



Chanukah candles & Christmas music • p 5
Elves deliver bread puddings locally • p 8

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Farm to table in your backyard



HARVESTING BRUSSELS SPROUTS – Skagit Valley Farm had a crew harvesting Brussels sprouts from its field on La Conner Whitney Road early on the morning of Dec. 18. The once-reviled vegetable has experienced a renaissance of popularity in recent years and Skagit Valley Farm is the largest producer in the state.

—Photo by Nancy Crowell

County planning commission says ‘no’ to easing agritourism rules

By Anne Basye

In the latest step in the process of reviewing and perhaps changing county code around agritourism, the Skagit County Planning Commissioners voted 5 to 2 to recommend that Skagit County Commissioners adopt the changes to Skagit County code proposed by the county’s Agricultural Advisory Board.

The Ag Advisory Board proposes regulating agritourism events as temporary events – and reducing the number of permitted temporary events a venue may host from 24 to 12 a year.

It also recommends restricting the use of farm buildings to farming only. Other uses of barns, granaries and other outbuildings that have been lovingly restored throughout the county would not be permitted, or permitted only through special use permits.

The commissioners in favor of the measure cited enforcement as a main motivator for their vote.

“Non-temporary events like tasting rooms and restaurants and weddings and those kinds of things are not allowed and have not been allowed, so it’s not like anything is being taken away,” said Commissioner Kathy Mitchell.

“We are here this evening because

existing codes haven’t been enforced in a long time,” said Commissioner Vince Henley.

“Basic laws are already in place,” noted commission Chair Tim Raschko. “I can’t see what we can do legally but support the position we currently have on the table.”

Commissioner Amy Hughes advocated for the county to have an in-depth conversation on tourism and its impact on local citizens. “Worldwide and locally, unregulated tourism is disrupting life,” she said, citing traffic experienced during last year’s tulip festival.

Commissioners Joe Woodmansee and Jen Hutchinson voted against the recommendation.

“We need to start somewhere but going back to previous position is not the right one,” said Hutchinson. “It’s hard to recommend moving forward with a proposal that we had 1,000 comments against and less than two dozen in support. I don’t think this is the right way to start.”

Also, she noted, “There is no pathway to compliance being recommended here.”

Besides better enforcement, Henley would like to see “a pathway to compliance for those who are out of compliance.” He acknowledged that advancing the recommendation could

help get “the new proposal, whatever it may be, onto the new docket.”

The commission’s recommendation will be on the county commissioners’ meeting docket in January. Whether the commissioners accept or reject the measure, the agritourism conversation will continue.

That is what members of the Multi-Stakeholder group hope. Convened by Skagitians to Preserve Farmland, the group proposed an alternative measure that would create a fixed number of “limited entry permits” for farm venues that would be renewed every three years. Inspections would ensure that events did not impact adjacent farming operations and other neighbors.

The group will refine its proposal and submit it to the county’s 2025 docket, said SPF Executive Director Allen Rozema.

“We felt that our proposal could find the middle ground,” he told the Weekly News. “It would create a cap on the number of venues, which we understood the farming community wanted, and would create a code path for existing venues, which some would make and some not.”

Rozema calls the planning commission’s request for more enforcement

(continued on page 3)

Excavation begins for Center Street project

By Bill Reynolds

No building permit has yet been issued, but excavation began at the 306 Center Street condominium project site last week to find the water table on the property so that paperwork could be completed for removal of contaminated soil.

Following that initial dig, a soil removal plan was drafted and submitted, according to Town of La Conner Assistant Planner Ajah Eills.

Public Work Director Brian Lease approved the plan and soil removal commenced, Eills said.

That work was completed and by early Friday afternoon all equipment had left the site.

The three-story complex, with six ground floor short-term rentals, will be built where fuel storage tanks and a garage once stood behind the former full-service fuel station that now houses The Slider Café and several other businesses.

A fill and grade permit was issued to KSA Investments, the firm developing the property whose principals are Kate and Brandon Atkinson.

The soil removal, though, has led to some near literally rocky moments.

Lifelong resident and professional builder Gary Nelson, a former planning commissioner who lives across the street from the site, told town council at its Dec. 12 meeting that on the first day of excavation a work vehicle was parked across his driveway.

“I’m urging the Town to rein them in,” said Nelson. “They need a designated parking area for their workers. It’s common practice to have designated parking when you’re working under a conditional use permit.”

“They shouldn’t be parking across anyone’s driveway,” agreed Planning Director Michael Davolio. “That will be addressed.”

Davolio said that the Town and KSA have reached agreement on several pre-construction issues. But one difference remains outstanding, he noted. The structure cannot exceed the Town’s 30-

(continued on page 6)

Managing food insecurity key to a strong local food system

By Adam Sowards

Local grocery shoppers pause and compare prices. They add up the rising costs of food and wonder how they will afford their next meal. This is how Arin Magill, director of the La Conner Sunrise Food Bank, defines food insecurity: concern about where the next meal will come from.

The number of people feeling food insecure is growing locally. Magill reported the food bank’s clientele has increased 15% in the last two months. Statistics gathered by Skagit County Public Health for its “Food Security Data Report” issued in August indicate 11% of county residents are food insecure, including 16% of Skagit’s children. These figures are a few years old and likely underrepresent the need.

The Sunrise Food Bank distributes about 3,000 pounds of food every week to approximately

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November felt cold and was damp but not much rain fell

By Ken Stern

Don’t let December’s rain, gray skies or fields of standing water distract you into thinking it has rained a lot. November maintained 2023’s pattern of rainfall below the monthly century’s norms. While precipitation came down 22 days, half of those were under one-tenth inch.

It rained daily the first two weeks, Nov. 1-13, totaling 2.5 inches, 78% of the month’s 3.2 inches. Nov. 1-4 1.2 inches fell, which grew to 1.4 inches through Nov 8. That was the longest period of higher precipitation. Another inch fell Nov. 11-13. While there were another nine days of rainfall, only two were around 0.2 inches.

The month’s rainfall was 1.3 inches, 29.6%, below the century average. The 17.7 inches of rain in 2023 is 10.4 inches, 37% below normal for the year to date for this century.

Five years since 2015 November

has had at least 5.6 inches of rain. Ten times since 2011 at least 4.7 inches came down.

Novembers are historically wet in the 21st century. At least 3.5 inches of rain has fallen 16 years. More than

four inches of rain fell 12 times. In nine years, over five inches fell and six inches or more has fallen five times.

This year’s 3.2 inches of rain was the sixth driest November this century. In five years less than three inches of rain fell. Two of those years were 2019-2020.

The first week was the warmest stretch of the month, with highs of 63.9- and 60.1-degrees Nov. 4-5. The daily average temperatures were between 51.5- and 57-degrees Nov. 2-6. The average temperature did not again rise to 50 degrees nor did a daily high top 56.3 degrees.

The second half of the month was cold, with 12 mornings of frost starting Nov. 14. Ten of those lows were in the twenties, including the last eight mornings, going down to 23.9 degrees Nov. 28 and 24.7 degrees Nov. 29, when those days’ average temperature was below freezing.

Holiday Closures

Christmas

Monday, Dec.25

Closed:

Everything

Bank: Closed

Buses: No service

Library: Closed

Post Office: Closed

Schools: Till Jan 3

Town Hall: Dec 22-26

County government: Closed

Trash Pick Up: None

Weekly News: Closed

And God bless us, everyone

Rain Report: November

Rainfall in November: 3.15”

Number of rain days: 22

Least rain, one day: 0.01”, 6 days

Most rain, one day: 0.6”, Nov. 11

Least rain: 1.61”, 2000

Most rain: 8.15”, 2021

Average rainfall, 2000-2023: 4.5” *

* No data, 2003

Data from WSU Mount Vernon.

From the editor—

Finding hope in dark times

Tomorrow, Dec. 21, is the solstice, the shortest day of the year. In BCE, Before the Common Era, and for all the centuries in our Common Era, people have celebrated the end of the year's dark period and the beginning again of the coming of the light.

Leaders seeking followers for their new Christian religion piggy-backed on the established communal gathering to herald the new light of the world, the hope for mankind, the Prince of Peace.

The Christians among us believe Jesus was born on Dec. 25. Wise men and shepherds came in honor and amazement of his birth. Here was God made flesh and come to Earth as savior.

What a great hope – miracle of miracles – that a child will save us. The adult Jesus would be the Prince of Peace, guiding mankind to beat their swords into plowshares and have us study war no more.

This year, 2023, has seen a dark fall in an incredibly gray and difficult year in an era of ongoing catastrophes and tragedies for those willing to stick with and look deeply and accurately at the realities of our larger world.

If only it was enough to hug our kids and drive them to their basketball games and music lessons. Maybe our children will become the hopes of the world and reach across manmade barriers to forge a peace adults refuse to attempt.

A child in a manger, homeless, on the road, his parents traveling as an imposed dictate. How could he grow into people's savior? There are children today – this day – and pregnant mothers migrating, traveling not because they want to but because they are forced to, as the only hope for their and their family's survival, if they can find shelter, food, water, safety for a day, for the rest of their lives.

"Unto us a child is born," the Hebrew scriptures reads. Every second of every minute of every hour of every day multiple children are born. Is one of them the hope of the world? Every one can be, if they live, if they are nurtured, if they are loved, if they grow up in love and told that in love lies hope for the world.

In this dark time, literally in far too many ways and figuratively in many ways more, adults tell each other and their children many stories. A story we can insist on and then work to make real is how the parents of today's children worked to build a miracle, saving all children by insisting on and working toward peace, bringing light to all children everywhere in our lifetime.

– Ken Stern

Musings – On the editor's mind

We, tell – and listen to – stories for a reason.

Way before the internet or radio or even telegraph lines, communities collectively gathered around the campfire to both tell each other the important stories of the day and to recall and pass down myths, the collected wisdom from their elders and their ancestors.

Today it is hard to pause and cut through the din of garbage on social media to reflect and revel in a good story that has a deep, larger meaning. Now, we don't understand irony and are blinded by the shine of celebrities. This instant's glitter will be replaced by another bright shining moment tomorrow. In the long run each is as empty as the sugary cereal or whatever flavor of chips shaken of a bag that is then crumpled up and thrown away.

There have always been stories with deeper meaning, however valuable and wonderful the tale itself, however fabulous the heroes and however they were aided or cursed by the gods. Such are some of the stories from the ancients, as the one Greeks told of the warrior Jason and his Argonauts in their search for conquest and riches.

It is a complicated tale, of course, full of challenges thought too difficult to overcome. Think of Jason as, if not a superhero, then supercharged, as Batman is in our tales of him today.

Before Jason was even able to sow dragons' teeth, he had to harness fire breathing bulls with bronze hoofs for plowing up the ground.

These are metaphors of danger and destruction.

What comes from such

violence?

From the dragon teeth planted into that land torn asunder spring fierce warriors who in a very different way from ducklings imprinting on a mother, attack all in their path.

Google "to sow dragons' teeth" and find "this is used as a metaphor to refer to doing something that has the effect of fomenting disputes."

What was the result of the U.S. military in Iraq for years and Afghanistan for decades, having unleashed destruction and mayhem into each society and upon the land? Into the ruins of each children grew into warriors pledging eternal and utter vengeance. This lesson has been true and not learned across the continents and centuries.

In the Middle East the land once called Palestine had been ripped up and its native peoples pushed around for 75 years, since Israel was born from war in 1948. Now, each bomb dropped, every bullet shot plants more dragons' teeth, each fertilized in blood. Into the soul of each child and around every campfire one story is chanted, of death to the invaders, the killers of our fathers, our mothers, our sisters and our brothers.

The blood of families and neighbors and the dust of homes and villages destroyed all create a fertile potion from which more death and destruction will spring.

And that is why the myths of ancients are told and passed down through the ages: To weave a tale of warning to not repeat the actions of the past.

All people can listen to this tale, learn, take heed and act. Or not. As it has ever been so.

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Write a 450 word guest column.

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A citizens' view—

Preserve Skagit County's small business farmers

By Jessica Davey

Did you know that in Skagit County only 2% of the farms in the valley are over a thousand acres? Did you also know that 41% of farms in Skagit County are noted as residential or lifestyle farms, aka hobby farms?

The face of farming has changed: There are fewer farms that are operating at a commercial level, or what would be considered financially self-sufficient operations. There are fewer new farmers entering the industry, as there are greater barriers to entry – more so then ever before. It takes years to see a rate of return when you are starting a new farm from the ground up, and most new farmers today do not have the resources to self-sustain a farming operation.

The barrier to entry into farming is exceedingly high and all the while the industry is challenged with an aging population. More farmers will retire as the years go by, and there are fewer farmers entering the industry. If you are doing the math, as I am, we are set to see a future with many fewer farmers to farm the land we are so set on preserving.

With this in mind, why would

the Skagit County Planning Commission vote to support the restrictive-purposed zoning changes from the Agricultural Advisory Committee? The proposed changes will further restrict the resources farmers may have to support their farming operations, and they will limit what farms may do to support themselves financially. If our goal in the county is to preserve farmland and support our farmers, how do the proposed changes achieve this? These changes are set to layer in another barrier to entry for Skagit farmers.

It has become increasingly clear that the Skagit County Planning Commission are not considering the needs of the small business farmer, or the 98% of farms in Skagit Valley under 1,000 acres. The zoning changes will restrict the types of activities that can be done on agricultural land or how often they can happen. This comes at a time when we have seen a 10% decrease of farms as reported in the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan from 2007 to 2012.

Instead of limiting what farm owners can do, shouldn't we tackle the gap in our current

zoning to actually address a compliant path forward for the wide range of activities covered under agritourism? Activities happening in the county currently include weddings, tasting rooms, RV stays, etc. Yet, the proposed code changes limit what farmers can do with their land, limits how they can generate income to support their farm operations and it does not provide sufficient change to the code to properly address everything that is defined as agritourism.

Our goal should not be to preserve dirt exclusively for farming: Our goal should be to preserve the farmer. Farmers need our support and the ability to use their land as needed to support their operations for future sustainability. We have co-existed under these conditions for decades, and any code change now should capture a path forward for everyone.

Jessica Davey is a local small business owner in Skagit Valley, a wife and mother to three young boys where she and her family enjoy their small farm.

A citizens' view—

Report: The Sound is holding on; recovery uncertain

By Tim Manns

The Puget Sound Partnership recently released its biennial State of the Sound report concluding that while, overall, Puget Sound is holding on, its recovery remains uncertain (Puget Sound Partnership: State of the Sound (wa.gov)). This very mixed scorecard is concerning. Merely clinging to life with little movement towards improved health of the Sound, its ecosystems and species is not sufficient progress in restoring this beautiful inland sea around which we live.

The report uses 44 vital signs to represent the many aspects of the Sound's health. While six of those vital signs are looking up and five are clearly down, 23 show no clear trend of decline or improvement and seven have mixed results (three have insufficient data). A few examples of the vital signs:

Estuarine wetlands, where fresh and saltwater mix, are critical to salmon, marine birds, shorebirds and waterfowl. Nearly 80% of estuarine wetlands around the Sound have been diked for urban development or farmland in the last 150 years. Recently that trend is reversing with 3,420 acres restored to

estuarine wetlands since 2006, a vital sign headed in the right direction. However, while this is one area of clear gains, projected sea level rise over the coming decades could reverse those gains, drowning and squeezing out estuarine wetlands against dikes that prevent the shoreline from migrating upslope with rising waters.

Terrestrial birds, especially those dependent on the once thriving forests around the Sound, are in steady decline, starting in the late 1960s. For example the golden-crowned kinglet, one of our smallest perching birds, found primarily in montane conifer forests, has declined by 60% in the western U.S. over the last 60 years. Protection of mature and old growth forest is of particular importance to this species and others dependent on these habitats.

A sign with mixed results is that of *marine birds*. Four species were selected to represent marine birds in the Sound. marbled murrelet populations have been declining at a rate of 5% per year since 2000. Scoters have been declining at about 2% per year. Pigeon guillemots and rhinoceros auklet populations appear stable, although a recent study shows

some declines in the latter.

If we want the Puget Sound to be the vital, functioning ecosystem it once was, we have to do more. We must protect and restore more estuarine areas and initiate plans to allow migration of those areas with sea level rise especially in the Sound's major river deltas. We must protect old growth forests around the Puget Sound Basin and the Olympic Peninsula and protect and restore key marine habitats such as kelp and eelgrass beds. We must reduce shoreline hard armoring that impacts functioning shoreline ecosystems and production of forage fish, vital prey for salmon and marine birds.

Here in Skagit County, current exhibits and presentations at the Museum of Northwest Art are powerful reminders of the impact sea level rise and other effects of climate change are having locally. King tides and the flooding of homes and roads are just the beginning.

We live in a magnificent place struggling to hold its own and must all do more to help it recover and thrive.

Tim Manns is conservation chair of the Skagit Audubon Society.

LETTER

Loss, politics, family love

Kudos to the editor for being willing to post a letter in last week's issue that, I suspect, did not align with his perspective. This gives credence to his professed belief that a free press, uncensored, is best and open communication can, hopefully, create new channels of understanding.

I can relate to the letter writer's sense of loss ("America has changed," Dec. 13). Yes, those golden years that we both grew up in were awesome. And yes, we miss them. But times change, conditions change and then is gone forever. Kiss it goodbye.

And don't blame Joe Biden. There were a few, mostly Republican, presidents between then and now. It would take more reams of newsprint than we have available here to discuss that.

I would remind the writer that most of the vegetables and fruits that he eats are presented to him by immigrant labor. And that there is a shortage of those workers. His obsession on issues at the border is, I search for the term, how about "obsessive?" It borders on being racist.

And then we devolve to "skulls full of mush" and "hair on fire." Oh, my.

The writer seems to have no grasp of the history of the

Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the total domination of Israel over any Palestinian attempt at sovereignty, the denial of rights to Palestinian citizens in Israel, the ongoing killing and theft of land on the Left Bank.

And, lastly, the writer seems to reveal a commitment to total control, cutting off aid to his children if they go against his political beliefs. This is most revealing of one who is dedicated to certain political beliefs that override even family love.

*Jai Boreen
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Mayor Hayes' final council meeting ends without fanfare

By Bill Reynolds

Four-term La Conner Mayor Ramon Hayes chaired his final town council meeting Dec. 12, but it was a business-as-usual session with no celebration or reception.

Hayes wouldn't have had it any other way.

"It's just not my personality," he told the Weekly News afterward on his reluctance to see the meeting morph into a retirement party.

"Once something is done, it's over," he explained. "And we had a very long, grueling agenda to work through."

There was, however, mention during the meeting – which included a 20-minute executive session on a new labor agreement with public works staff – of Hayes being feted in January with a retirement dinner at the Waterfront Café.

Town Emergency Management Commission Chair Bill Stokes, who served on the council and planning commission and former mayor Dan O'Donnell each briefly thanked Hayes for his public service.

The bulk of the meeting, which ran well over an hour, dealt with adoption of the 2024 budget, department and administrative reports, approval of a 2024 utility rates schedule, passage of assorted resolutions and agreements (including the July 4 fireworks display), appointment of Cynthia Elliott to the planning commission and Councilmember Annie Taylor as mayor pro-tem, reappointment of Michael Bucy to the parks commission and concerns registered by citizens over recent activity at the 306 Center Street condo project site.

On the budget, Hayes noted that while hotel/motel and sales tax revenues this year have surpassed expectations, "we don't always have enough money to fund everything we want," citing the impact of post-COVID-19 inflation.

The council did add \$4,000 for the La Conner Swinomish Library's after-school tutoring program.

Councilmember MaryLee Chamberlain said the financial commitment to the library represents a positive partnership between the two, akin to one in the works between the Town, La Conner Schools and the La Conner Firefighters Association for restoration and installation of a message board at the Chilberg Road fire station.

Stokes said that while he doesn't oppose supporting the library, he questioned whether the after-school program would duplicate what's already being done at the newly expanded Braves Hub on campus.

Resident Debbie Aldrich agreed with Chamberlain that it's money well spent.

"It's a good idea," she said. "We should be supportive. The kids will use it."

Resident, Mollie Rights concurred as well.

"You can't know how the tutoring program will work unless

you try it," she said. "You have to fund it first. Fund it now and see how it works. My experience with libraries is they'll use that money and the kids will come."

Looking ahead budget-wise, Town Administrator Scott Thomas and wastewater treatment plant operator Kelly Wynn noted the nearly 50-year old sewage facility faces expensive state-mandated upgrades in the next few years. Thomas recommended delaying the service surcharge to fund those plant improvements until engineering studies and analyses are completed.

Thomas suggested the surcharge be revisited next year. Wynn anticipates as "inevitable" new construction at the plant site within three to five years.

Mayor-elect Marna Hanneman praised all those at Town Hall responsible for developing the budget.

"It's amazing," she said, "what this town can do with the money we don't have."

A utility rates increase ordinance, based on the regional Consumer Price Index and grudgingly approved by the council, will be one way to help fill expenditure gaps.

"In preparing this ordinance," explained Thomas, "as a base I used the April 2023 CPI-U for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue (area), which is 6.9%. As we know, CPI is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. In keeping with past council discussion, I amended the sewer base rate for 2024 to reflect a 6.9% increase and the usage rate per gallon of water consumed to reflect an 8% increase."

Any pain from the rates hike will be shared, Councilmember Ivan Carlson vowed.

"In the past," he quipped, "my stipends from the council and fire department have paid my water bill. That won't happen anymore."

Taylor was elected to a six-month term as mayor pro-tem, to substitute when Hanneman is out of town.

"You can't go on vacation," Taylor insisted jokingly. Hanneman assumes office Jan. 1.

The regularly scheduled Dec. 26 Council meeting was canceled.

All that remained was for Hayes to bid adieu.

"It's been a pleasure, ladies and gentlemen," he said. "Marna has the temperament and she is well prepared and very capable for her new role."

FD 13 plans a windstorm disaster exercise

By Bill Reynolds

It's been said that an ill wind blows no good.

In the case of the Skagit County Fire District 13 coverage area, which entails Swinomish Reservation and rural La Conner, a facsimile windstorm at the end of March is designed to do plenty of good.

Planning has started for a March 30 Emergency Operations Center Windstorm Disaster Exercise and unified command strategy.

Captains Gary Ladd and Ted Taylor and Brad Reading of Shelter Bay summarized the training at the December commissioners hybrid meeting at the Sneec-Oosh Road station last Thursday.

"The objective," Ladd told the Weekly News, "is to establish a unified command to manage a windstorm disaster. This command needs to consist of the stakeholders, decision makers and those with financial authority. To us, that would be a fire commissioner from District 13, a senator from the Swinomish Tribal Community and a board member from Shelter Bay."

The exercise scenario will as-

sume a week of heavy rain with high winds predicted overnight. It projects downed limbs and branches and hazardous conditions, loss of electrical power and property damage, with trees uprooted and fallen on houses, power lines and cell towers causing major infrastructure damage to houses, buildings and places of business and no cellular or internet services and no power. With the 9-1-1 system overwhelmed, fire and police will have to self-actuate.

Shelter Bay Community Emergency Response Team members and volunteers will activate a disaster assistance center with generators, cots, blankets, water and medical supplies set up in the Shelter Bay clubhouse.

"The hope," Ladd said, "is that notice will be sent out to all Shelter Bay residents asking them to participate as volunteers or victims and to put up placards in their front windows stating 'HELP' or 'OK.'"

If enough Shelter Bay residents volunteer, tents with generators for heat and power will be set up.

Commission chairman Bruce Shellhamer agreed. "I like the

idea of having a windstorm exercise," he said. "It's good to practice before the game comes on."

The ultimate goal is testing the district's communications and unified command systems.

The effectiveness of staff training was seen earlier Thursday when firefighters and emergency medical personnel responded to a horrific motor vehicle crash on Reservation Road involving a teen driver whose vehicle struck a tree and caught fire.

The driver was removed from the vehicle and transported to John K. Bob Ball Park where a district crew established a landing zone for an emergency helicopter. The teen was then flown to Harborview Hospital in Seattle where she underwent successful surgeries.

"Our team really came together today," said Fire Chief Wood Weiss. "We were handed a very tense situation and got someone headed to care."

Badges were presented to firefighters Jackson Grande and Logan James at the meeting's end. James is also an emergency medical technician.

Jan. 11 is the commissioners next meeting.

Community emergency management communications planning underway

By Bill Reynolds

It's often said that to everything there is a season.

For La Conner's emergency management commission, that means development of a comprehensive guide addressing all disaster scenarios.

"We've been working on flooding issues hot and heavy for quite a while," Town Administrator Scott Thomas said at the the commission's Dec. 12 hybrid meeting. Now we need to develop a process and procedure for our (emergency management) plan."

Identifying groups within the community that will need extra assistance is key.

"How do we accommodate persons with disabilities in emergency shelters?" he asked. "How do we communicate with the hearing impaired in an emergency?"

Resources are available. Skagit County, the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Shelter Bay and the City of Anacortes have adopted emergency management plans or are now doing so.

The commission is hopeful that representatives will meet with them next year.

Commissioner Jim White will attend a Shelter Bay emergency management meeting. He named Ted Taylor, a Shelter Bay resident as a resource. Taylor is the emergency management coordinator for Skagit County Fire District 13.

The town plan will address disaster situations including fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, extreme hot or cold weather, cyber-attacks and, of course, flooding.

Commissioner Jerry George noted that the Skagit County emergency management plan would be a key tool.

"The Skagit plan is important," he said, "because most of the resources we would call upon would be from the county."

Communicating is essential as well, said Commission Chair Bill Stokes.

"Getting information to citizens so that they're prepared (for an emergency) is very important," he said.

Maps of the town were shared that can be modified to identify locations of and services available at La Conner's emergency shelters.

The next meeting is Jan. 2 at 4:30 p.m. at Maple Hall.

Agritourism

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

"an unfunded mandate" that would tax a county staff "maxed out" with current enforcement.

"Given that county has already adopted the 2024 budget, are they prepared to do a budget amendment to address this proposal?" he asked.

Chris Dariotis of La Conner Gardens farms one of his 18 acres and sells his produce to neighbors he calls "appreciative." While he described himself as a tiny participant with no dog in the fight, he hopes that the farming activity he sees outside his window can "be shared with the world, not just kept for ourselves."

For SPF, the agritourism discussion is one of many agricultural-related issues that evolve as farming evolves.

"Our board looks at the entire ag industry and what is in its best interest long term," said Rozema. Many previous flashpoint issues around land use "have been settled in the short term, then you see how it works out. Policies may need tweaks three, five or 10 years down the road."

And agritourism?

"This is a community issue, so if we can keep all the stakeholders talking, there could be a solution found."

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Girl hoopsters drop Acorns in big win

By Bill Reynolds

It was junior cheer night at Landy James Gym last Friday. And the La Conner High School girls' basketball team gave both the youth cheerleaders and a large crowd plenty to applaud.

Maeve McCormick scored a game-high 26 points, Shaniquah Casey filled the stat sheet with 16 points, six rebounds, six steals and two assists, Nora McCormick added six points and a half dozen steals and Jackie Lam finished with six points and eight boards in drubbing 1B Oakville 56-35 to improve to 5-2.

Alyssa Forsythe and Laela Baker scored 10 points apiece for the visitors, who fell to 1-4. Andrea Mendez-Castro chipped in another eight points in the non-league contest.

With its full-court press forcing Oakville turnovers in droves – La Conner recorded 24 steals – the hosts built a double-digit halftime lead (37-23).

Maeve McCormick scored 13 points – half her total – in the second quarter, many coming on transition layups.

She was 11 of 21 from the field (one of three from three-point range) and three of four from the foul line while collecting seven steals and grabbing four rebounds.

After a tough road loss at 2A Kingston six days earlier, the team pulled away further by outscoring Oakville 19-12 in the second half.

"It was a nice bounce back win for us," coach Joe Harper told the Weekly News afterward. "We've got a few girls back who had missed some of the previous games but were still not at full strength as it was Lydia Grossglass' turn in the sickness rotation this week."

Casey had left La Conner's Oct. 5 game with Orcas Island due to shoulder soreness.

"She came out and put up 16 points for us, which I believe is her career high," Harper said.

He cited the play of Maeve McCormick as well.

"She seems to be everywhere out there for us," Harper said, "be it jumping in front of a pass or crashing the boards. Maeve has a motor that never stops when she's on the floor."

Junior guard Lily Dougliss likewise drew praise. She has

been pressed into starting duty with teammates sidelined recently by illness and injury.

"She's done an outstanding job," stressed Harper. "What people don't realize is this is really her second year playing basketball overall. What she is doing is remarkable and her improvement defensively from year one is what we really appreciate."

"If you watch the film," he added, "there are not a lot of mistakes on the floor by Lily and she is also one of the stronger rebounders on the team even though she is only 5-1."

Harper remains impressed with the team's eighth graders, two of whom – Nora McCormick and Kim Williams – drew starting assignments against Oakville.

"Our eighth graders continue to improve and contribute on a nightly basis," he said.

La Conner, which traveled to 2A Squalicum last night, entertains 1A South Whidbey this Friday at home.

"We do have work to do," Harper acknowledged, "as we really need to focus on protecting the ball. Our turnovers are an issue, but I believe the girls will correct that moving forward."

School district revs up for green energy

By Bill Reynolds

The atmosphere was electric at the Dec. 11 La Conner School board meeting.

Campus solarization options lit up the room.

La Conner Town Council member MaryLee Chamberlain and resident Bob Raymond, of the Skagit Valley Clean Energy Cooperative, provided an update on local solar grant projects, including a feasibility study and analysis of energy consumption at the school district.

They made a pitch, eliciting a positive board reception, for the school district to convert to electric buses.

The two presented data that showed cost savings and environmental benefits of electric over diesel buses.

"It's a beautiful time to enter this space," said Chamberlain, who noted Raymond has conducted extensive research into grant opportunities for school districts converting to electric.

"We see the potential as amazing," she said.

Nearly a dozen school districts in the Pacific Northwest have already switched, Chamberlain.

said, including Orcas Island, "You would be on the cutting edge in the Valley to have electric buses," Chamberlain said.

She conceded there would be start-up costs incurred and the need for maintenance training, but the district would save money in the long run.

"These buses last a long time," she said. "There are no fuel costs. The drivers love them and the kids are calmer because they're quieter."

The two said access to grant funding is a key reason districts are considering making the move.

Board members affirmed their support to pursue the electric buses option and grant application process.

In the present, more students than anticipated are enrolled. Finance Director David Cram reported that 498 full-time K-12 students are on the rolls this year. Cram had estimated a student count of 490 in August prior to the start of classes.

"I actually thought we'd hit 500," Cram said.

That may yet happen, said Superintendent Will Nelson.

(continued on page 6)

La Conner Boys' defense cracks Acorns for 69-51 basketball win

By Bill Reynolds

Coming off his selection as the Skagit Valley Herald Boys' Athlete of the Week, La Conner's Brayden Pedroza provided Braves fans an impressive encore at Landy James Gym Friday night.

The junior guard dazzled with an array of shots on his way to a game high 33 points, 10 of which came in the pivotal fourth quarter, to lead the hosts to a 69-51 non-league win over 1B Oakville.

Pedroza found the hoop on slicing drives through the paint, mid-range jumpers, three-point bombs and at the free throw

stripe where he converted five of six attempts.

But as good as Pedroza was – which was plenty – it was hardly a one-man band for the team in its double-digit takedown of the talented Acorns and their imposing front line size.

In addition to Pedroza, five other players made the nets sing.

Corran Eisen delivered 12 points, including a pair of perimeter treys. Ivory Damien, in foul trouble early, finished with a flourish, scoring seven of his 11 points in the final stanza.

C.J. Edwards, matched Eisen with two three-pointers, in tallying nine points. Jarrett Hatch and Logan Burks chipped in two

points apiece.

Fueled by a tenacious full-court press that forced repeated Oakville turnovers in the backcourt, La Conner closed with a decisive 25-11 run in the fourth period.

"Overall, it was a great team win for us," first-year coach Lance Lopez told the Weekly News afterward. "Defensively, we turned up the pressure and found a way for us to use our athleticism."

"When we get after it and run," he added, "good things happen for us."

The transition game was just enough to offset a splendid outing by post Courtney Price, who

paced the Acorns with 32 points. Only two of those, however, came in the fourth quarter when the Braves' press limited opportunities for Oakville to set up its half-court offense.

Price did most of his damage on low post moves and putbacks, especially in the second frame, when he scored all but three of Oakville's 17 points.

Despite the 18-point final margin, the fast-paced contest was a back-and-forth affair much of the way.

The score was 35-35 midway through the third quarter following a tip-in by Burks and two free throws from Oakville's Eddie Klatush.

Pedroza responded with consecutive 15-foot jumpers, Eisen drained a trey and Edwards broke free for a layup as La Conner built a 44-40 lead going into the fourth quarter.

From that point, the Braves never looked back.

The team opened the decisive period with a 12-2 spurt with Pedroza and Edwards accounting for six points each.

The Acorns got no closer than 57-47. With the loss, the Acorns fell to 3-2.

The win came six days after a tough loss at 2A Kingston.

"We didn't have any games

(continued on page 8)



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FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS – Mayor Ramon Hayes lit the menorah at the Chanukah celebration at Maple Hall hosted by Rabbi Shumli Silver and attended by over 100 people Dec. 10. Mel Damski sang “The Chanukah Song” and Kevin Paul sang a heartfelt song in Lushootseed. – Photo courtesy of Mel Damski



SEVENTEEN BAND MEMBERS PLAYING – On the ninth day before Christmas the 50-strong Skagit Community Band performed their annual holiday concert to a probably record overflow crowd in Maple Hall Dec. 16. Attendees listened from the first and second floor hallways. The A-Town Big Band also performed. – Photo by Ken Stern

State parks free for ‘First Day Hike’ Jan 1

OLYMPIA —Begin the new year with Washington State Parks during their annual First Day Hikes Jan. 1, 2024.

Over 20 of the more than 40 state parks participating are in northwest Washington. Choose between staff-led and self-guided hikes, snowshoe excursions, dog walks, bike and trail rides, paddle adventures and more. The northwest parks range from Larrabee, Rockport and Deception Pass close by to Fort Casey, Fort Ebey and South Whidbey on Whidbey Island to Camano Island State Park

Events will range in difficulty from paved, flat ADA-accessible trails to moderate hill climbs. A few parks will host more than one hike with options tailored to different interests and abilities.

Some hikes include fun and educational talks with rangers discussing the history and natural features of the parks.

First Day Hikes is a national initiative led by America’s State Parks, encouraging people to start the new year outside. Last year, more than 1,500 participants hiked, biked and snowshoed 2,653 trail miles in Washington’s state parks.

Most First Day Hikes require advanced registration and group sizes may be limited.

This is the first state-managed land free day of 2024. Visitors will not need a Discover Pass to park on state recreation lands. Sno-Park permits are required.

Information: parks.wa.gov/find-activities. Source: Washington State Parks



Ask a Master Gardener

Start an indoor grow stand for fresh homegrown salads

By Kay Torrance

From mid-August through early November, daylight in the Pacific Northwest decreases by about three minutes per day. When the winter solstice arrives on Dec. 21 there is only 8.5 hours of daylight. This is an excellent time to start an indoor growing stand project.

Find a suitable location

Gardeners naturally want to place their grow stand near a window. However, with good artificial lighting, you can use a dark corner, unused room or counter, shower stall or heated basement. The size needs to match your growing goals. Once you decide on the size, it is time to decide whether to purchase a kit or build your own. Many kit options are available; some fit on a small tabletop, others are large tents that are mini-indoor greenhouses. Build your own with wood or pipe, or save money by repurposing shelving and lights you already have.

Selecting lighting

Grow stands need a good source of artificial lighting, ideally lights that produce a full spectrum of high-intensity light for rapid plant growth. Leafy greens and herbs need around five hours of direct sunlight each day. Most garden vegetables need up to 14 hours of light each day. Fluorescent or LED tube lights are an inexpensive alternative to a plant or grow light. Florescent lights give off some heat, which is beneficial to plants, but the glass bulbs can be easily broken. LED grow lights produce the highest intensity light but are the most expensive. Florescent lights should be hung one to three inches above the plants.

Heating pad selection and use

Size the pad to cover as much of the footprint of the plant

tray(s) as possible. Place the plant tray on top of the pad. Often heat pads are sold rolled up in boxes. At room temperature, the pads are stiff. Before unrolling a pad, plug it in and let it warm up. Forcing them flat can break the heating elements inside.

Selecting what to plant

As a rule of thumb, plant what you like to eat. Avoid vegetables that take a long time to grow and are inexpensive to purchase. Concentrate on herbs and greens that are best eaten fresh. For detailed information and a planting calendar, read WSU Home Vegetable Gardening in Washington <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2073/2014/09/Home-Vegetable-Gardening-in-Washington.pdf>

Growing seeds

If you are growing plant starts to transplant outdoors, start seeds around eight weeks before the last frost date. March is a good time to plant indoors. Plant each 6-pack with the same or similar seeds. Some plants like parsley will stay in the 6-pack for four to six weeks whereas lettuce will need to be transplanted in two to three weeks. It will take 5-14 days for seed germination. Some seeds will germinate faster if you soak them in water first. Follow directions on the seed packet and research specific germination information from seed companies.

More information: Skagit County/WSU Extension Ask A Master Gardener blog at <https://www.skagitmg.org/indoor-grow-stand/>

Kay Torrance has been a Skagit County WSU Extension Master Gardener since 2019. She is garden coordinator of the Naturescape garden and pond in the Discovery Garden on SR 536 west of Mount Vernon. Information: skagitmg.org.

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2023 Town of La Conner budget will end in black

By Ken Stern

The 2023 Town of La Conner budget has met its \$5.8 million revenue goal with December not yet counted. Even better, expenditures, now at \$4.55 million, are likely to finish below 67% of projections. The budget surplus is \$1.23 million and may still grow. Of the 12 program funds generating revenue, only the sewer fund, at 85% is below 100% of budget projections with one month still to come.

The \$3.58 million generated this year from the water, drainage, sewer and compost funds is the real engine of town income, bringing in 62% of total revenue. The four funds brought in \$200,580 in November.

The \$57,729 in sales tax is the second highest November ever, behind only 2021's \$60,911. The \$586,506 in 11 months is 96.3% of budgeted projections. It is almost certain 2023 sales tax revenues will be above the projected \$609,181, itself a record.

The \$19,048 collected in hotel/motel taxes brings the year to date total to \$181,875, 136.7% of 2023 projections. Likewise, the \$6,524 in the fire truck fund pushes the year's total to 105% of its budget.

The \$123,150 paid in property taxes is by far the largest single collection and brings the fund total to 92.7% of the year's estimate.

The \$9,875 collected in REET (Real Estate Excise Tax) revenue brings that fund to 116% of projections.

The 2023 budget was passed as a deficit budget, with expenses estimated at \$7.2 million and revenues projected to be \$5.8 million.

The 2024 budget also projects a deficit of \$1.8 million, with \$7.34 in revenues, against projected expenditures of \$9.1 million.

These totals are based on September collections from town businesses and online purchases delivered to La Conner addresses and reported to town council by the Washington Department of Revenue.

La Conner has a calendar fiscal year.

Excavation

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

foot height limit. A proposed elevator shaft appears in violation.

"We've told them that there are no exceptions to it," Davolio said. "It seems strange to me that their argument is that the elevator shaft is not part of the building. We're firm on that."

Lease told council he had made three separate site visits earlier that day.

Center Street resident Debbie Aldrich asked that Lease or other staff continue to do so.

"I hope the city will keep an eye on them," she said. "The residents shouldn't have to stay home and watch what they're doing."

Center Street resident Linda Talman said the work makes walking on that block of North Fourth Street difficult.

"There are no sidewalks on Fourth Street," she said. "You have to walk in mud. There's no place to park and it's kind of scary to walk on that street."

Marilyn Thostenson, who resides next to a residential development atop Snapdragon Hill, said she has mostly remained mum regarding home construction near her house. Thostenson said she has endured mostly in silence drilling and early morning noise for four years.

"My backyard is right next to a new house," she said. "I have an historic house and now there's a brand new million-dollar house next to it."

It's the way things go, she inferred.

"Property is property," said Thostenson. "People buy it."

Neither the Atkinsons nor any other KSA representatives attended the meeting.

KSA has secured a conditional use permit to locate the multi-family Center Street building on property that was rezoned in 1986 from residential to commercial use.

The Atkinsons have cited the local housing crunch as a reason the site is now better suited for housing than retail development.

Food

■ ■ ■ (from page 1)

130 local households. Volunteers deliver to about 30% of those households where residents' mobility is difficult. Anyone is welcome Mondays at the Masonic Hall food distribution site on South Third and Benton Streets in La Conner, 2:30-5 p.m.

"We serve anyone. We don't need to know anyone's story," said Magill. "We just really work hard at being welcoming and break down any barriers of awkwardness."

The thirty volunteers who make Sunrise Food Bank hum with activity see it as a community-supported system. "You know, we're all just people trying to make it," said Magill.

The food bank's goal is to offer supplemental food. Retired people whose limited incomes no longer stretch enough make up the most substantial recent increase in demand, Magill says. Many new clients receive no other benefits. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sunrise Food Bank developed a drive-thru model. This service makes some clients more comfortable. Volunteers record dietary needs and preferences and bring boxes to people in their vehicles.

A grant-funded partnership with Puget Sound Food Hub make this a community-wide effort that provides boxes of "wonderful organic produce," said Magill. "It's such a privilege to pass that on." The La Conner food bank is part of the Skagit County Food Bank Association. Collaborating local food banks pool resources and share benefits.

The county's Population Health Trust builds on this coordination. At its Food Security Workgroup meeting last month it issued a "Food Security Report," a product of eight months of work.

The workgroup envisions Skagit County developing a "resilient local food system that provides equitable access to nutritious, sustainable, and culturally appropriate food for all."

Kristen Ekstran, a community health analyst with Skagit County Public Health and facilitator with the Population Health Trust, calls the approach a collective impact model. By setting a common vision and directing attention

in the same direction, said Ekstran, the community can come together around a common set of challenges, like food insecurity, allowing individual organizations to direct resources toward agreed priorities. It encourages the sort of collaboration that the Sunrise Food Bank relies on.

After completing its report, the workgroup has reformulated as a Food Policy Council. The council now has to implement the strategies outlined in the report. Its first meeting was earlier in December.

Magill felt encouraged by the workgroup, which received feedback from the food banks. "It makes us feel like we're being heard," said Magill. "We're hoping that those reports will draw attention to what is really happening in our valley and bring awareness" and resources to people who are food insecure.

Green energy

■ ■ ■ (from page 4)

He told board members that two or three students are believed to be transferring soon.

The state provides approximately \$11,000 per pupil in funding support. The district has weathered painful budget cuts to offset declining student population.

The 90-minute hybrid meeting began with Nelson administering oaths of office to Kim Pedroza and new member Alana Quintasket – both ran unopposed – and to John Agen, who won a contested election for the Swinomish director district

in November.

Board President Susie Deyo was a unanimous choice to remain chair of the five-member governing body in 2024.

"She's done a fabulous job since I've been on the board," said Agen in nominating Deyo. "I would love for her to continue in that role."

Board member J.J. Wilbur was nominated and unanimously approved as vice-president.

Pedroza will serve as liaison to the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association, which administers extracurricular school programs statewide.

LEGAL NOTICES

Town of La Conner
Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of La Conner, Washington, passed Ordinance No. 1235 at the December 12, 2023, Town Council meeting. A summary of Ordinance No. 1235 is as follows:

An Ordinance Repealing Section 2.65.005 of the La Conner Municipal Code, Salary Commission.

Complete copies of Ordinance No. 1235 are available at La Conner Town Hall, P.O. Box 400, La Conner, WA 98257

Dated this 13th Day of December, 2023

Maria DeGoede, Town Clerk
Published in La Conner Weekly News Dec. 20, 2023.

Town of La Conner
Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of La Conner, Washington, passed Ordinance No. 1236 at the December 12, 2023, Town Council meeting. A summary of Ordinance No. 1236 is as follows:

An Ordinance Amending the 2023 Budget.

Complete copies of Ordinance No. 1236 are available at La Conner Town Hall, P.O. Box 400, La Conner, WA 98257

Dated this 13th Day of December, 2023

Maria DeGoede, Town Clerk
Published in La Conner Weekly News Dec. 20, 2023.

Town of La Conner
Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of La Conner, Washington, passed Ordinance No. 1237 at the December 12, 2023, Town Council meeting. A summary of Ordinance No. 1237 is as follows:

An Ordinance Establishing the 2024 Budget.

Complete copies of Ordinance No. 1237 are available at La Conner Town Hall, P.O. Box 400, La Conner, WA 98257

Dated this 13th Day of December, 2023

Maria DeGoede, Town Clerk
Published in La Conner Weekly News Dec. 20, 2023.

Town of La Conner
Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of La Conner, Washington, passed Ordinance No. 1238 at the December 12, 2023, Town Council meeting. A summary of Ordinance No. 1238 is as follows:

An Ordinance Amending the 2024 Utility Rates

Complete copies of Ordinance No. 1238 are available at La Conner Town Hall, P.O. Box 400, La Conner, WA 98257

Dated this 13th Day of December, 2023

Maria DeGoede, Town Clerk
Published in La Conner Weekly News Dec. 20, 2023.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE

OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SNOHOMISH

In re the Estate of: DEBRA M. JACOBSEN, Deceased. NO. 23-4-02269-31 NOTICE TO CREDITORS (RCW 11.40.030)

The Personal Representative named below has been appointed as Personal Representative of this estate. Any person having claims against decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner as provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing to the Personal Representative or the Personal Representative's attorney at the address stated below a copy of the claim and filing the original of the claim with the court. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) Thirty days after the Personal Representative served or mailed the notice to the creditor as provided under RCW 11.40.020(3); 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 non-probate assets.

Date of first publication: December 6, 2023

WANDA M. JACOBSEN, Personal Representative c/o Maren Benedetti, Attorney for Estate 3128 Colby Avenue Everett, WA 98201 425-339-8556
Published in La Conner Weekly News Dec. 6, 13, 20, 2023.

THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SKAGIT Estate of Marilyn Jean PENNINGTON, Deceased, Michael T. PREIKSA

Petitioners. Case No. 23-4-00634-29 NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The Personal Representative named below has been appointed as Personal Representative of this Estate. Any person having a claim against the decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner as provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing to the Personal Representative or the Personal Representative's attorney at the address stated below a copy of the claim and filing the original of the claim with the Court. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) Thirty days after

the Personal Representative served or mailed the notice to the creditor as provided under RCW 11.40.020(3); 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 non-probate assets.

Date of First Publication: December 20, 2023

Personal Representative: Michael T. Preiksa

Attorney for the Personal Representative: JOSEPH D. BOWEN, WSBA #1763117631

Address for Mailing or Service: 401 South Second Street Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Published in La Conner Weekly News Dec. 20, 27, 2023 and Jan. 3, 2024.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON FOR SKAGIT COUNTY

Estate of: CONSTANCE CHARDI NO. 23-4-00643-29 NOTICE TO CREDITORS PLEASE TAKE NOTICE

The individual named below has been appointed as Personal Representative of this estate. Any person having a claim against the Decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing the claim to the Personal Representative or the Personal Representative's attorney at the address stated below, and filing the original of the claim with the Court identified herein. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) thirty days after service or mailing this Notice as provided in RCW 11.40.020(3); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of this notice. If the claim is not presented within this time frame, the claim is forever barred, except as otherwise provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective for claims against both the Decedent's probate and non-probate assets.

Date of First Publication: December 20, 2023

Cheryl Havens, Personal Representative Attorney for Personal Representative Dewey W. Weddle, WSBA #29157

Address for Mailing or Service of Claims: LAW OFFICE OF DEWEY W. WEDDLE, PLLC

909 Seventh Street Anacortes, WA 98221 Telephone: 360-293-3600

Published in La Conner Weekly News Dec. 20, 27, 2023 and Jan. 3, 2024.

SUDOKO

Weekly SUDOKU Answer

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

Super Crossword

Answers

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

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Services at La Conner United Methodist Church
601 S 2nd St (Corner of 2nd and Benton)

Christmas Eve Worship Service: 11 am on Sunday, Dec 24th
Candlelight Christmas Eve Communion: 7pm on Sunday, Dec 24th
featuring joyous Christmas music, the announcement of the Good News of Christmas, and communion offered by candlelight.

Christmas Day "Birthday Party for Jesus" Service:
11 am on Monday, Dec 25th,
followed by a **Holiday Birthday Brunch!**
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POLICE BLOTTER

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sunday, December 10
9:08 p.m. Just chillin' — Reporter called in over a concern of dogs left in a vehicle. A deputy responded and found it was two small dogs that were not in any distress and the owner had only left them while attending a dinner function. No problem. 2nd St., La Conner

Monday, December 11
8:09 p.m. Your turn — A semi dropping off equipment on Center Street had taken the corner wide and partially driven into a yard. A deputy saw this happen and contacted the driver. A case was created and the company advised they would contact the yard owner to fix the damage done to the yard. Center St., La Conner

Tuesday, December 12
11:08 a.m. KonMari time — Owner of the property wanted a

junk/abandoned vehicle removed. They were advised of the process and that they were responsible for private property abandoned vehicles. Center St., La Conner.

Friday, December 15
7:40 p.m. Quiet zone — Caller reported a dog barking excessively and wanted it checked on. A deputy drove by the area several times but did not hear the dog barking. The owner was contacted and made aware in case further complaints came in. Kamb Rd., Mount Vernon.

Saturday, December 16
4:26 p.m. Observant — Caller reported a hit and run MVA where another vehicle backed into hers while she was at work. A deputy was able to track down video of the incident and will be following up with locating the truck that did the damage. 1st St., La Conner.

Pipeline leak cleanup ongoing

By Ken Stern
 CONWAY — Some 7,000 gallons of gasoline have been recovered through Dec. 18 from the leak in the Olympic Pipeline in Conway Dec. 10. Approximately 25,000 gallons were released before the pipeline was shut down. Trace impacts from the spill have been found on one-third of a mile of shoreline of 4.4 miles examined. Response teams have placed

2,300 feet of boom north of the Fisher Slough Preserve area and lining both sides of the bank of Hill Ditch on both sides of the SR 534 bridge. Nine Hill Ditch landowners have responded for having their wells tested. There are no known impacts to recreational and tribal Dungeness crab fisheries from the leak. Water and crab samples are being taken. Updates will be generated when warranted.

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November Kiwanis Students of Month



Alex Martin

The Kiwanis Club of La Conner November High School Student of the Month is Alex Martin. Alex is a La Conner High School a senior. His favorite class is math. He enjoys playing basketball and participating in track. After graduation he would like to study to become an electrician or diesel mechanic. Alex's parents are James Washington and Bridgette Solomon.



Reese Bird

Reese Bird is the middle school Student of the Month. She is in eighth grade. She enjoys playing volleyball and basketball on the school teams. Outside of school Reese likes hanging out with friends, swimming and traveling with her family. After graduation she would like to study for a job in the medical field. Reese's parents are Nate Bird and Paige Zimmer.



Jean Jimmy John

Jean Jimmy-John is the Elementary Student of the Month. Jean is in fifth grade. Science is her favorite school subject. She participates in Swinomish cultural events and especially enjoys the dancing. In the future Jean would like to become a teacher and teach others about her culture. Her parents are Andy and Patricia John.
 Source: La Conner Kiwanis Club

Bread Puddin' Boyz deliver the goods

by John Leaver
 So, we (Bread Puddin' Boyz' (aka Bob Ferari and I) were tasked by Kathy Schuh and her employer Pat from Barrett Financial in Anacortes with delivering about 70 bread puddings to deserving and cherished clients that reside in various locales in and around Skagit, Island and Snohomish counties.



PUDDIN' BOYZ – John Leaver, left, and Bob Ferari, right, played Santa to deliver puddings across a three county region last week.
 —Photo courtesy of John Leaver

We prepared our trusty sleigh, but alas' one of the reindeer (horses) from the Mustang Motor had gone "south." Santa immediately popped the "sleigh's" hood, determined and fixed the problem and we were off on a multi-county adventure in our trusty sleigh with 290 horses. Thanks to GPS technology we were able with the great help from "Jean" and "Elvira" from Wave and Garmin to set about to track down each address and deliver the Bread Puddings!

contraire: 2 1/2 days later we completed the arduous and often comical journey dropping (not literally) the last of the Bread Puddings to a happy resident on Camano Island. Our task completed we celebrated and toasted at Pacioni's Italian restaurant in Mount Vernon. With a name like Ferari, we're not going to O'Donnell's, right? Anyway, a fun experience for

both of us leaving us both with a satisfaction that we helped bring joy, well puddin' anyway, to deserving folks across three counties. Our trusty steed has been put away for another season to come. And as the real Santa would say, "Ho Ho Ho, Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night" or as Bob Ferari would say, "Mardonna Mi."

Boys basketball

(from page 4)
 this week until tonight," Lopez said, "so we ran a lot and worked on our conditioning this week to get ready for this game with

Oakville." La Conner hosted 1B Neah Bay on Monday and visits 1A South Whidbey Friday. Oakville, located southwest of Olympia was fortunate to make the game. The Acorns bus

was caught in Friday afternoon I-5 traffic slowed by a freeway collision, delaying its arrival by 45 minutes. Pedroza and the Braves made intrastate travel seem like a walk in the park, however.

Santa is on the Way!

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