

## Home sweet home



Help for women in need

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I-fest preview  
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Festival button winner picked

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Wednesday, April 24, 2019

# SEQUIM GAZETTE

www.sequimgazette.com

Sequim's Hometown Newspaper

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SOUND PUBLISHING INC.

## A pink primer



Delta Nu sorority members rally around Elle Woods (Maddy Dietzman, second from right) for the song "Positive," including from left, Brianna Jack, Charlie Briggs, Bri Rocha, Makayla Allen, Kariya Johnson and Lindsey Coffman. They'll present "Legally Blonde" starting May 3 at Sequim High School's Auditorium. Sequim Gazette photo by Matthew Nash

## Operetta Club preps production of 'Legally Blonde'

Put on your brightest attire and ready yourself for a night with the musical comedy "Legally Blonde" presented by the Sequim High School Operetta Club. Maddy Dietzman stars as Elle Wood, a high fashion sorority

girl, who seeks the affection of her ex-boyfriend Warner (Jonathan Heintz) by enrolling in Harvard Law School.

Her story from fashionista to full-fledged lawyer plays at 7 p.m. May 3-4, 10-11 and 17, and 2 p.m.

May 12, 18 and 19, in the Sequim High School Auditorium, 533 N. Sequim Ave. Advance tickets are available at [www.shsoperetta.ludus.com](http://www.shsoperetta.ludus.com). Tickets for opening night are \$12 on May 3, and cost up to \$18 for premium seats on

other nights. Tickets are on sale 45 minutes prior to curtain.

For more information, email [shsoperettaboxoffice@gmail.com](mailto:shsoperettaboxoffice@gmail.com). Read a full preview of the show in the May 1 edition of the Sequim Gazette.

## Citizens seek answers from board, extension of Neal's contract

BY MICHAEL DASHIELL  
Sequim Gazette

A group of concerned community members gave the Sequim School Board an earful at its April 16 meeting, with several asking board directors to re-consider extending superintendent Gary Neal's contract and moving the district closer to a plan to upgrade its facilities.



NEAL

Neal is under contract with the Sequim School District through June 30, 2020. Board members have in the past two years declined to extend his three-year "rolling" contract.

Several individuals spoke up in favor of the district extending the superintendent's contract beyond 2020 and to seek school facility improvements.

John Coulson asked the board to extend Neal's contract for the district to have "strong, consistent, progressive leadership."

Coulson said Neal has established good rapport with the community, spotlighting Sequim's High School's participation in Project Lead the Way — a national program that helps high school students in developing strong backgrounds in engineering and science fields.

"We need consistency at this junction," Coulson said, pointing out his concerns for failing district infrastructure, the growing number of classroom portables and student overcrowding all coming at a time when possible changes to the school board — three directors are up for election this fall — are imminent.

See EXTENSION, A-6

## Schedule set for Fir Street road closures

### SEQUIM GAZETTE STAFF

City staff have released a tentative construction schedule and its impact on drivers and residents for the West Fir Street Rehabilitation project.

They plan to close a portion of North Second Avenue between Alder Street and Fir Street on Monday, April 29, for Interwest Construction crews to begin staging. Construction on the approximate \$6.5 million project to rebuild a half-a-mile stretch of road from Sequim Avenue to Fifth Avenue tentatively begins on Monday, May 13, and finishes by December 2020.

That portion of Second Avenue will remain closed throughout construction.

City staff also set a tentative driving route for those traveling along Fir Street during school hours.

They said drivers can expect temporary roadway closures and lane closures along West Fir Street during the school year with one-way, westbound traffic only.

When summer break begins, city staff said construction crews may close both westbound and eastbound lanes along Fir Street.

However, access to school facilities, the Sequim Boys & Girls Club, businesses and residences will be available year-round.

See CLOSURE, A-10



During construction of the West Fir Street Rehabilitation, drivers along Fir Street can expect North Second Avenue between Alder and Fir streets to close through December 2020. Eastbound driving likely will close between Sequim Avenue and Fifth Avenue for much of the construction, too. Photo courtesy of the City of Sequim

## Creamery given 'all clear' to sell milk again

BY MATTHEW NASH  
Sequim Gazette

Dungeness Valley Creamery's raw milk from its Jersey cows is back on store shelves after nearly two weeks of a voluntary recall.

Staff with the Washington State Department of Agriculture gave an all clear for current samples of milk on April 22, after E. coli STEC was found in two separate samples from late March, early April.

Creamery co-owner Ryan McCarthy said they began pulling their milk products from shelves on April 9 with an expiration between April 6-20. Current "all clear" creamery milk products have an expiration of April 30.

See CREAMERY, A-10

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## COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

### Ferguson to talk free speech, press

Clallam-Jefferson County Pro Bono Lawyers is sponsoring an event with state Attorney General Bob Ferguson with the topic "Free Speech, Free Press, Free Society" from 5:30-7 p.m. Tuesday, April 30, in the Peninsula College Little Theater. Admission is by donation, suggested at \$10 for adults, \$5 for students. All proceeds go to supporting civil legal aid services in Clallam and Jefferson counties. RSVP to 360-504-2422 or email to probonolawyers@gmail.com.

### Group opposing smart meters to meet

Clallam Against Smart Meters (CASM) is hosting two upcoming community educational meetings: 2-4 p.m. Saturday, May 4, at the Sequim Library, 630 N. Sequim Ave.; and 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, May 8, at the Port Angeles Library, 2210 S. Peabody St.

The agenda includes a screening of the 30-minute "Take Back Your Power" documentary and following discussion, along with speaker Anthony Corrado about, "Why Is 5G Different?"

For more information, email to email-smartclallam@gmail.com.

### 'Horse Hoedown' planned

The Olympic Peninsula Equine Network will host its second annual "Help a Horse Hoedown" fundraiser from 6-10 p.m. Saturday, May 18, at Fox Bell Farms, 137 N. Barr Road, Agnew. Admission is \$55 per person for dinner, dancing and a silent auction. Entertainment is by the Jim Hoffman Band. Beer and wine will be available for purchase. OPEN is a horse rescue, rehabilitation and adoption nonprofit in rural Sequim and it recently became affiliated with the ASPCA's National Help a Horse Campaign.

For more information, contact Mike Vaillancourt at goldenmikedj@gmail.com or 714-222-0755. For more information about OPEN, see olympicpeninsulaequinenetwork.com.

### Monday Musicales offers student scholarships

The application deadline for Monday Musicales Scholarships is Friday, April 26. The three scholarships are open to high school students in Clallam County, including Sequim, Port Angeles, Forks, Clallam Bay, Neah Bay and homeschool students.

Get an application from school officials or one's music director.

Monday Musicales scholarship

auditions are held at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 5, at First Presbyterian Church of Port Angeles, 139 W. Eighth St.; the public is invited.

For more information, call Margot Hewitt at 360-775-0631.

### 4-H sets National Day of Service

In recognition of National Volunteer Month, 4-H holds a National Day of Service each year. This year's event is set for 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, April 27, when local volunteers will be at Lincoln Park in Port Angeles cleaning up branches from the past December's windstorm.

This effort is part of a month long 4-H True Leaders in Service initiative with thousands of youth chipping in to help improve their communities.

Learn more about 4-H in Clallam County at Clallam.wsu.edu/4H.

### Bunco party set for Friday

The Sequim Guild of Seattle Children's Hospital is sponsoring a spring Bunco party, set for noon-3 p.m. Friday, April 26, at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 525 N. Fifth Ave. Win prizes playing Bunco, enjoy a lunch made by guild members and bid on 25 silent auction choices, including some "one of a kind" items. Tickets are \$15 at the door

(doors open at 11:30 a.m.), with all proceeds going to Seattle Children's Hospital for uncompensated care.

For more information, contact Pam Herd at 360-683-3089 or sequimguild@gmail.com.

### City seeks parks board applicants

The Sequim City Council is seeking an applicant to fill a vacancy on the Parks, Arbor and Recreation Advisory Board. This voluntary board meets the third Monday of each month at 5 p.m. and advises the city council on issues involving city parks and public spaces. The position is open to residents within the Sequim city limits.

Applications are available at the Civic Center, 152 W. Cedar St., or online at www.sequimwa.gov. The position is open until filled.

For more information, contact city clerk Karen Kuznek-Reese at 360-681-3428 or kkuznek@sequimwa.gov.

### Stand Down set for May 2

The Forks Elks Lodge hosts the Voices for Veterans Stand Down 2019 event from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Thursday, May 2, at 941 Merchants Road, Forks.

The Stand Down offers hot meals (breakfast, lunch), and connections

to services such as medical/dental screening, screening info for colon and breast cancer, housing information, employment and education, veteran benefits, counseling, legal aid, haircuts, pet supplies, new clothing and more.

Free transportation to the event is available via Clallam and Jefferson Transit buses.

Voices for Veterans is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that seeks to "assist homeless veterans, veterans in need, and their immediate family members, in part through a Stand Down."

Stand Downs are held three times annually: In May, Forks; in Port Townsend in July, and Port Angeles in October.

For information, see voicesforveterans.org or call Jeff at 360-797-1791.

### DSHS mobile unit coming to Sequim

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Mobile Community Service Office offers services from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday, May 3, at the Sequim Food Bank, 144 W. Alder St.

At this event, residents can apply for cash, basic food and medical assistance, and the Medicare Savings Program.

## Extension

From page A-1

"Losing our superintendent will inhibit our ability to move forward and (get a bond passed)," he said.

Susan Sorensen, a Sequim resident and former board director for the Sequim Aquatic Recreation Center, also questioned the board's approach to Neal's contract.

"He showed he cares for the community," Sorensen said. "You do not meddle with the operations of the district; you need to stay out of his way."

Lori Anderson, who has two students in the school district, said, "I believe our district is at a crossroad. As a community, we need to get aggressive and get a bond passed, or a levy.

(Neal) has the knowledge and the experience to guide us through it."

Shenna Younger asked the board for clarification about the directors' decision to not extend Neal's contract.

"What is your plan for our kids? ... Why are we having all these meetings?" Younger asked.

"What is your issue with Gary Neal? What's going on? The public has no idea. It's not fair to parents or the students."

Board director Robin Henrikson sought to answer this, noting, "my lack of confidence in our superintendent to pass a bond," but her comments were soon cut off by board president Brian Kuh at Neal's prompting, who cited a school board policy doesn't allow for such comments.

Board director Brandino Gibson said board directors

sometimes need to have conversations about employees behind closed doors to consider internal issues.

"We simply can't share everything we are privy to," Kuh said. "There's a lot of passion in this district around next steps."

In January, Kuh said Neal's mid-year review was "favorable" and that the board seeks to create a more formal process to evaluate the superintendent position under a state evaluation framework.

Kuh told board directors on March 18 he feels they're on a "good trajectory" with their evaluation process and that he's in favor of waiting until June 30 to discuss an extension.

"He has 16 months on his contract, and if at the end of June 30 the board agrees to extend his contract, he'll have 24 months," Kuh said in March.

In a later interview Kuh said, "The clear message that has come forward from this group is a sense that they feel the board is saying one thing and doing something different," but reiterated director Gibson's comment that those community members are not privy to all discussions regarding the superintendent.

"We are appreciative of (people) asking questions voicing their support," Kuh said. "Compliments about the superintendent are well deserved. That's the positive side of this current narrative."

And while the optics of not extending the superintendent's contract may look negative, Kuh said, "A vote to maintain the contract is a vote to maintain the contract."

Now, with a little more than



Sequim High School students (from left) Vita Olson, Erin Dwyer, Brianna Cowan and Ana Benitez talk last week with Sequim School Board directors about their experience at the HOSA (Future Health Professionals) state conference in March. Sequim Gazette photo by Michael Dashiell

a year remaining on Neal's contract, Kuh said the board is not actively looking for a new superintendent. Neal interviewed for a superintendent position in the Hockinson School District earlier this year.

### Board changes coming

At the April 16 meeting, some speakers directed frustration toward board directors at no formalized progress toward addressing Sequim school facility improvements.

Board director Heather Short said, "It's hard to listen to these comments. You elected us. You trust us. If you think we put (facility issues) on the back burner, that's ridiculous. To question my resolve to passing the bond or acting in the best interest of our students, I take offense to that."

Both Henrikson and Short — whose positions, along with

director Jim Stoffer's are up for election this fall — said prior to the meeting they do not plan to run for re-election. (Stoffer later announced he is seeking re-election.)

"I'm not running again," Short said at last week's meeting. "Go ahead, throw your hat in the ring."

### Staffing concerns

Greywolf teacher Aaron Reno asked Sequim School Board directors and staff to reconsider a plan that would trim nearly four full-time teaching positions at Sequim High School.

"Consider adjusting the budget to (make cuts) that do not directly affect student learning," he said.

Neal noted that Sequim High School is, by state models, over-staffed.

"Our focus is not to get rid of anybody," Neal said.

"We have to follow the funding model so we don't wind up like some of these other (school districts)."

Neal noted that school districts often can see an enrollment "bubble," where a class is particularly larger

than the one previous. That can lead to staffing issues as a class progresses through the system, and because teachers are certified in specific areas and not in others they can't simply be shifted to fill gaps from school to school.

"We don't have a lot of overhead," Neal said. "We're looking at every entity, the district office included."

### Sequim adds snow days

Thanks to some significant snowfall earlier this year, students in Sequim schools are seeing their school year extended.

Board directors approved a letter requesting a two-day waiver from the state but Sequim schools need to make up the equivalent of four school days, so directors also approved a change to the calendar that adds June 14, 17, 18 and 19 to the 2018-2019 academic year.

Sequim students missed six days because of winter storms — with Gov. Jay Inslee declaring several of those in a state of emergency. Like other school districts, Neal said, Sequim needed to make sure they provide to students 1,027 hours of instructional time.

"The obligation falls to the district to provide those hours," Kuh said.

### Board director Stoffer announces re-election

Jim Stoffer, a Sequim School Board director since 2015 and the board's legislative representative, announced last week he plans to seek re-election in November.

Stoffer's position — District 3 — is one of three up for election this fall, though board directors Robin Henrikson and Heather Short already have announced they do not plan to seek re-election.

The candidate filing period in Clallam County is May 13-17. The top issue for board directors, Stoffer said, is addressing school buildings.

"Number one is our facility needs; we need to provide a safe learning environment that runs across the whole gamut (including) environmental conditions," he said. "Both of our elementaries are at (enrollment) max. Those problems were identified that that was going to occur back in 2008."

Soon after retiring from a 30-year career in the U.S. Coast Guard in 2010, Stoffer became involved in various school committees including a district facilities committee and serving as chair for Citizens for Sequim Schools before being elected to the board in 2015.

Stoffer said he'd like to continue serving as legislative representative for the board, to further building relations between the schools and the community, and to see more work completed on the district's strategic plan. Stoffer serves on the legislative committee for the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), one of two representatives for Director Area 4 (encompassing 15 school districts in four counties). He also serves on WSSDA's Federal Relations Network, WSSDA's Trust Lands Advisory Committee and on the Department of Natural Resources' Forest Health Advisory Committee on behalf of WSSDA.



STOFFER

  
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