



Another Washington newspaper bites the dust • p 7

Class of 2023, La Conner high school graduates • p 10

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# LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

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## High school seniors on a final roll



SOMETIMES LIFE IS A PARADE – The 47 graduating La Conner High School seniors paraded through town last Friday, soaking in the sun, basking in the glory of their accomplishments. Their school doors are closing behind them. They have many more new, different and varied doors to walk through next.

– Photo by Marissa Conklin

## High school seniors will have outdoor graduation

By Bill Reynolds

A La Conner High School senior class that was separated and isolated for parts of two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic will join together for the school's 129th annual commencement exercises tomorrow (Thursday) at 5 p.m. at Whittaker Field.

The class, which adapted to remote learning during the early portion of its high school sojourn, features 10 National Honor Society members, including valedictorian Hadley Shears and salutatorian Josie Harper.

"We continue to be proud of these students for all the hardships and obstacles they overcame during their high school experience," Middle and High School Principal Christine Tripp told the Weekly News on Friday. She will formally recognize NHS members at graduation.

"We wish them well," Tripp said. "We're proud of them now and will continue to be proud of them for their future accomplishments while also remembering their service to others and the community while at La Conner High School."

Retiring school counselor Lori Buher echoed those sentiments. "I have great admiration for this

class," she said. "They showed their resilience and their perseverance in the face of the pandemic and the chaos it caused."

Buher cited the independent spirit showed by class members, who juggled multiple roles while navigating the uncharted waters of student life during a pandemic.

"They've grown stronger from the COVID experience," said Buher. "They've been responsible for childcare, they've mastered the art and confusion of online learning and I think they have come to appreciate and value the importance of their peers and those relationships."

She will present the much-anticipated diplomas with school board members.

Shears and Harper are among several class members with speaking roles.

Jamie Damien-Sams will offer the class remembrance and Rachel Haley has been tabbed to deliver closing comments.

The ceremony will open with welcoming remarks shared in four languages---American Sign Language, Lushootseed, Spanish and English---by Kendall Lee, Matthew Stone, Miguel Cruz and Dakota King Lockrem.

The class will be officially presented by La Conner Superintendent of Schools Will Nelson and honored with a song performed by the Swinomish Canoe Family.

In addition to Shears, Harper and Haley, Raymond Bailey, Jr., Eleanor Drews, Isaías Gonzales-Rojas, Finn Hakenson, Ellie Marble, Cole Medeiros and Kennedy Miller will be introduced as members of NHS, which recognizes students demonstrating outstanding commitment to scholarship, service, leadership and character.

Two students, Brianna Lara-Garibay and Tehani Braga, have graduated early. The class also includes international exchange student Leo Kirbisich.

Junior class members Logan Burks, Taylor Rae Cayou, Zaira Najera-Davalos and Kenai Zimmerman will serve as ushers during the commencement program.

Graduation-related activities began in earnest last week with student car parades at Swinomish and in La Conner followed by a weekend class trip to Knott's Berry Farm in Southern California.

## Little rain in May

By Ken Stern

Continued bad news on the moisture front for 2023. Yes, May was dry. There has not been significant rain since a half inch fell May 5. Four of the five rain days came May 1-6, 0.59 inches of 0.64 inches total rain. The May 5 storm was the only precipitation greater than one-tenth an inch. This May, rainfall was 2.2 inches below, 70%, the century average.

This continues local water woes. Skagit County starts the dry season with a 6.2 inch water deficit, at 8.6 inches to date, six inches below normal for this century. In 2022 May's 2.4 inches of rain was 13% above the month's century average. Only February sent that much moisture this year.

Six of the eight driest Mays have been since 2016. Less than one inch of rain fell in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023. This year's 0.64 inch is the third driest May this century.

It was unseasonably warm, with daily temperatures well above normal. May's average daily high of 63.8 degrees was 4.3 degrees, 6.7%, above normal. Highs were above 70 degrees for 10 days May 11-20, with record highs the 13-15, at 82.1 and 86.6 degrees May 13-14.

The daily average of 54.7 degrees was 2.9 degrees and 5.3% above average. The 46.3 degrees average daily minimum was 1.9 degrees and 4% above average. There was no hint of frost. Only twice in May's first ten days did morning lows dip below forty degrees.

Calculations are based on 22 years of data with no records for 2006 or 2009.

Measurements and data are at Washington State University's Mount Vernon weather station on Memorial Highway.

(Rain Report data box, page 6)

## State appeals court meets at Skagit Valley College

By Bill Reynolds

Generations of Skagit Valley College students have been tutored in acting at the Phil Tarro Theatre on the school's Mount Vernon campus.

But Thursday morning it was a real-life drama that played out on the main stage there.

That is when SVC hosted oral argument hearings conducted by the three-judge Washington State Division I Court of Appeals, based in Seattle and whose docket takes cases originating in King, Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, San Juan and Island counties.

The panel heard attorneys present arguments in two civil and two criminal appellate cases.

A non-discretionary appellate court – it must accept all appeals filed with it – this court has authority to reverse (overturn), remand (send back to the lower court), modify or affirm lower court decisions. The court decides each case after reviewing the trial transcript from the court of origin and considering the arguments of the parties.

The court generally hears oral arguments in each case but does not take live testimony.

That was the format at SVC, where one of the court's jurists, Cecily Hazelrigg, previously earned her Associate in Technical Arts in paralegal studies.

(continued on page 7)

## Madison Huscher reaches new heights as region's teacher of year

By Bill Reynolds

The La Conner Middle School Rock Climbing Club sponsor is also rock solid in the classroom.

Madison Huscher, whose carefully crafted science lesson plans take students beyond the traditional boundaries of textbooks and lectures, has been named the Northwest Educational Service District 189 regional teacher of the year.

The award recognizes Huscher's outstanding commitment to teaching and her many contributions to the educational community.

As a regional winner, Huscher will compete against finalists from other educational service districts across Washington for state teacher of the year recognition.

La Conner Schools administrators weren't surprised to learn of Huscher's selection.

"Maddie is a dedicated teacher with a passion for place-based learning, outdoor education, mastery-based learning and student achievement

through relationship building," Middle and High School Principal Christine Tripp told the Weekly News Friday.

"We're lucky to have her," Tripp said. Huscher is completing her third year here.

Superintendent Will Nelson agreed. "Ms. Huscher is a forward-thinking teacher who is continuously looking to improve her craft so her students have the best learning experiences," Nelson said.

Nelson noted that her teaching style is designed to empower students to progress at their own pace, ensuring that they reach their full potential.

"With this approach," said Nelson, "Ms. Huscher has effectively personalized her instruction, catering to the unique needs and abilities of each student in her classroom."

Tripp and Nelson said that Huscher embraces outdoor education and the success it brings to student learning. Examples of her place-based learning excursions include recent student visits to the Kukutali Preserve State Park on Swinomish Reservation, the Padilla

Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Washington Park and Lake Padden.

Praised by NWESD 189 officials as a "gem in the educational landscape," Huscher is lauded by her school colleagues for having both subject matter expertise and creating safe spaces where students can freely express their thoughts and feelings.

Her dedication to employing exemplary teaching practices to ensure enriching learning experiences for students impressed NWESD 189 organizers of the regional teacher of the year program.

As a regional award winner, Huscher will be able to deliver trainings and workshops at NWESD and can be invited to serve as a trainer or speaker in regional school districts.

And as a candidate for state teacher of the year accolades, Huscher is a finalist in a program overseen by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction that honors teachers who make significant impacts in the lives of (continued on page 7)



SHOWING HIM THE ROPES – La Conner Schools climbing club sponsor Madison Huscher assists student Wes Whiteaker during a club outing at Riverstone Climbing Gym in Burlington on Saturday.

– Photo by Bill Reynolds



From the editor —

## Graduation hopes: theirs, ours

*Imagination is more important than knowledge.*

— Albert Einstein

Thursday La Conner High School seniors graduate, 47 of them. Local merchants and institutions recognize them by sponsoring the seniors' photographs on today's back page.

Take a look at these young, confident, about-to-be adults heading into their futures. That future is our future, to be shared with them but so far shaped by us, the elders reading these words.

The graduates step into a world not of their making nor choosing. As they start to make choices, we already hear them voice their disapproval with budget cuts planned for the next school year. Reflect for a minute on how long and how weighty is these kids' list of things they never asked for, don't want, may be scared to death of, and are stuck with.

Do we start with the school deficit, a result of a shrinking student population? Find the source of the problem in a lack of starter homes and working class housing, by the thousands of units just in Skagit County.

In past years their siblings and friends marched against mass killings by people with guns, against the possibility of random death visited upon any one of us, anywhere, at any time.

We have seen their family members and peers rally, calling for action toward climate change. They have experienced that as smoke in the air from wildfires, heat and, now, Swinomish Channel flooding.

It is easy to get drowned in the facts. But let's hope that education, at school, in the home and in the community stressed that facts are essential but they are not at the heart of life or decisions. No, we respond to emotions and to dreams. When thousands rise up in insurrection and storm the nation's Capitol, they are not acting rationally. Both fear and, yes, love, are driving those actions.

When people rally for orcas and salmon, facts and hopes, both, motivate them. Hope is more energizing then despair.

Facts upon facts are important, but they are tools, whether a tape measurer or the newest AI technology. Classes and teachers start the day and the school year with a foundation of facts, but reaching tomorrow requires stretching beyond what is known. To reach a different, sustainable future requires leaping into it.

The Einstein quotation has another sentence: "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand."

The 20th century British economist E.F. Schumacher, best known for his book "Small is Beautiful," wrote: "Our ordinary mind always tried to persuade us that we are nothing but acorns and that our greatest happiness will be to become bigger, fatter, shinier acorns; but this is of interest only to pigs. Our faith gives us knowledge of something better: that we can become oak trees."

The impetus of life is life. That most practical of romantics, Henry Thoreau, wrote, "Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders."

This crop of high school graduates have many things on their minds and in their hearts. They have all kinds of practical concerns. Just as important as pursuing "What am I going to do when I grow up?" is "Who am I and what is my place and role in the world?"

May they become what they imagine and hope their future selves into being.

— Ken Stern

## Musings — on the editor's mind

Memorial Day was May 29th this year. That is John F. Kennedy's birthday. I know that because it is also my mother's birthday, Mary Madeline Nemunis Stern. My mother was born in 1920. She would have been 103.

I believe my mother hated war. She never told me that. Nor did she ever take her five children to a demonstration against the Vietnam War or go on her own. She did tell me this story once, that in 1964 my parents were at some work-related social function of my dad's, of course, for few women worked outside the home then. He worked for the UAW, the United Auto Workers, as the editor of a weekly labor newspaper. He and his peers were ardent Democrats fully in support of President Lyndon Johnson. Asked in casual conversation about the Vietnam war, she spoke against it, being against war, as most mothers are. My dad shushed her, for she was bucking the party line, ahead of her time as she was in her opposition.

Memorial Day cemetery services are about our honored dead, as Lincoln said at Gettysburg. The annual

Memorial Day Pleasant Ridge Cemetery service is a tradition and ritualistic. At its center is a flag folding ceremony by the Marine Corps League Skagit Valley, which includes a narrative spinning out a story of the American flag from before Betsy Ross stitched hers through Valley Forge and our nation's wars from the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli and all the way to New York's World Trade Center towers and Afghanistan.

But this recounting skipped — missed, indeed avoided — the very reason Americans gather at cemeteries: our Civil War. This listing of battle heroes went from the 1846 Mexican War to San Juan Hill in Cuba in 1898.

The PBS TV website shares this: "Originally called Decoration Day, from the early tradition of decorating graves with flowers, wreaths and flags, Memorial Day is a day for remembrance of those who have died in service to our country. It was first widely observed on May 30, 1868 to commemorate the sacrifices of Civil War soldiers, by proclamation of Gen. John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic, an

## LETTER

### Gun violence a poison

What poisons have been unleashed in America? In Jewish mythology, a dybbuk is a malicious, possessing spirit, believed to be a dislocated soul. Pandora opened her jar (dubbed a box in the 16th century) out of curiosity, thus releasing all manner of evil and misery upon mortals, put into the jar by the gods to punish Prometheus for giving fire to mortals.

The non-mythical Donald Trump, via his embrace of violence and untruth, has both enshrined violence and released evil and misery across our land, and by doing so become a malicious, possessing spirit of a large percentage of the American population.

Over the three-day Memorial Day weekend, 179 adults and children were killed by shooting, 463 wounded and 17 mass-American shootings. Over the month of May 2023, there have been 259 killed and 70 mass shootings. (Gun Violence Archive). When Mr. Trump spoke before the recent NRA annual meeting he stated, "I am the most pro-gun, pro-Second Amendment president you've ever had in the White House."

He then vowed to defend and expand gun-owner's rights. (NBC News). Although bump stocks (allowing semi-automatic firearms to act as machine guns) were banned during his administration after 58 were killed by a bump stock-wielding shooter, he said at the recent meeting he is aligned with the NRA which considers their banning unconstitutional.

Two Circuit Courts of Appeals, the Fifth (which the Biden administration is appealing) and the Sixth, ruled the ban is unlawful, and in twenty six Republican states, adults can carry unpermitted, concealed weapons. (New Yorker)

To vote Republican in 2024 is to vote for more gun violence, deaths, injuries and mass shootings. June 2-4 were the National Gun Violence Awareness Days, to honor survivors of gun violence. But, perhaps, to also release the last gift trapped in Pandora's jar, Hope.

Sincerely,  
Christine Wardenburg-Skinner  
Edison

organization of former Union sailors and soldiers."

The lyrical recounting at Pleasant Ridge omitting leaving the Union and the shelling of Fort Sumter in 1861 was not missing a minor blip in our history.

A listing of Civil War battlefields rolls off the tongue readily, from Bull Run — twice — to Appomattox. From 1861 to 1865 the landscape ran red with the blood of fallen Americans. That is what we all were, and are, though half of us turned their backs and their guns on the rest of us. We can avoid those facts but there is no getting around those dates with destiny.

All Americans need to face the fact that a segment of our patriotic military veterans are as loyal and fervent in their reverence of the southern confederacy and its stars and bars battle flag as they are to the U.S. flag. Especially in 2023, two years after the Confederate battle flag was brought into the U.S. Capitol for the first time in the spirit of that rebellion against our elected government, it needs to be called out.

The Civil War was not a minor dispute between family members. Southern politicians decided to go to war against their national government in order to

A citizen's view —

## The game of life when 65 years old

By Aven Wright-McIntosh

I'm officially old.

It happened on a single day last week, Thursday, June 1. It was not a surprise. It had loomed on the near horizon for years. I'd dutifully prepared for it — watched innumerable how-to videos, talked with older friends who'd reached the same situation (and survived), waded through unsolicited voluminous mail offering to help with the transition, completed practice questionnaires, even worked with a consultant to get all the information straight before I submitted my application for society to recognize me as old: I am now on Medicare. I became 65 years old on Friday.

I relish this milestone! There aren't many once you're past a certain age; graduations, legal to vote, legal to drink, marriage, children/grandchildren, anniversaries if you're lucky in love, divorces if you're not, the Big 5-0, then what?

But I don't feel old. Does anyone? As you read this, it's been nearly a week since the transformation. I'm still the same "me" in here, looking out at you through the same eyes, still wiping my occasionally drippy nose, maybe have an extra glitch in my getalong. And I still carry an early lesson about this game of life.

In fifth grade, I loved the thrill of a gritty playground dodge ball game. On one memorable day, as my teammates disappeared by being knocked out of the game and relegated to "prison," something different happened. I kept dodging and jumping, managing to toss the ball over enemy lines to them. But No One Was Coming Back.

I watched as my teammate caught that last ball I'd heaved, held it close, looked at me running to and fro — and slowly bent down to roll the ball back to our opponents — he simply did not want to play. He'd rather sit this one out, thanks. Admit defeat, heck enable defeat! And be a Loser.

That simple concept stayed with me: Not everyone wants to play. It kept popping up in my life and career — when ideas were shot down, coworkers didn't come through, projects failed. I may have been on the wrong team, or they were. Now, years later, I realize there are many games to be played and not all of them require a win.

But I digress. I am thrilled to reach 65! I've earned this milestone, these benefits I've paid into for decades. I'll take care of myself, soak up my family and friends, continue to love and be loved and find new teammates who want to play this game of life with me. After all, we don't grow up, we just get bigger — and older. If we're lucky.

Wright-McIntosh lives in Shelter Bay.

## LETTERS

### The fish slide and the town council's decision

After reading in the Weekly News about the La Conner Town Council's decision to destroy the fish slide in Conner Waterfront Park due to money issues and other things, I have some questions. As I'm involved, of course I have some thoughts.

The only real money the Town has spent so far was to hire renowned local artist/sculptor Tom Jay to design and build the slide, since then the monies spent were on some grinding wheels, epoxy-like material and paint used by John Doyle and myself, volunteering to maintain the slide and keep it looking good.

Yes, we did work on the fish every year to keep it safe and looking good until about a

maintain slavery.

To honor American war dead from the Civil War is why people first gathered at cemeteries in 1868.

As a society we are torn, not because a sizable faction believe the South's cause was noble but because all of us have never forthrightly sat with, held and discussed together and entirely embraced the complete truth of the centuries of our slave-holding past.

Glorifying war seems noble and patriotic. Examining with our fathers, sons, family and friends who we really are and what we really did to each other for hundreds of years — through this present moment — is much more difficult.

Some Catholic nuns have long insisted, "If you want peace work for justice." This country will never be whole until more of us have the courage to reach for justice. Our nation's military veterans have had many difficult and arduous assignments. This is the most difficult campaign that they — and all of us — have to tackle.

Only the complete, unvarnished, difficult truth will ever set all of us free.

May 29 is also Ethan and Sydney's birthdays, children of my friends Lisa and Dick. This

year ago, when we found some issues and shut the slide down. We then asked the Town for some professional help to look the sculpture over and give us their opinion, as to what to do and how to do it, or maybe staff could do it. The council has made their decision.

The parks commission's job is to advise the mayor, town administrator and the town council about parks and any issues, so here are my thoughts. Have us, the volunteers, continue in our task to keep the slide active by bringing in an advisor who can make sure we have the correct materials and advise us how to handle them. If this cannot be done, then plug both ends of the fish and maintain it as an art sculpture along with the other local artwork in the park.

I will be at the next council meeting to discuss this with them.

Ollie Iversen  
La Conner Parks Commissioner

### Need God with country

No political party, no politician can heal the evident and destructive ills of our country. We, long ago, took God out of our schools, eliminated the Ten Commandments and crosses from public areas. Now in that void, evil has moved in. I have lived a long time and have never seen such darkness displayed, daily, by so many politicians and citizens. We are in the throes of a spiritual battle.

Back to God in this country, or we will have a country not worth living in.

"There are two ways to conquer and enslave a nation ... one is by the sword ... the other is by debt." John Adams, 1826.  
Nancy Burlison  
Shelter Bay

year the twins turned 22. May their work and their lives result in a world without war, where no one dies a military-related death and no one forgets the root causes of every war that has ever been fought.

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# Fire departments train on controlled house burnings

By Stephanie Banaszak

La Conner Fire Department volunteer firefighters conducted a series of controlled house burn trainings along with Fire Districts 2, 13, 27 and Whatcom County fire marshals in the Pleasant Ridge neighborhood just outside of La Conner on May 22 and 25. Fire District staffs will perform a live burn on June 10, restricted to professional firefighters. Controlled burns are only permitted and performed under strict supervision.

The first practice burn took place May 22 and was staged in the top floor bedroom using potential fire hazards such as a bed and bedding, firecrackers and carnosine. The situation provided local firefighters with valuable hands-on experience controlling a live fire La Conner. Fire Department Chief Aaron Reinstra supervised while managing water control and Fire District 13 Fire Marshal Duane Dent monitored smoke and heat. That small intentional fire generated black smoke as dust and debris took flame, then it was doused creating white billowing smoke that fluted through the north and south facing window frames, leaving them perfectly charred and ready for the next controlled burn practice. A thermal detector tracked the level of heat each fire reached and to assure it replicated the temperature of a real life situation. When the six-team

members took off their tanks and gear to reveal their reddened complexions, it illustrated that even a practiced controlled fire has its dangers.

On May 25 Reinstra and volunteer firefighter Natalie Baker hosted, with Burlington Fire Marshal Annie Avery and fire marshals from Whatcom County, a unique fire skills training at the old Hedlund house on Pleasant Ridge. The morning-long test was one of many that firefighters must take to achieve a Fire Investigation Certification.

The test took place in the freshly cindered second-floor bedroom where controlled burns took place earlier that week. The hosts tested trainees by acting as victims and witnesses to the burn. In turn, trainees had to ask them a series of questions as part of the coursework and then gathered evidence on how the fire may have started. They also examined the burning patterns in the room, furniture, walls and windows to deduce the entire burn scenario.

This fire investigation certification training was a rare opportunity for learning and facilitated a genuine cooperation between regional firefighters and their departments. The departments extend their whole-hearted thanks to the Hedlund family for offering a life-size object for practice.

*Banaszak is a La Conner Firefighter Association member.*

# Fundraising drive for scholarships

The La Conner Community Scholarship Foundation is undertaking a six-month fundraising drive that will provide scholarship aid to the high school's graduates seeking support. The foundation's goal is to raise \$100,000 between June 1 and Nov. 30.

A downturn in bond yields has had a negative impact on the foundation's investment income, necessitating a bolstering of its portfolio.

The Foundation grew from a 1989 Dollars for Scholars campaign launched here by then-school administrators Ken Winkes and Norm Hoffman, the local Parent-Teacher-Student Association and civic leaders including Gail Thulen, Maureen Harlan, John Hastings, Maude Misner and Melphine Schmittou. Winkes was recruited to this new campaign by Foundation and school board member John Agen.

The Foundation is supported

# Skagit program serving special needs adults held Maple Hall fundraiser

By Bill Reynolds

It's often said there's no rest for the weary.

For over three decades the Skagit Adult Day Program has been working to put that adage to rest.

The organization's mission is to provide a daytime program where adults with special needs can take part in a supportive group setting with friends, board member and La Conner area resident Jan Taylor told the Weekly News Saturday prior to a major fundraiser at Maple Hall.

Caregivers gain time to recharge their batteries or complete daily chores while those in their charge are engaged in an array of supervised activities, including therapeutic exercise, music and singing, table games, outdoor walks, art, cooking, gardening, wood crafting, inter-generational programs and more.

"We're not just looking at serving persons with dementia," Taylor emphasized. "We want to give strength to the caregivers."

And with good reason. Taylor said statistics show that caregivers of special needs adults are more prone to serious stress-related illnesses.

Thus, the program's motto: "Caregiving is hard, we can help

make it easier."

The program operates on multiple fronts. It coordinates a caregiver support group and presents "Powerful Tools for Caregivers," an educational series designed to reduce stress, locate helpful resources and improve self-confidence and communication skills.

Nearly 10 million new cases of dementia are identified globally each year, according to the World Health Organization. More people have dementia now because lifespans are increasing, meaning more older adults are reaching ages when memory-robbing conditions are likely to surface.

Additionally, costs for formal care in the U.S. approach an estimated \$30,000 per patient annually, with long-term care the costliest component.

But even families with resources or top-of-the line insurance coverage cannot always find full-time care facilities due to growing demand.

The Skagit Adult Day Program is a critical option.

"We're a good space for people who can't get into a (full-time) facility," said Taylor.

The program provides services at Bradford House in Burlington. A similar venue in Anacortes – Gentry House –

was suspended after pipes froze during COVID-19, leading to serious interior damage. Opening another house in Anacortes is a program goal.

"Our saying," Taylor said, "is that somebody somewhere knows somebody somewhere to make our dreams come true."

There was plenty of support evident at the Maple Hall fundraiser, which was catered by Santo Coyote Mexican Kitchen of La Conner and included a raffle of items donated by businesses and private donors from throughout Skagit Valley.

A free showing of the acclaimed film "The Father" starring Anthony Hopkins at the Lincoln Theater in Mount Vernon Nov. 15 will increase awareness of dementia and the strains it places on patients and their caregivers.

"It shows him going through dementia in his own eyes," Taylor said of the 2020 drama.

The Skagit Adult Day Program plans to get its message out to as broad an audience as possible.

"We want to make our presence known in the community," said Taylor.

Information: skagitadultday-program.org/ or 360-755-1235.

# Skagit Valley Farmers Market

The Skagit Valley Farmers Market at The Vinery located at Christianson's Nursery is in full swing.

Every Sunday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., everyone, including pets, are welcome to shop local produce, goods and more. The Farmers Market will continue weekly through October.

by contributions from community members and organizations including the La Conner Alumni Association, La Conner Soroptimists, La Conner Kiwanis and the La Conner Rotary Club.

Individual, business and community support is needed once again.

Contact John Agen, 360-503-4049 to contribute.

# Town of La Conner citizen survey

Town of La Conner planning staff want to hear from you.

Residents and businesses had yellow door hangers placed on their door knobs last week that requested responses to its community involvement survey, part of the process of the 10-year update to the Town's comprehensive plan. Feedback is sought to "ensure that La Conners continues to improve in the next 10, 20 and 50 years.

Complete the survey by

scanning the door hanger QR code. Or, fill it out by going to the town's website or picking up a paper copy at Town Hall, 204 Douglas Street. Questions? Contact planning staff.

By signing up for "Notify Me" on the town website you will get email or text notifications on a variety of topics when information is posted to the town's website.

Website: townoflaconner.org  
Source: Town of La Conner



# OBITUARY

**Elizabeth Grace Gordon "Betty"**  
Betty Grace Gordon 97, a longtime resident of the Skagit Valley, passed away with her loving family at her side on Monday, May 22, 2023 at her home. Family and friends are invited to Betty's graveside service on Monday, June 12, 2023, 11:00 a.m. at Pleasant Ridge Cemetery. You are invited to read the eulogy written for Betty online at [www.kernfuneralhome.com](http://www.kernfuneralhome.com). Funeral Arrangements are under the care of Kern Funeral Home.

**Home Loans Made Simple**

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**Should your portfolio shift when the market does?**

**Scott A Price**  
Financial Advisor

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# Alumni banquet honors La Conner Class of '23

By Bill Reynolds

The newest members of the oldest active high school alumni association in Washington state were welcomed into the fold Saturday night in La Conner. Members of the Class of 2023 were feted during the 109th annual La Conner Alumni Banquet and Program at the middle school, just hours prior to departing on their senior trip to Knott's Berry Farm. "La Conner is just so special," said 2022-23 high school student body president Rachel Haley, speaking on behalf of her classmates. "We're proud to graduate here and be part of this association."

Haley was one of four class members – with Madoc Hiller, Hadley Shears and Finn Hakenson – to receive alumni association scholarships during the event, which included ovations for retiring counselor Lori Buher and Outstanding Alumnus Award recipient Kim Good Rubenstein. Buher joined Middle and High School Principal Christine Tripp, herself an alum, in citing the many achievements of this year's graduating class.

Both emphasized the group's wide range of interests. "We have athletes, musicians, students interested in auto mechanics, pre-medicine, business and cosmetology," Tripp said. "It's a good group of students



Madoc Hiller

and they're even better human beings." "This is a very resilient class," Buher said, noting obstacles created by the COVID-19 pandemic. "We have such strong students. I could go on and on about this class."

Buher said the class not only survived, but thrived, despite isolation imposed when the pandemic forced students to rely upon online instruction for an extended period.

"They experienced a lot of growth," Buher recounted. "They did their schoolwork and what they needed to do to help their families."

And in doing so they followed a path Rubenstein has trod since her graduation here in 1973, enjoying impactful careers in hotel

management and as a champion for inclusive education and most recently as a volunteer for numerous local organizations.

She was introduced by her sisters, Virginia Good-Vlahovich and Patsy Good.

"Why was my sister chosen (as outstanding alumnus)?" Good asked. "How much time do you have?"

"There always will be more to say about Kim," she added, citing her sister's unwavering devotion to the community.

"I definitely love La Conner and always will love La Conner," Rubenstein said upon accepting her award. "Even when I went to California to pursue my career, I took La Conner with me."

She encouraged Class of '23 members to do the same and stressed the importance of teamwork.

"Everything I've done in my life," she said, "I've been able to do only with the support of others."

Master of ceremonies Jay Hulbert, Rubenstein's high school classmate, invited members of reunion classes to share remarks and memories.

Dorothy Dalan ('53), Linda Reynolds Gravely ('63) and Jane Anderson ('83) each spoke briefly.

Dalan was joined at the banquet by two classmates, her husband, Roger Dalan and Sybil Jenson. She said seven of the 16 members of the class are living.

"We're glad to be here. We're glad to be anywhere," she quipped.

Gravely said she had attended larger schools while growing up on the East Coast. But after moving to La Conner she was able to know all her classmates. She noted that in what is a rarity these days, she has resided continuously in the same house in La Conner for six decades.

Anderson shared the comparative costs of consumer goods from 40 years ago and added that the school's football team coached by Landy James advanced to the state semifinals her

(continued on page 7)

# A faster, higher Murdock won state hurdles titles

By Bill Reynolds

Tommy Murdock had a leg up on the competition throughout the high school track and field campaign this spring.

And a big reason the La Conner High School junior was head and shoulders above all comers was his mental toughness, Braves' head coach Peter Voorhees told the Weekly News after Murdock swept the state 2B boys' 110 and 300-meter hurdles contests at Yakima in May.

A case in point, Voorhees noted, was how Murdock handled a late start time for his preliminary heat in the 110s.

"In the heat before Tommy's," said Voorhees, "a kid broke his leg coming off the last hurdle. Tommy's heat was delayed 10 minutes."

"Tommy stayed really calm, though," Voorhees emphasized. "You have that wave of adrenaline going, preparing for a peak performance. Then the schedule changes. That's tough. During the delay," Voorhees added, "a lot of other people were bouncing around, expending energy."

Not Murdock. "He was able to remain focused," Voorhees said. "The rest of the field didn't know how to handle the delay, in my opinion. Tommy didn't get flustered."

Murdock won the heat in 15.51, comfortably ahead of runner-up Morgan Anderson of Raymond, who ran a 15.73.

The junior standout showed his fortitude again in the 110 final when he faced Anderson in a rematch. Midway through the race Murdock was trailing. He managed a late burst and with a lean at the tape edged Anderson by two-hundredths of a second.

"That really showed Tommy's poise," said Voorhees. "Two hundredths of a second is a turn of the shoulder or just tightening up. Tommy didn't do that."



Tommy Murdock

The result was a winning time of 15.01, a personal-best mark for Murdock, as well as a new school record.

Murdock literally ran away with the 300-meter hurdles title, posting a 39.00 in the medal round, setting another personal and school standard. Second place finisher Judah Milton of South Bend was well back at 40.29.

With the twin wins, Murdock has now mined state gold three times. He won the 300 hurdles as a sophomore in 2022.

Still, the best is likely yet to come.

"I can see Tommy getting stronger between his junior and senior year and getting those times even lower," Voorhees said. "I'm really excited for that."

Murdock will be among key returnees next season.

Voorhees said those ranks include junior Morgan Huizenga, who placed fourth in the state 2B girls' javelin trials, delivering a toss of 111-01, surpassing her previous best by 10 feet.

But, for now, Voorhees and his coaching staff will take time to fully appreciate the La Conner program's many highlights from Yakima last month.

Those start with Murdock, who also placed 10th at state in the 100-meter dash and joined Jacob Pommels, Thomas Kitchen, and Brenden Kitchen for a fifth place finish in the mile relay.

"I'm proud of Tommy," said Voorhees. "He set two school records at the state meet, which is hard to do. State is a three-day event and by the time you get to Saturday afternoon, the legs tend to get a little tired."

"It was great," he stressed, "to see Tommy manage it that well."

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# Guitar Festival brought luthiers to La Conner

By Kylee Fortygyn

La Conner is a cool place with its incredible dining, magic Skagit views and small town charm. It is no wonder a Guitar Festival has been added to the list of things to do. In mid-May, Maple Hall becomes home to some of the finest handcrafted and carefully sourced guitars one could imagine. “They’re almost like living things” says John Carrigan of Curly Creek Guitars. “I know my child is out there and it wants to be played.” Carrigan specializes in Archtop guitars, a passion he developed as a skilled furniture builder turned guitarist. “It is a hobby that pays for itself” says Carrigan. He is one of many luthiers – stringed musical instrument builders – who came out to the Pacific Northwest for this show.

Brent McElroy and his late wife, Shirley Makela, started the festival in 2017. McElroy, a luthier, was a regular attendee of guitar shows across the continent, traveling to New York City, Montreal, Buck City and Rhode Island. The couple would pack up their Sprinter RV with guitars and go on adventures, because it is much more fun that way.

When Makela retired they settled in La Conner, “the cutest of all of the towns” says McElroy. “It smells like salt water. When the tide’s out, that’s the best smell,” he says with a grin. Makela used her business sense from the corporate world along with her guitar festival experience to dream up one of her own. “She had a good sense of what worked and what didn’t. La Conner has a rich musical past which reminded her of Woodstock, the little hippie town outside of Manhattan. That gave Shirley the idea” said McElroy.

Opportunity arose after a popular guitar show in Healdsburg, California called it quits. Luthier supply shows invite luthiers, provide a party and bring in the public. It was the “gold standard of guitar shows,” as McElroy puts it, and when it ended it “left a huge hole in the West Coast.” Woodstock has the Bearsville Theater with an open floor, stage and balcony. When Makela and McElroy toured Maple Hall, they thought it bore an uncanny



**TRULY PITCHING SELLING ONE OF A KIND** – Hundreds of luthiers brought their handcrafted stringed instruments to Maple Hall for the fifth annual La Conner Guitar Festival May 19-21. Thousands of attendees handled them, played them and listened to their sound. Probably more hearts fluttered in anticipation of purchasing a guitar or mandolin than people opening their wallets to make a transaction.

– Photo by Marissa Conklin

resemblance. The couple worked together to organize and build the show, including the logo, which is a beautiful picture of the rainbow bridge with a guitar overlaid on top.

Once the word was out, people traveled from all over the country and even the world, to showcase their handmade guitars. The first year seven luthiers attended from Europe. This year there were only two, from Spain and Italy. There was a two-year hiatus in the festival during the pandemic, as well as Makela’s surprise death in 2021.

What the couple built together has now become a world class show that “put La Conner on the guitar maker’s map” according to McElroy.

Walking around Maple Hall in the midst of the event invites your ears to hear the perfectly tuned guitars being happily strung by interested buyers. “It is a perfect way to get your name out there and it gives people a chance to actually play your guitars” says McElroy. Nearly 50 luthiers were vendors with guitars on display along with guitar part suppliers, expert panels and song circles.

Outside of Maple Hall were multiple pop-up concerts for listeners to enjoy. Andre Feriante (andreferiante.com), an Italian born, flamenco inspired guitar-

ist put on an incredible show at Skagit Cellars. The packed house was mesmerized by the titillating sound of rhythmic guitar moving throughout the room. It was a display of finger picking madness as Feriante played original tunes, along with some Beatles adaptations. His music touches the gamut of emotion, from fast and happy, to deep and longing.

In the back of the room stood Craig Wilson of White Salmon Guitar Co. He is making Feriante’s future guitar. They met at the Guitar Festival last year where the deal was made. Wilson was watching the performance in order to “capture the sound and aesthetic” of Feriante, whose guitar will be based on the work of Antonio de Torres, the father of the modern guitar. It can take 300 hours to build a guitar by hand, Wilson estimated.

The price tag for one of these handcrafted masterpieces ranges from \$8,000 to \$30,000 or more. It is not for the faint of heart or the casual bystander. This is a work of art to be enjoyed by an artist who can understand the difference in sound, quality, touch and feel.

And for all the regular people out there, you’re invited to listen and learn at next year’s La Conner Guitar Festival at laconnerguitarfestival.com.

# MoNA’s 31st annual auction June 10

The Museum of Northwest Art’s annual auction, biggest fundraiser of the year, takes place at the First Street museum Saturday, June 10, but you can preview – and bid – on the over 300 works of art now, online.

“Share the Magic of Northwest Art!” is the theme of the 31st annual auction, which raises funds for exhibitions, the art collection, and transformative educational and outreach programs.

Tickets are \$100. Saturday,

start as early as 4 p.m. to browse and join in this “pre-dinner” party with its hors d’oeuvres, oyster bar and wines. Bidding starts at 5 p.m. at MoNA and online. All bidding is by cellphone.

Silent bidding has started and will continue through 8 p.m. June 11. Preview daily on-site, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Information: monamuseum.org.

Source: Museum of Northwest Art

# Sunday music in Gilkey Square



**NOT HIS FIRST DANCE** – Adam McGarity had to hustle himself to keep up with his son Turner dancing to the music of the Michelle D’Amour band June 4.

– Photo by Ken Stern

La Conner Live’s Sunday concert series in Gilkey Square enters its third week June 11 with The HIP playing its unique choice of covers under the white canopies by the boardwalk.

The summer schedule: June 18, Midlife Crisis; June 25, Mojo Cannon; July 2, The Walrus; July 9, Fantasy Band; July 16 BrohamM; July 23 Chris Eger

Band; July 30 Joan Penney; August 6, Lost at Last; August 13, Cosmic Sauce; August 20, Pacific Twang; August 27, Cascadia Groove; September 3 Savanna Woods and Sept. 10, Murphtones.

The series opened May 28 with the Skagit Valley favorite CC Adams Band.

# ‘Birds and Bees’ play at Whidbey

Need a laugh or want to laugh? Go see “The Birds and The Bees” at the Whidbey Playhouse in Oak Harbor. Set on a Canadian farm, this comedy jumps right into sex, love, science, family and, of course, the artificial insemination of turkeys. There is a bee colony, naturally.

Weekends through June 18. Information: .whidbeyplayhouse.com.

Source: Whidbey Playhouse

# Adopt-A-Hydrant Fundraiser

Paint a fire hydrant and add beauty to the community while supporting Fire District 13.

The fundraiser is June 17, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at John K. Bob Memorial Ball Park, 17400 Reservation Rd, La Conner.

Adopt a hydrant for \$100. Payments can be made at the Skagit County Fire District 13 Fire Station #2 at 17433 Sneec Oosh Rd.

Source: Fire District 13

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**CRAFTS AND A MOVIE** – Children attended a “drive-in” movie showing of ‘CARS’ at the La Conner Swinomish Library June 2. Before the movie, kids decorated “box cars” using boxes donated from Pioneer Market.  
– Photo by Marissa Conklin



**PLAYING THEIR SWAN SONG** – The La Conner Schools bands and choirs held their spring concert in Maple Hall last Wednesday, May 31. The middle school and high school choirs performed “Don’t Stop Believin’,” accompanied by Ian McCormick, with Eleanor Drews and Sierra Nelson soloing, from left. Choir member Hadley Shears, right, sang in support.  
– Photo by Madoc Hiller

**Rain Report: May**

Rain last wk, May 28-Jun. 3: 0.0  
 Rainfall in May: 0.64  
 Number of rain days: 5  
 Least rain, one day: 0.01, 1st  
 Most rain, one day: 0.51, 5th  
 Year least rain: 0.35”, 2018  
 Year most rain: 4.57”, 2010  
 Average rainfall, 2000-2023: 2.7  
 Rainfall last month, April: 1.7

All totals in inches. Data from WSU Mount Vernon.



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**Natural gas stoves are bad for you and the environment**



**By Greg Whiting**

A few days ago, one of the people I was talking with at the coffee shop asked me whether a possible ban on gas stoves is real, or just another straw-man argument designed to rile up the public in search of television ratings.

It’s a real issue. Several cities, starting with Berkeley, California in 2019, banned new natural gas connections to residential and commercial buildings. The primary purpose of these laws is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Eliminating natural gas as a fuel supply for buildings reduces methane leaks related to natural gas production and delivery and reduces the carbon dioxide emissions that directly result from gas combustion.

The Berkeley ban on new gas connections was overturned in federal court earlier this year, on the grounds that it violates a law giving the federal government jurisdiction over energy efficiency standards for appliances. This ruling won’t end the debate, as it will be appealed. Nor does it address the question of whether gas stoves should be banned, or whether they can be banned in some other way. Debate for a few more years seems inevitable.

Aside from greenhouse gases, the principal argument for banning gas stoves is reducing health issues caused by indoor

emissions, including natural gas itself (again, from leaks in the system) and combustion byproducts like nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide. There is no question that health issues related to interior gas emissions are real, but further research and discussion are needed to determine how significant they are and what costs would be justified to address them. Do we ban gas or subsidize ventilation?

There’s another reason for banning new gas connections: Cost.

The cost of new gas infrastructure is significant and avoided entirely if buildings are powered with electricity only. Gas is used in homes for water heating, space heating and cooking. Heating water and rooms can be done with electricity. Even after transmission losses, heat pump systems that use grid electricity can use less fuel than traditional on-site combustion heaters powered by on-site gas, so heat pumps will gradually be favored over gas.

This leaves the gas stove as the appliance that effectively determines whether a gas connection is required at all.

In other words, eliminating gas stoves would enable builders to eliminate the entire cost of new natural gas connections. Furthermore, gas is a finite resource that gradually becomes more expensive to produce, while the cost of electricity is likely to stay flat or fall as low-cost solar and wind power, storage and time-of-use controls are added to the grid.

In an unregulated world, it is likely that net total lower infrastructure and fuel costs would favor electric stoves so strongly that the result would be very few gas connections within about 20 years, even without regulations.

However, utilities are regulated. A gas utility that puts a new connection in today is allowed to recover the cost of that connection from its ratepayers, even if the cost of electricity eventually becomes so favorable that the gas connection is not used. Today’s regulators have an obligation to consider the question of whether new gas infrastructure costs can justifiably be added to future utility bills, in addition to considering greenhouse gases and health.

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# Grant County Journal to close doors June 29

By WNPA staff writer

After more than a century of keeping Ephrata and surrounding communities in the know, the venerable Grant County Journal will cease publication at the end of June.

"I've been here 51 of our 117 years," said Journal Production Manager Kerry Moser. "It's breaking my heart, but you can't stay in biz and not make money."

Publisher Jeff Fletcher purchased a minority interest in the Journal in 1977 and bought out his partner in 1981. At its height, the company owned newspapers in Ephrata, Grand Coulee, Davenport, Cheney, Medical Lake, the Spokane Valley and Newport along with two printing facilities in Ephrata and Cheney. "We didn't set out to have a chain of papers,"

Fletcher once said, but as some publishers retired and others sought financial backing, the company stepped in and grew.

Fletcher and business partner Bill Ifft acquired new titles, expanded into competitive territories and established themselves as an important hub of journalism and printing in Eastern Washington. And as their employees and other entrepreneurs expressed an interest in owning their own newspaper, Fletcher and Ifft helped them get started. Fred Willenbrock bought the Newport Miner that way and similarly Scott Hunter became the owner of the Grand Coulee Star, buying the newspaper where he worked as the publisher.

Ultimately, Ifft bought out Fletcher to create Free Press Publishing in Cheney. Today,

WNPA board member Roger Harnack is acquiring Free Press Publishing from Ifft and WNPA President Michelle Nedved is the publisher in Newport.

To say WNPA has benefitted from seeds planted in Ephrata is an understatement. Fletcher was president of the board of directors in 1989, Willenbrock in 1997 and Hunter in 1993.

In an attempt to stay afloat, the Journal in early March cut back its twice-weekly publication schedule that had been the norm for four decades. It dropped the Monday edition and published only on Thursday. In the end, however, that wasn't enough to keep the paper open.

*THE WASHINGTON NEWSPAPER: Journal of the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association, June 2023. Reprinted with permission.*

## College

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

Judge Hazelrigg approached SVC leadership with a proposal that the college host the court's hearings to foster a better understanding of the justice system and improve legal literacy within the community.

To that end, the proceedings were attended by numerous SVC students.

One, Mount Vernon High School graduate Adam Wagenbach, told the Weekly News he was attending as part of an assignment for a communications class.

"I'm watching and taking notes on the various presentations made by the attorneys," he said during a break between cases.

Wagenbach showed his detailed notes, then mentioned how impressed he was that the attorneys could retain their trains of thought despite repeatedly being cut off mid-sentence with complex questions posed by the judges.

"I know that would drive me crazy," said Wagenbach, who plans to complete work on a two-

year degree before transferring to a four-year school to pursue a bachelor's degree, perhaps in education.

Each argument lasted about 20 minutes. A question-and-answer session followed, when students, instructors and members of the public were invited to ask about the operations of the court. SVC students also participated in their own panel discussion.

During the morning's oral arguments, students heard the attorneys reference case law and familiar courtroom terms such as "precedent" and "prejudice."

Less familiar and very un-Perry Mason-like words and phrases – "peremptory challenge" was among them – were also voiced, causing students to quickly thumb through the thick vocabulary and guided notes packets they were provided beforehand.

At one point, counsel representing a civil plaintiff stressed: "I think words matter," further underscoring the value of the students' key terms lists.

The sessions were open to the public and recorded and livestreamed by TeleVision Washington (TVW), which offers unedited coverage of Washington

state government, politics and public policy.

The Court of Appeals judges were completely on board with taking their work on the road.

"I am so looking forward to this great opportunity to have our court travel to the northern part of our region," Division 1 Chief Judge Lori K. Smith told the media prior to embarking for Mount Vernon. "Having our arguments available for viewing via TVW has provided the opportunity for more people to see oral argument. But giving people who might not be able to travel to Seattle the opportunity to see oral argument live and ask questions afterwards is really exciting for us."

## Burn ban starts Friday

A burn ban begins 8 a.m. June 9 for all residential and land clearing fires in unincorporated Skagit County until further notice. County staff will no longer issue permits and existing permits are suspended.

La Conner residents must check at Town Hall for local burning restrictions.

Information: Skagit County Fire Marshal 360-416-1840; skagitcounty.net/Departments/FireMarshal.

## Coach

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

students.

Nelson attested to Huscher's inclusion among nine regional winners considered for the elite statewide distinction.

"Ms. Huscher has effectively personalized her instruction," Nelson said, "catering to the unique needs and abilities of each student in her classroom."

Huscher was featured on Seattle's KING 5 TV June 2.

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# POLICE BLOTTER

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**Sunday, May 28**

**11:08 a.m.: Dog ran free** – Report of a loose dog running around Waterfront Park. Law enforcement checked the area and couldn't locate the dog. Conner Way, La Conner.

**Wednesday, May 31**

**11:57 a.m.: Suspicious male** – Caller reported seeing a male she didn't recognize and didn't belong at the house next door. When she confronted the male, he advised he was lost and left the area. A door was found open, but the homeowner reported nothing was disturbed. McLean Rd., Greater La Conner

**Friday, June 2**

**12:40 p.m.: Break in attempt** – An

employee of the business entered the back door. Shortly later someone behind them attempted to open the same door. The door had locked behind the employee. The person could be heard attempting the keypad, but later walked away after they could not get it open. Morris St., La Conner.

**Saturday, June 3**

**1:34 p.m.: Suspicious van** – Report of a suspicious multi-color van. Citizens were concerned because of recent thefts in the area. The area was checked by law enforcement; however, the van already left. Similk Bay Rd., Greater La Conner.

## MARINA MOORINGS

Port of Skagit

Sometimes the most important lessons are learned, or reinforced, by the most harrowing experiences. I hope the following experience, shared with me by a highly skilled boater, serves as an important safety reminder for everyone out on the water. The tale began at four in the morning when the anchor alarm went off; instead of being secure for the night they were drifting with the tide.

They had to take up and re-set the anchor before anyone on board would be sleeping again. She shrugged on a jacket and went to the bow to work the capstan. As the capstan finished she reached for the chain and started to pull up the last 50 feet, as they have to do with their design. Her glove got pinched in the chain and before she knew what was happening her glove was torn off and her thumb was bleeding. A lot. But she was determined!

She did, however, have the presence of mind to send a daughter to get a life vest, which she put on before pulling up the anchor. Finally she was finished, the anchor lay on the deck before her, they could re-set it and go back to bed.

It was at this point the exertion and loss of blood hit her hard. She saw spots and was in the water before she even knew what was happening. Luckily her daughter had the presence of mind to alert the rest of the family, keep her eye on her mother in the water and then help pull her out just a few minutes later.

This story has a happy ending. Other than a badly injured knee, hurt somehow during the fall, everyone is all right at the end. However, for perspective, this whole incident took less than 15 minutes from the alarm sounding to being pulled back into the boat. Had she not been wearing a life jacket she might very well have sunk like a stone, as she went over without a sound. Had her daughter not been paying attention she might have drifted away from the boat, with the current running and the sun not yet up.

Emergencies happen when you are not ready for them. This is the kind of story that makes me remember to wear a life preserver. Be safe out there.

See you on the Channel!

— Chris Omdal, *harbormaster*

## Alumni

■ ■ ■ (from page 4)

Alumni Association President Jim Hernandez offered the formal welcome prior to dinner catered by La Conner Seafood and Prime Rib House, announcing that an additional post-graduate alumni scholarship had been awarded to Charity Dakota Jordan, who represented the school three times

at the national Geography Bee.

It was Rubenstein, though, who recited the overarching theme of the banquet – that of the lifelong camaraderie and sense of belonging shared by La Conner alums.

"They say you can't go home again. But that's not true," Rubenstein insisted, casting her gaze upon this year's graduates. "You really can go home again."

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**AGENDAS**

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

**NOT TO BE MISSED**

**Skagit County Master Gardeners.** [skagitmg.org](http://skagitmg.org), 360-395-2367.  
*Firewise Landscaping.* June 13, 1-2:30 p.m. at WSU NWREC Auditorium.  
**Berry Dairy Days.** June 16-18. Parade on June 17, 11 a.m. down Fairhaven Ave.  
**Fire District 13.**  
*Adopt-A-Hydrant.* June 17, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at John K. Bob Park, 17400 Reservation Rd.  
**City of Anacortes.**  
*Pride Parade.* June 17, 11 a.m. in downtown. Celebration at Causland Park afterwards.

**ART & THEATRE**

**Whidbey Playhouse.** 730 SE Midway Blvd, Oak Harbor. [whidbeyplayhouse.com](http://whidbeyplayhouse.com), 360-679-2237.  
*Live Theatre: The Birds and the Bees.* Through June 18. Fri-Sat shows at 7:30 p.m. and Sun matinees at 2:30 p.m.  
**Museum of Northwest Art.** [monamuseum.org](http://monamuseum.org), 360-466-4446.  
*Teen Art Club.* Fridays twice a month, 3-5 p.m. Free for grades 6-12. Pizza, snacks and art supplies are provided. Find schedule online.  
*31st Annual Art Auction.* Through June 11. Live program June 10, 5-7 p.m. online and in-person. Purchase tickets online.  
**Intuitive Arts Fair.** June 24-25, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. at Maple Hall. Admission is \$5. Hosted by Magnus Marketing. More info at [intuitiveartsfair.com](http://intuitiveartsfair.com)

**LIBRARIES**

**La Conner Swinomish Library.** 520 Morris St, La

**AGENDA**

La Conner Park Commission Agenda For June 14, 9:30 a.m. Maple Hall Fireside Room 104 Commercial Street, La Conner And By Zoom  
 Information Below and on the Town Website  
 Public comments  
 Old Business  
 A. Kiosk Repair Update  
 B. Pavilion Permit Update  
 C. Fish Slide Update  
 D. Trees on Morris Street Update  
 New Business  
 Meeting ID: 821 1722 4057  
 Passcode: 143481



Town Council Agenda June 13, 6 p.m. 104 Commercial Street Upper Maple Center and by Zoom  
 Information is below and on the Town Website  
 I. Call to Order  
 II. Pledge of Allegiance  
 III. Public Comments (Limit: 3 minutes per person)  
 IV. Presentations:  
 V. Consent Agenda  
 A. Consent Agenda (Approved without objection 5/0)  
 1. Approval of the Minutes: Council Meeting of May 23  
 2. Finance:  
 Approval of Accounts Payable.  
 Approval Payroll  
 B. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda  
 VI. Reports  
 1. Chamber Report  
 2. Revenue /Expenditure Report  
 3. Department Head Reports  
 4. Mayor's Report  
 5. Council Committee Reports  
 VII. Unfinished Business:  
 1. Center Street Project  
 2. Jenson Property  
 3. Pioneer Park Tree Removal  
 VIII. New Business:  
 1. Resolution – Appointment to the Planning Commission – Holt  
 IX. Mayor Roundtable:  
 X. Executive Session:  
 Meeting ID: 833 3986 5419  
 Passcode: 941756

Town of La Conner Emergency Management Commission Tuesday, June 13, 4:30 p.m. Council Room  
 104 Commercial Street, La Conner, WA and by Zoom  
 Information below and on the Town website (Zoom TBD)  
 A. Consent Agenda  
 1. Minutes  
 B. Public Comment (items not on the agenda)  
 C. Old Business  
 1. Temporary flood measures – develop consensus.  
 2. Conditions to implement temporary flood protections measures  
 3. What level of flood protection?  
 a. 100 year flood event (1%),  
 b. 500 year flood event (0.2%),  
 c. 1000 year flood event?  
 4. Flood height for Skagit River design.  
 5. Trigger(s) for a Skagit River Flood watch for La Conner.  
 6. Flood height for coastal flooding.  
 7. Trigger(s) for a Coastal Flood watch for La Conner.  
 8. Heat Event Protocol and Cooling Rooms – Summer Heat Shelters  
 D. New Business  
 1. Community Disaster Recovery  
 Meeting ID: 876 2451 5796  
 Passcode: 090399

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Conner. 360-466-3352. lclib.wa.us. Open 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday.  
*Storytime.* Every Friday at 11 a.m.  
**Anacortes Public Library.** 360-299-8067, [CityofAnacortes.org](http://CityofAnacortes.org). 1220 10th St, Anacortes.  
*Tech Help.* Every weekday at library front desk. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Drop-in for hands-on help.  
*Friendship Book Sale.* June 10, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Bring your own bag and fill it for \$7.

**MUSIC**

**Ukelele Fun & Song Circle.** Meet every Wednesday. 1-2 p.m., Burlington Senior Center. For more info, email [yoga-heartspace0@gmail.com](mailto:yoga-heartspace0@gmail.com).  
**Shelter Bay Chorus.** Meet every Thursday. 4:30-6:30 p.m., Shelter Bay Clubhouse. No auditions required. Questions, call Joan 360-941-7507.  
**Lincoln Theatre.** 712 S 1st St, Mount Vernon. 360-336-8955. [lincolnthatre.org](http://lincolnthatre.org).  
*Live Music: The Soul Rebels.* June 20, 7:30 p.m.

**MUSEUM EXHIBITS**

**Museum of Northwest Art.** Open daily 10 a.m.-5 p.m. [monamuseum.org](http://monamuseum.org), 360-466-4446.  
**Pacific Northwest Quilt & Fiber Arts Museum.** Wed-Sun, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. [qfamuseum.org](http://qfamuseum.org), 360-466-4288. 703 S Second St, La Conner.  
*Annual Porch Sale.* June 9-10, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and June 11, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.  
*Exhibit: The Undead.* Through July 2.  
*Exhibit: Unfolding.* Through July 23.

*Exhibit: Life in the Mountain West.* Through July 30.  
**Skagit County Historical Museum.** 360-466-3365 or [skagitcounty.net/museum](http://skagitcounty.net/museum). Hours: Thurs-Sun 11 a.m.-4 p.m.  
*Exhibit: Quilt Until You Wilt.* Through June 2023. Design your own paper quilts.  
*Exhibit: "I Do" the History of Weddings.* Through Sept. 24.  
*Re-opening of Native American permanent exhibit.* June 8, 5:30-7 p.m.

**MEETINGS**

**Town of La Conner** 204 Douglas St, La Conner. 360-466-3125. Zoom info @ [Townoflaconner.org/calendar](http://Townoflaconner.org/calendar).  
**Town Council.** June 13, 6 p.m. at Maple Hall.  
*Parks Commission.* June 14, 9:30 a.m. at Maple Hall.  
*Planning Commission.* June 20, 6 p.m. at Maple Hall.  
**Skagit Conservation District** 2021 E. College Way #203, Mt. Vernon. 360-428-4313. Zoom info @ [skagitcd.org](mailto:skagitcd.org).  
*Board meetings.* Every fourth Wednesday 7:30-9 a.m.  
**Rotary Club of La Conner.** [laconnerrotary.org](http://laconnerrotary.org). Meetings Monday, 6-7 p.m. at Shawn O'Donnell's Farmhouse restaurant - optional dinner at 5:30 p.m.  
**Skagit Cemetery District One.**  
*Regular meetings.* Every second Thursday, 5 p.m. at Lori Buher's home, 17604 Valentine Rd., Mount Vernon.  
**Little Mountain Gamblers.** *Gamblers Anonymous.* Every Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. at Senior Center in Mount Vernon. 1401 Cleveland Ave. Any questions, call 855-222-5542.

## Aqimuk's Kitchen

By Patricia Aqimuk Paul, Esq., Food Editor.

### Fruit Leather

Made with berries. It's June and fresh berry season. To make room in our freezer, I pulled out several containers of frozen berries from last season. I found strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and cranberries. It was a delightful selection! I used an electric dehydrator.

**Ingredients**

- Berries, 12 cups
- Parchment paper
- Oil spray for cooking

**Preparation**

Drain the berries of excess liquid. Fill your blender to the 6-cup mark. Use the smoothie setting to blend. Pour into a bowl. Repeat. Measure the parchment paper to fit on the dehydrator tray. Cut. Spray the parchment paper lightly with oil. I used a coconut oil. With a medium size ladle, scoop and put the berries on the oiled parchment paper. Spread out evenly. Repeat until all trays are full. Place the trays in the dehydrator. Set the temperature to 135 F. Begin testing after six hours. Slightly lift the edges. Look for soft spots in the center. Depending on the thickness, they may take up to 10 hours. Some of my trays I finished dehydrating the second day. When done, peel off and roll. Cut each roll into three or four pieces. Store in airtight container.  
[AqimuksKitchen@outlook.com](mailto:AqimuksKitchen@outlook.com)

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## Super Crossword

**WORKING IN 2-D**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		
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## Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
 ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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MIGUEL CRUZ



JAMIE DAMIEN-SAMS



SAMANTHA DAVIDSON



FLOYD DENT



ELEANOR DREWS



ANDREA EDWARDS



CHLOE EDWARDS



JOEQUAN ENGAVO



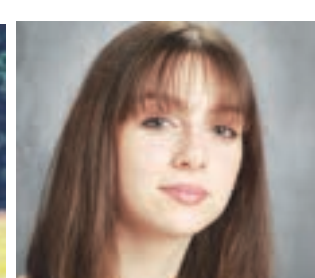
ISAIAS GONZALES-ROJAS



FINN HAKENSON



RACHEL HALEY



KRISTINA HANSEN



JOSIE HARPER



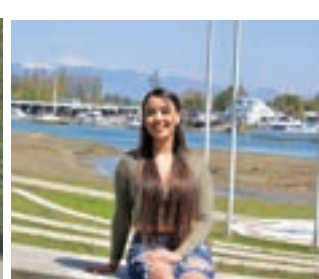
MAKAYLA HERRERA



MADOC HILLER



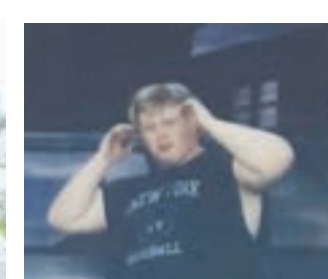
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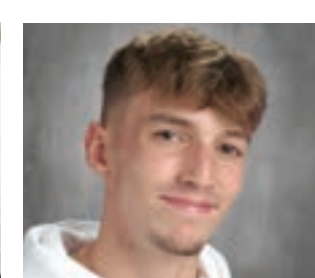
THOMAS KITCHEN



RAEGAN LEE



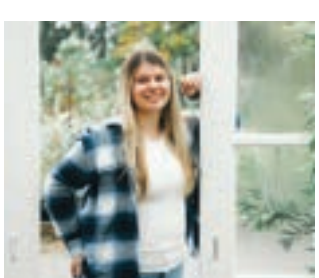
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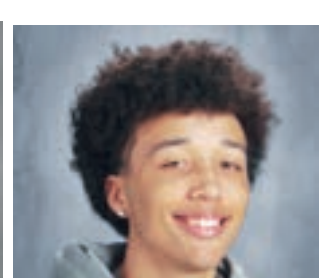
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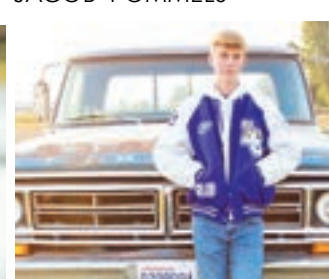
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 Clever Kathy Designs  
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 COA Mexican Restaurant  
 Crescent Moon Yoga  
 Cusp Creative  
 Dona flora  
 Earthenworks Gallery  
 Edward Jones  
 Enchanted Locks Hair Salon  
 Fine Feathered Friends  
 Go Outside  
 Handmade La Conner  
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 Kern Funeral Home & Mount Vernon  
 Cemetary  
 La Conner Barber Shop  
 La Conner Brewing Company  
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La Conner Christ the King  
 La Conner Drug Store  
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 La Conner Hair Design  
 La Conner Ice Cream Tower  
 La Conner Pub & Eatery  
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 La Conner Sips  
 La Conner Studio 623  
 La Conner Swinomish Library  
 La Conner Thai Garden  
 La Conner Waterfront Café  
 Latitude Longitude  
 Local Color Art Gallery  
 Lulu's Espresso & Ice Cream  
 Magnus Marketing  
 Mo's Eclectic Gifts and Apparel  
 Museum of Northwest Art  
 Mystic Arts Supply  
 Nasty Jack's Antiques  
 Nell Thorn Restaurant  
 Olive Shoppe & Ginger Grater  
 Pacific Northwest Quilt and Fiber  
 Arts Museum  
 Pac Nor Westy  
 Pioneer Market  
 Raven's Cup Coffee  
 Sacred Cedar Co.

Santo Coyote  
 Scone Lady  
 Seaport Books  
 Sempre Italiano  
 Skagit Cellars  
 Skagit County Historical Museum  
 Skagit River Boutique  
 Step Outside  
 Stompin' Grounds  
 The Country Lady  
 The Cusp Apothecary  
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*Best wishes and continued success.*

**Job well done!**