



Vampires suck power from your home • p 2
American Tugs: good jobs at good wages • p 8

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LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

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Last annular eclipse until 2046



A CRESCENT SUN – was created when the moon moved between the earth and the sun on Saturday Oct. 14. La Conner was not in the path of totality, so viewers did not witness the complete “ring of fire,” visible to those who were, but instead got this sliver of sun at the peak, about 9:20 A.M. The next annular solar eclipse will be in 2046.

—Photo by Nancy Crowell

Ballots and local elections coming

By Ken Stern

Voters living in the La Conner School District have one choice on their ballot in the school board race for the District 2 director. John Agen, elected to the District 1 position in 2019, has moved into the district. Janie Beasley, defeated in her 2019 reelection for that seat, is running again.

No other local race is contested. Residents have to decide to vote their approval or not mark their ballots in these local elections:

La Conner School District

Alana Quintasket, District 1

Kim Pedroza, District 4

Town of La Conner

Marna Hanneman, mayor

Annie Taylor, Position 1

Mary Wohleb, Position 5

Port of Skagit

Steve Omdal, Position 2 commissioner

Neither Agen nor Beasley have reported campaign contributions to the state’s Public Disclosure Commission. None of the La Conner school board candidate submitted information for the Skagit County voters’ pamphlet.

Skagit County Elections Department staff will mail ballots by Friday. Voters will cast ballots through 8 p.m. Nov. 7 at local drop boxes at the old library building, 614 Morris Street and the Swinomish Reservation Social Services Building, 17337 Reservation Road. Ballots mailed through the post office must be postmarked by Nov. 7. No stamp is needed.

Register to vote online by Oct. 30 or mailed voter registrations must be received by Oct. 30.

Questions: Skagit County Elections Department, 360-416-1702. Election and voter registration information: VoteWa.gov.

School board candidates speak at League forum

By Bill Reynolds

The candidates in La Conner’s only contested 2023 election shared their views and personal backgrounds at a Skagit County League of Women Voters forum in Mount Vernon Monday night.

John Agen, elected director in District 1 in 2019, is the La Conner school board’s legislative liaison. Janie Beasley served a decade on the five-member governing body until 2019. Each shared prepared statements and answered a set of questions.

Candidates for seats on the Sedro-Woolley and Mount Vernon school boards preceded them in the 90-minute program at the Skagit PUD Building. Agen and Beasley are running for District 2

(continued on page 5)

Blessing the La Conner Swinomish Library

By Judy Booth

Like loons calling across the water, like Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah,” the Swinomish Canoe Family hushed the crowd of 150 people as they sang and drummed a blessing prayer, the chorus meandering its way from the majestic totem outside into the La Conner Swinomish Library Saturday afternoon.

The building felt just a little more hallowed. And crowded. Whew! There were a lot of people there.

The pole, made from a 400-year old western red cedar, carved by Kevin Paul and assisted by his son-in-law Camas Logue, represents sharing of resources, guidance and wisdom. The figure at the bottom is a Coast Salish welcoming figure symbolizing inclusion.

This theme of inclusion continues to run throughout the building and was remarked upon by speakers representing the Swinomish Tribe, the Town, Skagit County and Washington state.

Matt Aalfs, principal of the architectural firm BuildingWork, in collaboration with Paul, “looked at La Conner buildings and that informed my design ... and worked with Swinomish to incorporate, especially Kevin’s pole – and used the colors of the pole for the building.”

As Mayor Ramon Hayes so clearly stated (and restated) a lot of hard work by a lot of people, cooperating with each other over a long period of time, made this happen.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE – Swinomish Senator Brian Wilbur joined in the chorus of thanks and praise at the dedication of the La Conner Swinomish Library Saturday afternoon.

—Photo by Ken Stern

The play of light from the welcoming windows to the warm wood donated by Sierra Pacific to 42 roof-top solar panels, to carved canoe paddles gracing the walls, and enough space to welcome 150 people, quiet sitting spaces, a conference room and a child’s area made all the years of hard work worthwhile.

B.J. Carol, representing Friends of the Library, pointed out that the beginnings of this chapter of the La Conner

(continued on page 6)

School board candidates answer our questions for you



John Agen

Candidates responded to these issues:
 1. School District’s greatest strengths.
 2. Curriculum and policies valuing student voices.
 3. Schools’ unique features to maintain.
 4. How to best support Superintendent Will Nelson.
 5. High school’s future if enrollment remains low.
 6. Your experiences and qualities.

1. Community: La Conner has a long history of great support for our students and schools.

Diversity: We have a wonderful blend that includes significant numbers of Native, Hispanic and Caucasian

students and lesser numbers of other backgrounds.

Teaching/Professional/Support Staff: The teacher role spans from long tenured alums, to a relative newcomer from New York, Ms .Huscher, who has already won recognition statewide. Many of our staff have willingly accepted greater duties due to budget constraints.

2. The board meets twice a year with students to gain insight and give students a voice into our policies.

In addition, we added a topic to our monthly board meeting for our student reps to share ideas with us around a specific policy.

The District policy regarding equity, also part of our strategic plan. The board recently added a second student representative. These reps are tasked with bringing student issues and ideas for improvement to the elected board.

3. I would hope the aforementioned community support for students and the District will continue. The close relationships between teachers and students was a meaningful part of my years in the District. It continues today and I presume it will be maintained. Tribal input and traditions have grown as a part of our District and I believe that will only expand.

(continued on page 4)



Janie Beasley

1. I believe the three greatest strengths of the La Conner School District are: the parents, who want the best education that their children can get, so they are very supportive and involved; the staff are committed to their students and providing the best education they can; and the administrative staff and board for finding the best education and best solutions for any shortcoming or issues that come up.

2. I believe policies and curriculum address basic level education standards, but we also offer the Since Time Immemorial Curriculum, native language and culture classes; Between Two Worlds Science Classes, as well, and student reps

on the school board, so the students have a voice to address and voice their concerns re: positive and negative impacts.

3. The Since Time Immemorial Curriculum is required, on a broad scale, but we have a relationship with the tribal community and can develop a more personal connection with tribal history, which I believe we should. As stated previously, the culture and language are important and history of why those values were taken from our ancestors. Between Two Worlds is a fairly new program, continuing and developing that program is invaluable, we all need to learn how to Protect Mother Earth.

4. It is the job of the board to know and assist Dr. Will Nelson implement policies, but we also need to support him in all the aspects of his job, regarding staff and day-to-day activities in the schools.

5. Possibly doing an in-depth study of the reason for lower enrollment and looking into what the school can do to foster relationships with the community in order to address any issues or concerns. Is it COVID-19; is it homeschooling or running start; is it relationship building; is it not meeting the needs of students?

(continued on page 4)

From the editor—

Elections demand high expectations

Ballots will be arriving in the mail soon. We have very few choices in this year of municipal elections. There is only one contested seat: the La Conner school district Director 2 position. The rest of the positions in greater La Conner, for school director positions 1 and 4, Port of Skagit commissioner position 2 and Town of La Conner mayor and council positions 1 and 5 are all decided when the candidates cast their ballots.

That is our bad, residents and constituents of those jurisdictions. It may be that school board member Kim Pedroza and candidate Alana Quintasket are so good that there was no need to challenge them. In La Conner, Marla Hanneman, running for mayor and Annie Taylor and Mary Wohleb, to maintain their council positions, perhaps are so outstanding that no one saw a need to run against them.

It is not the candidates' fault that they are running unopposed. But candidates and constituents all, don't fall into complacency and allow the next 18 days to snooze on buy. It is not a matter of filling in boxes on sheets of paper – or not filling them in. The challenge, and responsibility, is on the candidates to make the effort and reach out to residents to explain why they are returning to another term of office – for Hanneman, what she hopes to accomplish – and why we, as voters need to check the box in front of their names.

Citizen movements in various states have advocated for a “None of the Above” ballot option: NOTA, a box at the bottom of each office for voters to have the option to mark that yes, we actively decide that none of the candidates meet our needs for the office.

Since these positions are not contested, office holders have all the more reason to be visible and share their vision for the institutions for which they are volunteering to be responsible.

Why are they running for reelection? What is important about the positions that they want us to place our trust in them?

Gale Fiege is right to be disappointed, as she expresses in her letter this week, noting that no La Conner school district candidate submitted a voter profile for the election guide.

Still, residents need to thank every person standing for an office. These are our neighbors. They are willing to run for and serve as school board and town council members and port commissioners, stepping forward when no one else has. They have taken on difficult and often thankless jobs. Significant responsibility is involved: the schools budget is almost \$13 million. Some 70 employees are responsible for about 500 students. The school board watches over all that.

While the Town of La Conner is a much smaller operation, with a \$6 million-plus budget and maybe a dozen employees, every dollar spent and every day of work is done in service to the town's residents.

Local elected officials toil at the start of and heart of democracy. In our small community they must move forward in always difficult times, overseeing institutions that are under resourced monetarily and staff-wise.

So citizens, these next 18 days take your civic obligation seriously and reach out to candidates. Voters do not “give” incumbents four more years. Voters elect candidates to four more years. Candidates, reach out and make the case for winning the votes of your neighbors.

There are issues and concerns important to you as officeholders. What issues do you need to be discussing with residents and what issues do you want them to pay attention to and provide support for?

And that contested school board race between Agen and Beasley? You can take a closer look. Watch the League of Women Voters of Skagit County's recording of the Oct. 16 candidate forum on their website: skagitlv.org/Election-Forums.html.

—Ken Stern

LETTERS

Why weren't school board candidates in voter pamphlet?

I was disappointed when I opened the Skagit County voters' pamphlet only to find that none of the candidates for La Conner School Board had submitted statements.

To Alana Quintasket, John Agen, Janie Beasley and Kim Pedroza: What is your excuse?

Voters need to read about why you are seeking election.

I don't care if you are the most popular person in the district, you still need to make a statement.

And if the voters pamphlet deadline was too much for you, how can we be assured that you will do your job on the board?

Gale Fiege
Pleasant Ridge

Thank you La Conner

On Aug. 15 our motor home was parked in La Conner while my husband and I took a walk. A few minutes later we heard fire engines and walked back to see, as it was near our motor home.

It was our motor home and we were so fortunate the firefighters did a terrific job, as it was near the ice cream stand.

We just want to thank Kevin and Carla Little for their phone numbers in case we needed to stay overnight. We also want to thank the nurse that came by and gave us her phone number. The support we had was phenomenal. People came by with food, water, cash, hugs and places to stay. The fire marshal was helpful and gave us his number in case we had a problem.

We have been going to La Conner for about 30 years and now we know why. It is the people. I can't thank the people enough, as for the five hours we were there people were so kind.

Thank you. We are forever grateful.

Kerry and Bill Eyre
El Segundo, California

Grant applications for trees, fish slide repairs denied

By Bill Reynolds

Since money doesn't grow on trees, Town officials and the La Conner Chamber of Commerce hoped reversing the process might pay off in support of a civic beautification campaign.

Alas, grants written to plant trees on Morris Street and remove trees and related cleanup work at Pioneer Park were not funded, so no money to repair the iconic salmon slide at Conner Waterfront Park, either.

Chamber director Mark Hulst and Parks Commission Chair Ollie Iversen vowed last week to try again despite the competitive nature of applications.

“We'll continue to work with various committees and commissions in town to find grant money to do more beautification in the business district,” Hulst told town council at its Oct. 10 meeting.

Iversen, meanwhile, suggested a targeted “Adopt a Tree” fundraising drive be revived

at the parks commission Oct. 11 meeting. He estimated trees would cost between \$2,500 and \$3,000 each.

Iversen and former town administrator John Doyle were disheartened at failing to gain a state Local Maintenance Program Recreation and Conservation Office grant for the fish slide repairs and the Pioneer Park tree work.

“If it comes up again next year, we'll go for it again,”

(continued on page 3)

Town council Oct. 10 meeting

Joint meeting on paid parking coming

By Bill Reynolds

The Oct. 10 La Conner Town Council meeting was full of comings and goings.

Council will meet jointly with the planning commission Nov. 28 to hear a presentation from representatives specializing in paid parking systems.

“This will give you information on what some of the options are,” Planning Director Michael Davolio told them.

Planning Commissioners John Leaver and Bruce Bradburn have spoken to two companies. They reported to the commission, noting Leavenworth and Bellingham have committed to paid parking.

Town Emergency Management Commissioner Jerry George, who wrote a Weekly News column on Thursday's Great ShakeOut, followed up with comments on earthquake preparedness.

“Things are always shaking in La Conner,” he quipped, “so you might not have noticed that we had an earthquake on Sunday night.”

George said the quake rumbled some 35 miles beneath the earth's surface and was centered south of Port Townsend, some 46 miles distant.

“If it had been nearer the surface,” George pointed out, “we could've really felt it in La Conner.”

La Conner Chamber of Commerce Chamber Director Mark Hulst promoted the annual Jingle Belles Ladies Night shopping Nov. 17. Participating stores are being encouraged to take part in a decoration contest voted upon by shoppers.

Council continued its discussion of funding future street maintenance and repairs with a one-tenth of one per cent sales tax increase.

“Transportation Benefit Districts are not uncommon throughout the state and here in Skagit County,” reported Town Administrator Scott Thomas.

“Statewide, cities have formed 113 TBDs. Anacortes formed a TBD in 2014; Sedro-Woolley in 2014; and Mount Vernon in

2016. Anacortes' and Mount Vernon's TBDs are funded by a 0.2 per cent sales tax, while Sedro-Woolley's is funded by a \$20 vehicle license fee.

A vehicle license fee for town residents is the alternative.

“We just need to think about these two options,” council member Mary Wohleb said of the sales tax and license fee revenue sources.

Skagit County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Brad Holmes, managing the La Conner detachment, reported a rash of vehicle prowls on the north side of town last month appeared to be “crimes of opportunity.”

“There wasn't any smashing of windows,” Holmes said. “I think somebody walked through and took advantage of an opportunity.” They were unlocked vehicles, he noted.

Public Works Director Brian Lease said his staff have filled about 2,000 sandbags with a machine on loan from a local dike district. He said the Town had also purchased pre-filled bags that are being placed at locations in low-lying areas on the north and south waterfronts along with Ecology Blocks.

“Tides have been higher than normal,” Lease said, “so we'll be doing this the next couple weeks.”

Staff reported plans to meet with Port of Skagit representatives to discuss funding for purchase of a fire boat and the state legislature will also be lobbied for support.

Council approved an ordinance limiting the operation and location of adult businesses to the town's port industrial and light and medium industrial zones.. The measure, reminded Thomas, is necessary because without specific restrictions adult businesses could open anywhere in La Conner's commercial areas.

The fairly mundane hybrid budget discussions, on the wastewater treatment plant, were interrupted by a profane and racist “Zoom Bomb” that for a few moments hijacked the 40-minute meeting.

This is flood awareness week

Flood Awareness Week runs through Friday, Oct. 20.

Serious flooding generally occurs between October and March.

The Skagit County government offers a variety of alert tools for residents. Sign up for CodeRed Alerts, follow @SkagitGov on Twitter, or sign up

for news releases to receive key emergency information before, during and after an event..

Information: skagitcounty.net/flood or contact Skagit County Department of Emergency Management, 360-416-1850.

Source: Skagit County Department of Emergency Management

Don't let vampire and phantom electric loads suck your power out of your house

By Greg Whiting

Pumpkin spice lattes, football, leaves starting to change color, the approach of Halloween ... it's time to talk about vampires and phantoms.

Vampire and phantom electric loads, that is.

Many consumer electronics today are on even when they're off. Clocks seem to be built into just about everything, though not used; they're often just blinking 00:00. Computers, televisions and gaming consoles have standby modes to allow them to start up quickly, apparently because manufacturers think we're too impatient to wait ten seconds to watch the Seahawks. (Perhaps they're right. When I was the



utility manager at the SeaTac Airport, I called cable TV the most important utility, because people sitting in airport bars can survive without water longer than they can survive without the Seahawks.)

The power consumed by devices that are supposed to be off are called a “vampire electric load” or a “phantom load.” The amount of power a device uses depends heavily on that specific device, so the effect is hard to measure without installing a meter on every

plug in your house. However, the cumulative energy consumption from these devices is believed to be substantial. As lighting and HVAC systems have become more and more efficient, standby power has become a significant fraction of household use. Vampire electric loads might account for up to 10% of American household electricity consumption.

To drive a stake into energy vampires and exorcise energy phantoms, unplug electronics when they're not in use. Doing that is extraordinarily inconvenient, so a more user-friendly solution is to plug electronics into a power strip and turn them all off using the power strip switch. The TV will take a little longer to start up, but if you're consistent about

it, your electric bill will go down.

A more sophisticated solution is to plug electronics into a “smart” power strip, which senses when a device is off, or when a primary device like a television is off, and automatically cuts off power. Or, if you have a device that needs to be on at certain times, like a security lamp, use a timer. (Yes, the useless clock will flash 00:00 when you turn it on. Think of it as proof that you're saving energy, or just put a piece of electrical tape over it.)

Timers and smart plugs also allow you to control when devices receive power. Set them up to provide electricity during the times you need the devices to be active. This is especially useful when charging batteries, in anything

from a cell phone to a car. Set up the timer or smart plug to be on only during off-peak electric hours (hours when it seems likely that everyone else won't be using electricity at the same time, say, 9 p.m.-5 a.m.). Charging takes place when the charging least affects the electric grid.

When buying appliances, look for devices with low standby power consumption. Energy Star labeled devices typically have lower standby power requirements. Look for devices that can be set up to enter sleep or low-power modes when not in use. The setting is available on many new appliances. It significantly reduces standby power consumption.

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Ken Stern, Publisher & Editor

editor@laconnernews.com

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Bill Reynolds, News Editor
news@laconnernews.com

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

Nancy K. Crowell, Production Manager
Eileen Engelstad, Proofreader
Rick Shorten, Special Projects

Contributors:

Anne Basye, Judy Booth, Nancy Crowell, Don Coyote, Mel Damski, Kylee Fortygyn, Janna Gage, Bob Hamblin, Madoc Hiller, Ollie Iversen, Bobbi Krebs-McMullen, Patricia Paul, Claire Swedberg, Sayer Theiss, Sarah Walls, Aven Wright-McIntosh

OBITUARIES



David Francis Ehman
Oct. 21, 1950 - Oct. 16, 2023

Dave is gone. For someone who was consistently late to every appointment, he left this world way too early. David Francis Ehman was born to Shirley Ehman and Marvel Brodt Ehman on October 21, 1950, in Dayton, Ohio. He joined sisters Kathy and Marilyn. Later, Julie would join them. He attended public schools in Dayton, Ohio through high school, and went on to attend and graduate from Valparaiso University in Indiana with a Political Science degree. Beginning as a teacher's aide, David was immediately drawn to working with children with disabilities and decided to turn that into his life's work. In 1980 David moved to Seattle to attend the University of Washington's school of Education and earned his master's degree in special education. Enamored with the natural setting of the Pacific Northwest, he decided to stay. He worked in the Lake Washington School District, then

the Stanwood-Camano School District, and ended his teaching career in the La Conner School District, completing a 42-year calling.

In his earliest years of teaching in Ohio, David began his lifelong interest in backpacking and hiking in the summers. One summer he was employed as a chambermaid at the Grand Canyon Lodge, so that he could spend his off-hours hiking the canyon. He was proud to tell anyone who cared that he was promoted from chambermaid to head of the linen closet in just one summer.

Dave had a well-developed spiritual life. Sometimes church-related, having grown up in the Lutheran Church, and sometimes nature-related, finding peace, solace and inspiration in the mountains. Dave spent as much time as possible in nature, backpacking and hiking, and recruiting as many family members into that lifestyle as he could. David loved animals. During his adult life, Dave was never without a dog, sometimes one, and at one time as many as four. He has loved other animals as well, and collected a veritable menagerie: Cats, dogs, ducks, chickens, goats, sheep.

He enjoyed every form of entertainment: Reading, movies, music, sports. He enjoyed being the "voice" of the La Conner Braves basketball team as the home announcer, and conversations with anyone about anything. He was someone who sincerely cared about other people's lives and interests.

Dave was inspired by music. He loved all genres. He played the trombone in high school, and the stand-up base in a band in

Stanwood (though he confessed that he didn't know how to play it, just wanted to be in a band). Always with a song on his lips, it is appropriate that David's final words were lyrics: "Clowns to the left of me, jokers to the right..."

David was always thoughtful, inquisitive, kind and absolutely hilarious. He was adored by all of his nieces and nephews. Dave related well to young people, mostly because he was young at heart himself. His optimism was unending and endured through his battle with cancer.

Family was very important to Dave, and he was especially proud of his daughter, Jessie.

Dave is survived by his wife, Sara, his daughter Jessie, and his sisters Kathy Ludeman, Marilyn Dallet, and Julie Knostman. He will be forever missed by his extended family of Harlans (Mit, Maureen, Mike, Jennifer, Morgan, and Lane), and his many Ehman nieces and nephews. Anyone who knew Dave is going to feel like the world is a little too quiet now.

A celebration of David's life will take place later in the spring. Memorial contributions can be made to Skagit Humane Society or the Sierra Club. You may offer your condolences and share memories of David online at www.kernfuneralhome.com. Arrangements are in the care of Kern Funeral Home.



Robert "Bob" Abrams
Jan. 22, 1931- Oct. 11, 2023

It is with extreme sadness that we announce the passing of Robert "Bob" Abrams. He was a bright spark in our world and will be deeply missed by many. Bob passed away Oct. 11, 2023, in his home in La Conner. He was 92 years old.

Bob was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Jan. 22, 1931. After being discharged from the Navy in 1953, he attended the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and upon completion was offered a position with Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, California. He attended the Art Center School in Los Angeles and several colleges and universities for cinematography and film editing. He obtained his teaching credentials from UCLA.

We all knew him as "The Disney Artist." He always said "I never worked a day in my life" because he loved going into the studio every day! He drew all our favorite cartoon characters: Mickey Mouse,

Sleeping Beauty, Donald Duck, Bugs Bunny, Mr. Magoo to name only a few. He went on to become a freelance artist for TV and films. He was a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the American Film Institute. From there, Bob became senior art director at ad agencies in the Los Angeles area, being honored by the advertising and printing industries.

Bob was a prolific artist in many genres. His work has been shown in galleries from California to Pennsylvania and is in collections all over the world. After his retirement, he continued to create beautiful art while lecturing at colleges, schools, libraries and museums.

Bob will be remembered for his passion for life, his happy positive outlook, his kindness. He was a true friend to many.

He is survived by his sons: David Abrams (wife Katrien), Ed Moltz (wife Lori) and daughter Susan Abrams. His grandchildren: Jake Abrams (wife Tiffany), Daniel Abrams (wife Neary), James Abrams (wife Rita), Heather and Michael Abrams; Anna, Michael, Jean, Billy Jo, and Kristene Moltz. Sister Portia Jacobs (husband Mel) as well as numerous great grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Everyone is invited to a Celebration of Life which is expected to be held at Maple Hall in La Conner. Date and time to be announced.



Grant

■■■ (from page 3)

Iversen said. Doyle noted the waterfront park idea bloomed around the slide. "It was always considered a critical feature of the park," Doyle said at the council meeting.

The RCO grant was to have covered the bulk of rehab work on the slide.

With that option nixed for now, Doyle told council that private fundraising continues and another grant application will be submitted in 2024.

"We're on track to get donations," he said, "and we'll be applying for the grant again next year and work on the slide in the spring.

"We want to get the slide working," Doyle stressed. "It's really critical to get that function

back." Mayor Ramon Hayes praised Iversen and Doyle for their efforts to restore the slide. "You've been committed to this for a long time," Hayes said. "We're grateful you're taking this on and we're looking for-

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La Conner girls' soccer team blanks 1A Sultan

School sports highlights: Teams on road last week

By Bill Reynolds

The La Conner High School Lady Braves brought their 'A' game to the soccer pitch Saturday.

Actually, they brought their better than 'A' game.

Lydia Grossglass took a well-placed pass from Kendall Lee to break a scoreless tie and forge a thrilling 1-0 La Conner non-league triumph at 1A Sultan, taking the sting out of twin 5-0 setbacks earlier in the week to Friday Harbor and at North Mason.

"I'm so proud of the team for performing at such a high level with back-to-back-to-back away games," Lady Braves coach Maddie Huscher said after her charges secured the hard-fought road win.

"The girls have become such a stronger team in the past couple of months," added Huscher.

"They're learning to read the game, be patient when defending and to look up while dribbling to find amazing passes."

Huscher stressed that there was "lots of learning" in the team's three matches.

She said the loss at NW2B/1B rival Friday Harbor was an improved showing over their prior meeting, an 8-0 home defeat in September.

Huscher praised the work in goal by goal keeper Josi Straathof at Friday Harbor.

"She was aggressive coming out for the ball and diving to save the ball," said Huscher.

Straathof did so despite having sustained a knee injury during the match.

"But she stayed strong for the team and played the rest of the game," Huscher said of Straathof.

The Lady Braves shook off a sluggish start at 2A North Mason to keep the hosts off the scoreboard after halftime.

"Our players went out there and just had fun playing the game they love with their teammates," said Huscher, "and it showed in how they performed during the second half."

La Conner resumes its non-conference away schedule tomorrow (Thursday) at 1A Nooksack Valley.

Boys soccer

The boys' soccer squad looks to rebound this week after dropping a hard-fought 4-2 league home test with Orcas Island. The Braves are at Auburn Adventist tomorrow and visit NW2B/1B Coupeville on Friday.

Coach Galen McKnight told the Weekly News that his club has much to build on off the match

with Orcas, a perennial small school soccer power.

Lane Tenborg and Jarrett Hatch each scored for La Conner against the Vikings, with Corran Eisen assisting on both goals.

Hadden Zimmerman and goalkeeper Tyler Cicotte were La Conner's defensive standouts.

"They both held the Orcas strikers in check for most of the game," McKnight said. "Tyler was tested a lot during this game and came up with some big saves."

The Braves, 1-4 in league and 3-7 overall, have played close matches all season but have fallen short in the late going, noted McKnight.

"We've been equal with all the teams we've been playing," McKnight said, "but we're struggling finishing in the final third."

Football

The opposite has been true of the football team, whose pattern has been to finish strong after slow starts. That was the case again Friday for the Braves (0-3 in league, 1-5 overall), who fell behind 37-0 in the first half at Friday Harbor enroute to a 44-6 conference loss.

"If we play an entire game like we have played the last few second halves we can have some great success," said Braves head coach Charlie Edwards.

"Our coaches," Edwards said, "made some great adjustments at the half."

C.J. Edwards ran for the lone touchdown and Kenai Zimmerman led a Braves ground attack that picked up steam after the break. Despite wet conditions, La Conner quarterback Ivory Damien passed well, also.

Defensively, Marlon Edwards enjoyed a solid outing.

The team hosts Coupeville Friday.

Volleyball

The high school volleyball team has established a pattern of its own, using tough losses to foreshadow larger enrollment schools to prepare for the NW-2B/1B title race. That was the case last week when the Lady Braves fell at 4A Glacier Peak but improved to 6-0 in league standings with a straight-sets victory over Darrington.

"The girls showed up and played really hard against Glacier Peak even though we didn't get the win," said La Conner head coach Pam Keller. "Every week we improve and gain confidence."

La Conner was at home last night with the 3A Marysville Getchell Lady Chargers for the annual Dig Pink fundraiser and Senior Night celebration. Their next league game is Thursday at Friday Harbor.

"Playing bigger teams is what's preparing us for league matches," Keller insisted.

Beasley

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

6. I served on the school board for 15 years, I am on the Skagit Valley College Foundation Board; La Conner Young Life; Leadership Skagit Curriculum Committee; WE Ignite board; Salvation Army Board. I am a graduate of La Conner High School, I have a very large family and that makes it personal for me to want the best for my family and my community. I am very involved in my tribal community, as well as the community as a whole.

Friday Harbor Film Festival

The 2023 Friday Harbor Film Festival offers 25 feature films including notable award winners and nominees next week, Oct. 27-29 in Friday Harbor. Showings start Friday morning and the evening ends with the Friday Night Gala honoring filmmakers at the San Juan Community Theatre.

Deborah Giles will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award for her work as research director for Wild Orca, which monitors the Southern Resident killer whales population. Giles has a Ph.D in biogeography. There will be an impressive variety of food and drink and the screening of the award-winning documentary, "Wild Beauty: Mustang of the West."

The 25 feature films and 14 short films are shown at three venues: the Palace, San Juan Island Grange and the San Juan Community Theatre. There are multiple showings of films through Sunday evening,

ending with the showing of the Audience Choice Awards film.

Films include "Buffy Sainte-Marie: Carry It On," a career-spanning film about the celebrated Canadian musician and activist, nominated for a 2023 International Emmy Award; "Common Ground," which won the 2023 Tribeca Festival's Human/Nature Award, established to amplify a film that best exemplifies solution-oriented environmental storytelling; and "Bad Press," exposing the Muscogee Nation's censoring of a local newspaper and a reporter's fight to expose her government's corruption.

There are a variety of ways to view and pay for your viewing pleasure, from the \$250 all access passport to the Friday Night Gala ticket and a saver 6-pack tickets to the on-demand passport for home viewing Oct. 30-Nov. 5.

All information: fhff.org.

Some recreational shellfish areas now open

Washington State Dept. of Health has lifted the following closures for recreational shellfish harvesting: West Fidalgo Island, South Skagit and Similk Bay. Harvesting remains closed

to butter and varnish clams at Samish Island.

Call 1-800-562-5632 to check for closures.

Source: Skagit County Government

Agen

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

4. First, I will say Will Nelson has had the foresight to implement Universal Design for Learning which encourages teachers to utilize various methods to teach those having a difficult time learning via a single path. We support the superintendent with suggestions and offers to counsel/mentor in areas where he has less experience. His greatest growth is coming through experience.

5. I believe the question is impertinent and probably irrelevant at this time. We have a 2023-24 budget that will begin to correct the deficit with which we entered. The District can

function financially with slightly fewer than 500 students as we are this year. If you must ask "What is the rationale for La Conner High School?" you have failed to recognize the spirit of the La Conner/Swinomish community.

6. A deep passion for seeing every student in our District receive a solid, if not exceptional education. Involvement in the community – as a school board member, scholarship board member, assistant coach in football and basketball and a supporter of our arts. I am an alum and longtime community member. I believe my judgement and professionalism can help provide excellence in education through equity, respect, accountability and integrity.

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MUSIC FOR ALL – The 47 member Skagit Community Band opened their 2023-2034 season performing “Explorations,” sampling music from around the world, at Maple Hall Oct. 13. – Photo by Ken Stern



Ask a Master Gardener

Seed saving and sharing

By Sheri Rylaarsdam

Seed saving and sharing can save you money and open the door to learning about plants.

First, always save seeds from open-pollinated plants: plants pollinated openly by wind, rain or flying critters. Heirloom seeds are included in this category because the saved seeds have produced “true to type” plants for fifty years or more. Hybrid plants are sterile and the seeds will not grow true to form.

Harvesting self-pollinating seeds such as beans and peas: Let them dry on the plant, then pick the pods to shell. Thresh the pods by hand. The chaff can be winnowed by tossing the pods in the wind and catching the seeds in a basin.

Lettuce seeds send up a seed stalk, ripening two to three weeks after flowering. Harvest daily by shaking the seeds into a paper bag. The lettuce feathers and chaff can then be separated from the seeds using a fine mesh screen.

To save seeds from tomatoes, choose fully ripe tomatoes. Cut across the equator of the tomato and scrape out the gel and seeds. Let the seeds ferment for a couple of days until a black or white mold forms on top. This helps remove any pathogens on the seed surface and also removes the natural germination inhibitor that coats the seed. Strain off the mold and rinse the seeds slowly and carefully. Drain in a fine mesh strainer and dry thoroughly on a saucer.

Be sure to label the saved seeds with the name of the variety and the date they were saved. Since the viability of seeds is most affected by fluctuating temperature and moisture levels, it is important to store them in a cool, dry place-ideally in a tightly closed glass jar in the refrigerator.

Bee-pollinated plants include

many ornamental flowers and these vegetable families: Apiaceae (carrots, dill, parsley, cilantro, parsnip, chervil, caraway), Amaryllidaceae (onion, garlic, shallots, scallions, chives, leeks), Brassicaceae (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, turnips, kale) and Cucurbitaceae (squash, pumpkins, gourds).

If vegetables have the same Latin name they can cross. Avoid cross-pollination by allowing just one type of vegetable from each family to go to seed. For example, if one lets leeks go to seed, do not let onions, garlic, shallots, scallions or chives go to seed at the same time. The seed-producing vegetable also needs to be isolated from other seed-producing vegetables in its family by one-half mile. Cucurbitaceae are often hand-pollinated. Professional seed savers often use a system of cages to avoid cross-pollination.

Carrots, cabbages, beets and onions are biennials. These should be left in the ground or stored over the winter and replanted in spring to produce seed in the second year.

Start with something easy. Choose a variety of beans, peas, lettuce or tomato that is delicious, grows vigorously, is a good producer and is resistant to pests and diseases. Once you’ve started saving seeds, collect all the seeds you can. Then you’ll have plenty to plant next year, some to share, some to donate to a seed library or take to a seed swap.

For more information about specific topics such as saving wind-pollinated seeds or seed banks and biodiversity as well. Please go to our blog at <https://www.skagitmg.org/seed-saving/>.

Sheri Rylaarsdam has been a Skagit County WSU Extension Master Gardener since 2019.

School

(from page 1)

director. District 2 includes the Swinomish Reservation and most of the eastern Fidalgo Island peninsula north of Shelter Bay and west of Reservation Road.

Loran James, appointed to the seat when Amanda Bourgeois resigned, did not file for election.

Agen, a longtime La Conner Community Scholarship Board member, moved into this district mid-term.

Both are La Conner High School alumni and stressed their strong ties to the school district and experience in leadership and managerial positions.

Beasley grew up in a family of 10 brothers and sisters – one of her siblings is Swinomish Tribal Senate Chairman Steve Edwards – and she has 78 family members who have attended La Conner Schools, she said. She mentioned her membership in multiple service, business and educational organizations as having provided a teamwork ethic that she carried over to her school board tenure.

“Servant leadership is the biggest thing for me,” she said.

“We all have a role to play,” Beasley added. “The important thing is to ask questions and get information and make sound decisions.”

Agen, a descendant of the pioneer Tillinghast family, studied

at Whitman College and the University of Washington following his 1974 graduation. As a senior he quarterbacked a Braves football team that won nine regular season games without a loss and advanced to the first round of the state playoffs.

He noted how his subsequent 30-year career in sales management and work as a youth and high school athletics coach helped prepare him for school board service, where financial moxie, relationship-building and policy-making are integral components.

“When serving on the board, collaboration is a key,” he said.

“I’ve always been a strong advocate for the underdog and underprivileged,” Agen offered, lauding the district’s efforts during his term to address individual student learning styles through its equity-based long-range strategic plan and Universal Design for Learning program.

Agen lamented that the state legislature “is not adequately funding public education,” creating financial strains for La Conner and other school districts across the state.

Beasley, a U.S. Navy veteran, stressed that serving on the board requires members to coalesce around common goals.

“We need to work as a team and come together for the students,” she said.

“We need to listen to and hear

the staff,” insisted Beasley, who taught the Lushootseed language, among initiatives serving to strengthen bonds between Swinomish and La Conner Schools.

She alluded to enduring positive impacts made by paraeducators hired by Swinomish to work on the La Conner campus.

Agen saluted the decades-old relationship between La Conner Schools and Swinomish, describing it as an historic and much-valued connection.

He pointed out that board members aren’t empowered to act upon daily work conducted at school, but rather are tasked with managerial oversight and providing clear, concise communication with the public.

“I think our board has done that quite well in the past four years,” Agen said. “We must be focused on what’s the best direction to take for our students as well as the financial health of the district.”

Beasley struck a similar tone. “Communication is very important,” she said. “When I taught the language class, the biggest goal was to enhance respect. It’s a matter of respect and listening.

“Being part of the Leadership Skagit class,” she recalled, “led to many connections. I gleaned so much valuable information that gave me the opportunity to help.”

Ballots are mailed to voters by Oct. 20. Election Day is Nov. 7.



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POLICE BLOTTER

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sunday, October 8

8:30 p.m. Dog lost; owner found – Lost dog found in La Conner. Owner was found on the reservation and the dog was returned. Morris St., La Conner.

the truck was stolen from Blade Chevrolet in Mount Vernon. Unknown suspect info but cameras are being checked and further follow-up is coming Best Rd., Mt. Vernon.

Tuesday, October 10

9:14 a.m. Busted memory – Employee of the Conway Pub called in a burglary and stated a window was broken and there was damage to the lock on the door. The owner arrived and stated it was him who had broken in after forgetting the code to the new lock box. No crime as it was his property. Main St., Conway.

Wednesday, October 11

9:37 a.m. Off track – Report of a male subject who may be trying to break into a BNSF building near the tracks in Conway. A Deputy contacted the subject who was just locking up his bike to a post near the building. No problem. Fir Island Rd., Conway.

Sunday, October 15

9:36 a.m. Wayward bovine – Loose cow in the road on Farm to Market. The owner was located, and the cow was returned to a field. Farm to Market Rd., Edison.

Booming American Tugs offers worker training

By Bill Reynolds

When Port of Skagit officials unveiled preliminary plans last year for long-range re-development at La Conner Marina, workforce housing was a key variable for future investment.

Port leadership emphasized that its maritime tenants are engaged in growth industries and will better expand their labor forces to meet market demands when more local housing is available.

Consider American Tugs, on Pearle Jensen Way, a boatbuilding firm whose top-of-the-line pleasure craft feature rugged hulls like those used in the Alaska salmon fishery. The company, which dates to 2000, produces semi-custom vessels ordered by clients on both coasts and the Great Lakes.

While marina housing is a future possibility – and perhaps in the distant future – worker training is very much part of the here and now at American Tugs.

“We hire from entry level to master technicians,” General Manager Troy Olason, who resides on Morris Street, and walks to work told the Weekly News. “We train from start to finish. We try to get better every day. We’ve developed a pathway for people to work in the factory in the mornings and get to the SVC (Skagit Valley College) Maritime Center in Anacortes for afternoon classes.”

In addition, American Tugs has developed an internship program for high school students via the Northwest Career and Technical Academy Marine program.

Workers at American Tugs are hired from maritime trade schools, industry recruitment and referrals. Even craigslist is scoured for budding talent.

Those diverse skill sets are needed to tackle a challenging production schedule.

“We’re trying to finish eight boats this year,” Olason said, “and 10 to 12 next year.”

Olason said American Tugs has an 18-month wait list for current boat orders.

That trend will likely continue, he said.

“With an all-new East Coast sales team that just launched,” Olason explained, “the demand may double over the next year. So, we need to keep hiring.”

The growing demand, Olason intimated, reflects the popularity of American Tugs uniquely designed coastal cruisers.

“In late 1999, a team of three industry veterans – including our



FULL LINE UP—American Tugs has multiple boats in various stages of assembly at its Pearle Jensen Way manufacturing facility in La Conner.

—Photo by Nancy Crowell

current president, Kurt Dilworth – partnered with naval architect Lynn Senour to form Tomco Marine Group,” said Olason. “Leveraging their combined experience, they created the American Tug 34/365, a perfect couple’s cruiser based on Senour’s original 34-foot fishing boat design.

“The AT 34/365 offered an unprecedented combination of comfort, craftsmanship and seaworthiness, becoming an instant classic,” he stressed.

Olason works with students as a La Conner High School assistant football coach. He logged nearly two decades with the 4A Bothell Cougar grid staff.

Olason, lauded by his fellow La Conner coaches for crafting innovative offensive schemes and game plans, is equally comfortable scouting talent and building a workforce roster at American Tugs. The company strives to construct a balanced lineup of fiberglass composite technicians, woodworkers, carpenters, electricians, marine system installers and detailers.

Olason gets to navigate his twin passions here: the boating life and coaching football.

“I’m a third generation, lifelong boater,” he said. “My grandfather and his twin brother built a 34-foot Monk from plans in the 1950s and the Olason family boating tradition began. I’ve worked at a few marine businesses along the way.”

Olason founded CruisingNW.com, a digital boating resource guide and magazine.

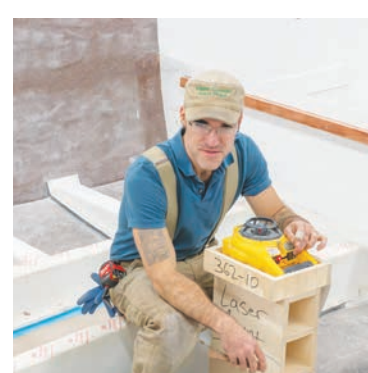
“My professional background at the time,” he recalled, “was in the automotive industry, managing events and special projects for the marketing and public relations departments of automotive manufacturers. I wanted to translate the knowledge and experience (I had) gained to the marine

industry.”

Olason and his wife, Theresa, were wed in 2016 at the Swinomish Yacht Club. Naturally, the couple moors a boat at La Conner Marina.

“We love it here,” Olason said. “We live in a Hallmark Movie. I walk two blocks to my boat, three more blocks to work.”

It’s likewise a short walk to Whittaker Field, where Olason has resurrected his coaching career. His lengthy resume includes a role helping to guide Bothell’s 2014 state title winners and taking part in a famous nine-overtime playoff game in 2009. He is in his first year



STUDENT WORKER—Alexander Martinez checks level on a hull before he begins work on it.

—Photo by Nancy Crowell

assisting Braves’ head coach Charlie Edwards with a program in rebuilding mode following the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I thought I was done coaching,” Olason reflected, “and then stumbled across a situation that I could help with.”

His day job brings the same sense of self-fulfillment.

He manages a well-established local based boat-building venture that turns out best-in-class models in a thriving market and which provides opportunities for those wanting to train for the marine trades to ride that wave.

Harvesting corn

When their tassels begin to turn brown, pull corn “ears” downward and twist them off the stalk. Remove all husks, tassels and stalks, and place shucked cobs of corn in cold water until time to cook. Bring a large kettle of water to a rapid boil, adding 1 tablespoon of salt for each quart of water. Toss in all your corn cobs and boil them 3-5 minutes. Remove and drain, and serve hot with butter and seasonings.

—Brenda Weaver

Source: www.almanac.com

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