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Wednesday, January 1, 2020

SEQUIM GAZETTE

www.sequimgazette.com

Sequim's Hometown Newspaper

\$1.00
Vol. 47, Number 1



The Year in Review

BY MICHAEL DASHIELL
Sequim Gazette

A historic snowfall, new leader for Sequim schools, a major victory for Clallam County health care providers and the loss of several major community advocates.

Sequim had a busy 2019 to close out the decade, but few stories made more headlines than a story that figures to get prominent attention in 2020: the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's proposed medication-

assisted treatment (MAT) facility. Hundreds came out to Sequim City Council meetings to oppose the plan, many of them organizing the grassroots Save Our Sequim (SOS) group led by Jefferson County resident Jodi Wilke. Other groups such as the Voices for Health and Healing formed to support the tribe's proposal, one that looks to be officially filed with city staff in January 2020.

Here's a quick look back at other stories that made headlines throughout 2019:

January

Sequim Police investigated the Jan. 2 death of Sunbelt Apartment resident Valerie Claplanhoo. An autopsy later revealed she'd been killed with a knife or other sharp weapon or object that caused deadly injuries to her head and neck. No arrest has yet been made in the incident.

The discussion about ownership and management of Sequim's John Wayne Marina heated up. Ethan Wayne, president of John Wayne Enterprises, informed the Port of

Port Angeles on Jan. 3 that the firm opposes the marina being owned by any entity other than the port.

Pearl Harbor survivor Roy D. Carter of Sequim died on Jan. 3.

A partial government shutdown prevented access to Hurricane Ridge — and numerous winter sports activities — for about a month.

An online campaign to help hospitalized baby Gerald Ladd begins in January. Ladd was diagnosed at 4 months of age with a disorder

that sees fats build up in his body and are unable to be removed. After spending about a month at Seattle Children's Hospital, Ladd passed away on Jan. 27.

The discovery of beetles in its taxidermy collection led Dungeness River Audubon Center leaders to close the center on Jan. 24 and suspend its exhibits while they removed and froze items, an effort to rid the building of the drugstore beetle infestation.

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Mary Budke, second from left, sits with, from left, Scotty Janssen, Dalton Wilkinson and Seren McClurken in the games room of the Carroll C. Kendall Unit of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Olympic Peninsula in Sequim. Submitted photo



Budke took a long road to running Boys & Girls Clubs

“Filling gaps” is executive director’s mission

BY CONOR DOWLEY
Sequim Gazette

With nearly 500 youths and a crew of staffers looking after them at the two Boys & Girls Clubs in Sequim and Port Angeles, one might not think about the person who runs both facilities.

And that's just how Mary Budke wants it. The executive director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Olympic Peninsula organization says she prefers to stay in the background, making sure that her

staff and the children they serve have what they need to be successful.

An unusual journey

Budke didn't take a traditional path to becoming the woman in charge of the Boys & Girls Clubs in the region. Her start with the organization was a humble one: making snacks for users of the Sequim club.

After working as a “lunch lady” at

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Budke

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Helen Haller Elementary School for several years, Budke was asked by a teacher who also helped run the Sequim Boys & Girls Club's summer camp if she was interested in helping to run their kitchen for the summer in 2004.

Budke, who was also attending graduate school with an eye on becoming a teacher herself, was happy for the opportunity to make a little extra income.

"It helped pay my cell phone bill," she says with a laugh. "I really enjoyed being here," she says. "And when the executive director at the time (Todd Bale) said, 'Would you consider staying on and running our lunch program?' I said yes."

That led to Budke striking a delicate and hectic balance of working at the club, continuing to work Helen Haller's lunch program and attending graduate school — all while still raising two young boys, Brennan and Spencer.

When she was finally finishing her degree requirements, Budke was approached by the club's executive director in a moment that she says will stick with her forever.

"I turned around with a tray of tater tots that I just pulled out from the oven, and the executive director came in and he said, 'I just found out that you have advanced degrees. Would you open a kindergarten for us?'"

"And I'm standing there with my apron on and tater tots, and said, 'I didn't train for kindergarten!' He just said, 'You can do it.'"

Filling the gaps

After a teaching position at Helen Haller didn't work out, Budke turned to starting up what would become the club's KinderKids program, which started with Budke, Ashley Woolsey and Kelly Miller leading it.

Budke says the program was ultimately successful and ran until the Sequim School District began to offer full-day kindergarten.



Mary Budke is pictured with Sequim Boys & Girls Club youths soon after her appointment to the club's executive director position in November 2010. Sequim Gazette file photo by Matthew Nash

"That was the whole point of KinderKids," Budke said, "to fill that gap that families needed. We were so happy to see (the district make kindergarten full-day), because that's our job at the Boys and Girls Club, to fill those gaps for the community."

Woolsey, who was 18 when KinderKids began, is now the unit director at the Port Angeles clubhouse, while Miller is now a first grade teacher at Helen Haller Elementary.

Budke herself spent a fair amount of time filling gaps in the club itself, working in nearly every program area of the building before eventually being asked by Bale to interview for the open unit director position to run the Sequim clubhouse in 2007.

Just a few weeks after Budke started her job as unit director was a time she calls a "period of instability" for the Sequim and Port Angeles clubs, with both Bale and the board president resigning.

The club then went through two more executive directors, before the resignation of Bob Schilling in 2010 prompted then-board president Jerry Sinn to appoint Budke as the interim executive director while a search for a replacement began.

"Jerry asked me to interview for the job, but I told him no way. I loved the club and the mission too much to want to pack my belongings and leave eventually," Budke says of the time, referring to the

position's instability. Eventually Budke's husband Steven convinced her to apply for the position.

Budke was appointed the executive director and CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of the Olympic Peninsula in late 2010, which she calls the start of "an incredible learning curve."

Budke credits her more humble beginnings for her successes as the person in charge of the Sequim and Port Angeles clubhouses.

"The skills I learned being a lunch lady — timing, multitasking, scheduling — there's so much I got out of that," Budke said. "Also coming up in the ranks of the club, working in every program area, I knew everything about how the building ran."

"There (have) been much smarter people than I am in this position. Better educated, better equipped to do this job. But because of where I started and went through here, it gave me a really good understanding and a different perspective on the job, and that's the difference."

Club growth

Since her appointment, the two Olympic Peninsula clubs have seen their budgets double, as well as the number of children that they serve.

Budke says that her goal has always been to serve as many children and families as possible, and she's glad that the clubs have been able to do that so far. There's enough need for

more space at the Port Angeles clubhouse that they're in the process of constructing a new, 16,500-square-foot facility on the corner of Lauridsen Boulevard and Francis Street that Budke says is on-target to open by the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

"We'd been talking about it for years, but when the (Peninsula) Housing Authority told us they were going to be leveling all of the complexes there, we knew we had to get to work," Budke said.

The current Port Angeles clubhouse is on Peninsula Housing Authority (PHA) land in a converted four-plex built in the 1940s, on land that the PHA has plans to redevelop. After due diligence and work to look at potential sites for a new building or taking over an existing structure elsewhere, the PHA and Boys & Girls Club agreed that the PHA would lease land they own nearby on Lauridsen and Francis to the club for \$1 a year — a similar arrangement that clubs and the Sequim School District have for the Sequim clubhouse.

Budke says that the process of getting the new clubhouse built has been an incredible challenge.

"It's been such intense work," she says. "The capital campaign, I never realized how it would be. I knew I didn't know enough, so we hired (capital fundraising) consultants. But I learned that even as I get older, (I) find that you don't necessarily know everything about yourself. I found that I enjoy fundraising, because I so believe in what I'm fundraising for."

As for the future of the Sequim and Port Angeles clubs, Budke says she's always looking for what gaps need to be filled. "Workforce development is a big thing for us right now," she says. "That is really paramount: making sure that our children are ready to enter the academic and workforce worlds. What that means is we have job ready internships in the clubs, where kids work two hours a day when they qualify to be an intern after applying and interviewing for the position. They do a time sheet, they're given jobs and tasks to do and we're going to start a Paycheck 101 program so that they start to learn what to do when

they start getting their paychecks."

Budke adds that the clubs are starting to coordinate with several local businesses and Sequim High School to set up internships outside the club that will give students job training and school credit. She says the clubs are working on getting more comprehensive training programs in place not just for the interns, but for the clubs' regular staff as well.

"The clubs have to continue to evolve," she says.

Not just the club

Away from the clubs, Budke is a wife and mother of two who says she surprises people with how introverted she can be.

"Everyone assumes I'm outgoing all the time," she says, "but this job takes a lot of energy. When the weekend comes, I just want to go home and be quiet."

Even then, Budke stays busy — she says she bakes all of her family's bread, and even when they're doing something like watching a movie, she has to be doing something else too, like cleaning or folding laundry.

Originally from Wyoming, Budke met her husband Steven at Idaho State University, and they lived in Reno for several years before moving to Sequim with their two children, then 5 and 3 years old, in 1994.

"My husband was originally from Portland and felt that the Pacific Northwest was a great place to raise a family," Budke says. "We decided to not be too close to Portland and that we wanted a small town experience. Sequim was definitely that, and still is even with how much it's grown."

Budke says she's grown to love how the business community comes together to help each other, even with for-profit and nonprofit companies combining efforts for a cause.

"There are so many people here that I can call with a need either for the clubs or even an individual we know, and it's taken care of in an instant," she says. "People here are always willing to step up, and seeing how Sequim can work together so well is inspiring."



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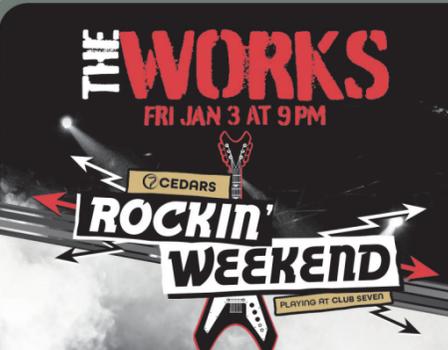
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