

Concrete Herald

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50 cents

Submitted photo



Santa and Mrs. Claus—a.k.a. Kevik and Marta Rensink—return to Concrete this year to celebrate Christmas.

Christmas in Concrete

In its 10th year, “Christmas in Concrete” promises a joyful time for area residents—especially the younger ones.

The festivities kick off Dec. 12 at 6 p.m. with the tree-lighting at the east end of downtown Concrete, followed by the traditional Christmas parade. Event organizer Gladys Silrus of Friends Helping Friends said the parade has few rules, but its order is one of them.

“It will start at PSE and head west, ending at the Senior Center,” she said. “The Skagit County Sheriff goes first, then the Legion, then the Eagles, then anyone else who cares to join. Santa is last—always.”

Santa is the high point of the evening. Concrete citizen Kevik Rensink will reprise his role as jolly St. Nick, with Marta, his wife, playing Mrs. Claus. They’ll be at the Concrete Senior Center, where Silrus said she expects 150 to 180 kids to arrive. Adrienne Smith will decorate the scene.

Kids will be given toys provided by Toys for Tots, as well as bags filled with peanuts and Christmas candy, courtesy of the Concrete Fire Department.

“It’ll be a magical evening,” said Silrus. Christmas events and church services are scheduled throughout eastern Skagit County. For more information, see the schedule on p. 15.

The case for buying local:

Who will you support this Christmas—and all year long?

Commentary by Jason Miller

“Buy local.” It’s a phrase that’s in danger of becoming threadbare, a cliché tossed out to guilt you into spending more money than you want to—or can. Right?

Wrong. Buying local is much more than a marketing ploy. When you open your wallet or write a check to a local business, you participate in a return on your investment that has long-term implications. Put simply, your money stays in your community; it cycles through it repeatedly, in fact.

That’s good news for local business owners, but even better news for you, actually. Because when you support your hometown stores, their doors stay open. When their doors stay open, so do your purchasing options. It’s one thing to *choose* to drive west to a big-box retailer; it’s quite another to be *forced* to do so.

See Buy Local, p. 29



Top: Sherrill Coville of Matty’s On Main in Concrete offers unique, eclectic gifts for every taste.

Middle: Betty Seguin, Merlene Buller, Karin Silvemale, and Athena Hornsby own shops in the Sauk View Plaza in Concrete.

Bottom: Dyrk Meyers is part-owner and manager Oliver-Hammer Clothing, a fixture in the downtown Sedro-Woolley business community since 1921.

First Bloom program connects kids with nature

By Patricia Blauvelt

In 2007 the National Park Foundation established First Bloom, an educational program that not only is encouraging and motivating youth to engage in outdoor

See First Bloom, p. 9



Michael Liang

WSDOT sign regs a confusing “patchwork”

By Ben Smith

Calling the Washington rules and regulations governing highway signs “a very complex patchwork,” Pat O’Leary of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Highway Advertising Control Program confirmed a “blanket prohibition on off-premises signage/advertisement on scenic highways and roads off of them.”

O’Leary’s comments came after 26 certified letters from WSDOT went out to owners of advertising signs along

See WSDOT, p. 26

Published the first Wednesday of each month

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**Between a creek and a hard place:
Few options after missing “fish window”** See p. 11.



Concrete Herald

The Voice of Eastern Skagit County

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Editorial

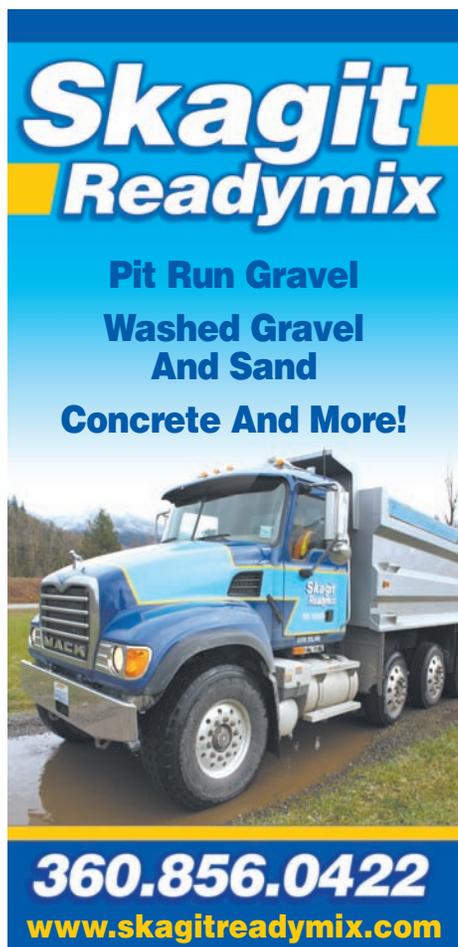
The Nov. 17 meeting regarding Rockport State Park delivered something that citizens of eastern Skagit County haven't felt on that front for more than a year: hope.

Project leader Derek Gustafson and several colleagues laid out a preliminary recommendation that demonstrated careful thought, recognition of obvious financial restraints, and, most importantly, that Washington State Parks obviously had listened to the feedback of east Skagit citizens. (See report, p. 20.)

While the preliminary recommendation is exactly what the name implies, this is a step in the right direction after more than a year of frustrating delays.

The Parks and Recreation Commission will rule on the recommendation during its March 11, 2010, meeting in Tacoma. I'll let you know how you can make your voice heard during that meeting and keep you posted on the Commission's ruling.

—J.K.M.



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Opinion

Letters to the editor

Hometown police build community

I saw firsthand the transformation of Duvall when it got its first police department some 25 years ago.

The adequate and admirable Skagit Sheriff's office offers 80 hours and 10-minute responses, but these are no substitute for hometown peace officers. (How long since anyone heard that terminology?)

Think about the effect of seeing the same friendly faces in uniform year in and year out, officers who bother to learn the names of the locals and who are dedicated to finding creative ways to increase community mindedness while enforcing the law.

They can help energize and socialize the youngsters, offering regular fun activities like shooting hoops with off-duty officers for the older kids and other age-appropriate fun for younger ones year-round. This helps counter the age-old complaint of "nothing to do," while giving tomorrow's adults a positive connection with officers and less the mindset for vandalism or worse.

Retaining officers for the long run requires a little creative thinking, but there are incentives beyond the reasonable paycheck, such as the personal use of squad cars (which also increases police visibility).

Concrete could borrow a page from the books of small towns trying to attract doctors. Some of these provide free housing. With real estate cheap now, maybe several houses could be acquired or donated as a tax write-off or bequest.

Reinstituting its own police department—with mature, well-educated and well-trained officers who are on board for community building—is one of few options for Concrete that would really change for the better the town's mental and emotional nature and its view of itself.

Lynn McMillan
Concrete

Note of gratitude to firefighters

My hat is off to our volunteer upriver fire departments. On Oct. 26, I came home to a second-floor fire in our Rockport home. Our home was saved, losing all contents and belongings of only one

bedroom.

This summer, our volunteers attended a three-month Fire Academy training (*Concrete Herald*, October), during which they learned to use new, high-tech devices to enter burning buildings, fighting fires from inside and out. It has made all the difference in the way they are able to fight fires. Their teamwork and success was amazing to watch.

Afterward, they were like children winning their first football game, knowing that all their devoted hard work and having the proper tools and training had paid off and improved their ability to fight fires, saving lives and homes.

You never realize what's involved until it happens to you. These men and women are amazing, unconditionally volunteering their time, at any given moment, to aid during a time of personal disaster. I cannot thank them enough for their devoted, honorable, and sincere hard work they put forth to better our community.

Please donate to support your local fire department. They need our help, to help us all.

Sandy Bares
Rockport

Hwy 20 signage: Time to revisit past promises?

Your editorial in the November issue of *Concrete Herald* prompted me to look up a documentary video I made in 1988 about the restrictive sign laws on Highway 20. I presented this video at a meeting between Walter Ames, then of DOT's outdoor advertising division, State Representative Mary Margaret Haugen, and concerned business owners from the Upper Skagit. We learned at this meeting that when Highway 20 first opened, businesses in Rockport were allowed to have signs on it and they were very busy.

See Letters, p. 3

Letters policy

Letters of 150 words or fewer may be sent to Concrete Herald, P.O. Box 682, Concrete, WA 98237 or e-mailed to letters@concrete-herald.com. Writers must include their name and town or community for publication, plus a daytime telephone number for confirmation purposes. *Concrete Herald* reserves the right to edit letters for length, clarity, accuracy, spelling, grammar, and potentially libelous statements. So be nice.

Letters, cont. from p. 2

Then, as soon as the State Highway Department started enforcing “federal laws on scenic highways passed in 1971,” the Rockport businesses were told to remove their signs from the highway and business plummeted.

As a result of this meeting, Marblemount gained the sign at its entrance stating, “Last Full Service Stop for 89 miles” and Rep. Haugen said that she would be “willing to work on legislature if necessary to correct some of the barriers business owners have faced since the Scenic Vistas Act of 1971” (*Concrete Herald*, July 21, 1988). Since Senator Haugen is now Chairwoman for the Senate Transportation Committee, maybe it would be beneficial to approach her on this subject again.

Nicola Murray
Sauk City

Thanks from SWCTS

Sedro-Woolley Community Troop Support (SWCTS) thanks everyone who made this year’s drive successful. We are sending more than 120 care packages to men and women serving overseas this holiday season, and it couldn’t have been done without the generosity of local businesses and community members who have supported our efforts.

Thank you, Rockport Shell Country Market, East Skagit Community Resource Center, Albert’s Red Apple Market, Hamilton Market & Café, Lyman Town Hall and library, Cascade Mercantile, Old Mill Restaurant, Hamilton First Baptist Church, For the Love of Learning Daycare, HFBC TeamKids, Sedro-Woolley School District schools, Sedro-Woolley Farmer’s Supply, North Coast Credit Union, Wholesale Sports, Common Ground Coffee House, Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion, Clear Lake Fire Department, Snelson, *Concrete Herald*, *Argus*, *Courier-Times*, KAPS radio, Janicki Industries, KBRC radio, Skagit Readymix, Angel of the Wind Casino, The Skagit Casino, Swinomish Northern Lights Casino, Tulalip Casino, Mike Gubrud Farmers Insurance agency, Evergreen Girl Scouts troop #43120, Say Never band, Inner Octave band, Twiddy and the Argonauts band, Deluxe Goodness band, Soroptimist International of Sedro-Woolley, Sedro-Woolley Rotary, COHO Liquidations, and Strawberry Bay Coffee Company. Special thanks also to those who helped with our Drop-Off Day: Jack Aldridge for bringing his logging truck; Erin Greene for face painting; Joe Flood, Anthony Pineda, and

Dave Oxyer, who took turns being Santa for the event; helpers Georgia Rusch, Patty Walker, Colleen Rutledge, Connie Lance, Marilyn Pineda, Sherry Kelly, Wendi Dembowski, Kayleen Forbes, Erik Greene, Will Whiton, Samantha Pineda, Joshua Oxyer; and all our volunteers and staff from Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion and manager Bob Carter. We also want to welcome our newest liaisons, Kathy Schmidt for Burlington and Elaine Kohler, handling our correspondence.

We appreciate all the hard work, donations and efforts put forth this year from everyone. Without each and every one of you we could not do as much as we do to send care packages to the soldiers serving overseas.

Sedro-Woolley Community Troop Support

Eagle-watching opportunities

Eagle Watchers enters its 17th season of stewardship this year.

The popular volunteer program, a partnership between Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and North Cascades Institute, helps manage and assist visitors to the Skagit River who to view the bald eagles that arrive to take advantage of the winter salmon run.

This year, Eagle Watchers will be stationed on weekends at three sites on the Skagit River, from Dec. 26, 2009, through Jan. 31, 2010.

Working as educators, volunteers provide information about eagles, salmon and the Skagit River at outdoor information tables set up along SR 20.

Volunteers will be outfitted with binoculars and spotting scopes to give visitors an up-close look at the magnificent birds in their natural habitat.

The Eagle Watchers program educates the public about respectful wildlife watching and provides access to viewing locations that are on public land, have safe parking, and create only minimal disturbance to feeding eagles.

The Skagit River system has one of the largest wintering populations of bald eagles in the lower 48 states, one of the “outstandingly remarkable” values for which the river was designated under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Bald eagle viewing along the upper Skagit River has increased dramatically in the past 10 years. In a typical winter season, 3,500 rafters, 1,000 anglers, and more than 10,000 people visit to view eagles.

For more details, contact the Mt. Baker Ranger District at 360.856.5700.

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Skagit Land Trust appreciates the support from Puget Sound Energy in helping us to conserve and manage cherished local lands for the benefit of all generations.

Molly Doran
Executive Director
Skagit Land Trust
Mount Vernon
(pictured far right, with staff and volunteers)

Puget Sound Energy thanks Skagit Land Trust and its volunteers for conserving more than 5,500 acres of wildlife habitat, wetlands, farm and forest lands, scenic landscapes and shorelines in Skagit County. People and wildlife will benefit now and in the future from this stewardship. PSE is honored to contribute to these efforts. We encourage others to join in preserving Skagit County’s natural heritage.

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Celebrations

Jim and Carol Bates mark 60 years of marriage

James A. Bates and Carol Bernice Robb-Bates will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Dec. 23.

They were married in a Methodist church in Hardin, Mont., in 1949, during a snowstorm with 18 inches of snow.

During their time together, Jim has worked on the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad; oil drilling rigs; milking cows; washing clothes at Sedro-Woolley Laundry, the Mount Vernon Laundry, and Northern State Hospital; cutting wood; and at the refineries. He operated a mobile butcher truck for 17 years with his son, Timothy, and raised red Angus cattle.

Carol ran a daycare in Gillette; worked at Sears; waited tables in several places; worked at United General Hospital for seven years; cut and wrapped meat with their son, Nicholis, for 17 years; and finally retired from Seattle Film Works at the age of 70, after missing only one day in 11 years of service.

The Bateses have four children, 10 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, and a great-great-grandchild due to arrive in April 2010.

"We now stay home and do a lot of canning and making jelly for the grandchildren and great-grandchildren," said Carol. "We also do genealogy and raise a couple head of beef to butcher."

Because of Jim's health and the flu and colds going around, the Bateses plan no party, but add that drop-ins are welcome.

"The coffee pot is always on," said Carol.



James and Carol Bates in October 1950.

7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. If you're looking for authentic Texas barbecue, you know where to go.

At the regular Council meeting Nov. 23, our **Mayor Judd Wilson** quietly announced that he was doing some fence repair work for CalPortland on his own time, and that in return, CalPortland will donate his fee—more than \$300—toward the 2010 season of townwide movies in the park.

A sad farewell to my friend **Jean Johnson**, who is retiring with her husband, Steve, and leaving for sunnier climes. Jean has left her position of branch manager at Summit Bank in Concrete. Rockport citizen **Philip Moran**, however, has come out of retirement and accepted the position of assistant vice president and branch manager of the of the Concrete branch. Philip had been at the State Bank of Concrete (later acquired by Summit Bank) and had retired in October 1996.

THIS AND THAT

By J.K.M.

Best wishes go to **Michael and Diana Apple**, who will have to pull up stakes and close **Rainy Day Books** on Dec. 20, maybe sooner. It all depends on how quickly they can sell off their inventory. The Apples pass along their deep gratitude for their loyal customers, and say they are very sorry they'll have to leave our community.

On a brighter note, a hearty welcome goes to Robert and Heather Denny, who opened **Que Car BBQ** in Marblemount this past September. They're located in that cool rail car between the Shell station and Buffalo Run Restaurant, and are open Sat. through Tues.,

"Elf Store" still open

The Gift Avenue (a.k.a. Elf Store or Santa's Workshop) is still open for teachers to bring their classes in at designated times to shop for their family members.

Items are priced from 50 cents to \$20. Most items are under \$5. Children will get a letter to bring home telling them the time and an envelope with a budget on it to help the child shop. A 6-ft. stocking will be raffled off for 50 per ticket.

The store opened Nov. 30 and will run through Dec. 4. Hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Purchased items will be wrapped in individual bags to bring home.

To volunteer in the store or for more information, call PTO president Debbie Ross at 360.826.3135.

Imagine Concrete task forces need YOU

Imagine Concrete task forces have formed to actively address the five initiatives that were identified during the two visioning workshops earlier this year. **New members are welcome!**

The goal of the task forces is transform ideas into action. They will report to the steering committee, which will report to the Concrete Town Council.

The task forces meet in tandem with the steering committee. Everyone is invited to join these meetings, which occur on the second Wednesday of each month. The next meeting is Wed., Dec. 9, at 6 p.m., at the Airport Lounge. For more information, call Jason Miller at 360.853.8213.

BOSS Construction drops Concrete lawsuit

Bellingham-based BOSS Construction has decided to take the mediation route with regard to its disputed wastewater treatment plant construction contract with Town of Concrete. Mediation proceedings are scheduled to take place Jan. 12, 2010.

The initial decision to mediate came before the Town was served with the lawsuit on Oct. 16. The lawsuit was actually filed with Skagit County Superior Court on Aug. 27, after BOSS had told Town of Concrete officials that it would enter into mediation.

During the Concrete Town Council meeting on Nov. 23, Mayor Judd Wilson reported he'd had a conversation with Tim Hart from BOSS, during which Hart agreed to drop the lawsuit.

The mediation proceedings will require at least one Council member to be present, as well as Town officials and its attorney.

American Legion Post and Auxiliary announce new meeting time

The American Legion Post No. 132 and Auxiliary in Concrete has adjusted its meeting time.

Meetings will be held the second Tuesday of each month, at 5:30 p.m., at the club, located at 45952 Main Street, downtown Concrete.



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Postal news

Packaging for the holidays

By Kathy Watson

Every holiday season, insufficient, incorrect, or illegible addresses send too many gifts to the land of lost toys instead of to their intended recipients.

The first rule of addressing a package is to place a card showing the name, address, and phone number for the sender and the addressee inside the parcel. Next, remove or cross out any old labels, especially if they have barcodes. Clearly print return and delivery addresses with full first and last names. (A package addressed "Grandma" with an incorrect address most likely will not reach its destination).

For international mail, be sure that you have filled out the customs forms completely and accurately, listing each item separately with quantity, weight, and value. Some foreign addresses follow a different format than we are used to. The last line of the address is always the complete country name in English—no abbreviations—and must be written in capital letters, like this:

Mrs. Jane Doe
1010 Ocean St.
Ottawa, ON K1A0B1
CANADA

Help the letter carriers

It is hard to stay ahead of the bad weather; snow and ice always seems to know when we have other plans or just want to stay inside to be warm and toasty. But when bad weather hits, it's important to act. We all owe it to our family, neighbors and the letter carriers to make sure our property is safe and accessible.

This means keeping walkways and the approach to the mailbox clear of snow, so that the carrier can provide the best possible service even in the worst weather, without risk of injury. With your help, the Postal Service can provide you with uninterrupted service.

Got questions?

Many postal questions can be answered online at www.usps.com. Find a ZIP code, calculate postage, print shipping labels and customs forms, purchase stamps, and order free Priority shipping supplies.

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Eagles Christmas Party

The Concrete Eagles Annual Children's Christmas Party and Store is scheduled for Sat., Dec. 12, from noon to 3 p.m., at the Concrete Eagles building, 45930 Main St., Concrete.

Children will be able to make ornaments, decorate cookies, make Christmas cards, and create a variety of crafts. The Christmas Store will be open again this year, and, of course, Santa will be there too.

All children are encouraged to bring their piggy banks and do their shopping for the whole family. There will be lots of Santa Helpers to help them wrap their gifts.

Each child will get a bag of treats from Santa, plus hot dogs and a beverage. Parents need to accompany their children.

To volunteer or donate, please contact Mary McFadden at 360.853.8611.

Raffle to support Senior Center

The Concrete Senior Center is holding a Basket Raffle to raise funds for Center programming. Tickets are \$1 for two, and may be purchased at the Senior Center. Two winners will be drawn, with the first winner getting to choose between a "Coffee" or "Hot Chocolate" Basket.

The drawing will be held Dec. 18.



Concrete Senior Center Coordinator Sara Pritchard holds the raffle prizes: two gift baskets that two lucky winners will receive when their names are drawn Dec. 18.

Concrete Herald
The Voice of Eastern Skagit County

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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5th-graders in "Pippi"

Two young actors made their stage debut in the local children's production of "Pippi Longstocking" at McIntyre Hall in Mt. Vernon.

Jacelyn Kuipers and Treyton Howell, 5th graders at Concrete Elementary, auditioned for META's fall production in August. After three months of rehearsals, they finally arrived onstage as they performed eleven times from Nov. 20-30.

Jacelyn was onstage as a school child and a circus attendant, while Treyton's roles included a pirate, villager, circus hand and a part in the dream chorus. The highlight of their stage time included performing in front of their teachers and classmates on the Nov. 24, as Ms. Mapes and Mr. Thompson accompanied their 5th-grade classes to watch the school performance for a field trip.

META's spring performance will be

"Annie." If you want to audition, go to META's Web site for more details: www.metaperformingarts.org.



Concrete 5th-graders Treyton Howell and Jacelyn Kuipers pose with Adele Clark, 11, of Bow, who played Pippi. Photo by Brooke Howell.

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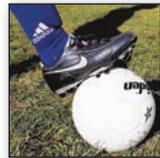
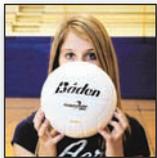
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Sports



Mighty Pee Wees win championship!

By Jason Miller

On Nov. 15, the Pee Wee football team from Concrete made history, taking, for the first time, the Valley Division Pee Wee championship in the North Cascade Youth Football League (NCYFL).

This is only the second time since the late 1980s that a youth football team from Concrete has taken home the Super Bowl trophy. In 2005, the Junior team won.

Victory is always sweet, but this time it had a special taste, said Head Coach Shile Magee, who teamed with Assistant Coach Taylor Nybo to lead the Pee Wees into the winner's circle. With their first game of the three-game series won because of a Darrington forfeit, the Pee Wees faced South Whidbey, the No. 1 seed, and trounced them 31-18.

In the championship game they battled Lakewood, the No. 2 seed, and beat them 8-6.

"In the regular season, we lost to both Lakewood and South Whidbey. We played Lakewood twice during the season—and

lost to them twice," said Magee. "That's why taking the championship was so cool. We went in as the fourth seed, basically the lowest team on the totem pole, and then beat the two teams we lost to during the regular season," he said.

The championship game was a defensive battle, with Concrete scoring first, said Magee. Shayne Luttrell scored the Pee Wees' sole touchdown, with Ryan Dopkus kicking the PAT, which added two points (Pee Wee rules give one point for running in a PAT and two points for kicking a field goal).

A game ball later went to Levi Lowry, who was named defensive player of the Championship game.

A fighting chance

The league divided teams a little differently this year, said Chad Clark, NCYFL president. "They put the smaller schools into our own division, which gave

See Pee Wees, p. 29



Led by Head Coach Shile Magee and Assistant Coach Taylor Nybo, along with team wives Dani Magee and Sarah Dinkins, Concrete's Pee Wee football team took it all this year. The stars of the show are Shayne Luttrell, Tyler Coffell, Hayden O'Neil, Wyatt Magee, Kaden Becker, Marshall Fichter, Evan Cleland, Ryan Dopkus, Austin Thompson, Dalton Newby, Haden Smith, Jacob Hadaway, Peyton Sanchez, Tyler Day, Levi Lowry, Brandon Hopkins, Brent Wicker, Seth Martinez, Hunter Olmstead, Shawn Powell, and Corbin Coggins. *Photo by Becky Luttrell.*

Lions make state playoffs appearance

By Brooke Howell

After ending the regular season with a dominating win over archrival Darrington, the Lions fell in the first round of the state playoffs to the Willapa Valley Vikings at Tumwater District Stadium to end their season with a record of 6 wins and 5 losses.

In week 10, the Lions handled the Loggers in every way as they beat

them 35-0 to avenge 2008's split with Darrington where the Lions beat the Loggers in Darrington, but lost to them at home. Squeaking out a win in the first "Saws and Claws" by a score of 34-27, the Lions ran at Darrington every which way in the second "Saws and Claws" battle.

See Football, p. 29



Lions quarterback Tyler Clark barely gets rid of the ball as Willapa Valley Vikings close in during the Lions' Nov. 14 playoff game in Tumwater District Stadium. *Photo by Kevin D. Miller Photography.*

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2009 Awards Banquet honorees

Special awards were given to the following football players during the Nov. 23 ceremony:

Captain: Greg McIntosh

Most Valuable Player: Kyler Howell

Best Blocker: James Martin

Best Tackler: Tyler Clark

Coaches Award: Uriah Kast

Super Scout Team Award: Chris Phillips

NW 2B All-League Awards

1st Team Offense: Kyler Howell, Running Back; James Martin, Offensive Line; Uriah Kast, Offensive Line; Tyler Kales, Offense

Honorable Mention: James Johnson, Tight End; Will Stidman, Offensive Line

1st Team Defense: Tyler Clark, Linebacker

2nd Team Defense: Kyler Howell, Linebacker; James Martin, Defensive Line; Greg McIntosh, Defensive Back

Honorable Mention: Uriah Kast, Linebacker; Tyler Kales, Defensive Back; Scott Rice, Defensive Line

Men's basketball revs up for season

By Chad Dinkins, head coach

Led by Head Coach Chad Dinkins and Assistant Coach Jesse Howell, the Men's basketball team hopes to improve on last year's 4-15 record.

Top returners are Greg McIntosh (sr), James Johnson (sr), Kyler Howell (jr), and Tyler Clark (so).

Top newcomers include Aiden Walsh (so) and Jake Massingale (so).

Strengths: The Lions top four can compete with any of the top four in the league. Johnson is one of the biggest players in the league and should provide an inside scoring threat for the Lions that has not existed in a few years.

McIntosh, Howell, and Clark create a great trio of guards that can all shoot and get to the rim off the dribble. Look for Clark to be one of the top five players in the league this year.

Weaknesses: Basketball is a power-by-numbers game. This allows teams to practice with numerous amounts of combinations and develops depth on the bench. The Lions lack depth and experience at the depth they do have coming off the bench. If Walsh and Massingale can develop as players and are able to compete at the Varsity level as sophomores, the Lions will be a solid squad throughout the season.

See Men's Basketball, p. 31

Men's Basketball schedule

| Date | Opponent | Event location | Time (JV/V) |
|--------|------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 12.1 | Blaine | Concrete | 5/7 |
| 12.3 | Meridian | Meridian | 5/7 |
| 12.5 | Crosspoint Academy | Concrete | 3/1 |
| 12.8 | Nooksack Valley | Concrete | 5:30/7 |
| 12.15 | Orcas Island | Orcas Island | 5/3:30 |
| 12.18 | Darrington | Concrete | 4:30/7:30 |
| 12.19 | University Prep | Concrete | 1/3 |
| 12.28 | Willapa Valley Tourney | Willapa Valley | TBD |
| 12.29 | Willapa Valley Tourney | Willapa Valley | TBD |
| 1.5.10 | Mt. Vernon Sophomores | Concrete | 6 |

Athletes of the Month



Athletes of the Month are Taylor Lee and Kyler Howell.

Taylor Lee is a senior forward/striker and midfield soccer player who was named First Team All-League and MVP for this year's team. Kyler Howell is a junior running back who was named the football team's MVP this year and also was named twice for the Northwest 2B All League Awards: as a running back for the First Team Offense, and as a linebacker for the Second Team Defense. Taylor and Kyler were selected by Concrete Lions Booster Club members based on their leadership, being team players, and demonstrating sportsmanship and character.

Women's basketball greets full roster

By Chad Dinkins

In his 11th year, Women's Basketball Head Coach Kevik Rensink pairs with Assistant Coach Matthew Williams to make a strong showing this year. Last year's record was 6-12.

Top returners are Taylor Lee (sr), Ashley Johnson (sr), Consuelo Casteneda (sr), and Martha Schoolland (jr).

Top newcomers are Megan Rogge (jr), Brooke Lee (so), Lonna Lloyd (so), and Jessica Filtz (fr).

Strengths: Lots of players (24). The Concrete Girls Basketball team is known for being fast, athletic, and scrappy, and will be forced to go deeper into their bench this year than in previous years. They rely heavily on defense, rebounding, and converting from the freethrow line. The Lady Lions will look to turn up the pressure on opponents this year with a relentless and aggressive style of play. Returning from an ACL injury that kept her out most of last season, Taylor Lee will be the cornerstone on which the team will build its defense.

Weakness: Experience. The Lady Lions lost four starters from last year's squad, including returning starting point guard, Kelsey Barnett, to an ACL injury from soccer. The total

number of players who have substantial varsity minutes are few; however, the eagerness and excitement of the younger players should help to make up for it.

Season outlook: The Lady Lions are coming off a summer filled with a ton of basketball, fun, and anticipation. Eighteen of the 24 players are underclassmen; already they have bought into the program. This is huge and should make for an easier transition into practice and games, where some of the younger girls will be asked to play major varsity minutes.

Orcas Island, La Conner, and Darrington are extremely tough competitors, and will enter the season as the league favorites for clinching the three available district playoff spots. Orcas Island and La Conner are coming off seasons in which they

See Women's Basketball, p. 29

Women's Basketball schedule

| Date | Opponent | Event location | Time (JV/V) |
|-------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 12.1 | Coupeville | Concrete | 5 |
| 12.3 | Meridian | Concrete | 5/7 |
| 12.5 | Crosspoint Academy | Concrete | --/3 |
| 12.9 | Blaine | Blaine | 5:15/7 |
| 12.10 | Highland Christian | Highland Christian | TBD |
| 12.15 | Orcas | Orcas | 3:30/5 |
| 12.18 | Darrington | Concrete | 4:30/6 |
| 12.19 | University Prep | Concrete | 3/1 |
| 12.28 | Willapa Valley Tourney | Willapa | TBD |
| 12.29 | Willapa Valley Tourney | Willapa | TBD |

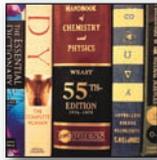


The Concrete Lady Lions basketball team huddles up with Head Coach Kevik Rensink and Assistant Coach Matt Williams during a Nov. 27 practice.

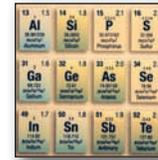
Concrete wrestlers enter season with match against Lakewood

Wrestling schedule

| Date | Opponent | Event location | Time |
|--------|--------------------------|--------------------|------|
| 12.3 | Lakewood | Lakewood | 6 |
| 12.5 | P.I.T. Tournament | Omak | 10 |
| 12.10 | Darrington/La Conner | Darrington | 5 |
| 12.12 | Bellevue Christian | Bellevue Christian | 10 |
| 12.14 | Nooksack | Concrete | 6 |
| 12.18 | Tacoma Baptist/Chief Les | Tacoma | 5 |
| 12.19 | Wahkiakum Tournament | Wahkiakum | TBD |
| 1.2.10 | Castle Rock | Castle Rock | 10 |
| 1.7 | Friday Harbor | Friday Harbor | 5 |



Academics



Concrete PTO notes

By Debbie Ross, president

First, a **reminder** to keep bringing in box tops, Albert's Red Apple Market receipts, and Campbell's soup labels.

Winter break runs Dec. 23 through Jan. 3. Back to school on Jan. 4.

Our next **PTO meeting** will be held in the library, Dec. 9, at 6:30 p.m.; our Dec. 10 meeting is at 2:45 p.m.

School Board meeting announcement

The Concrete School Board will hold its next regular board meeting will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 16, at 7 p.m., in the high school library. No work session is planned for this month, because of the holidays.

New board members: Bill Thompson replaces Lucy Claybo. Gladys Silrus is currently in Vince Hedrick's position. Crissie Wilson replaces Ed Rogge.

Clear Lake Elementary School news

From the principal:

A big thanks goes out to the parent group for a wonderful **Harvest Festival**. The evening affirmed how important family and community involvement is to our students.

Henk Kruithof, principal

Please help support the annual **Transportation Food Drive**. Canned items and other staples will be collected now through Dec. 15 at school. The class that brings in the most items will get ice cream sundaes. See the info box on the Clear Lake page of this issue (p. 10) for more information. Thank you for your support of our school families.

The Sedro-Woolley **Winter Sports Club** skiing and snowboarding program begins Jan. 9, 2010. Application forms are now available in the office. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served

basis for the first 75 participants who submit payment with their application. Fifth- and 6th-graders must have a buddy to participate, and need to be independent and responsible.

The 17th annual **Clear Lake Elementary Winter Craft Bazaar** is coming Sat., Dec. 5, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Mrs. Malone's sixth-grade class will sell lunch items as a fundraiser for Camp Orkila, including Ms. Becky's homemade chicken noodle soup!

Immunizations and information updates

Keep your child—and others' children—safe and healthy this school year.

Consult with your child's health care provider for administration of any recommended or required immunizations before the first day of school.

For a list of vaccines required for school attendance, grades K–12, for the 2009–10

school year, go to www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/schools/vaccine.htm, then go to the "kindergarten–12th grade attendance" link and click on "2009–10 vaccines required for school attendance."

Also, please contact your child's school office with any updated phone numbers or emergency contacts so administrators can promptly contact families in case of emergency.

Nurse Jenn with the Sedro-Woolley School District adds:

Remember the best line of defense to guard you and your family from illness is to practice good hand washing.

Please keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or do not have signs of fever without using fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen.

This will not only help reduce the number of people who may become infected, but will also help your child recover fully.

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

CHS grad and private chef Drew Jackson would tell you who he works for, but he'd have to kill you.

By Jason Miller

Don't ask Drew Jackson who he cooks for these days. He won't tell you. The Los Angeles-based private chef says that discretion is just as important as ability in this specialized career.

Okay, fine. But trust me, he mentioned enough names during his interview for me to be impressed. One name sits on the Fortune 400 list. Another is a favorite musician of mine. And one—no, make that two—are total babes who regularly melt me from the covers of People magazine and other tabloids.

Nice work if you can get it. And Jackson has managed to do so at the age of 32.

The son of Dan and Maureen Royal of Birdview, Jackson spent most of his life in Rockport and graduated from Concrete High in 1995, after years spent munching burgers and washing dishes at the restaurant where Dan cooked at the time, as well as at the Red Robin in Burlington. "That's how I got started," he says.

After graduating from high school, Jackson stayed in the area for a couple years, then attended the Culinary Institute

of America in St. Helen, California. He worked at different restaurants around

See Chef, p. 31



Submitted photo

First Bloom, cont. from p. 1

experiences, but also preparing youth to act as caretakers of our natural world for years to come. During the past two years, First Bloom has caught on like wild fires and spread from five cities in early 2008 to its present involvement of 26 National Parks. This past year, The National Park Foundation awarded First Bloom funding to North Cascades National Park and a chosen local community partner. North Cascades National Park has partnered with WSU Extension in Skagit County, primarily with Concrete Elementary School's citizen-based 4-H club.

Connect and bond

First Bloom is offered to 4th- through 6th-grade youths and encourages awareness and commitment to the core learning areas of national parks, conservation, native plants, and stewardship. Outings are held at least once a month and consist of hands-on educational activities that prepare youth for the end goal of organizing a native landscape at a national park.

The goals of First Bloom are to:

- Connect kids to the outdoors
- Bond children to their national parks
- Organize native plantings that educate visitors and enhance their experiences
- Build the next generation of outdoors enthusiasts and stewards

Why native plants?

A native plant is one that occurs in a particular region, ecosystem, and habitat without direct or indirect human actions. It is estimated that nearly 25 percent of the 20,000 native plant species in North America are at risk of extinction. Using native plants can help to reverse the trend of species loss.

First Bloom in the Skagit Valley

The 15 participating youth from Concrete Elementary School have voluntarily committed to the mission of First Bloom and are enthused and eager to rise above suggested program goals. The First Bloom core group intends to design, create, and implement a native plant garden not only at North Cascades National Park, but also within their community at Concrete Elementary school.

Partner Project Lead Jennie McGuigan wants the participating kids to "complete the program goals, as well as establish enthusiasm for plants, for one another, and for the gardens they will create and build together. I want them to take ownership of their work and see their beautiful gardens in their community and national park."

Since September, McGuigan and Marieke Slovin, Park Project Lead and Ranger at North Cascades National Park,

have been organizing and facilitating First Bloom outings at Concrete Elementary School, North Cascades National Park, and several natural areas in-between. McGuigan and Slovin have been so enthusiastic about the program that they have scheduled several outings per month, including six full-day trips, since September.

Activities focus on the four learning areas of First Bloom: national parks, conservation, native plants, and stewardship. Recently, the core group has participated in salvaging plants in Concrete, as well as at Diablo Lake Overlook, collecting seeds on interpretive walks, plant identification, lessons on soil and its interaction with plants, and necessary food for plants. An activity involving plant identification is scheduled for December; core group members will identify plants, press them into clay, and create their own wind chimes.

The New Year brings a focus on native plants. Working to ensure that the importance of native plants is recognized by core group members, McGuigan and Slovin have planned upcoming lessons and activities that involve the making of salves, how plants fit into our everyday lives, and the culture and significance of native plants within Washington and the Skagit Valley.

Participating in First Bloom

The First Bloom program of Skagit Valley is allowing students in 4th through 6th grade to join classes and activities on a roll-in basis until otherwise noted. Please contact Jennie McGuigan at 360.708.7214.



Michael Brondi shows First Bloomers Isaac Tiemens (in back) and Brandon Pratt how to properly salvage native plant Bunchgrass. This plant will live at the native plant nursery in Marblemount and will be planted in the First Bloom garden at the Diablo Lake Overlook in April 2010. *Photo by Michael Liang.*



Michael Brondi (center), native plant nursery manager and horticulturalist for North Cascades National Park, introduces First Bloomers to native plants that will be planted in fragile ecosystems in the park to help restore habitats that have been affected. Joining him are, from left to right, Allijah Gastelum, Juliana Wood, Brandon Roberts, Cameron Herauf, Brandon Pratt, Jennie McGuigan (Project Lead WSU/4-H), Brondi, Isaac Tiemens, Marieke Slovin (Project Lead NPS). *Photo by Michael Liang.*

Life after First Bloom

North Cascades National Park has partnered with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) to offer a year-long watershed program for 7th- and

8th-graders. McGuigan and Slovin say they would love to see 7th- and 8th-grade students interacting and mentoring 4th- and 6th-grade First Bloom participants as they move through the program.

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Clear Lake



Community Dinner draws 400 diners, connects friends

Annual event served up 24 turkeys with all the fixings, held at three Clear Lake locations Nov. 21

By Sylvia Matterand and Katharine Schmidt

Sunday, Nov. 21, Clear Lake Community Connection hosted its 4th Annual Community Dinner.

The progressive dinner started with a course of green bean casserole and salads, prepared by the Clear Lake Historical Association at their hall.

Next came a meal of turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce, and rolls, served at the Clear Lake Community Covenant Church. Twenty-four turkeys were prepared and meals served to more than 400 guests.

Dessert was served in the Clear Lake Elementary cafeteria by Clear Lake First Baptist church members.

In spite of rainy weather, a good crowd of Clear Lake residents came out for a fun time to visit with friends old and new.

The Clear Lake Fire Department provided extra lighting and delivered dinners to those unable to attend. They also paid the postage on the invitations. Clear Lake Elementary offered their ovens to cook all those turkeys.

Clear Lake Community Connection thanks the following groups and people for their help to make this dinner a success: Allen Grenz of OASYS, John Batts, Shannon Cooper and Harley Draper of Day Creek Chapel, Holiday Inn, Jim and Ann Farrington, Zach Schmidt, Karen and Jeff Jansma of Jansma Industries, and all the volunteers of Clear Lake Community Connection for continuing to provide this annual, community-building event.



Above: Preparing the main course inside Clear Lake Covenant Church, and having a great time doing it! Shown left to right are Jessica Owen, Rhonda Owen, Karen Wilson, Sharon Hall, and Cindy LaBore.

Photo by Zachary Schmidt.

Top right: The dining area in the Clear Lake Community Covenant Church. *Photo by Jim Farrington.*

Below: The Historical Association Hall lies waiting for diners. *Photo by Zachary Schmidt.*



Above: Loren Sande and Jacquie Turner prepare hors d'oeuvres in the Historical Association Hall.

Photo by Zachary Schmidt.



To volunteer for KSVU call 416-7001

To sponsor KSVU call 416-7711

Volunteer correspondents are needed for Clear Lake!

Want to write short updates, or simply provide news tips about Clear Lake for *Concrete Herald*?

Contact publisher and editor
Jason Miller:

360.853.8213

editor@concrete-herald.com

Annual Canned Food Drive

Please help support the annual Transportation Food Drive. Canned items and other staples will be collected through December 15 at Clear Lake Elementary School.

- Donation suggestions:
- Bag of flour or sugar
- Pack of toilet paper or paper towels
- Clorox or similar disinfecting wipes
- Package of bar soap or hotel samples
- Shampoo and/or conditioner
- Canned soup, pasta noodles
- Cereal or oatmeal
- Aluminum foil or plastic wrap

It's time to give back to our community!

Between a creek and a hard place

Concrete citizen fears his property's value will plummet

By Jason Miller

Bill Chamness has a problem with water. His property, located at 7639 S. Superior Ave. in Concrete, has a neighbor that doesn't respect his boundaries.

Lorenzen Creek runs through a shallow channel along the northern edge of Chamness' eight acres. The land here is nearly flat, causing the creek to travel at an almost imperceptible pace and allowing any silt in the water to settle out and fill the channel.

That's exactly what happened last winter, when above-average levels of snow, warmth, and rain combined to flood areas usually safe from such events.

Chamness' property was one such area. Burdened with silt from a Burpee Hill mudslide, Lorenzen Creek made its way to Chamness' flat land, slowed down, dropped its silt, overflowed its channel, and let itself into Chamness' home.

"I didn't care so much about the buildings on my property; but now I'm concerned that the property itself will be left unusable for future development," said Chamness. He is trying to sell the property, which has been in his family for decades.

Missed opportunity

Chamness appeared before the Concrete Town Council in early 2009, informing them of his situation and saying he'd begun a conversation with Wendy Cole, an area habitat biologist for the Department of Fisheries.

From Concrete officials' perspective, dredging the creek at the point where it entered Chamness' property seemed a logical solution, since it had been done in the past.

Not necessarily, said Cole, who noted the salmon and cutthroat trout present in the creek, and told Mayor Judd Wilson and Public Works Director Alan Wilkins that any dredging—a short-term solution at best—would have to be done in a carefully prescribed manner and during a "fish window" from July 1 through Oct. 15, when the number of fish present in the creek were at their lowest point.

Town officials missed that window this year and pressed Cole to let them dredge this fall, a position that brought Cole to



This Nov. 18 photo shows the southwest corner of Bill Chamness' property after Lorenzen Creek rose and rerouted itself to flow south (instead of west) from the northeast corner of the property. The creek eventually turned west again and ended up here, causing a large pond to form. Sandbagging has moved the creek back into its original channel; this pond has drained away.

town for a Nov. 10 meeting with Mayor Judd Wilson, Public Works Director Alan Wilkins, Assistant Public Works Director Rich Philips, and Chamness.

Town officials came to the table with dredging as the solution, and met with little change on Fisheries' part.

"In dry or low-water periods, we permit dredging all the time. It's just not a good long-term solution," said Cole, who reminded officials of the fish window and wondered why they hadn't applied for the necessary permits during the first several months of 2009 in order to dredge during the period when it was lawful.

"This just seems like poor planning to me," said Cole. "Didn't you call the county to help you, as I suggested?"

"We're spending most of our time at the wastewater treatment plant and other things," Public Works Director Alan Wilkins responded. "We're too busy."

"You're too busy to make a phone call?" asked Cole. "I don't hear that you're trying too hard to find solutions."

"I have other things to do than worry about stupid fish," said Wilkins.

Mayor Wilson summed up the town's position with one question to Cole: "I just want to know what's more important, fish or people?" he asked.

"I want to help people," said Cole. "I seek solutions where people can be helped without harming fish."

"If there's no money, there's no money"

The dredging solution isn't as straightforward as it seems at first glance. Fisheries requires any dredging operation to first bypass the section of creek that's being dredged, meaning that the flow of water must remain uninterrupted—pumped around the work area.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

DECEMBER

- 10, 17,
- 31 Concrete Food Bank open, noon to 3 p.m.
- 12 Christmas Parade, Concrete; contact Gladys Silrus at 360.826.4848 or gsilrus@verizon.net
- 15 All-Band Concert, Cascade Middle School; for more info, contact Kyler Brumbaugh at kbrumbaugh@swsd.k12.wa.us
- 15 Last day for Clear Lake Elementary Food Drive; bring canned items and other staples to the school
- 25 Christmas Day
- 31 Third Annual New Year's Eve Dance, Marblemount Community Hall, Marblemount; potluck dinner, 8 p.m. (B.Y.O.B.); music, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.; info at 360.873.4631 or 873.2048

That's problematic at best for Concrete, said Wilkins, which doesn't have the equipment or the staff to undertake such a project. Its 5-yard dumptruck also is unsuitable, he said.

Skagit County has the equipment and could help, but they couldn't do it without charging, said Wilkins, and Concrete simply doesn't have the money to pay for a project of that scale.

"If there's no money, there's no money," he said.

"Aren't there grants?" asked Cole.

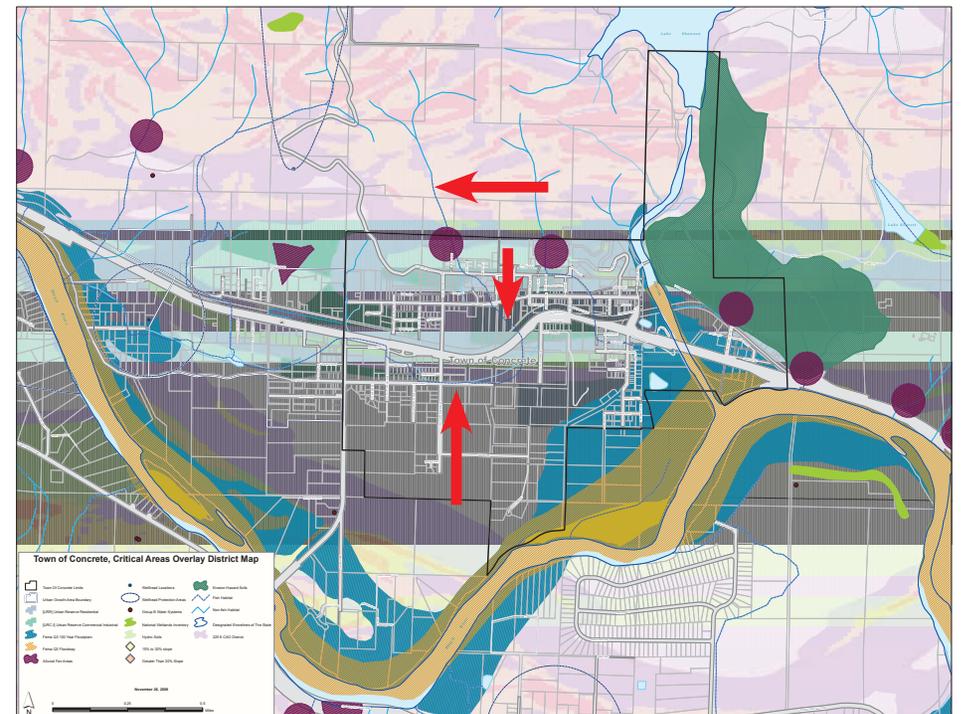
"They're drying up," said Wilkins.

Short-term solutions, long-term ideas

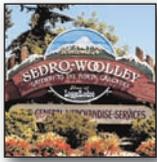
For now, sandbagging will keep the creek in its channel. Mayor Wilson and

the Concrete High School wrestling team have placed sandbags in the northeast corner of Chamness' property, where the creek had rerouted itself to form a pond in the southwest corner.

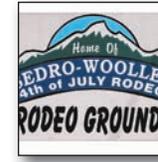
During the Nov. 10 meeting, Wilkins suggested rerouting the creek to make it run along the eastern edge of Silo Park and into a manmade pond with an island. From there, a new channel would allow the water to meander, dropping its silt load before running along the northern edge of State Route 20 and eventually rejoining its current channel near Concrete-Sauk Valley Road. After a follow-up meeting, Fisheries officials seem willing to accept his proposal.



This Critical Areas map dated 2008 shows Lorenzen Creek as it descends from Burpee Hill, turns south and passes under SR 20, then runs westward along the flat terrain that borders Bill Chamness' property along its northern edge. Concrete Public Works Director Alan Wilkins has proposed rerouting the creek along the eastern edge of Silo Park and just north of SR 20 to protect Chamness' property, an idea the Department of Fisheries seems willing to accept. Image courtesy of Skagit County GIS.



Sedro-Woolley



Christmas events abound in town

Look for Christmas celebrations to descend on Sedro-Woolley in fine form this month.

On Dec. 5, the Christmas Parade and related festivities will take place in downtown Sedro-Woolley. There's plenty for kids to enjoy, beginning with pony and train rides from 3 to 5 p.m. The tree-lighting ceremony will wow the crowds at 5 p.m.—and if you want to be the one to light the tree, pick up an entry form at Oliver-Hammer, Skagit State Bank, The Dollar Spree, Wells Fargo Bank, or Morgan Creek Outfitters. Good luck!

When those lights go on, the parade will start. Look for your favorite entries, plus a few new ones—and, of course, jolly old Santa Claus himself. Parade applications are available online at www.sedro-woolley.com, so don't miss out on your chance to join the fun. Clydesdale wagon rides also are available for a small donation. For more information on the day's events, go to www.sedro-woolley.com.

On Dec. 12, head to the Sedro-Woolley Community Center for Santa Breakfast from 9:30 to 11 a.m., followed by a Holiday Home Tour. More information on this event also can be found at www.sedro-woolley.com.

Of course, holiday events mean holiday closures for the Sedro-Woolley Chamber and Auto Licensing office. This year we'll close at 1 p.m. on Dec. 24. We'll be closed on Dec. 25. You'll notice a similar theme during the New Year's holiday, when the office will close at 1 p.m. on Dec. 31, and will be closed on Jan. 1, 2010.

We thank you for your understanding and we wish you and yours a very happy holiday season! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

From the Mayor's desk

By Mayor Mike Anderson

When the weather cools and my woodpile is at its highest level, my thoughts usually turn to the holidays and tropical beaches. This year, I can't get my mind off Skagit County's reassessment of the east county. Unrealistic property valuations result in the east county paying a disproportionate share of countywide taxes, which hampers our communities' efforts for a speedy economic recovery.

Last year, Skagit County revalued the east county, increasing our property values to the peak of the real estate bubble. Then the bubble burst and Skagit County taxed us at that inflated value, saying they had no choice but to assess us as of Jan. 1, 2008, for tax year 2009. Another year has passed and prices are lower and I want to be sure that the east county is being treated fairly. The assessor's office should do a blanket reduction for east county based on the east county being

unfortunately the last to be assessed at those high real estate values.

I talked to the assessor and his deputy, and was assured that the east county would be revalued. I hope that is the case, but I encourage everyone who is concerned about property tax fairness to contact your commissioner, Sharon Dillon, at 360.336.9300 and ask her to ensure that revaluation occurs. Also, look in your mailbox for a notice from Skagit County regarding revaluation. You have the right to appeal your assessed value determination to the Board of Equalization, but must do so within a limited period of time. More information is available at www.skagitcounty.net or at the Board of Equalization at 360.336.9334.

From your neighbors in Sedro-Woolley, I wish you a Merry Christmas. Best wishes for a happy 2010 and hopefully all of us in the east county won't get screwed by Skagit County again next year.

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Rocking for a cause

By Tammie Werner

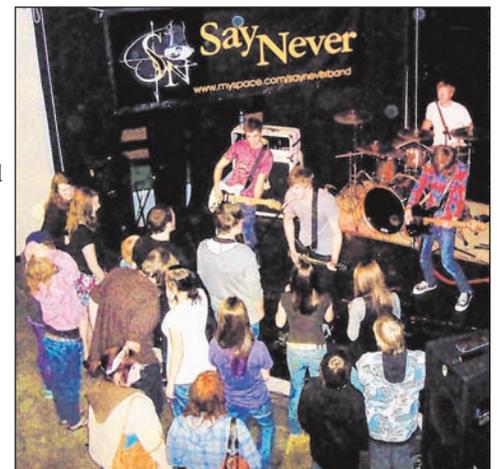
Sedro-Woolley Community Troop Support held a Benefit Concert on Fri., Nov. 20, at Common Ground Coffee House in Burlington. Approximately 125 people came to listen to four local bands that donated their time and talent to the benefit fundraiser. Say Never, Inner Octave, Twiddy and the Argonauts, and Deluxe Goodness bands came to rock the stage and put on a great show.

They didn't disappoint. Concertgoers took to the floor to dance along to the bands and enjoyed an energetic night of entertainment while supporting the group's efforts to raise some much-needed funds for the care packages this year. Due to the downturn in the economy, SWCTS has noticed lower than normal donations this year, as have many charitable organizations.

Concert admission was \$5 at the door and netted close to \$450, which will go toward purchasing items still needed for the Christmas boxes. More than 120 care package boxes will be sent out to soldier names that have been submitted for this year's drive. Each submitted name gets two boxes: one for treats, games, and special items, and another box for

personal hygiene items, such as soap, boot socks, DEET, etc. Boxes begin shipping out this week and will arrive before Christmas to their destinations overseas.

SWCTS chairman Marilyn Pineda said she was pleased with the turnout for the first concert and the amount of funds raised. "We hope to make this an annual event," said Pineda. "We are so appreciative of the bands that played for free and supported our drive this year."



Say Never plays at the first-ever Sedro-Woolley Community Troop Support Benefit Concert Nov. 20. The event raised almost \$450 this year; organizers hope the concert will become an annual affair.

Photo by Marilyn Pineda.

Concrete Heritage Museum News

The Concrete Heritage Museum is closed for the season. Until next Memorial Day weekend, you can make an appointment to visit the museum or do research in our library; just call Robin Wood at 360.826.3075 or e-mail us at concreteheritagemuseum@stumpranchonline.com. Monthly meetings are held year-round at the museum, on the second Thursday of each month, at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

Museum Christmas Party/Potluck

Join us for our annual Christmas Party, held this year at the Concrete Senior Center on Thurs., Dec. 10, at 6 p.m. Enjoy good company and food, and celebrate the holiday season and New Year's with us.

Great gifts for the holidays

Quilt blocks calendar: Della Payne, first-place winner of the Cascade Days Historic

Quilt Block Contest, is taking orders for the 2010 calendar based on the quilts that were entered in the contest. Cost is \$10 per calendar, which can be purchased at Albert's Red Apple Market.

The Centennial reprint of *So They Called the Town Concrete* is still available. The new edition features enhanced photographs and a more readable type font. New cover graphics were done by Philip Johnson. Copies are available at Albert's Red Apple (at the lottery counter; remember to pay for it separately at that counter) and the museum; an order form also can be printed at our Web site at www.stumpranchonline.com/concreteheritagemuseum.

—DPR

At the Library

By Aimee Hirschel

Budget cuts. Is anyone interested in hearing more about budget cuts? Luckily, the Upper Skagit Library will tighten its belt, but will not have to change hours or cut back in any way. We will be affected by the cuts at other libraries, however. In 2009 we've borrowed nearly 800 books from other libraries, but being able to borrow books through interlibrary loan will get a little tougher. During the past few years, the number of copies available for borrowing has dropped slowly. As book budgets get cut again this year, that number will drop dramatically and the number of requests for a title at the owning library will slow its availability for an outside library to borrow it. So, prepare to wait when you request a book!

It's not too late to apply for the vacancy on the library board. The trustee position starts Jan. 1, 2010. This is a good opportunity for someone who likes to work with a small group of people and has an interest in the library. If you want to know more, additional information is available at the library.

Did you miss Homemade Bread Day (11/17), National Cashew Day (11/23), or Pins & Needles Day (11/17)? Watch for them to show up again next November!

The December board meeting will be Dec. 9, at 5 p.m., at the Library.

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Lyman



Food Bank update

By Sharon Eldridge

From its opening on Aug. 6 through Oct. 31, 396 clients have visited the Shepherd's Heart Care Center/Food Bank, with a total of 1,174 individuals served more than 10,000 pounds of food!

Stop by our Community Corner, where you can sit with a coffee or tea and light snacks. Everyone is welcome.

We have the best volunteers!

Each month we will highlight one of our volunteers, starting with Elaine Kohler. You know Elaine as the town librarian, but did you know that at the age of 70ish, she received her black belt in karate or that she teaches self-defense classes?

Elaine is an incredible blessing to us. She comes in for the morning rush and returns again to help with our extended hours, ending the day sweeping the floor.

Thank you, Elaine, for your consistency, hard work, and willingness to do whatever is needed—with a smile.

Thanksgiving Basket Drive

This year's Thanksgiving Basket Drive ended with the distribution of more than 1,000 pounds of food on Wed., Nov. 25, from 10 a.m. to noon.

The North Sound Gobblers Chapter of The National Wild Turkey Federation partnered with the food bank by providing up to \$250 in funds for turkey breasts and whole turkeys for our clients. Reverie BBQ in Mount Vernon smoked the turkey breasts as a gift for the clients.

Additional Thanksgiving food donations were received or purchased from individuals in several Skagit communities, Food Lifeline and Skagit County Community Action's distribution center, which allowed us to distribute the impressive amount of food.

Thanks to everyone who helped make this a truly thankful Thanksgiving.

We are open every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., with extended hours on the first and third Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Christmas Angel Tree

By Tammie Werner

An Angel Tree is set up inside Lyman Town Hall (Minkler Mansion) until Dec. 19. The tree is full of angel tags of children needing someone to be their "Angel" this Christmas. More than 60 children have been nominated this year and so the need for sponsors is great.

Anyone wishing to participate can stop by during regular office hours of Mon. through Fri., 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and pick an angel tag from the tree. Tags will give nonidentifying information for children whose families could use help this year during Christmas. Tags will include as much information as we can provide.

Choose a boy or girl and then return the tag with your unwrapped, unopened gifts by December 19. There are no rules for what to purchase. There are generic tags available for such things as wrapping paper, socks, hats/mittens, toys, and other items. We're also accepting donations of

cash/checks and single items. There is a drop box next to the Angel Tree for single-item donations.

Checks need to be made payable to Angel Tree organizer Tammie Werner and can be dropped off at Town Hall or mailed to P.O. Box 1372, Lyman, WA 98263. Tags also can be obtained by calling Tammie at 360.826.3818 or e-mailing her at oney_brat@yahoo.com.

Elaine Kohler of Lyman has volunteered her time and talent to make scarves and/or blankets for the children this year out of any donated fleece fabric she receives. Elaine says it takes 1¼ yards of solid-colored fleece and 1¼ yards of patterned

See Angel Tree, p. 15

Volunteer correspondents are needed for Lyman!

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Lyman Library tales

By Elaine Kohler

The holiday season is once again upon us. Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. That means decorations and gifts. In these economic times, few of us have money left over for such things. My family celebrated Christmas and I remember as a child making paper chains and stringing popcorn and cranberries for the tree. I have made many of my gifts and have found that these are the gifts most cherished.

The library has several books on making wreaths and handmade crafts for adults and children. I also have printed up ideas for all three holidays and copies are available. So come in and browse for inspiration.

Like to bake? We have cookbooks and magazines with all kinds of goodies to make. One of my favorite gifts to receive is a plate of cookies or a loaf of banana bread all wrapped in colored paper. Most of us have a favorite holiday baked good that we do each year. Mine is a wreath-shaped coffee cake. I make several and give them to friends to enjoy. The response is always great, even the year I put too much green food coloring in the coconut I used to decorate it and the

kids went around with green fingers and mouths. It's easy to make, just take it easy on the food coloring.

In November we donated all the surplus paperback books we had in storage. Because of space limitations, we often have to pull duplicates. Sedro-Woolley Community Troop Support picked them up and will send them in the packages they send the troops.

Recently a couple stopped by the library. They said their name was Lyman and just had to come and visit our town. They once lived where there was a library like ours and were delighted to see such a nice one available. Remember: There are no fees, no sign ups. Just select some books, take care of them and return them when done. Since the food bank is in the same building, books are now accessible on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The library will be closed Dec. 24–26. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a Joyful Kwanzaa. Whichever your family celebrates, may it be filled with joy and love.

For more information about the library, call 360.826.3929.

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The Voice of Eastern Skagit County

Angel Tree, cont. from p. 14

fleece for blankets. For scarves she can get about four scarves out of 1¼ yards of fleece in either solid or patterned material. Donations of fabric can be dropped off at Town Hall or contact Tammie to make other arrangements.



This year's Angel Tree is inside Lyman Town Hall until Dec. 19. Photo by Tammie Werner.

Angel Trees in two Concrete locations

By Vicki Dinkins

Concrete Chamber, East County Resources, Upper Skagit Library, and the Town of Concrete are excited to announce our first "Community Angel Trees."

There will be two trees: one located at the East County Resource Center and other at the Upper Skagit Library. The trees will have nondescript "angel" tags of children from our area who need someone to be their special "angel" for Christmas. Because of these tough economic times, individuals can make a difference in our community by sponsoring one or more children and helping them have a merry Christmas.

If you wish to participate, come choose a boy or girl angel tag during regular office hours Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Resource Center, and regular operating hours of Upper Skagit Library. You may buy any toy, game, clothing, or other age-appropriate gift. Please wrap all gifts with the angel tag attached.

We also are accepting check/cash donations, which will help to ensure that all the children receive a gift. Please make

Concrete Chamber to hold evening meeting

The Concrete Chamber of Commerce will hold an evening meeting on Thurs., Dec. 17, at 6 p.m., at Annie's Pizza Station, in place of its usual second Thursday morning meeting.

All Chamber members and potential members are invited to attend, enjoy no-host pizza and other menu items, and hear about the latest business and community news. For more information: contact the chamber at chamber@concrete-wa.com or 360.853.8767.

New hours for Planning and Development Services

SKAGIT COUNTY — Skagit County Planning and Development Services announced new hours of operations effective Mon., Nov. 9, 2009.

Office hours open to the public will be Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Phone service will be available from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Permit application submittals will be accepted until 3:30 p.m. only.

checks payable to Concrete Chamber.

Wrapped gifts or cash/check donations need to be dropped off by Friday, Dec. 18, at either of the two above businesses or Concrete Town Hall. You also may mail the checks to:

Concrete Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 743
Concrete, WA 98237

We appreciate your donations and wish you Happy Holidays!

Vicki Dinkins is office manager for Concrete Chamber of Commerce and Concrete Licensing.

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Christmas services and events**DECEMBER**

- 5 Christmas Parade and festivities, downtown Sedro-Woolley; pony and train rides from 3 to 5 p.m.; Clydesdale wagon rides with donation; tree lighting at 5 p.m. starts parade; info at www.sedro-woolley.com
- 5 Marblemount Tree-Lighting Ceremony, 4 p.m., in front of red caboose by Shell station; more info at 360.873.4631 or 873.2048
- 5 Clear Lake Elementary Winter Craft Bazaar, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Clear Lake Elementary School, Clear Lake
- 6 Christmas Brunch, Marblemount Community Hall, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., \$4 to \$6 more info at 360.873.4631 or 873.2048
- 6 Marblemount Craft Fair, Marblemount Community Hall; more info at 360.873.4631 or 873.2048
- 12 Christmas in Concrete Parade and Santa visit, downtown and Senior Center; parade starts at 6 p.m. at PSE, ends at Senior Center with Santa handing out gifts; contact Gladys Silrus at 360.826.4848 or gsilrus@verizon.net
- 12 Concrete Eagles Annual Children's Christmas Party and Store, Concrete Eagles, 45930 Main St., Concrete, Noon to 3 p.m.; to volunteer or donate, contact Mary McFadden at 360.853.8611
- 12 Santa Breakfast, Sedro-Woolley Community Center, 9:30 to 11 a.m.; Holiday Home Tour from 4 to 9 p.m.; info at www.sedro-woolley.com
- 13 Community Bible Church Christmas Program, 45672 Limestone, Concrete, 7 p.m., refreshments following; contact Pastor Rob with questions at 360.853.8511
- 13 St. Catherine Catholic Church Food Drive for Concrete Food Bank, 45603 Limestone St., info at 360.855.0077
- 20 Christmas Lessons & Carols featuring 15 singers and handbells, St. Martin-St. Francis Episcopal Church, SR 20 at Milepost 100, 2:30 p.m.; flaming Christmas pudding after Christmas service and program, Concrete Assembly of God, 45734 Main St., Concrete; 10 a.m.; info at 360.853.8042
- 20 Christmas choral music during 8 a.m. worship service, Mount Baker Presbyterian Church, 45705 Main St., Concrete; 360.853.8585 or www.mtbakerpresbyterian.synodnw.org
- 23 Early Candlelight Christmas Eve service, 7 p.m., Mount Baker Presbyterian Church, 45705 Main St., Concrete; 360.853.8585 or www.mtbakerpresbyterian.synodnw.org
- 24 Community Bible Church Christmas Eve Service, 45672 Limestone, Concrete, 6 p.m.; contact Pastor Rob with questions at 360.853.8511
- 24 Christmas Eve musical service, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, 46372 Main St., Concrete, 7 p.m.; all are welcome; info at 360.853.8814
- 24 St. Catherine Catholic Church Christmas Eve Mass, 45603 Limestone St., Concrete, 5 p.m.; Sunday Mass, 8:30 a.m.; info at 360.855.0077

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See ad, p. 12.

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Above: Town of Concrete staff, Council, and citizens enjoyed a pig roast Nov. 22 in the Pilots Lounge. Mayor Judd Wilson and Public Works employee Rich Phillips grilled the guest of honor, a 100-lb. pig. Everyone else brought side dishes and desserts to complete the potluck feast. Council members and staff contributed \$20 each to buy the pig.



November



Above: November 14 dawned with a fresh coat of snow creeping down the hills south of Hurn Field. *Photo by Amber Lee.*



Above left: Concrete finishers Willis Olson (in red) and Kyle Dearing (foreground), and Steve Lundquist, and Bart Dearing (background) do what they do best after the last load of concrete from Skagit Readymix is delivered for the new sidewalk on Main Street, Concrete.

Above right: Concrete Assembly of God pastor Bruce Martin installs rebar in preparation for the church's addition project. When complete, the construction will be in the black, thanks in large part to donated labor from church members, plus long-term thinkers among the church's bean-counters. Stay tuned for more.



Left: Floodwaters crossed State Route 20 just east of Healy Road between Lyman and Hamilton on Thanksgiving Day.



Above: Led by professional cooks Todd Landwert and Erika Bjorklund, volunteers turned out a delicious Thanksgiving meal. From left to right: Marilyn Martich, Pat Fontana, Greg Daigle, Colleen Fontana, Dave Cornwell, Carol Bohmbach, Leslie Cornwell, and Ellen Morgan.

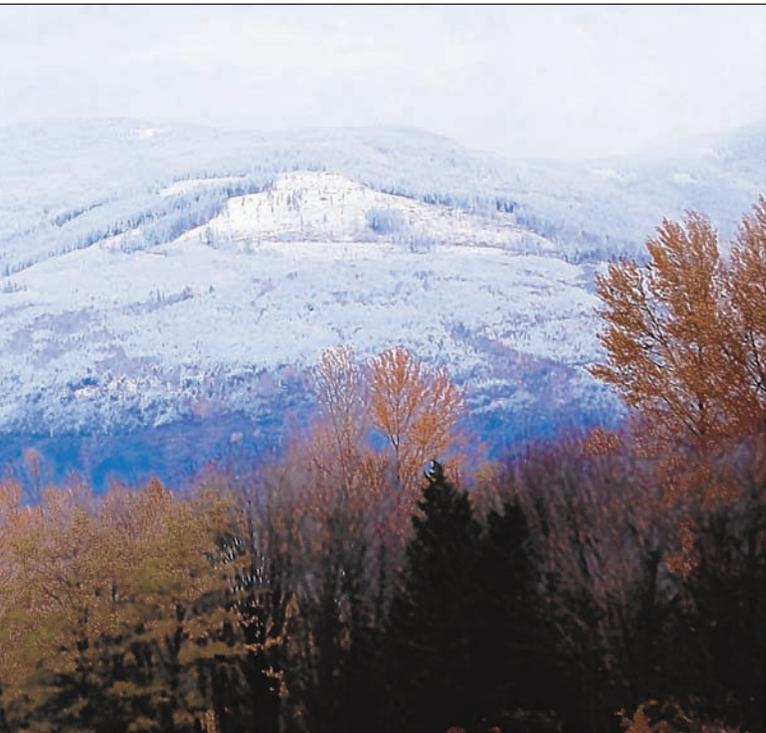
Sedro-Woolley's annual **Community Thanksgiving Dinner** drew a crowd to Cascade Middle School Nov. 26. A grassroots effort for 25 years, the event was supported by Soroptimists Sedro-Woolley, Rotary Club, the Sedro-Woolley School District and the City of Sedro-Woolley, and was hosted by volunteers from Cascade Middle School, Sedro-Woolley High School, and the community.

All Community Thanksgiving Dinner photos by Amber Lee.



Above: Floral arrangements were provided by Karen Johnson. Turkey centerpieces were created by Mrs. Self, Mrs. Fishwild, and Mrs. Stauffer's classes at Mary Purcell Elementary.

in pictures



Left: On Nov. 21, a rain-swollen Skagit River passed beneath Dalles Bridge. Photo by Amber Lee.



Left: Dinner co-organizer Stephanie Lokkebo teamed with Elinor Nakis to plan for success.

Below: Diners prepare for a feast.

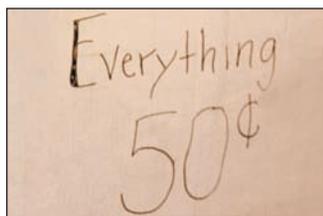


Right: The Concrete Chamber of Commerce and Concrete Licensing (Department of Licensing sub-agency) office celebrated the move to its new location in the East Skagit County Resource Center with an open house Nov. 19.

Shown left to right are Skagit County Community Action Coordinator Lou Hillman, Concrete Chamber of Commerce President Valerie Stafford, Chamber and Licensing Office Manager Vicki Dinkins, and Skagit County Auditor Jeanne Youngquist.

The Chamber and Licensing office is open Tues. through Fri., from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and can be reached at 360.853.8767 or www.concrete-wa.gov.

The Resource Center is located at 45770 Main St., Concrete.



Spotted for sale at the Holiday Bazaar in Concrete Nov. 21: Barbie slippers for only 25 cents. And a puppy for only 50 cents. C'mon...



Left: CHS Women's Soccer players and supporters made wreaths Nov. 21. An annual fundraiser, the wreaths sell for \$15 each and are sold by the players. "Somehow we cornered the market on wreath sales and it's a great fundraiser for us," said Head Coach Adam Woodward (far left). Shown with Coach Woodward are, left to right, Ruth Spaeth, Sarah Spaeth, Carol Barnett, Heather Collins, and Jessica Filtz.



Above: Richard Lowrie of Hamilton (far right) displayed glass works that he creates in his garage during the Holiday Bazaar in Concrete Nov. 21. "Glass is a great medium for making smiles, and we can always use more of those," he said.

Below: Concrete cheerleaders offered a variety of toys and small gifts during the Holiday Bazaar Nov. 21. Staffing the table left to right are Paulina Stafford, Kellen Russell, Desiree Bauer (captain), Ashley Johnson, Makhala Brister, Miranda Wallen (captain), and Arielle Aiken.





Hamilton



From the Mayor's desk

By Mayor Tim Bates

With the holidays fast approaching, I would wish everyone in town my sincere wishes for a joyous season.

I also would like to welcome Andrew Jensen as a new Council member starting this January, and thank Harold Pitts for the work and time he spent on the Council. I appreciate what all the Council members do for our Town.

Hamilton now has newly paved streets, a new stretch of sidewalk, new street signs, and a beautiful town entry sign. We have a new fire truck and we are ready for winter with our new snow plow. The whole country is in a deep recession yet Hamilton is keeping its head above the water. We're getting rain almost every day, now, and watching the river closely. I hope everyone read the flood awareness notice the Town sent out and posted on the bulletin board.

We are a small town where everyone knows everyone and I would hope we will all come together to help each other. We are planning a Christmas party for the town children sometime in December, so watch the bulletin board for dates.

Hamilton Musings

By Carol Bates

We recently lost our son-in-law, Danny Ray Singleton, and discovered he had no will or Community Property Agreement. In this day and age, you'd better have life insurance, mortgage insurance, retirement, and just about anything else you can get.

With no will, everything goes into an

estate account until all bills are paid. To collect life insurance, you have to get a current certified marriage license (this is to prevent insurance fraud). You even have to take a death certificate to the Social Security office to prevent someone from drawing the deceased's Social Security or using the credit cards.

Most credit cards carry \$1,000 of insurance, which will pay up to that amount; some even will pay them off. But if your name is not on the checking and savings accounts, you'll need to show that death certificate to the life insurance company, mortgage company, credit card holders, banks, etc. In other words, cross your t's and dot your i's; this will help the survivors with the paperwork.

Years ago we made a Family Trust, but don't let this fool you, either: They aren't as simple as they say. You have to file Quit Claim deeds, transfer papers, and, if mortgaged, a release from the bank. In the long run, it costs about \$500 just to inherit what might only be a land lot.

If the person inheriting the money has a trailer on the lot, he has to file to drop his trailer license and more papers to tie it to the lot. It's a headache. When we did this, it cost \$10 to file a paper; now it's \$200 for each item. And if the person with the trailer has to get a copy of the permit he bought when he put it there, another \$50 goes simply to copy something that shows up on the computer and is available to anyone.

I think it is time to move out of Skagit County or Washington. I'm not sure which.

Birdsview buzz

By Kris Voigt

Happy holidays, everyone! Hope you are all avoiding the nasty bugs that are going around.

December anniversaries

Bonnie and Keith Tyminski

December birthdays

- 2 Kyle Brown
- 7 Claire Babcock
Michael Russell
- 8 Michelle Shearer
- 9 Keith Tyminski
- 10 Dan Neishe
- 16 Jack Mattingly
Lacy Lahr

- 18 Shelly Russell
- 19 Tammy Lake
Kevin McAdam
Tim Babcock
- 24 Jessie Voigt

November Jambrewrie at the brewery was great. In addition to the usual jammers, we saw Zack Machaud, and Dick Levy brought a friend from work named Pat. Even Justine and Julie jumped in for awhile. On Nov. 21, Barefeet rocked the house and will do so again on New Year's Eve.

Darrel and Anita Weidkamp brought new neighbors Teresa and Don Wood in to meet us. They recently moved to Birdsvew from Burlington. Since they have horses, they fit right in. Welcome!

Our family wishes all of you a happy holiday season and a great 2010!

Remember, support your local businesses. We count on our locals!

Council summary

The Hamilton Town Council held a monthly meeting on Oct. 13. Major topics included:

- Council McGrady presented her findings on the Shangri-La Property. Council McGrady had gathered information, spoken to people at the county level, Matt Kaufman at the Health Department and Tim DeVries at the Building Department, addressing Lauren Tracy's letter dated Sept. 28. As of Oct. 3, the Health Department and the Building Department considered the job completed. A letter was just received by e-mail from Mark Stewart, Site Hazard Mitigation Program. Council McGrady opened the subject to discussion, but to properly review the letter, any unresolved issues will go on the docket for next month's agenda. Tom Selin stated Mayor Bates had offered to take the cement out during one of the meetings on the property. Shangri-La Committee declined the offer and stated they were going to call the Health Department. Council McGrady again stated that on Oct. 3, the Health Department considered the project completed. Chet Parker, Shangri-La Community Board President, told the Council they should read
- the letter just received from Mark Stewart, Site Hazard Mitigation Programs Manager, dated October 13, 2009. Chet Parker and Jerry Ravell represented Shangri-La Community Board and presented their issues with this property. They feel there could be a problem with their well from the work done on this project and did not follow the FEMA codes and rules. They stated the Health Department requested the testing on the well and test holes dug. The Council and Shangri-La representatives agreed to allow FEMA to handle this from here. Mr. Ravell asked if the Council was finished with the discussion on the Shangri-La property. Council Pitts asked about the current water testing results. There was a disagreement regarding the results of the tests and Mr. Ravell stated "you have a beautiful well site and I would hate to contaminate it for any reason." Council Bonner pointed out that the response to Mark Stewart was due by Nov. 10 and, therefore, the Council would need to respond before the next scheduled council meeting. Council Bonner questioned why the final payment was made to Pitts and Sons when the council asked that the check be held until the project was accepted and our payment from FEMA could be applied for. Council McGrady stated Mayor Bates released the check because the Health Department and County accepted the work as completed.
- Council members agreed to have an additional meeting prior to the next council meeting on Nov. 10, (6 p.m.) to finish reviewing the 2010 budget.
- Street Department: Tom Selin stated the snow plow would be ready on Oct. 20. The cost would be \$5,000; Selin thought that amount included sales tax. Council Bonner made a motion to authorize the amount necessary to cover the sales tax to be included in the approved purchase amount for the snow plow. Council Pitts seconded. Unanimously approved. Nick Bates confirmed that the cost of the snow plow was \$5,000.00 which included the sales tax.

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Business Spotlight: The Secret Garden Styling Salon

By Cora Thomas

The Secret Garden Styling Salon is located on Main Street in Concrete's Town Center, across the street from Cascade Supply and next to the Concrete Liquor Store. Its owner, Dani Magee, is originally from Montana, but lived in Puyallup for several years.

In 1997, Dani graduated from the Gene Juarez Beauty Academy in Federal Way. Magee worked at Regis in the South Hill Mall in Puyallup for five years, before moving on to a private Spa in Puyallup for two years. In 2004 she moved to Yelm, Wash., and opened the first Secret Garden Styling Salon.

The story behind the name is an interesting one. "The business name came about because the salon in Yelm was in an old house built in 1932," says Dani. "The front of the house was somewhat hidden by hedges and rose bushes, and there was a cobblestone walkway leading up to the front door. I was signing the lease and my landlord mentioned he could take the hedges out and immediately I said, 'No, it's like The Secret Garden!' I had not settled on a business name yet and I thought that was perfect."

In 2006, when Dani's husband, Shile, took a job in Mount Vernon, they decided to move to Concrete and reestablish the salon. "We lived [in Concrete] for six months before I decided I needed to get back to work, so I found a great spot on Main Street and reopened The Secret Garden Styling Salon," Dani explains. The new location was opened in February 2007.

Magee is a color expert and specializes in precision haircuts. Her plan for the salon is "to continue to build up my clientele and provide top-quality hair care to my community." If you visit her salon,

See Secret Garden, p. 29



The face behind the name: Dani Magee leads The Secret Garden Styling Salon, located at 45899 Main Street in Concrete's Town Center.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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Pat Buller Photography
2010 North Cascades scenic calendar in production. Look for it locally in mid-November.
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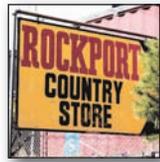
AT A GLANCE:

The Secret Garden Styling Salon

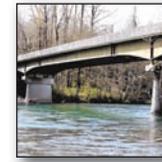
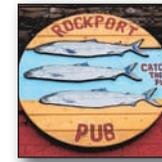
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Hours:
Tues. – Fri., by appt. only

Phone:
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Rockport



Preliminary recommendation presented for Rockport State Park

By Jason Miller

Representatives from Washington State Parks (WSP) met with dozens of east county citizens Nov. 17 to present progress made toward the future of Rockport State Park.

The park's overnight camping area was closed in 2007 because the aged and diseased crown (top) of an old-growth Douglas Fir broke off and crashed to the ground. The area was designated day-use only and has remained so ever since.

Area businesses immediately felt the economic sting, as 11,253 overnight visitors* immediately evaporated, taking their tourism dollars with them.

State Parks began researching its options with regard to the park; its efforts included consultations with staff and outside experts, public meetings, and discussions with Skagit County officials.

Their findings with regard to Rockport State Park's general standing were presented during the Nov. 17 meeting by Derek Gustafson, project lead for Classification and Management Planning (CAMP), a department within WSP. They found that:

- Rockport State Park is commonly viewed as the gateway to the North Cascades with the backdrop of Sauk Mountain, the Skagit River, and the complex of public lands
- The local community sees camping as an important attribute to the park's experience
- Preservation of the old growth forest is important to the future of the park

- Within an increased emphasis on old growth interpretation and recreational interaction, appropriate day-use facility development is needed
- With these findings in mind, CAMP staffers first considered two preliminary options for moving forward: one with a "natural" emphasis and one with a "recreation" emphasis.

The natural emphasis approach would leave much of the park undeveloped, even while more land was purchased around it. The recreation emphasis also would add more land, but include new camp sites to replace the ones lost in the closing.

Those closures were significant, with 50 full-service sites closing, as well as 12 walk-in sites and 1 group site.

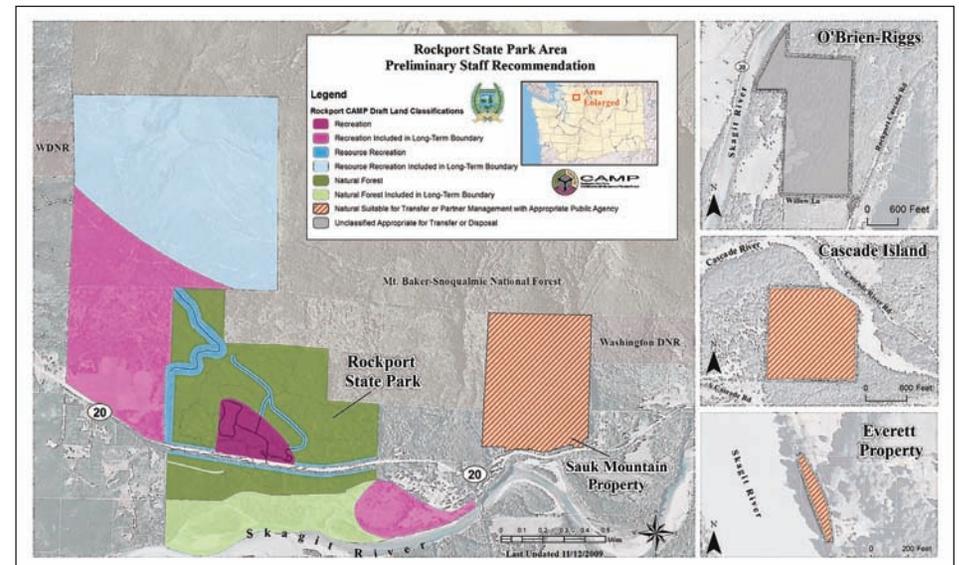
"A living solution"

CAMP staff considered additional nearby properties while developing the preliminary recommendation for the Parks and Recreation Commission, a seven-member body that will take action on the recommendation during its meeting on March 11, 2010 (see sidebar).

Those additional properties were:

- Sauk Mountain property to the east
- O'Brien-Riggs State Park
- Cascade Island
- Everett property

The preliminary staff recommendation calls for O'Brien-Riggs to be transferred back to the family that gave it to Washington Parks decades ago, since it was deemed to have "limited to no recreational values."



The Preliminary Staff Recommendation for Rockport State Park focuses on expanding the park's area, incorporating Howard Miller Steelhead Park, and transforming a portion of the whole as a "premier day-use destination." *Graphic courtesy of Washington State Parks.*

The Cascade Island, Sauk Mountain, and Everett properties were found to be "rich in natural resources and history," but isolated and, therefore, "better off managed by partnering entities" such as land trusts.

"We want to put our eggs in the Rockport State Park basket," said Gustafson.

Doing so would mean expanding the park's boundaries to the north, west, and south.

To the north and stretching south to connect with State Route 20 lies the so-called "Trillium property," hundreds of acres of undeveloped land that is owned by four different entities—a potential hurdle, Gustafson admitted.

"Private owners may not want to sell, and funding could run into the millions of dollars and take several years.

"We recognize that we can't act fast," he said with regard to the Trillium property.

The other major element of the recommendation is a long-term boundary that includes Howard Miller Steelhead Park, which currently adjoins Rockport State Park's property line.

Also in the recommendation is an intent to transform Rockport State Park into a "premier day-use destination," requiring capital investment to ramp up the day-use area with a modest interpretive center. This is not a far-flung idea, according to Rockport State Park Ranger Al Nickerson,

who attended the meeting and reported that day-use visitors have numbered more than 30,000 so far this year.

Significant hurdles lie in Rockport State Park's future, but, after budget-induced delays, the preliminary recommendation moves the process forward.

"This is a living solution, with refinements possible and likely," said Gustafson.

*2006 figures provided by Rockport State Park Ranger Al Nickerson.

Decision pending

On March 11, the Parks and Recreation Commission will meet in Tacoma to vote on the preliminary recommendation.

The public is encouraged to testify or provide written comments prior to the meeting. Comments may be sent to:

Derek Gustafson, CAMP project lead
Washington State Parks & Rec Comm.
220 N. Walnut St.

Burlington, WA 98233
360.755.9231

rockport.planning@parks.wa.gov
Rockport State Park's status may be followed online at:

www.parks.wa.gov/plans/rockport

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Home & Garden



Energy efficiency in the home

Time is money, but so is energy. In these trying economic times, few of us can afford to waste either one.

This winter, you can minimize your energy costs by taking a closer look at the areas of your home that cost the most. For example, did you know that heating your home gobbles up a whopping 40 percent of your total appliance cost? Your refrigerator is next in line, with a hefty 18 percent.

Let's start with the heat and go from there. Take the following steps to **stop drafts in your home**:

- Install foam gaskets behind outlet covers and switchplates (turn off the electricity first), and replace those covers if they're missing.
- Scrap cloth sewn into a tube and filled with coarse sand makes a "door snake." Place the snake against the bottom of the door to stop drafts. A rolled-up rug also will work.
- Close drapes at night and open them in the morning. Windows on the south side of your house will let in more sunlight and warmth—when the sun shines, that is!
- If you have a fireplace, close the damper when it's not in use. If you do not use your fireplace, close off the flue entirely with a large piece of cardboard. This will prevent drafts.

Remember that **refrigerator**? It's time to put it and your **freezer** on an energy diet.

- Replace worn gaskets on the door of the fridge or freezer. Check gaskets by attempting to pin a piece of paper with the closed door. If the paper falls to the floor, it's time to replace the gasket.
- Keep the coils and motor clean; check once per month for dust, because dust on the coils will make the unit's motor run harder, using more energy.
- Keep your fridge and/or freezer away from direct heat. In other words, don't place it against your oven.
- Know what you want before opening the door. Take everything out that you need and put everything back at one time. Don't leave the door open for prolonged periods.
- Avoid frost build-up, which makes a

freezer or fridge work harder. Defrost when ice is 1/4-inch thick. Let food cool before placing it in the fridge. And, cover everything you put in the fridge.

- Check the temperature to be sure it's at the right setting: Between 38 and 40 degrees in the fridge, and 0 degrees in the freezer.
- Washing** is one area where a few simple tips can save energy.

- When washing clothes, use cold water; wash full loads; sort clothes by weight, color, and type; double-spin heavy clothes; dry clothes outside when possible; keep the dry vent and lint filter clean; and use an auto dry setting, if available.
- When washing dishes, fill a basin with hot soapy water and a second basin with clean rinse water; avoid letting the water run. If you use an automatic dishwasher, allow dishes to air dry and wash only full loads.
- On the personal hygiene front, fill the sink with water rather than letting water run down the drain. A full tub may be fun, but less water gets you just as clean. A shower will use less water than a bath. Try a low-flow showerhead.

After space heating, **water heating** can be the second largest use of energy in the home. Take these steps to lessen its drain on your wallet.

- Check all hot water faucets. If you find a leak, fix it.
- Set your water heat at 120 degrees or less, to save energy and money.
- Wrap your water heater.
- Wrap the water pipes closest to the water heater and save more energy.
- Keep your water heater in good working order by flushing out 1/4 of the water every six months.

Finally, alternate resources are available for **energy assistance**. Here are a few:

| | |
|---------------------|----------|
| Housing Authority | 856.1223 |
| Community Action | 428.1011 |
| DSHS | 416.7444 |
| Catholic Comm. Svcs | 416.7546 |
| Red Cross | 293.2911 |

Source: Community Action Energy Assistance Program

Lyman entomologist pens bug book

If you garden in Skagit County, you'll want to get your hands on *Insects of Skagit County*, a new book by retired entomologist and Lyman citizen Dr. Lloyd Eighme.

Ten years in the making, *Insects* examines the good, bad, and just plain interesting bugs that take up residence in our gardens here in Skagit County. It's an indispensable tool for anyone who wants to be more in tune with their landscapes.

The 150-page, spiral-bound book is chock full of interesting facts and color photos of the more common insects found in Skagit County.

The book is \$25 per copy. To buy the book, stop by the WSU Skagit County Extension office at 11768 Westar Lane, Suite A, in Burlington. For more information, call 360.428.4270.

Insects of Skagit County



Lloyd Eighme

Let worms eat your leftovers

By Jason Miller

When I moved back to Washington from Minnesota, I got a rude awakening when I tried to set up a compost bin for my sister and brother-in-law.

Still operating with a Minnesota mindset, I encouraged them to throw both yard waste and kitchen scraps in the same bin, a nifty, repurposed affair I fashioned out of leftover pallet boards and tucked into a corner of their garden. So helpful.

This strategy resulted in a very unhappy brother-in-law, who grumbled with more than a little irritation, "We never had rats until we started composting!"

Ouch. My bad. The harsh Minnesota winters kept infestations of vermin at bay, but the mild Pacific Northwest quickly turned my sister's garden into a stomping ground for rats. Thank goodness for Tanner, their Golden Retriever, who was more than willing to deal with the situation.

What's the alternative? Vermicomposting, a.k.a. worm composting.

Vermicomposting is

easy to do. You just need a couple bins. Rectangular, plastic bins are popular. Punch small holes in the bottom of one bin and set it inside a slightly larger bin. Slowly fill the first bin with shredded newspaper (no glossy paper!) and your food scraps, which can be any fruit or vegetable leftover, plus coffee grounds (and filters) and eggshells. *Nothing else.*

Google "red wigglers" and you'll find places to buy the specific types of worms that prefer to eat kitchen scraps.

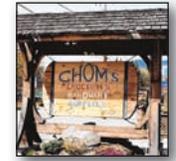
Keep the lids on the bins and check them every few days to make sure your worms are happy and not waterlogged or too dry. When one bin gets full, transfer some of the material on top—plus worms—to the other. Then use the finished compost in the first bin.

I keep my setup outdoors (see photo, below). It consists of two medium garbage cans with the bottoms cut out. Works well for me.





Marblemount



Marblemount Community Hall announces holiday events

By Connie Clark

There's plenty in store for citizens of Marblemount and the rest of eastern Skagit County in December and into 2010. Here's a brief rundown.

Christmas tree lighting ceremony with Santa

Saturday, Dec. 5, in front of the red caboose in the Shell station parking lot. Social time begins at 4 p.m. with refreshments. Santa arrives by the Marblemount Fire Department at 4:30 p.m., and lights the Christmas tree after arriving.

Christmas Brunch

Sunday, Dec. 6, at the Community Hall, we'll serve a delicious brunch from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Look for country biscuits and gravy, pancakes and eggs, and beverages. Prices range from \$4 to \$6. Such a deal!

Craft Fair

An exciting Craft Fair is planned for Sun., Dec. 6, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Many vendors will be there, displaying unusual treasures and interesting items. Stop in to find that unique, one-of-a-kind, handmade Christmas gift. For more information or to sign up as a vendor, contact Connie Clark at 360.873.4631. Space rental is only \$15.

Third Annual New Year's Eve Dance

It's back! Don't miss it! We'll start with a potluck dinner at 8 p.m. (B.Y.O.B.), with music from 9 p.m. till 1 a.m.

Tickets are on sale now for only \$25 per couple or \$15 for a single. We'll announce the music line-up later in December.

Any time you want to learn more, pick up the phone and call Connie Clark at 360.873.4631, or Kathy at 873.2048.

Outdoor Skagit

By Bob DiLeo



December in the outdoors! This month we will have the first day of the winter season. It also means that one word that will either send chills of dread up your spine or thrills of sheer enthusiasm: Snow.

For many outdoor enthusiasts, snow is far more than a four-letter word: It's an indicator of their favorite time of the year.

With snow, the outdoors becomes even more amazing and wonderful. Here, we have good snow for skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, sledding, sleigh-riding, or hiking on foot or with snowshoes.

Baker and Stevens Pass are reporting good snow. Whether you are skiing downhill or on a cross-country trail, it is

invigorating to be on fresh snow.

We also are starting to see a lot of bald eagles, snow geese, and trumpeter swans arrive in Skagit County, just for the birdwatchers, it seems. The sight of a bald eagle is a delightful experience for all.

In progress also are the late seasons for archery and muzzle loaders, for both deer and elk.

Don't forget the steelhead fishing in the Skagit River; it's getting very good right now.

As always, be safe and follow the rules. Remember, your head is the most important safety equipment you have. Merry Christmas!

Comfort food season has arrived

Battle the winter blues with family meals that matter

(ARA) — When temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, you know that comfort food season has arrived. And nothing is more heartwarming than bringing family and friends together for a traditional winter meal, evoking feelings of warmth and nostalgia.

Look no further than your cupboard for simple meal solutions to create hearty and budget-friendly meals for your family any day of the week. On one of those chilly winter days, nothing hits the spot more than the taste of a savory casserole or a piping hot bowl of soup.

Here are a few easy tips for making meals matter for your loved ones:

Give your leftovers a makeover

This season, chances are your fridge will be stocked with food and your home filled with family and friends. Instead of tossing them away, give your leftovers a makeover—your family will never know chicken they had for dinner yesterday is on the menu tonight.

- Add ready-made broth or stock to leftovers. Enhance your dishes with rich flavors by adding a ready-made broth or stock to add moisture that

may have been lost. Incorporate your leftovers into delicious, creative dishes such as chicken tortilla soup, Santa Fe chipotle beef stew or Southwest chicken chili.

- Freeze it. Prolong the shelf life of your leftovers by freezing them. Most meals that have been frozen will last for a few months.

Making family meals matter

According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), kids who eat dinner with their family regularly tend to:

- Eat more healthful foods and less junk.
- Get better grades.
- Engage in fewer risky behaviors, including taking drugs, drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes.
- Develop stronger connections with their parents.
- Be less depressed.
- Build larger vocabularies.
- Have fewer eating disorders.
- Feel that their parents are proud of them.

Corrupted Carols: Which Christmas carols are these?

1. Move hitherwards, the entire assembly of those who are steadfast.
2. Ecstasy towards the terrestrial sphere.
3. Hush, the celestial messengers produce harmonious sounds.
4. Creator, cool it, you kooky cats.
5. O tatterdemalion ebony atmosphere.
6. The thing manifested itself at the onset of a transparent day.
7. Embellish the interior passageways.
8. Tintinnabulation of vacillating pendulums in inverted metallic resonant cups.
9. Hey, minuscule urban area south of Jerusalem.
10. Nocturnal timespan of unbroken quietness.

*Answers are right...down...there...

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It is a music video with pictures of the area.

Marblemount Chapel wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas.

Answers to Corrupted Carols: 1. O Come All Ye Faithful; 2. Joy to the World; 3. Hark the Herald Angels Sing; 4. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen; 5. O Holy Night; 6. It Came Upon a Midnight Clear; 7. Deck the Halls; 8. Jingle Bells; 9. O Little Town of Bethlehem; 10. Silent Night.



Newhalem



DOE selects Seattle City Light for \$178M smart grid demo

RICHLAND — The Department of Energy has selected a Pacific Northwest team, including Seattle City Light, to conduct a regional smart grid demonstration project designed to expand upon existing electric infrastructure and test new smart grid technology with up to 60,000 customers in five states.

The Pacific Northwest Smart Grid Demonstration Project was the largest of 16 demonstration projects announced by DOE in November. The Pacific Northwest team combines energy providers, utilities, vendors and research organizations.

Total estimated cost for the project is \$178 million. DOE will provide half the funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The project's participants, primarily utilities and industry team members, including Seattle City Light, will provide the remaining funds.

The Northwest study will involve more than 60,000 metered customers in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. Using smart grid technologies, the study will test new combinations of devices, software and advanced analytical tools that enhance the power grid's reliability and performance.

Seattle City Light, the University of Washington and their project manager, McKinstry Energy Services, will develop a \$9.6 million smart micro grid project with four major components:

- Install utility-grade "smart meters" that can monitor electric consumption for 200 buildings on the university's campus
- Upgrade and create a common communication capability for the 33 individual building management systems currently in use across the campus
- Install data management equipment at one location to allow a regional grid operator to monitor and control energy uses and important generation assets, such as solar panels, steam turbines, or emergency diesel generators
- Install monitoring and control equipment in two lab or classroom

buildings and two dormitories. This will allow UW administrators to better understand how energy is used on campus and apply that knowledge in ways to better manage their facilities and control energy costs.

At its peak, the DOE project could create about 1,500 total jobs in manufacturing, installation and operating smart grid equipment, telecommunications networks, software and controls in the five states.

"Seattle City Light wanted to be a part of this smart grid project team," Superintendent Jorge Carrasco said. "This is another step in our efforts to move to a different relationship with our customers in energy management. Advances in this area could help our customers reduce their energy consumption, shorten our restoration times for outages, and increase the overall efficiency of our distribution system."

The project team will install equipment and technology in 2010 and 2011. Then, for the next two to three years, project leaders will gather data on smart grid performance from 15 test sites that represent the region's diverse terrain, weather, and demographics. The test sites range from Fox Island in Washington State's Puget Sound, to the Teton Mountains in western Wyoming, and include the campuses at the University of Washington and Washington State University.

"This will be a wonderful test vehicle for our researchers to investigate the deployment of smart-grid technologies," said Matthew O'Donnell, Dean of the UW's College of Engineering. "Having users on campus will allow us to do rapid-cycle testing of important concepts related to user interface and cyber-security."

The project will involve more than 112 megawatts of power, enough to serve 86,000 households.

In 2006, the region participated in the DOE-funded Pacific Northwest GridWise Demonstration Project on the Olympic Peninsula. The project was designed to test and speed adoption of new smart grid technologies that can make the power

The pass is closed

After a temporary closure Nov. 13, the North Cascades Highway is officially closed for the season.

Avalanche crews returned to the Nov. 13 closure site Nov. 17 to assess the area. They found 20 inches of new snow at the closure gates and 38 inches at Washington Pass.

With the recent temperature fluctuations, there was layering in the avalanche chutes. More snow in the forecast completes the recipe for more avalanches.

Ready to head up with your skis or snowmobile? Please check the Northwest Avalanche Center's back country avalanche advisories; the danger in the backcountry is high, too.

Crews will go up for the reopening assessment in late February or early March 2010.

grid more resilient and efficient. The study showed that advanced technologies enabled consumers to be active participants in improving power grid efficiency and reliability, while saving about 10 percent on their electricity bills in the process. The new project builds on those results, expanding the scale of the effort and introducing additional technologies.

Smart grid technology includes everything from interactive appliances in homes to substation automation and sensors on transmission lines. It is a system that uses various technologies to improve power delivery and use through intelligent, two-way communication. Generators of electricity, suppliers and users are all part of the equation. With increased communication and information, smart grid technology enables real time monitoring of electric

energy use, exchange of data about supply and demand, and adjustments of power use to changing load requirements.

Skagit General Store winter hours

The Skagit General Store in Newhalem has adjusted its hours of operation to accommodate the slower winter season.

The store is open 7 days a week all winter:

Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday – Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Concrete Herald
The Voice of Eastern Skagit County

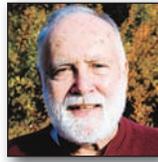
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Seniors



Coffee Break

Did you hear that...?

By Patrick Kennedy

Everyone assumes seniors are hard of hearing. Unfortunately, it's a physical reality that many seniors, as they become older and wiser, mysteriously have the volume knob in their brain connected to their ear drums turned down. It results in stories like this: Three seniors are out walking. One says, "Windy, isn't it?" The second one says, "No, it's Thursday!" The third says, "Me too. Let's get a beer."

Everything is so serious these days that many small things can get blown completely out of proportion. Seniors are accused of being grumpy all the time, but they know it's not grumpiness, it's that they see people making the same mistakes they did and are trying to correct them. It's offering gracious criticism to make sure the young don't fall into life's little traps. Seniors are a kind and thoughtful people.

And the fact is, seniors these days have a great sense of humor; did you hear that? Just look at all the jokes being passed around mouth-to-mouth and around the Internet about and by seniors. And those little creative and informative anecdotes of information are so helpful.

For an example of semi-reality, a senior lady's husband, Henry, being miserable with her mood swings and bought her a mood ring so he could monitor her moods.

He soon discovered that when

she was in a good mood, the ring turned green. When in a bad mood, it left a big red mark on his forehead. Maybe next time he'll buy her a diamond.

Did you hear that . . . he who laughs last thinks the slowest, or has a clear conscience? And just when everything seems to be going well and everything is coming your way, you find out you're in the wrong one-way lane. Driving jokes about seniors are overwhelming the network. But the truth is, you don't want to be the character in this punch line: "Henry, you just ran 3 red lights." And he responds, "Oh, am I driving?" We don't need that.

Inside every senior is a younger person wondering, "What the heck happened?" Do you recollect that the doctor once told you, "Remember the 20 extra years you added to your life through clean, healthy living? Well, here they are and you have to live with them."

Did you hear that? Health is funny as well as not funny for seniors, but what the heck? Seniors have so many years to pick apart and are easy targets for humor because of their: frame-of-mind swings, wrinkles all over, selective hearing, deprived eyesight, a deliberate walk, memory lags, driving while still alive, and just being funny people.

Patrick M. Kennedy is the author of How to Have Fun with Retirement, a sneak peek for which is available online at www.funwithretirement.com.

Way Back When

70 years ago

Dec. 7, 1939: Concrete High School's basketball team opened the fall season last Friday evening against the Bellingham High squad and to the surprise and delight of the local fans, won both games in as thrilling a set of contests as had been seen here.

Concrete's second team won the opener 20-16 and the first string made it two by nosing out their opponents 28-27.

Concrete's first string this year appears to be Doyle, Thompson, Hasselberg, Campbell, Hoover, J. Hoover, Larsen, Beazzizo, and Rhodes, who performed well in the Friday game. On the second string we have Larsen and Rhodes, Dillard, Cupples, Foss, Hatcher, Beck and Elkins, all on the floor during the second team contest.

60 years ago

Dec. 1, 1949: Heavy rains and unseasonably warm temperatures combined with other factors over the weekend in causing the first serious flood on the Skagit River since 1921. Although the river was high for several days, the rapid rise of the river Saturday night and Sunday morning caught most residents living near the river by surprise.

By 2 a.m. Sunday, water had started to enter the town of Hamilton, and by morning there was 2 to 4 feet of water over the

entire town.

At Rockport the waters overflowed the south banks, marooning Mr. and Mrs. Merten on the roof of their house. Mrs. Watson and her small child also were trapped in their home by the waters. Rescue parties from Rockport removed both families by boat. Mrs. Watson and her child were found floating about the room on a mattress when help arrived.

At Marblemount the Cascade and Skagit rivers combined to flood the area east of the bridge. The Witham place was isolated and a portion of highway was washed out just beyond the bridge. The small bridge to the fish hatchery, across the Cascade, was swept away.

All traffic to the Upper Valley was closed Sunday by water over the road at Lyman.

50 years ago

Dec. 17, 1959: A helpful, cooperative attitude paid dividends to Diablo 8th grader Neil Ostrander when he was appointed the first "Junior Fire Marshal" of Diablo by the Diablo Volunteer Fire Dept. as a reward for his help.

Presentation of the ribbon symbolizing the office, and a regulation football given for past services to the fire department, was made by Fire Chief D. J. Miller Sunday evening.

"Neil has shown unusual initiative in helping the department," said Mr. Miller.

The department encourages young people to take an interest in it, and plans to appoint other Junior Fire Marshals in future years as a reward for extra merit.

40 years ago

Dec. 24, 1969: Funeral services for Jim Becraft, 80, known in the Upper Valley as driver for Sedro-Woolley Laundry for many years, were held yesterday, Dec. 23, at Lemley Chapel in Sedro-Woolley. Becraft, who made his home at

Route 2, Sedro-Woolley, died last Thursday. He was a member of the Eagles Lodge, Sedro-Woolley. He had lived in Skagit County for 70 years.

30 years ago

Dec. 20, 1979: Marc Edmonds of the Concrete Police Department

graduated with top honors from the Seattle Police Academy course in basic law enforcement.

First in his class of 29 academically after the 12-week, 440-hour course, he tied for first place in firearms training and ranked third in the physical training program. The classes included emergency vehicle operation, firearms instruction, criminal investigation, criminal law, and patrol procedures.

Patrolman Edmonds joined the Concrete Police Department in March 1976 and has served full-time since the following spring.

20 years ago

Dec. 7, 1989: Naomi Rumpff of Concrete was sworn in as the Concrete Postmaster Friday morning. Swearing in Mrs. Rumpff was Randy Hundley, associate office coordinator of the Seattle Field Division. Prior to this, Mrs. Rumpff was postmaster in Marble-

mount for four years. In school board news, Barbara Hawkings was granted a maternity leave from Jan. 3, 1990 to the closing of the 1989-90 school year. Vic Woodward was appointed to replace Mrs. Hawkings as a 5th grade teacher for the duration of the leave. The school board also took action, honoring the late Jack Bradley by naming the Concrete High School gymnasium after him.

Making news in its own unique way, the Skagit River swelled beyond flood stage and inundated portions of the Upper Valley. In Cape Horn, 175 people were evacuated Monday. Fifty people were evacuated from Thunderbird Lane two miles east of Concrete. The town of Hamilton was especially hard hit when a dike on the west side of town failed Monday evening, necessitating the evacuation of about 225 residents.

Concrete Senior Center December 2009 Activities

Lunch is served Monday through Thursday, 12:30 p.m.

Mondays

| | |
|--------|---------------------------|
| 9 a.m. | Gray Ladies Hoop Quilting |
| 1 p.m. | Skip Bo |
| 1 p.m. | Mexican Train Dominos |

Tuesdays

| | |
|------------|---------------|
| 11:30 a.m. | Jigsaw Puzzle |
| 1 p.m. | Skip Bo |

Wednesdays

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. | Quilting |
| 11:30 a.m. | Jigsaw puzzle |
| 1 p.m. | Skip Bo |

Thursdays

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. | Wii Sports play |
| 11:30 a.m. | Jigsaw puzzle |

Fridays

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. | Quilting |
| 10:30 a.m. | Men's Group |
| 11:30 a.m. | Jigsaw puzzle |
| Noon | Mexican Train Dominos |

Special Events

| | | |
|-------|----------------|--|
| 12/3 | Call for appt. | Foot care |
| 12/8 | 1 p.m. | Rebekah's Meeting |
| 12/9 | 11 a.m. | Advisory Board meeting |
| 12/9 | 1 p.m. | Bingo |
| 12/17 | | Christmas Luncheon; reservations required |
| 12/18 | | Christmas gift exchange party; reservations required |
| 12/22 | 12:45 p.m. | Leap of Faith |
| 12/22 | 1 p.m. | Rebekah's Meeting |

Holiday Closures

Furlough Day: 12/24 (all Skagit County offices closed); Christmas Day: 12/25

EAST COUNTY RESOURCE CENTER

Hours: Mon. through Fri., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

45770 Main Street, Concrete, WA 98237

phone 360.853.7009 or 360.853.8767 // fax 360.853.7555

Services:

Concrete Licensing: Tabs and Titles
Concrete Chamber office
VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER
Tax Payments and property records search
Community Voice Mail

Energy Assistance program info
Copy, FAX and Notary services
Water Sample testing
Food Handler permits
Meeting space available

Scheduled programs and events:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Adult Literacy | Mon. & Fri., 9 to noon | Drop in |
| Commissioner Dillon | Fri., 9 to noon | Call for appt. |
| GED testing & classes | Weekly | Call for appt. |
| DC probation | 1st Fri. | spring, summer |
| DSHS Representative | 1st & 3rd Tues. | Call for appt. |
| Legal Clinic | 2nd & 4th Fri. | Call for appt. |
| NAMI Adult Craft Classes | Every other Thurs. | 1:30-3:30 drop in |
| Needle Exchange Program | 1st Wed. | 2-4:30 |
| Teen Clinic (no appt. required) | 1st Wed. & 4th Tues. | 2-4:30 |
| Veterans Representative | 2nd & 4th Mon. | all for appt. |
| WIC (call 336.9392 for appt.) | 2nd & 3rd Tues. | 9:30-3 |
| Women's AA | Wed. nights | 6 p.m. |

Sunday School lesson

Whose birthday do we celebrate?

By Tom Ross

Consider the opening stanzas of two familiar Christmas carols:

Deck the halls with boughs of holly, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

'Tis the season to be jolly, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat;

Please put a penny in the old man's hat.
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do,

If you haven't got a ha'penny, then God bless you.

The first carol is about eating, drinking, and being merry. Much of one's December time will be spent at the grocery and mall stores, getting ready for Christmas. There are gifts to be purchased, wrapped, and mailed; the house to be cleaned and decorated; a tree to be cut and trimmed; and special family and guest meals to be prepared.

The second song also assumes Christmas preparations, but takes a turn toward a deeper meaning of Christmas. Sharing with a needy senior citizen



is closer to what happened at the first Christmas.

Why do we give Christmas presents, anyway? Because God gave baby Jesus at Christmas, so that he would teach us how to live generous lives, then die for our sins and be raised in victory over death. Because rich wise men traveled from a far country in the East to bring famous presents of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus. Because poor shepherds in nearby fields listened to the angels and ran to offer the only presents they had—their presence—to Jesus.

Jesus was born in a borrowed stable and laid in a feed trough. If we want to worship Him, we cannot forget people like Him. In a recent year, Americans spent on Christmas forty-five times what it would cost to make sure every child on Earth had clean water to drink. This year, many Americans will remember Jesus by spending less on gifts that family members don't want or need, and by giving more to people who really are in need.

Worship directory

Assembly of God

Concrete Assembly of God
45734 Main St., Concrete; 360.853.8042
Sunday worship, 10 a.m.
Tuesday: Men's meeting, 8:30 a.m.
Wednesday: Adult Bible Study, 6 p.m.
Thursday: Women's Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.

Presbyterian

Mount Baker Presbyterian Church
45705 Main Street, Concrete
Sunday worship: 8 a.m.; Wednesday: 7 p.m.
Church 360.853.8585 office 360.595.0446
www.mtbakerpresbyterian.synodnw.org
Tom Ross, pastor

To add your place of worship to these listings, call or e-mail
360.853.8213 or editor@concrete-herald.com.

Nondenominational

Community Bible Church
45672 Limestone, Concrete; 360.853.8511
E-mail: cbcofconcrete@earthlink.net
Sunday School 9 a.m.; Worship Svc 10 a.m.
Childcare/Children's Ministries at both
Contact church for other available ministries

Lutheran

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
46372 Main St., Concrete
360.853.8814
Sunday Worship 10 a.m.
Marcus Stroud, pastor

Worth repeating...

"God's sovereignty over men's affairs is not compromised even by the reality of sin and evil in the world. It is not limited to the good acts of men or the pleasant events of nature. The wind belongs to God whether it comforts or whether it kills. In the end, one must finally come to see that if there is a God in heaven, there is no such thing as mere coincidence, not even in the smallest affairs of life."

— John Piper, *Desiring God*

The Concrete Food Bank, an unemployed family on your block, Toys for Tots, and Living Water International are just a few places where your gifts will make a difference to someone who cannot pay you back. What would Jesus do this Christmas?

Tom Ross is pastor of Mount Baker Presbyterian Church in Concrete.

WSDOT, cont. from p. 1

State Route 20 in September, advising them that their signage along SR 20 was noncompliant with state regulations.

The letters resulted from a focused review of the Northwest and North Central sections of the State Route 20 Scenic Highway by the WSDOT Highway Advertising Control Program. The Northwest section of SR 20 runs between mileposts 59.5 at the junction of I-5 and SR 20 in Burlington, east to Rainy Pass at the crest of the North Cascades. The North Central section extends from Rainy Pass east to the junction of SR 97 and SR 20 at Okanogan, around milepost 233. Eight letters were sent regarding signs in the North Central section of SR 20, and 18 were received by sign owners along the Northwest section of SR 20, in Skagit County.

Few exceptions

Only two exceptions to the blanket ban on off-premises advertising along scenic highways exist: 1) in incorporated towns/cities, or 2) if the off-premises signs are on commercial/industrial land or if there are three or more businesses within 500 feet. O'Leary said that federal and state regulations allow no wiggle room outside the 500-foot limit/three-businesses rule.

What about sandwich board-style signs? While on-premises sandwich boards within 50 feet of the main facility are acceptable and not regulated by the state, any kind off-premises sandwich boards would need to be permitted by the state. No sandwich boards are permitted inside the right-of-way of a scenic highway. Any such signs would have to be far enough away from the highway and on private property, said O'Leary.

Decades of regulation

The Scenic Highway regulations were first applied to SR 20 in 1971. The program was begun by the federal government; today, states are required to abide by and enforce the scenic highway

www.concrete-herald.com regulations. Lack of state compliance with federal regulations on the scenic highway system could jeopardize 10 percent of federal highway funding to the State of Washington, which would amount to roughly \$32.5 million for 2010.

Washington centralized its Highway Advertising Control program under O'Leary in July 2009. O'Leary and one other colleague, Dale Pedersen, are conducting the focused reviews of specific stretches of state highways and interstates.

Prior to the centralizing, oversight of highway ad signage was divided between multiple, disparate organizations, which contributed to an atmosphere of confusion surrounding advertising signage rules. O'Leary said he has spoken with the Office of the Code Reviser and explained the scenic highway law to them, as well as the regulations governing off-premises advertising.

O'Leary said his office is not taking a "scorched earth approach"; rather, he said, they work to bring signs into compliance. Many types can be made compliant, permitted, scaled down, or moved slightly, such as temporary agricultural signs. There were several temporary agricultural signs that were approved and permitted in cooperation with the business owners, among those found out of compliance in the SR 20 review, O'Leary said.

Changes moving forward

O'Leary said he takes a historical perspective, saying that anyone who put up signs that are not in compliance with regulation did not do due diligence when they did so. His office is now coordinating with other agencies in the state to clean up areas and bring them into compliance. "Anything that has happened in the past is going to be different from this point forward," he said.

O'Leary's office is currently working to finish the report on the Skagit SR 20 Scenic Highway focused review. He said that compliance thus far with their letters and the state/federal signage regulations has been "not quite 100 percent."

Move it or lose it

Timothy O'Marra, owner of Cascades Traffic Control, is a Marblemount-area businessman who received one of the initial WSDOT letters. He was informed that while his on-premises sign was allowed, he needed to move it out of the SR 20 right of way. He did so and has not heard any more about it from the state.

Sign regulations online

For more information on highway advertising regulations in Washington, go to
www.wsdot.wa.gov/Operations/Traffic/Signs/default.htm

Sheriff's blotter

November 15

A Marblemount caller reported a pellet stove valued at \$700 was stolen from a trailer, which had been left unlocked to allow entry. A deputy has suspect information and is looking for a man and a woman who were seen in the area. The case is ongoing.

November 14

A Rockport caller said her neighbor has two goats, which are loose in her yard and chase her if she goes outside. She said one of the goats is a large billy and she cannot even let her dogs out. Caller also stated the neighbor's boy was trying to herd the goats with a rope, but it was not working. Requested deputy assistance.

November 12

A Sedro-Woolley caller said a black dog is the terror of the neighborhood. Caller said the dog tips garbage cans over and chases everyone's animals. Animal control officer checked with the suspected dog owner, who said the dog is not his; his dog is kept under control. Animal control officer advised man that neighbors are willing to shoot the marauding dog next time, so if it is his, keep it leashed.

November 12

A Grasmere caller said she has three dogs that run loose sometimes. She said her neighbor claims the dogs chase his cat. She said he has threatened to shoot her dogs if the problem continues. Caller was upset. Deputy explained that there is no leash law, but the neighbor does have a right to protect his own pets as long as he shoots in a safe and humane manner.

November 11

A Concrete caller reported seeing two men digging a large hole on the side of the road. Deputy contacted the two men, who said they were digging ferns to be transplanted elsewhere. The men were told to put the ferns back and apply for a special forest permit to see if they can harvest them.

November 10

A Hamilton caller reported a neighbor's generator was very loud. Deputy arrived to find the generator running. Owner said generator was the only power source, and will try to muffle it better in an effort to be a good neighbor.

November 9

A school bus stopped in the road. A Toyota Camry pulled up behind it. Bus went into reverse to turn around. Toyota driver honked horn, but bus hit him at a slow speed. Kids on the bus were not injured; minor damage to vehicles.

November 7

A Cape Horn caller reported that two men in a brown and white pick-up were stealing alder trees from her property. Deputy took the vehicle information and a theft investigation continues.

November 6

A Sedro-Woolley caller found some drug paraphernalia that belonged to a friend, and wanted a deputy to test it, saying she wanted to know if it really was drugs. The caller refused to give any other information about ownership of the items.

November 6

A Concrete caller reported that a man knocked on her door, saying he was there to beat up her boyfriend for making comments about a friend. The caller's boyfriend did not come to the door and eventually the man left the porch and the area. Deputy arrived and looked for the man, but was unable to locate him.

November 5

A Concrete caller reported that school officials were "badgering" her children by calling them into the office and questioning them about family issues. This was not criminal harassment; deputy told the caller to talk with school officials.

November 4

A Sedro-Woolley caller reported that his teenage son had been smoking marijuana, and would like a deputy to come out and search his house because he has been advised it has been hidden in various

places around the house. Deputy advised caller to search his residence and if he located any suspected drugs, to call back.

November 4

A Concrete caller reported six juveniles playing with a rope swing behind the Senior Center. The juveniles were asked to leave and refused. A deputy responded, but the kids left prior to his arrival.

November 3

A 911 dispatcher received a call from the Lyman area, but no one was on the line. Dispatcher called back and determined a domestic dispute between a stepdaughter and stepmother was in progress. A deputy arrived to find the parties had calmed down and would separate for the night.

November 2

A Concrete caller reported he had moved out of a rental house; however, he needed to return to the property to get his camper and other items. He said his former landlord would not allow him on the property. Deputy contacted the landlord, who said the caller's property had been set at the edge of the road and he could come get it.

November 1

A Rockport caller reported a male friend at his house, intoxicated. Caller said he wanted his friend to leave, but the friend wouldn't leave. The intoxicated friend left before the deputy arrived.

November 1

A Conway caller reported lots of people down by Fisher Slough, shooting guns. Deputy checked. It's duck-hunting season.

October 31

A Hamilton caller said he is frustrated with neighbor dogs chasing his horses, and wanted it documented because he intends to shoot the dogs the next time it happens. Horse owner has talked to the dogs' owner and warned of his intentions.

October 30

A Concrete caller said his wife was home alone, with their landlord drunk and beating on their motor home. Deputy checked; landlord was neither drunk nor beating.

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Health



Exercise for healthful holidays

By Valerie Stafford

I have a theory about exercise: You need it most when you don't have time to do it.

Do you sometimes find yourself rushing from one project to the next, losing sleep over trying to get everything done, filling every waking moment with work or family obligations? Especially during the holiday season, we usually have more than enough to keep us busy. The thought of going for a walk sounds nice, but who has time for such a luxury? The truth is, a brisk 30-minute walk can clear your mind and give you the burst of energy you need to accomplish your goals for the day.

Consider these three important points:

- 1. Your brain works better with aerobic exercise.** In his recent New York Times best seller, *Brain Rules*, author John Medina explains that exercise increases oxygen flow to the brain, which produces an increase in mental sharpness. Medina reported on researchers who studied two elderly populations with different lifestyles, one sedentary and one active. Those who were active had higher cognitive scores, faster reaction times and better memories than those who were not. That could explain why, after you've hiked for an hour, you're suddenly able to recall the name of the dessert you were planning to buy for New Year's Eve.
- 2. Exercise improves your mood.** A study at the University of Vermont shows that people are in a better mood for hours after they exercise. Researchers had participants ride

an exercise bike for 20 minutes at a moderate intensity; another group did no exercise during the same time period. Afterward, everyone filled out questionnaires that evaluated their overall mood. The questions addressed tension, anger, fatigue, confusion, and depression. Those in the exercise group experienced a significant improvement in mood immediately after exercise and the positive effects lasted for 12 hours. The nonexercisers reported no improvement in mood. So while it might seem counterintuitive, exercise could be better than a nap for boosting energy and fighting fatigue.

- 3. Exercise helps you manage stress.** Scientists have concluded that exercise alters the activity of neurotransmitters in the brain, making it easier for you to relax in the face of stressful situations. This resistance to stress doesn't happen overnight, so you may not feel magically relaxed after your first jog, but people who exercise regularly for several weeks usually benefit from this phenomenon. Word to the wise: If a holiday get-together with grumpy Aunt Ruth is on the horizon, you may want to start an exercise program this week.

Granted, when life speeds up, exercise is usually the first thing that slips off your to-do list, when it's really the time you need it the most. Remember that going out for a walk after a holiday dinner could be the best thing you can do for yourself.

Besides, I've discovered it can get you out of doing the dishes.

Valerie Stafford is the director of communications and community education at United General Hospital, and the owner of Encore Fitness in the Concrete Theatre.

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For information on Skagit County's
H1N1 vaccine supply, go to
www.skagitcounty.net.

Help your kids learn healthful habits

(ARA) — Teaching kids healthful habits can be tough. Kids need help from mom and dad on caring for their bodies — including their skin, hair, and nails.

Some of the American Academy of Dermatology's tips for parents and their children to care for skin, hair and nails include:

- Avoid using hair styling products near the face to prevent acne
- Wear sunscreen every day to prevent skin cancer and premature aging
- Put an ice pack on a bruise to reduce swelling; if it's a bad bruise, elevate the area above your child's heart for about 15 minutes

The American Academy of Dermatology provides information about caring for skin, hair, and nails for kids ages 8 to 12 online at www.KidsSkinHealth.org.

The children's section of the Web site features interactive games with Sammy



the Skin Cell, where kids can catch bugs, explore mazes, and zap ultraviolet rays. The site also explains how skin, hair, and nails work, and how to take care of them, as well as fun facts including:

- An inch of skin has 650 sweat glands, 20 blood vessels and at least 1,000 nerve endings
- You lose 50–100 hairs a day
- Fingernails grow faster than toenails, and nails grow faster in summer

PSE tips for safe, efficient lighting

BELLEVUE — With the arrival of the holiday season, Puget Sound Energy reminds you to stay safe and save energy by using ENERGY STAR®-rated LED decorative holiday lights.

LED lighting uses plastic lenses (instead of glass), making them less likely to break and significantly cooler to the touch, and they can be used indoors and outdoors. In addition, LED lights can reduce energy consumption by as much as 90 percent over traditional holiday lights and can operate for more than 20,000 hours — enough to light up 40 holiday seasons.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that if every household switched to using LED holiday lights, the country would save approximately \$410 million in electricity costs. Most major retailers now carry LED holiday lights.

In addition to holiday lights, LEDs in the Puget Sound region also are used in traffic signals, highway signs, porch lights and street lights.

Safety first

PSE offers the following safety tips for decorating a home or business with holiday lights.

- Check for overhead power lines before installing outdoor lights

- Make sure ladders, lights, and people are at least 15 feet away from overhead power lines
- Never insert nails, staples, or tacks through any electrical wiring
- Discard light strands with bare wires, worn cords, or broken plugs to prevent fires
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions on the number of light strings that can safely be connected together
- Never run extension cords under carpets or area rugs. They can overheat or be damaged, resulting in a fire
- Make sure all lights and cords are UL (Underwriters Laboratories) approved
- Turn off all holiday lights before going to bed or leaving home. Save energy by connecting your lights to a timer so they're only on during the hours you select
- Only lights designed for outdoor use should be used outdoors

For more safety tips and a list of retailers in the Puget Sound region carrying LED holiday lights, visit www.PSE.com or call a PSE Energy Advisor at 1.800.562.1482.

she's the only employee you'll find.

"It's just me. I like a private setting for my clients where they can come relax and for awhile it can be all about them," she says.

Dani believes she does not compete with the other salons in Concrete because they each specialize in different services. She has a friendly relationship with the other businesses and is happy to refer clients to them if she is booked up on a particular day.

Check out this business on Main Street Concrete the next time your hair is looking a little frazzled!

Football, cont. from p. 6

As the rain poured and players flew out of bounds into the flooded baseball field, the Lions were able to hold their ground well enough to gain 365 yards on the ground while holding the Loggers to a meager 70 yards of offense. Leading the way for the Lions was Kyler Howell, who rushed 18 times for 138 yards and three TDs. After being out for three weeks with an injury, Tyler Kales returned in fine fashion, rushing for 88 yards on 11 carries. Quarterback Tyler Clark carried the ball 12 times for 68 yards, while fullback Scott Rice bulldozed his way to 65 yards on seven carries. Clark and Rice also scored a touchdown apiece for the Lions. James Johnson booted three of four PATs, with Howell running in a two-point conversion to bring the final score to 35-0. The Lions played great team defense with several players rallying to the ball on every play.

Traveling to Tumwater District Stadium for the first round of the state playoffs, the Lions met up with a senior-dominated team that couldn't be stopped. The Vikings put the first points on the board, but missed the PAT. The Lions were able to answer them as they marched down the field, scoring on a Rice 8-yard TD with a Johnson PAT. The Vikings and Lions again traded touchdowns, with Howell scoring on a 3-yard run. The Vikings made their 2-point conversion, but the Lions missed their PAT and the Vikings would not relinquish the lead again. At halftime the Lions went into the locker room behind 21-13 and came out unable to catch the Vikings as Willapa Valley quickly reeled off two touchdowns in the third quarter, along with a fourth-quarter touchdown, before the Lions were able to put one more score up on a Howell 38-yard run.

The Lions were led by Tyler Clark, who completed six of 12 passes for 73 yards,

hooking up with Kales three times, along with Howell, Dellinger, and McIntosh. Clark also was on the receiving end of a 15-yard Howell pass. Leading the way on the ground was Howell, who rushed 30 times for 170 yards, followed by Kales with 7-54, Rice with 6-34, McIntosh with 2-18, and Clark with 5-12.

Howell reached the 1,000-yard mark for the second consecutive season, while Sophomore Tyler Clark surpassed 1,000 yards with his combination rushing/passing game. The Lions will miss their six seniors in Will Stidman, James Martin, James Johnson, D. J. Mitchell, Jacob White, and Greg McIntosh, but look forward to next year as they bring back several key players to lead the charge into the 2010 season.

Women's Basketball, cont. from p. 7

placed at State, and Darrington has plans of bringing home some hardware this winter.

The Lady Lions will look to compete with these top three teams, along with other tough league opponents, and one of the toughest nonleague schedules they have faced in years. Their games are always exciting to watch: Last season, 14 of their games went down to the final possession. You can always count on all-out effort, a lot of heart, and a strong collective pride in our High School Women's Basketball program.

Coaches outlook: "I am excited as much for this season as any season. I love what I am seeing from the girls in practice right now, and I can't wait to see what the girls will bring to the games. Every season is life-changing, and I am looking forward to being a part of that."

Pee Wees, cont. from p. 6

us a fighting chance," he said.

The Pee Wees, which are ages 6 to 8, racked up some impressive numbers during the regular season. Out of the 12 Pee Wee teams in the league's two conferences, Concrete outscored 11, scoring 219 points this season, and 179 during the regular season.

"That's a lot of action for little guys," said Magee.

The championship trophy is the result of a great team effort from a team full of scrappers, said Magee, who extended a special note of thanks to the parents of the players for their support during the long season, and to team wives Dani Magee and Sarah Dinkins, who kept the energetic players in line on the sidelines.

Buy Local, cont. from p. 1

"Unique" is not a dirty word

"Commercial things really do stink," said Andy Warhol. "As soon as it becomes commercial for a mass market, it really stinks."

This Christmas and throughout 2010, you can ditch the status quo by picking up one-of-a-kind gifts, artwork, clothing, and more at our area businesses.

Darken the door at Matty's on Main in downtown Concrete you'll find the cure for the common gift.

"We have almost everything from A to Z—interesting stuff that doesn't blow out your pocketbook," Matty's owner Sherrill Coville told me recently. "Fine jewelry, art glass, antiques, fine collectibles, artwork, candles, even some goofy stuff. And we have an assortment of stocking stuffers."

You've heard the "better service" argument before, but until you've been blown off or frustrated by a maddening lack of knowledge demonstrated by a chain-store employee, you can't truly appreciate how important it is.

"You get Nordstrom's-level service without the Nordstrom's price," said Coville.

Sort of makes Wal-Mart pale by comparison, doesn't it?

Socially responsible

"The reasons to buy local are actually very simple," said Athena Hornsby, who owns Northwest Garden Bling in Sauk View Plaza, Concrete. "You do it to stimulate your own economy and lessen your carbon footprint."

She's right, of course. That carbon footprint issue just won't go away. The less you travel to get the things you need, the less gas you burn and the less carbon dioxide you release into the air. And the less wear and tear you put on your vehicle, requiring the manufacture of replacement parts. It's a "big picture" mindset, to be sure, but it's one that's gaining in recognition and popularity.

Speaking of Sauk View Plaza, this is one little building that will body-slam your "I like to do all my shopping in one place" argument.

Composed of Sauk View Gallery, Karin's Art Studio and Gallery, and the above-mentioned Northwest Garden Bling, the plaza has an impressive array of gift ideas and year-round appeal.

Sauk View Gallery includes the popular Pat Buller calendar, plus handmade treasures, ornaments, and more. Karin's Art Studio and Gallery offers hand-dyed fabrics (just right for quilters), bags and purses, beeswax candles, felted wine bag cozies, cards, photos, and original paintings and artwork by local artists.

Northwest Garden Bling boasts hand-blown glass ornaments, chimes made from 100 percent recycled glass, and supplies for glass artists. You want to be a glass artist? Talk to Athena about the classes she offers.

The message here is that more often than not, local businesses offer a depth of quality and service that big-box and chain retailers simply can't match, because their priorities are unbalanced, focused primarily on their bottom lines and stockholder satisfaction. Nobody told them, apparently, that such a mindset is the kiss of death for any kind of product worth loving.

Consider this challenge: Make it a goal to shop for your Christmas and everyday items in your own hometown whenever you can. If you can't find what you need, work your way west, stopping at independent retailers until you find it. If you're tempted to shop elsewhere, calculate the gas you burn and the time you spend into the purchase price, and see if it's still a better buy.

Donations continue!

The *Concrete Herald* fundraising drive reached its goal of \$10,000 on Oct. 29, but that hasn't stopped contributors from supporting their hometown newspaper?

A big **THANK YOU** goes to the following November contributors:

Sharon Gilbert

Anonymous

To donate, go to www.concrete-herald.com and click on "Donate," or mail your check payable to Concrete Herald to:

Concrete Herald
P.O. Box 682
Concrete, WA 98237

Thank you for your support!

\$150 logos \$100 portraits \$25 caricatures



paul rider design

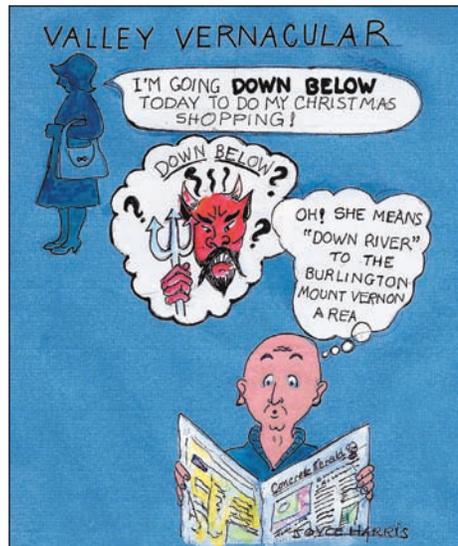
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Smile



Concrete Harold



By Joyce Harris

Simple Logic:

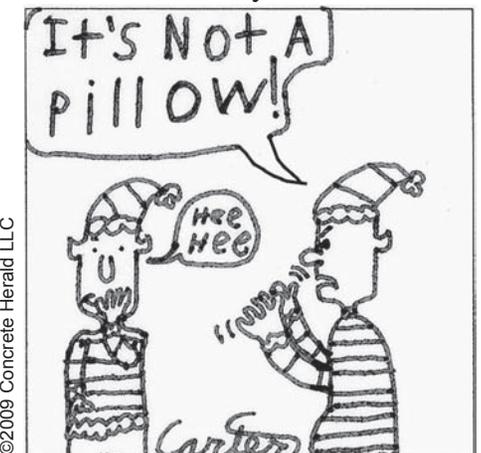
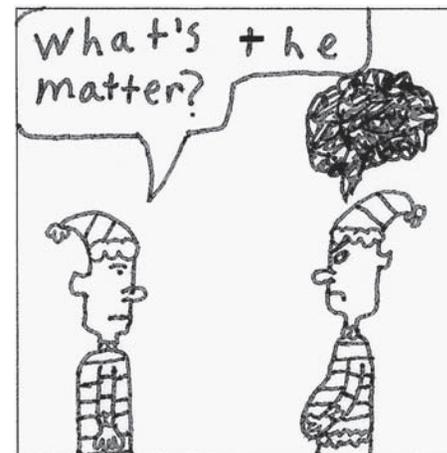
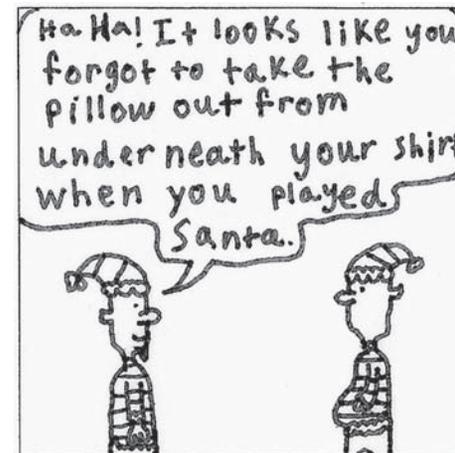
After marrying a young woman, a 90-year-old man told his doctor that they were expecting a baby.

"Let me tell you a story," said the doctor. "An absentminded fellow went hunting, but instead of a gun, he took an umbrella by mistake. "Suddenly, a bear charged him. Pointing

his umbrella at the bear, he shot and killed it on the spot."

"That's impossible!" said the old geezer. "Somebody else must have shot the bear." "Exactly," said the doctor.

An Elf's Life



By Jonathan Carter

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Dwelleysms

Wit from the Herald's former editor

"A woman is suing a store because a bathing suit became transparent in water. Again the mystery of woman: Here, she achieves the ultimate goal of wearing something without appearing to—and she still isn't happy."

"Admiration for those not afraid to do things on the spur of the moment is lost on those who make a habit of doing things on the spur of the last minute."

—Jan. 1, 1959

"So the Russians shot a rocket past the moon. A marvelous achievement. But in this race, the one who will come out winner will be the one who gets the thing to come back and tell about it."

—Jan. 8, 1959

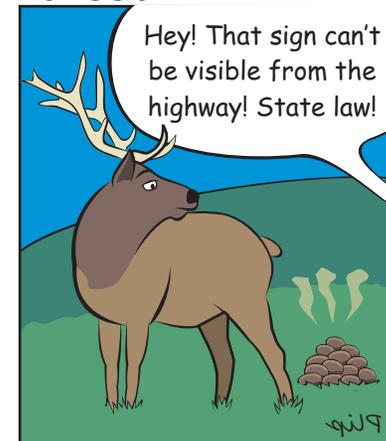
"Small town: Where, when you remember leaving your hat somewhere, you try to get it back before everyone else knows where you left it."

—Feb. 5, 1959

"Keep smiling. If the rain doesn't stop, plant rice."

—April 2, 1959

Nut Job



By Plip Morley

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Public Service Announcement



By Stig Andersen

the country, including the Wild Iris in La Conner, where he was chef and manager. "They had good local food there; roughly 70 to 80 percent of their menu used local ingredients," he says.

Jackson has been an apprentice chef in Belgium and Paris. He's worked in Tokyo, too, where he taught western cooking to locals and developed menus for restaurants. He's cooked in New York and Idaho, and even spent time as a chef on a yacht in Alaska.

In 2004 he dipped a toe in the waters of contracted freelance chef work, serving for the former head of a wall street firm and former ambassador. Jackson has been a private chef ever since.

One would think that the life of a private chef would be filled with glamorous world travel, exposure to a variety of interesting people, and access to the finest ingredients money can buy—and one would be correct.

"The best part of the job is the world travel—I've been to about 37 countries and been exposed to cuisines of many cultures. I'm always able to buy the best, whether it's wine, fish, meat, you name it. I buy luxury ingredients, because they're the best," says Jackson.

Chef Jackson currently works for "a very prominent Hollywood couple," which allows him to meet a whole slew of names that you would recognize in a heartbeat—names, of course, that I can't repeat.

Anything remotely resembling a drawback to the job doesn't faze Jackson. Single and without kids, his sometimes random schedule is easy for him to accommodate.

What can be a challenge, he admits, is the fact that "when you work for people with money, who have eaten at the best restaurants in the world, every meal you make is judged by a standard that is

particularly high. It's a challenge to stay new and creative, making two meals a day, five days a week."

That's a challenge he willingly accepts, however, because the tradeoff comes in the form of a two-month stint in Greece this past summer, St. Bart's, the Mediterranean...you get the picture.

"I get to go to all these world-class destinations while working," he says, "making foie gras one night and PB&J sandwiches the next."

And he started as a skateboard-toting, hamburger-munching, dish-washing kid. Remember that.

From the kitchen of...
Drew Jackson

Holiday Salmon

INGREDIENTS

4 six-ounce salmon filets

For the marinade:

1 tablespoon butter (melted)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoons orange juice
1 tablespoon honey
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon cinnamon

METHOD

Mix all marinade ingredients in a small bowl and whisk thoroughly.

Place salmon in a baking dish and pour the marinade over it; mix well; refrigerate for at least 30 min., up to 2 hrs.

Preheat oven to 350°; place salmon on middle shelf and bake for 10-12 min. until salmon is firm, but not overcooked.

Remove and spoon any of the remaining juices from the pan over the fish, and serve with seasonal side dishes.

Serves 4.

Men's Basketball, cont. from p. 7

Season outlook:

The Lions lost a big group of seniors last year that brought the power by numbers for the program. The program is at nine kids at the Varsity level, which will be joined by the 8th grade boys to help complete a JV roster starting Dec. 16, 2009.

La Conner enters the season as the league favorites after losing only one main contributor and returning a plethora of players for Coach Scott Novak. Our rivals to the southeast, Darrington, will once again give the Lions a challenge, but the Lions are looking for their first win in the rivalry since December 1997.

The Lions will display a lot of heart and hard work on the court each game and will be competitive inside the Northwest 1A/2B League. The non-League schedule for the Lions is one of the most difficult schedules in the state for a 2B school and includes three teams from the Whatcom County League, including the defending League Champ, Meridian. These will only prepare the team for a tough league grind by raising their level of competition.

Coach's outlook: "We have a great group of four players, but will need to develop from a young batch of players who should compete successfully at the JV level. They'll get up to speed as they are all smart players, hard workers, and listen when they are instructed. I am excited for the season."

In The Service



If you'd like to share updates on loved ones' service in the armed forces, please e-mail Jason Miller, editor, at editor@concrete-herald.com, or call 360.853.8213.

Classifieds

EMPLOYMENT

Community Education Instructors needed. \$15-17 per hour. Call Lisa, 360.853.8145.

Concrete Branch Manager. Summit Bank is looking for the right candidate to manage its Concrete Branch. The Branch Manager will be responsible for promoting and selling bank products and services, collections, and originating and processing consumer, commercial, and real estate loans. Strong emphasis on increasing deposits and satisfying the needs of the bank's customers. To be successful at this job, applicants must have the desire and ability to be an active member of the local community. Effective cross-selling, communication, and computer skills are required. Prior banking and loan origination experience preferred. Four-year business degree preferred. Personal bankers, branch managers, and loan officers are ideal candidates for this position. Send resume and cover letter to:

patrickg@summitbank-wa.com

FOR SALE

1947 Indian Chief motorcycle in a box. Asking \$8,000, but open to negotiation and/or possible trade. 360.826.3849.

MUSICIAN FOR HIRE

Dave Chapman's entertaining 1-man band wants to play for your special occasions and parties, including holidays. Dance music for all ages, including classic rock, blues, country, and more. 360.853.7433.

RENTAL PROPERTIES

25' x 40' bldg. in Concrete. Two 11-ft.-high doors. Will hold a 35' travel trailer. Includes all hookups. 360.853.8091 or 425.353.9095.

REWARD OFFERED

\$2,500 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the individual(s) who burglarized my home on Nov. 19 and stole \$10,200 in \$100 bills. If you receive a \$100 bill in payment for anything, call me at 360.826.4708 with the serial number on the bill and the name of the person who cashed it. I will report the incident to the Skagit County Sheriff.

Do you know who's been stealing our "Dave's Towing" signs? Call us and we'll give you money. Call 360.853.7433. Thanks!

SERVICES

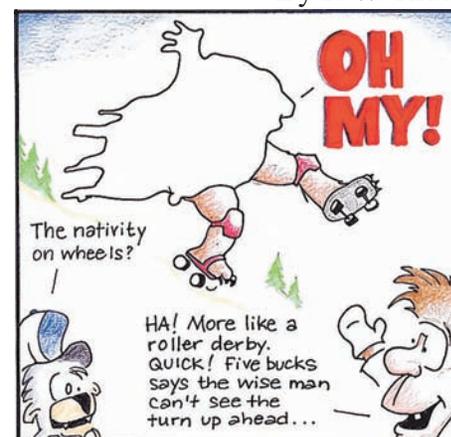
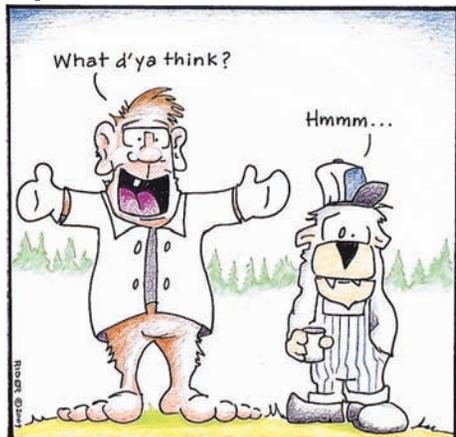
Encore Fitness opens in December at the Concrete Theatre. Exercise classes: Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m., Saturdays at 8 a.m. (no class Dec. 5). Contact Valerie Stafford, encorefitness@concrete-theatre.com.

TO PLACE A CLASSIFIED AD:

Contact *Concrete Herald* at 360.853.8213 or classifieds@concrete-herald.com. Monthly rate is \$5 for every 10 words, rounded up to nearest 10. Ads must be paid for at time of submission.

Concrete Herald
The Voice of Eastern Skagit County

Up Yonder



By P. W. Rider

5 Ways to Not Gain Weight During the Holidays

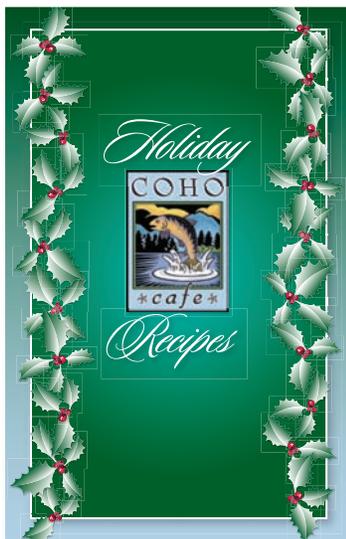
Practice moderation. Sure, the season only comes once a year, but don't throw caution to the wind.

Stop eating before you're full. There's nothing festive about feeling stuffed.

Avoid stress. Don't wait until the last minute to shop or decorate. Remember to rest.

Turn down (some) desserts. Keep the cookies out of sight. Enjoy a little pie but skip the whipped cream.

Exercise. It increases your energy, reduces your stress and helps you sleep.



We all know how easy it is to gain weight this time of year. Instead, let's concentrate on healthy food and exercise, so we can enjoy many more future holidays! For a free copy of our Holiday Cookbook and 10 Tips for Holiday Fitness, call (360) 856-7245 or e-mail wellness360@unitedgeneral.org.

Happy holidays from all of us at United General Hospital!

