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# LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

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## A local exercise in democracy



TALKING ABOUT COMMUNICATING BETTER – Saturday's Town Talk forum gathered over 50 people in the Retirement Inn. Gretchan McCauley, seated at the right end, led Table 2 as it contributed to the mission of helping the town council's communications committee gather information for a communication plan. Marna Hanneman, standing, was a recorder.

– Photo by Ken Stern

## Town forum unleashes flood of ideas for communicating

By Bill Reynolds

Public safety in emergency situations was the talk of the town at the La Conner Retirement Inn Saturday morning.

The latest in a series of quarterly public forums coordinated by La Conner Town Council communications committee members MaryLee Chamberlain and Rick Dole focused on December's flood and proposed measures to mitigate future episodes.

The Dec. 27 flooding, a combination of factors – seasonal king tides, low barometric pressure, strong westerly winds and steady rainfall – struck rapidly that morning and resulted in nearly \$2 million in damages here.

"I've lived here my entire life and live on the waterfront now," said Maureen Harlan, a forum leader, "and I've never seen anything like that before."

Town Planning Commission Chair Marna Hanneman, who served as a forum recorder, noted that she received phone calls from fellow residents asking what they should do.

"It's critical in this day and age that government can get accurate information to its citizens," Mayor Ramon

Hayes stressed in opening the Jan. 21 session, which delved heavily into communications options in emergency situations.

A jigsaw approach, with the 50 participants – including Town Administrator Scott Thomas and Skagit County Assessor Danny Hagen – seated at six tables, was employed to brainstorm communications strategies going forward.

Among those most frequently proffered were:

- Including key information with monthly water bills.
- Installing a new community reader board to replace the one removed at Sixth and Morris street.
- Encouraging increased neighbor-to-neighbor communication.
- Establishing neighborhood watch programs.
- Developing an emergency checklist for residents and merchants.
- Instituting a siren, whistle or church bell system for a pending emergency notifications.
- Increasing utilization of local CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) members.
- Using multi-lingual messaging.
- Providing "OK" and "Need Help"

signs to place in windows to alert first responders of their respective situations.

- Making use of phone trees, texting and other technology assets.
- Creating a community "Care Network."

Retirement Inn resident Jackie Smith suggested that regular emergency response drills be conducted at her facility, site of the forum.

"This has been a great opportunity to meet with your group," Hanneman told Retirement Inn residents. "We're very happy to have been able to come here today. Thank you, very much, for allowing us to be here. It's important that all our communities are heard."

La Connerite Gail Bruce facilitated. "There has been some very good information shared here," Chamberlain said afterward, "and we really appreciate it."

Input from the forum, organizers said, will be compiled and made available publicly in report form.

Hagen said the forum was productive and an ideal model for future public meetings.

"We want to make sure," he insisted, "that this isn't a one-time event."

## Rep. Larsen discusses flood response with Mayor

By Bill Reynolds

Even a U.S. representative can have trouble finding a parking place in La Conner.

And not just during peak summer tourist season, but on a January weekday morning.

Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Arlington), top Democrat on the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, knows that all too well. He had to park in a police zone Thursday before a full round of activities here, including speaking at the 24th annual Storming the Sound Conference at Maple Hall.

The 11-term lawmaker avoided a ticket – and for good reason. He is trying to shake loose federal funds for local flood control measures.

Larsen met at Town Hall with Mayor Ramon Hayes, Town Administrator Scott Thomas and Councilmember Rick Dole to discuss the path forward for La Conner, which sustained nearly \$2 million in flood damages last month.

"That's about 70% of the county total," said Hayes at the late afternoon meeting. "We took the brunt of it."

Hayes stressed that it was Larsen who asked for the meeting.

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## Tribal dental program gets Medicaid funding

OLYMPIA — A federal appeals court reversed a last-minute Trump Administration decision to deny Medicaid funding for dental health aide therapists in Washington tribal communities, Attorney General Bob Ferguson, the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and the Washington Health Care Authority announced Jan. 19.

These dental aides help fill a void in tribal communities, which have a significant shortage of dentists and dental services.

The state and Swinomish jointly filed an appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit after President Biden took office. The state and Tribe also asked the Biden Administration to reverse the decision, but it defended the decision. Last week, the Ninth Circuit ordered the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to approve Medicaid funding for the dental therapists.

The decision to deny Medicaid funding, made by CMS, came on the last day of the Trump Administration and nearly a year after an independent federal hearings officer recommended the funding be approved. CMS had approved Medicaid funding for a similar Alaskan program under the George W. Bush administration.

Ferguson, on behalf of the Health Care Authority and the Swinomish Tribe, jointly filed their petition with the Ninth Circuit in March 2021, asking the court to overturn the federal agency's decision.

On Jan. 12, a three-judge panel with the Ninth Circuit agreed with the state and Swinomish that CMS' denial was "not in accordance with law." The court ordered CMS to approve the Medicaid funding for DHATs in Washington.

(continued on page 3)

## Fundraising campaign launched to help McLeod family after fire

By Bill Reynolds

A La Conner man's lifelong dream and five years of his hard work quickly went up in smoke last week.

Tyrone McLeod lost to fire on Tuesday, Jan. 17 the house he had been building on family property off Indian Road. McLeod is perhaps best known for having built the elaborate rampway at the former Dorsten residence on Morris Street west of the Firehall Kitchen and Taphouse.

"They weren't moved in yet, everyone is okay," McLeod's mother, retired La Conner Schools staff member Linda Rumbolt, told the Weekly News Wednesday morning, "but Tyrone lost all his tools and equipment. He had just finished the house and was ready to paint it."

Cause of the fire is under investigation, according to Skagit County Fire District 13 and Swinomish Tribal Police personnel.

A friend of McLeod's, Kelly Jensen, has begun a fundraising campaign to help the family recoup its losses.

"Tyrone started building the home by himself five years ago with his own funds," Jensen posted on social media.

"It was his dream to have a home for his two children and the dream is gone.

"The home was built by hand and uninsured," said Jensen. "Now the family is without a place to live."

Jensen described the fire as "devastating." The 2,100 square foot structure burned completely to the ground.

McLeod works for a roofing company, which had helped him with the roof on his dream house.

"He had built it mostly himself," Rumbolt said. "He hired independent contractors for electrical and drywall work, though. He paid as he went. He was so excited as he had just paid the few thousand dollars left to the drywaller. They were ready to paint and move in."

McLeod had stored his tools inside the house since he was going to be out of town, said Rumbolt.

District 13 Fire Chief Wood Weiss said the blaze was initially toned out as a brush fire on nearby Reservation Road. After receiving a corrected location, Weiss and district firefighters drove to Indian Road, where they saw fire deep in the woods. The call came at 7:46 a.m.

"We proceeded down a 600-foot driveway where I saw a fully engulfed structure fire with 15-to 20-foot flames and a leveled structure which was down to the foundation," said Weiss.

Weiss said District 13 was assisted by the Anacortes Fire Department. Together, they had the flames under control in about 15 minutes, an effort that required more than 11,000 gallons of water.

Swinomish Tribal Police was also on scene.

"It's a pending investigation at the moment so I can't say anything," said officer Char Burks. "We're so thankful no one was home and everyone is safe. It's scary stuff."

Scary and overwhelming.

"It's about more than a house burning down," Rumbolt said. "They need help. He has to get his electrical hooked up again to the trailer he was living in while building the house. That will take a while – and money."

Two nearby residents have said they were awakened by a loud gunshot at 4:30 the morning of the fire. That is likely one aspect of the investigation as Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms is

(continued on page 3)



BURNING QUESTIONS – Authorities are probing the cause of a fire last Tuesday that leveled the house that Tyrone McLeod was building off Indian Road. Neither he nor his children were at the structure when the blaze started. A fundraising effort has begun to help recoup the family's losses. – Photo courtesy of Linda Rumbolt



From the editor —

## Resiliency every day, every year

Town of La Conner leaders continue to talk, plan and act in preparing flood control measures in the wake of Dec. 27's flooding from the Swinomish Channel. Last night the town council created a flood commission by ordinance, cementing in place a group charged with developing responses to the next flood.

Last Thursday Mayor Ramon Hayes, Councilmember Rick Dole and Administrator Scott Thomas met with U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen and gained his commitment to have his staff pay attention to Town entreaties to federal agencies. No magic bullets there, but when outreach to the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers and FEMA — the Federal Emergency Management Agency — is made, Larsen's people will be there.

Hayes says he is taking La Conner's story to the governor's office and state legislature. Certainly we are a poster child for small town trauma and for needing a defense against the elements beyond resources that can be mustered locally.

As critical as our preparations are to us, at the state and federal levels there will probably be little funding — and that far down the road — by the time governments turn their attention to us.

What is a small community to do? Continuing to meet, talking and taking notes, as was done Saturday at the Town Talk forum organized by the council's communications committee, is critical. Folks who talk together stay together, provided they listen to each other and find that their conveners aggregate the best ideas and act on them. Bonds will strengthen when people find out their contributions get used.

Residents and leaders alike will be helped by taking at least one step back, pausing and considering if their approach is that of addressing each crisis after it hits or if the future can be better prepared for by creating a sustainability commission. That option develops a clearinghouse for a master plan that recognizes the alphabet soup of potential environmental crises. But maybe that list is longer than the people of one small town can handle.

Just considering the disaster list is daunting.

Consider the variety that may befall us: Fire, flood, drought, earthquake, heat, smoke, snow, cold, tsunami, wind. What is left out? Is any other natural calamity missing that can wreak havoc on us? As the December flooding proved, a once in a lifetime event will happen in the lifetime of some of the people reading this today.

Establishing the flood commission was critical and done within weeks. Creating a sustainability commission will not be in response to an emergency and will not be rushed into. It might not happen at all. The possibility it offers is for a cohesive and comprehensive assessment of both potential catastrophes and possible solutions that lessens the severity of emergencies.

The Skagit Valley Clean Energy Cooperative is a community initiative of residents pulling La Conner into the 21st century by greatly advancing installation of home solar energy systems. That is a gift, a grass roots effort by our neighbors. We are lucky to have them in our midst.

Let a thousand ad hoc efforts bloom. But, since we have governments, the marshaling of local resources, however limited, is a means to bring more people together more quickly and support them in wider scale efforts that can help more of us.

Natural disasters by definition are a surprise, and devastating. They cannot be averted but they can be prepared for, either singularly or in a comprehensive and collaborative fashion. Discussing preparing for them starts preparing for them.

— Ken Stern

### LETTER POLICY

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

Write a 450 word guest column.

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

Include your name, address and phone number for verification.

Letters are edited for civility clarity and style.

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editor@laconnernews.com

## LETTER

### Edison citizens success story

In January of 2022, a record-high king tide, coupled with strong winds and unusually low barometric pressure, pushed the waters of Edison Slough to breach the west-side town dikes, causing substantial damage to some homes and a number of businesses in “downtown” Edison.

At its regular monthly meeting that January, the Edison Women's Club, an active community group formed over 100 years ago to maintain safety and improve life for the citizens of Edison, collectively made a decision to address the dikes. A subcommittee was created. It organized meetings then met with dike commissioners from other districts, our county commissioner — who also serves as drainage commissioner for a neighboring dike district — and the executive director of Skagit County's drainage and irrigation districts consortium.

All proved forthcoming, informative and helpful. But we needed greater community input, so chose to hold an open town meeting. “In most of New England, town citizens become legislators for one day a year. They get together in school gyms and town halls and vote in person, and in public. This centuries long practice of towns doing the slow and hard work of disagreeing and arguing and compromising on how to govern themselves—this has a profound impact on a place, and what it means to be from a place.” (Rumble Strip, podcast)

The Edison town meeting followed suit. It drew a large crowd of citizens, county and dike district commissioners, and various Skagit County planners. Hard questions were asked and opinions flew but the result was the formation of a citizen's committee that met with our dike commissioners, once, twice, reaching agreement that the dike must be surveyed then raised. Funds were forthcoming from dike and county coffers and last October the dikes were raised. With this January's king tide, Edison was saved with only inches to spare.

Democracy works!

Thank you,  
Christine Wardenburg-Skinner  
Edison

## If I ran the zoo

By MEL DAMSKI



Am I proud to be an American? Yes. This is the country that gave my parents a wonderful place to live after they barely escaped from Nazi Germany. Am I happy with the direction this country is headed into? No.

Politics have overruled governance. Turn on CNN or MSNBC or any national or local newscast and little of it is positive news that makes me proud to be an American. As a former newspaper reporter, I'm a news junkie and I am finding it very painful to see the direction our country is moving in, politically.

There is so much violence going on right now, heartbreaking stories. One of the victims in the University of Idaho stabbings was a young man from Skagit County. Gun violence is exploding with heartbreaking stories of youngsters getting access to firearms. Our country has to do what Australia did after experiencing similar gun violence and make it much much harder for people to purchase and own weapons. Why is anyone allowed to buy a pistol?

In the last couple of weeks, most of the news on those two networks has been about the discovery of many classified documents belonging to President Joe Biden. Although its being blown out of proportion, it is still extremely upsetting to know that Biden has not been forthcoming with these documents and it might be intentional, or he might be a victim of age discrimination.

Speaking of age discrimination, we are being told that Biden wants to run again in the next election, which I think is a terrible idea at this age. I am hoping that our next president will be much younger and we won't have to worry about presidential dementia. There are a couple of wonderful women governors, and serving as a governor is perfect training for the presidency.

I want a president who prioritizes the welfare of her or his constituents and takes a very strong stand against gun violence in our country. I want another Abraham Lincoln or FDR or Bill Clinton or Barack Obama to lead us into a less violent, more democratic future.

I thought we had come so far when we put a man on the moon in 1969 but when you look around our world and see how much violence and discrimination there is in so many places, it is clear that we still have a long way to go.

## Oregon loses yet another newspaper

By Chris Lehman, KLCC

The year is less than a month old, and Oregon has already lost three newspapers.

The latest to shut down is the Lebanon Express, a weekly that's served its namesake Linn County community for nearly 136 years. The final edition was published Jan. 18.

It comes less than a week after two southern Oregon papers, the Medford Mail-Tribune and the Rogue Valley Messenger, announced their closures.

The owner of the Lebanon Express is Iowa-based Lee Enterprises, which did not respond to a request for comment about why it shut down the paper. In a statement included on the front page of the final edition, it said

“your trust in this newspaper has been an honor, and we wish to sincerely thank our readers and advertisers for your support over the years.”

Lee Enterprises also owns two nearby dailies: The Albany Democrat-Herald and the Corvallis Gazette-Times. The company suggested that coverage of Lebanon will continue via reporters based at the Albany paper.

“As our industry evolves, we need to focus our news resources on complete coverage of the entire region, which we will continue to do as part of the Albany Democrat-Herald,” the front page statement read.

That's effectively how the city of roughly 19,000 people has been covered for some time now, according to an article in the final edition that chronicled the paper's history and downfall.

The Express “was produced from an office in Albany after the local office was closed,” the article said.

The closure of the paper is a “dagger” for the community, said Lebanon City Council president Michelle Steinhebel.

“After 135 years, to lose that paper is brutal,” she said.

Long before she was elected to city council, Steinhebel worked as an editor at the paper. She said it had a robust staff that was able to keep close tabs on nearly everything going in the farming community near the foothills of the Cascades.

“It was a pretty bustling office,” she said. “We covered school board, city council, but also community news. Kids going out on field trips to see salmon spawn. School projects for the science fair. Everything in between.”

Those stories are still going to happen, she said.

“I would hope that that coverage continues to happen through other newspapers in the area.”

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## Even keel electrical supply and pricing is possible



By Greg Whiting

What can Washington state do to avoid problems similar to those Texas experienced with its energy supply during February 2021? How should our grid and utility regulations be designed to maintain economic and reliable service, especially as the use of intermittent solar and wind generation, and electric vehicles, all increase?

Let's start with what our state can do to avoid the high electric prices Texas experienced.

Two key lessons the public can learn from the Texas situation are: Electric prices can go up 100-fold within minutes if a short-term mismatch between electric supply and demand happens. Second, extreme prices can persist long enough for total costs to be very significant.

Electric price spikes usually aren't as prolonged, or as visible, as they were in Texas. Under Texas' regulations, consumers were allowed to take the risk of accepting live wholesale prices. Some Texas retail customers saw \$10,000 monthly utility bills.

Similar supply/demand mismatches, and their resulting wholesale price spikes, can happen anywhere, including Washington. Demand can be higher than expected because of a heat wave or prolonged cold weather. Supply can be lower than expected for several reasons, e.g., accidents can affect generation or transmission.

In Washington, customers will not receive huge individual bills, because our utility rates don't allow wholesale prices to be passed through directly. However, Washington customers do pay for wholesale price spikes. We just don't pay all at once. In most places, regulations are set up to force utilities to absorb extreme wholesale prices in the short term and to pass the costs on to retail customers over years, or decades, via higher rates.

Washington utilities raised rates following the California energy crisis of 2001, which affected most of the western U.S. grid. There were several causes of the California supply shortfall, including weather, poorly implemented state regulations, bad utility management, and outright fraud by several companies, notably Enron.

The supply/demand mismatch that caused the high prices also had a demand side. The reasons demand did not fall when prices increased are the same as they were in Texas: Customers had no way to know that electric supply was down, and had no way to react even if they had known.

In commodity markets other than electricity, extreme price spikes do not happen. In markets for, say, metals and farm products, a mismatch between supply and demand can be addressed by releasing inventory from previously stored stockpiles. Also, customers do know that prices are up and react to higher prices by reducing demand.

The following actions can be taken to reduce and address

electric supply shortfalls, and to create a feedback loop that will give customers more control over demand:

Actions that reduce electric supply shortfalls and create a feedback loop that gives customers more control over demand include:

- Improving Washington's access to additional electric supplies which can be brought on line quickly to address a supply shortfall.

- Creating dispatchable inventory. Washington has a much greater ability than most states to release more water from hydroelectric dams. Utility-scale batteries, and electric vehicles that can be discharged with customer permission on utility requests, are potential sources of inventory.

- Creating live two-way communication between utilities and customers, so that customers can see dramatic price changes. Create systems and regulations that enable customers to automatically and voluntarily reduce demand.

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**OBITUARY**



**Sharon Kay Cutler  
Sept. 20, 1939 – Jan. 4, 2023**

Sharon passed away on Wednesday Jan. 4, 2023. She was born on Sept. 20, 1939 and was 83 years old. Sharon was preceded in death by her dad, Sylvester Pulanco; her stepdad, Don; mother, Wanda Campbell and granddaughter, Janae Pew. Ironically, mom passed away on what would have been Janae's 30th birthday.

Sharon carried the sacred gifts of crafts and hospitality. She was a devoted and loyal wife, sister, and mother. She was married to Bert Cutler for over 64 years. She loved children and was gifted at working with children under the age of five. She ran a home daycare for 10 years and then worked at the Boeing Company as a quality assurance inspector. She worked there for 10 years and retired. Bert and Sharon moved to Mesquite, Nevada and then moved back to Washington to settle down close to their children. Her primary personality trait everyone would say was 'working hard'. She loved a clean house and a manicured yard.

She leaves to cherish her memory: Husband, Bert Cutler Sr; children: Anna Cutler, Donelda (Dwight Arney), and Bert Cutler Jr; siblings: Denny (Pinky) Pulanco, Roxanne Scott, Dale (Marleen) Campbell; grandchildren: BreAnn Williamson, Samina and Jay Ahmed, and Shawd Cutler; great grandchildren: Memphis, Tytus, Korbyn, Adyson Jones and Serene and Esias Arney. And many nieces and nephews and a host of other relatives and friends.

A memorial service for Sharon will take place 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 4th at Evans Funeral Chapel in Anacortes.

To share memories of Sharon, please visit [www.evanschapel.com/obituary/sharon-cutler](http://www.evanschapel.com/obituary/sharon-cutler).

**McLeod. . .**

(from page 1)

said to be engaged in the probe.

One person reported seeing a car driving through the woods prior to the fire starting, but that has yet to be confirmed.

Because the fire was well off the road, its aftermath has somewhat escaped notice, Rumbolt said.

"Everyone knows Tyrone," she said, "but no one knows about the fire."

Unfortunately, the McLeods know about it all too well.

**Inslee pushes legislature for homeless funding**

By Alexandria Osborne, Washington State Journal

Homelessness is still a big issue throughout Washington, and while the state has spent millions, the governor wants to invest more.

In a press conference Jan. 19, Governor Jay Inslee said while some homeless encampments have been cleared as a result of past funding efforts, there are still not enough places to house the homeless.

"Many of these people have chemical addiction problems that have to be treated if they're going to succeed. Many of these people have mental health problems that have to be treated," Inslee said. "Where we have found success is providing all of those things in one shot."

In Spokane, 100 people were able to move into a building with four full-time mental health counselors and two chemical-addiction counselors, he said.

Inslee said while that program was successful, there is still more work to do and more investments are needed. He said he hopes to work with the Legislature this session to fund more programs for the unhoused.

"We are getting places but it's limited by the dollars we have available. That needs to increase if we're gonna solve

this problem," he said. "If we had three times as much money, we would have cleared three times as many encampments."

As governor, he has increased budgets for programs to aid the homeless, he said. He said that these programs help people get back on their feet.

Inslee said Washington has been successful in the past decade in the sense that it is one of the best places to live and visit.

"As a result, you get a lot of people moving here from other states. If you don't build the housing for them, which we have not done, you get a homelessness crisis," he said. "So, we need to build more roofs."

In addition to programs to help the unhoused, Inslee said he hopes to work toward lowering the legal blood alcohol level to reduce impaired driving.

While some small businesses may worry their customers will not buy as much alcohol, Inslee said business owners need to think about people losing their lives to impaired drivers.

"You're not a very good customer when you've lost your life," he said. "We cannot allow that to continue."

*The Washington State Journal is a non-profit website funded by the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation. Learn more at [wastatejournal.org](http://wastatejournal.org).*

**Funding. . .**

(from page 1)

The federal government will cover the entire cost of DHAT services for Medicaid patients in Washington. Currently, the state is covering all of the Medicaid costs out of its own budget.

In 2015, Swinomish became the first tribe in the country to establish its own dental health provider licensing law and regulatory system, which includes the licensing and regulation of dental therapists.

"We are very thankful for the decision of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals authorizing Federal Medicaid payments to Dental therapists working in tribal dental programs," said Steve Edwards, chairman of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community. "Dental therapists are a Native solution to the unmet oral healthcare needs in Native communities. They provide culturally appropriate care to the patients and communities they serve and they free up dentists' time for the most complex conditions and procedures. But in order for dental therapists to be a sustainable part of tribal oral health programs, it is essential that Federal Medicaid payments be available for Dental Therapist services."

**Dental health aide program**

DHATs are professionally trained to perform about 40 oral health care and dental procedures in a culturally competent manner, ranging from preventative services like cleanings to simple extractions.

Washington's DHAT program was modeled after the successful program in Alaska, which is widely used in tribal communities there.

After Swinomish created its own dental licensing program, the first tribal dental therapist outside Alaska began practicing at the Swinomish Dental Clinic in 2016. Swinomish subsequently sent several tribal members to Alaska to be trained and has since developed a training program with Skagit Valley College which is more accessible to students in the lower 48 states.

CMS approved Medicaid funding for Alaska's DHAT program, which began in 2004.

*Source: Washington state Attorney General's Office*

**KERN**

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A View From The State House

**Clyde Shavers**  
State Representative  
District 10

**Farmland and farming community protection**

Washington has a proud history of agricultural leadership. Here in Skagit County, we have one of the largest and most diverse agricultural communities west of the Cascade Mountains. Island County is home to an ecosystem of organic and school district farms, training programs and community supported agriculture. We have a lot to be proud of – and a lot to protect.

Agriculture should be home-grown and family owned. Local farmers mean a stronger local food pipeline, more robust local economy and a healthier environment through responsible, sustainable farming practices. Growing food is integral to the fabric of our communities and our farmers care for our land. It is part of our culture and identity.

Unfortunately, more and more foreign-owned corporations are buying agricultural land.

In 2021, Capital Press ran a story about who is buying up U.S. farmland. Out west, we are seeing more investments by businesses from Canada, Japan and European countries. Much of these purchases are in wine grapes, tree fruit and timber as well as manufacturing, processing and real estate. Some of these purchases have resulted in environmental challenges including water management and rights.

According to Washington State University Skagit County Extension, 95% of the red potatoes

in Washington are from Skagit County. More tulip, iris and daffodil bulbs are produced in Skagit than in any other county in the United States. These foreign companies could be investing in the very lands and products that are the backbone of Washington's agriculture economy.

This represents a huge threat to our environment, the well-being of our local communities and the resilience of our water and food sources. It is vitally important that we keep Washington agriculture land in the hands of our farmers.

On Jan. 18, I submitted House Bill 1412 which prohibits foreign governments and businesses from buying our farm and timber land. With this bill, we can work towards environmental protection and a healthier farming community.

I will be working to get this vital bill passed this legislative session. It is critical to the health and wellbeing of our states' agriculture industry, much of which resides in our region.

If you are a farmer or landowner in our corner of the state and wish to get involved with supporting this legislation, please reach out to my office. You can contact me at [housedemocrats.wa.gov/shavers](mailto:housedemocrats.wa.gov/shavers).

I look forward to hearing from you as we work to protect our local farmers.

**Apply for ag advisory board**

Skagit County is seeking applicants for a seat in District 2 for a Citizens Advisory Committee, the Agricultural Advisory Board that makes recommendations to the county commissioners on land use, planning, programs and policy decisions relating to agriculture.

Applicants need a demonstrated knowledge, experience and interest in one or more of the following areas: soil and water conservation, farming practices, food and feed processing, wholesale

and retail marketing, produce buying, direct marketing, supply, agricultural real estate/land appraisals and finance.

Apply by submitting a letter of interest along with a statement of qualifications by Feb. 9 to:

Kimberly Adams  
Skagit County Planning and Development Services  
1800 Continental Place Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
E-mail: [kadams@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:kadams@co.skagit.wa.us)  
Contact Adams: 360 416-1338.  
*Source: Skagit County*

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**Home Loans Made Simple**

**Jessica Nguyen**  
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Boys basketball —

# Braves lose heartbreaker to Coupeville; rebound with big win against Darrington

By Bill Reynolds

The La Conner Braves went from heartache to heartened in 48 hours last week.

The high school team (7-7) rebounded from a tough 57-56 home loss to Coupeville Wednesday with a 64-14 blowout win over Darrington at Landy James Gym Friday night.

With the two-game split, La Conner was 3-2 in NW1B/2B play before last night's conference action at Orcas Island.

The lopsided Darrington triumph helped take the sting out of the last-second setback to the Wolves, which was no ordinary one-point defeat.

It was one of the more heart-wrenching losses ever suffered to Coupeville, a rivalry whose storied intensity of the 1960s and 1970s was revived in a back-and-forth affair witnessed by loud and energetic cheering sections that were as competitive as the players on the floor.

La Conner had appeared to clinch matters when Braden Thomas, who finished with 15 points and 11 rebounds, delivered a 12-foot pull-up jumper that broke a 54-54 tie with three seconds to play.

Then the improbable happened.

Coupeville quickly inbounded the ball to mid-court and called a timeout. From there, out of the team's huddle, Coupeville's Chase Anderson passed inbounds to Jonathan Valenzuela, who quickly spun and flung the ball off glass and through the net for a game-winning three-pointer.

Even more remarkable, Valenzuela hit the big bucket despite sporting a big gash above his partially closed right eye, the result of taking a sharp elbow earlier.

The Coupeville crowd erupted and Wolves players stormed the court as the final buzzer sounded to celebrate what the school's fans called one of the biggest shots in program history.



PERFECT FORM – Nathan Bailey sank four free throws without a miss and finished with eight points to help lead the Braves to a lopsided 64-14 triumph over Darrington.

– Photo by Madoc Hiller

In literally a split second, Coupeville extended its winning streak to four games and improved to 9-5 overall and 2-1 in league standings.

Thomas showed rare foul shooting proficiency, knocking down five of seven attempts. His teammates were a combined five of 19.

Isaiah Price, scored 22 of his game-high 29 points before the break. Price's stat line included three perimeter treys and eight rebounds.

Brayden Pedroza delivered two three-pointers while C.J. Edwards drained a trey and Ivory Damien chipped in a bucket and free throw.

La Conner left nothing to

chance against Darrington. The Braves bolted to a 32-9 halftime lead and never looked back.

Head coach C.J. Woods substituted liberally throughout with eight players joining the point parade.

Thomas led the Braves with 22 points, all in the first three quarters, draining four three-pointers. Price popped in 13 points, also in limited duty.

Nathan Bailey (8), Ivory Damien (7), Pedroza (5), Finn Hakenson (4), Logan Burks (3) and Edwards (2) rounded out the attack.

The Braves played at Lummi Monday night. They entertain Tulalip Heritage Saturday, 7 p.m.

La Conner remains home next Tuesday to meet Mount Vernon Christian, tip-off at 5:15 p.m.

Girls basketball —

# La Conner Lady Braves are dominate in two-game sweep

By Bill Reynolds

There was plenty of highlight reel material when the La Conner High School girls' basketball team swept conference foes Coupeville and Darrington at home last week.

The Lady Braves routed Coupeville 72-16 Wednesday and romped past Darrington 69-9 Friday, extending their winning streak to four games and improving to 11-3 going into Tuesday's action at Orcas Island.

"Those two games gave us the opportunity to get playing time for everyone," said head coach Joe Harper. "It was also a chance for us to work on making the extra pass in our half-court offense. Ellie (Marble) had some nice interior passing to Makayla (Herrera)."

Marble dished off four assists to go with her game-high 22 points in the shellacking of Darrington. She also recorded 30 points against Coupeville.

Josie Harper and Herrera joined Marble in double-digit scoring in the Coupeville game. Harper finished with 19 points while Herrera added 14.

Freshman point guard Shaniquah Casey tallied eight points, two steals and an assist.

The story was the same in the Darrington. In addition to Marble, Harper (21) and Casey (10) also landed in double-figure scoring.

Herrera (8), Kennedy Miller (6) and Lily Dougliss (2) rounded out the scoring.

Coach Harper's emphasis on making the extra pass extended from half-court sets to the transition game.

The ball didn't hit the floor on a fast break from Casey to Josie Harper to Marble for a 26-0 La Conner first period lead. Successive passes by Miller and Casey led to a Josie Harper layup and 58-8 fourth quarter Lady Braves' margin. Again, there were no dribbles.

A truer test of where the team stands at this stage of the season comes this week when the Lady Braves go to southwest Washington opposite larger enrollment Vancouver area programs, Union and Skyview.

The Lady Braves resume conference play at home Jan. 31 against Mount Vernon Christian.

# Rachel Haley is Soroptimist student

Rachel Haley, a senior at La Conner High School, is the January Honored Student of the Month for Soroptimist of La Conner. Rachel is a member of the McCauley family and attributes much of her artistic leanings to her family. The late Curt McCauley, her grandfather, was an artist and was very involved in MoNA, the Museum of Northwest Art, as both a docent and a supporter. Gretchen, her grandmother, served on the board. Her aunt Eve is an accomplished painter. Rachell wants to represent all of her family well as she moves forward in life.

Starting in fifth grade, she began to love poetry under the guidance of Sam Green, the first Washington state poet laureate, who left his island home every year to teach at La Conner. That interest stayed with her and prompted her to participate in the poetry slam at the Skagit River Poetry Foundation Festival last year. She still keeps a poetry journal.

As Associated Student Body president this year, she works to facilitate others to enable their

goals. Drama is also a strong interest for Rachel – having started with the Missoula Children's Theatre in elementary school. This year she looks forward to being in the spring play. Pep band is another joy in Rachel's school life which she also hopes to carry into college.

Rachel feels that a large part of who she is comes from living in La Conner – being able to hear the drumming as she stands outside her home on Swinomish ancestral land and being in a school, community and a family that honors culture.

Rachel plans to attend Central Washington University and major in humanities. She wants to learn to think, read, write and lead well – and to help others. Rachel is the daughter of Bonnie Beddall and John Haley of La Conner.

Vintage La Conner will give a certificate to their Vintage Thrift and Consignment shop – a store made run solely by volunteers and made possible by the generous donation and purchases of the community.

Source: La Conner Soroptimist

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### 'Quilt Until You Wilt' at history museum

Come check out the new interactive exhibit "Quilt Until You Wilt." There are a variety of designs, including floral patterns in time for Tulip Season! Guests will get the opportunity to design their own paper quilts while being surrounded by different designs from the Skagit County Historical Museum's

collection. Take creative inspiration from the quilts and make a personal connection to a part of the county's history. Make a paper quilt into June. Open Thursdays through Sundays from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Information: 360.466.3365 or email museum@co.skagit.wa.us. Source: Town of La Conner

### Ride Skagit Transit buses free Thursday

Ride free all day Jan. 26 on Skagit Transit buses. This supports the annual Point in Time Count and other efforts to end homelessness in Skagit County. Everyone can take the bus Thursday. Give it a try. The Skagit Transit Board of directors approved the fare-free day which applies to Skagit Transit's local fixed routes.

Children under eight-years old need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. The free fares offer easy access to any of the host Continuums of Care locations in Anacortes, Mt Vernon, Burlington and Sedro Woolley. Information: SkagjtTransit.org; 360-757-4433 Source: Skagit Transit

### Senior class raffle at Jan. 31 b-ball game

The La Conner High School senior class has a raffle fundraiser at the Jan. 31 basketball game in support of its spring graduation trip. Over \$1,000 in donated

items can be won by buying \$5 tickets or five for \$20. Seniors are hoping to raise about \$6,000 by the end of the school year.

### Join farmers Thursday at Lincoln Theatre

Come celebrate the Skagit Valley Food Co-op's partnership with Viva Farms at the Lincoln Theatre 6 p.m. Jan. 26 with snacks, prizes, beer and farmers. Learn more about Viva Farms and its incredible work. The Co-op has donated \$100,000 to Viva Farms, investing in the future of local food. Not a Co-op member? Join when you come. Source: Skagit Valley Food Co-op

### Poetry reading Saturday

Skagit Valley poet Georgia Johnson reads poetry at Pelican Bay Books accompanied by Roberto Ascalon and Natalie Lahr Jan. 28, 7 p.m. at the Anacortes bookstore, 520 Commercial Avenue.

### Slider Café closed till Feb. 3

Make plans for breakfast at The Slider Café Feb. 3 or later. The Morris Street restaurant is closed until then: the Slider family has caravanned to North Tahoe for Kimberly Bonilla and Levi Howell's wedding. Congratulations newlyweds!

## Wild swimming: My year-round experience in the Salish Sea

By Lynne Beebe

I have always had mixed feelings about swimming in cold water and my idea of paradise is floating in the warm waters of the Caribbean. But I grew up on the Connecticut shore of Long Island Sound and spent most summer days on the beach and in the chilly water. (My mother's rule was that we had to come out and get warmed up if our lips turned blue.)

After attending college far from my beloved beach and then living in Paris for five years, I moved to Seattle with my former husband. It was August and hot when we arrived. We headed for the Sound to cool off and I was surprised that no one was swimming. I knew the water was colder than Long Island Sound, but thought it couldn't be that cold. I dove in and couldn't breathe for what seemed like five minutes. That was the last time I would swim in the Salish Sea for decades.

When we moved to the Swinomish Reservation in 2008, I joked that since global warming seemed inevitable, I hoped to be able to swim in front of my home on Skagit Bay and have monkeys in the trees before I died. The first pandemic summer was warm and the mud flats in the bay heated up the surface of the water and I found that I could actually swim in front of my house. By September, I realized I had been in the water nearly every day for almost three months and decided to see how far into the fall I could swim. As the water and air cooled, I was taking a dip more than actual swimming, but was sure I was still staying in for a few minutes. In December, I asked my husband to time me and it turned out that I was only in the water for 30 seconds! I needed to up my game, so I turned to the internet for guidance.

In my research, I found that I was a cliché: Middle aged women all over the world had taken up cold water swimming since



Lynne Beebe

the start of the pandemic. It was most popular in the UK (where they have a long history of "wild swimming") and the Outdoor Swimming Society's membership grew by 36% in 2020. People were turning towards wild swimming since the pools and popular beaches were closed down during the first years of the pandemic. Cold water gurus like Wim Hof had long touted the benefits of cold water immersion and were seeing increased interest in the experience and the possible mental and physical health benefits. Generally, adherents of cold water immersion believe that this practice can help with depression, inflammation and other ailments, but no studies so far have shown any proven benefits.

I also found out that the diver in one of my favorite films, "My Octopus Teacher," was swimming in 50 degree water without a wet suit while making the documentary! I had assumed the water was warm and now I felt even more inspired to increase my time in the water.

In a second article I will share what I have learned from avid reading about cold water swimming and almost three years of daily swims.

**Skagit Community Band**  
presents:  
**"The SCB Goes To the Show"**

**Friday Feb. 3rd • La Conner Maple Hall 7:30**    **Sunday Feb. 5th • Anacortes Brodtnick Hall 3:00**  
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For more information and directions go to: [www.SkagitCommunityBand.org](http://www.SkagitCommunityBand.org)

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# Date Night Special

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## NOT TO BE MISSED

**Community Dinner and Community Engagement.** Visit the schools, meet amazing teachers and learn about the state of the district. La Conner School District. Jan. 25, 5 p.m.. Elementary School gym.  
**Skagit Valley Food Co-op.**  
*Feeding Skagit Forever.* An evening of food, farming and fun celebrating the partnership between the Co-op and Viva Farms. Jan. 26, 6 p.m. at the Lincoln Theatre.  
**North Cascades Institute.**  
*Owls of the Pacific Northwest.* Jan. 26, 6-7:15 p.m. via Zoom. Class fee is \$10. Register online at [ncascades.org](http://ncascades.org).  
**Poetry reading with Skagit Valley's Georgia Johnson, Roberto Ascalon and Natalie Lahr.** Jan. 28, 7 p.m. Pelican Bay Books, 520 Commercial Avenue, Anacortes.

## ART & THEATRE

**Illuminate Skagit.**  
*Illuminight.* Jan. 27, 5 p.m. at Skagit River Walk Plaza. Free family event.  
**Gallery W.**  
 101 N 1st St, La Conner. 360-265-2374. [galleryw.art](http://galleryw.art)  
*Exhibit: "Connected" featuring Sherry Ying Ruden.* Through Feb. 26.  
**Museum of Northwest Art.**  
[monamuseum.org](http://monamuseum.org), 360-466-4446.  
*Teen Art Club.* Every Friday, 3-5 p.m. Free for grades 6-12. Pizza, snacks and art supplies are provided.

## LIBRARIES

**La Conner Swinomish Library.**  
 520 Morris St, La Conner. 360-466-3352. [lclib.wa.us](http://lclib.wa.us). Open 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday.  
*Storytime.* Every Friday at 11 a.m.  
**Anacortes Public Library.**  
 360-299-8067, [CityofAnacortes.org](http://CityofAnacortes.org). 1220 10th St, Anacortes.  
*Tech Help.* Every weekday at library front desk. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Drop-in for hands-on help.  
**Mount Vernon Public Library.**  
 360-336-6209, [mountvernonwa.gov](http://mountvernonwa.gov). 315 Snoqualmie St, Mount Vernon.  
*Virtual Reality.* Every Saturday 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Must be 18 or older.  
*Baby Storytime.* Every Friday 10:30-11 a.m.

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

## MUSEUM EXHIBITS

**Museum of Northwest Art.** Open daily 10 a.m.-5 p.m. [monamuseum.org](http://monamuseum.org), 360-466-4446.  
*Exhibit: Consonance by Richard Nash.* Through Feb 5, 2023.  
*Exhibit: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Honoring our Stolen Sisters.* Through Feb 5, 2023.  
*MoNA Collection: New Acquisitions.* Through Feb 5, 2023.  
**Pacific Northwest Quilt & Fiber Arts Museum.** Hours: Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 3. [qfamuseum.org](http://qfamuseum.org), 360-466-4288. 703 S Second St, La Conner.  
*Exhibit: Celebrating 25 Years - Treasures from the permanent collection.* Through Jan. 29.  
*Exhibit: Our Voices in Fiber.* Through Feb. 26.  
**Skagit County Historical Museum.** 360-466-3365 or [skagitcounty.net/museum](http://skagitcounty.net/museum). Hours: Thurs-Sun 11 a.m-4 p.m.  
*Exhibit: Quilt Until You Wilt.* Through June 2023. Design your own paper quilts.

## MUSIC

**Ukelele Fun & Song Circle.**  
*Meet every Wednesday.* 1-2 p.m., Burlington Senior Center. Beginners and all ages are welcome. Loaner ukules available. For more info, email [yogaheartspace0@gmail.com](mailto:yogaheartspace0@gmail.com).  
**Shelter Bay Chorus.**  
*Meet every Thursday.* 4:30- 6:30 p.m., Shelter Bay Clubhouse. No auditions required, just a joy for singing. Rehearsals are resuming for Spring Concert. Questions, call Joan 360-941-7507.  
**McIntyre Hall.**  
 2501 E College Way, Mount Vernon. [mcintyrehall.org](http://mcintyrehall.org).  
*Skagit Symphony Presents: Shake It!* Jan. 29, 1-3 p.m. A family concert and children's music fair. Tickets are \$5.  
**The SCB Goes To The Show.**  
 Music selections from favorite movies and theatre. Skagit Community Band. Maple Hall, Feb. 3, 7:30 p.m. Feb. 5, 3 p.m. Brodriak Hall, Anacortes.

## MEETINGS

**Town of La Conner**  
 204 Douglas St, La Conner. 360-466-3125. Zoom info @[Townoflaconner.org](mailto:Townoflaconner.org)/calendar.  
**La Conner School District**  
 305 N 6th St, La Conner. 360-466-4113. [lcsd.wednet.edu](http://lcsd.wednet.edu).  
*Community engagement night dinner.* Jan. 25, 5 p.m. at elementary school gym. Visit the schools, meet teachers and learn about the state of the district.  
*Community voice outreach meeting.* Jan. 26, 6:30 p.m. at Swinomish Youth Center, 17275 Reservation Rd.  
**Skagit Conservation District 2021**  
 E. College Way #203, Mt. Vernon. 360-428-4313. Zoom info @ [skagitcd.org](mailto:skagitcd.org).  
*Board meetings.* Every fourth Wednesday 7:30-9 a.m.  
**Rotary Club of La Conner.**  
[laconnerrotary.org](http://laconnerrotary.org). Meetings Monday, 6-7 p.m. at the Farmhouse restaurant - optional dinner at 5:30 p.m.  
**Skagit Cemetery District One.**  
*Regular meetings.* Every second Thursday, 5 p.m. at Lori Buher's home, 17604 Valentine Rd., Mount Vernon.  
**Little Mountain Gamblers.**  
*Gamblers Anonymous.* Every Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. at Senior Center in Mount Vernon. 1401 Cleveland Ave. Any questions, call Washington State Gamblers Anonymous hotline at 855-222-5542.

## SERVICE & VOLUNTEER

**La Conner Sunrise Food Bank.** Food distribution every Monday from 2:30-5 p.m. 602 S. 3rd St., La Conner. 360-488-3878. [laconnerfoodbank.com](http://laconnerfoodbank.com).  
**Skagit Valley Humane Society.** 18841 Kelleher Rd, Burlington. 360-757-0445. [skagithumane.org](http://skagithumane.org). Operating by appt. only at this time. Find volunteer/donation opportunities online.

Instagram  
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By Patricia Aqimuk Paul, Esq., Food Editor.

## Butternut Squash Soup

*I ventured out to our garden today, packing my scissors out in a grocery bag. I told Chili, our 5-year-old miniature Australian Shepherd that we were going out to the garden. As the day was rainy, I put on my waterproof boots. The pickings were slim but I saw plenty of life. I pulled one green onion and left about five. I cut several stems of English thyme. I cut one short stem of chocolate mint and the tops of several sage plants. Once back inside, I cleaned the onion and put the herbs in a medium Corelle bowl and rinsed them 20 times. After each rinse, rinse again, until the water is clear. What I ultimately decided to put in the soup was the green onion and six sage leaves. I was going for subtle and not overpowering flavors.*



### Ingredients

- Butternut Squash, 1 medium
- Apple, 1 peeled and chopped
- Green onion, 1 fresh
- Sage leaves, 6 fresh
- Butter, 1 tbsp
- Garlic, 1 clove, minced
- Ginger, 1 inch knob
- Chicken broth, low sodium, 1 ½ cups
- Apple cider vinegar, 1 tsp
- Parchment paper, optional
- Water, 1 cup

### Preparation

Cut, clean and chop the herbs, as described above. Next bake the butternut squash. Use parchment paper and line a shallow baking dish. Set the squash in and put in the water. Bake 350 F for one hour. Allow to cool for 30 minutes. As it is cooling, prepare the apple. Heat, on a low temperature, in a large skillet with butter and garlic. Add the chopped apple, green onion and sage. Either grate or mince the ginger. Add to the soup and add the cider vinegar. Stir in the chicken broth, cover and stir every few minutes. Cook until the apple softens. Turn off the heat. Use a handheld potato masher to break up the large pieces. Allow to cool for 30 minutes. Use a hand immersion blender to create a smooth soup.

[AqimuksKitchen@outlook.com](mailto:AqimuksKitchen@outlook.com)

**"Pear Blossom"**  
 All alone by the veranda railing,  
 teardrops drenching the branches,  
 although her face is unadorned,  
 her old charms remain.  
 Behind the locked gate,  
 on a rainy night,  
 how she is filled with sadness.  
 How differently she looked  
 bathed in golden waves  
 of moonlight, before the darkness fell.  
 Chinese poet Qian Xuan (1280)

Source: [www.motmorton.org](http://www.motmorton.org)

## CLASSIFIEDS

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**FOR HIRE.** The Town of La Conner Public Works Department has an immediate opening for a full time Mechanic Maintenance Worker. This position pays \$ 33.30 per hour, plus benefits. Application and detailed job description are available at [www.townoflaconner.org](http://www.townoflaconner.org) Completed application and resume must be received no later than 3:00 p.m. Monday, February 13, 2023. The Town of La Conner is an Equal Opportunity Employer.  
**WATERFRONT OFFICE FOR RENT.** Overlooks Skagit Bay. Private and quiet. 8'X22', second floor. Wired for phone and internet. Restroom on ground floor. \$350/month. Call John at 425-218-8820.  
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## Super Crossword

SCRAMBLING TO GET THINGS DONE

- ACROSS**
- 1 "Just a moment!"
  - 7 Crusade
  - 14 Changes gears
  - 20 Debonair
  - 21 Spiritedly, in music
  - 22 Bull battler
  - 23 Clinton drains material away by percolation?
  - 25 Celebrity chef Lagasse
  - 26 Deborah of "Separate Tables"
  - 27 Coach Parseghian
  - 28 Competent
  - 30 "Red Book" chairman
  - 31 Presley wears a disguise?
  - 35 Ralpbone jumps ship?
  - 38 RSVP encl.
  - 39 Ideologies
  - 40 Kyo — (Darth Vader's grandson)
  - 41 British peer
  - 42 Prefix with angle
  - 43 Liquidy lump
  - 44 Keaton argues back in a debate?
  - 49 Longhorn's gridiron rival
  - 51 Anticipated
  - 53 Downy quilt
  - 54 Locke adds decorations?
  - 57 Carders' demands
  - 60 Nothing more than
  - 61 Work for
  - 62 "ER" roles
  - 63 Up — (cornered)
  - 65 Cobra variety
  - 66 Romero competes in a relay?
  - 70 Ford marks a word for omission?
  - 72 "7 Faces of Dr. —" (Tony Randall film)
  - 73 Matt of "Good Will Hunting"
  - 74 Links org.
  - 75 FBI guy, e.g.
  - 76 Words clarifying a spelling
  - 78 Osaka money
  - 79 Heaney makes people smile?
  - 84 Fiber for hose
  - 86 Kept safe
  - 88 Submit taxes paperlessly
  - 89 Leroux does a ballroom dance?
  - 92 Santa — (desert winds)
  - 95 Zero
  - 96 Engrave
  - 97 Singer Janis
  - 98 Baseball's Felipe or Moises
  - 99 Scottish Celt
  - 100 Thompson works as an usher?
  - 104 Deane goes on a cruise?
  - 106 Bush press secretary Fleischer
  - 107 Old British gun
  - 108 Alternative to Yahoo
  - 109 Russia's — -Tass
  - 110 One of Janet Jackson's sisters
  - 112 Wiig mends a sweater?
  - 119 Precursor to web forums
  - 120 Tartish brew
  - 121 Peanut butter cup brand
  - 122 Composed
  - 123 Transition zone
  - between plant communities
  - 124 Will subject
- DOWN**
- 1 Ogre of myth
  - 2 "Uh-uh"
  - 3 Scratch (out)
  - 4 Chicken with long, soft plumage
  - 5 Curvy letters
  - 6 Herb of the parsley family
  - 7 Actor Linden
  - 8 Ryan and Tatum of film
  - 9 Fib tellers
  - 10 Family rec facility
  - 11 Infant cry
  - 12 Lunched, e.g.
  - 13 Lovers' flowers, in Spain
  - 14 Superb
  - 15 Native
  - 16 Wrath
  - 17 Physician Enrico
  - 18 Case hearing
  - 19 Goes it alone
  - 24 "Am not!" comeback
  - 29 Funeral stand
  - 31 These, in Mexico
  - 32 Slowly, musically
  - 33 Winner's hand gesture
  - 34 Tough dude's self-assertion
  - 35 Surpasses
  - 36 Cost of cards
  - 37 Picture book
  - 40 Devastates
  - 43 Actor Depardieu
  - 44 Poet-singers
  - 45 Tweaks text
  - 46 Of the middle eye layer
  - 47 Concise
  - 48 Footfalls
  - 50 Mental flash
  - 52 Part of NOW
  - 55 Matrix
  - 56 Jim Croce's "I Got —"
  - 58 Wine barrel residue
  - 59 Actress Blair
  - 63 "There Is Nothin' Like —" (softly)
  - 64 "Daniel Boone" actor
  - 66 Trolley sound
  - 67 Cushy course
  - 68 Stains
  - 69 Winding-line dance
  - 70 "Yipes!"
  - 71 Adequate, to Lil' Abner
  - 74 Argentina's Juan or Eva
  - 77 Lecture jottings
  - 79 Long stories
  - 80 Politico Mo
  - 81 Exodus peak
  - 82 Architect Saarinen
  - 83 Peddles
  - 85 "So far, no"
  - 87 Army group
  - 90 Univ. in Raleigh
  - 91 Fare-well link
  - 93 Condition in outer space
  - 94 Morally strict
  - 98 Actress Quinn
  - 99 Precious red stone
  - 100 Bone of the 103-Down
  - 101 Scratch out
  - 102 Located
  - 103 Foot-leg joint
  - 104 — voce (softly)
  - 105 "— alive!"
  - 108 At — time (prearranged)
  - 111 Words before dare or diet
  - 113 Rocker Ocasek
  - 114 "I believe," to a texter
  - 115 Scot's denial
  - 116 "There — god!"
  - 117 New Year in Vietnam
  - 118 MI-to-SC dir.

## Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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8					2														3
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		7			1				8										6
2							7												8
		4			8														1
			3			6													2
																			4

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆

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

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# POLICE BLOTTER

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**Sunday, January 15**  
**8:51 p.m.: Stranded kayak** – A subject in a kayak got stuck on the northeast end of Hope Island due to high winds. A Swinomish Fisheries boat was able to contact the stranded boater and bring him back to shore. Hope Island, Greater La Conner.

**Tuesday, January 17**  
**8:22 a.m.: Sleeping male** – A male subject sleeping outside the public restrooms on Morris Street was provided a ride by law enforcement to First Steps in Burlington for shelter. Morris St., La Conner.

**2:46 p.m.: Suspicious photos** – The reporting person thought pictures taken inside their house by a service worker was suspicious. It was reported to law enforcement for awareness. Bradshaw Rd., Greater La Conner.

**Wednesday, January 18**  
**5:48 p.m.: Injured dog** – A motorist struck a dog on the roadway. The dog walked off after the incident

and couldn't be found. A large black dog with a red collar. Maple Ave. & Caledonia St., La Conner.

**Friday, January 20**  
**1:40 p.m.: Street fight** – Report of a physical altercation that occurred on a previous date than was reported. The people involved were not identified. The caller was encouraged to call back and report the activity when it was happening. Maple Ave., La Conner.

**Saturday, January 21**  
**12:55 a.m.: Open door** – An open door was reported at the Swinomish Youth Center. The information was passed to the Swinomish Police. 6th St., La Conner.

**12:04 p.m.: Car accident** – A vehicle was traveling westbound while another vehicle was traveling southbound. The driver stopped for the stop sign and then pulled out in front of the other vehicle. The vehicles collided in the intersection. There were no reported injuries. Best/Young Rds., Greater La Conner.

# Rain and wind like you would not believe hit California

By Anne Basye

In the first three weeks of January, 32 trillion gallons of rain and snow fell on California.

I was there for an awful lot of them.

Usually, when I make my holiday sojourn to Sacramento, I enjoy slightly warmer temperatures and a whole lot more sun than I get in Skagit County in the winter.

Not this year. Rain began just a few days after I pulled up to my mom's house on Dec. 19. At first, it was refreshing and from what I saw on my drive south, badly needed. But one storm turned into one atmospheric river after another and New Year's Eve brought high winds. Around 8 p.m. we heard an explosion – the first of a thousand drought-stressed trees toppling as 60-mile gusts swept through the region. The power went out shortly after.

The next morning, mature cork oaks, stone pines, eucalyptus and several varieties of fir trees lay on their sides or on top of bleachers and picnic tables in the oldest, shadiest parks in town. Many had fallen across arterials and streets. In neighborhoods, they had blocked streets, crushed cars, damaged roofs and pulled down electrical wires. One unhusbed Sacramentan was killed when a tree fell on her tent.

It was a tragedy for a place that calls itself the City of Trees.

Shortly after the gold rush began, a miner planted 12 cottonwood trees near his tent, reports the 1998 paper, "From nature to nurture: The history of Sacramento's urban forest." By the 1930s, proud residents bragged that per capita, Sacramento had more trees than Paris. Today the city's huge urban forestry division maintains about 100,000 public trees, and there are said to be a million trees within the city limits. You can't cut one down,



CITY OF TREES LOST A LOT OF THEM – William Land Park is Sacramento's largest city park and two blocks from the writer's mother's home. At least three-dozen trees, like this eucalyptus, came down in the Jan. 6 storm.

– Photo courtesy of Anne Basye

even in your backyard, without a permit.

Rain and wind continued the first week of January. Every night, my mother lay awake worrying that the 70-foot tall redwood next door would crush her house and visiting loved ones. When the wind sounded like a freight train, as it did on Jan. 6, the second high-wind storm, I worried too.

That night, branches from the redwood dropped and the fence, but the tree is still standing. The neighbor's insurance will fix the fence and clean up the mess. And while the southern part of Sacramento County experienced severe flooding from the Mokelumne and Cosumnes rivers, floods don't disturb my mom's sleep.

Like Skagit County, Sacramento sits a few feet above sea level in a river delta. A century and change ago, rain events like this one would cover the Sacramento Valley with so much water, it looked like an inland sea. Now, dams, levees, weirs and the three-mile wide, 40-mile long 16,000-plus acres Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area help keep cities

and farmland dry. Land within the Bypass has no permanent structures and is farmed in summer. When the Sacramento, Feather and American rivers rise, the Bypass can divert 500,000 cubic feet of water per second around the main channel of the Sacramento river to where the delta empties into the San Francisco Bay, in the heart of the Pacific Flyway,

Half a million cubic feet of water per second is a lot of water – about four times as much as the 120,000 cubic feet we saw in the Skagit River during the November 2021 flood.

The rainstorms have ended, but tree cleanup continues. The city has its hands full cutting, chipping and mulching trees. The waiting list for private tree services is long.

And people are thinking about the future. Levees in California – and there are about 20,000 miles of them, mostly in the Central Valley – are owned and maintained by a mix of government agencies and private landowners. The Cosumnes River levee that failed and flooded the southern part of Sacramento county is probably a private one. After paying so much attention to drought measures, is it time to focus on flood prevention again – before the "super" storm system predicted by climate change experts arrives?

As for the future of trees, city foresters will be replacing the fallen park and street trees as soon as they can. As well, the Sacramento Tree Foundation has been helping the cities of Sacramento and West Sacramento plant 500,000 new trees by 2045. "Under-canopied" neighborhoods, largely low-income, are the first focus. Which is good. When it is 100 degrees out, shade makes life bearable.

I'm glad the City of Trees wants life to be bearable for all its residents.

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