

# THE NEWPORT MINER

THE VOICE OF PEND OREILLE COUNTY SINCE 1901

www.pendoreillerivervalley.com

Wednesday, July 3, 2019

Volume 117, Number 23 | 2 Sections, 16 Pages **\$1.00**

## Details emerge on bear incident

BY DON GRONNING  
OF THE MINER

PETTIT LAKE, Wash. – Further details are emerging from the bear encounter in

which a man was chased 20 feet up a tree before he shot and killed a mother black bear.

SEE BEAR, 2A

## Miller fined for campaign reporting violations

BY DON GRONNING  
OF THE MINER

OLYMPIA – Sheryl Miller, the Independent candidate for Pend Oreille County commissioner who lost to Mike Manus in the general election, was fined \$5,000 by the state Public Disclosure Commission, with \$4,500 suspended.

The PDC held an enforcement hearing Thursday, June 27 in Olympia. Miller attended by phone.

“We don’t usually get this far,” said Kim Bradford of the PCC. “Enforcement hearings are rare.”

The PDC charged Miller with violating campaign finance laws by failing to timely file mon-

SEE MILLER, 2A



MINER PHOTO|SOPHIA ALDOUS

Newport Hospital and Health Services CEO Tom Wilbur addresses the crowd at the ribbon cutting of the new River Mountain Village Advanced Care facility Friday, June 28. At left is Michele Page, RN, previous Director of Residential Care. Susan Schwartz, RN, right, is the current Director of Residential Care.

## New advanced care facility unveiled to the public

NEWPORT – Newport Hospital and Health Services celebrated the ribbon cutting and public unveiling of River Mountain Village Advanced Care (RMVAC) Friday, June 28. The ceremony opened with statements of appreciation by CEO Tom Wilbur.

Ribbon cutting honors were extended to Michele Page, previous NHHS Director of Residential

Care and the driving force behind the initial RMVAC vision, according to Jenny Smith, marketing director for the hospital district. Page, a registered nurse, expressed appreciation to community supporters of the project.

Approximately 350 people toured the new facility that will eventually house up to 72 residents.

River Mountain Village Advanced Care was

supported by a facility expansion bond approval by Public Hospital District No. 1 voters in a special election in April 2016. The \$10 million bond has a 20-year term. Recent estimates, which included completion of the fourth neighborhood, placed the overall budget around \$12.2 million, or approximately \$260 per square foot. The district funded anything beyond the

original \$10 million bond with cash reserves.

Initially, the approximately 54,000-square-foot facility will accommodate 54 residents, with an additional neighborhood of 18 beds ready for expansion. NHHS anticipates the growing need for residential care and wanted the ability to expand. The same services

SEE NHHS, 8A

## Selkirk graduate makes American Ninja Warrior history



COURTESY PHOTO|MATTHEW HAYWARD/NBC

“It was crazy, surreal,” says Sandy Zimmerman of becoming the first mom and oldest woman to complete a course on reality TV show ‘American Ninja Warrior.’

BY SOPHIA ALDOUS  
OF THE MINER

SPOKANE – It’s probably just a coincidence that when Selkirk High School graduate Sandy Zimmerman became both the first mom and oldest woman ever to complete a course on popular television program ‘American Ninja Warrior’ she did it on Mother’s Day weekend.

“For almost two months it was a secret,” Zimmerman recalls from her home in Spokane. “My family and I couldn’t tell anyone.”

Still, that doesn’t make it any less meaningful when you watch Zimmerman, 42, traverse across the difficult obstacle course in the Tacoma Dome. In the episode that aired on NBC June 24 her husband, Charlie, and their three children watch with baited breath that is only punctuated when their exhilaration overtakes them and they cheer and clap as Zimmerman deftly completes each challenge before reaching the Warped Wall, which contestants must climb in

order to finish the course and hit the buzzer on top. Each contestant gets three tries. On her first effort Zimmerman doesn’t make it, but on her second try she pulls herself up as the audience erupts in ovation and she slams the buzzer, letting out her own jubilant cry.

“When I first started this journey I had so much love and support before I even hit a buzzer,” Zimmerman says.

She cites an example where she wanted to rent the Garland Theater in Spokane to screen the episode of American Ninja Warrior for the public last Friday, so she put out a status update on her Facebook page asking if there were any businesses interested in sponsoring the screening. In three hours the money was raised and the theater was rented.

“Those people had no idea how that episode was going to end, if I was going to complete the course or not,” Zimmerman says. “I’m so grateful; this community really supports you and has your back.”

SEE ZIMMERMAN, 2A

### BRIEFLY

#### Newport school budget hearing July 8

NEWPORT – Newport School District officials are still putting their 2019-2020 budget together ahead of the budget hearing set for Monday, July 8, at noon at the district offices.

Financial director Debra Buttrey said the district plans on a general fund balance of \$16.713 million for the 2019-2020 school year. The budget balances between revenue and expenditures, she said.

The district budgeted based on a projected enrollment of 1,026 students, down from last year’s projected

enrollment of 1,035, Buttrey said.

The district will pay \$677,364 in debt service on \$3.205 million in bonds. That includes principle and interest. The district has no construction planned next year. The district plans on running an enrichment levy in February. The enrichment levy was formerly called the maintenance and operations levy.

#### Worker injured at Stimson

PRIEST RIVER – Bonner County EMS and West Pend Oreille firefighters responded to a work accident at

Stimson Lumber Co. in Priest River Tuesday, June 25.

According to the Bonner County EMS Facebook page, an initial report from the 911-dispatch center was that a patient was trapped in a conveyer belt. Dispatchers advised soon after that the patient was no longer trapped. First arriving units found the patient with serious injuries. Paramedics stabilized the injured patient and transported him to the Priest River Airport to meet a Life Flight helicopter, which transported the patient to Kootenai Health Hospital in Coeur d’Alene.

Multiple calls to BCEMS and Stimson Lumber were not returned before deadline.



8 08805 93179 2

CLASSIFIEDS	6B-8B	OPINION	4A	RECORD	5B
LIFE	1B	POLICE REPORTS	5B	SPORTS	3B
OBITUARIES	5B	PUBLIC NOTICES	7B-8B	BOOSTER PAGE	2B

**HAPPY  
FOURTH OF JULY!**

## THE NEWPORT MINER

Serving Pend Oreille County, WA

**Michelle Nedved**  
Publisher

**Jeanne Guscott**  
Office Manager

**Natalie Babcock**  
Assistant Office Manager

**Micki Brass**  
Advertising Manager

**J. Lindsay Guscott**  
Advertising Sales

**Cindy Boober**  
Advertising Sales

**Don Gronning**  
News Editor

**Sophia Aldous**  
Gem State Editor

**Brad Thew**  
Production

**J. Louis Mullen**  
Owner

### DEADLINES

Lifestyle Page.....Friday 12 Noon  
General News .....Monday 12 Noon  
Display Advertising .....Monday 5 p.m.  
Classified Advertising .....Monday Noon  
Hot Box Advertising .....Tuesday Noon  
Legal Notices .....Monday Noon

### BUSINESS HOURS

8:30 a.m.-5:15 p.m. Monday-Friday  
421 S. Spokane Ave., Newport, WA.

### YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Pend Oreille County, WA.....\$27.50  
West Bonner County  
and Spirit Lake, Idaho.....\$27.50  
Out-of-County & Elk.....\$37.35  
Single Copy.....\$1.00

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Newport Miner, 421 S. Spokane Ave., Newport, WA. 99156.

Telephone: 509-447-2433  
E-mail: minersubscriptions@povn.com

Published weekly by Newport Miner, Inc., 421 S. Spokane Ave., Newport, WA. 99156. Periodical Postage paid at Newport, WA.; USPS No. 384400.

### LETTERS POLICY

We welcome letters to the editor. Letters should be typed and submitted to The Miner and Gem State Miner office no later than 5 p.m. Friday for publication the following Wednesday. No letter will be published unless it is signed by at least one individual, even if the letter represents the view of a group. The letter must include a telephone number and address for confirmation of authenticity. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. The Miner reserves the right to edit to conform to our publication style, policy and libel laws. Political letters will not be published the last issue prior an election. Letters will be printed as space allows.

### HOW TO CONTACT US

By Mail: 421 S. Spokane Ave.  
Newport, WA 99156

By FAX: (509) 447-9222  
\* 24-Hours

Comments or Information  
By Phone: (509) 447-2433  
Our editors and writers welcome your calls to discuss issues, coverage or story ideas.

### News

minermews@povn.com

### Classified Ads

minerclassifieds@povn.com

### Display Ads

mineradvertising@povn.com

### Legal Ads

minerlegals@povn.com

### Subscriptions

minersubscriptions@povn.com

### CONNECT WITH US



The Miner Online  
www.pendoreillerivervalley.com

MOBILE EDITION

www.pendoreillerivervalley.com/m.htm

FACEBOOK



www.facebook.com/MinerNews

TWITTER



www.twitter.com/MinerNews

# Downtown project struggles with Timber Days deadline

BY SOPHIA ALDOUS  
OF THE MINER

PRIEST RIVER – Will the majority of Priest River's Downtown Revitalization Project be completed in time for Timber Days? There were those at Monday night's general council meeting who had their doubts, including Mayor Jim Martin, who expressed frustration at the seemingly slow pace of construction. "Quite frankly, I'm tired of

being the one having arrows shot at him over this because people are frustrated about the timeline," Martin said to Priest River's Director of Public Works Rex Rollicheck during the meeting. "If it is or isn't going to happen (in time for Timber Days), I need to know either way."

The contractor for the project is Earthworks Northwest, Inc. of Sandpoint. Construction began in May and includes High Street from just east of Wisconsin to

Cedar, and Main Street from just south of Highway 2. Council members approved adding waterline replacement under the two sections to the north and south in April. Last month, council approved a second add alternate for \$243,835 to complete improvements at the south end of Main. The total budget for the project is \$1,389,420.

Martin and council members were concerned that the High Street portion of the project

would not be completed in time for Timber Days July 26-27, as was originally agreed upon.

Representatives from Earthworks Northwest, Inc. were not at Monday night's city council meeting, but will attend a public meeting to discuss the project on Tuesday, July 9 at 3 p.m. at Priest River City Hall.

Rollicheck said that portion of the project is working in con-

SEE PR COUNCIL, 8A

## ZIMMERMAN: Graduated from Selkirk in 1994, went to GU

FROM PAGE 1A

Zimmerman graduated from Selkirk in 1994, getting a full ride scholarship playing basketball for Gonzaga University under her maiden name, Gere. As a kid she was a national Judo champion at age 12 and competed in NCAA Division I basketball, both times at the Tacoma Dome. It seems fitting that she should return there again to make history for the 11th season of American Ninja Warrior. Zimmerman had competed on the show twice before, in Los Angeles during seasons 8 and 9, but she had never made it to the second obstacle. As a child, she didn't believe she would even make it that far, despite her Judo sensei telling her she could go all the way to the Olympics.

"At the time I just thought, 'No way, that's not in the cards for kids like me,'" Zimmerman says. "We just try to get through the day without getting hit or yelled at or going to bed hungry. I didn't think I had the

right to even hope for something like that."

Zimmerman grew up in a military family. Because of abuse she suffered at the hands of people who were supposed to be watching over her while her parents worked, she spent time in the foster care system, living on welfare and struggling academically. She moved to Ione and started attending Selkirk High School her freshman year. It was there playing sports that she shined, says Selkirk Athletic Director Kelly Cain, who coached Zimmerman in basketball.

"It's not a surprise if you know her," Cain says of Zimmerman's accomplishment on American Ninja Warrior. "She was hardworking and self-motivated. When she tore her ACL her senior year she did physical therapy like a fiend. Even on graduation day I saw her out there on her bike, rehabbing away."

Zimmerman recalls Cain and his wife, Angela, as some of the people who encouraged and cared for her during

that tumultuous time in her life.

"I love that guy," she says of Cain. "Angela too. They took me under their wing and looked out for me. It was not the easiest childhood and they went the extra mile."

Zimmerman was inspired to train for American Ninja Warrior several years ago when one of her sons was channel surfing and the program came up on television. He called out for her to take a look at it. As she watched competitors try to conquer obstacles like the floating steps, "Barrel Roll" and "Lunatic Ledges," she thought it, "Looked like fun." As a result, Charlie and a contractor built a "ninja fortress" in the backyard, replicating several of the courses contestants on the show must conquer.

"It was our 17th wedding anniversary and Charlie asked me what I wanted and I was like, 'A salmon ladder,'" Zimmerman chuckles, referring to a set of metal rungs that athletes

climb by lodging a bar between them one at a time. It wasn't as easy as just building an obstacle course and working out though. Two years ago Zimmerman had to have two major surgeries on one of her knees, undergoing months of painful rehabilitation. This was followed by thumb surgery for both hands after she tore a ligament in her right thumb. The ligament in her left thumb had been torn in high school during a softball game.

"Basically, I couldn't grip with my thumbs," Zimmerman says. "But the knee was the worst. It hurt so bad, and I wondered why I was doing this, why I thought I could do it. I was at my rock bottom."

When her doctor told her she was cleared to start training for American Ninja Warrior again, Zimmerman says on the way home from her appointment, she began crying so hard she had to pull the car over.

"I was just filled with gratitude," she says. "Personally, I don't

believe that God rewards one person over another, but I felt so blessed in that moment."

From her triumphant finish at the American Ninja Warrior course, Zimmerman went on to compete in the City Finals back at the Tacoma Dome, which will air on NBC Monday, Aug. 5. Under contract she cannot talk about the outcome of that competition yet, but the winners go to finals in Las Vegas.

Whatever happens, Zimmerman says she has nothing but appreciation for the people who have helped her along the way, family, friends and strangers alike. The adults that invested in her as a child are the reasons she is now a physical education teacher at Michael Anderson Elementary at Fairchild Air Force Base.

"No one gets there alone," Zimmerman says. "If I can make even the slightest difference in a kid's life for the better, that's something worth doing, because so many have done it for me."

## MILLER: PDC is authorized to take issue to Superior Court

FROM PAGE 1A

etary contribution reports, failing to file campaign summary receipts and expenditures, failing to allow a person requesting to inspect the campaign books of account in the eight-day period proceeding the election and failing to provide campaign books of account to PDC staff pursuant to a subpoena duces tecum issued by PDC staff.

PDC staff recommended the \$5,000 civil fine.

"Staff recognizes that this is a significant penalty but believes that the penalty is warranted when you consider the aggravating factors," assistant attorney general Chad Standifer said.

In particular, two aggravating factors support the penalty, he said.

"Ms. Miller's non compliance did deprive the public of timely information during a time sensitive period, specifically the entire 2018 campaign cycle," he said, noting that the person she beat in the primary did file his campaign reports with the PDC

on time. "Ms. Miller has failed to engage in good faith efforts at compliance, including by failing to consult with PDC staff prior to the initiation of this enforcement action."

Standifer said Miller ignored PDC staff requests for information and ignored the subpoena for documents.

"Staff has had no contact since October 2018, when she participated in an initial hearing relating to the investigation," Standifer said. A week prior to that meeting, Stanford said that Miller had agreed to provide all information requested.

"We sit here eight months later and Ms. Miller has failed to file those reports," he said.

Miller consistently failed to meet her campaign disclosure obligations, he said. The only mitigating factor staff could find was that Miller was a first time candidate.

Miller testified that she was not personally served in March.

Miller said the \$5,000 penalty was a problem.

"I'm on SSI income," she said,

of \$770 a month. "That's the only income I have." Staff rebutted Miller's argument that she wasn't served in March, asserting that she had been served.

Staff said that a Margaret Underwood had requested to see the campaign records. Miller said she didn't recognize that name. Staff said Underwood also went by Margaret Taylor. Underwood made the complaint to the PDC, but the emails said Taylor.

Miller said she blocked Taylor because of harassment.

"Margaret Taylor, because of Messenger harassment and phone call harassment, and I never received any emails, was blocked because I was getting one and two in the morning messages of harassment," Miller said. Miller said she did not receive a request from anybody to look at her campaign books.

The problem started when Miller chose the full reporting option when she registered with the PDC, meaning that she intended to collect and spend more than \$5,000 on the campaign. In choosing the full reporting

method, she was required to submit campaign finance information. PDC staff were able to document a little more than \$2,700 Miller spent on the campaign.

Miller also said she had email problems. She said she did send the PDC copies of her campaign finances in January and didn't hear back.

"I thought this was all taken care of," Miller said.

PDC decided to fine Miller \$5,000 but suspend \$4,500 and give Miller a time payment schedule to pay. The \$4,500 is suspended with the understanding that Miller would have to submit completed forms within 10 days of the order. The PDC also required that Miller file campaign documents on time if she runs for office again.

If the financial fine in this matter is not satisfied, the PDC authorized taking the matter to Superior Court, seeking the full \$5,000.

It isn't the first trouble Miller has had with the PDC. A \$250 fine for failing to file financial forms went to collection.

## BEAR: Cubs able to nurse for a couple hours from dead mother

FROM PAGE 1A

The unidentified local man did the right thing Tuesday morning, June 25, when he encountered the bear while scouting elk hunting sites near Petit Lake in north Pend Oreille County near the Idaho line, according to Sgt. Tony Leonetti of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The man's dog was running ahead of the man when he jumped the bear.

"(The man) jumps up and makes himself large and makes noise," Leonetti said. "He did

everything we tell people to do."

The bear charged by him chasing the dog. The man immediately climbed a tree.

"He didn't hesitate," Leonetti said. "What he did was think on his feet."

The man was armed with a handgun and when the bear continued to go after the dog, he fired a warning shot in the ground.

The bear quit bothering the dog and came after the man, climbing about 10-12 feet up the tree. The man, about 20 feet up the tree, fired three shots, killing the bear. The man didn't

have bear spray, Leonetti said.

"Bear spray is a valid deterrent," he said. "So is a firearm."

After climbing out of the tree, the man called his wife and she reported the kill.

"It was initially reported as a grizzly bear attack," Leonetti said, as the bear was brown in color and the area is in grizzly bear country.

The man didn't go near the bear, Leonetti said.

"The bear ran off about 20 yards and he left in another direction," Leonetti said. The dog was found about four miles away.

The bear was a lactating female, so two game cameras and walk-in traps were put out to see if the cubs came back. The camera showed two tiny cubs, about three pounds each, coming back to nurse, but they were not trapped.

Leonetti said the cubs were able to nurse a couple hours Wednesday from their dead mother, which had been left there for that purpose, he said.

Leonetti wasn't initially optimistic about the cubs' survival, as they were only four or five weeks old and it had hailed hard in the area one night.

But Leonetti said Tuesday that one of the cubs keeps coming back to the site where the mother was, although the carcass had been removed after a day or so.

But the cub won't walk into the trap, although a big boar bear did Saturday.

The traps are for smaller animals, so the male bear was pretty confined in the trap. Game officers darted the bear with a tranquilizer and released him near the site.

Leonetti said they will continue to try to trap the cub.

"We are not going to give up hope," he said.