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# LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

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## New Year Not Clear



NEW YEAR'S FORECAST IS UNCLEAR – The weather at midnight Sunday was foggy, if not frightful. The new year was rung in locally with fireworks provided by Swinomish tribal members. Some came out to Gilkey Square, above, to take in the eerie, if damp, beauty of the night. Others danced away in Maple Hall to the music of the Chris Eger band in support of the summer Sunday concert series at the Square. —Photo by Nancy Crowell

## December: lots of rain but too warm for snow

By Ken Stern

Finally, rain, lots of it. December's rains were near record high, 4.6 inches, and 2023's first month of precipitation exceeding the century's average.

Rain fell 10 of the first 11 days, totaling 3.1 inches; another 0.9 inches was in the last week. It rained 23 times, with only a two days break at most.

Half an inch came down Dec. 1 and another 0.8 inch Dec 9, the month's highest one-day total.

The 12 days of over 0.2 inches totaled 4.2 inches of precipitation.

Total rainfall in 2023 was 22.4 inches. The deficit for the year is 8.9 inches. The 24 year average is 31.2 inches, 28.4% more.

Annual rainfall in 2022 was 28.6 inches, 3.3 inches, 10.2% below the century average.

Seven record high temperatures were set for their days: the 4th, 60.1 degrees; 5th, 60.3 degrees; and Christmas week: 25th, 58.6 degrees; 27th, 56.9 degrees; 28th, 55.8 degrees; 29th, 58.5 degrees; and 30th, 55.6 degrees.

No day averaged less than 35.8 degrees (Dec. 16) and no snow was seen or recorded.

This was whiplash from 2022, when record cold mornings dropped to 5.9 degrees and the month's average minimum was 3.7 degrees below the century average. A volunteer recorded an eight inch snowfall.

December's weather was much warmer than the century's average. No snow was scene. There were only three frost days; it never went below 28.6 degrees. The monthly minimum averaged 34.3 degrees, 1.2 degrees above average for the century. December's average maximum was 45 degrees, an astonishing 5.8 degrees higher for the last 24 years (continued on page 7)

## Northwest salmon hatcheries harm wild salmon populations, study finds

By Alex Baumhardt  
 Oregon Capital Chronicle

For much of the last century, fish hatcheries have been built in the Northwest, across the U.S. and around the world to boost fish populations where wild numbers have gone down.

But an analysis of more than 200 studies on hatcheries programs meant to boost salmonid numbers across the globe – including salmon, trout and whitefish – shows that nearly all have had negative impacts on the wild populations of those fish. Most commonly, hatchery fish reduced the genetic diversity of wild fish, leading to poor health and reproductive outcomes.

The findings weigh into a sensitive topic with a big price tag. In the Northwest, hatcheries are supposed to be a solution to declining wild salmonid numbers, caused in large part by hydroelectric dams, overfishing, irrigation and climate change. In the Columbia River Basin alone, officials have spent billions of dollars on nearly 200 hatcheries as well as habitat restoration projects during the past 50 years to improve wild numbers, but research shows

those programs are having an opposite effect.

The global studies, all undertaken between 1971 and 2021, were analyzed by scientists at the nonprofits Trout Unlimited, based in Virginia, and The Conservation Angler, out of Washington, along with the University of Washington, the University of Montana and the Université Laval, in Quebec, Canada. Their analysis was published in July in the journal Fisheries Management and Ecology.

Of the 206 studies the team analyzed, more than 80% revealed hatcheries programs had adverse effects on wild salmonids. Of the 3% of hatcheries globally that were found to benefit wild populations, the majority were stocked with wild fish who were bred and released in small numbers to boost severely depleted wild populations.

John McMillan, science director at The Conservation Angler who worked on the analysis, said the team wanted scientists all over the world who are studying the same fish species to see the impact of hatcheries programs beyond their regions of study. He said despite an overwhelming body

of research showing most hatcheries programs hurt wild fish populations, it's often controversial to criticize such programs.

"It's frustrating from a scientific point of view, because you can see what the science suggests, but it's understandable why we've been reluctant to move our position on hatcheries, because of the social implications," he said. "This is one of those things, like climate change, where we have to sit back and think about our relationship with the animal, what it means to us and how much we want to give up so these animals can truly, potentially rebuild themselves."

### Effect of big hatcheries

This year the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 5509, which includes \$1 million for a third-party assessment of hatchery programs in the state, including analysis of their costs and benefits.

Hatcheries programs in the Northwest and globally that release hundreds of thousands of fish each year had the worst effect on wild salmonid populations, according to

(continued on page 6)

## Inslee pitches budget plan with \$2.5B in new spending

By Jerry Cornfield  
 Washington State Standard

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee outlined a plan to boost state spending by nearly \$2.5 billion in the next 18 months with the largest sums devoted to increasing behavioral health services, reducing homelessness, and combating climate change in mid-December.

His proposal relies on higher-than-expected tax collections and robust proceeds from the sale of pollution allowances. It would supplement spending in the operating, capital and transportation budgets adopted by the Legislature in 2023. Washington runs on two-year budget cycles with the current one ending June 30, 2025.

The three-term Democratic governor wants to pour another \$1 billion into programs in the \$69.8 billion operating budget. No new taxes are proposed.

Nearly half the increase, \$448.7 million, is earmarked for increasing capacity in the state's behavioral health system through the hiring of staff and addition of treatment beds for youth and adults. Another \$140 million is sought for addressing homelessness and expanding housing and \$64 million is to deal with the deadly spread of fentanyl, a powerful opioid Inslee called the "nuclear weapon of drugs."

"This is a budget that is changing lives. There are some numbers attached to it but these numbers

(continued on page 7)

## Swinomish Senate primary start of 2024 election season

By Bill Reynolds

The calendar has flipped from December to January; 2023 to 2024.

That means it's a general election year.

And the first local polling are two Swinomish Indian Tribal Community Senate primary races later this month.

Six candidates, including the incumbents, are vying for a pair of five-year terms on the 11-member tribal governing body.

Sen. Eric Day, first elected in 2019, faces challenges from Rodney John and James Bobb for Senate Seat No. 10.

Three-term senator Brian Wilbur is seeking re-election to Seat No. 10, opposed by Bruce James and Myrtle Rivas.

The top two vote-getters in each race will advance to the Feb. 10 general election.

Wilbur, while lauding the strides Swinomish has made since 2009 – from

its partnership with La Conner to finance the new award-winning library on Morris Street to its opening of major dental and wellness clinics – continues to direct his focus on the future.

"There is more work to be done,"

Wilbur said in an essay submitted to the tribal community's Qyuuqs publication.

He cited increased housing development and renovations, elder care and assisted living services, master lease negotiations with the Shelter Bay residential community, expansion of Swinomish hotel and medical clinic facilities and an updated sewer treatment agreement with La Conner among priority items.

"As I reflect on the work we've accomplished over the last 15 years," Wilbur said, "it's clear how much the policies and programs we've implemented complement each other to make our community a better place to live.

"We are working," he added, "to raise the next generation of tribal members to

be better than ourselves."

Wilbur noted that Swinomish has increased its student scholarship program from a one-time \$2,500 payment to a full-ride benefit, which "has enabled members to attend schools anywhere in the world, helping them become more educated and more employable to provide services the community needs."

His multiple tribal assignments include chairmanship of the dental licensing board. Wilbur points out that Swinomish, in conjunction with Skagit Valley College, has embarked on a model dental therapy education center and that the tribal community has spearheaded state legislative changes to authorize dental therapists to work across Washington state.

James, who serves on the Swinomish Gaming Board, fish commission and Tallawhalt Housing Committee, said he embraces public service because it gives him the opportunity to help

people.

"Helping people," said James, "comes naturally to me from teachings from my family and mother, Barb James."

James wants to rectify the Swinomish housing crunch.

"We have a housing crisis here at Swinomish," he told Qyuuqs, "and although we do have more houses being built, we aren't able to build houses at a reasonable price in this current economy."

James said his work on the housing committee "has taught me about having compassion for our members who need housing and to offer support and resources to them when applying for loans and mortgages."

James said, additionally, his "main goals are to work hard to represent the voices of our members, update our current enrollment policies and look for funding to provide additional help for our children and elders."

(continued on page 6)

## LETTERS

### Thank you Mayor Hayes

How does one thank a person who has unstintingly given 16 years of his life to our community? Ramon Hayes has been La Conner's mayor twenty four hours a day for every one of those years. Many of us have had the pleasure of chatting with him on his daily walks, often accompanied by his smiling, gregarious wife. A useful way of taking the pulse of the town person to person, he seemed to genuinely enjoy his walks.

But the mayor's day was often much more than glad-handing. He chaired 16 years of town council meetings, some being quite contentious. Under the mayor's gavel the council meetings remained civil, businesslike and productive. Everyone was heard. The issues were aired and decisions, often difficult compromises, were

made. And the business of La Conner moved on. Mr. Mayor represented our town on many Skagit County commissions, councils and committees. In person, in Olympia and on the phone he repeatedly pleaded for La Conner to our state and federal legislators.

Small as La Conner may seem, it takes a lot to keep the streets swept, the drains unplugged and the sewage plant operating. Our mayor oversees a more than \$8.6 million annual budget while co-directing the town's staff.

A mayor is a combination of symphony conductor and enthusiastic cheerleader; more facilitator than a fabricator. Here is a very incomplete but impressive list of things accomplished on his watch:

1. The remarkable, beautiful community-bridging La Conner Swinomish Library.
2. Sherman Street boat launch

### Check smells political

Many, maybe all of us, received a check from our state attorney general, Bob Ferguson. He said it was for me being overcharged for chicken. I don't know how

he knew how much chicken I bought but because of his being a candidate for governor, I suspect it made no difference: He probably just wanted to buy my vote.

I am going to send my check to his Republican opponent

ramp replacement.

3. Creation of Waterfront Park and reinforcement of channel shoreline.

4. Expansion of wastewater treatment plant including its award winning, self-funding composting program.

5. Designation of Maple Hall as a green energy building, with solar panels.

6. Renewed nighttime lighting of Rainbow Bridge.

7. Development of the Sixth Street skateboard park.

8. Construction of Caledonia Street pump station.

It is likely that some or none of these things would exist without Ramon's encouragement and follow through. We are lucky to have had Mayor Ramon Hayes serve as our mayor for the last sixteen years and I thank him so very much.

*Jerry George  
La Conner*

because I noticed he said in the letter "the corporations must pay," not that they have paid. If some of them don't pay he will be using our tax dollars to fund his campaign.

*Mike Morrell  
Shelter Bay*

### La Conner Fire Department thanks

The La Conner Volunteer Fire Department would like to thank our La Conner Community for the continued support this year! From attending parades to supporting our fundraisers, this community helps make our operations more fulfilling and successful.

We want to say thank you to all of the generous sponsors of our 2023 Annual Golf Tournament. Our sponsors include: The La Conner Pub and Eatery, Calico Cupboard, Tillinghast Postal, Skagit Cellars, Olive Shoppe/ Ginger Grater, Conway Feed, Pioneer Potatoes, Sliders Cafe, The Stall, La Conner Brewing Co., Baird, Marathon and The La Conner

Retirement Inn. If you love golf and haven't attended our annual tournament before, our next one will take place Sept. 14, 2024. Stay tuned for more information!

We wanted to say thank you to everyone who donated to our Christmas Drive. We were able to provide tons of gifts for children and families in need.

We want to extend another big thank you to The La Conner Weekly News for all the photos and articles done for us this year. We are also extremely thankful for the support from Tom and Alexa Robbins and Jon and Linda Peterson.

We owe a huge thank you to the members of the La Conner Fire Department Association who put in all the groundwork for our fundraisers and events.

We are a volunteer

organization with 20 active members of firefighters and emergency medical responders. They volunteer hundreds of hours each year responding to 911 calls and training. We work with Skagit County Search and Rescue and other organizations around La Conner.

If you are interested in volunteering and at least 18 years old, stop by our station Wednesday nights at 7 p.m.

As we venture into this next year, we are filled with gratitude for the La Conner community. Thank you again for supporting us. We look forward to seeing you at our Saint Patrick's Day Dance.

*Natalie Baker  
La Conner*

### Thank you Weekly News

Dear La Conner Weekly news team,

Simply put: thank you. Thank you for all of the effort you put into your stories, for connecting with the community and for

the quality of your work. Your publication is a large part of what helped my spouse and I make the giant leap of faith into putting down roots of our own here. You helped us fall in love with La Conner, her history and people, while also

bringing reality of daily life and important local issues to our attention. Thank you for being our storytellers, megaphone and mirror.

Happy New Year!  
*Brandice Burke  
Shelter Bay*

### A citizen's view —

## Regarding the future of agritourism

By Glen Johnson

Agritourism, is it a good thing or bad? A wedding in a farmer's backyard is a great place and time to congratulate the couple, while also putting the spready on the table. Foods from area farms could be shared, marketed and sold to these wedding attendees.

Most smaller farms still have a farmyard with a barn and a storage shed or two with space between them that allows for parking that doesn't encroach on or impede the production of crops in the field. I was in the business about two decades ago, or at least I gave it a try.

The one wedding we hosted was truly a hoot, nobody got hurt, and we were able to educate and entertain the guests.

We had a farmstand and parking lot snugly situated in our orchard and we also had said farmyard, so we had ample parking for the 100 or so folks who attended the soiree. We spent extra money for insurance, which kept us abreast of the laws that regulate such events. The fire marshal was most helpful as I worked my way through the permitting process. Without some regulation, people will pack 4,000 people into a small space

in the middle of a pandemic!

The Tulip Festival is well regulated and it does bring money to the community. The complication they bring is that the show is scattered across a 10,000-acre footprint. If it weren't for their large patchworks of color, RoozenGaarde and Tulip Town wouldn't be able to handle the crush. Yeah, county roadside shoulders have become long parking lots, where county sheriff's scold and cite the scoundrels that block the tractor's path.

If the tulips bloomed in July and August, the rest of the farm community could sell their farm crops straight from their fields to the tourists. Thus, the

### State of the town —

## For a stronger La Conner in 2024

By Marna Hanneman

Hello and Happy New Year!

First and foremost, I hope you have been able to spend time with loved ones and had some time to reflect on 2023. Secondly, I wish you and yours a safe and prosperous New Year. May 2024 bring the necessities we need to make La Conner the best it can be.

The following note represents my reflections of social, economic and environmental perspectives that impact our town as I take office. Think of it as a "State of La Conner" of sorts.

One of the great things about our community is that it is a unique microcosm of a broader society and its trends and opportunities. Our social and cultural fabric provides the sense of community that makes La Conner so special. The social cohesion, community engagement and inclusivity of our community are represented by vibrant cultural events (i.e., the La Conner Guitar Festival and Art's Alive!) and communal activities (i.e., July Fourth parade and fireworks, La Conner Live at Gilkey Square and the annual boat parade).

Economic vitality is a foundation for our community to thrive. The businesses that operate here not only provide essential services to fellow citizens and bring in revenue from outside, but also contribute to our tax base, a critical element that enables investments in infrastructure, education and public services. The presence of quality schools and educational infrastructure are indicative of our commitment to education – and the intellectual and cultural vibrancy of La Conner.

Environmentally, it is fair to say that we live in a truly magical place. The Skagit Valley is one of the most fertile and productive on Earth. Swinomish Channel provides access to the immense beauty that we call the

San Juan Islands and we have plentiful access to what Mother Nature provides us. To truly enjoy all this, however, we need to plan intentionally, develop our infrastructure with the future in mind and think sustainably. Well maintained public spaces, sufficient housing, transportation systems and access to nature all contribute to the magic of our town.

Effective leadership, a transparent government and an involved community are all vital components of a well-functioning system. Engaged local leaders help navigate challenges, advocate for residents' needs and implement policies that enhance our town's overall prosperity. Fortunately, La Conner has been guided by elected officials and staff with the perspective needed to create one of the most idyllic small towns in the Pacific Northwest. That said, we still have significant opportunities to improve. By being proactive and with community collaboration, we will continue to shape La Conner to be enjoyed by all.

I would personally like to thank Ramon Hayes, our former mayor, for his 16 years of service. Without his guidance and direction La Conner would not be the vibrant town it is today. I want to also thank the La Conner staff who have collectively put in countless hours to make sure our town runs smoothly and efficiently.

I am looking forward to serving as the next steward of La Conner and am grateful for residents allowing me the opportunity to serve as your mayor for the next four years. I'm honored for your vote of confidence and believe that, working together, La Conner will become stronger in 2024.

Hope and kindness in the New Year!

*Marna Hanneman is in her first week as La Conner's mayor. She was elected in November.*

### LETTER POLICY

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Letters up to 350 words are welcome as are longer analyses and statements.

Write a 450 word guest column.

Deadline: 5 p.m.Sunday for next issue.

Include your name, address and phone number for verification.

Letters are edited for civility, clarity and style.

Send To: editor@laconnernews.com

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### Ken Stern, Publisher & Editor

editor@laconnernews.com

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#### Postmaster:

Send change of address to:

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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 Fortygin, Janna Gage, Bob Hamblin, Madoc Hiller, Ollie Iversen, Bobbi Krebs-McMullen, Patricia Paul, Adam Sowards, Claire Swedberg, Sarah Walls, Aven Wright-Mcintosh

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## Funding to assist employer-led child care

The Center for Retention & Expansion of Child Care (C-RECC) seeks applications from Skagit County employers wanting to support their employees by opening a child care center in or near their business. This is an innovative pilot project with a March goal of selecting a partner.

C-RECC will distribute up to \$75,000 of federal American Rescue Plan Act funds to one or more employers to jump-start employers increasing child care

capacity, helping families and boosting employee retention. "We're so grateful that these pandemic relief funds were designated to support the child care sector," Manager Kenda Sipma said. "When Skagit County and the Population Health Trust Advisory Committee identified these funds for employer-based support, plus \$100,000 to start in-home family child care businesses, they invested in a strategic sector at a crucial time."

The selected businesses will

receive coaching from child care business experts for long term support. This service is offered to any employers interested in offering child care options for their employees.

Submit letters of interest online: [www.ccanorthwest.org/c-recc/skagit-employer-based-child-care-pilot-project/](http://www.ccanorthwest.org/c-recc/skagit-employer-based-child-care-pilot-project/).

Information for funding or coaching services: [childcarebiz@oppco.org](mailto:childcarebiz@oppco.org).

Source: C-RECC

## New knowledge advances science

By Greg Whiting

In 1992, two colleagues and I visited Ukraine and Russia to tour ex-Soviet research laboratories in search of interesting technologies that had been developed by their scientists and engineers. The company I worked for hoped that we'd be able to bring something valuable back to Canada, and also hoped that we could justify enough in the way of licensing fees and direct investment to help keep the scientific and engineering expertise of at least one Ukrainian or Russian lab together.

Neither Ukraine nor Russia could afford to pay their scientists. Professionals with the expertise to develop world-changing technologies were leaving their laboratory jobs to drive cabs and translate for English- or German-speaking tourists.

After a month of visiting almost 30 laboratories – some small, some on the scale of the U.S. Oak Ridge or Argonne National Lab – we hadn't found anything we could ask our board of directors to spend two or three million dollars on.

It was not because the Soviets weren't good scientists. They were exceptional. The Soviet government often wouldn't allocate resources to lab equipment, so Soviet researchers had to develop early stage theoretical concepts purely on paper, without testing and feedback. If you think that's not hard, try it.

There was something else the Soviet government had done, though, that was even more important. It had censored Western magazines.

In Kyiv I met a man who had recently invented something he was sure we'd be interested in licensing. He said it was one of the most important technologies that could possibly be developed in the energy field; that it would reduce energy consumption of buildings substantially; that our company, from Edmonton, a particularly cold location in Canada, would be excited the instant he explained it.



He was almost right. He had invented metal oxide-coated window glass. Unfortunately for him, for the lab he worked for, and for my company's goal of licensing innovative Soviet technologies, this concept had been in use in the Western world so long the patents had already expired.

Zinc oxide-coated windows are a distinctive blue color. They are indeed widely used in high-rise curtainwall, especially in cold climates. The tallest building in Edmonton, and many others in many other places, already used them. If he had been allowed to see a photograph of a Western high-rise building, he would have realized he was working on something that already existed. (He also would have realized, to the probable detriment of Soviet authority, that Western countries weren't poor technological backwaters.)

Human genius is the most important resource available to humanity, and he had it, but he hadn't been allowed to use it. Not really.

Another project that lab was working on was hydrogen fuel cells, a technology that has significant potential to be an improvement over existing electric generation and energy storage systems. Where would all of humanity be today, if brilliant individuals like him – and thousands of others – had been allowed to do their jobs? If their work had proceeded towards something new, not towards something that was only "new" because not allowing researchers to know what was actually new kept Soviet leaders from being embarrassed?

Freedom matters. When countries are run by tyrants, the paranoia and fear the tyrants create destroys human potential and sets all of civilization back.

## 289 trees removed in gas pipeline leak cleanup

By Ken Stern

CONWAY — Crews cleaning up the Olympic Pipeline gas leak southwest of SR 534 in Conway cut down 289 trees Dec. 27-28 in order to remove underlying contaminated soil, the cleanup project's unified command reported in a Dec.29 update. The area borders the west edge of a farm field and east shoreline of Hill Ditch.

The trees were to be handled by a materials recycler BP spokesperson Pam Brady told the press last week.

Approximately 8,324 gallons of gasoline have been recov-

ered through the 29th. Approximately 25,326 gallons were discharged from a vault on Dec. 10 when a three-eighths inch diameter tube leading from the main pipeline to a pressure-check valve failed.

Spill response teams continue to locate and remove pockets of gasoline along the shoreline released over time as weather conditions change.

Air monitoring conducted at the direction of unified command continues to indicate no public health risk from gasoline fumes.

Members of the public are asked not to touch or relo-

cate affected wildlife and to call the wildlife hotline (1-800-22BIRDS).

One lane of SR 534 remains open with traffic flaggers assisting motorists through the area as cleanup work proceeds..

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

Status updates will be posted on Ecology's incident webpage at <http://tinyurl.com/svvp2p4s>.

## Emergency Management Commission gets to work early in new year

By Bill Reynolds

The Town's newest advisory panel didn't wait long getting to work in the New Year.

The six-member Emergency Management Commission, which spent much of 2023 developing and implementing immediate saltwater flood barriers along the waterfront and in low-lying areas, met yesterday afternoon at Maple Hall.

The main agenda topic was their ongoing efforts to craft a community emergency management plan for La Conner.

Commissioners were scheduled at their Jan. 2 hybrid session to hear from Skagit Department of Emergency Planner Joan Cromley.

"We need to develop a process and procedure for our plan," Administrator Scott Thomas told commissioners when they met Dec. 12, noting that the task – producing a working document to deal with

the full spectrum of potential emergencies and natural disasters – will be challenging. One thing that occurs to me is it's easy to get overwhelmed really quick.

"There are more people in this room," he added, "than staff at Public Works who would do the work."

At that meeting it was suggested someone from the county's emergency management team be invited to address the commission.

"The Skagit (emergency management) plan is important," explained commissioner Jerry George, "because most of the resources we'd call upon would be from the county. So,

we should tailor our plan to what the county expects."

George also suggested Swinomish Emergency Management Coordinator Brian Geer, a member of the Swinomish Tribal Community police force, as a source to be tapped as the plan takes shape.

"He has agreed to speak to the commission," George said.

Meetings will be on the first Tuesday of each month at 4:30 p.m. this year, prior to Town Planning Commission meetings.

The planning commission cancelled its Jan. 2 meeting. It will next meet on Jan. 16 at Maple Hall, starting at 6 p.m.

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## COVID-19 still here

By Ken Stern

The coronavirus is still here and lurks in La Conner, in nearby movie houses, in dance halls and auditoriums and wherever people gather and however they travel. The year ended and 2024 began with staff and freelancers, critical people all, sick with cases of COVID-19. It can happen here.

The national Centers for Disease Control's mid-December data showed about 19% of adults are up to date on COVID-19 vaccines through Dec. 23, 2023.

For RSV vaccination, about 17.5% of adults are vaccinated. Almost 45% of Americans adult have

## Birthdays abound

Important late December birthdays locally included Barbara Carson, Nancy Crowell, Tony Harrah, Sally Riggers and other significant people not named.

gotten their seasonal flu vaccine.

The media website The Hill reports a December "Emerson College survey found Americans overall are split down the middle on whether to get the updated vaccine – with 51 percent nationally choosing not to. In the survey, 57% of respondents in the Midwest and surrounding states said they would not get the booster.


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## Braves take second in Seattle holiday hoops tournament

By Bill Reynolds

The La Conner High School boys' basketball team got pounded in Seattle over the weekend.

But not on the scoreboard. The Braves split two closely fought, loosely called holiday tournament games with teams from larger schools, each contest decided in the final seconds. Ivory Damien and Brayden Pedroza scored 16 points apiece as La Conner edged The Northwest School, the tourney's IA host team, 44-41 on Friday night.

The Braves led during much of Saturday's matchup with 2A Black Hills, but fell 44-42 in Saturday's title round of The Top of the Hill Holiday Tournament.

Trips to the foul stripe were rare as the often-rugged weekend action showed that basketball can indeed be a contact sport.

Corran Eisen hit a putback in the waning moments to clinch the win against Northwest, which missed two three-pointers in the last 10 seconds that would have sent the game to overtime.

"The boys played hard," La Conner coach Lance Lopez told the Weekly News afterward, "and got a win in a game that has been the most physical game

for us this season."

Twenty-four hours later the Braves played a game that was equally physical.

"Black Hills is a big, physical team and a big 2A-size school," said Lopez, whose club will carry a 6-4 mark into this Friday's NW2B/1B clash at Concrete, where fans of both Skagit County teams will celebrate the "70-plus" year anniversary of the Concrete gymnasium.

The Northwest School, venue for last weekend's tournament, also boasts a unique athletics facility. Dubbed "The House," it was built on a former Diamond Parking Lot in Seattle's Pike/Pine corridor and served to expand The Northwest School's Capitol Hill campus.

Since 1980, The Northwest School — which doesn't have an official mascot — has embraced "The House" as its sports teams' moniker.

La Conner and Black Hills rocked "The House" on Saturday in an entertaining back-and-forth pairing.

Braves' senior Logan Burks meshed a perimeter trey that gave La Conner a 19-15 half-time lead over the Wolves.

After a 5-0 Black Hills run to open the third quarter, the Braves regained the lead at 22-20 on a Pedroza three-pointer. Black Hills went ahead again at

28-24 before Eisen delivered a trey to trim the Wolves' margin to 28-27 going into the final stanza.

A step-through by Damien and a Pedroza transition bucket off a feed from C.J. Edwards briefly knotted the score at 34-34.

A Damien layup that would have tied the score at 37-37 was negated by a controversial charge call.

The Wolves held on for a two-point victory despite a Tyler Cicotte trey and Eisen score in the paint as time wound down.

Damien and Pedroza led La Conner with 15 and 13 points, respectively. Eisen (8), Cicotte (3) and Burks (3) rounded out the Braves' attack.

"Overall, for the tournament, we played well," Lopez said. "Being the smallest team in the tournament, we had a chance to win the whole thing. We're proud of the boys' effort this weekend."

"Both games in the tournament were super physical," he added, "and not a lot of fouls were called. We're so proud of the boys for playing through contact and competing."

"The boys played hard this weekend," stressed Lopez, "and against some bigger teams. We'll get back to work on Tuesday and get ready for Concrete."

## Concrete High School hosts La Conner in re-do of gym opening

By Bill Reynolds

History stands to repeat itself in Concrete on Friday.

Just as was the case in 1952, when the Concrete High School gymnasium first opened, visiting La Conner hoop teams will take the floor Jan. 5 in a rivalry that precedes the Great Depression.

Members of the 1952 Concrete and La Conner teams will be honored as part of a "70-plus Years Anniversary" celebration at the iconic Concrete gym.

The night's events will also include a brief historical presentation and introductions of all-time Skagit County scorers Gail Thulen and Andy Otis of La Conner and Tyler Clark of Concrete, a 10-minute session scheduled for halftime of the boys' varsity contest.

The fun starts at 4:30 p.m. with a one-hour dinner served by the Concrete Booster Club. The girls' varsity game follows at 5:45 p.m.

The boys' varsity contest is set for 7:30 p.m. after a 20-minute program in which members of the 1952 La Conner and Concrete teams will be recognized as honorary coaches for the evening.

Dave Alvord, Sr., who was a sophomore member of the 1952

La Conner team, has committed to representing the Braves.

Concrete native Paul Bianchini, a star athlete at Mount Vernon High School, who in the 1970s played football for the University of Washington, has helped coordinate the anniversary festivities.

Bianchini has conducted exhaustive research of the Concrete Herald archives, gleaming information about the gym opening from reports penned by the legendary Charles Dwelley, who retired to Shelter Bay and wrote a regular column for the old Channel Town Press newspaper here.

Bianchini unearthed a Dwelley article that referred to the Jan. 4, 1952 Concrete gym opening as "an auspicious occasion."

The large crowd, wrote Dwelley, numbered around 800 fans, each of whom "saw a building that seemed to meet the dreams of any sports enthusiast."

Bianchini has found Concrete Herald accounts of the schools competing in basketball dating to 1927, a generation before the present Concrete gym was built. He said the anniversary event is an opportunity to celebrate not only the gymnasium but all student-athletes who have played there over the past seven-plus decades.

## Coach with La Conner, Irish links to lead Team USA golfers at Palmer Cup

By Bill Reynolds

A member of La Conner's O'Leary family will coach Team USA golfers at the 2024 Arnold Palmer Cup in Ireland next summer.

Matt Thurmond, a son of La Conner High School alums Kathy O'Leary Thurmond and the late Joe Thurmond, was chosen last month to be the head coach at the three-day competition on Ireland's west

coast next July.

Thurmond is head coach of the Arizona State University men's golf team. He previously guided the University of Washington men.

The Arnold Palmer Cup features the best men's and women's collegiate golfers against their international counterparts in an event played annually since 1997.

Given his O'Leary roots, Thurmond is especially grate-

ful for having been selected to coach on Irish soil for the prestigious Palmer Cup.

"I'm so excited to coach at the Arnold Palmer Cup," said Thurmond, who has numerous La Conner area relatives through his O'Leary lineage.

"It's such an honor," he stressed, "to represent Mr. Palmer, the country, college golf and Arizona State University at such an amazing event."

Under Thurmond, the ASU men have finished in the top five at the last three NCAA championships, placing second to the University of Texas in 2022.

Thurmond was the 2009 National Coach of the Year while at the Husky helm. He twice earned top conference coaching honors.

"I'm mighty proud of my nephew," Thurmond's aunt, Maureen O'Leary Harlan, told

the Weekly News upon his selection to lead Team USA at scenic Lahinch Golf Club, known internationally as the "St. Andrews of Ireland."

"This is a really big deal to me," Thurmond said in an interview with TheSunDevils.com, "and I'm hoping some of our Devils will be competing with me."

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## Noelle Ford slings sliders, sings in 'The Music Man'

By Bill Reynolds

A server at a La Conner restaurant isn't just singing the praises of Skagit County's musical community.

She's lending her voice to it, returning to the stage after a lengthy hiatus, with the Skagit Valley College presentation of "The Music Man," Meredith Wilson's 1957 Broadway musical comedy.

Noelle Ford, who by day works at The Slider Café, is rehearsing several nights weekly for the Feb. 23-March 3 run at McIntyre Hall on the SVC campus.

She was thrilled to learn that tryouts for parts in the local production of "The Music Man" weren't limited to SVC theater arts students. The Tony Award-winning tale highlights traveling con man Harold Hill and his arrival in the fictitious River City.

"It's been 25 years since I've been in a play," Ford told the Weekly News. "I've missed being part of the musical community." Ford grew up on the northern California coast and now resides in Burlington.

Encouraged by her grandmother, Ford took piano lessons for 10 years as a student in Fort Bragg, California, about 120 miles northwest of Santa Rosa, at the northern tip of the Bay Area.

"I did theater in school and loved it," recalled Ford, whose fondest memories include having landed the lead in a performance of "The Fantasticks," one of theater's most popular and durable musicals.



Noelle Ford

Ford's love of the theater ultimately gave way to economic realities.

"For years," she explained, "I had to work nights, so I couldn't do theater. But now that I'm working days here at Slider's, I can try it again."

She's making the most of her opportunity, rehearsing as often as possible.

"I've always loved singing," said Ford, who as part of the ensemble cast will deliver a solo line.

During her initial foray into the musical world, as a teen vocalist, Ford sang soprano. That has changed a bit, she acknowledged.

"I'm thinking that now I'm more of an alto," she said. "It's a little harder for me to hit those higher notes anymore."

Her familiarity with musical expression is matched by having established roots in Skagit County.

"La Conner," she said, "reminds me so much of where I

grew up. There's the same kind of feeling in the community."

Even while away from the stage, Ford stayed connected as best she could. She maintained contact with her first school choir teacher, who by coincidence had re-located from Northern California to Bellingham, where he founded a performing arts academy for children.

"I reached out to him when he moved here," Ford noted.

She has continued to play piano and write music in her spare time. And when Ford saw a posting last fall that auditions for "The Music Man" would be held at nearby SVC, she couldn't resist emailing the college to ask if non-students could try out.

"They said it was open to everybody," Ford said, her relief still apparent in the re-telling.

Ford's audition went well, and she is again a member of the musical fraternity.

"It's fun," Ford said, "and the people you get to know is really a big part of it. There are lots of different personalities."

Her personality is one clearly shaped by music. On the job, she's consistently upbeat and rarely misses opportunities to share positive notes with her Slider Café customers.

Appearing in "The Music Man" literally has her singing for joy.

"I would just say that anyone who feels too old to follow through with their childhood dreams shouldn't hesitate to go ahead and do it," she said. "For me, this has re-opened a door that's a major joy for me."

## La Conner martial arts teacher makes grade with latest black belt promotion



KIDS GROWING ARE THE BEST PRIZES – John Alcorn of USTA Martial Arts, with Anna Howell, his first La Conner Taekwondo student. – Photo courtesy of Levi Howell

By Bill Reynolds

A U.S. military veteran, John Alcorn knows the importance of a promotion.

He does so as a martial arts practitioner and instructor as well.

Alcorn, who teaches Taekwondo at USTA Martial Arts in La Conner, was recognized last month for having advanced from second to third Dan (or Degree) Black Belt, a level that requires years of practice at what is universally considered a challenging and physically demanding discipline.

But for Alcorn and his students, who range in age from children to adults, the rewards of Taekwondo – from increased stamina and improved muscle toning to greater confidence and powers of concentration – more than justify the time investment required to master a Korean martial art noted for its intricate punching and kicking techniques.

Alcorn, who grew up in rural Minnesota and is of Cherokee descent, is on his second tour with Taekwondo.

"We had all our sports," he recalled of teen years spent northwest of the Twin Cities, "but I wanted to do something different."

As a youth, a sign for a Taekwondo class caught his eye. He thought he'd give it a try. As it turned out, the instructor was his middle school choir teacher.

It was a very promising start. But Alcorn's sports career was put on hold by a serious knee injury at age 17.

"I tore my ACL (anterior cruciate ligament)," he told the Weekly News. "It took about 15 months to recover back then. Now it takes around six to nine months."

Alcorn put Taekwondo in his rear-view mirror when deployed for service overseas. He had returned to civilian life and was working a well-paying warehouse job in Snohomish County when by chance he was re-introduced to the sport.

"What brought me back to Taekwondo," he explained, "was when my daughter, Makena and I were doing laundry one night and our dryer went out. We had to go to a laundromat in Arlington. But when we got there, the lady said they had taken their last loads. So, we had to go to a laundromat in Smoky Point.

"While there," Alcorn continued, "Makena could hear loud noises next door. She went outside and pressed her face against the window to see what was happening in there."

It was a Taekwondo class. "The instructor asked her if she wanted to try it," said Alcorn. She did and ultimately the door opened for Alcorn to re-enter the world of Taekwondo.

"When Makena was at the class, I would help with her technique," Alcorn said. "Then the instructor asked me if I had any experience with Taekwondo and I said that I did. He asked me if I wanted to try it again."

Alcorn was initially hesitant. Over the years he had undergone surgeries and sustained injuries while in the military. He was worried about his flexibility.

But that instructor, K.J. Newell, "got me going," said Alcorn.

Newell also suggested that Alcorn train to be an instructor and encouraged him to open a USTA gym of his own. They scouted throughout the region, eventually settling on La Conner.

"We kept coming back to La Conner as a venue," Alcorn said. "We'd look at a place and would end up saying, 'let's go back to La Conner.' La Conner kept calling us back. The community has totally embraced us."

Alcorn has taught classes here for three years now, often spending 12-14 hours a day at the remodeled studio behind The Slider Café.

Alcorn's approach is to teach the whole person, instructing not only Taekwondo skills but also other areas of self-improvement. With children, he emphasizes daily reading, good behavior at home and school, willingness to take on household chores and attention to homework and other scholastic assignments.

"Every day," he said, "the goal is to make each child a better person."

He tells students that he pays back his debts and obligations with money while they can do so by showing respect. Especially to elders.

"The elders in our community show their love," said Alcorn. "The younger generation needs to step up with that opportunity."

During his time in La Conner, Alcorn has built a rapport with Swinomish Indian Tribal Community Senate Chair Steve Edwards. As a result, the La Conner martial arts program was invited to participate in a recent Swinomish talent show.

"Our kids finished first and second," Alcorn recounts with pride.

Another testament to USTA La Conner's success is its Black Belt Wall of Fame, which boasts 22 members – and counting.

"I want that whole wall filled with black belts," Alcorn said.

Alcorn continues to live in the Arlington area, commuting to La Conner for class sessions and Taekwondo-related events. But it isn't so much his vehicle as it is his students that are the driving force, he said.

"I have a great love of the sport and a love of the kids," said Alcorn. "The kids are what drive me every day."



RIFFING IN THE NEW YEAR – If it is the evening of Dec. 31 in La Conner, there is probably a fundraising dance in Maple Hall for the La Conner live Sunday concert series in Gilkey Square. The Chris Eger band once again took the stage. "We are thrilled to once again be celebrating a new year with our Skagit Valley friends in La Conner. Supporting the summer concert series, which we have been a part of since the beginning, is a fantastic bonus to the evening and a win for everyone!" reflected Eger.

– Photo courtesy of Mel Damski

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# Salmon

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)  
 the analysis.  
 “When you see really large releases of fish, they tend to swamp out the wild population,” McMillan said.  
 An example is pink salmon released from hatcheries in Alaska. Unlike most salmon species, pink salmon spend two years rather than one in the ocean feeding before returning to their spawning grounds in rivers. They enter the ocean almost immediately after being released, and feed on vast amounts of microscopic plankton, which are the food for larger plankton that other fish species such as Chinook, coho, steelhead and sockeye eat. When hundreds of thousands of pink salmon are released from hatcheries each year, they upset the balance of food available in the ocean for all those other species.  
 “It’s not leaving enough food for other salmon in the ocean,” McMillan said. It’s even negatively impacting orca populations, who feed on those other salmon species. You consume so much at the bottom of the food chain that it cascades to lower production at the top.”  
 The best hatcheries, McMillan said, rear fish from wild stocks and release small but effective numbers to provide a short-term boost to the population.  
 McMillan said the analysis shows a need for more study of fish epigenetics – the study of how the environment

a fish develops in can change and affect the way its genes work, the way it behaves and its ability to survive.  
 “There has been research coming out in the last four to five years indicating that even though hatchery fish are representative of the population at large from which they’re from, they’re undergoing epigenetic changes due to the hatchery rearing process,” he said.  
 Some of those changes are passed along to offspring. Scientists are trying to study that process and discover whether those traits are passed to wild species and whether that affects the ability of wild fish to survive, he said.  
 Recent studies found that some hatchery fish struggle in waters heavily affected by climate change. Wild fish have had millions of years to evolve through conditions that, at times, have resembled the present. Though they may have similar DNA, the influence of hatchery conditions on fish could make them less prepared to survive in volatile ocean conditions than wild fish.  
 “Many of these wild fish have the genes to deal with these changing environments. But it’s unclear whether the hatchery fish do,” McMillan said.  
*First published Dec. 18, 2023. Copyright 2023 Oregon Capital Chronicle. Reprinted with permission. More at: oregoncapitalchronicle.com/. The article is at: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/fme.12643.*

# Swinomish

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)  
 Rivas, a 1985 La Conner High School graduate, is a 38-year employee of the Swinomish Casino & Lodge.  
 “I started when it was just the bingo hall,” she recounted, “and I grew up with the property.”  
 Rivas has built her candidacy around stemming drug abuse, supporting and improving community services and fostering the education and welfare of tribal children.  
 “My goal,” she said, “is to be the best senator that I can be while working with fellow senators to build a better relationship with our community.”  
 Day is the senate’s recording secretary. His myriad of tribal tasks include chairing the employment rights office, serving as vice-chair of elder services and membership on the planning, environmental and lands, fireworks and Protect Mother Earth committees.  
 “I come from a long line of tribal leaders from both sides of my family,” Day shared with Qyuuqs. “As a senator, I’d like to continue paddling forward in a positive direction – continue and expand necessary

services, provide more housing and work with law enforcement to keep our community safe and drug free.”  
 Day is an advocate of trade schools and training opportunities for living wage jobs that provide financial stability as well as a sense of personal accomplishment.  
 “I support our youth,” he stressed, “in whatever their educational goals might be.”  
 Day expressed gratitude that the Swinomish Didgwalic Wellness Center has expanded its care and services from 250 to 500 clients, tribal and non-tribal members, both.  
 As a senator, Day has traveled the nation for conferences and training sessions, including a trip to Anchorage where he witnessed two Swinomish members graduate from a Dental Health Aid Therapy program there.  
 “We have built a relationship with Skagit Valley College,” he related, “and now offer that same DHAT training.”  
 John, who narrowly missed advancing to the 2020 general election ballot, has outlined a robust campaign platform highlighting economic development, elder service, support for single

**THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SKAGIT**  
**Estate of Marilyn Jean PENNINGTON, Deceased,**  
**Michael T. PREIKSA Petitioners.**  
**Case No. 23-4-00634-29 NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
 The Personal Representative named below has been appointed as Personal Representative of this Estate. Any person having a claim against the decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner as provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing to the Personal Representative or the Personal Representative’s attorney at the address stated below a copy of the claim and filing the original of the claim with the Court. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) Thirty days after the date of first publication of this 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: December 20, 2023  
 Personal Representative: Michael T. Preiksa  
 Attorney for the Personal Representative: JOSEPH D. BOWEN, WSBA #1763117631  
 Address for Mailing or Service: 401 South Second Street Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
 Published in La Conner Weekly News Dec. 20, 27, 2023 and Jan. 3, 2024.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY**  
**Estate of: CONSTANCE CHARDI**

parents and work force opportunities.  
 “We need to get our community involved, get them trained and look at helping members get started being contractors,” John said, “and support tribal member-owned businesses so that way we create jobs that stay within our community and with that you help them have a better future.”  
 John said he is a good listener who encourages all Swinomish voices to be heard.  
 “We have a great foundation,” he said, “and need to continue to grow and improve what we have for a better quality of life for our community.”  
 Bobb, son of late La Conner School board member Susan Edwards Wilbur, for whom the Swinomish Early Education Center is named, is a commercial fisherman who is committed to enhancing and ensuring the safety of the tribal fleet.  
 “I’m eager to be a part of the solution and contribute to making our community a better and safer place to

**NO. 23-4-00643-29 NOTICE TO CREDITORS PLEASE TAKE NOTICE**  
 The individual 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 provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing the claim to the Personal Representative or the Personal Representative’s attorney at the address stated below, and filing the original of the claim with the Court identified herein. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) thirty days after service or mailing this Notice as provided in RCW 11.40.020(3); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of this 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 for claims against both the Decedent’s probate and non-probate assets.  
 Date of First Publication: December 20, 2023  
 Cheryl Havens, Personal Representative  
 Attorney for Personal Representative  
 Dewey W. Weddle, WSBA #29157  
 Address for Mailing or Service of Claims: LAW OFFICE OF DEWEY W. WEDDLE, PLLC 909 Seventh Street Anacortes, WA 98221  
 Telephone: 360-293-3600  
 Published in La Conner Weekly News Dec 20, 27, 2023 and Jan. 3, 2024.

**SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY**  
**In the Matter of the Estate of JOHN A. SAYRE, Deceased.**  
**No. 23-4-02414-31 PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS RCW 11.40.030**  
 The personal representative named below has been appointed as personal repre-

live,” said Bobb.  
 Bobb is a proponent of both youth and elder services.  
 “It’s essential,” he insists, “to bring awareness to the various opportunities available to our youth. I’ve had conversations with collegiate athletes who are leading the way for our younger generation.”  
 “It’s scientifically proven,” he continued, “that social relationships contribute to the longevity and mental well-being of our elders. My objective is to bring elders to witness the strength of our youth while they pursue excellence in academics and sports.”  
 Bobb said his upbringing was marked by the unifying power of sports as Swinomish athletic teams traveled from tribe to tribe, “bonding with people who would become lifelong friends.”  
 He said his mother took a similar approach by building relationships with neighboring school systems.  
 “Her message of ‘education, education, education’ was deeply ingrained in me,” Bobb said, “as was the value of embracing challenges and moving forward.”

**LEGAL NOTICES**  
 sentative of this estate. Any person having a claim against the decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner as provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing to the personal representative or the personal representative’s attorney at the address stated below a copy of the claim and filing the original of the claim with the court in which the probate proceedings were commenced.  
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 DATE OF FILING COPY OF NOTICE TO CREDITORS with Clerk of Court: December 21, 2023.  
 DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION: 27 December 2023  
**P E R S O N A L REPRESENTATIVE: PATRICIA A. SAYRE ATTORNEY FOR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE:**  
 Amy C. Allison, WSBA #34317  
 Anderson Hunter Law Firm, P.S.  
 2707 Colby Avenue, Suite 1001  
 Everett, WA 98201  
**COURT OF PROBATE PROCEEDINGS: Snohomish County Superior Court AND CAUSE NUMBER: 23-4-02414-31**  
 Published in La Conner Weekly News Dec. 27, 2023, Jan. 3 and 10, 2024.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY**  
**In Re The Estate of: KATHRYN MARIE**

**CHAPMAN, Deceased.**  
**No. 23-4-00614-29 PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS (RCW 11.40.030) (NTRD)**  
**JENNIFER COLEMAN**  
 MAN has been appointed as Personal Representative of this Estate. Any person having a claim against the decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner as provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing to the Personal Representative or the Personal Representative’s attorney at the address stated below a copy of the claim and filing the original of the claim with the court in which the probate proceedings were commenced. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) Thirty days after the Personal Representative served or mailed the notice to the creditor as provided under RCW 11.40.020(1)(c); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of the notice. If the claim is not presented within this time frame, the claim is forever barred, except as otherwise provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective as to claims against both the decedent’s probate and nonprobate assets.  
 Date of First Publication: January 3, 2024.  
 Personal Representative  
 Print Name: Jennifer Coleman  
 Attorneys for Personal Representative  
 Print Name and Bar #: Heather Ledgerwood #56238  
 Address for Mailing or Service: Heather Ledgerwood Wade Law Offices 6100 219th St SW, Suite 480 Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043  
 800-835-2634  
 Court of probate proceedings and cause number: Snohomish County Superior Court Case No. 23-4-00614-29  
 Published in La Conner Weekly News Jan. 3, 10 and 17, 2024.

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## Super Crossword

**Answers**

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

## SUDOKO

### Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

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# POLICE BLOTTER

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## Sunday, December 24

**9:40 p.m. Weaved away**— Erratically driven vehicle on Mclean Road and then into the town of La Conner. Vehicle turned on to Maple Avenue and the caller stopped following. No plate provided and no further complaints.. Morris St. / Maple Ave., La Conner.

## Monday, December 25

**1:35 a.m. Dog ran free** — Small dog running loose in the middle of the road. Caller was off duty officer but advised they could not catch it and it kept running away. Unknown owner and no response from a deputy. Summers Dr. / Best Rd., Greater La Conner.

## Wed., December 27

**10:43 a.m. Dropped call** — Cell phone alert of a possible MVA at the intersection. This was an automatic alert that is often caused by a sudden jolt or dropping of a phone. We checked the area and did not find any problems. Chilberg Rd. Chilberg Ln., Greater La Conner.

**3:08 p.m. Running dogs** — Report of two loose dogs running in the area. There is no leash law in the county and the dogs were not a danger to traffic. Deputy did not respond due to no laws being violated. Mann / Fir Island Rds., Conway.

**10:44 p.m. Stuck situation** — Caller reported a possible MVA at this residence with a vehicle stuck in a field just off the road. A deputy responded and found it was not an MVA and the driver and just pulled in to park and got stuck. Driver was going to need a tow to get out.. Maple Ave., La Conner.

## Thursday, December 28

**9:41 a.m. Dead end call** — Oak Harbor Police requested a check of the business to try and locate a direct number for a case they were investigating. Only numbers available were automated lines that would not reach a real person.. Morris St., La Conner.

**12:17 p.m. All o.k.** — Client reported that they might be missing jewelry from their room. A deputy responded but this may be an age and confusion issue. Unknown if anything is actually missing. N 1st St., La Conner.

# 2023: The year reviewed in headlines

December was frosty and frozen	4-Jan
La Conner Community combats wave of saltwater flooding	4-Jan
Flood damage cost estimate \$1.8 million	11-Jan
Council creates emergency management commission	1-Feb
Center Street condos a go	15-Feb
Marna Hanneman will be next La Conner Mayor	24-May
Festival celebrates author Tom Robbins	6-Sep
Earthquake rattles La Conner Sunday	11-Oct
29 newspaper contest awards for Weekly News	11-Oct
Blessing the La Conner Swinomish Library	18-Oct
Town's short-term rentals forum draws large turnout	25-Oct
306 Center Street permit problems	1-Nov
Mayor Ramon Hayes final council meeting ends without fanfare	20-Dec
2023 Town of La Conner budget will end in black	20-Dec
Shelter Bay board sanctions fellow board members	22-Feb
Recall campaign targets 5 Shelter Bay directors	5-Apr
Shelter Bay residents recall director Kontos	19-Apr
Lynette Cram resigns; Dave Cram hired	1-Mar
Enrollment drop means school staff cuts in fall	26-Apr
A lean budget to rightsize school finances	2-Aug
BNSF locomotive derailed early Thursday behind Swinomish Casino	22-Mar
Matika Wilbur launches 'Project 562' at Swinomish	3-May
Skagit Valley Food Co-op members celebrate 50 years	16-Aug
Tulip Valley Farms sued by Skagit County	30-Aug
County planning commission says 'no' to easing agritourism rules	20-Dec

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