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Your Independent Hometown Award-winning Newspaper

# LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

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## THAT'S ALL HE WROTE



IT DOES LOOK LIKE THE BEST JOB, EVER – Weekly News Publisher Ken Stern is better with written text than speaking, but here is at his office desk, convincing someone to do something earlier this fall. He is retiring after this issue but hopes to return to the office in January to help the new publisher of a community-owned newspaper as needed. – Photo by Judy Booth

## Weekly News in 2025? Only time will tell

By Kurt Batdorf

It's not over till it's over. While the future of the La Conner Weekly News remains uncertain after this issue under Publisher Ken Stern, he remains hopeful.

He is more so after a Tuesday morning phone call with Andrew Ashmore, board chair of the La Conner Community News community group that's seeking to buy the Weekly News.

At a meeting with Ashmore, Washington Newspaper Publishers Association director Ellen Hiatt, and retired publisher Dave Gauger on Friday, Dec. 13, Ashmore tendered Stern an offer of \$125,000. Ashmore said the group considered that a fair price. Stern replied he was there to hear their offer but wouldn't negotiate an agreement that day.

The offer was half of what Stern sought, and it

(continued on page 8)

## The origins of the La Conner Weekly News

By Ken Stern

Once the Puget Sound Mail ruled the La Conner roost as the town's weekly newspaper, undergoing successive ownership changes from 1879 through and past Pat O'Leary's tenure, 1939-1973.

Alan Pentz started the Channel Town Press in 1976 and outcompeted the Mail, which closed in 1982. Pentz ran a commercial print shop for additional income. After his death in 1990, his wife, Audrey, took over for the next 16 years.

On Sept. 27, 2006, "We're Back!" was the lead page 1 headline, with Tim Dunlap as publisher, Wayne Everton as managing editor, Sandy Stokes as editor, and Cindy Vest as production manager. They saved the Channel Town Press from closing. Stokes and Vest became partners.

The La Conner Weekly News debuted April 30, 2008, with the page 2 masthead listing Stokes as managing editor and Vest as production manager.

By 2014 or 2015, they were ready to retire and put the paper up for sale.

On June 30, 2017 Ken Stern bought it, creating the La Conner News Publishing Company LLC and, with Stokes' advising, published the July 5 issue. On July 12, Stern was on his own, with Vest as production manager, a wage position.

Vest died in 2022. Stern put the paper up for sale that summer. This is his final issue, Dec. 18, 2024, his 389th, seven-and-a-half years after he started.

It has been a great run. If the hours were too long, the work was never too hard.

The Weekly News closure may not end the legacy of La Conner as the community with the longest continuous publication of a weekly newspaper in the state, 145 years, but that story is still unwritten.

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## 'Ken-Do' spirit: Retiring publisher loved role as Weekly News steward

By Bill Reynolds

Ken Stern is moving on from what he calls his "best job ever" to a retirement that will likely involve travel near and far.

Stern, after all, rarely ventured beyond what he calls the greater La Conner area during seven-and-a-half years as publisher of the community's weekly newspaper, which came to be defined by his topical, lively and – often by design – controversial editorials.

"For seven years," Stern reflected last week, "I've been chained to my desk here in La Conner. I haven't seen anything. I haven't seen the Columbia River, Lake Chelan or the Olympic Mountains. So, I could spend a year just traveling the state and region."

He found his mission here compelling and rewarding, each week an opportunity to provide a strong editorial voice while chronicling what would become the history of his adopted hometown.

"Every week," Stern said, "I took

my editorial very seriously. It was very important to me to say something of weight to the community."

For the past couple years he has tried to pass the historic torch of La Conner newspapering to new owners who would put their own stamp on the Weekly News. When unable to find buyers meeting his \$250,000 sales price for a profitable news venture in what is considered the "Best Small Town" in Washington state, Stern at the end of 2023 decided he would close the paper at the end of the year.

"Putting out a weekly newspaper has been a great pleasure," Stern said. "But managing the business side of the paper has been a bridge too far. That's what's worn me down."

Stern had to hit the ground running upon arriving from Cincinnati in late June 2017. Within a year of purchasing the newspaper from Sandy Stokes and Cindy Vest, Stern became immersed in what was a major story – turmoil at La Conner Schools over the termination of popular teacher Georgia Johnson cou-

pled with contentious district contract negotiations.

"I was impressed by how the school staff and parents supported Georgia Johnson," said Stern, whose father edited a labor union newspaper. "The solidarity of the staff and parents was impressive. This was the most significant story I covered."

Other big stories would follow. Stern cited from memory in rapid-fire fashion the resignation of a Museum of Northwest Art executive director, contentious Shelter Bay governance, the Maple Field housing development and the COVID-19 pandemic.

He also recounted several environmental stories, most notably those related to hovering wildfire smoke and summer heat waves.

"The weather was so hot," he said, "that restaurants and businesses closed temporarily because of it."

But the second most important issue for him was his championing

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## Weather cooperates, to the delight of boat parade crowd

By Bill Reynolds

The miracle of Christmas came to La Conner early this year.

On a day that began with fierce winds that brought down trees and power lines across Puget Sound and imposed choppy currents on local waterways, then ended with a cold, drizzly rain – and in some cases hail – a two-hour evening window of calm, comfortable weather emerged here. Clouds parted and the almost-full moon was plainly visible.

It just so happened that last Saturday's respite from harsh wintry conditions coincided with the annual Swinomish Yacht Club lighted boat parade on Swinomish Channel.

The brightly lit flotilla set off just after 6 p.m. and completed its up-and-back run between La Conner Marina and Rainbow Bridge by 6:45 p.m.

"Sometimes," said Mayor Marna Hanneman, among the large throng

that turned out for the much-anticipated event, "you just need to have faith.

"They say the rain is holding off until 7," she added, "so it couldn't be more perfect."

Comprised of individual entries and those representing the La Conner area's yacht clubs, the boats were cheered on by enthusiastic spectators lining the boardwalk and viewing from other strategic spots on both sides of the channel.

Many took in the scene while dining at restaurants with waterfront views. Some photographers captured brilliant images from the bridge.

The 2024 parade sported the theme "Classic Characters" and paid homage to the popular animated films "Frozen" and "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

Ten to 12 boats participated. It was hard to determine the actual count since a couple dimly lit vessels cruised

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THIS LOOKS LIKE A LOT MORE THAN CHRISTMAS – Saturday's annual Swinomish Yacht Club's lighted boat parade up the Swinomish Channel brought a big crowd to La Conner's boardwalk. Light came from the sky, too, as the clouds parted and a nearly full moon shone through.

– Photo by Lorena Edwards



This is the last issue of this publisher's La Conner Weekly News.

From the editor —

## The free press is for you

The old saw – cliché – is that freedom of the press is limited to those who own one. Like all clichés, there is some truth there. Communities do better when the local newspaper has ethical journalistic stewardship, but publishing a paper is half the equation, at most. The people holding the paper in their hands, reading the news, absorbing it, discussing the going ons in the community and then – vitally – participating to move the community forward creates the whole process entailed in the phrase “freedom of the press.”

Press freedom is not for journalists or politicians, corporate bad actors, sports stars or other celebrities making the news. Freedom of the press exists to protect you, the common citizen, yes, but more, it exists to empower you. It is citizens processing information they gain from reading newspapers that makes newspapers important. That is why the Constitution's First Amendment includes the press in one sentence, woven in with the freedoms of speech, the right to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. Newspapers are a tool you use to protect and advance your freedom. Journalists, then, are servants of the people.

So when demigods attack journalists their goal is to cut the flow of information to you, to cut off at the knees your learning the facts you need to protect and advance your freedoms.

The free press is a phrase probably originating in the English American colonies in the 1770s. It is older than the Constitution and just as fragile as the copies of our country's foundational document preserved in the National Archives.

Consider how 13 colonies of settlers united to defeat Great Britain. This was before public schools. Most men were illiterate and females were their property. But the community gathered in coffee houses, taverns and the public square to hear those who could read, read the day's news.

Like social media today, people got riled up. Unlike today, people were up close and in person in their much more close-knit communities. Arguments could evolve into discussions and people could reason the facts out and cohere and, over time, unite together. Their communications tool was not the internet but the newspaper. Their community boundaries were limited by the distance the sound of voices traveled.

Today our mass culture beats its chest that America is the greatest, number one, the best country on earth. If only it were so. Research the internet for measuring the vitality of press freedom. While you are at it, search for our ranking in the world for democracy, health, wellbeing and happiness. The facts do not line up with our patriotic finger waving.

The 2024 World Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters Without Borders shows the U.S. has dropped 10 places, to 55. Canada, at 14, is first in North America. Thirteen European countries top the list. The index compares the level of freedom enjoyed by journalists and media in 180 countries and territories.

America is broken. We are not very literate or well educated. That may be why we have squandered our vaunted press freedom and compare so poorly on critical measures among nations.

And, for a generation, communities large and small have been losing their newspapers. As many as 2,500 daily or weekly newspapers have closed since 2000. The rate this year is 2.5 per week, 130 a year.

Now one more newspaper is going dark, the news desert expanding over La Conner and its rich agricultural community.

Is it possible that the loss of the press in communities opens the possibility to the loss of other First Amendment freedoms? Who will be covering and reporting a process that may slowly erode life as we know it?

The press is different from all other businesses, even vital local services such as a bank or drugstore. Newspapers peddle facts and truths both large and small. Readers can share their beliefs on the letters page. The staff's words, on every page of the paper, report what is known and analyzed to provide information useful for its readers.

This issue is the 389th I have published in that many weeks over seven-and-a-half years. It is Volume 17, No. 35, since April 30, 2008. For your sake, this community's sake and our collective democratic future, I sincerely hope that No. 36 is published in January under new ownership.

— Ken Stern

## Thank you all for your support

My thanks, first, to you who are reading this. Your continued subscribing to the Weekly News is the reason this newspaper exists.

Thanks to everyone who advertised: The merchants, the large hearts powering the nonprofit organizations and their auctions, pancake breakfasts, concerts, craft fairs, theater productions and more.

Thanks to Jo Mitchell, whose classified ad by classified ad perhaps was the paper's biggest supporter.

Thanks to anyone who ever answered a question for a story, posed for a photographer, suggested a story or photo idea or sent something in to share.

Thanks to everyone who called or wrote with compliments or complaints over something they read. Thanks for paying attention and holding strong beliefs – and stating them.

Thanks most of all to Weekly News staff who wrote stories, took photos, produced the paper and worked in the office. My heartfelt thanks to those who volunteered, who appreciated their reward of knowing they were doing good deeds. They helped me immensely.

To all of you, thank you for the best 389 work weeks of my life. It has been quite a run.

— Ken Stern

A citizen's view —

## The heart of the matter: Our lives

By J. Walker-Wharton

I sent years of the La Conner Weekly News to North Carolina, New Jersey, Arizona, Montana, Tennessee and to multiple locals here and in Anacortes. To neighbors forced to move by rent increases. To a long time boat-owner, moored here. Oh, even to Olympia. Why?

The heart of many articles: individual living experiences of humans, creatures (some pets), ivy killing carbon-sequestering trees, passages of birds recoloring fields, a blue heron shot to death, a home ablaze, flooding.

Photographs and basics of elementary, middle and high school students of the month.

Bill Reynolds' consistently detailed and accurate reporting on meetings that Readers could not find time to attend. The facts informed us all to be able to hold to account elected and appointed individuals. No hiding funding decisions behind closed doors.

Volunteers are highlighted, pictured. Businesses that champion fundraising for a family with a tragically ill child – year after year.

Would the La Conner Swinomish Library be standing if Kiwanis members had not taken over the once-upon-a-time La Conner auto repair shop? Kiwanis collected furniture and items for sale there, raising thousands.

Once locals show such spirited determination, politicians have to

get ahead of their movement.

Money shouts.

National trends hit home via our newspaper: local bank closures, bookstore changes, drugstore gone! Faces in generational depth where they belonged. Deep caring expressed in outrage, at the swift shift in use of the Hedlin ballpark. Letter after letter to our newspaper's editor RE the Center Street multiple residential property proposed use.

Yes, Letters to the Editor.

Wranglings and hissings and cheers; Ken Stern spewed on to the page: all points of view clear to read.

Olympia's politicians and those running for local, state, national office: all their promises and plans were there between our fingers. Choices informed.

Democratic processes in action via our newspaper.

In 8-10 pages we enjoy (lap up), Aqimuk's recipes every week, a large crossword and a sudoku, lists of where to dance, music, theatre, local parades: for pets, July 4th, notable people celebrations, beside Tom Robbins sat Alexis, yea! Santa in our ancient firetruck. Coverage superb – as if the Reader were there on site. And for \$1.25 per week, value!

From a twinkle in his eye to conception, through pregnancy, birth pangs, delivery, from first squeals to words, consistent feedings by Mel Damski and other notables, enabling a confidence of

standing on his own two feet, Ken ends this successful seven-year, risk-taking adventure now in a near 70-year old, rather tired bod'.

This multi-curved, hard-fast and slow sinker ball player has given the game his all.

No local with deep pockets has chosen to step up to the plate. Nonetheless, Ken, your owner, publisher, editor, newshound, OPEN, earned pseudonym shines like a revolving 360-degree beacon. It reminds one Reader of a WWII searchlight. Such strong beams pierced cloud layers for enemy aircraft.

Your beacon may prove too enlightening for deep pockets folks' far narrower vision, perchance.

You leave as a trusted friend whose legacy can breathe life into those willing to take a deep breath, or leave us all shaking our heads, our lives lacking the heart of what we didn't or couldn't acknowledge as critical matter. Existence keeps on. Life?

To close: Winston Churchill, English people's WWII hero, was not re-elected in 1945. But, in 1952, King George VI suddenly died. The hero returned as prime minister; a steady, well-known hand at the helm.

Ken will not return. Winston's heart-piercing summation will play out: We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.

J. Walker-Wharton lives in La Conner.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Would donate to paper if I could

I wanted to say that I will really miss the paper. I have enjoyed it immensely. If I knew how long my money would last me I would have contributed gladly.

Thank you!

Vanessa Jett  
Shelter Bay

### Stern embodied civic virtue. You?

As you cruise into retirement to wallow in hedonism, I want to thank you for embodying Civic Virtue in our hometown La Conner Weekly News. You dared to share with your readers what 70 of the top one hundred newspapers in circulation did not, endorse a presidential candidate. And you were in good company as those papers who did not kowtow to their billionaire or hedge fund owners, 28 endorsed Harris while two endorsed Trump. Those who didn't do their civic duty their reasons were “growing polarization and fears of political retribution” (Axios, 11/5/2024). They forgot Thomas Jefferson's warning that “a democratic society depends upon an informed and educated citizenry”.

I would rather hear the opinions of those who serve to educate as the “first witness to history” than celebrities, memes or Russian bots. Since most editors know the etymology of the word history is from the Greek verb *historein*, or one who seeks wisdom through active inquiry, when they seek the truth they are not “enemies of the state” as fascists would have us believe, but are doing their duty as responsible citizens.

Unfortunately, many Americans have a historical memory of a

fruit fly as they are distracted by each shining spinning object they encounter. How many Americans knew that the 2024 Presidential Greatness Project Expert Survey of over 500 presidential scholars of the American Political Science Association voted Trump as the worst president in U.S. history (UPI, 2/19/2024)? However, he did come in first as “the most polarizing president” (https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com). Does MAGA stand for Make America Grate Again?

As president Trump was #1 in our nation's history in many categories – only president to be impeached twice, #1 in violent coup attempts to stop the peaceful transition of power, #1 in cabinet resignations due to corruption and ethics charges and more Americans died from COVID-19 than any other wealthy nation.

Thanks for your article on “Local cow herds free of bird flu” (Nov. 27) which helped to remind folks about cause and effect. The 1918 influenza virus that killed more than 20 million people worldwide may have been from North American domestic birds. With more than 100 million birds either dead or killed since the latest bird flu outbreak in 2022, folks who complain about the price of eggs never learned capitalism's golden rule: When supply drops, prices increase.

As Trump rolls out his cabinet clown car running on empty of empathy filled with sycophants, grifters, haters and billionaire oligarchs, America needs a homework assignment. Can you remember what E Pluribus Unum means, name the six goals of the preamble of the Constitution (I think when you do #5 you get #1), read Lincoln's 1838 Lyceum Address (“The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions” – ed.), know the 1923 National Flag

Code – hint: they are not Tibetan prayer flags, or are familiar with our Founding Fathers views about the importance of Civic Virtue as the soul of democracy?

Does Trump know what execute means in the Oath of Office?

Thank you again for your service to the community!

Eric Grant  
Shelter Bay

### Ken served the community well

Dear Ken. Seven years ago you chose to purchase the La Conner Weekly News after the opportunity to lead the paper in Hardwick, Vermont, vanished and fortunate for our community that was. For you too, spared black flies and deep winter's frost for maritime climes, tulips and snow geese.

You dove in, a cold plunge in many ways. Your exhaustive presence at seemingly every municipal event and otherwise, was impressive. Your walk with the printed paper to the stand on Wednesdays, even with injured leg, a folksy message of commitment. No doubt you took written and most likely verbal haranguing, though received many praises – hopefully those far outnumbering the opposite. Most importantly, you quickly became a member of the La Conner, Skagit community as a friend.

Now we are here at this juncture, which has been in the making for over a year, the La Conner Weekly News on the brink. The world knows that regional printed press is under threat, you have touted that line for long. It is widely acknowledged that an impartial journal, sharing the happenings within a bustling community is essential.

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## La Conner Weekly News

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## Ken Stern, Publisher & Editor

editor@laconnernews.com

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**Postmaster:**

Send change of address to:

La Conner Weekly News

PO Box 1465, La Conner, WA 98257

Bill Reynolds, News Editor  
news@laconnernews.com

Kurt Batdorf, Copy Editor and Production Manager  
production@laconnernews.com

Rhonda Hundertmark, Design and Layout Editor  
production@laconnernews.com

Eileen Engelstad, Proofreader  
Rick Shorten, Special Projects

**Contributors:**

Anne Basye, Judy Booth, Don Coyote, Mel Damski, Kylee Fortygyn, Janna Gage, Bob Hamblin, Madoc Hiller, Ollie Iversen, Bobbi Krebs-McMullen, Patricia Paul, Adam Sowards, Claire Swedberg, Sarah Walls, Greg Whiting, Aven Wright-Mcintosh

**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



## OBITUARY



**Leslie John "Les" Emry**  
Leslie John Emry, 78 of La Conner, passed away on Oct 18, 2024.

Les was born in Bellingham on Sept. 10, 1946, to Rip and Phyllis Emry. At the age of 3, the family moved to the Olympia area.

Les attended North Thurston Public Schools, graduating in 1963. After graduation Les served in the National Guard. After military service, Les worked in the Olympia area and played slow pitch for the Armstrong Home League, making many friends, before moving to La Conner.

While living in La Conner, Les worked at the oil refineries, went to Alaska fishing for several years, and was the chef at The Stationhouse Restaurant. Les was also a die-hard Huskie fan.

Les is preceded in death by his longtime partner Peg Smith and his father Rip. Les is survived by his Mother Phyllis Emry of Olympia; his brother Greg and Patty Emry of New Westminster, British Columbia; his brother Scott and Helen Emry of Yelm; and many nieces and nephews.

Les had many dear friends in La Conner and will be sorely missed by all. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

■ ■ ■ (from page 2)

For La Conner that is the sharing of news from the: school district, city council, Swinomish Tribe, La Conner commissions, Port of Skagit, calendar, ads, obits, police blotter, special interests, along with individual opinions. Crucial checks and balances.

Thankfully there is a solid movement underway to save the Weekly. But here I cannot iterate enough the importance of saving the PRINTED PAPER. As I write I am surrounded by print of various kind, all pieces I want to hand off: an article, an image, a date, an opinion, an ad. Digital links cannot fill that role, that physical piece, they assist but they do not replace.

I am putting on my Christmas list one ask, to save our printed La Conner Weekly News.

Come 2025 it won't be you walking the paper to the boxes on Wednesdays, but if my ask does come through, someone will be. This is the strongest visual symbol of a community that is informed, accountable and genuinely thoughtful of its neighbors and the wellbeing of the place we all call home, a regional paper in mailbox and newsstand.

Congratulations Ken – thanks for serving us all so well.

Katie Carson  
Greater La Conner

## La Conner south end concepts, options unveiled

By Bill Reynolds

A detailed presentation, insightful questions and dreams of the future for La Conner's south waterfront and long underutilized former industrial area marked a nearly two-hour Dec. 11 public forum at Maple Hall.

A large audience – at one point requiring Town Administrator Scott Thomas to set up additional chairs – attended the workshop, which explored potential zoning and code revisions and design concepts for the four-acre site commonly known as the old Moore-Clark property.

Consultants Tom Beckwith and Julie Blazek and town planning

staff led the program.

They shared steps taken since August to draft a revitalization plan for the area, once a bustling hub home to the Moore-Clark fish feed manufacturing plant and since-demolished iconic San Juan Islands cannery building.

"This," said Planning Director Michael Davolio, "will be a plan that identifies possibilities and potential impacts of those possibilities in the area." It is funded by a state grant that Davolio said was awarded to La Conner because the south end has been largely underused since Moore-Clark's closure and relocation to Vancouver, B.C. in the early 1990s.

Attendees asked about the posture of Triton America, the property owner. They sought answers to potential flood, parking and traffic flow impacts.

In response to a question from resident Joan Cross, Beckwith said a Triton representative has been kept apprised of the planning project.

"This property isn't a priority for them," Beckwith said, whose focus is the high-tech and aviation sectors. "They're building aircraft. They're a passive party, not antagonistic, just disinterested."

Beckwith said Triton acquired the property as a favor to the late Vaughn Jolley, who for years

had sought without success to transition the old Moore-Clark plant to a mixed-use commercial/residential area.

Beckwith noted that Triton went to considerable expense cleaning debris left by a tenant.

Thomas said the Town has filed a complaint that spurred Triton to examine present issues with the property, most notably public safety hazards posed by the vacant and dilapidated 19th century warehouse building known to locals as "Big Blue."

Demolishing the warehouse – the plan recommends it be torn down and rebuilt – would solve

(continued on page 8)

## Town Council approves 2025 budget, but public remains mum

By Bill Reynolds

It was more ho-hum than ho-ho-ho as the La Conner Town Council approved a \$7 million 2025 municipal budget during its final meeting of the year.

No public comment was offered at a budget hearing, part of the nearly hour-long Dec. 10 agenda at Maple Hall.

"People come to the meetings here to talk about things and sometimes it can be fairly trivial," Town Councillor Ivan Carlson noted wryly, "so I'm surprised that no one is here to speak to the proposed budget."

Mayor Marna Hanneman had a ready explanation.

"Either we're doing a great job," Hanneman quipped, "or

there's a riot outside."

If 2024 was any indication, this budget, while tight, should hold up barring unforeseen circumstances.

"It looks like we'll meet our (2024) budget and then some," Hanneman said. "We're a whole lot better off than a lot of cities and towns."

The council approved the draft Community Emergency Management Plan. The document was crafted this year by the town's emergency management commission.

The mayor called it a working document and praised the commission's "amazing job."

It includes a risk assessment for potential emergencies and natural disasters. It also spells

out research-proven procedures for emergency responses.

Public Works Director Brian Lease shared the good news of \$290,000 in state grant funding to finish planned pedestrian safety and drainage upgrades earmarked for Maple Avenue and Road Street.

"This will complete the work that was begun last year," he said.

The council canceled its Dec. 24 meeting, as it does annually of the second December meeting. The local Christmas spirit is exemplified, all agreed, by the lighted tree at Gilkey Square.

Chamber of Commerce Director Mark Hulst, in his report to council, praised town staff for installing and decorating the tree and agreed to explore whether

the community tree lighting ceremony – which always draws large crowds – might be scheduled a couple weeks earlier.

Hanneman said the town arts commission has three vacancies in 2025. A fifth emergency management commissioner is also needed.

Councilmember MaryLee Chamberlain will serve as appointed mayor pro-tem the first half of 2025.

## Town Hall will close at 3 p.m. today

La Conner is closing Town Hall at 3 p.m. today, Dec. 18. Town Hall will open at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, its normal hour.

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# A tribute to Ken Stern and his La Conner legacy

Thank you for your dedication to the free press! Best wishes on your well-deserved retirement.

We will miss you.  
*Ashley Sweeney  
D. Michael Barclay*

**Ken,**  
**With admiration and thanks for everything you have accomplished and contributed to the community.**

*Richard and Britt Wisniewski*

Thank you for your great editorials and truth telling. Your gift to La Conner and the community have been amazing and enriched many lives. So sad for the closure.

*Best wishes!  
Skagit Unitarian  
Universalist Fellowship*

"Often, when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else."

*- Fred Rogers (via your La Conner Soroptimists who wish you well!)*

*Aven Wright-McIntosh*

Ken,  
You have been helpful to me with so many of my town projects, thanks. And may your next adventure be as successful as this one.

*All my best,  
Ollie Iverson*

My deepest gratitude to Ken Stern for his monumental gift to our town. His editorials were perceptive and courageous. His endeavor helped bind together networks of community. May we not fail to recreate this in perpetuity. Thank you, Maggie Wilder

## LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SKAGIT COUNTY

Thank you, Ken, for your dedication to local news and for providing the La Conner community with connection, accountability and a shared voice. Your consistent support of the Skagit League of Women Voters activities has been a gift.

*Best wishes in your next endeavors.  
From Wende, Bev, Jane and all the members of Skagit League of Women Voters*

*This is my 85th year as a lifelong Skagit County resident who loves our history. I thank you Ken and crew for continuing La Conner's share of people and happenings county news. I will miss reading of our history in the making. Thank you and best wishes to you.*

*Joyce and Al Sward*

"Thank you for creating a great newspaper for our town. Regrettably, this is like saying goodbye to the last Truffula Tree. We'll miss The Weekly.

Good luck to Ken and wonderful staff!

*Craig and Katryna Barber*

Dear Ken,  
Under your leadership, the LCWN has become the glue that holds our community together. Thank you for your tireless commitment to publishing an award-winning local newspaper since 2017. All the best in your retirement.

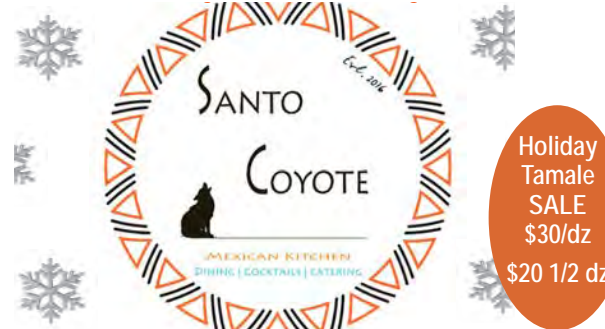
*You've earned it!  
Dave Buchan & Susan Macek*

Ken,  
You have done an excellent job with the La Conner Weekly News. I will miss reading it each week.

Wishing you all the best in the future.

*Anne Svendsen*

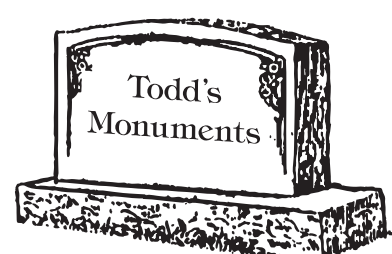
Santo Coyote would like to say a fond farewell to Ken, whose dedication and passion have kept our community informed for so many years. We wish him all the best!



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Congratulations on retirement! Your high journalistic standards leave a great legacy.

*Andrew and Deidre Ashmore*

## DECENCY

*One heartfelt, intelligent editorial after another. "Letters" treated fairly. Not enough thank yous possible. Glasses filled with gratitude (and more) raised high to staff and Ken Stern.*



*Patrick and Dassy Shellenberger*

Honesty. Integrity. Professionalism. All words that describe Ken as a journalist and a person.

Thank you and adieu,

*John and Evelyn Schmidt*

Thanks, Ken, for seven years of creative and responsible journalism. Not an easy task in a small town. You met the challenge and enriched the community dialog and the public's awareness of the public's business. At this point the future of printed news in La Conner is uncertain. But should there be a local paper, the LCWN has set a high, but we hope achievable, standard for small town journalism...in our community as well as across the West. Thanks, my friend. *Bob Raymond*

Ken,

Thank you for the years of keeping us informed as to what had, was, & would be going on in the La Conner area. It will be hard to duplicate your results. We do not know what your future will be but we are certain you will be successful.

The very best! *Allen & Chris Elliott*

Ken, thanks for your valuable, hard work and care for our community. I'm sad.

*Gale Fiege*

Dear Ken, We wanted to thank you all for all you have done for the community of La Conner and the families we serve. We are sad to see you go, but want to wish you the best as you move forward.

Happy Holidays and thanks again,  
*Jeremiah LeSourd  
Connie LeSourd  
Kern Funeral Home and Mount Vernon Cemetery Staff*

Thanks, Ken, for your dedication to the La Conner community and providing honest, factual journalism.

*Jai Boreen*

Thanks, Ken, for your dedication to a vital public service. Your voice will be missed.

*M.J. Craig*

It has been a pleasure working with you and we wish you a happy relaxed retirement.

*Kurt Batdorf & Rhonda Hundertmark*



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## La Conner School Board approves levy for Feb. 2025

By Bill Reynolds

The La Conner School Board on Monday endorsed and approved a four-year replacement levy on the Feb. 11 ballot to bridge the gap between state funding and the cost of staff, materials, services and facilities during a briskly paced 40-minute meeting.

The proposal seeks \$ 4,745,000 starting in 2026, \$1.11 per \$1,000 assessed valuation, the present tax rate.

The levy and contributions from the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community offset a \$1 million shortfall between state funding and rising costs in transportation, special education, utilities, insurance, materials and supplies,

Board President Susie Deyo said.

Deyo noted that district administrators earlier this month joined Skagit County counterparts on a one-hour webinar with area state lawmakers to discuss their fiscal stresses.

Deyo said the webinar produced a positive dialogue.

"It was a good meeting, a very good meeting," Superintendent David Cram reflected. "We received good feedback from the legislators."

Director John Agen, though, lamented that the percentage of state allocations to school budgets has dipped in recent years.

"I continue to be disappointed in our legislators," said Agen, "for not following their mandate to

fully fund public education. And the gap is widening. I hope our legislators will see fit to come to the table with proper funding."

Cram cited a two-and-a-half times increase in district insurance premium payments since 2019 as an example of the district's daunting challenges.

The board unanimously approved its leadership team for 2025. Deyo continues as president. Alana Quintasket will be vice president and Agen is again legislative liaison.

The mood turned upbeat when Cram announced the district's Moody's credit rating has been upgraded from AA to AAA now that the fund balance is above \$1 million, up from \$25,000 a year

ago.

The Dec. 16 meeting opened with special recognition of the high school's state qualifying volleyball and girls' soccer teams. Key donations were recognized: \$10,000 by the Town of La Conner in support of the Braves Hub program, \$3,000 La Conner Rotary Club donation and the La Conner Civic Garden Club's \$700 for wood chips for the elementary school playground.

Olimpia Zuniga's work with the district migrant education program was also applauded.

The board approved a lodging request for the annual senior class spring trip, which is often to southern California.

"We're one of the few schools

to do this," said Deyo. "It's very unique. They earn the money for the trip and work hard for it."

Deyo and Agen reported on the annual Washington State School Directors Association conference in Spokane. Agen summed up a session on Artificial Intelligence, which addressed advantages and areas of concern, calling it insightful.

"AI is going to be here," said Agen. "It's going to be used. How we monitor it will be interesting going forward."

Deyo suggested drafting a policy to fully tap AI for its potential as a student learning resource.

The board will hold a special meeting in January to discuss a contract extension for Cram.

## Braves start league play with strong 72-48 win

By Bill Reynolds

Friday Harbor missed the boat when it came to getting its NW-2B/1B boys' basketball season off to a good start.

In hindsight, the Wolverines would have fared better had they literally missed the boat – their ferry ride from San Juan Island – to face La Conner in the conference opener for both teams at Landy James Gym Friday night.

The home team, behind superb perimeter shooting and relentless full-court defensive pressure, sank Friday Harbor 72-48 in an impressive league debut.

"We played hard," Braves coach Lance Lopez told the Weekly News afterward. "We played a solid team defensive game. For us, everything starts on the defensive end."

Their suffocating defense forced repeated Wolverine turnovers leading to momentum-building transition baskets for the victors.

The Braves, 3-2 overall, drained

12 treys, five by senior forward Corran Eisen, who finished with 23 points.

Brayden Pedroza paced the team with 28 points. The crafty senior guard knocked down a pair of three-pointers. He was also effective off the dribble, often driving into the paint to hit short jumpers or earn trips to the foul stripe.

Tyler Cicotte, another senior, chipped in 11 points, all but two coming from beyond the arc.

Freshman guard Keaton Bailey came off the bench to deliver six points on two three-balls.

Senior point guard C.J. Edwards, who orchestrated the fast-paced attack, added four free throws.

La Conner offset a great effort from Friday Harbor senior guard Pierce Kleine, who led all scorers with 34 points. Kleine tallied 20 of his total after the break.

The Braves bolted to an early 12-2 lead behind a barrage of treys from Eisen, Cicotte and Pedroza. The halftime score was 37-17.



HE SHOOTS, HE SCORES! — La Conner senior guard Brayden Pedroza (15) scored 28 points, leading the Braves to a lopsided 72-48 win over Friday Harbor on Dec. 13. — Photo by Lorena Edwards

With a comfortable lead, Lopez was able to substitute liberally in the second half. All 11 Braves suited for the contest saw playing time. It would have been 12 but junior guard Hadden Zimmerman is sidelined with a knee injury suffered last week.

Developing roster depth early in the season has paid dividends.

"The boys are really starting to come together," Lopez stressed.

La Conner converted 10 of 15 charity tosses. Friday Harbor went seven-of-13 from the stripe.

The La Conner girls' team, meanwhile, had its Dec. 13 home matchup with Friday Harbor post-

poned due to cancellation of the late ferry from the San Juans.

After hosting NW2B/1B rival Orcas Island on Tuesday, La Conner teams host non-conference foe Lakewood tomorrow (Thursday) starting with junior varsity matchups at 4:30 p.m.

The Dec. 19 girls' JV clash is scheduled at the middle school gym. The boys' junior varsity game will be at Landy James Gym.

The La Conner and Lakewood girls' varsity teams tip off at 6 p.m. with the boys' varsity pairing at 7:30. The varsity games will be at Landy James Gym.

## SVC claims volleyball title with help of Sarah Cook

By Bill Reynolds

Skagit Valley College showed foresight when it envisioned Sarah Cook as a rare two-sport athlete coming out of high school.

The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community member and La Conner grad rewarded SVC with a focused 20-20 effort in Skagit's Northwest Athletic Conference volleyball tournament title win over Linn-Benton Community College in Tacoma last month.

Cook, a key member of SVC's women's basketball program, delivered 20 kills and 20 digs to help lead the Lady Cardinals to a gritty five-set championship match victory against the previously unbeaten Oregon team.

The conference tourney victory was the first in Skagit volleyball history. SVC placed second in 1987 and 2019.

The SVC players and coaches were feted Dec. 10 with a celebration on the Mount Vernon campus.

"The team earned the first-ever NWAC volleyball championship through its hard work, commitment to each other and fearless approach," athletic director Mitch Freeman told the media.

Freeman also praised coach Joe Amaral and his staff.

"I'm so happy for their accomplishment," said Freeman, "and proud to witness coach Amaral's continued success in building a championship volleyball program year after year."

Amaral was voted the 2024 NWAC Coach of the Year.

"This," Amaral said, "has been an incredibly memorable season and it has been a true privilege to coach this exceptional team."

"We take great pride," he added, "in achieving an historic milestone – securing the first-ever championship in SVC volleyball program history."

In Cook's case, the championship run had a familiar ring. She was a force for La Conner High School when it captured multiple state 2B volleyball crowns under since-retired Hall of Fame coach Suzanne Marble.

Amaral has referred to Cook, an outside hitter who often played all six rotations, as a "gamechanger."

"Any given match," he said, "she can take over on offense or defense and sometimes both."

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## Holiday gifts for gardens

By Kari Ranten  
Skagit County WSU Extension Master Gardener

The holidays provide an opportunity to lift your favorite gardener's spirits with the gift of a gardening book – or two. There are a wide variety of volumes filled with beautiful images and educational content to help gardeners learn something new and provide inspiration for the seasons to come.

For the gardener with a passion for a specific plant family, publications are available focused on individual species, from pansies to succulents and dahlias to peonies. Still more provide guides beyond the plants to include insects, pollinators, birds, animals and other creatures important to northwest ecosystems.

Here are a few ideas to begin a search for the perfect holiday gift for a gardener near you. Check out your favorite retailer for more titles and information.

A local author: Erin Benzakein, founder of Floret Farms in Skagit Valley, has written and co-authored several books about grow-



ing and displaying flowers. Each offers inspiration and tips for growing, harvesting and arranging popular summer blooms.

A classic: "The New Sunset Western Garden Book: The Ultimate Gardening Guide" (2012, 9th edition) is a staple for beginning and experienced gardeners, offering details and tips for selecting, planting and caring for a wide range of perennials, annuals, shrubs and trees specific to each climate zone.

For the vegetable gardener: "The Timber Press Guide to Vegetable Gardening in the Pacific Northwest" (2013) by Lorene Edwards Forkner is specifically directed at those growing food crops in the Pacific Northwest. Winter is an important time for vegetable gardening enthusiasts to plan for the next season.

A coffee table option: "Private Gardens of the Pacific Northwest" (2021) by Brian Coleman shares detailed descriptions and extensive photography by William Wright to provide a glimpse of 20 private estate and residential gardens that showcase the abundance and artistic potential of the northwest landscape.

For the gardener with limited space: DK's "Grow All you Can Eat in 3 Square Feet: Inventive Ideas for Growing Food in a

Small Space" (2015) is helpful for the new or experienced gardener with limited deck, patio, or garden space.

For the littlest ones: Check out "Hello, World! Garden Time: A Book of Plants and Gardening for Kids" (2022) by Jill McDonald. This colorful board book provides a great introduction to how plants grow and the role of gardening in providing food.

For children ages 5 to 8: Another volume from DK titled "Let's Get Gardening" (2020) details 30 gardening projects to work on with young children. Step-by-step instructions include how to grow vegetables, create a ladybug sanctuary and attract pollinators.

This is just a sampling of the many titles that await in bookstores and online to engage the gardener in your life regardless of their age and interests. There is, literally, something for every gardener to get them through the quiet of winter and inspired for the possibilities of future seasons.

For a complete list and descriptions of books for gardeners on your list: [skagitmg.org/gift-ideas-24](http://skagitmg.org/gift-ideas-24).

Kari Ranten is a retired journalist and health care communicator who became a certified Skagit County WSU Extension Master Gardener in 2024.



## Belted kingfisher

The kingfisher is a year-round resident in this area, but often difficult to photograph. They are shy than other birds and fly away with a loud voice to announce their dislike of being disturbed. You can see them on perches over saltwater shorelines and lakes where they detect small fish and dive down head first to catch them.

During nesting time, they create burrows in sand banks that are several feet deep. The kingfisher is one of the few species where females are more colorful than males, with a rufous band across

the lower chest. We enjoy seeing and hearing them and sometimes have to hide behind a tree to take a picture, as I did with this one at the Hope Island Beach.

I hope you enjoyed my small educational articles and photos over the years. I started with "Bird Bytes" when Cindy and Sandy owned the paper. I then followed this tradition in Ken's paper and enjoyed working with him.

I wish him all the best for his retirement! I enjoyed working with him and will miss him!

Text and photo by Rosi Jansen

### A&E BRIEFS

Theater Arts Guild presents "The Secret Garden, the Musical" with performances on Dec. 19-21 at the Lincoln Theatre 712 S. First St., Mount Vernon. Advance reserved seating tickets: \$34 1st section; \$32 2nd section; \$26 3rd section; \$20 4th section plus applicable fees. Discount night Dec. 12: \$20 all seats plus applicable fees. Tickets online at [lincoltheatre.org/live-theatre-secret-garden-musical](http://lincoltheatre.org/live-theatre-secret-garden-musical).

Skagit Symphony presents "Timeless Elements, The Composer is Dead," a family concert and children's music fair, on Sunday, Jan. 26, in McIntyre Hall, Mount Vernon. From the darkly comic minds of composer Nathaniel Stookey (not dead) and writer Lemony Snicket (also, not dead) comes this murder mystery for narrator and orchestra. The children's music fair begins at 1 p.m. and will feature hands-on musical crafts and an up-close

look at stringed instruments for kids to try. Meet the musicians and their instruments in the lobby before the family concert at 2 p.m. Tickets: adults \$15, children

\$5, available at [purchase.mcintyrehall.org/ChooseSeats/1202](http://purchase.mcintyrehall.org/ChooseSeats/1202) or 360-416-7727. Concert info: [www.skagitsymphony.com/the-composer-is-dead](http://www.skagitsymphony.com/the-composer-is-dead).

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# Stern retires

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

the building of a new La Conner library. That went beyond extensive coverage and several editorials to a significant financial contribution.

Stern also took deep dives into La Conner town finances, regularly providing budget reports on the paper's front page. He occasionally took issue with fiscal policy at Town Hall.

"The town, even through COVID-19, has enjoyed ongoing healthy revenues," said Stern. "So, I don't understand the continued conservative estimates around revenue."

Not every story was serious in tone, however.

A favorite was his page one April 1, 2021 satire reporting Gov. Jay Inslee's plans to relocate government offices from Olympia to La Conner. He was sur-

prised when some readers took the account seriously.

Stern minored in journalism at Antioch College but pursued other career paths after earning a master's degree from Michigan State University. He sought a full-time return to the newspaper world – and with it an opportunity to regularly advocate for democracy – while in his 60s. Longtime friend Dick Wittenberg made it happen.

"I met Dick in 1974 in Toledo, Ohio, when I was finishing my first year of college," Stern reflected. "He was running for re-election as a state representative and I worked on his campaign."

In the summer of 2016, Wittenberg called Stern and asked if he had read an article in the New York Times about a Vermont publisher who was running an essay contest to choose a new owner of his paper.

"He said, 'I bet you can

win that newspaper,'" Stern said. "He believed in me."

Stern didn't land the Hardwick Gazette but he was emboldened to sell his Ohio home and buy the Weekly News.

"I'm in La Conner," Stern said, "because of my friend Dick Wittenberg. This is a love story at its origins"

Stern said that during his tenure here he has benefited from a staff dedicated to reporting local stories and producing an award-winning publication. He praised them all for their commitment to the hard work of putting out a quality paper 52 weeks a year.

"The paper is as good as it is because of the staff," he stressed.

Stern had announced an ambitious agenda in his July 12, 2017, editorial.

"Owning a newspaper is a cross between real estate agent boosterism and hardboiled detective

cynicism," he wrote. "You love the community and want it to succeed, but for the common good you have to find out where the bodies are buried. In other words, the good is lifted up and encouraged and you speak truth to power against the bad, shining a light on wrong. Communities have a wide mixture of people making good and poor choices."

Stern stayed true to his calling, achieving all he set out to do.

"I'm completely satisfied with everything I've accomplished," he said. "I don't have to cover one more parade, one more council meeting, write one more editorial, or take one more photograph."

Stern may not miss those assignments, staples of weekly news coverage. But his unique perspectives and insights, crafted over 389 straight issues, will indeed be missed.

# Weekly News

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

left him frustrated.

"That might be a fair price to someone, but not me," Stern said. "That's what I paid for the paper in 2017. Factor in inflation since then and that price would be \$162,000."

Monday afternoon, Stern sent the Community News board a proposal, with a sales price below \$200,000 and performance term payments metered out over five years.

Tuesday morning Ashmore called Stern. They discussed a schedule for negotiating terms, payments and publishing in January. Talks will continue next week.

"Nobody wants to read a newspaper in La Conner next year more than me," Stern said. "I want to

reach a sales agreement with the community group, but I am going to sell at a price that recognizes the value of the business and is fair to me."

That deal seems possible for the first time since Stern put the paper up for sale in the summer of 2022. Still, the Dec. 18 issue is Stern's last. It is a summary and farewell after seven-and-a-half years and 389 editions.

Many in the community find the Weekly News a much better paper today than in 2017. Unlike many other newspapers that struggle to maintain income, Stern doubled the Weekly News' advertising revenue and gained new subscribers. Stern and his staff have won several dozen awards in annual WNPA statewide competitions though the years.

Hiatt read about the

pending closure of the Weekly News and first met with Stern last summer. Now she's encouraging a deal for Stern to stay through March 2025 while La Conner Community News continues to raise funds to buy the paper.

Christmas and New Year's Day both fall on the paper's Wednesday publication dates. The paper's qualification to publish legal notices, a significant revenue stream, is an issue if the paper is not published. Both sides aim to prevent that.

"There will not be an edition next week," Stern said. "I am going to a hot springs for a few days to soak and relax. I'm hoping for the best for everybody for 2025."

One other possibility: Stern's lawyer has sent a purchase proposal to

Adams Publishing Group, owners of the Skagit Valley Herald. He is waiting for a response.

Ashmore said La Conner Community News is "absolutely committed to be a local news source for La Conner." The group's preference is to buy the Weekly News in order to maintain publishing continuity and its substantial legal notices revenue.

If that doesn't work out, Kari Mar has offered the group her services as publisher, Ashmore said. Mar comes from a newspaper background. She worked at the Bellingham Herald and Seattle Times covering Native American tribes and local news.

What form a successor to the Weekly News would take is under consideration, Ashmore said.

# Boat parade

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

the waterfront at the start and end.

"I bet they're asking, 'Are we part of this?'" one woman said of an undecorated boat that stealthily slipped by.

There was little doubt, however, when it came to the core group of pleasure craft that donned flashing lights, inflatable holiday characters such as Frosty the Snowman and played amplified Christmas music.

Children gathered near The Waterfront Café enjoyed counting down in

unison, "3, 2, 1...Merry Christmas!" as the boats passed by. Each time they were rewarded with hearty responses from those onboard.

"Thanks for coming out!" a parade participant shouted.

"Look at the next one!" an excited youth exclaimed at one point. "Wow! Look at all the inflatables."

His glee was much appreciated.

Group Christmas caroling on the boardwalk further added to the holiday atmosphere, as did several Santa sightings.

The one-and-only Santa Claus, just returned from

his busy visit to La Conner the weekend before, managed to hitch rides – at least in inflatable form – on various parade vessels. His reindeer were believed to be resting under cover of nightfall on a nearby farm, gathering strength for their upcoming Christmas Eve round-the-world flight.

Folks of all ages celebrated the parade. Parents held little ones up to see the procession. Grandparents strolled the boardwalk, some guiding their leashed pooches.

It was in all respects a family affair.

"It's great to see so many people in town," said

Hanneman, drawing a contrast to the relatively sparse turnout a year ago when a driving rainstorm limited parade attendance.

Swinomish Yacht Club members were appreciative as well.

"We want to thank everyone from the Shelter Bay Yacht Club, La Conner Yacht Club or as an individual who participated in our parade," the SYC said in a social media post afterward. "We also want to thank everyone who watched from land. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did."

By all accounts, they did.

# South end

■ ■ ■ (from page 3)

the public hazard aspect but leave unresolved the under-utilized state of the property.

The Beckwith team, guided in large measure by input received from a public survey, has drafted design concepts for future land uses in the area based on anticipated zoning and municipal code modifications.

Development opportunities for the area suggested by the Beckwith consultants last Wednesday included but weren't limited to affordable workforce housing, produce sales, performing and fine arts venues, marine-related services, craft studios, a farmer's market, festival space, historical interpretive exhibits, group picnic areas, a hill climb from South Third to Douglas Street and an interior pedestrian path from Third to First Street.

The plan incorporates a Town concept calling for extension of First Street to Caledonia past the concrete block Moore-Clark freezer building and the aging warehouse, which

stands partially on the public right-of-way.

Several participants, including Dave Buchan, had attended an initial Sept. 30 workshop, allowing them to offer informed comments and ask specific questions of the evening's presenters.

Buchan, for instance, noted that if south end revitalization were a phased development, it could provide time to plan for long-term flood mitigation in the area.

Madeleine Roozen stressed the importance of working with south end stakeholders such as the Upper Skagit Tribe, which owns the former Puget Sound Freight Lines building at South Third and Sherman streets.

"We have reached out to Upper Skagit, Swinomish, the Port of Skagit and

Skagit County," assured Assistant Planner Ajah Eills.

"We'd be looking at changing the zoning from commercial transitional in the sub-area," Eills answered in response to Bob Raymond's question regarding what planning and code decisions would drive south end redevelopment.

Beckwith, terming the planning a "work in progress," said his team anticipates completing a

draft document for review within a few weeks. He said that specifics related to traffic, parking and flood protection would be addressed in a planned action SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) process allowing preapproval of projects conforming with the south end plan.

He said his team most recently has been engaged in financing and implementation strategies for the area's revitalization.

# LEGAL NOTICES

## TOWN OF LA CONNER NOTICE OF SUMMARY ORDINANCE

Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of La Conner, Washington, passed Ordinance No. 1252 at the December 10, 2024 Town Council meeting. A summary of Ordinance No. 1252 is as follows:

An Ordinance amending the 2024 Budget.

Complete copies of Ordinance No. 1252 are available at La Conner Town Hall, P.O. Box 400, La Conner, WA 98257

Dated this 11th Day of December, 2024.

/s/ Maria DeGoede, Town Clerk

Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Dec. 18, 2024.

## TOWN OF LA CONNER NOTICE OF SUMMARY ORDINANCE

Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of La Conner, Washington, passed Ordinance No. 1253 at the December 10, 2024 Town Council meeting. A summary of Ordinance No. 1253 is as follows:

An Ordinance establishing the 2025 Budget.

Complete copies of Ordinance No. 1253 are available at La Conner Town Hall, P.O. Box 400, La Conner, WA 98257

Dated this 11th Day of December, 2024.

/s/ Maria DeGoede, Town Clerk

Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Dec. 18, 2024.

## SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY ESTATE OF RUTH ELLEN PRATER, DECEASED. NO. 24-4-00561-29 PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS (RCW 11.40.030) PLEASE TAKE NOTICE

The above Court has appointed me as Personal Representative of Decedent's estate. Any person having a claim against the Decedent must present the claim: (a) Before the time when the claim would be barred by any applicable statute of limitations, and (b) In the manner provided in RCW 11.40.070: (i) By filing the original of the claim with the foregoing Court, and (ii) By serving on or mailing to me at the address below a copy of the claim. The claim must be presented by the later of: (a) Thirty (30) days after I served or mailed this Notice as provided in RCW 11.40.020(1)(c), or (b) Four (4) months after the date of first publication of this Notice. If the claim is not presented within

this time period, the claim will be forever barred except as provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective for claims against both the Decedent's probate and non-probate assets.

Date of First Publication of this Notice: December 4, 2024

/s/ Gwendolyn M. Prater Dalseg, Personal Representative c/o Jayne Marsh Gilbert, WSBA #24656

Attorney for Personal Representative 314 Pine St, Ste 211, Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Dec. 4, 11, and 18, 2024.

## STATE OF WASHINGTON CLARK COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: PATRICIA A. BROOKS, DECEASED. NO: 24-4-01311-06 NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The Estate Administrator named below has been appointed as Estate Administrator 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 Estate Administrator or the Estate Administrator'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 Estate Administrator 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: December 4, 2024

Estate Administrator: RICHARD D. BROOKS

Attorney for Estate Administrator: NICHOLAS ALEXANDER

Address for mailing or service: c/o Vancouver Wills and Trusts 405 W 13th Street Vancouver, WA 98660

Court of probate proceedings and cause number: CLARK COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT, CAUSE NO. 24-4-01311-06

Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Dec. 4, 11, and 18, 2024.

# AT YOUR SERVICE DIRECTORY



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www.portofskagit.com

# Super Crossword

## Answers

S	A	M	B	A	B	O	R	E	D	O	M	S	O	L	A	R	A	S	
A	R	I	A	S	E	V	A	S	I	V	E	T	R	I	C	O	R	N	
Y	U	R	I	S	E	L	E	C	T	I	O	N	E	S	T	O	N	I	A
S	T	A	T	E	L	I	N	E	A	C	E	E	L	D	E	R			
R	E	C	I	T	E	D	P	I	T	I	E	D	V	A	T				
A	N	A	S	I	S	H	A	N	T	I	E	D	C	A	T	E	R	T	O
Y	O	N	H	A	N	C	O	C	K	S	A	R	I	O	R	B			
E	L	S	B	E	A	U	T	O	H	E	N	R	Y	F	L	U	E		
D	A	T	A	L	O	S	S	A	M	I	N	O	R	A	L	L	E	Y	
W	E	B	E	R	I	C	E	A	G	E	T	A	R	L	E	T	O	N	
A	G	U	A	G	R	A	T	I	A	W	I	L	C	O	R	I	O		
W	A	R	S	O	O	T	Y	E	L	L	O	W	M	O	L	D			
A	D	J	O	U	R	N	B	A	R	O	N	Y	E	P	E	E			
T	H	E	A	V	E	R	A	G	E	Y	O	H	O	L	E	S			
H	O	R	N	E	I	R	C	A	N	N	E	R	I	E	S				
A	N	A	G	R	A	M	Y	A	K	O	F	D	I	A	M	O	N	D	S
R	O	S	E	T	T	E	E	V	I	L	O	N	E	S	O	R	E	N	
P	R	E	S	S	E	S	D	E	T	E	S	T	S	O	M	E	N	S	

## Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Complete Events Calendar on [laconnerweeklynews.com](http://laconnerweeklynews.com)

## LIBRARIES

**La Conner Swinomish Library.** 520 Morris St., La Conner. 360-466-3352. [www.laconnerswinomishlibrary.org/](http://www.laconnerswinomishlibrary.org/) events. Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays. 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. Closed Sundays.

- Storytime for Children, 11 a.m. Fridays.
- Tech Help Mondays, 3-5 p.m. Get 30 minutes of one-on-one technical help. Must register.
- After-school LEGO club, ages 5 and up, 3-4 p.m., second Fridays monthly.

**Mount Vernon Public Library.** 208 W. Kincaid St., Mount Vernon. 360-336-6209, [mountvernonwa.gov/175/Library](http://mountvernonwa.gov/175/Library).

- Virtual Storytime to Go: 9 a.m. Saturdays.
- Virtual Bilingual Storytime: 9 a.m. Sundays.

**Anacortes Public Library.** 1220 10th St., Anacortes. 360-299-8067, [cityofanacortes.org](http://cityofanacortes.org).

- LEGO at the Library, 3:30-5:30 p.m. Mondays.
- Teen Creative Writing, 2-3 p.m. Wednesdays.

**Burlington Public Library.** 820 E. Washington Ave., Burlington. 360-755-0760, [burlingtonwa.gov/library](http://burlingtonwa.gov/library).

- Bilingual Storytime, 10:30-

11:30 a.m. Fridays. Ages 6 and under with caregivers.

- Wednesdays of Wonder, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Wednesdays. Arts and crafts for children.

## MUSEUMS

**Museum of Northwest Art.** 121 S. First St., La Conner. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday and Monday. [monamuseum.org](http://monamuseum.org), 360-466-4446. Exhibits through Jan. 12:

- Peter Millett: Built Forms is the first major institutional survey of the Seattle artist's work.
- At the Seam: MoNA's Permanent Collection is an engagement with the collection.
- Outside In Gallery, Creative Response to Trauma: A Community Response. See art and writing from trauma survivors.

**Skagit County Historical Museum.** 360-466-3365 or [skagitcounty.net/museum](http://skagitcounty.net/museum). Hours 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursday-Sunday. Current exhibit through March 2:

- "Wick Peth: The Original Rodeo Bullfighter" and the History of Rodeo in Skagit County."

**Pacific Northwest Quilt & Fiber Arts Museum.** 703 S. Second St., La Conner. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday. [qfamuseum.org](http://qfamuseum.org), 360-466-4288. Current exhibit through Dec. 22:

- 2024 International Quilt & Fiber Art Festival Winners.

## MUSIC

**Ukelele Fun & Song Circle.** 1-2 p.m. Wednesdays, Burlington Senior Center. Info, email [yogaheartspace0@gmail.com](mailto:yogaheartspace0@gmail.com).

**Shelter Bay Chorus.** Meets 4:30-6:30 p.m. Thursdays, Shelter Bay Clubhouse. No auditions. Call Joan at 360-941-7507.

## SERVICE & VOLUNTEER

**Swinomish Helping Hands Food Bank.** Food distribution 2-5 p.m. Thursdays, nonessentials every first Thursday. 17444 Snee Oosh Road, La Conner. 360-856-2211. [helpinghandsfoodbank.org](http://helpinghandsfoodbank.org).

**La Conner Sunrise Food Bank.** Food distribution 2:30-5 p.m. Mondays, 602 S. Third St., La Conner. 360-488-3878. [laconnerfoodbank.com](http://laconnerfoodbank.com).

**Skagit Valley Humane Society.** 18841 Kelleher Road, Burlington. 360-757-0445. Volunteer and donate at [skagithumane.org](http://skagithumane.org).

## MEETINGS

**Little Mountain Gamblers Anonymous.** Meets at 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays at Mount Vernon Senior Center, 1401 Cleveland Ave.

**Town of La Conner Council Meeting.** 6 p.m. second and fourth Tuesdays at Upper Maple

Center. [www.townoflaconner.org](http://www.townoflaconner.org).

**Restful Dementia Relief Sessions,** 11 a.m. Mondays at La Conner United Methodist Church, 601 S. Second St. This is a therapeutic group for relaxation, cognitive improvement and joy. Free-will offering. Caregivers, please accompany those with dementia. Info: 206-939-2124.

**La Conner Thrives Association** is a new public group that focuses on tourism, 8:15 a.m. Mondays, 503 Morris St., La Conner. Info: Gina Torpey, 360-228-8021 or 925-487-1848.

**Skagit Men's Garden Club.** All are welcome, 6-8 p.m. first Thursdays at Christianson's Nursery, 15806 Best Road, Mount Vernon. SMGC promotes interest in recreational gardening.

**Skagit Cemetery District 1.** Meets 5 p.m. second Thursdays at Lori Buher's home, 17604 Valentine Road, Mount Vernon.

**Rotary Club of La Conner.** [laconnerrotary.org](http://laconnerrotary.org). 6-7 p.m. Mondays at Shawn O'Donnell's Restaurant.

**Skagit Conservation District.** Monthly board meeting at 7:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 18, at 2021 E. College Way, Suite 205, Mount Vernon. 360-428-4313. Public is welcome.



By Patricia Aqimuk Paul, Esq., Food Editor

## Brussels Sprouts with Lemon and Cranberry Sauce



This recipe begins with a homemade cranberry sauce, prepared in advance.

You will find me at home cooking fresh meals each day. You can reach me at [patriciapauljd@msn.com](mailto:patriciapauljd@msn.com).

### Ingredients

- Fresh cranberries, 2 cups
- Crushed pineapple, 1 cup
- Sugar, 1 cup
- Water, 1 cup
- Olive oil, 2 table-spoons
- Brussel sprouts, 8 or 10, halved
- Lemon, 1, quartered

pop open. Cook on low for 30 minutes. Prepare the Brussels sprouts. Remove from stem, cutting close to sprout. Cut in half. Add olive oil to sauté pan over medium-low heat. Add Brussels sprouts. Stir with wooden spoon, as they lightly brown. Add lemon quarters. Continue to cook, reducing heat to low. The lemons will brown slightly. Add 1/2 cup of cranberry sauce. Add more, to your taste. Cover and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. You want to pierce the Brussels sprouts with a fork and they must not be mushy.

### Preparation

The cranberry sauce is not to be rushed, to avoid scorching. Add cranberries to a medium saucepan. Add water, crushed pineapple and sugar. Stir often with wooden spoon. Push down on cranberries and they

# Super Crossword

## CLEAR COMMUNICATION

<b>ACROSS</b>	<b>DOWN</b>	<b>ACROSS</b>	<b>DOWN</b>	<b>ACROSS</b>	<b>DOWN</b>
1 NATO has a special one for spelling out words over the radio	57 Dot on some transit maps	108 Very thin material for book pages	5 Le Duc — (1992-97 president of Vietnam)	49 French noble	90 Hat edge
9 Architectural wings	59 Gave a coil	113 Steelers' gp.	6 Nectar lover	50 Rule for homework time, perhaps	91 Italian peak
13 Provo people	60 Suffer ruin	115 Mu — pork	7 Sailors' saint	52 Operated by water under pressure	92 African nation whose capital is Lomé
20 In a lying, faceup position	62 Admonish	117 Normandy city	8 Knotting up	53 Brand of fat substitute	94 Lava or Dial
21 Sticky stuff	65 "Hello" singer	118 Doctrine	9 Ovum	54 Ignited anew	96 NFL scores
22 Kind of energy	66 Cast off skin	120 Internet ID	10 Actor Rob	55 Blissful sites	99 Stymied
23 Moniker for novelist Ernest	68 1992 Guns N' Roses hit	122 Symbol of innocence	11 Averse (to)	58 Bakery buys	100 Sticky stuff
25 Dig up	70 Extermination target	126 One revising something	12 Whale's half-rise out of the water	61 Hoagie	102 Some small batteries
26 Apt. overseer	73 Civil rights icon Parks	129 Portrayer of Jax Teller on "Sons of Anarchy"	13 Island guitar	63 Coll. in Dallas	104 Japanese green tea
27 Yoko of music and art	76 Hoagies	133 Act as arbiter	14 "Sn" element	64 Wanes	108 "Veni," translated
28 Singer Waters	77 Extermination targets	134 Symbol of innocence	15 Suffix with prop-	67 Football's Flutie	109 Monikers
30 Puente of mambo	78 Method of measuring ocean depth	135 Brazil's largest city	16 Shrubland	69 Hollywood's Morales	110 Skillful feats
31 Road coater	83 Boy actor in 1937's "Elephant Boy"	136 Soul	17 Sunny lobbies	70 Praline bit	111 Navel type
34 Weed B- —	85 Raccoon kin	137 Amply skilled	18 Mafia's Frank	71 Cut-rate, in adspeak	112 Fixed-up building
36 Marriott, e.g.	86 Alluring attributes	138 Apt word spelled out by the first letters of eight answers in this puzzle	19 "Danke —"	72 Thick carpets	114 Brittle
39 Doesn't lack	89 "No doubt!"		24 Around 12 p.m.	74 Show filmed at 30 Rock	116 Arm bones
42 Often-dried fruit	93 Trig topics		29 Greek H's	75 Hebrew month	119 Like giraffes
44 Diarist Anaïs	95 Dependent		32 In a new way	79 Daytime nap	121 Emmy winner Remini
46 "Caveman diet"	97 — -ground missile		33 Backboard attachment	80 "How — Your Mother"	123 "Sometimes you feel like —"
47 Messy roommate on "The Odd Couple"	98 Barely beats		35 Sentra maker	81 Pitcher Ryan	124 African nation whose capital is Bamako
51 Dune locale	101 Doing certain ballroom moves		37 Grasslands	82 African nation whose capital is Conakry	125 Coll. hotshot
56 Chicago hub	103 Spanish bar appetizers		38 Actor sharing top billing	84 Boil briefly	127 Football's Marino
	105 Born, to Luc		39 Backboard attachment	87 Very angry	128 Lister's abbr.
	106 Plant pouch		40 Tennis' Arthur	88 — -Caps	130 Caviar source
	107 — Zedong		41 Injury vestige		131 "Yoo- —!"
			43 Yak it up		132 1995-2006 TV channel
			45 "That's false!"		
			48 Pupil of Plato		

## CLASSIFIEDS

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

**EXPERIENCED, QUALITY, TRUSTWORTHY HOUSE-CLEANING.** Hi, my name is Matt. I'm doing housecleaning jobs in La Conner and west Mount Vernon again. References available. \$26.00/hour. 360-941-4716

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## FIND PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PAGE 8

## Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦**

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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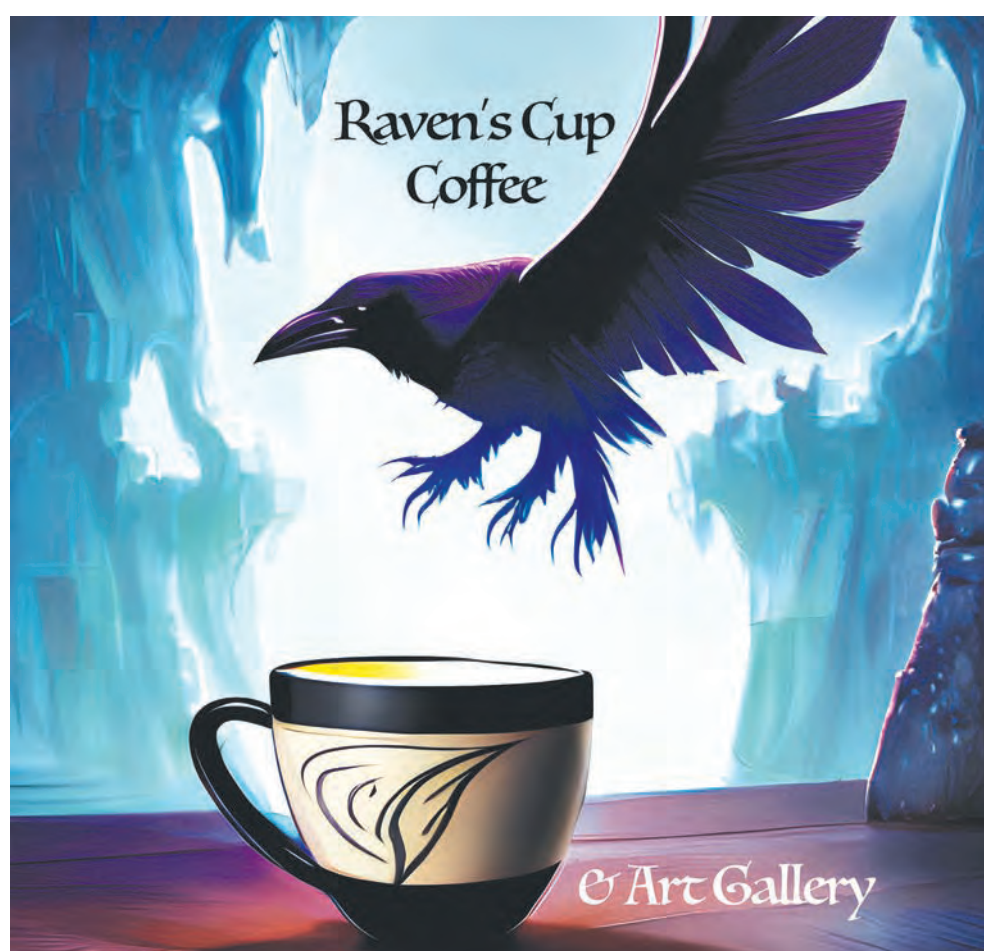


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## Last-minute caw-liday shopping?

Visit Raven's Cup for unique gifts!

- Queen Elizabeth II's teapot! We stole it ourselves!\*
  - Other fancy-schmancy coffee & tea stuff!
  - Stuffed alpaca animals – they're so fluffy!!!!
  - Coffee mugs for everyone!
  - Scented and decorative candles! Candle accessories!
  - High-quality locally handmade handbags!
  - See our game section! Board and card games! Carved cribbage boards! Genuine stone, and metal, dice for DND!
  - Artistic earrings! Wallets! Genuine pysanky eggs!
- MORE!

\* OK, we're the local distributor for the manufacturer.

## DID WE MENTION LOCAL ART?

Fill up that empty wall with art! Originals! High-quality reproductions! Prints! Greeting cards! Magnets!

### Ken - Later, dude! - The Bigfoot Lebowski

2nd anniversary clearance sale!  
Up to 45% off, on a bunch of stuff!

**Only till Jan. 6**



Visit our sasquatch corner, for all your sasquatch needs.

 PENDING	 SOLD	 SOLD
 SOLD	 SOLD	 SOLD
 SOLD	 SOLD	 SOLD
 SOLD	 SOLD	 SOLD
 SOLD	 SOLD	 SOLD

Happy Holidays

From Your La Conner Real Estate Specialists!  
Thank you La Conner Weekly News for your service.



Rebecca Chamberlain®  
360.421.5021

Renee Westlund®  
360.610.3861

# 2024 LA CONNER SALES

