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WHY, IT'S A MURDER!

Prohibition era whodunit draws sleuths to deduce who bumped off the bootlegger

By Bill Reynolds

A storied chapter from La Conner's past, often spoken in hushed tones, was revisited with screaming headlines on March 23.

This year's La Conner Chamber of Commerce Murder Mystery, set during the Prohibition Era of rumrunning and bootlegging, spelled out details of the event in a special March 23, 1924, edition of the "La Conner Territorial News," one of the resources used by aspiring sleuths to solve a fictional homicide case.

Mother-daughter duo Chris and Nicole Jennings crafted the engaging story line, featuring several plot twists and nine suspects donning period costumes. Nicole Jennings is a former Weekly News reporter who now serves as Seattle University law school's assistant director for communications and public relations.

Participants braved the day's steady rain to crack the case of the Bumped-off Bootlegger.

Zach and Kayla White and 9-year-old daughter Hanna, of Mount Vernon, were among the eager detectives.

"We did it last year and Hanna absolutely loved it," Kayla White said. "When we saw they were doing it again this year we were all super excited."



THE CASE OF THE BUMPED-OFF BOOTLEGGER — Above, three suspects (right) in the La Conner Chamber of Commerce Murder Mystery face questions about the murder of rumrunner Jack Danielson. — Photo by Bill Reynolds



The cast of the Bumped-off Bootlegger donned Prohibition-era garb for their roles. — Photo courtesy Nicole Jennings

(continued on page 2)

2025 murder mystery script is in the works already

By Bill Reynolds

Crime won't be taking a holiday in La Conner anytime soon – at least in terms of the town's popular murder mystery event.

Former Weekly News reporter Nicole Jennings co-wrote the Prohibition Era murder mystery script with her mom, Chris Jennings. They're already planning next spring's third annual production.

Nicole Jennings is developing for next year a mystery steeped in World War II intrigue.

Her aim is to craft story lines around local weapons testing and espionage, with fictional plots bolstered by research into the history of nearby Naval Air Station Whidbey Island and perhaps Fort Whitman on Goat Island just south of town.

"I plan to get started on it pretty

soon," she said. "We were writing this year's murder mystery right down to the wire."

Jennings portrayed Bonnie McClyde, moll of a murdered rumrunner, in the 2024 murder mystery. She hopes her castmates will return for next spring's World War II-themed whodunit.

"The second annual La Conner Murder Mystery, set in 1924, was the bee's knees," Jennings said in a recent social media post. "And just as special as getting to act the part of Bonnie McClyde was getting to write the story and all the clues with my mom, who played the FBI's first woman agent, Alaska Davidson, hired in 1924."

Chris Jennings owns Jennings Yarn & Needlecrafts, a long-established La Conner business, and is president of the La Conner Chamber of Commerce, whose office serves as the start and final arrest site for each murder mystery.

"We based the story off the real history of bootlegging between Vancouver Island and the La Conner area during Prohibition," Nicole Jennings said.

The period 1920s clothing worn by the cast and participating merchants was more comfortable than the Victorian garb required last year, she and others noted.

"It was great how many people dressed up (in 1920s clothing)," she said.

Jennings credited Kevin Baker with helping create charts for motives, alibis and evidence for sleuths to narrow down theories of the case with the clues they were provided.

"I think we did all right as quite a few people guessed correctly – but not too many, so it wasn't too easy," Jennings said.

A similar formula will be in place for the 2025 murder mystery.

Agritourism decision on hold again

6-month moratorium provides time to talk

By Anne Basye

The interim ordinance that places a temporary moratorium on new event venues on land zoned Ag-NRL "is not a free pass for existing venues," Skagit County Prosecuting Attorney Will Honea said Monday at a post-adoption hearing in the county commissioners' office.

Twenty six people attending gave testimony on the moratorium, adopted by the Skagit County Board of Commissioners on Jan. 29. The moratorium was a surprise. It essentially ignored the agritourism code changes proposed by the county's Agricultural Advisory Board and recommended by the Skagit County Planning Commission on Dec. 12.

Honea told the crowd that besides severely restricted existing venues, the Ag Advisory Board's recommendations would have been unenforceable.

(continued on page 8)

'Traffic' is Tulip Festival's top word, top worry

By Anne Basye

This year's Tulip Festival is all about traffic – on the road and on social media.

Eighty percent of the traffic to the Tulip Festival website comes from people on mobile devices. On its new mobile-friendly website, people can buy display garden tickets, get bloom updates, even check Skagit County weather right from their phones.

A large paid media campaign sponsored by the Skagit Tourism Bureau and the Festival has enticed many new website visitors. While "tulips are our crown jewel," said Tourism Bureau CEO Kristen Keltz, print and digital ads "encourage people not to just see the tulips and leave, but come for the week and stay a couple days exploring other parts of the county, too."

As for the kind of traffic that drives residents berserk, Tulip Festival Director Nicole Roozen hopes that visitors using their phones can eventually access traffic advisories on Facebook and Instagram. Not this year, though, so two weeks ago she brought the major players together at the Skagit County Board of Commissioners' office. The Festival, the Tourism Bureau, all four display gardens, the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Skagit County Sheriff's Office and Department of Emergency Management reviewed past practices, future goals and concerns.

Assistant County Engineer Given Kutz and his team from public works have added flashing lights to stop signs, "no parking" signs on shoulders and "local traffic only" signs on Calhoun and Jungquist Roads. With Festival director Roozen and Washington Bulb Company President Leo Roozen,

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Anacortes event center plans progressing

By Judy Booth

The Anacortes City Council and the Port of Anacortes commissioners voted unanimously to authorize the Port's executive director to enter into an interlocal agreement regarding the conceptual design of an event center at the corner of Ninth Street and R Avenue at a joint meeting at Anacortes City Hall Monday evening.

The Port has been discussing a future event center for Anacortes since 2016. In 2021, it announced it would close the Transit Shed as an event center and its permanent return to maritime industrial use after 2023. It closed Dec. 31. The city and port committed to cooperating and have

been engaged in discussions to solve this community need.

"We envision a building with a marine aesthetic ... drawing inspiration from iconic landmarks in the area, we aim to create a space that is a reflection of our community, fostering connections and benefits for the entire community," said Mayor Matt Miller.

Miller explained the venue would be suitable for large scale events – Bier on the Pier, Uncorked, Boat & Yacht Show –community events hosted by nonprofits and private weddings. It will have banquet seating.

Plans are for the port to provide the land and manage day-to-day construction. The city will fund construction from lodging tax revenue and will own

and operate the venue through policies articulated in the next interlocal agreement.

The goals for the conceptual phase of the project include identifying project teams, consensus on minimum design criteria such as size and capacity; vetting of project criteria with stakeholders, i.e., location; support of downtown core; seating for 400; conceptual design; estimating construction costs; and an outline of responsibility for adjacent park area for event "spill-out" and public access.

Initial estimates for the first phase of this project are \$95,000 with the city and port sharing costs 50/50.

(continued on page 10)



TULIP GRIDLOCK — Tulip Festival traffic attempting to reach Interstate 5 can back up for miles on State Route 536 through Mount Vernon, as in April 2023. — Photo by Ken Stern

From the editor —

When the Earth did stand still

In the 1951 movie “The Day the Earth Stood Still,” the landing of a spaceship on the Washington Mall and the emergence of Klaatu in a spacesuit and helmet immediately changed everything worldwide. By the film’s end, humanity learned valuable lessons and nothing would be the same ever again. Ah, stories.

In real life, catastrophe strikes, say a three-year-plus worldwide coronavirus pandemic – for that is what a pandemic means, worldwide infections, sickness and death – and societies near and far, local and global hunker down, survive and a year after emerging from it, say March 23, 2024, what is the big deal? Who notices? Who commemorates it? Who has learned from it and what are the lessons learned?

Recall how totally shut down La Conner, Skagit County, the state of Washington and the country were as March 2020 ended.

Gov. Jay Inslee’s Stay Home – Stay Healthy Order prohibited “all people in Washington state from leaving their homes or participating in social, spiritual and recreational gatherings of any kind regardless of the number of participants, and all non-essential businesses in Washington State from conducting business, within the limitations provided herein.”

The snapshots of Weekly News stories on page 7 offers a glimpse into no toilet paper on store shelves, people supporting restaurants through take-out orders and a sign at the roundabout telling people to stay home. The rest of 2020 was a matter of mostly staying home.

In early 2021, vaccines became widely available and most people were vaccinated. Still more people died in 2021 than 2020: In Washington, 6,165, and nationally 463,267, lost their lives from the infection. By 2022, annual deaths fell below 2020’s total and the decline continues, as recorded by the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics.

Inslee lifted the state of emergency for COVID-19 Nov. 1, 2022.

Locally and around the state, we gathered together but not all together. The national fabric of all for one and one for all has long been frayed, as quaint – or unworkable – as an early 1950s sci-fi film. Instead the national political polarization was reflected in every community in following scientific guidelines, socially distancing, wearing masks and getting vaccinated – or not. The pandemic did not bring society together nationally or locally.

Knowledge in the public health community has advanced to turn the de-evolution of the pandemic into an epidemic. As with the flu, annual shots have become the norm. Still, in every state people are getting infected and some are getting both pretty sick and staying sick for a long period of time.

While masks are recommended for going into public spaces, whether it is the grocery or hardware store or the Lincoln Theatre or Maple Hall, few masks are to be seen.

How prepared are we, either as individuals and families, or institutions such as schools and public health departments for the next large scale catastrophe?

Maybe it is the American way to not be prepared and not for the long haul. — Ken Stern

La Conner’s tax revenues are middling in December

By Ken Stern

The Town of La Conner’s sales tax revenue was significantly down in December, to \$47,549, the lowest since 2020, the first year of the coronavirus pandemic.

The total, reported to the town council by the state Department of Revenue, is \$15,554, 24.6% below 2023’s record December collection. The special-use fire tax revenues were similarly down, at \$4,739, 24.5% below 2023.

Tourists were spending less at restaurants and stores, but probably staying in town overnight more, or longer. The December hotel/motel tax collection was \$13,915, almost 22% above the 2023 total.

The real estate excise tax collection on the sale of real property was \$2,376 in a high interest rate real estate market. As with the property tax, which did not have taxes reported, the monthly totals

vary widely across the year. This early, no analysis can be made.

The four water and wastewater treatment funds are more major revenue sources. Water revenues were \$105,773; drainage \$30,521; sewer \$54,444; and sewer compost \$71,290. The water and storm drainage collections are meeting their two-month projections while the sewer and compost collections are a bit lower, 3% and 2% below. Expenditures on storm drainage had capital costs, including a forklift, and are at 26% for the year, at \$168,329. The other fund expenditures are at or below projections.

Totals are based on December collections from town businesses and online purchases delivered to La Conner addresses and reported on a two-month lag by the Department of Revenue. The sales tax rate remains at 8.6%.

La Conner has a calendar fiscal year.

It’s Food Waste Prevention Week

No joke! Monday starts Food Waste Prevention Week, championed in Skagit County by Washington State University Extension. It is a food security issue, a family budget issue – and the cost of wasted food – and has an environmental impact on the planet.

The Skagit Food Waste Prevention Coalition has activities next week: classes, social media game and a compost event.

A cooking demonstration, “Cooking with Ends and Stems: A Sustainable Culinary Adventure,” is 12:30-1:15 p.m. Tuesday, April 2, at the La Conner Swinomish Library. You’ll get a kit to make the recipe at home.

Tale the pledge and learn about preventing food waste at home and in your community at WSU Skagit Extension Food Waste Prevention Webpage extension. wsu.edu/skagit/fam/.

Save big with passive technologies

By Greg Whiting

Reducing energy use during the design and construction phase of a new building is almost always easier than retrofitting the building afterwards. There are many techniques that can be used to reduce the amount of energy a building needs. Using efficient systems like LED lighting and heat pumps are obvious.

However, the building architecture itself can be designed to save energy, both without management of control systems (passive technologies), and with controls (active technologies).

Architectural and advanced mechanical systems that should be considered during building design include such things as: building orientation, insulation, thermal mass and other radiant barriers, windows, window frames, air conditioning economization, directly controlled humidification/dehumidification, and heat recovery from wastewater.

That seems like a lot of technologies. It’s hard to find construction professionals who are familiar with all of them. Fortunately, an organization exists to help people involved in new construction projects to learn from the experiences of those who have designed particularly efficient buildings before.

The Passive House Institute (Passivhaus) was founded in Germany in the late 1980s, to explore and promote the design of buildings for optimal energy use. Passivhaus offers significant resources to people who want to prioritize energy efficiency, thermal comfort and indoor air



quality through a combination of passive design strategies and advanced active technologies.

Passivhaus buildings typically consume up to 90% less energy for heating and cooling compared to conventional buildings. This reduces the size of the electric infrastructure needed to serve them, and ongoing operating costs. Designs using Passivhaus principles simultaneously achieve lower costs, lower energy use and improved occupant comfort through the use of systems like:

- Exceptionally high levels of insulation, to minimize heat loss and heat gain through the building envelope.
- Airtight construction, to prevent unintended air leakage, ensuring thermal comfort and reducing energy demand, accompanied by...
- ...Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR), to ensure a good supply of fresh filtered air while recovering heat from outgoing stale air. Airtight construction with MVHR helps to reduce energy use while still maintaining indoor air quality.
- Meticulous architectural detailing to eliminate thermal bridging, ensuring uniform temperatures throughout

the building envelope. For instance, a Passivhaus window frame will be designed so that the frame itself has insulation value, rather than providing a thermal conduction path that negates some of the effect of insulation.

- Triple-glazed windows with low-emissivity coatings are standard in Passivhaus buildings, maximizing natural light while minimizing heat loss.

Some Passivhaus technologies are free, e.g., building orientation for optimal heat management and use of daylight instead of artificial light. Others are slightly more expensive than standard systems (e.g., triple-glazed windows rather than double-glazed), but can be installed economically during first construction or a scheduled retrofit. Others (e.g., superinsulation, or heat recovery from wastewater streams – your bath and laundry water are still hot, and some of that heat can be redirected into your water heater’s storage tank) cost money up front but save significant energy in the long run.

Occupant surveys and monitoring data indicate high levels of thermal comfort in Passivhaus buildings, which have stable indoor temperatures and minimal temperature variations. Continuous mechanical ventilation ensures a constant supply of fresh air, reducing the concentration of indoor pollutants and allergens.

If you’re involved in new construction, encourage your architect to use Passivhaus concepts. For further information, see www.passivehouse.com.

Murder Mystery

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

The Johnson family of Oak Harbor likewise had the La Conner Murder Mystery event on its radar again.

“A friend from Langley came up last year and saw it and told us about it,” said April Johnson, accompanied by children Elliott, 11, and Jax, 14, and adult Jenyfer Rosen. “So, it was kind of a fluke that we were here. It was fun, and we solved the mystery but didn’t win the grand prize.”

That was more than enough to draw them back. And they brought with them a strategy for success.

“We get all the clues, study the suspect profiles, go to the clue locations and ask questions of all the characters,” Johnson said.

Others, including 2024 grand prize winner Jason Rogers, employed similar strategies.

Rogers deduced that Maise Buchanan (portrayed by Gina Torpey) was the murderer of reputed rumrunner Jack Danielson. According to the Territorial News, his body was discovered in his schooner moored at the end of Morris Street.

It was Sheriff Sully (Chamber Director Mark Hulst) who identified the deceased as Danielson, said to have often plied the waters around La Conner and the San Juans as he delivered illegal alcohol to clubs and speakeasies.

Sully told the Territorial News that with an investigation under way he couldn’t comment other than to say the cause of death appeared to be blunt force trauma to the head.

As the afternoon unfolded, it became clearer why Sully was so tight-lipped. Turns out, he was being investigated by the FBI for corruption, and like Buchanan, was arrested.

Chris Jennings, in her surprise role as a special agent, made the collar. She also pressed the case for Buchanan’s guilt.

“She actually had two motives,” Jennings said of Buchanan. “Jack was competition with her boyfriend, Al (Malone), and she was afraid Jack was going to tell Al about their fling.”

Malone was portrayed by Ernie Gomez. Rounding out the deft cast were Kim Broadhead as shopkeeper Rhea Taylor, Lisa Judy as temperance leader Carrie Nation, Rebecca Strong as speakeasy

owner Millie Green, Bob Jacobson as Danielson’s partner Roy Olmstead, Greg Whiting as Mayor Theo Mayer and Nicole Jennings as Bonnie McClyde.

Their costumes were a highlight. Whiting, for example, wore a vintage tie that had been his grandfather’s. Nicole Jennings looked every bit the Roaring 20s flapper.

The daylong event was sponsored by Stompin’ Grounds Coffee, The Living Room, Santo Coyote, Wayfinder Market Cafe, Skagit Crest, Seaport Books, La Conner Artists’ Gallery, Jennings Yarn & Needlecrafts, Walking Mod, Pacific Northwest Quilt & Fiber Museum, Beaver Tales Coffee, Vintage La Conner, Nasty Jack’s Antiques, Mystic Art Supply, Skagit Cellars, Raven’s Cup Coffee, B.U.tiful, Mo’s Eclectic Gifts & Apparel and Bunnies By the Bay.

Hulst said turnout for the event was good despite the weather.

“Our online sales were equivalent to last year,” he said. “And we’ve seen quite a few walk-ins since there’s no wind and just a little drizzle.”

The conditions, in fact, proved ideal for solving a murder.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for the quicker delivery

To the editor:

Thank you so much for the effort to get the newspaper out earlier to those of us in the 98273 ZIP code area of the school district. Much appreciated!

Gale Fiege
Pleasant Ridge

LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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

Write a 500-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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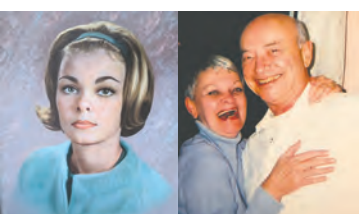
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OBITUARY



Barbara A. Hammer
1944-2024

Shelter Bay/La Conner resident Barbara Ann Hammer died peacefully at age 79 on Tuesday, March 12, at Rosario Assisted Living in Anacortes. Barbara was born to Billy Stanford and Anna Lorene Boehm on June 15, 1944, and grew up in Southern California. She was preceded in death by her sister and brother. In 1978, Barbara married Karl C. Hammer, who passed away in August 2015. They moved to Washington 29 years ago from California, where Barbara worked in the airline industry as a customer service agent.

Barbara is survived by Karl's three children and their spouses: Chris and Tina Hammer, Carolyn and Raz Jessen, and Jeff and Kristin Hammer. She also leaves behind her beloved grandchildren, Shane, Samantha, Slater, Brooke, Hanna, Hailey, Aidan, Devin, Sierra and Kingston, and her niece, Natalie Boehm Wight.

Barbara was a strong, intelligent and passionate woman who was willing to teach the things she knew to anyone who wanted to learn. She loved music (especially opera), ballet, art and fashion. She served on the teen board of Seventeen Magazine and was a model and a modelling teacher.

She was a voracious reader of books, newspapers, magazines, catalogues and everything that kept her well informed about the world and where she lived. Good food, especially fresh fruit and vegetables she found in abundance in Skagit Valley, sustained her along with milkshakes from Schuh Farms in Mount Vernon. And chocolate. Barb gave up a dishwasher to have a dedicated chocolate drawer instead in her Shelter Bay kitchen.

Barb loved to cook and nurtured that love and interest for her grandson Devin, who now cooks professionally. She took great delight in her knowledge of all things Skagit and La Conner and loved to share information with any interested visitors she encountered.

Barb joined Soroptimist of La Conner in 2011 and was very active in helping to make lives better for women and kids and the community at large. As the chairperson of the Vintage Thrift Store, she raised the bar on how the store should be merchandised and presented to shoppers, making it an even more valuable going concern for the community and tourists alike.

The week of her passing was the 20-year anniversary of her surviving pancreatic cancer, a testament to the strong lady she was, who could endure anything you put in her way.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Barbara's name to: Virginia Mason Pancreaticobiliary Cancer Fund, Attention: Dr. Vincent Picozzi, 1100 Ninth Ave., Seattle, WA 98111.

Swinomish leader sees solid future with district

By Bill Reynolds

Swinomish Tribal Senate chair Steve Edwards, a La Conner High School graduate, enjoyed a warm homecoming when he met with school board members March 25.

Edwards, known for his conciliatory leadership style, focused his remarks on building bridges between the La Conner School District and Swinomish.

"It's great that we can come to the table and have an open discussion," said Edwards. "We all grew up together. We all know one another. We're a community here."

Edwards was the second local elected leader to address the board in recent weeks, following the visit of new La Conner Mayor Marna Hanneman.

Edwards said he was thankful for the opportunity to formally meet with board members and expressed his appreciation for district officials having attended a prior tribal senate session.

"We can have a plan to improve

the relationship going forward for both sides of the channel," Edwards said. "I think there is still work to do."

There has been progress on several levels, including implementation of the campus Between Two Worlds program, celebrations of Native American cultural and historical events, classroom instruction of the traditional Lushootseed language, and creation of a school district community and cultural liaison position.

"I see progress," said Edwards. "We're going to grow this community. There shouldn't be division. I want a future for this community."

Board members embraced Edwards' comments.

"I'm very passionate about what you're saying," said board member Kim Pedroza. "We have to make a real commitment to get people to come out of their houses, get away from the TV, and see each other in-person. We have an opportunity to make things happen. I think we have an

opportunity here."

Board member John Agen told Edwards he is always welcome at board meetings. Following Edwards' presentation, he and Agen engaged in a lengthy side conversation.

"You have our commitment that we will continue to make the strides necessary so that all kids are successful," board member Susie Deyo assured Edwards.

Board member J.J. Wilbur, who serves with Edwards on the tribal senate, reinforced the chairman's message.

"Our responsibility is to help raise the bar," said Wilbur. "I would like to see even more coordination between the school and the tribe."

The agenda included recognition of the high school boys' and girls' basketball teams, each of which advanced to the state playoffs; fourth grade student Halley Oh, recent recipient of a state-wide award for her artwork; and La Conner Rotary and residents Mike Collins and Ben Barrett

for their respective donations to school programs.

School officials praised Oh for her submission to the Washington State PTA Reflections Art Contest.

"When I first saw it I knew it was a winner," La Conner Elementary Principal Heather Fakkema said.

Oh's colorful illustration of letters sprinkled upon houses by a large helping hand, expresses the power of education to provide hope in the lives of students.

Town Council members MaryLee Chamberlain and Mary Wohleb updated the board about the Skagit Valley Clean Energy Cooperative (SVCEC) and efforts to secure grants to solarize La Conner Schools.

Wohleb said the grant process is competitive, but favors proposals promoting equity and social justice, two high priority items for the district.

The board has agreed to submit a letter of support for the SVCEC grant application.

Little Braves preschool closure was Head Start's decision

By Bill Reynolds

Much has been made the last couple years about tough personnel and program cuts at La Conner schools forced by steadily shrinking student enrollment.

But in the most recent example of difficult funding choices – and one not of its making – La Conner is again paying the price.

La Conner Elementary School Principal Heather Fakkema told school board members at their March 25 public meeting that pending closure of the popular Little Braves preschool program is rooted in national budget decisions, not local.

She said the national Head Start organization in a "right-sizing" move is reducing the budget for Skagit/Islands Head Start, under whose umbrella Little Braves has operated. Due to its relatively small size, Little Braves will be closed.

"It's sad," said Fakkema, who has served as Little Braves administrator.

School board president Susie Deyo agreed. She had envisioned the campus preschool helping to

boost K-12 enrollment.

The idea was that students attending Little Braves would be more apt to enroll in the district's kindergarten. State funding for public schools is determined by full-time K-12 enrollment.

La Conner has seen enrollment drop from around 700 K-12 students in the early 2000s and about 600 pupils at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic to an estimated 460 students for the 2024-25 academic year.

Little Braves preschool introduced students to early childhood education concepts such as shapes, colors, counting and letters through play and table activities. Students have also taken field trips to the La Conner Fire Station and Skagit County Children's Museum among other venues.

Ironically, the preschool will close despite a \$275 million increase in Head Start's budget. New federal legislation authorizes \$12.27 billion for Head Start, a \$275 million increase.

Sen. Patty Murray, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, is a former pre-

school teacher. She won election to the Senate in 1993. She has long championed measures that support pre-K options for working parents across the country through Head Start.

The Little Braves preschool, however, won't meet beyond the present school year.

As for next year, Fakkema floated the idea for the district to offer a transitional program to serve as a bridge between preschool and kindergarten. That format would provide students with time to develop fundamental skills for school success in a setting appropriate to their age and development.

Another option for Head

Start-qualified families is to enroll their children in the preschool program at Washington Elementary School in West Mount Vernon.

"Washington School got to keep its preschool because it's a much bigger program," Fakkema said. "We can help families who are currently registered to find a new (preschool) placement."

The non-profit La Conner Co-Op Preschool, where parents work alongside teachers to provide students early childhood learning opportunities, poses another possibility.

"Their numbers are way up," said board member Kim Pedroza. "They're busting at the seams."

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Track makes strides at Coupeville meet

By Bill Reynolds

La Conner High School track teams seem to be on the right track two weeks into the 2024 campaign.

The school's boys' and girls' track teams enjoyed a second straight strong outing March 20 at Coupeville with several among coach Peter Voorhees' charges making their season debuts.

"It was another good week for us," Voorhees said.

The Lady Braves placed a close second and the boys were third on their respective team leaderboards.

The La Conner girls, behind dual-event winner Morgan Huizenga and superb finishes in the relay events, trailed meet winner Coupeville just 139-135 at day's end. Mount Vernon Christian, with 134 points, was third in the six-school contest.

On the boys' side, Coupeville

(150.6) and MVC (118.5) outpaced La Conner (111.2) despite Tommy Murdock's four solo gold medal efforts and triumphs by Alex Martin (discus) and Lane Tenborg (triple jump).

Tenborg and Huizenga were named the La Conner track and field program's athletes of the week at Coupeville, Voorhees said afterward.

The invitational meet at Mickey Clark Stadium was Tenborg's first outing of the season.

Eighth-graders Kiana Jenkins, Kim Williams and Finley Hancock likewise saw their initial action of the spring.

Jenkins captured the girls' 200-meter dash in 28.72 and was second in the high jump at 4-6. Williams mined bronze in the triple jump, stretching the tape to 27-0. Hancock placed fourth in the 1,600, an event for which the Lady Braves previously had no entrants, with a time of 6:54.01.

Huizenga, meanwhile, won both the javelin (98-3) and high jump (4-8) and ran a leg of La Conner's victorious 4x100 sprint relay. She, Maeve McCormick, Nora McCormick and Lydia Grossglass were clocked at 53.47.

Huizenga wasn't done, joining Jenkins, Nora McCormick and Reese Bird for a second-place finish (1:56.14) in the 4x200 relay.

The Lady Braves also struck gold in the mile relay as Grossglass, Jenkins, Bird and Maeve McCormick ran the 4x400 in 4:29.97.

Grossglass was an individual winner as well, claiming the 300-meter hurdles in 51.98. Grossglass added a second-place finish in the 100-meter sprint (18.27), just ahead of Nora McCormick, who clinched third in 18.44.

The McCormick sisters con-

tinued showcasing the versatility they showed in the season opening meet at Whittaker Field earlier this month.

Maeve McCormick won the 100 meters in 13.61 while Nora McCormick was the silver medalist in the long jump (15-2.75), with Maeve McCormick (14-4.5), finishing third.

Bird and Addison Wigal placed fourth and fifth, respectively, in the javelin behind Huizenga. Bird threw an 80-4 while Wigal went 73-8.

Murdock, the defending state boys' 2B hurdles champion, swept his specialty events at Coupeville and added first-place finishes in the 100- and 200-meter dashes. He won the 100 (11.42), 200 (24.67), 110 hurdles (15.76) and 300 hurdles (41.76).

"Tommy, obviously, had another great meet," Voorhees said.

(continued on page 6)

Restaurant cooks up benefit for senior trip

By Bill Reynolds

The COVID-19 pandemic limited fundraising opportunities for La Conner High School's Class of 2024.

Santo Coyote Mexican Kitchen is helping the class make up for lost time.

Santo Coyote donated 20% of its proceeds March 22 to the La Conner High School senior class, which looks forward to taking its end-of-year trip to Disneyland later this spring.

Restaurant manager Cristal Perkins said that Santo Coyote's benefit raised about \$800, including what was collected in a donation jar, toward travel and lodging costs to be incurred by the class during its stay in Southern California.

"It was so busy," Perkins said. "The support was overwhelming. We had calls (for food orders) all day from teachers and community members who wanted to help the senior class."

There is precedent for Santo Coyote doing its part.

"This was our fourth year of doing a fundraiser for the senior trip," Perkins said. "It's always a good time for us. The kids are so sweet."

Perkins said she's never surprised by the level of La Conner area support for worthy causes.

"One of the things we love about La Conner, and we've had restaurants in other places, is this is such an endearing community," Perkins said. "We just love that."

The Class of '24, which earlier this month held a car wash at the Swinomish Casino & Lodge, will continue fundraising in the weeks ahead. The seniors are slated in April to benefit from tickets sold for a boat ride out of Anacortes.

Those wishing to donate directly to the class may contact Theresa James (tjames@lc.k12.wa.us) or Dan Hansen (dhansen@lc.k12.wa.us) or call 360-466-3173.

Braves rally, nip Loggers in extra innings

By Bill Reynolds

Being better armed proved the difference for La Conner as the Braves edged Darrington 3-2 in a classic pitcher's duel at home March 22.

La Conner hurlers Nathan Bailey and Kenai Zimmerman combined to one-hit the Loggers and fan 14 batters while yielding just a pair of unearned runs in the NW2B/1B debut for both clubs.

Bailey, who threw 83 pitches, struck out 10 and gave up just one safety — a ground-ball single in the fourth inning that carried off the third base bag and advanced a Darrington runner who later scored with a theft of the plate.

Zimmerman came on in the sixth inning with La Conner trailing 2-0 and retired the Loggers in order over three innings.

La Conner rallied in the bottom of the seventh to force extra



La Conner girls' softball pitcher Della Souryavong delivers a strike against Darrington in NW2B/1B softball action at home Friday afternoon. The hot-hitting Lady Loggers won the game 22-2. —Photo by Bill Reynolds

innings.

With one out, Zimmerman got on after a Darrington error and advanced to third on Brogan Masonholder's sharp single to right. David Holt followed with a clutch single that scored Masonholder and tied the game.

"David Holt had the biggest hit of his life," an elated Braves coach Jeremiah LeSourd said.

Zimmerman in the top of the eighth induced a fly-out, struck out a batter and hit a batter whom he then picked off at first.

In the home half of the eighth,

Zimmerman led off with a walk, then stole second and third. He scored the winning run on a wild pitch thrown by Darrington's fourth pitcher on the day.

La Conner's bleachers, which

(continued on page 6)

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Library Happenings

By Jean Markert

Director, La Conner Swinomish Library

It seems that spring has finally arrived, and we have lots happening at the library to get you ready for warmer weather.

Library Giving Day is here! You are invited to support the La Conner Swinomish Library as a vibrant, welcoming place for all! Your gift, now through April 4 as part of National Library Giving Day, will directly benefit your library as we look toward our youth summer reading program, ongoing use of our meeting space, author readings, musical events and more. Our goal this year is \$15,000, with the first \$5,000 matched thanks to a very generous donor. Your gift, in any amount, matters! Please donate at www.laconnerlibraryfoundation.org or at La Conner Library Foundation, P.O. Box 1025, La Conner, WA 98257.

Monday Tech Nights are back! Starting Monday, April 1, from 3 to 5 p.m., sign up for an individual 30-minute session to help you solve issues with your devices. Stop by or call the library to reserve your free spot. Thanks to volunteer Bernadette Bishop for helping us get this valuable service started again!

Thanks to our amazing community and the Quilt and Fiber Museum, we have new art on our walls featuring shops along First Street. Be sure to stop by and check it out. This season our art pieces feature local artist Joel Brock.

Winter Reads has come to an end. This year's theme was Read Around the World in 80 Days. Readers traveled the world, even reaching outer space and under the sea! Our grand prize winner is Nicole Garcia-Swanson. She received a gift bag with treats from each continent. Thank you to all who participated, and don't forget, summer reading is just around the corner.

We have plenty of great programs coming up in April:

If you love to cook and want to learn how to make good use of your food scraps, visit us from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 2, to see WSU Extension Educator Diane Smith demonstrate how to create a delicious soup with those pesky, leftover ends and stems.

If you liked that lesson, come back from 3 to 4 p.m. Wednesday, April 3, to get practical gardening advice and learn how to start seeds for your garden from Master Gardener Cathy Markham. Grow the plants that will create the ends and stems for your delicious soup and more.

Our always popular interactive ukulele group returns from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Monday, April 8, for another fun-filled, interactive concert. Come sing, play or clap along or just come listen to this great group.

Kids, stop by the library on Monday, April 22, to celebrate Earth Day and make a fun craft.

At 2 p.m. Friday, April 26, author Vi Hilbert will join us to discuss her book "Where the Language Lives: Vi Hilbert and the Gift of Lushootseed."

Finally, join us for story time at 11 a.m. every Friday.



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Consider the many health benefits of gardening

By Kathy Wolfe
Skagit County WSU Extension
Master Gardener



Ask a Master Gardener

Most gardeners know from experience the benefits they feel from working in their gardens. These moments are what keep us going back season to season, year after year.

As author Sue Stuart-Smith writes in "The Well-Gardened Mind: The Restorative Power of Nature," "Gardening is more accessible than other creative endeavors, such as painting and music, because you are halfway there before you start; the seed has all its potential within it – the gardener simply helps unlock it."

Gardening rewards us by igniting our senses. The scents of flowers and herbs wafting through the air, the calls of birds and bees going about their daily business, the taste of the season's first cherry tomato straight off the vine, the dazzling rainbow of colorful flowers or the feel of earthiness in the soil as we dig up the dirt all contribute to our feeling of calm and connectiveness.

Scientific studies have found benefits that can help improve physical and mental health. This has led to forming groups that work with physically and mentally disabled individuals using techniques practiced in gardening to improve their lives. Many undergoing physical rehabilitation have improved mobility and

coordination. Those struggling with their abilities to focus such as ADHD patients can learn over time to concentrate on the task at hand. Studies have found people experiencing mood disorders or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can alter EEG recordings, and reduce stress, fear, anger and sadness as well as blood pressure by working with plants.

Let's look at some of the findings of gardening's benefits for all of us:

Focusing on immediate tasks and details can calm the mind away from negative thoughts and feelings, giving us a more peaceful and content frame of mind.

Seeing plants grow and thrive under our guidance leads to feelings of accomplishment for our efforts.

Paying full attention to a single activity can be difficult at times in this age of technological bombardment. Gardening helps us concentrate on what is right in front of us without getting distracted. This concentration can transfer to other situations over time and studies show that outdoor activities are a benefit to everyone.

Through digging, weeding, raking and hauling, our bodies

move several different muscle groups which help improve heart rate, muscle strength, immunity and overall mental wellbeing. Reducing anxiety and depression can be a result.

Not everything in the garden goes as planned. Learning from our mistakes and pushing forward to rectify problems or begin the project anew helps forge stronger resolve to get good results.

Even as our gardens slowly move into dormancy over the winter, we are still engaged with looking backward at the successes and challenges of the past year and at the same time are

invigorated by planning changes, improvements and additions we want to implement in the year ahead.

Skagit County Master Gardeners provide scientific and practical information as well as reference materials through our affiliation with Washington State University. For more information, please visit our blog at <https://www.skagitmg.org/blog/>.

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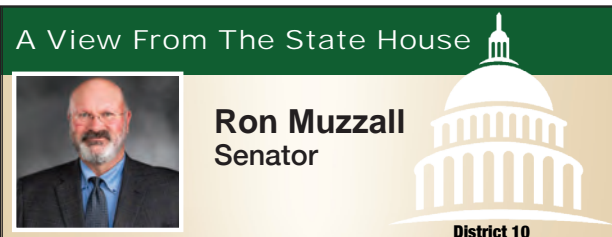
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2024 Legislature wrap-up



Republican lawmakers push financial restraint

By Sen. Ron Muzzall

The final gavel has fallen in Olympia and the Legislature is adjourned. I thought I might wax philosophical about this year's events as I've done in previous columns, but let's start with a high-level accounting of what your state government is doing for you.

Given it's an even-numbered year, our main task was to develop a supplemental budget, making tweaks to the two-year spending plan we adopted last year. Incredibly, our state continues to see ever-increasing tax collections and that's both good and bad news.

The good news is that my Senate Republican colleagues and I pushed for a more restrained approach and in many ways that was reflected in this budget that includes no new taxes. That's a big win considering we were staring down proposals to triple the growth rate in property taxes, costing nearly \$6 billion. The bad news is that our budget is paid for with the people's money and, despite rising costs, working families aren't seeing any tax relief. The state budget is now just over \$71 billion, pushing up spending levels more than 100% since 2015.

We also approved the state's construction budget to fund important community infrastructure projects such as parks, schools, community centers and needed environmental works. I voted in favor of this proposal and worked to secure just over \$10 million in this supplemental appropriation for projects around the district. I'm proud to have worked to secure \$77,000 for the Camano Lutheran Childcare Center upgrade of fire suppression systems to meet new licensing requirements. Local media reported that Camano Island is already a child-care desert as local officials halted an innovative outdoor program. The Stanwood Police Station is also set to receive \$100,000 in this budget.

Spending reflects priorities and so does the legislation that I sponsor. I've taken the approach over my short time serving as your state senator to dig deep into issues, listen to those affected, and work hard on what unites us and makes good sense.

Last year, I wrote in these pages about the challenges of the abortion debate and pointed out how if we want to support women and children, we've got to make the investments. I sponsored a slate of bills and one of the most impactful will soon be signed into law. Not only will Senate Bill 5580 make important policy changes, but I also worked to secure over \$5 million in additional funding to implement it. This law would expand access to critical maternal care aimed at improving outcomes for those struggling with behavioral- and substance-abuse problems. Overall, I worked to invest over \$20 million in a variety of maternal- and infant-support programs over the next four years.

Health care continues to be a policy area where I've focused a great deal of my efforts in the Legislature. I've seen firsthand the problems, complexities and possible solutions. Our system is overburdened and that is why I've worked across the aisle to boost our workforce, supporting several interstate compact bills that streamline credentialing for qualified practitioners living in other states to move here and begin working faster and deliver needed medical care. Reducing red tape in our health-care system is a win for patients, providers and taxpayers.

Against substantial opposition, the legislative majority pushed through what I called "corporate welfare" in a 2 a.m. vote. House Bill 1589 gives Puget Sound Energy (PSE) special permission to submit plans to the state Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) without legislative or customer approval. PSE, the largest monopoly utility in the state, supplies electric and natural gas service in much of Western Washington and under this law can get approval to stop providing natural gas without the Legislature or the people standing in the way. The costs to eventually convert from gas to electricity are estimated to be more than \$30,000 per household according to our state's building industry. At a time when customers are already cost-burdened and housing costs continue to rise, working Washingtonians simply can't afford this experiment.

My commitment to you is to be open, accessible and candid about the problems we face. Through dialogue, understanding and a sense of shared responsibility we can tackle these issues head-on. As I've said before, it can be uncomfortable and challenging. Still, at the end of the day, our collective efforts will be rewarded with a vibrant economy, thriving environment and affordable, sustainable Washington for future generations.

Ron Muzzall is a Republican state senator representing the 10th Legislative District.



Update on a successful legislative session

By Rep. Dave Paul

We have wrapped up the 2024 legislative session, and I'm pleased to report that state lawmakers worked together to pass legislation and fund projects to benefit Washingtonians.

I'm especially proud that my bill to lower the cost of health care by capping the price of asthma inhalers and epi-pens passed both the House and the Senate unanimously. This is great news for families who use these life-saving medications for asthma and allergies.

In addition, the Legislature passed two very important bipartisan bills in the final days of session: the new state construction budget and the new transportation budget. These budgets will benefit the people of Washington for generations – and they will also put people to work for years, with good wages.

Local capital budget projects

Working together, Democrats and Republicans funded construction investments in every corner of Washington state.

I worked with my seatmates to advocate for local projects, big and small. Every one of those projects matters to folks in the 10th District.

Many of you have spoken to me about the need to prioritize behavioral health outcomes, including improving mental health services and substance use disorder treatment. I'm very pleased to report that the capital budget includes three important local projects that help address this.

- \$1.9 million for the Holman Recovery Center in Arlington
- \$250,000 for the Skagit County Crisis Stabilization Center
- \$93,000 for the Ituha Stabilization Facility in Oak Harbor

In addition, the budget includes projects to support housing affordability, quality of life and protecting the environment. Some of the projects include:

- \$1.6 million for the Generations Place workforce housing project in Langley
- \$36,000 for the Coupeville Boys and Girls Club Pathway
- \$600,000 for the Langley Library Historic Preservation
- \$132,000 for the South Camano Grange #930
- \$100,000 for the Stanwood Police Station
- \$3 million for the Lagoon Point Community Forest
- \$2 million for estuary and salmon restoration in the Lower Maxwellton Valley, Port Susan Bay, and other locations in the 10th.

Transportation projects

Throughout the session, political reporters and pundits said the House and Senate were simply too far apart on the transportation budget. They predicted we couldn't get it done at all, much less finish on time during the 60-day session.

But we reached agreement, and we made progress on keeping projects on track and improving ferry service.

I fought for smarter ferry funding, including increased funding for preservation and maintenance to keep our current ferries running.

The budget also includes \$10 million for the new electric Guemes Ferry operated by Skagit County.

Looking ahead

Politics is the art of the possible. It's not a zero-sum game, where somebody has to lose for your side to win. We do our best work for the people of this state when we work together in common purpose, finding ways to create jobs and build a better Washington – together.

Now that the session is complete, I'm looking forward to listening to neighbors and community members to identify the most important priorities for the 2025 Legislative Session. I hope to see you soon at a community forum or event, and please keep in touch.

As always, it's an honor to serve as your state representative.

Rep. Dave Paul and his family live in Oak Harbor, and he serves as the Deputy Floor Leader and Vice Chair of the House Transportation Committee.

Town Hall with Rep. Paul, Mayor Hanneman

Join Rep. David Paul and Mayor Marna Hanneman for a town hall event from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 27, at La Conner Swinomish Library, 520 Morris St., La Conner.



Lowering cost of living, fighting for benefits

By Rep. Clyde Shavers

March 7 marked the last day of the 2024 legislative session – and I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve. For two years as your state representative, I worked as hard as possible each and every day to fight for you.

In a time of political hostility and divisiveness, I've tried my absolute hardest to move forward with kindness and caring. And after reflecting on our combined stories and struggles, I'm hopeful about our future. Our country is great because of you – your resilience to endure and grow together, your compassion towards helping people whom you may never meet, and your unwavering belief in our democracy.

My goal has been and will always be simple – to give my absolute everything to public service. Serving in the Legislature has been one of the most challenging endeavors, but also one of the most meaningful – and I'm honored to have gone on this adventure with you.

During the two legislative sessions, we have passed seven bills and brought in millions of dollars to our community.

As the cost of living continues to rise, our families are struggling to make ends meet. That's why lowering costs – including groceries, gas and housing – and protecting your benefits have always been my top priority.

I'm proud to have worked with Rep. Sharon Wylie on House Bill 1355 to provide greater property tax relief to seniors, veterans and those with disabilities. This incorporated some of the policies I introduced in House Bill 1560. By increasing the income tax thresholds and accounting for inflation and cost of living, this bill helps prevent people from losing their homes.

On top of this, I cosponsored House Bill 2375, which allows a detached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) to qualify for this property tax exemption. I'll keep fighting to ensure that as many people struggling to make ends meet can use this property tax exemption.

Finally, I'm proud to have cosponsored House Bill 1985, which increases the retirement benefits for teachers and public employees (TRS Plan 1 and PERS Plan 1). With increased cost of living and medical expenses, it is important for our retirees to receive the benefits they deserve. We need to take care of our seniors – and this is one way I'm taking action.

For our veterans, I fought for the continued funding of a veteran service officer (VSO) in Island County. VSOs are critical in helping veterans receive benefits including housing, utility and food assistance. For the 2025 legislative session, we will be reintroducing a bill that establishes a statewide VSO program, so that every veteran across every corner of our state has access to benefits they deserve.

I also cosponsored House Bill 1862, which provides tax exemptions for on-base nonprofits serving disabled veterans and members of the armed forces, and House Bill 1943, which expands the eligibility to spouses and dependents for the Washington National Guard Postsecondary Education Grant Program. I will always fight for every veteran because they have fought and sacrificed for all of us.

And this isn't the end. We're forging ahead with priorities for the next legislative session. This means fighting for bills that haven't crossed the finish – just yet.

I'll keep fighting for better resources and tools for our law enforcement so they can rebuild the bonds of trust with their community and do their job right (House Bill 2390). Our farming community is feeding us and the world, and we need to support them more with tax incentives (House Bill 1936). Finally, our democracy is stronger with all of us participating, and House Bill 2023 will require voting materials to be translated in more countries.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue my life-long dedication to public service. As a veteran having graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and served in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, I am honored to serve you here in the Washington State Legislature.

Clyde Shavers is a Democratic state representative serving the 10th Legislative District.

Baseball

■ ■ ■ (from page 4)

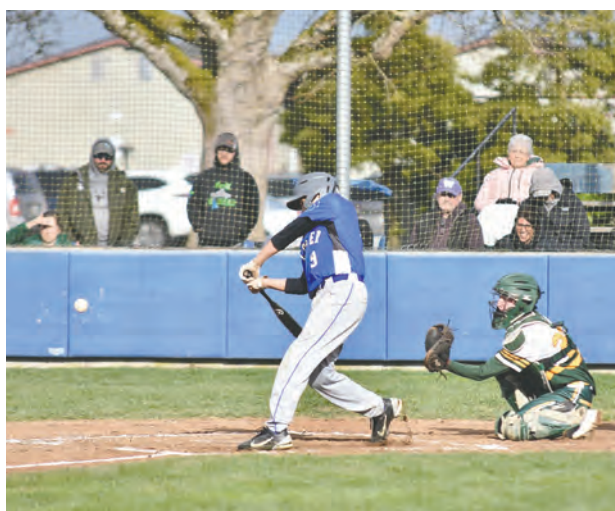
were filled for the much-anticipated league contest, erupted with cheers when Zimmerman crossed the plate.

With the win, La Conner improved to 3-0-1 overall. The Braves tied the host 2A Sedro-Woolley junior varsity in a wild 12-12 affair March 20.

Bailey lined two singles and C.J. Edwards ripped a double to pace the La Conner attack against the Cubs, a non-conference pairing that allowed LeSourd and his coaching staff to employ their entire roster.

The Braves were slated to resume league action March 26 opposite Mount Vernon Christian. The Hurricanes entered the week with a 1-1 NW2B/1B mark, having taken a tough 5-4 loss at Coupeville on March 22.

The La Conner baseball and softball teams, the latter of which dropped a 22-2 verdict to Darrington last week, are scheduled to entertain NW2B/1B foe Orcas Island March 29. Both games start at 4 p.m.



Charley Jackson takes a swing in the pitchers' duel between La Conner and Darrington on March 22. The Braves battled back from a 2-0 deficit to win 3-2 in extra innings.

—Photo by Madoc Hiller

Track makes strides

■ ■ ■ (from page 4)

"He won multiple events, so we're super proud of him."

Same for Tenborg. In his inaugural meet, he won the triple jump (36-6), tied with eighth-grade teammate Yandel Rosales-Rojas for second in the long jump (18-5), and joined Marlin Bralens, Maxwell Page and Rosales-Rojas to secure third place in the mile relay at 3:58.33.

La Conner demonstrated depth on the oval as Simon Bouwens finished third in the 100 meter dash (11.57), and fourth in the 200 (26.09) and 300 hurdles (48.95). Bralens took fourth in the 110 hurdles (19.69).

Martin led La Conner in field events. He won the discus with a throw of 35-1 and took third in the shot put with a toss of 35-1. He was sixth in the javelin (109-1), just behind teammate Flint Huizenga (113-9).

The La Conner track teams will look to make additional strides at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, March 28, at an invitational meet hosted by Mount Vernon Christian.

Four years of COVID-19 in La Conner

March 11, 2020

Locals make run on hand sanitizer; toilet paper supplies low



Concerns of the Coronavirus have reached into La Conner. Tuesday Mayor Ramon Hayes sent this recommendation from the Skagit County Health Officer to Town Councilmembers and staff: "The community should postpone non-essential events and gatherings of ten or more people." While there are no known infections in Skagit County, there have been local cancellations and runs on hand sanitizer, rubbing alcohol and, yes, toilet paper. At the start of last week staff taped a "No masks, No Sanitizer" sign on the door of the La Conner Drug store.

When COVID-19 shut the world down

By Ken Stern

Monday was the four year anniversary of Gov. Jay Inslee's March 23, 2020 emergency proclamation in response to the emerging coronavirus pandemic. He imposed a "Stay Home – Stay Healthy Order throughout Washington state by prohibiting all people in Washington state from leaving their homes or participating in social, spiritual and recreational gatherings of any kind regardless of the number of participants, and all non-essential businesses in Washington State from conducting business, within the limitations provided herein." Inslee's order effectively shut down social society and much economic activity. It led actions governors throughout the country took and later policies of the federal government. Inslee first declared a state of emergency in response to cases of COVID-19 Feb. 29.

That day the first death in the United States was announced by Public Health-Seattle & King County, the proclamation states. In 2020, 262,516 Washingtonians were infected by COVID-19 and 4,461 died, the state Department of Health reports. In 2021, 6,165 residents died; in 2022, 4,157 died; and in 2023 1,510 died, for 15,535 deaths 2020-2023, as recorded by the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics. Nationally, deaths were 385,676 in 2020, 463,267 in 2021, 246,263 in 2022 and 75,807 in 2023 for 1,171,013 deaths 2020-2023, as recorded by the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics. Inslee lifted the state of emergency for COVID-19 Nov. 1, 2022. The Weekly News' first stories were in the March 11, 2020, issue and dominated coverage the next 18 months. This page captures a sampling of stories and photos printed.

March, 25, 2020

Restaurants delivering on takeout

The variety of restaurants and coffee shops had a variety of sales volume in the week since Gov. Jay Inslee ordered they cease serving sit-down customers. They are an essential business under Inslee's Monday declaration telling everyone to stay home, except for a short list of approved activities, including picking up take-out meals, getting groceries and medicines, seeing doctors and getting exercise. Social distancing – keeping six feet distance – is always necessary. Car and foot traffic 1 p.m. Sunday was moderate on South First Street. People were having lunches at picnic tables at the boardwalk pocket parks as were two couples at Gilkey Square, where the trash receptacle on First and Morris was filled



April, 29, 2020

With amped up signage, visitors see social distancing message



La Conner has gone digital to get the word out on social distancing. The Town has placed a rented electronic reader-board at the roundabout entrance to La Conner that implores weekend visitors to 'stay home, stay safe' and maintain six-foot distancing while here to help curb spread of COVID-19. That's not all. The Town Public Works Department last week implemented two other measures which, like the digital reader-board, were advanced during recent talks with the Skagit County Sheriff's Office designed to stem shoulder-to-shoulder congregating in La Conner.

May, 13, 2020

COVID-19 test site open at college



The best things in life truly are free. And better yet when they're also pain-free. That's been the case at the COVID-19 testing drive-thru site at Skagit Valley College, where Sgt. Jeff Willard of the Skagit County Sheriff's Office La Conner detachment is part of the team assembled to quickly and efficiently guide the public through coronavirus self-exam stations. Located in the large parking area east of

SVC's McIntyre Hall, the site has drawn between 50 and 200 vehicles daily since opening in late April. The site is designed to handle much larger traffic volumes than that, said Willard, who himself went through the testing process "We get people here at 8 a.m. and we don't open until 9," said Willard, a traffic sergeant. "It's not uncommon for us to have 12-15 cars when we open the gates."

September, 2, 2020

COVID-19 County cases above 1,000

Skagit County passed 1,000 confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus Aug. 28 with 17 more positive test results over the weekend, for 1,020 cases reported Aug. 31. There were 86 new cases in the 14 day period ending Monday, as reported on Skagit County Public Health's website, with 92 people hospitalized, 629 recovered and 22 deaths. There were single digit case counts the last nine days, Aug 23-31, ranging from no cases Aug. 23 to eight cases on Aug. 29. Higher positive test results were reported at the Skagit Valley College test

site because out-of-county residents testing positive are reported in their resident county statistics. The rate of increased new cases is slowing. It took 20 days to go from 900 cases to 1,000, while it was 12 days each to go increase from 600 to 700 cases and rise to 800 cases from 700. The County recorded 77.4 cases per 100,000 population the last two weeks, according to the state Health Department website, triple the 25 case metric the state has set to show progress.

September, 1, 2021

County reopens fairground testing site



Here we go again. Skagit Public Health reopened its test site at the county fairgrounds on Monday. The hours are 5-8 p.m. Monday-Friday. Free antigen tests, with results in 15 minutes, and free vaccinations are offered. Julie de Losada, emergency preparedness and response manager for Skagit County Public Health, said the ratio was 20 to 1 of people getting

tests to vaccinations. One line of cars inched along to the staff inside the F barn at the fairgrounds at 6 p.m.. The wait was probably over an hour to be seen for either a test or vaccination at 630 p.m., a volunteer estimated, though it seemed a slower process than that. Over 30 cars stretched back to the entrance ticket booth.

January, 1, 2022

Skagit County has 15,000 COVID cases

Last Tuesday, Jan. 4, the Washington state Department of Health reported the 10,000th death in the state from COVID-19 since record keeping began in early 2020. In Skagit County, 156 people have died in that period. There were 14 county resident deaths in December; 27 died in November. No deaths have been reported in 2022 through Jan. 6. Since Nov. 1, 184 Skagitonians have

been hospitalized, 24 since Jan. 1, 63 in December and 97 in November. Experts are emphasizing increased hospitalizations and the stress put on health-care systems over new case counts in the new year. "It is much more relevant to focus on the hospitalizations as opposed to the total number of cases," Dr. Anthony Fauci, medical advisor to the president, said on ABC Jan. 3.

November, 9, 2022

Dramatic drop in new Skagit COVID-19 cases

New cases of coronavirus infections in Skagit County have dropped dramatically, 71% since July, when 1,078 people tested positive. The 315 positive tests in October

are a 35.3% drop from the 487 new cases in September. In August 578 people had tested positive, itself a 55% reduction from July.

September, 8, 2021

August county COVID cases top 1,350

September's start matched August's end for increasing new coronavirus cases in Skagit County, with 394 new cases Aug. 30-Sept. 3, a 10% increase from Aug. 23-27. There were 10 new COVID-19 patient hospitalizations Sept. 1, alone and 16 for the week, matching the Aug. 23-27 new hospitalizations count.

August saw 87 COVID-19 patient hospitalizations, 3.3 times the 26 in July and 4.6 as many as the 19 in June. Seven people died from COVID-19 in the county in August after three deaths were reported in July. The 1,353 new August cases are 25% greater than the 1,082 recorded in December, the second highest case count. The Skagit Public Health Department started testing at the county fairgrounds Aug 30. One hundred two people tested positive, a 12% rate, of the 841 antigen tests given.

The county case rate is 505.9 per 100,000 residents over the last 14 days with a hospitalization rate of 16.9 COVID-19 patients per 100,000 residents over the seven day period through Sept. 2.

January, 11, 2023

Skagit COVID-19 cases continue to decline

Skagit County entered 2023 with COVID-19 cases on the decline. The seven day case rate per 100,000 residents fell to 50 for the week ending Dec. 31, 2022. The county case rate climbed some, to 60.6 per 100,000 residents through Jan. 4, just above the statewide rate of 58 cases per 100,000 people, according to state Department of Health data.

December totaled 407 confirmed cases, with new cases decreasing weekly, from 116 Dec. 1-7 to 70 Dec. 22-28, based on Washington state Department of Health data. New reported coronavirus cases in Skagit County declined 31% in December from November's 591 total confirmed cases.

November 8, 2023

Get free COVID-19 tests

Place an order to receive four free COVID-19 rapid test: special.usps.com/testkits or 800-232-0233. COVID-19 tests are available to uninsured individuals and underserved communities. No-cost COVID-19 testing sites: aspr.hhs.gov/TestToTreat/Pages/default.aspx.

Agritourism

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

The definition of agritourism is broad and the rules still aren't clear. The six-month moratorium on new venues buys the commissioners time to develop enforceable code and creates a path to a permit for existing venues.

Most of all, it keeps people from outside the county from buying up agricultural land now, hoping to create venues if or when county rules allow.

"Because we as a community have protected our farmland through strict laws, land is actually pretty cheap compared to elsewhere, because only farming is allowed," Honea said. "If we allow things other than farming that produce things other than farming, the land will flow towards the money."

Eight speakers opposed the moratorium and endorsed existing code and rules.

"Existing codes protect agriculture in compliance with the GMA (state's Growth Management Act) and we don't support this," said Ellen Bynum of Friends of Skagit County.

"We urge the county to uphold the laws that were created under land-use planning."

Kara Rowe of the Western Washington Agricultural Association also felt the moratorium was unnecessary. "We fear that the work of [creating code for] agritourism will now take place behind closed doors."

To Mikayla Staples Hughes of Fir Island, the moratorium indicates "a covert movement." She urged the commissioners to respect the recommendations of the Ag Advisory Board.

"The process of creating law by emergency is very troubling," said Sandro-Woolley cattle farmer and Ag Advisory Board member Terry Sapp.

The seven who spoke in favor of the moratorium and the additional time to clarify agritourism policy included Tim Knue of Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland, former planning commissioner Mark Knutzen, the owners of Maplehurst Farm in south Mount Vernon and the president of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce.

Some comments were not about the moratorium but about property rights, the Constitution and the lawsuit between the county and Tulip Valley Farm. Two commenters focused on the process existing venues must go through to receive a Voluntary Compliance Agreement. It is lengthy and complicated.

Venues must submit detailed information about

their operations, plus a site plan, to the county's Planning and Development Department. Staff review it, seek additional information, visit the site if necessary and identify any issues of code or law that require correction. Then the landowner and county enter a Voluntary Compliance Agreement that documents existing use rights and any conditions imposed on those rights. The VCA is recorded against the property, providing landowners with documentation specifying the extent of the existing use right.

Venues that do not complete this process in the subsequent 180 days "become an enforcement priority," Honea said.

"You are literally declaring your offenses," said one venue owner who asked for more clarity around these requirements. "It's a little awkward."

"In return for self-reporting, the county says they will come and regulate you some more," said Mount Vernon attorney Garl Long. "You can turn yourself in, or lose your existing accessory use. It is an attempt by staff to grab tremendous power."

Christianson's Nursery is grateful for the moratorium, "because there is ambiguity in understanding exactly what 'accessory use' is and what is qualified," Emma Christianson told the Weekly News after the hearing. Commercial and residential development has led to the loss of farmland in Skagit County, "not small family farms and farm venues operating for part of the year to supplement their income."

Christianson's host events in the Meadow Schoolhouse and the Vinery and participates in the Multistakeholder Working Group on Agritourism. They plan continued engagement with the county.

Existing venues like Christianson's can participate in an April 1 work session with Honea and the commissioners that will discuss the details of the compliance process and enforcement. Comments will not be taken at that meeting, but can still be submitted to the county until 4:30 p.m. April 4.

"Neither Biden nor Trump will figure this out for us," said Honea. "Your comments matter."

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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Super Crossword

Answers

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LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY
In Re The Estate of: CYNTHIA L. GREYDANUS, Deceased.
No. 24-4-00500-31 PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS (RCW 11.40.030) (NTRCD)

The person named below has been appointed as Personal Representative of this Estate. Any person having a claim against the decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner as provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing to the Personal Representative or the Personal Representative's attorney at the address stated below a copy of the claim and filing the original of the claim with the court in which the probate proceedings were commenced. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) Thirty days after the Personal Representative served or mailed the notice to the creditor as provided under RCW 11.40.020(1)(c); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of the notice. If the claim is not presented within this time frame, the claim is forever barred, except as otherwise provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective as to claims against both the decedent's probate and nonprobate assets. Date of First Publication: March 13, 2024. Personal Representative Print Name: Cheryl Gifford Attorneys for Personal Representative Susan E. Skelton, WSBA 47154 1812 Hewitt Ave #210 Everett, WA 98201 (360) 822-7224/susan@skeltonlawfirms.com Published in the La Conner Weekly News, March 13, 20, and 27, 2024.

SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR KING COUNTY
Estate of LARRY WAYNE WAGAR, Deceased.
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 The individual named below has been appointed as personal representative of the above estate. Any person having a claim against the decedent must, prior to the time such claims 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 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 probate assets and nonprobate assets of the decedent.

DATE OF FILING COPY OF NOTICE TO CREDITORS With Clerk of Court: s/_____
 DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION: March 20, 2024.
 s/_____
 RONNA D. WAGAR, Personal Representative
 s/_____
 MARISA E. BROGGEL, WSBA NO. 41767
 Of Attorneys for Personal Representative
 McCune, Godfrey, Emerick & Broggel, Inc. PS
 4500 9th Ave. NE Suite 300
 Seattle, WA 98105-4697
 206-632-0575
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, March 20, 27, and April 3, 2024.

SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY
Estate of MARJORIE EBERLI (a/k/a MARJORIE ANN EBERLI), Deceased.
NO. 24-4-00149-29 PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS (RCW 11.40.030)
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE
 The above Court has appointed me as Personal Representative of the Decedent's estate. Any person having a claim against the Decedent must present the claim: (a) Before the time when the claim would be barred by any applicable statute of limitations, and (b) In the manner provided in RCW 11.40.070: (i) By filing the original of the claim with the foregoing Court, and (ii) By serving on or mailing to me at the address below a copy of the claim. The claim must be presented by the later of: (a) Thirty (30) days after I served or mailed this Notice as provided in RCW 11.40.020(1)(c), or (b) Four (4) months after the date of first publication of this Notice. If the claim is not presented within this time period, the claim will be forever barred except as provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective for claims against both the Decedent's probate and non-probate assets. Date of First Publication of this Notice: March 27, 2024. /s/

Kris M. Anderson, Personal Representative
 c/o Jayne Marsh Gilbert, WSBA #24656
 Attorney for Personal Representative
 314 Pine Street, Suite 211
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, March 27, April 3, April 10, 2024.

SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR KING COUNTY
Estate of, SALLY HALL, Deceased.
NO. 24-4-01486-9 KNT PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE
 The above Court has appointed ANGUS HARRIS as

Personal Representative of Decedent's estate. Any person having a claim against the Decedent must present the claim: (a) Before the time when the claim would be barred by any applicable statute of limitations, and (b) In the manner provided in RCW 11.40.070: (i) By filing the original of the claim with the foregoing Court, and (ii) By serving on or mailing to my attorney at the address below a copy of the claim. The claim must be presented by the later of: (a) Thirty (30) days after this Notice has been mailed or served as provided in RCW 11.40.020(1)(c), or (b) Four (4) months after the date of first publication of this Notice. If the claim is not presented within this time period, the claim will be forever barred except as provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective for claims against both the Decedent's probate and non-probate assets.

Date of First Publication of this Notice: March 27, 2024.
 Prepared By: /s/_____
 W. TRACY CODD WSBN 16745
 Attorney for Personal Representative
 P.O. Box 1238
 Seahurst, WA. 98062-1238
 (206) 248-6152
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, March 27, April 3 and April 10, 2024.

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA RANDOLPH COUNTY
In the District Court 23CVD2664 Absolute Divorce Proceeding To Christopher Michael Bjorn:
 Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled Divorce proceeding. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows:
 Absolute Divorce.
 You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than April 29, 2024, and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.
 This, the 27th day of March, 2024
 Daniel Karlsson, Atty. for the Plaintiff
 122 N. Elm St., Suite 900, Greensboro, NC 27401
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, March 27, April 3, and April 10, 2024.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF PIERCE
In Re the Estate of DAVID ALAN GIDLÖF, Deceased
NO 24-4-00707-8
NOTICE TO CREDITORS (RCW 11.40.110)
 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'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 will be 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 filing copy of Notice to Creditors: March 22, 2024. Date of first publication of Notice to Creditors: March 27, 2024.
 PR: AMANDA SANDIDGE
 ATTY: SARA R. BERKENWALD
 WSBA No. 42076
 Attorneys for Personal Representative
 Address for Mailing or Service: 10655 NE 4th Street, Suite 312
 Bellevue WA 98004
 Court of Probate Proceedings/ Cause Number: 24-4-02087-7 SEA
 King County Superior Court, Seattle, Washington.
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, March 27, April 3 and April 10, 2024.

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.

Decedent: DAVID ALAN GIDLÖF
 Date of Birth: MAY 31, 1946
 Date of first publication: MARCH 27, 2024
 Personal Representative: AUSTIN D. GIDLÖF
 Attorney for Personal Representative: SHANNON KRAFT
 Address for Service: THE KRAFT LAW GROUP, PS
 8910 MAIN ST E STE A BONNEY LAKE, WA 98391 (253) 863-3366
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, March 27, April 3, and April 10, 2024.

SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR KING COUNTY
In the Matter of the Estate of TONY ALVIN SANDIDGE, Deceased.
NO. 24-4-02087-7 SEA
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 that arose before the decedent's death 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 will be 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 filing copy of Notice to Creditors: March 22, 2024. Date of first publication of Notice to Creditors: March 27, 2024.
 PR: AMANDA SANDIDGE
 ATTY: SARA R. BERKENWALD
 WSBA No. 42076
 Attorneys for Personal Representative
 Address for Mailing or Service: 10655 NE 4th Street, Suite 312
 Bellevue WA 98004
 Court of Probate Proceedings/ Cause Number: 24-4-02087-7 SEA
 King County Superior Court, Seattle, Washington.
 Published in the La Conner Weekly News, March 27, April 3 and April 10, 2024.

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By Patricia Aqimuk Paul, Esq., Food Editor

Corned Beef Soup

We enjoyed a nice corned beef meal for St. Patty's Day. A good chunk of the corned beef was left. I made hash for breakfast, then sliced thin for sandwiches. I still had 2 pounds of cooked corned beef left. We received collard raab in our final CSA winter box from Boldly Grown Farms. I have cooked enough collard greens to know that apple cider vinegar blends well with them.

Ingredients

- Cooked corned beef, 2 pounds
- Yellow potatoes, 3 medium
- Collard raab, 5 to 6 leaves
- Onion, 1/3 cup diced
- Chicken broth, 2 cups
- Water, 6 cups
- Apple cider vinegar, 1/4 cup



cut 1-inch pieces. Add to the soup pot. Peel and cube the potatoes into 1- or 2-inch pieces add to the soup pot. As the soup begins to boil, add the apple cider vinegar. Reduce heat to medium low or low. Cook until the potatoes are tender, about 40 minutes. Does not need seasoning.

Preparation

Slice and cut the corned beef into 1-inch cubes. Add to soup pot with the chicken broth and water. Turn on medium heat. Add the diced onion. Remove the center rib of each collard leaf. Roll up the collard leaf and

NOT TO BE MISSED

Easter egg hunt, 10 a.m. Saturday, March 30. Inspire Church will spread thousands of eggs around its facility at 17444 Sneeh Oosh Road. Free food, bounce houses, games and more.

Second life for food scraps, 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 2. If you love to cook and want to learn how to make good use of your food scraps, visit La Conner Swinomish Library from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 2, to see WSU Extension Educator Diane Smith demonstrate how to create a delicious soup with those pesky, leftover ends and stems.

LIBRARIES

La Conner Swinomish Library. 520 Morris St., La Conner. 360-466-3352. www.lclib.lib.wa.us. Open 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday.

- Storytime for Children. 11 a.m. every Friday.
- Tech Help returns April 1. 3-5 p.m. every Monday. One-on-one technical support in 30-minute blocks.
- Dungeons & Dragons Club. 3-5 p.m. every Tuesday. No previous gaming experience necessary.

Mount Vernon Public Library. 315 Snoqualmie St., Mount Vernon. 360-336-6209, mountvernonwa.gov.

- Seedling Storytime: 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays. For young ones who may be shy or who like more caregiver support.
- Board Games: 1-5:30 p.m. Tuesdays. Choose from classic board games for a variety of ages.

Anacortes Public Library. 1220 10th St., Anacortes. 360-299-8067, CityofAnacortes.org.

- Family Storytime: 10-11:30 a.m. Fridays. If the first session is full, visit the children's desk for a ticket to the next one. For ages birth to 5, siblings welcome.
- LEGO at the Library: 3:30-5:30 p.m. Mondays. LEGO bricks provided.

Burlington Public Library. 820 E. Washington Ave., Burlington. 360-755-0760, burlingtonwa.gov/library.

- Bilingual Storytime: 10:30-11:30 a.m. Saturdays. For ages 6 and under and their caregivers. Enjoy stories and songs in English and Spanish. Craft or STEM-based play follows.
- Knitting Club: 6 p.m. Wednesdays, all ages.

MUSEUMS

Pacific Northwest Quilt & Fiber Arts Museum. 703 S. Second St., La Conner. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

qfamuseum.org. 360-466-4288. Current exhibit:

- Stone Portraits and Sacred Stonescapes: Artwork by Denise Labadie, through May 5.

Skagit County Historical Museum. 360-466-3365 or skagitcounty.net/museum. Hours 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursday-Sunday. The museum is seeking donations of vintage, holiday wares, craft supplies, collectibles and unique items for their annual Sale at the School in April. Contact jwolfe@co.skagit.wa.us.

Museum of Northwest Art. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday and Monday. monamuseum.org. 360-466-4446. Current exhibits through May 12:

- Silva Cascadia: Under the Spell of the Forest features two- and three-dimensional works by Northwest women artists inspired by forests and trees.
- At the Seam: The exhibition asks to look not only at the individual works but also at the "seams," where works representing different artistic trends and cultural identities come in touch with each other.
- My Roots: Honoring the Cultural Identity of Skagit Valley's Under-Resourced Children: Outside In Gallery

SERVICE & VOLUNTEER

La Conner Sunrise Food Bank. Food distribution from 2:30-5 p.m. every Monday, 602 S. Third St., La Conner. 360-488-3878. laconnerfoodbank.com.

Swinomish Helping Hands Food Bank. Food distribution from 2-5 p.m. every Thursday. Non-essentials every first Thursday. 17444 Sneeh Oosh

Road, La Conner. 360-856-2211. helpinghandsfoodbank.org.

Skagit Valley Humane Society. 18841 Kelleher Road, Burlington. 360-757-0445. Find volunteer and donation opportunities online at skagithumane.org.

MUSIC

Ukelele Fun & Song Circle. Meets 1-2 p.m. Wednesdays, Burlington Senior Center. For more info, email yogahartspace0@gmail.com.

Shelter Bay Chorus. Meets 4:30-6:30 p.m. every Thursday, Shelter Bay Clubhouse. No auditions required. Questions, call Joan at 360-941-7507.

MEETINGS

Skagit Conservation District. Regular board meeting at 7:30 a.m. every fourth Wednesday at 2021 E. College Way, Suite 205, Mount Vernon. 360-428-4313.

Town of La Conner Council Meeting, 6 p.m. second and fourth Tuesdays. For current agenda, go to www.townoflaconner.org. Sign up for "Notify Me" to get current town information.

Skagit Cemetery District 1. Regular meetings at 5 p.m. every second Thursday, at Lori Buher's home, 17604 Valentine Road, Mount Vernon.

La Conner Swinomish Regional Library. Library board of trustees meets at 5 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month in the library, 520 Morris St., La Conner.

Rotary Club of La Conner. laconnerrotary.org. Meetings 6-7 p.m. every Monday at Shawn O'Donnell's restaurant. Optional dinner, 5:30 p.m.

Super Crossword

PHONY-BALONEY

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| ACROSS | 48 Thin porridge | 97 Cindy Brady player Susan | 5 Whole lotta | 49 VIP vehicle | 88 Miami loc. |
| 1 Wearing nightclothes, for short | 50 Saw against the main grain, as wood | 98 Former jets to the U.K. | 6 Knightly title | 51 Margarine | 89 Stud money |
| 6 Meanie's look | 52 Bit of money seized by a Secret Service agent | 101 Bit of non-needed body art | 7 Bulblike base of a stem | 53 Deprives of weapons | 90 Old Storms and Trackers |
| 11 In addition | 58 Ecol. monitor | 105 Sour plum | 8 — cat (two-base game) | 54 "Sorry, too busy" | 92 Paraphrase |
| 15 Eyelid hair | 59 Middays | 107 Stage star | 9 Neighbor of Minn. and Ill. | 55 Bodily digit | 93 On Sunset Blvd., e.g. |
| 19 Steel, e.g. | 60 Tiny arachnid | 109 Title for Kate Middleton | 10 Jewish potato pancake | 56 Big striped cat, in French | 96 Two, in Chile |
| 20 Ancient Greek region | 61 J. — Hoover | 110 Component of a coated glass-bead bracelet, perhaps | 11 Relative of a guinea pig | 57 A/C output qty. | 99 Maintenance job on a car |
| 21 Empty spaces | 64 Like overdue birthday wishes | 117 Even score went on one in a 1991 film | 12 Lion portrayer Bert | 62 Landscape painter Asher Brown — | 100 Indy sponsor |
| 22 World's fair | 70 Wombs | 119 In the past | 13 Feature of Betty Boop's hair | 63 Like low-quality eggs | 102 Ballet outfit |
| 23 Illegal detention | 71 Bible book after Prov. | 120 Apt cry of disbelief for this puzzle | 14 "— Mio" | 64 City transport | 103 Something very easy |
| 25 Columbus is its capital | 74 Q-V linkup | 125 Coagulate | 15 Crude sheds | 65 Alcohol in liquor | 104 Vegas casino |
| 26 British actor Guinness | 75 "Spider-Man" director Sam | 126 Rebuke from Caesar | 16 Car shaft | 66 Landlords or landladies | 106 Some Siouan speakers |
| 27 "Mind your — business!" | 76 Wedlock not based on love | 127 Like a dweeb | 17 Project detail, for short | 67 Empty | 108 MetLife rival |
| 28 High, round collar not folding over on itself | 79 Cheer up | 128 About, before a date | 18 Sell at a pawnshop | 68 Having protruding hearing organs | 110 Concern for a dermatologist |
| 31 Without any variety | 81 Burros, e.g. | 129 At this place | 24 Opponent | 69 Yang go-with | 111 Concern for a dermatologist |
| 35 Ingest | 82 — occasion (never) | 130 Lather (up) | 29 "I taut I — a puddy tat!" | 72 Sings gently | 112 Horror film lab assistant |
| 36 Boston NBAer, for short | 83 Paris' river | 131 Gather up | 30 Shade trees | 73 U.S. pres., militarily | 113 Twice tetra- |
| 37 Paint job made to look like marble, wood, etc. | 84 Toronto-to-Montreal dir. | 132 Hoodwinked | 31 Flip — coin | 77 Inquires | 114 "Psst" cousin |
| 41 New Nintendo console of 2012 | 85 Prada or Fendi replica, maybe | DOWN | 32 DEA worker | 78 "Continue" | 115 — avis |
| 43 Big antlered beast | 91 "Beloved" novelist Toni | 1 Global finance org. | 33 Irish money | 80 Architect | 116 Some old Fords |
| 47 Opposite of dep., in an airport | 94 Buc, Bronco or Niner | 2 Teacher's union, in brief | 34 Bring about | 83 Chiang Kai — | 121 The "S" of GPS: Abbr. |
| | 95 Beatty of film | 3 Old TV ministry inits. | 38 Some flawed garments: Abbr. | 84 Broody rock genre | 122 Hosp. zones |
| | | 4 2002 "Friday the 13th" sequel | 39 Add-on to the end of a wd. | 86 Investigate pryingly | 123 Ideal serve |
| | | | 40 Bit of a bray | 87 Very loudly, in music | 124 Young fella |
| | | | 42 Most polar | | |
| | | | 44 Sea nymph | | |
| | | | 45 Sovereign | | |
| | | | 46 Letter two before iota | | |

CLASSIFIEDS

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FIND PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PAGE 8

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

8		4						3
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	3				8		1	

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!

POLICE BLOTTER

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sunday, March 17

12:42 p.m.: Picturesque roadblock, part 1 – Deputy responded to reports of vehicles blocking the road to look at and photograph snow geese. All cars moved along or moved off the roadway. Fir Island Rd.

2:50 p.m.: Picturesque roadblock, part 2 – More calls of subjects blocking the road to photograph the geese. A deputy made a PA announcement to move the cars and all subjects complied. Fir Island Rd.

Thursday, March 21

9:27 a.m.: Vehicle collision – A driver turning south onto La Conner-Whitney Road did not see oncoming traffic and pulled in front of another car. That driver could not stop to avoid a collision. The causing vehicle was shoved into a power pole which was later replaced. No injuries and both cars were towed from the scene. McLean Rd at La-Conner Whitney Rd.

1:21 p.m.: Not animal cruelty – Someone from the big city was visiting the area and had opinions about longhorn cattle. The caller thought it was cruel to have the heavy horns and hurt the cattle's neck. The caller received a thoughtful explanation that this breed of cow is designed to carry the weight of long horns, which are not against the law. Farm-to-Market Rd., Bay View area.

Friday, March 22

12:26 p.m.: Midnight prowler – A caller said she parked on the side of the road at approximately midnight to walk her dog on the Padilla Bay trail system. She returned to find her window broken out but nothing missing. Bay View-Edison Rd, Bay View area.

1:35 p.m.: Not my dog – A caller reported a loose dog in their yard. The dog wasn't aggressive but the caller animal control to pick it up. La Conner code enforcement was advised. Washington Ave, La Conner.

5:01 p.m.: Pack mentality – A caller reported aggressive dogs at the RV park on Pearle Jensen Way. During the call, the dog owner left with the dogs. Pearle Jensen Way, La Conner.

Saturday, March 23

1:27 a.m.: Drinking? Driving? – The sheriff's office received a report of subjects drinking in the school parking lot and possibly driving. A deputy contacted a group of approximately 10 hanging out by the skate park with alcohol. While dealing with the situation, an intoxicated subject tried to leave in a car and was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence. The remaining subjects cleaned up the area until a sober driver arrived to take everyone home. N. Sixth St, La Conner.

Tulip traffic

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

Sgt. Craig Caulk of the sheriff's traffic department visited all bulb company fields to identify where bottlenecks might develop.

WSDOT will monitor its cameras along State Routes 536 and 20 for unexpected backups, says Caulk. The traffic unit, including two motorcycle officers, will work weekends from Fire District 2 at McLean and Beaver Marsh Roads, a major point of congestion. Caulk is grateful the Tulip Festival draws on the county's lodging tax to pay for off-duty officers to flag traffic on McLean Road.

The goal is to avoid snags like the 2-mile-long line of cars that backed up on Beaver Marsh Road last April. "The nightmare happens when parking lots are full and not emptying fast enough," Caulk said. Volunteers and paid staff who monitor display garden parking play a key role in moving traffic.

A new "pain point" is Bradshaw Road and its two gardens directly across the road from one another. Tulip Town will direct people leaving their lot to turn right and drive south to McLean Road. Tulip Valley Farm will direct people north to State Route 536 (Memorial Highway).

"People remember the first five minutes and last 10 minutes of their time on the farm," said Tulip Valley Farm CEO Andrew Miller. "There are things we can work on to make everyone's experience more pleasant."

To report a traffic jam, Caulk recommends calling the sheriff's non-emergency dispatch number, 360-428-3211. The traffic team's computers show a running log of traffic complaints that they address as they come in.

Meanwhile, the tulips are just



TULIPS IN BLOOM — A vibrant field of tulips bloom during the 2023 Skagit Valley Tulip Festival. — Photo by Ken Stern

about to break into bloom.

Roozengaarde has been open almost two weeks. "The entire display garden was redesigned and replanted this year," says manager Brent Roozen, "and our fields will be exceptionally colorful and awesome."

Tulip Town opens Friday and "the fields look wonderful," says CEO Rachael Sparwasser. Visitors can play or take photos on the four-person bench swings scattered around the fields. Besides Easter egg hunts for children, an over-21 Easter egg hunt includes a beer or wine of your choice. Also new this year: food trucks on peak weekends to supplement their café and beer and wine garden. Locals Night will be Wednesday, April 10.

"We are now the second largest U-pick in the U.S. and the only one in the valley," said Miller, whose Tulip Valley Farm will be all U-Pick in 2024. Look for beautiful Parrot tulips and peony tulips – notoriously hard to grow in our

wet, windy valley – and "baby" tulips, too.

"Come late, watch the sun set, sit around the fire, watch the light show and enjoy a taco in the tulips with friends" during the weekend Night Bloom, said Miller. Neighbors Night, sponsored by Helping Hands Food Bank, takes place April 17. The Bloom Ball fundraiser for United Way is April 18.

The windmill at Garden Rosalyn has a new coat of paint and owner Ernesto Mendoza has planted more tulips than ever. When the garden opens Thursday, March 28, dogs and cats will be welcome on leash, handmade crafts will be on sale and snacks will be available from food trucks in the parking area. The swans swimming in the small lake will not be leashed, he notes.

Mendoza welcomes people to bring their own food to enjoy on his picnic tables. "It restores and relaxes people to be here," he said.

Raised Garden Bed Materials

2x12 #3 Knotty Rough-Cut Cedar

\$3.49/LF



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Event center

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

While all elected officials championed the cooperative nature of the proposed agreement, a few caveats were expressed, particularly the use of lodging tax funding. Public comments emphasized concerns over noise at the marina and traffic congestion, though most who spoke were in favor.

Mark Lione, owner of Cap Sante Inn, expressed his concerns over using lodging tax dollars. He questioned the potential impact on nonprofit organizations that rely on lodging tax funds if the city and port sought to pay construction costs with the lodging tax. He suggested a bond

issue repaid with lodging tax dollars.

Pat Barrett, a local financial advisor who supports and underwrites for nonprofits, cautioned everyone to be aware not to use all the money from lodging tax dollars upon which nonprofits depend.

"Lodging tax dollars is seed money. We would be doing them [nonprofits] a disservice."

Councilmember T.J. Fantini explained the new center would generate future lodging tax revenues for nonprofits.

Councilmember Christine Cleland-McGrath pointed out there were only three centers in Skagit County that came close to their proposal – the Swinomish Casino, McIntyre Hall and Maple Hall in La Conner. None compares to the proposed event center in Anacortes for its size, kitchen facilities or scheduling availability.

The full agreement will be posted online the end of this week at portofanacortes.com/doing-business/interlocal-agreements.

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SAVE THE DATE

11TH ANNUAL **MUSIC & MEMORIES**

A SPRING FUNDRAISER FOR SKAGIT ADULT DAY PROGRAM

SATURDAY APRIL 13TH, 2024 5:30PM

Join Skagit Adult Day Program for our 11th Annual MUSIC & MEMORIES dinner and auction at Bertelsen Winery as we raise money and awareness for this unique Skagit County non-profit! We provide needed services to Dementia and Alzheimer's and offer respite to their families. To continue this vital care, we need YOUR support.

Check out our website for updates →

Scan with your smartphone camera

Bertelsen Winery, Starbird Rd, Mount Vernon