



Rotary Club auction honors town mayor • p 3  
Anne Waldron's scrapbook collection • p 5

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# LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

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## Labor Day, in the fields



EVERY DAY IS LABOR DAY FOR FARM WORKERS — This crew was preparing leeks for transplanting in a Ralph's Greenhouse field earlier this summer. Since Ralph's Greenhouse grows leeks about 10 months out of the year these workers have steady employment year around. Editorial, page 2. — Photo by Craig Barber

## Tulip Valley Farms sued by Skagit County

By Ken Stern

Tulip Valley Farms proprietor Andrew Miller is back in Skagit County Superior Court, this time with farmer Larry Jensen, sued by Skagit County for Miller's development on Jensen's Bradshaw Road property last fall. The Aug. 8 lawsuit states that developments took place without "obtaining a single permit or necessary developmental review as required by state law and the Skagit County Code."

The County asks the court to confirm the violations are a public nuisance, to permanently enjoin them and order Jensen and Miller to abate them.

When Tulip Valley Farms created its operations last fall on the property, the lawsuit alleges it "unlawfully converted approximately eight acres of agricultural land. This includes the erection of a large electronic advertising sign and supporting structure constructed from multiple shipping containers stacked on each other—the lower containers having been structurally modified and used for retail sales to the public. This development also includes the creation of access to a county road, driveways, parking lot [and] public gathering areas."

Violations listed in the complaint include failure to obtain required building permits, floodplain development permits, environmental review under the State Environmental Protection Act and the County's Critical Areas Ordinance, a special use permit for a temporary event and a county road access permit.

The complaint states 51 "relevant facts" against the defendants, including "the defendants did not develop the property in a way to minimize impacts to agricultural activities;" that "prior to 2023, the parcel was used exclusively for agriculture," that in March County staff "posted a Stop Work Order at the Property, directing Jensen and his invitees to cease and desist from further construction activity; and "the Stop Work Order was not appealed within 14 days."

The summons against Jensen and Miller were submitted to the court Aug. 8 and required a response within 20 days of being served. Otherwise, "a default judgment may be entered against you without notice" each states.

Neither Jensen nor Miller had filed a response by Aug. 29, according to court documents.

While the company's website states, "Get all the latest information on the tulips, bulbs, events and happenings at Tulip Valley Farms by signing up for our newsletter," nothing about the lawsuit is listed. A Google search returns a red bar with the words "Tulip Valley Farms is temporarily closed."

## Agritourism stakeholders to county: slow down, step back and try again

By Anne Basye

An ad hoc Agritourism Stakeholder Working Group created in July has submitted agritourism policy concepts to the Skagit County Planning Commissioners. The group's goal is to help the county shape code that lets large and small farmers and venue operators thrive.

The group was formed after the Planning Commission's July 25 public hearing on agritourism zoning recommendations made by the county's Agricultural Advisory Board. Those recommendations proposed changing the definition of "agritourism" to exclude "celebratory gatherings, weddings, parties or similar uses that cause the property to act as an event center or that take place in structures specifically designed for such events."

As well, the number of events permitted under the "Temporary Events" classification would be reduced from 24 to 12 calendar days per year. Such a reduction "means no one could be legally permitted to participate in the 30-day Tulip Festival," Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland Executive Director Allen Rozema told this reporter.

The first of the 52 people who commented during the July 25 hearing endorsed the AAB's recommendations. "Non-agricultural activities such as weddings, concerts and meetings

**"Farmers lose operational hours to individual requests by neighbors to not spray when they are home, or they choose to skip an area of a field when digging spuds because the dust could ruin the neighbor's barbeque."**

Angela Hayton, Hayton Farms

are going to interfere with the right to farm," said AAB member Randy Good of Sedro-Woolley. "If these venues are allowed, agriculture in Skagit County as we know it today will be gone forever."

Those were fighting words for supporters of Save Skagit Venues, founded by Christianson's Nursery, Maplehurst Farms in south Mount Vernon and the Salt Box on Fir Island Road.

Fir Island wedding planner Lacey Larsen estimated that event venues and related florists, caterers, makeup artists and equipment rental companies bring in 18.9 to 31.5 million dollars annually. "This is a luxury industry," she concluded. "People want to spend money on it." Other speakers pointed out that it's an industry that county coffers cannot do without.

Small and large farmers spoke to the need for supplemental income sources. Larry Jensen from Produce Lane noted that agritourism should be looked at "from a perspective of how do we keep people farming." Otherwise, he warned, small and large farms "will become estates for rich people who are coming out of Seattle who don't need to work."

Angela Hayton of Hayton Farms said venues on Fir Island don't interfere with land she and her dad farm. But Mikala Staples Hughes of the neighboring Hughes Family Farm addressed the complexities of big farmers working 40- and 50-acre parcels rented from 20 or more landowners.

"Farmers lose operational hours to individual requests by neighbors to not spray when they are home, or they choose to skip an area of a field when digging spuds because the dust could ruin the neighbor's barbeque," she said. "Or maybe they have to skip a pole with a big gun when they're irrigating because vendors are setting up chairs at the neighboring wedding venue. These challenges are paired with the already complicated nature of farming as we are at the mercy of wind, rain and crop maturity."

John Christianson of Christianson's

(continued on page 2)

## Holiday Closings

Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 4

Bank: Closed

Bus: Regular service

Library: Closed

Post Office: Closed

Schools: Closed

Town Hall: Closed

County gov't offices: Closed

Trash Pick Up: Normal day

*In union we are strong!*

Back in the Day –

## Tom Robbins' lost 1974 high school commencement address

By Fred Obee

When I was the editor of the newspaper in Oak Harbor nearly 40 years ago, I was given a copy of a commencement address by author Tom Robbins that was delivered to a handful of graduates at the Off Campus School in Oak Harbor on June 7, 1974. The Off Campus School was an alternative for students who previously dropped out of regular high school. Press reports called the program "hotly controversial."

I tucked the speech away back then and recently found it in my files. I wondered how Robbins came to be on Whidbey Island that night. The Off Campus School commencement was a very small event — graduates numbered just 20. And at the time, Robbins was already well-known. His 1971 book, "Another Roadside Attraction," which described the discovery of the mummified body of

Jesus Christ at a highway zoo and hot dog stand, was a best seller and his second, "Even Cowgirls get the Blues," was in the works. And Oak Harbor was and still is a generally conservative community shaped by the naval air station on its doorstep and the Dutch Reformed Church to which many of its original settlers belonged.

So, Robbins was an unlikely person at an unlikely event, but nonetheless, there he was, in the flesh, talking to graduates who didn't fit in at regular school. Robbins took to the podium at the Surf and Sands Country Club on that night in 1974 and began:

"I am often asked whether there is life after death. Certainly, there is. There is also death after life and life before death and death after life. It goes on forever. There's no stopping it. You will live forever and die forever. In fact, you already have."

"As for heaven and hell, they are right

here on Earth and it is up to each of you in which one you choose to reside. To put it simply, heaven is living in your hopes and hell is living in your fears.

"One problem with the notion of Heaven and Hell," Robbins continued, "is that although they are exact opposites, an astonishing number of people seem to be confused about which is which. For example, all over the United States on this very evening, commencement speakers are standing before audiences not greatly unlike yourselves describing hell as if they were talking about heaven.

"Their speakers are saying things such as, 'Graduating seniors, you have reached the golden age of maturity; it is time now to go out into the world and take up the challenge of life, time to face your hal-lowed responsibility.'

"And if that isn't one hell of a note, it's certainly one note of hell.

"When I hear the word maturity

spoken with such solemn awe, I don't know whether to laugh or get sick. There circulates a common myth that once one becomes an adult, one suddenly and magically gets it all together. And, if I may use the vernacular, discovers where it's at. Ha ha. The sad funny truth is adults are nothing but tall children who have forgotten how to play.

"When people tell you to grow up, they mean approximately the same thing they mean when they tell you to shut up. By shut up they mean stop talking. By grow up, they mean stop growing.

"Because as long as you keep growing, you keep changing and the person who is changing is unpredictable, impossible to pigeonhole and difficult to control. The growing person is not an easy target for those guys in slick suits who want you to turn over your soul to Christ, your heart to

(continued on page 6)



From the editor —

## Labor movement: a good idea

Monday is Labor Day. That is a quaint, almost 19th century holiday, a time when the picnics and lawn games came after boisterous downtown big city marches, the streets filled with row after row of salt-of-the-earth common men, Labor literally on the march. And, it was mostly men for most of the 20th century.

Alas, the days of a powerful labor movement is a black and white newsreel out of the 1950s, when one in three workers belonged to a union and almost every one of them worked for companies, large and small.

Today, unions in the private sector have been decimated by 75 years of concerted effort to destroy organized labor. If you know a union worker, she is more likely to be a teacher, nurse or bus driver than a factory or construction worker. That is because pressure has been kept up on elected politicians by those public sector employees to provide humane working conditions in schools, hospitals and local governments. But in the dog-eat-dog world of market capitalism, the big dog Elon Musk of the world have long gamed the system to, as the cliché has it, smash the workers efforts for decent wages and humane working conditions.

As the rhetorical question goes, are you better off than your grandparents were two generations ago? How did the eight hour day, 40 hour work week, time and a half overtime and two weeks paid vacations come about?

As the bumper sticker reads: brought to you by the labor movement.

“Power concedes nothing without a demand,” Frederick Douglass wrote 175 years ago. “It never has and it never will.” Since the 1950s corporate capitalism has been in the ascendancy. What do owners give workers besides the door, the boot and the back of their hand? Almost nothing, hardly a turkey, a day off or a holiday to enjoy either one.

For hundreds of years owners have diverted and divided workers, those natural brothers and sisters, first distracted by the color of our skin – racism – and then made to be afraid and disdain each other by our sex, whom we kiss and now how we define our essential selves.

At its best the union movement always knows that people march together, hand in hand, solidarity forever, for the union makes us strong. In this week after the 60th anniversary of the 1963 August 28 March on Washington, remember that the signs on stakes people held high read “Jobs and Freedom.” Along with recognition of their humanity and demands for dignity, Blacks and justice-seeking allies in 1963 understood that nothing lifts people out of poverty like good jobs at good wages.

For each of the very few of us who get to succeed on our own merits there are legions of us needing to figure out that it is our getting together, marching shoulder to shoulder, insisting that we are in this together and sticking it out in common cause as the path to our common freedom, dignity and equality.

Look around. It is the Amazon and Starbucks workers who are proving once again that the union makes us strong.

— Ken Stern

## Musings – on the editor’s mind

Some of us are quicker than others, have our priorities in better order, are more in tune with the rhythms of the season. Partly, too, it is a matter of location and timing. For me, confined to a narrow course of home and office, it has only been since last week, Monday, Aug. 21 that I have heard and seen Canada geese returning to the Skagit. That first evening the sound of their honking followed me home. I did not see in the evening haze and smoke but heard the telltale sound somewhere over Hedlin farm fields.

Honking brought me out of my office the next morning to find a line of dark birds heading south, seemingly following the eastern border of La Conner. Since then I have hopefully seen and heard daily, now at various times, Canada geese. Twice, in the evening, small flocks were headed north, my guess to field where dinner lay.

At first I wondered if their arrival was early and if I was quick to notice. But no. Again, I am the last to know. I asked my barber, Tony, Saturday. He is more attentive and has many sources for gathering information. “A couple of weeks they have been coming in” he said.

Then I asked Nancy Crowell, a professional nature photographer and first class observer of birds. “Three weeks,” she told me. They started arriving early in the month. Snow geese will fly in in October. Oct. 3 is the earliest she has seen them. What the Valley is famous for.

Timing and location are critical. So is intention. To catch a falling star position yourself under it to make your success more likely. Nature extends that invitation every minute. Nancy and Tony know that.

## Tom Robbins celebration Saturday

Tom Robbins will be King for a Day Saturday and the entire La Conner community is invited to join in and celebrate the world-famous 91-year-old author.

All may join the parade, coming in costumes based on themes and characters in his books. Come to the La Conner Marina Third Street parking lot

at 12 p.m. for the 1 p.m. parade up First Street.

Activities, including a raffle, trivia games and costume and spam carving contests will often be at Gilkey Square..

Funds raised are in support of mentoring opportunities in the arts for youth at the La Conner Swinomish Library.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Ag use on ag land

Since 1990 Skagit County has protected farmland with good planning and county codes. The current Skagit County code prohibits non-agricultural uses on the 90,000 acres of farmland zoned Agriculture-Natural Resource Lands (Ag-NRL).

The proposed code changes strengthen farmland protection and do not affect farming and agricultural activities. The code permits farmstands, CSAs, U-pick, farm stays, farmers markets, farm to table meals, processing and sales of value added products, nursery sales, farm tours, hayrides, public education programs and other agriculturally related activities.

The proposed code changes do not affect public festivals and tours on Skagit Valley farms. The Tulip Festival was first described as “a 17 day flower festival with 30 fun family events.” The Festival of Family Farms Tour has operated since the 1990s. Both are non-profit, civic celebrations of limited duration.

Skagit County has never permitted weddings/

events on farmland zoned Ag-NRL. State and local laws require any accessory use on Ag-NRL must be soil-dependent and an agriculturally related activity.

Special Use Permits on Ag-NRLs are for accessory activities related to farm production. A permit criteria states: “All proposed temporary event uses proposed shall adequately demonstrate how the event is related to agricultural production”. Only two of the 21 venues on Ag-NRL farms hold an SUP. The others have no SUP. At least one venue hosted over 70 events last year. To comply with current codes venue operators can apply for special use permits or relocate to another less restrictive rural zone.

Any citizen can propose new codes through the County’s annual planning process. Public notice, comments and hearings allow a full review of any proposed changes. New code changes must meet legal and policy criteria under national, state and local laws.

Ellen Bynum  
Executive Director, Friends of Skagit County  
Mount Vernon

### Canoe Journey reflections

This year’s tribal Canoe Journey brought sacred tribes to the shores of Swinomish from distant lands with their final landing at Muckleshoot, Alki Beach. The canoe journey is a tradition that has taken place for generations. The canoes were most often crafted from a single log that may have been several hundred years old. There is much honoring around the wood used, as their use has been integral for the tribe’s survival. This was their way of travel, their way of life was upon the water. It was relied upon heavily. Many of their resources came from these waters and were ensured a soft footprint. They took only what they needed for survival with an understanding of the replenishment of Mother Nature. Different regions had different types of canoes as they traveled upon these waterways.

We cannot reflect on the Canoe Journey without putting an emphasis on the importance of the traditional ceremonies. Their meaning cannot be understated. There is a host nation that welcomes all the various tribes with immense generosity.

At this point, many ceremonies are held to honor their ancestors, each person that has participated in this meaningful travel, and all in attendance. The tribes of the Salish Sea and beyond come together in song, dance, celebrational food and the sharing of intergenerational and intuitive memories. This event sees many thousands of people.

Some of us have had the great fortune to attend a landing, a dinner, a moment with a tribal friend. The canoe dinner this year welcomed us as guests and hosted here in La Conner by The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community. It is a witnessing for us to comprehend another way of life. The Canoe Journey can be a process for us to better understand the importance of the land of which we reside.

If you were one of the lucky ones to attend, meet the skippers and friendly tribes of Vancouver Island and beyond, then you too felt the love brought upon these shores. I know I did and look forward to our reciprocal actions.

Lisa Versteegh  
Shelter Bay

### Agritourism

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

Nursery hosts weddings to restore old buildings on his property.

“Whenever I see a barn falling down I think gosh, can’t somebody do something?” he told the crowd. “They’re being replaced by ugly metal buildings that look very industrial. There’s no image of Skagit Valley farmland that shows ugly metal buildings. Repurposing them and certainly wedding venues seems to be the path that allows one to make improvements.”

Amy Frye of Boldly Grown Farm was among those who wondered why the results of previous focus groups and public surveys, which seemed to favor agritourism, were not reflected in the proposed changes.

“It seemed that the original work produced by BERK consulting did a better job taking the needs and perspectives of multiple stakeholders into account,” she said after the meeting.

Connie Funk of Pleasant Ridge urged everyone to get along. “Without the people here, there are no farms. And for people that have venues on farm property, they consider it sacred too. So let’s have conversations that include everyone’s voice at the table and let’s be neighborly to each other.”

While the Planning Commissioners hoped to wrap up the code process by October, just about every speaker at the hearing pleaded for them to slow down, extend public comment and really listen to all stakeholders.

During his remarks, Rozema announced that the next day, SPF would “start a dialog again with Ag Advisory Board members, with the farm community, with the venue community – the agritourism community – to try to find some common ground.” SPF would pay for a facilitator

**“Without the people here, there are no farms. And for people that have venues on farm property, they consider it sacred too. So let’s have conversations that include everyone’s voice at the table and let’s be neighborly to each other.”**

Connie Funk,  
Pleasant Ridge resident

to help the group create code recommendations that large and small farmers, venue operators and other stakeholders could agree on.

Christianson’s, Maplehurst Farm, the Washington Bulb Company, Gordon Skagit Farms, the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, Boldly Grown Farms and others participated in the multi-stakeholder working group. Their recommendations can be retrieved at skagitonians.org/agritourism-stakeholder-working-group

At the SPF table, Frye advocated for code that addressed the needs of smaller farms. “Almost two-thirds of Skagit County farms are counted as ‘small and mid-sized farms,’” said Rozema. “They really need an agritourism component in order to vertically integrate, like wreath-making classes, farm-to-table dinners and other interactions between farmers and the public.”

Using a consensus decision-making model, the ad hoc group “ground it out” in twice-weekly meetings for five weeks, said Rozema, in order to meet the extended August 17 public comment deadline.

“It was really looking at the angle of all the people involved, seeing how to come together and create a solution that benefited everyone, that everyone felt good about and that everyone

could support,” said participant Emma Christianson, who is optimistic about the results.

The group’s proposals would create a fixed number of “limited entry permits” for farm venues that would be renewed every three years; restrict venues serving up to 100 guests to 24 events a year; and allow those serving 100-plus guests to host more than 24 depending on the results of inspections by the county hearing examiner “and provided that events do not create a detrimental level of electrical interference, line voltage noise fluctuation, noise, vibration, smoke, dust, odors, heat, glare, traffic or other impacts to adjacent farming operations, neighbors and/or other environmental impacts on the surrounding area.”

Small farms could host up to 25 people for on-site education, workshops and training.

Perhaps influenced by John Christianson’s passion for history, the group recommends that venues must use existing buildings. No new venue buildings could be built except when using the footprint of an existing building. “This would prevent someone from buying property, starting a farm, building a special purpose building and starting a venue,” said Rozema. “The idea is to breathe new life into existing buildings.”

These recommendations, along with hundreds of other comments, are in the hands of the Planning Commission, which has scheduled a review of public comment for Sept. 26 and deliberations on Oct. 10.

“Twenty years from now Skagit County and the Skagit County farming community will look a lot different than it does today,” said Ag Advisory Board member Michael Trafton at the July 25 hearing. “Is [our choice] going to be something we’ll all look back on and be proud of, or something that we look back on and regret?”

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## Council focuses on flood plan

By Bill Reynolds

La Conner leaders continue to develop a saltwater flood mitigation plan before king tide season this fall. They will meet Sept. 1 with representatives of the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe at their south end property to discuss placing flood barriers there.

La Conner Town Councilmember Rick Dole relayed the news to council, which met after the commission concluded its business Aug. 22 in Maple Hall.

Town Administrator Scott Thomas reported discussions have begun with north end business owners for sandbagging their property from October to March.

Dole said gaps will be left in sandbag walls to allow customers access to stores in the flood zone and can be quickly filled when necessary.

Councilmember MaryLee Chamberlain noted that flood protection is becoming the new normal. "If we're going to deal with this flood issue," she said, "we've got to get used to things being different."

The Council has endorsed Public Works Director Brian Lease's materials and equipment purchase plan. But upon receiving high cost estimates, Lease submitted a fallback plan.

Lease is suggesting borrowing a sandbagger from a nearby dike district, renting a forklift and buying pre-filled sandbags instead of buying equipment.

Town Finance Director Maria DeGoede said some of the \$163,000 in a municipal flood fund has been spent.

The commission is recommending purchasing Ecology Blocks primarily in low-lying south end areas and sandbags on the north waterfront. The specifics will be more apparent after Town officials meet with their counterparts at Upper Skagit and Dike District 12.

The commission will next focus on long-term remedie to

threats posed by other natural disasters.

Resident Debbie Aldrich, during the council's public comments section, stressed the importance of that mission, especially in terms of fire readiness.

"I'm really concerned. I have friends in Lahaina and I haven't heard from them," Aldrich said, referring to the deadly fires on Maui.

Aldrich fears the 306 Center Street multi-unit development and other housing construction could increase fire danger in La Conner.

"The Maple Field houses, what a joke," she said. "There's no way to get a fire truck in there.

"Let's get real, guys," added Aldrich, turning her attention to 306 Center. "It's not too late for the council to say 'no' to this unless you guys can guarantee my house won't burn down when that place goes up."

Council member Ivan Carlson, a volunteer firefighter, reminded the audience that La Conner fire department had recently put out an RV fire on North First Street next to the two-story, wood-frame Nasty Jack's Antiques Building. Carlson said Fire Chief Aaron Reinstra was first on the scene.

Mollie Rights, also a Center Street resident, suggested a system to make it easier for citizens to know where public emergency heating and cooling stations are located and when they are open.

## Annual La Conner Rotary Club auction honors Mayor Hayes

By Bill Reynolds

When saluted by La Conner Rotarians Saturday night at Maple Hall, Mayor Ramon Hayes didn't speak at length about accomplishments that have marked his unprecedented four terms in office.

He instead chose to focus on a task left uncompleted until that very moment, when he was presented the Paul Harris Fellow recognition, a \$1,000 contribution to the national Rotary Foundation in Hayes' name.

Hayes, who is bringing his 16-year tenure to a close, used his remarks to shift attention from himself to former Washington state Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, to whom he had extended a special invitation to attend the La Conner Rotary Club's 2023 Dinner and Auction.

Hayes lauded Haugen for having used her considerable influence in Olympia to earmark state funds for construction of the popular La Conner boardwalk.

Then Hayes asked the 118 attendees to rise in a standing ovation for Haugen, a tribute he said was long overdue.

"For years," Hayes told the Weekly News afterward, "I've tried to find ways for the community to thank her for all she did for the boardwalk. When I learned I would be receiving the Paul Harris Award tonight, I had it in my heart to give her a call so that she could be here and give

the La Conner community an opportunity to show its appreciation."

Hayes also expressed appreciation for the Rotary chapter's wide-ranging efforts on behalf of local citizens of all ages, most notably its support of literacy and education initiatives.

Those on-going projects received a major boost when diners attending the Aug. 26 event, catered by O'Donnell's American Grill and Irish Pub, pledged nearly \$55,000 separate from additional monies raised during the 16-item live auction.

In all, Saturday's fundraising total exceeded \$92,000 in support of its missions to ensure daily food security, promote educational and leadership experiences for students here and abroad and provide annual scholarship awards for graduating seniors, among other points of emphasis.

That spirit of selfless community service was perhaps best modeled by Rotarian Kim Good Rubenstein, who donated her winnings from a 50/50 raffle – more than \$1,200 – back to the club's Fund-in-Need account.

Past La Conner Rotary President Adam McGarity emphasized the club's ability to morph hope into tangible results.

"We're known as the 'make it happen' club," McGarity said, adding that "hope is so much more than a passing wish. It's an act of positive change. Your gifts bring hope that all kids will learn to read and write well. Public service makes our community better and brings us together while we're doing it."

Club President Connie Milliken welcomed the evening's attendees, whose ranks included Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen and district Rotary officials.

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Make your own whale\*: 6 - 8:30 pm Saturday, Sept. 16

And another paint & sip: 6 - 8 pm, Thursday, Sept. 28

For details, go to the Events page at [www.ravenscup.com](http://www.ravenscup.com).


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1	\$43,492	\$49,622	\$600
2	\$49,399	\$55,529	\$900
3+	\$53,057	\$59,187	\$1,200



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## Expectations high for new-look La Conner High School volleyball

By Bill Reynolds

New La Conner High School head volleyball coach Pam Keller is succeeding a legend and her young team is following in the footsteps of the four-time defending state 2B net champions.

But optimism was clearly in the air – and on the freshly painted floor at Landy James Gym – when the Lady Braves opened pre-season workouts last week.

“This crew is working pretty dang hard,” Keller, who assisted retired state Hall of Fame coach Suzanne Marble for more than two decades, told the Weekly News prior to leading her charges out for conditioning runs up the Benton Street stairway.

To keep pace with prior powerhouse teams, Keller will have to overcome major graduation losses from a year ago, starting with the departure of Washington State 2B Player of the Year Ellie Marble, now a key addition to the Central Washington University roster.

This year’s nucleus consists of seniors Abby Udlock, Morgan Huizenga and Natalee Koch.

Udlock was the setter for the 2022 state title winners, while Huizenga joined Marble and now graduated Makayla Herrera as a primary scoring option on the front line. The versatile Koch, able to swing between the front and back rows, could well see more time as a hitter this fall.

Sophomores Maeve



Coach Pam Keller

McCormick and Addie Keller figure to be in the mix, with the latter likely to anchor the defense as its libero.

Keller, a 1999 alum and former Lady Braves net standout, might rotate into the lineup several of the half-dozen eighth graders in the program this season.

“I think some people might underestimate this group because we’re so young,” she said, “but so far we’ve been excited to see what this team can do.”

She said La Conner made a strong impression at summer camps and tournaments.

“They did really well at the Central Tournament (in Ellensburg) in June,” said Keller. “They’ve had some great camps. This team is young, but it has a great volleyball IQ.”

As a student, Keller played club volleyball, competing in the off-season with and against some of the Skagit Valley’s top pros-

pects. She played for Marble, who was then at the front end of what would be a remarkable 30-year run.

Following graduation, Keller moved alongside Marble on the La Conner bench and served as an assistant during the program’s string of deep playoff runs, resulting in seven state crowns.

“I really liked my role as a JV (junior varsity) coach,” Keller reflected. “It was great being able to teach fundamentals and help players develop their skills.”

Those duties will now be embraced by assistant Kamea Luna, also an alum and former stellar Lady Braves player.

“I couldn’t do this,” said Keller, a self-employed business owner, “without Kumea.”

Marble’s influence remains evident with another challenging non-conference schedule designed to prepare the team for the regular season and playoffs.

The Lady Braves are slated to break in the revamped Landy James Gym floor, which sports the school district’s new logo, with a Sept. 5 home match with 1A Meridian.

La Conner visits 1A Lynden Sept. 6, then hosts Neah Bay Sept. 13.

Two early season home pairings, in particular, stand out. La Conner entertains 4A Glacier Peak Sept. 20 in a non-league clash. Coupeville, expected to be an NW2B/1B contender, visits Sept. 26.

## Braves football roster grows, bolstering winning chances

By Bill Reynolds

Sweet Sixteen.

A milestone birthday, for sure. But it has added significance for the La Conner High School football program.

Sweet sixteen is the number of players on the Braves’ preseason roster this year. That’s about twice as many who turned out at this time last August.

Ultimately, head coach Charlie Edwards and his staff were able to cobble together a young group with enough depth – though, barely – to complete its 2022 11-man grid schedule, forging a respectable 2-6 mark given the circumstances.

Edwards, who began his third season at the Braves’ helm when late summer workouts began last Wednesday, is confident the 2023 ranks will grow further as the start of school nears.

Additionally, he and assistants Wil James, Aaron Reinstra, John Agen and Troy Olason are

encouraged knowing the Braves can count on six seniors, the most La Conner has been able to call upon since the abbreviated spring 2021 campaign when Jeff Scoma – now at Stanwood – led the team to a 4-1 record.

Coupeville, which went 7-2 a year ago to capture the NW2B crown and secure a state playoff berth, did so with a veteran battle-tested lineup, Edwards reminded the Weekly News on Thursday.

“Coupeville had more seniors last year than we had players,”

he noted.

The Braves’ senior group includes dynamic returning quarterback Ivory Damien and state hurdles champion Tommy Murdock.

“We’ll want to create open space for Ivory and Tommy and take advantage of their athleticism,” said Edwards, whose offensive approach will be to simplify sets and formations.

“We’re working on fundamentals,” he said. “What we want

(continued on page 6)

## School board considering public service graduation requirement

By Bill Reynolds

Longtime La Conner Schools counselor Lori Buher has retired, but she is still offering timely advice.

Buher suggested that the district resume its requirement that La Conner High students complete public service hours in order to graduate at the school board’s Aug. 14 study session.

The board was listening.

“We recognize that volunteering connects students to the community,” Board President Susie Deyo said then, noting that the board has retained its policy promoting student public service. The graduation requirement was set aside during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At their one-hour Aug. 28 hybrid meeting, members tasked board student representatives Taylor-Rae Cayou and Josi Straathof with seeking input on the topic from their peers.

The public service component, board members recalled, was an integral part of retired teacher Vince Sellen’s civics class.

Public service could be clocked in a variety of ways, from attending local government and cultural meetings to helping fill sandbags during flood events.

Middle and high school principal Christine Tripp said many scholarships require student public service. She said those could serve as models for graduation standards.

Deyo proposed easing into it. “Maybe 15 hours (of participation) is too much for the first year,” Deyo said. “Maybe we should keep it simple.”

The board approved goals for Superintendent Will Nelson during the 2023-24 academic year, which launched on Tuesday with Braves Day. Nelson had said during the study session that due to district budget cuts his plate will be even more

full than usual.

“As superintendent, special ed director and assistant principal,” he said, “it’s going to be a busy year.”

Nelson’s goals reflect those the board adopted earlier. They focus on instructional leadership, student-centered learning and further implementation of new academic programs in this second year of a five-year strategic plan.

The board applauded the level of student participation at summer adventure camp. Nelson noted 74 students had attended the on-campus summer program at the study session.

“That’s a really good number,” Deyo said. “Obviously, they had fun and we had great teachers.”

Looking ahead, elementary Principal Heather Fakkema-Hovde said plans for a split classroom have been modified from a K/1 to a 4/5 format.

“We knew we needed a split,” she said, “but we wanted to get it away from the primary grades.”

Students in the split classroom will report to several teachers, each with a homeroom and specializing in specific subject areas.

New personnel hires were announced. Aaron Gruber will teach physical education at the middle and high school, replacing C.J. Woods.

“He’s a strength and conditioning guy,” Tripp said, “and has great references and experience with Mastery-Based Learning.”

Danial Hansen has been rehired to teach secondary math, primarily geometry.

Julia Johnson, with a mechanical engineering background, has been retained as a part-time secondary math instructor.

The board accepted a \$2,500 donation from the Building Industry Association of Washington in support of the tiny house construction project completed this past spring.

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# Collecting clippings: local resident preserves glimpses of history, pop culture

By Bill Reynolds

In recent years, scrapbooking has become a popular hobby. But for a La Conner area resident it has long been more than that. Anne Waldron has over time filled several of her old-school hardcover photo albums – the ones reinforced by clear protective overlay pages – with an eclectic collection of local and national news articles, favorite cartoon strips, advertisements bearing images of celebrities and treasured family memorabilia. They are assembled in no particular order. Even so, none seem out of place. With a lifelong appreciation of history and journalism, Waldron has fondly been referred to by friends variously as a pack rat and preservationist. She wears both labels with pride.

“I choose things that just sort of jump out at me, things that resonate with me,” Waldron explained. “I’m especially interested in La Conner-related news. I’ve always liked to keep up with the news.” Her scrapbooks bear Weekly News clippings dating to shortly after the paper’s founding more than 15 years ago. Turning the pages, one finds news photographs taken by Don Coyote and Amylynn Richards. Also saved is a 2013 Weekly News basketball feature on Katie McKnight, shown posing with her grandfather, La Conner High School sports legend Gail Thulen. Waldron also clipped a Richards story and photo on a trio of La Conner students – Cody Cayou, Travis Tom and Nick Clark – who made an



A CENTURIES OLD HOBBY COLLECTS THE PAST – Anne Waldron has been clipping and saving the story of her time: Canoe journeys, dog birthday parties, each holds significance. – Photo by Bill Reynolds

environmental documentary film on the U.S. Grant Administration’s decision to open to white settlement land that appeared to have been within Swinomish Reservation boundaries established by the Point Elliot Treaty of 1855.

Her pages likewise contain an account by then-Weekly News reporter Maria Matson on creation of a salmon nursery on Fir Island; coverage of student and community stage play productions, town parades and the 2007 hiring of Shelter Bay’s Garry Cline as director of the La Conner Quilt and Textile Museum.

She has saved Skagit Valley Herald features on the history of the Dunlap Towing Company, Washington state’s partnership with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community to co-manage a public park on Kiket Island, La Conner dairy owner Alan Mesman’s embrace of organic farming and construction on Swinomish Reservation of the landmark Coast Salish cedar

hat pavilions prior to the 2011 Paddle to Swinomish. And much, much more. “I’ve always loved history,” Waldron said on Thursday. “I like to keep a record of things.” In that vein, she is on record lamenting the decline of local journalism around the country. Fewer people elsewhere in America now can do as she does – clip items of interest from an independent community newspaper. “People,” she stressed, “need to have local news.” Waldron, who doesn’t own a computer, is a devotee of print. “I would much rather have a news story that I can hold in my hands,” said Waldron. And the same is true when it comes to interpersonal communication. Digital has its place, she conceded, but nothing in her view compares to reading correspondence on paper from a prior century. “I have my great-grandmother’s letters,” said Waldron, “that I can hold in my hands and see up close what was written.” Similarly, Waldron likes handwriting and mailing letters and postcards. And, through the scrapbooks, she has put her stamp on topics of historical and cultural significance as well.

## Closed area beaches, lakes, crabbing

The Washington state Department of Health has issued area lake and beach closures and closed recreational shellfish harvesting due to toxins. All waters around the entire San Juan archipelago from the southeast tip of Guemes Island west and north to Canadian waters and southwest to northern Whidbey Island is a Marine Biotoxin Closure Zone closed for harvesting all species including clams, geoduck, scallops, mussels, oysters, snails and other invertebrates, but not crab or shrimp. Beaches closed for all species of shellfish harvesting include: Bay View State Park, March Point Recreational Area, Samish Island Recreational Area and North and South Skagit Wildlife Area. Lake Campbell was closed until further notice due to high

microcystin level, toxic blue green algae, Skagit County Public Health reported Aug. 18. Test samples Aug. 16 and 22 exceeded safe limits. Pass Lake was also listed as closed Aug. 29. Microcystin samples exceeded safe limit in an Aug. 7 test. Cyanobacteria, blue-green algae, can produce toxins at levels that are harmful to humans, pets,

domestic animals and wildlife. There is no way to detect toxins in an algae bloom except through laboratory analysis. Lake test results posted at Washington State Toxic Algae: [nwtoxicalgae.org/Default.aspx](http://nwtoxicalgae.org/Default.aspx). Shellfish status: fortress. [wa.gov/doh/biotoxin/biotoxin.html](http://wa.gov/doh/biotoxin/biotoxin.html). Questions, email Samantha Russell: [eh@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:eh@co.skagit.wa.us).

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**Answers to Aug. 30 puzzle**

**Don't Kit Nap Kittens!**

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A LITTER OF KITTENS**

**QUIETLY OBSERVE**  
Observe from a safe distance to see if mama is present.

**ASSESS CONDITION**  
If kittens are clean and sleeping in a heap, then mama is likely out looking for food and will be back.

If kittens are cold, dirty, thin, making a lot of noise or appear sick or hurt, mama might be MIA and possibly gone for good. If you have observed for 12 to 24 hrs and mama still hasn't returned, she's probably not coming back.

**MAKE A GAME PLAN**  
If kittens are in obvious distress and mama is clearly not coming back, call HSSV at 360-757-0445 to discuss bringing them into us for care.

If the kittens appear to be well fed and in good health and mama seems to be nearby or has obviously been there recently, then wait and try to see if you can bring mama in as well. If she's friendly scoop them up, and give us a call. If she isn't keen on contact, again, call us at 360-757-0445 for advice on trapping so you can bring them all in together safely. A trap might be necessary and it's important to get mom first, so you don't scoop up the babies and then realize you can't get mama.

**Humane Society of SKAGIT VALLEY**

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## Tom Robbins

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

America, your butt to Seattle First National Bank and your armpits to the new extra crispy Right Guard.

“No, the growing person is not an ideal consumer, which means, in more realistic terms, he or she is not an easy slave. Worse yet, if he or she continues to grow, grows far enough and long enough, he or she may get too close to the universal mysteries, the nature of which the Navy and the Dutch Reformed Church do not encourage us to ponder. The growing person is an uncomfortable reminder of the greater human potential that each of us might realize if we had the guts.

“So, society wants you to grow up to reach a safe, predictable plateau and root there. To muzzle your throb. To lower the volume on the singing in your blood. Capers all cut, sky finally larked, surprises known: SETTLE

DOWN — settle like the sand in the bottom of an hourglass, like a coffin six months in the ground. Act your age, which means act their age and that has, from the moment they stopped growing, always been old.”

People who graduated from high school in the 1960s and early 1970s remember it as a time of great unrest. Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were gunned down. The disaster of the war in Vietnam rolled on and the casualties mounted. Universities exploded in protest. Soldiers opened fire and killed students at Kent State. Cambodia was bombed. Black civil rights marchers were hosed by police and beaten with batons. And as Robbins spoke, the walls were closing in on President Richard Nixon, the fall of Saigon was a year away and everywhere people grappled with a loss of faith in government and social institutions. And Robbins lashed out.

“Growing up is a trap. “As for responsibility, I am forced to ask, responsibility to what? To our fellow man? Two weeks ago, the newspapers reported that a federal court had ruled that when a person’s brain stops functioning, that person is

legally dead, even though his or her heart may continue to beat. That means that 80% of the population of the Earth is legally dead. Must we be responsible to corpses?

“No, you have no responsibility except to be yourself to the fullest limit of yourself. And to find out who you are. Or perhaps I should say to remember who you are. Because deep down in the secret velvet of your heart, far beyond your name and address, each of you knows who you really are. And that being who is true cannot help but behave graciously to all other beings – because it is all other beings.

“Ah, but we must be responsible and if we are, then we are rewarded with the white man’s legal equivalent of looting: a steady job, a secure income, easy credit, free access to all the local emporiums and a home of your own to pile the merchandise in. And so what if there is no magic in your life, no wonder, no amazement, no playfulness, no peace of mind, no sense of unity with the universe, no giggling joy, no burning passion, no deep understanding, no overwhelming love? At least your ego has the satisfaction of knowing you are a responsible citizen.

“The only advice I have for you tonight is not to actively resist or fight the system, because active protest and resistance merely entangles you in the system. Instead, ignore it, walk away from it. Turn your backs on it, laugh at it. Don’t be outraged, be outrageous! Never be stupid enough to respect authority unless that authority proves itself respectable.

“So be your own authority, lead yourselves. Learn the ways and means of the ancient yogi masters, pied pipers, cloud walkers and medicine men. Get in harmony with nature. Listen to the loony rhythms of your blood. Look for beauty and poetry in everything in life. Let there be no moon that does not know you, no spring that does not lick you with its tongues. Refuse to play it safe, for it is from the wavering edge of risk that the sweetest honey of freedom drips and drips. Live dangerously, live lovingly.

**“Learn the ways and means of the ancient yogi masters, pied pipers, cloud walkers and medicine men. Get in harmony with nature. Listen to the loony rhythms of your blood. Look for beauty and poetry in everything in life. Let there be no moon that does not know you, no spring that does not lick you with its tongues.”**

*Tom Robbins*

Believe in magic. Nourish your imagination. Use your head, even if it means going out of your mind. Learn, like the lemon and the tomato learned, the laws of the sun. Become aware, like the jungle became aware, of your own perfume. Remember that life is much too serious to take seriously – so never forget how to play. Looking at you tonight, I know you are going to do just fine.”

Today, Robbins lives in La Conner and is 91 years old. I heard he only responds to written letters, so I sent him a copy of the speech and asked him how he came to be in Oak Harbor that night and what he thinks about his speech now. He graciously responded:

“Your epistle has caught up with me (or me with it) in this little clam-cawed outpost where I continue to follow the Charmer’s pipes down oblique paths of ... well, I’m unsure if there is a fitting name for it. In any case, I’m happy to be here (and Here) and both surprised and cheered to be reminded of the one and only high school commencement address I have ever delivered. I must confess that it pleases me to discover that the speech not only fails to redden my cheeks, but actually provokes a kind of prideful grin.”

Robbins said he was invited to speak at the event by a woman he was romantically involved with at the time who had friends in the graduating class. Robbins added:

“It produces a tiny tingle of pleasure to learn that there may be people who can still recall that event and my contribution to it. (The statute of limitations would protect me, I suppose, from any belated accusations of contribution to the delinquency of minors.)”

I checked Oak Harbor’s newspaper, the Whidbey News-Times, which is preserved on microfilm at the Washington State Library, to see if a reporter covered the commencement address. A very helpful librarian at the state library wheeled through the microfilmed newspaper pages for June 1974 and found a story and a blurry photo of students with Robbins. The story was long on explaining what the Off Campus School was and how its future was threatened, but it was short on the substance of Robbins’ address. Although the speech has surfaced here and there over the years, most of the words Tom Robbins spoke that night echoed only in the ears of those 20 graduates – until now.

“Let me wrap this up with a few short questions I am often asked.

“1. Will we be eaten by bugs and worms? We ought to be. We have eaten and we ought to be eaten. This is Justice and there is no stopping it. If you have your body burned, starving the earth to glorify a memory, you are asking for trouble. I have no idea what form the trouble might take, but I do know that if you are too good to be eaten by bugs and worms, you are asking for trouble.

“2. Does your soul fly out of your body at the moment you die? No. This is a foolish superstition. Your soul is constantly flying out of your body in just the same way that energy is constantly flying out of the sun. At the moment your body dies, the soul stops flying out.

“3. Is Jesus coming back? Yes, all the time. And so are you. All souls echo forever throughout the universe.

“I hope you have a wonderful trip.”

*Obee directs the Washington Newspapers Publishers Association.5*

## Braves

■ ■ ■ (from page 4)

do this year is have a few plays that we run really well and then add some more plays as we go along.”

Damien was able to move the Braves through the air and on scrambles last season. Junior C.J. Edwards was a key receiver for Damien out of the backfield and showed he could both run between the tackles and get to the edge. His workload is likely to increase this season.

It helps, too, that the team has experience in the trenches with seniors Kenai Zimmerman and Oscar Soto ticketed for duty upfront on both sides of the ball. Alex Martin and Isaiah Miller, also seniors, will get plenty of snaps as well.

“Isaiah was a jack of all trades for us last year,” Edwards said. “He played some linebacker, offensive line and running back.”

Brent Bobb, Jaydin Clark, Austin McClure and Nathan Bailey are also being counted on to make solid contributions for the Braves, who closed out 2022 with a 56-6 romp at Lummi, a game in which McClure scored a TD.

La Conner opens the season at perennial state 2B title contender Morton/White Pass on Sept. 2.

The Braves’ home opener is a Sept. 8 non-league test with Evergreen of Seattle.

Successive NW2B matchups are with Friday Harbor Sept. 14, and at Coupeville Sept. 22. La Conner has rematches at Friday Harbor Oct. 13 and with Coupeville Oct. 20 in the second half of the season.

The mid-season schedule features a non-league Sept. 29 visit to Bellingham and Oct. 7 matinee home date with Mabton.

Edwards, while lamenting the loss of assistant Ari Landworth from last year’s staff, was pleased to have fellow La Conner alums James, Reinstra and Agen alongside when practices kicked off.

“It’s great having these alums here,” said Edwards. “I love the passion and intensity that they bring.”

Edwards said the camaraderie between coaches and players has paid dividends well ahead of scoreboards and field lights being turned on.

“When the kids understand that care for them,” Edwards explained, “they play harder.”

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## NOT TO BE MISSED

**King for a Day!** Come one, come all for Tom Robbins Day from 1-3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 2. Dress up as your favorite Tom Robbins character "or as crazy as you want." Festivities include a parade, food and drink, arts and shopping, fun gifts and gaiety, and a raffle to benefit children's reading programs at La Conner Swinomish Library.

## LIBRARIES

**La Conner Swinomish Library.** 520 Morris St., La Conner. 360-466-3352. [www.lclib.lib.wa.us](http://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](mailto:wisniew10@gmail.com)
- Tech Help. 4-6 p.m. every Monday. One-on-one technical support in 30-minute blocks.
- Dungeons & Dragons Club. 3-5 p.m. every Tuesday. No previous gaming experience necessary.

**Mount Vernon Public Library.** 315 Snoqualmie St., Mount Vernon. 360-336-6209, [mountvernonwa.gov](http://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, [CityofAnacortes.org](http://CityofAnacortes.org).

**Burlington Public Library.** 820 E. Washington Ave., Burlington. 360-755-0760, [burlingtonwa.gov/library](http://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.-5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. [qfamuseum.org](http://qfamuseum.org), 360-466-4288. See two new exhibits:

- Bojagi Journey 2023; curated by Patti King. July 26 - Oct. 8
- David Owen Hastings: Paper + Stitch. Aug. 2 - Oct 29

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

- Exhibit: "I Do, the History of Weddings," through Sept. 24.

**Museum of Northwest Art.** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday and Monday. [monamuseum.org](http://monamuseum.org), 360-466-4446.

## MUSIC

**Ukelele Fun & Song Circle.** Meets 1-2 p.m. every Wednesday, Burlington Senior Center. For more info, email [yogaheartspace0@gmail.com](mailto: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.

**La Conner Live Concert Series.** Live music 1-4 p.m. every Sunday in Gilkey Square.

**Burlington Summer Nights.** Live music from 6-8 p.m. every Friday at the Burlington Visitor Center Amphitheater, 520 E. Fairhaven Ave., Burlington.

## SERVICE & VOLUNTEER

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

**Skagit Valley Humane Society.** 18841 Kelleher Road, Burlington. 360-757-0445. Find volunteer and donation opportunities online at [skagithumane.org](http://skagithumane.org).

## MEETINGS

**Rotary Club of La Conner.** [laconnerrotary.org](http://laconnerrotary.org). Meetings 6-7 p.m. every Monday at Shawn O'Donnell's Farmhouse restaurant. Optional dinner at 5:30 p.m.

# Aqimuk's Kitchen

By Patricia Aqimuk Paul, Esq., Food Editor.

## Blackberry Pie

Look for blackberries growing away from busy roads. Bring garden clippers to cut back the thorny brambles. To clean, give two quick rinses and drain immediately. Measure and gently push the berries into the measuring cup.



**Ingredients**

- Blackberries, 6 cups
- Sugar, 1 cup
- Flour, 1/2 cup
- Cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon
- Lemon juice, 1 tablespoon, fresh squeezed
- Butter, 1 tablespoon
- Pastry for two crust pie
- Tin foil

**Preparation**  
Preheat your oven to 425 degrees F. Line a pie pan with one pie crust. In a small bowl, mix the sugar, flour and cinnamon. Pour over your berries (in a separate bowl) and gently mix.

Pour onto the bottom pie crust and spread out. Sprinkle with the lemon juice. Cut the butter into thin pieces and scatter over the top. Place the second pie crust over and crimp the edges, piercing the top to allow berry juices to escape. Crimp the tin foil over the edge of the pie and leave there until the last 20 to 15 minutes of baking time. Bake for 45 minutes. Cool slightly before cutting.

[aqimukskitchen@outlook.com](http://aqimukskitchen@outlook.com)

# MARINA MOORINGS

Port of Skagit

As August draws to an end, we can start to take stock of a season of travels. We had several marina members travel to Canada and Alaska this summer. One couple I spoke with put their fourth marker on the saloon hatch, celebrating another summer lived with a lot of adventure. They boated, fished and hiked to every hot spring between here and Skagway. Others are just getting back and have not come into the office yet to tell me their highlights, but they will. This is the kind of thing a community likes to share and we are always happy to hear about people's adventures.

Another marina couple this week cast off their lines for the last time. They and their dog are heading out the Straits and making a left for Mexico. As of now they do not plan to come back. This is pretty exciting! They are living the dream a lot of people have but for whatever reason do not seem able to throw off the lines and just head out. I respect their courage for trying and wish them the best!

Yet another member just got back and is at the midpoint of a lifetime trip. They bought their sailboat in California and headed west, planning never to return. However, they realized they needed some more training and came back to finish the Marine Technology program at Skagit Valley College. They will be here until June and then they will really head west and south, with the intent this time that it is a one-way trip. Never say never, but they are a determined pair and if anyone can make it work they can.

**Safety and Maintenance:** I mentioned the Skagit Valley College Marine Technology program above. I want to call out this local gem. This program offers practical training for everyone from professional operators to recreational skippers. They have a gas and diesel engine focus or a marine electronics focus, or to be really prepared you can take both over two years. The labs, demonstration materials and instruction are all first rate. The age range of students is 18 - 90. If you want to gain confidence in managing every aspect of your vessel, from engines to electronics and hulls to heads, this is the program to look to.

See you on the Channel!

— Chris Omdal, harbormaster

# POLICE BLOTTER

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## Wednesday, Aug. 23

**12:43 p.m. Hole opened** — Manhole cover was open creating a traffic hazard for vehicles. La Conner public works staff were able to fix it. Maple Ave. / Caledonia St., La Conner.

**8:12 p.m. California spending spree** — Person called to report that his credit card information had been stolen and was being used in Southern California. Funds were replaced by the bank and there is no suspect information or idea how the credit information was obtained. Farm to Market Rd., Edison.

**8:55 p.m. Designated driver** — Deputies were called to a motorhome that had been parked in the area for several hours and was partially blocking the road. Deputies contacted the occupant who stated he had pulled over to rest and thought he was off the road. Deputies noticed signs of impairment and asked if the subject would take a portable breath test to see if he could drive. The subject was well over the limit and gave permission for the deputy to move the RV approximately 50 yards to a safe location. Young Rd. / SR 536, Greater La Conner.

## Thursday, Aug. 23

**11:16 p.m. Lights out, sort of** — A juvenile was driving home from work when they apparently fell asleep and left the roadway. The car went into a ditch and broke a power pole. A second vehicle then drove into the power

lines that were hanging across the road doing some damage to that vehicle. Subjects were not impaired, and the issue was resolved with an exchange of insurance info and repairs from the power company. Fir Island Rd., Conway.

## Saturday, Aug. 26

**9:22 a.m. Flagged flagger** — Caller complained that the flagging crew at the intersection was not doing a good job and needed more signs. A deputy checked the area and saw that everything was running smooth and the crew was doing a good job. McLean / La Conner Whitney Rds., Greater La Conner.

**6:00 p.m. Caller called out** — Person called in to report that he was being assaulted at the bar. Yelling could be heard in the background of the 911 call. Deputies arrived and found this was an intoxicated male who was being kicked out for yelling at staff. No assault occurred and the subject was removed. Cains Ct., Edison.

# Super Crossword

## MILK-AND-HONEY POOCHES

**ACROSS**

1 Web page directories  
 9 Espresso, e.g.  
 16 Basic lessons  
 20 Open to suggestion  
 21 Solar or lunar phenomenon  
 22 U.S. island territory  
 23 Start of a riddle  
 25 Paree "to be"  
 26 Tar's "Help!"  
 27 Wrinkly tangelo variety  
 28 Cavaliers' org.  
 29 Stuff expelled from a volcano  
 31 West Aleutian island  
 33 Brand of contact lens solution  
 35 Outbreak of zits  
 37 Reply to "Which girl?"  
 38 Mom on "The Cosby Show"  
 41 Riddle, part 2  
 45 Old-style "Yay!"  
 47 Voguish Christian  
 48 — kwon do

49 Was the father of  
 50 — Lady of Guadalupe  
 51 Eager kids' question  
 53 Pinkish red  
 55 Not even one  
 56 Riddle, part 3  
 61 Aykroyd of film  
 62 Favorite son of Isaac  
 63 Beard on grain  
 64 Eyes lewdly  
 65 Fissure  
 67 Great joy  
 69 Remedies  
 70 Cross the mind of  
 74 — T (exactly)  
 75 Boring carpentry tool  
 76 Otology subject  
 77 Bert who played a lion  
 78 Spike on a film set  
 81 Riddle, part 4  
 85 Grease-laden  
 87 Diarist Nin  
 88 Snares, e.g.  
 89 Previous to, in verse  
 90 Canonized fifth-cen. pope  
 92 Barely manage, with "out"

93 Canadian gas brand  
 95 Ancient Greek lyric poet  
 97 End of the riddle  
 101 Campus complexes  
 102 Commanded  
 103 — Mawr College  
 104 — a one (zilch)  
 105 Rival of Lyft  
 107 Threat ender  
 109 Windows 10 runners, e.g.  
 110 A few  
 112 Ewe noise  
 115 Viva —  
 116 Riddle's answer  
 122 Slaughter of baseball  
 123 Racked up  
 124 Anticlimactic happening  
 125 Muralist José María —  
 126 Rodent-catching cats  
 127 With two-channel sound

4 Suffix with absorb  
 5 Bucko  
 6 In re  
 7 Put a stopper in  
 8 Vender  
 9 Ron of the 1970s  
 10 First female Supreme Court justice  
 11 Viral cause of a winter woe, informally  
 12 It funds Soc. Security  
 13 Pollution-control gp.  
 14 U.S. immigrants' class  
 15 Gomez of "Getaway"  
 16 Old Time film critic James  
 17 Totally bungled  
 18 The late 1970s, politically  
 19 Applied, as finger paint  
 24 Makes soiled  
 30 787s, e.g.  
 31 Lung filler  
 32 Pamphlet  
 34 Old name for Tokyo  
 35 Classic game consoles

36 Bamboozle  
 38 Had grub  
 39 Thelma's film sidekick  
 40 Of a major blood vessel  
 42 Astronomer  
 43 Furry scarves  
 44 Musical set in Oz, with "The"  
 46 "Ver-r-r-ry funny"  
 52 Salamander  
 53 V8 vegetable  
 54 Charley horse, e.g.  
 57 French for "eight"  
 58 Areas on a golf course  
 59 Be in accord  
 60 Bodily pouch  
 66 Pooch with a corded coat  
 68 Pai — poker (casino game)  
 69 Adorable kids' island  
 70 Waikiki's  
 71 Like many gory movies  
 72 Constellation  
 73 Mandates  
 75 Skywalker of "Star Wars"  
 76 Scandalous corporation of 2001

78 Old sweets  
 79 Whichever of the two  
 80 Alternative magazine to House Beautiful  
 82 Rival  
 83 "Sounds right to me"  
 84 Back of a 45 record  
 86 "Darn tootin!"  
 91 Poetic eyes  
 93 "Roots" Emmy winner  
 94 35mm camera inits.  
 96 Fish-fowl linkup  
 98 Coal mine vehicle  
 99 Put in a crate  
 100 Burden with one's problems  
 106 Pintos, e.g.  
 108 For fear that  
 109 Bygone  
 111 Bygone Dodge  
 112 Dutch South African  
 113 Novelist Rice  
 114 In re  
 117 Doc's org.  
 118 Rebel Turner  
 119 Jewel box inserts  
 120 Tennis barrier  
 121 "Now — seen it all!"

## Answers on page 5

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**LEGAL NOTICES**

**PUBLIC NOTICE FOR LODGING TAX FUNDING**  
 The Town of La Conner is accepting requests for Hotel/Motel tax distributions for budget year 2024. The 2024 Lodging Tax Fund Request for Proposal may be found on the Town website under the Finance Department at [www.townoflaconner.org](http://www.townoflaconner.org). All requests must be received (no postmarks) at La Conner Town Hall, 204 Douglas, P.O. Box 400, La Conner, WA 98257, by 3:30 p.m. on September 8, 2023. Please address any questions to Maria DeGoede, Finance Director, at [financedirector@townoflaconner.org](mailto:financedirector@townoflaconner.org) or call 360.466-3125. Late submissions will not be accepted.  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, August 23 and 30, 2023.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY**  
 CHRISTINA EGERER, as Successor Trustee of the Wilson Family Trust dated June 19th, 1997  
 Plaintiff  
 vs.  
**THE HEIRS & DEVISEES OF JOHN JOHNSON & WILHEMINA JOHNSON, h/w; AND, ALL PERSONS UNKNOWN CLAIMING ANY INTEREST IN OR TO THE SUBJECT REAL PROPERTY**  
 Defendants  
 No. 23-2-00565-29  
**SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION**  
 THE STATE OF WASHINGTON TO: ALL PERSONS UNKNOWN CLAIMING ANY INTEREST IN OR TO THE SUBJECT REAL PROPERTY, Defendants:  
 You are hereby summoned to appear within sixty days after the date of the first publication of this summons, to wit, within sixty days after the 26th day of July, 2023, and defend the above entitled action in the above entitled court, and answer the complaint of the plaintiffs, and serve a copy of your answer upon the undersigned attorney for plaintiffs at his office below stated; and in case of your failure so to do, judgment will be rendered against you according to the demand of the complaint, which has been filed with the clerk of said court.

The object of this action is to quiet title to certain real property, located in Skagit County, Washington, and described as follows:  
 That portion of the Northeast ¼ of the Northwest ¼ of Section 14, Township 35 North, Range 3 East, W.M., lying East of the Pacific Highway; EXCEPT one acre, also showing as one acre square, also showing as the North 208.7 feet of the East 208.7 feet thereof.  
 DATED: July 26, 2023.

**CRAIG SJOSTROM #21149**  
 Attorney for Plaintiff  
 1204 Cleveland Ave.  
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
 (360) 848-0339  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News July 26, Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 2023.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY**  
 No. 23-4-00417-29  
**PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
 (RCW 11.40.030)

In the Matter of the Estates of Glen K. and Betty R. Loy, husband and wife, 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 decedents' probate and non-probate assets.  
 Date of first publication: August 16, 2023  
 Michelle M. Foggin  
 Personal Representative  
**SKAGIT LAW GROUP, PLLC**  
 MEGAN OTIS MASON-HOLDER, WSBA #29495  
 Attorneys for Personal Representative  
 P.O. Box 336/227 Freeway Drive, Suite B  
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Aug. 16, 23, 30, 2023.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY**  
 No. 23-4-00416-29  
**PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
 (RCW 11.40.030)

In the Matter of the Estate of Donna M. Zeltinger, 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

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY**  
 No. 23-4-00416-29  
**PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
 (RCW 11.40.030)

In the Matter of the Estate of Donna M. Zeltinger, 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: August 16, 2023  
 Michelle M. Foggin  
 Personal Representative  
**SKAGIT LAW GROUP, PLLC**  
 MEGAN OTIS MASON-HOLDER, WSBA #29495  
 Attorneys for Personal Representative  
 P.O. Box 336/227 Freeway Drive, Suite B  
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Aug. 16, 23, 30, 2023.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF KING**  
 In re the Estate of STEPHEN E. WICKS, Deceased  
 Case No.: 23-4-05210-0SEA  
**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: Aug. 16, 2023  
 Personal Representative: Cindy Maxwell  
 Attorney for the Personal Representative: Michael Biesheuvel  
 Address for Mailing or Service: 114 Second Ave. S., Suite 101, Edmonds, WA 98020  
 Court of probate proceedings and case number: King County, WA  
 Law Offices of Kyle G. Ray,

P.S. 114 Second Ave. S., Suite 101, Edmonds, WA 98020  
 (425) 712-0279  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Aug. 16, 23, 30, 2023.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY**  
 Estate of  
 C. SUSAN COOPER  
 (a/k/a SUSAN COOPER),  
 Deceased.  
 NO. 23-4-00405-29  
**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: August 16, 2023  
 Jerald Allen, Personal Representative  
 c/o Jayne Marsh Gilbert, WSBA #24656  
 Attorney for Personal Representative  
 314 Pine Street, Sute 211  
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Aug. 16, 23, 30, 2023.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF KING**  
 In the Matter of the Estate of: NANCY M. HUSTED, Deceased.  
 NO. 23-4-05572-9 KNT  
**PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Jami L. Wallace has been appointed as the 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: (a) filing the original of the claim with the Court, and (b) serving the Personal Representative or the Personal Representative's attorney at the address stated below with a copy of the claim. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) THIRTY DAYS after the Personal Representative has served actual notice to the creditor as provided under RCW 11.40.020(3); or (2) FOUR MONTHS after the date of first publication of the notice. If the claim is not presented within this time frame, the claim is forever barred, except as otherwise provided in RCW sections 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective as to claims against both the decedent's probate and non-probate assets.  
 Date of First Publication: August 16, 2023  
 Personal Representative: Cathy MARQUEZ  
 Address for Mailing or Service: JOSEPH D. BOWEN ATTORNEY AT LAW, 401 South Second Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Aug. 23, 30, Sept. 6, 2023.

ive as to claims against both the decedent's probate and non-probate assets.  
 DATE OF OPENING PROBATE: August 9, 2023  
 DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION: August 16, 2023  
 Attorney for Personal Representative  
 Michael K. DuBeau, WSBA # 15581 Michael DuBeau & Associates, PS 2135 - 112th Avenue, N.E., Suite 200 Bellevue, WA 98004. (425) 455-9787  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Aug. 16, 23, 30, 2023.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SNOHOMISH**  
 The Estate of Joshua E. MARQUEZ, Deceased,  
 Cathy MARQUEZ, Petitioner  
 NO. 23-4-01042-31  
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS TO: ALL CREDITORS OF THE DECEDENT**

**YOU AND EACH OF YOU TAKE NOTE** that the Personal Representative named below has been appointed as Personal Representative of this Estate. Any person having a claim against the decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner as provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing to the Personal Representative or the Personal Representative's attorney at the address stated below a copy of the claim and filing the original of the claim with the court 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(3); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of the notice. If the claim is not presented within this time frame, the claim is forever barred, except as otherwise provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective as to claims against both the decedent's probate and nonprobate assets.  
 Date of First Publication August 23, 2023  
 Personal Representative: Cathy MARQUEZ  
 Address for Mailing or Service: JOSEPH D. BOWEN ATTORNEY AT LAW, 401 South Second Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Aug. 23, 30, Sept. 6, 2023.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON FOR KING COUNTY**  
 In Re the Estate of LEONNA J. GRAY, Deceased.  
 NO. 23-4-04266-0 SEA  
**PROBATE 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. The claim must be presented within the later of: (a) Thirty days after the personal representative served or mailed the notice to the creditor as provided under RCW 11.40.020(3); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of the notice. If the claim is not presented within this time frame, the claim is forever barred, except as otherwise provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective as to claims against both the decedent's probate and nonprobate assets.  
 Date of First Publication: August 23, 2023.  
 Personal Representative: Brenda D.R. Warner  
 Attorneys for Personal Representative: OSTREM LAW,

PLLC  
 Address for Mailing or Service: 8905 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Aug. 23, 30, Sept. 6, 2023.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY**  
 No. 23-4-00426-29  
**PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
 (RCW 11.40.030)

In the Matter of the Estate of Steven J. Hill, 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: August 23, 2023  
 Drusilla A. Hill  
 Personal Representative  
**SKAGIT LAW GROUP, PLLC**  
 MEGAN OTIS MASON-HOLDER, WSBA #29495  
 Attorneys for Personal Representative  
 P.O. Box 336/227 Freeway Drive, Suite B  
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Aug. 23, 30, Sept. 6, 2023.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY**  
 No. 23-4-00441-29  
**PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
 (RCW 11.40.030)

In the Matter of the Estate of Margery G. Zimmerman, 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: August 30, 2023  
 Ann L. Hernandez  
 Personal Representative  
**SKAGIT LAW GROUP, PLLC**  
 MEGAN OTIS MASON-HOLDER, WSBA #29495  
 Attorneys for Personal Representative  
 P.O. Box 336/227 Freeway Drive, Suite B, Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, Aug. 30, Sept. 6 and 13, 2023.

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# Sept. 2: Let's celebrate Tom Robbins

*Townwide celebration to speak volumes of author's community impact*

By Bill Reynolds

Some people, no matter how dire the situation, always see things with a glass half-full perspective.

And then there's Tom Robbins.

The acclaimed La Conner author, who famously quit his gig at the Seattle Times by calling in "well," has during his more than 50 years here earned a reputation as a joy hunter, always seeking and cherishing life's "cup runneth over" moments.

That tireless devotion to optimism, regularly punctuated with wit and whimsy, will be saluted during "Tom Robbins Day" festivities in town Saturday.

Robbins, whom the Los Angeles Times hailed as the new Mark Twain following the release of his "Another Roadside Attraction" in 1971, will be feted as king for a day in recognition of his long reign over the domains of imagination and exultation, often dispensed from the renowned New York Times bestseller list.

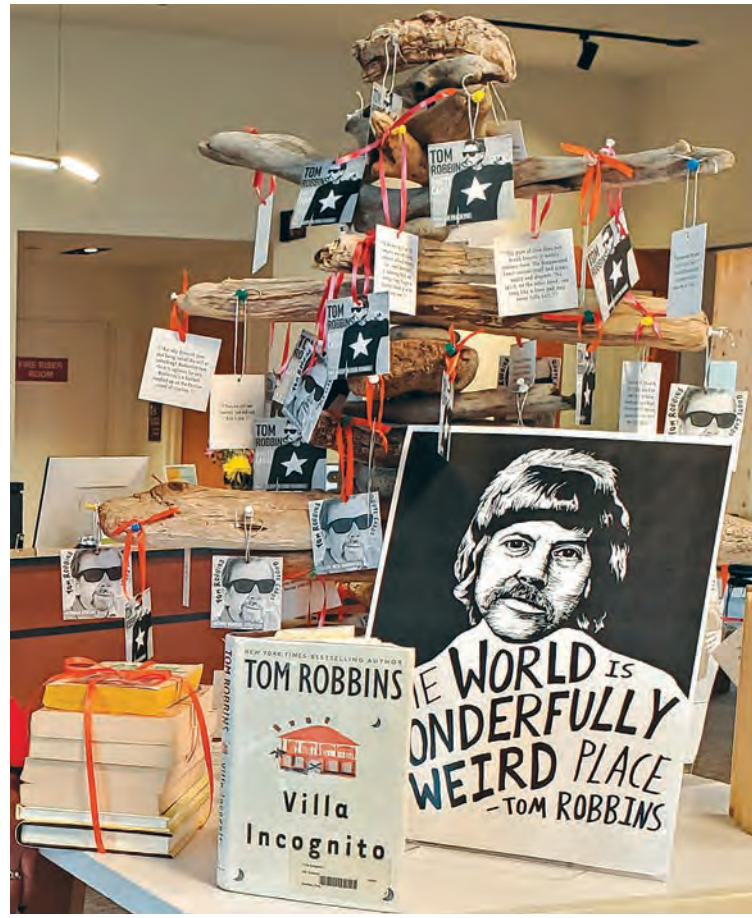
Additionally, the Sept. 2 event will generate financial support for youth arts and literacy outreach programs at the new La Conner Swinomish Library on Morris Street.

"This is huge for us," library director Jean Markert said. "We're really excited about it. We're still quite early in the process, but we can envision a space where kids can come and be creative and be themselves. It's going to be great."

Markert said that Robbins' books are quite popular with La Conner readers.

"Most of them are (always) checked out," she said, "especially right now."

The library has added a trivia card game to its Robbins collection that can now be obtained with a donation to the La Conner Library Foundation, she said.



**TREE-MENDOUS IDEA** — A Tom Robbins Tree at La Conner Swinomish Library is among the signature attractions that will highlight Saturday's celebration of the local author's career and witty, whimsical approach to life. — Photo by Bill Reynolds

Ahead of Saturday's celebration, the library has unveiled a "Tom Robbins Tree" bearing images of and quotes from the author, a son of the rural south who seamlessly transitioned to life in the Pacific Northwest, where among his more notable and early reporting assignments was a review of Jimi Hendrix's homecoming concert for a Seattle underground newspaper.

La Conner proved an ideal landing spot for the former Seattle metro journalist. Much like the La Conner of yore, Robbins' North Carolina hometown had morphed each summer from what has been described as a "backwater

small town" to a popular tourist destination.

"When you live in a fast-paced, competitive environment, you're less inclined to daydream, or to engage in long conversations, in which language is used for its own sake," Robbins told interviewer Mary Ann Gwinn in 2014. "As a kid I was exposed to snake handlers, gypsies, moonshiners and eccentric old men who were great storytellers."

Robbins, now 91 and the grandson of preachers, would become one of America's pre-eminent storytellers through his string of bestselling novels.

His career led local fans earlier this summer to approach

Robbins' wife, Alexa, about the possibility of honoring him with a day of joy and celebration — complete with a parade, costume contest, food, beverages, arts and shopping.

Alexa Robbins gave her blessing, especially when Tom Robbins Day was aligned with support of the library's mission to serve the community's youth.

"Libraries," Alexa Robbins told the Weekly News, "are interactive places where people can be fed. And our library is the perfect place to be a real community center."

She called the day for her husband "a great idea. It's a great way to celebrate imagination, creativity and wonder. It's a way we can celebrate what we can be as a human family."

Mayor Ramon Hayes will be among the celebrants. He intends to present the author a formal Tom Robbins Day proclamation during the Saturday parade.

"First and foremost, like every citizen of La Conner," said Hayes, "Tom is a valued member of the community. And, in his case, he has achieved a significant level of achievement."

Library patron Kelsey Stevens, a parent of school-age children, was literally on the same page as the mayor.

"It's always a good thing to have a celebration," Stevens said as she perused titles at the library Friday morning, "especially since it's going to help the library's children's reading programs."

Robbins said it best in describing how the upcoming townwide celebration dovetails perfectly with her husband's "joy in spite of everything" approach.

"We're here in this beautiful place," she said, "and I feel our community is ripe to be a model for something that promotes the possibility of a movement for hope."

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# King for a Day: Let's celebrate Tom Robbins

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- Tom Robbins, Jitterbug Perfume

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