-witted
  - 105 Racing boat with lots of mollusks attached?
  - 109 Fill with joy
  - 113 Lyric verses
  - 114 Billiards stick
  - 115 They make up molecules
  - 116 Abstruse
  - 118 Reproductive organs
  - 120 Sub-sinking ship full of aquariums?
  - 125 Lay aside
  - 126 Bert's pal
  - 127 Introductions
  - 128 In clothes
  - 129 Actors O'Neal and Reynolds
  - 130 Says "OK"
- DOWN**
- 1 Jay-Z's music
  - 2 Year, in Portugal
  - 3 NBC skit show, in brief
  - 4 Indian Ocean island nation
  - 5 — Brasi (role in "The Godfather")
  - 6 One voted in
  - 7 Book page opposite a verso
  - 8 Severe
  - 9 Samples something
  - 10 Singer Diana
  - 11 With 13-Down, thick glacial mass along a polar shore
  - 12 BB shooter
  - 13 See 11-Down
  - 14 Magazine publisher
  - 15 Wannabe surfer
  - 16 Exiled Amin
  - 17 Key into a cash register
  - 18 Acting king
  - 19 Good traits
  - 24 He-sheep
  - 28 "— may be so bold ..."
  - 30 — Raton
  - 31 Lovers' deity
  - 32 Neighbor of Thailand
  - 34 Clayey fertilizer
  - 35 Herd of seals
  - 37 "— a break!"
  - 39 Gave a new interior design to
  - 42 Welsh canine
  - 43 Mom's bro
  - 44 Ball supporter
  - 45 Org. for cavity fillers
  - 46 Doc's warm treatment
  - 47 "For" votes
  - 51 Like thrift store goods
  - 52 — facto
  - 53 Sly deception
  - 54 Prices to play
  - 55 Variety of trapshooting
  - 57 Spot's noise
  - 58 Etching liquid
  - 60 Husband of Eva Perón
  - 61 Actress Keanan
  - 62 Enthusiasm
  - 63 Gold-fancying king
  - 64 Boxers' event
  - 66 Waffle brand
  - 70 No, to Nikita
  - 71 Torres with 12 Olympic swimming medals
  - 72 Antique item
  - 73 "Hooray!"
  - 76 "Guilty" or "not guilty"
  - 79 Onetime TV host Philbin
  - 81 Debut on Wall St.
  - 82 Zippo
  - 84 Woofing pet
  - 85 Actor Vigoda
  - 88 Olympic skier Mahre
  - 91 Meeting building regulations
  - 92 Tater
  - 93 Head, in Metz
  - 94 Mining strikes
  - 95 Big inits. in SUVs
  - 97 Certain deer leather
  - 98 Hamlet's duel opponent
  - 99 Peace treaty
  - 100 Shutter piece
  - 101 Fidgetiness
  - 102 Valuable rock
  - 103 Long, loose outerwear
  - 106 Nitpickers split them
  - 107 Olympic skier Mahre
  - 108 Sprayed, with "down"
  - 110 Mining strikes
  - 111 Downed
  - 112 Electric car producer
  - 116 Sicilian resort city
  - 117 Investments for later yrs.
  - 119 Home: Abbr.
  - 121 Suffix with budget
  - 122 — and yang
  - 123 Doc for head colds
  - 124 Blog feed format inits.

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### ANSWERS ON PAGE 6

## Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

### DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

- ◆ Moderate
- ◆◆ Challenging
- ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!



# POLICE BLOTTER

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## Tuesday, January 16

**11:14 a.m. Horses in winter** – Another report of the horses at the polo club not being fed or watered. We checked the horses and found adequate food and water on site with all horses being fed. La Conner Whitney Rd., Greater La Conner.

**5:47 P.m. Big talk, no action** – Call of a verbal argument at the La Conner Shell Station between an employee and a customer. The argument did not get physical and cooler heads emerged and were able to solve the situation. La Conner Whitney Rd., Greater La Conner.

## Thursday, January 18

**8:14 a.m. Large potatoes haul** – A workshop on the property was broken into with multiple items taken which included a motorcycle, tools and a shotgun. Deputies are investigating for suspect information. Downey Rd., Greater La Conner.

**11 a.m. Depositing the truth** – Report of a MVA where a vehicle had hit the stone wall outside the bank and left the area. Before a deputy could respond, the driver came into the bank to make a report and advised they would take care of the repairs. No response from law. Morris St., La Conner.

**11:10 p.m. Slid home safely** – Possible DUI as the driver had been seen drinking prior to leaving in a car. No reports of bad driving and law was unable to locate the vehicle. La Conner Whitney / Chilberg Rds., La Conner.

## Friday, January 19

**8:51 a.m. Not so suspicious** – Caller reported that she believed her car was hit when parked in front of her house. A deputy responded and saw tire tracks in the snow going towards the parked car but did not see that any impact was made. The caller pointed to a small chip in the paint but the deputy could see rust around the chip which indicated it had been there for some time. There was no evidence of an MVA 3rd St., La Conner.

**6:24 p.m. Good deed punished** – The caller picked up a hitchhiker on McLean Road and gave them a ride to Mount Vernon. A short time after dropping them off, the driver noticed a portable speaker was missing from his car. It is believed the subject stole it but there was no info for the hitchhiker, and he was not located in town. McLean / Beaver Marsh Rds., Greater La Conner.

**7:08 p.m. Ninth life over** – Pet emergency center advised that a cat had been brought in that was hit by a car on Fir Island Road. The cat had died and they wanted us aware in case an owner called in. Fir Island Rd., Conway.

**9:53 p.m. Young and foolish** – A truck driven by a juvenile went off the road and hit a power pole. A second car pulled up and tried to flee the area with the occupants of the truck. The car was located and the original truck driver was taken into custody for DUI and hit and run. Dodge Valley Rd., Greater La Conner.

# Repainting Rainbow Bridge may be a dream

By Bill Reynolds

When the iconic Rainbow Bridge, the often-photographed arched orange span synonymous with La Conner opened in 1957, it looked like a million.

Fast forward to 2024 and the now faded local landmark requires several millions – as in dollars – to reclaim its original bright orange appeal.

The estimated cost of repainting Rainbow Bridge, which links La Conner and the Skagit County mainland with Fidalgo Island and Swinomish Reservation, is about \$4 million, town resident Linda Peterson learned from Skagit County Public Works staff.

Peterson has been concerned about the bridge's condition for some time and shared those concerns with La Conner Councilmember Rick Dole. Dole noted that it is a county span and that she should contact its public works department.

Pederson did. "I sent a letter in December about my concerns," Peterson

said.

She received a response Jan. 8 from Forrest Jones, the county's lead bridge inspector.

Jones acknowledged that Rainbow Bridge "is somewhat lacking in its normal coloring and has faded and is a bit dirty." "However," he added, "per the last inspection performed in 2023, the paint system while dirty and faded, is in good shape overall."

Jones said of the 72,000 square feet of paint on the bridge, less than one percent – about 700 square feet – is lacking or has been downgraded.

The paint appears brightest, though, on the underside of the bridge, rather than its heavy volume car deck.

"Unfortunately," Jones told Peterson, "the costs to repaint the bridge is prohibitive due to our already overstretched budgets for the coming years of 2024 and 2025."

The \$4 million price tag for painting is largely due to mandated paint containment and environmental protection measures.

"Part of the high costs," Jones explained, "is we would be required to fully contain the bridge during the procedure so as not to allow contaminants to fall into the channel below."

The county plans to avoid the fallout from a painting project in the late 1980s when boaters complained about orange paint falling onto their vessels as they passed beneath. Motorists have also had their vehicles splattered while crossing the bridge during the project.

Jones confirmed to Peterson that in addition to paint and labor plus permit fees, traffic control is a significant expense.

"Due to these costs," he said, "Public Works is looking for grant funding to help subsidize the cost."

"The next call for projects on bridge grant funding is tentatively scheduled for 2025," said Jones. "We will be looking at grant criteria to see if the bridge would qualify for not only paint but also to repair any other issues the bridge may have."

# Conway gas spill site cleanup continues

By Ken Stern

CONWAY — Last week's weather paused cleanup operations of the December Olympic Pipeline gasoline spill east of Conway. By Jan. 20 excavation of impacted soil at the spill site north of SR 534 resumed. This update is from Unified Command press releases.

SR 534 will be closed in both directions at the site in the near future for a period of four to six hours while a temporary sheet piling wall is installed to isolate the eastern bank of Hill Ditch and allow response crews to dig out the remaining impacted soil and sediment and replace it with clean soil. At press time a date had not been set. Closures will avoid peak commuting or school pick-up or

drop-off times.

The wall will be installed along approximately 220 feet of the impacted east shoreline, just north of SR 534. Large interlocking steel sheet pilings will be installed using a crane-mounted vibratory pile-driving system.

Pile driving operations are expected to begin in early February and last approximately two weeks. The pile driving system will operate during daylight hours. There will be elevated construction noise and vibration in the immediate area. Vibration and noise monitoring will be in place along the Hill Ditch dike and along the pipeline.

Water sampling has not found any exceedances of environmental or health-based screening values for at any location since Dec. 22, 2023 from nearby waterways including Hill Ditch, Skagit River, and Skagit Bay.

No public health risk from

gasoline fumes have been detected from air field sampling and laboratory analyses. Community air monitoring will continue during work hours when impacted soil is being removed.

Removal of some of the boom downstream of the I-5 overpass was to be removed last week since there has been an absence of detectable hydrocarbons in Hill Ditch below the SR 534 bridge.

Approximately 25,326 gallons of gasoline leaked and some 8,325 gallons recovered through Dec. 29.

The Unified Command consists of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Washington Department of Ecology, Skagit County Department of Emergency Management, bp and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community.

Status updates are posted on the Department of Ecology's website: [ecology.wa.gov/OlympicPipelineSpill](http://ecology.wa.gov/OlympicPipelineSpill).

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The La Conner Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring the  
**La Conner Birding Festival**  
February 3rd and 4th



Renowned author and artist Tony Angell will be the featured speaker on Saturday evening. His presentation, titled "For Ravens, Crows, and Other Birds, Timing is Crucial," promises a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to gain insights into these fascinating creatures.

**Other highlights include:**

- ◆ **Local Artists:** Explore the talents of our local artists showcasing their bird-inspired creations.
- ◆ **Education:** Engage in educational opportunities to expand your knowledge of birds and their habitats.
- ◆ **Interactive Displays:** Immerse yourself in interactive displays that bring the world of birds to life.
- ◆ **Children's Activities:** Delight in fun and educational activities designed for our younger bird enthusiasts.

**Hours : Saturday doors open at 10:00AM**  
**With a guest speaker beginning at 6:00 PM.**  
**Sunday 10:00AM - 4:00 PM**  
Sponsorship and Vendor Opportunities are still available  
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