



Omak advances with victory over Colville

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Missing Colville pilot's body found in lake

THE OMAK-OKANOGAN COUNTY CHRONICLE

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Essential Reading for Okanogan and Ferry counties - Year 110 No. 54

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Fit for a queen



Shelby White, Miss Omak Stampede 2020, receives her crown from outgoing queen Vanessa Pershing during the Nov. 16 Omak Stampede banquet and coronation. For more on the banquet, see Page A5.

AL CAMP | The Chronicle

Suit filed over I-976

Two county mayors on board of one plaintiff

By DEE CAMP
The Chronicle

OMAK — The Association of Washington Cities, which represents cities and towns and provides various services, has joined a coalition of agencies suing the state over passage of Initiative 976.

Among the association's board members are Omak Mayor Cindy Gagne and Twisp Mayor Soo Ing-Moody.

The initiative, which is passing statewide in unofficial election returns, would repeal, reduce or remove authority to impose certain vehicle taxes and fees; limit annual motor vehicle license fees to \$30, except for voter-approved changes, and base vehicle taxes on Kelley Blue Book value.

Returns will be certified Nov. 26. Those opposed to the measure say it will take away needed funding for roads, bridge repairs, transit and other transportation-related projects.

A lawsuit challenging the measure was filed Nov. 13 in King County Superior Court by Garfield County Transportation Authority, King County, City of Seattle, Washington State Transit Association, Association of Washington Cities, Port of Seattle, Intercity Transit, Amalgamated Transit Union Legislative Council of Washington and Michael Rogers.

In the filing, they argue the Tim Eyman-sponsored measure violates several portions of the state Constitution. The suit asks the court to declare the measure unconstitutional and enjoin it from taking effect or being otherwise enforced.

"As with prior initiatives by the same sponsor, I-976 is a poorly drafted hodge-podge that violates multiple provisions

of the Constitution," said the suit.

Gagne, who is the association's District 3 director, declined to comment. Instead, she pointed to the association's official statement.

Ing-Moody, vice president of the board, did not respond by deadline to The Chronicle's request for comment.

The association's statement did not say whether the board voted to join the suit or whether it was an administrative decision.

"AWC is joining the coalition to clarify the initiative's constitutionality," said Peter King, association CEO. "Our purpose is to determine the legality of I-976."

"This initiative overturns local decisions of communities throughout the state that have chosen to invest in their own transportation needs. It casts into doubt state financing for numerous critical local transportation priorities."

More than 60 cities - including Bridgeport, Elmer City, Grand Coulee and Electric City - have established transportation benefit districts funded by a \$20 vehicle license fee. Twisp has a transportation benefit district, but it is funded by a 0.2 percent sales tax.

King said the measure would repeal local decision-making authority of those transportation benefit districts to impose vehicle license fees. They've had the ability to fund local transportation needs and priorities for more than 12 years.

According to the lawsuit, membership in the Association of Washington Cities is voluntary, although all of Washington's 281 incorporated cities and towns belong. Sixty of them have locally adopted licenses fees to fund their transportation benefit districts and in 2018 raised \$58.2 million through

See **SUIT**, page A7

Three Rivers will close OB unit

County-wide newborn deliveries shift to Mid-Valley

By DEE CAMP
The Chronicle

OMAK — The idea of making Mid-Valley Hospital a regional obstetrics center is becoming reality with the decision by Brewster's Three Rivers Hospital to close its obstetrics department next spring.

"I feel bad for Three Rivers," said Alan Fisher, CEO of Mid-Valley Hospital and a

proponent of regionalizing services.

North Valley Hospital, Tonasket, closed its obstetrics unit earlier this year.

Decisions by clinics, who employ the obstetricians, drove decisions by both North Valley and Three Rivers to end their newborn delivery services.

Family Health Centers

decided to move its obstetrics service to Mid-Valley Hospital as of April 1, 2020.

"This is the end of an era for Three Rivers Hospital," said Three Rivers CEO Scott Graham.

"We have long prided ourselves on our top-notch OB program. We're sad to see it come to an end, but we support Family Health Centers' choice

to centralize OB services in order to keep this invaluable service available in Okanogan County."

Family Health Centers' Medical Director Dr. James Wallace explained during the Oct. 2 Three Rivers board meeting that the decision was made because Family Health Centers has struggled to recruit more physicians to Okanogan County.

Hospital spokeswoman Jennifer Best said Three Rivers Hospital administration

See **HOSPITAL**, page A7

"We have long prided ourselves on our top-notch OB program. We're sad to see it come to an end ..."

Three Rivers Hospital CEO Scott Graham

Remember Pearl Harbor?

Artwork discovery leaves local couple puzzled

Home improvement project turns into quest for history

Story, photos by BROCK HIRES
The Chronicle

WHAT STARTED OUT as a simple home improvement project for an Okanogan couple quickly turned into a quest for information into their 1921 Okanogan home.

While removing shelving from his basement pantry over the Veterans Day holiday weekend, Wayne Turner said he was startled to see three distinctive paintings on his wall. One, of

an airplane with the words, "Keep 'Em Flying," adjacent to the words "Remember Pearl Harbor," and an outline of what appears to be the Axis leaders of World War II - Adolf Hitler, Hideki Tojo and Benito Mussolini - accompanied by the phrase, "Beat the Axis."

"It blew me away," Wayne Turner said. "I didn't know what was going on here."

His wife, June, added, "they were so well done."

"Who did this?" she said. "Maybe someone can tell us something."

According to Okanogan County tax records, Wayne purchased the 225 Conconully St., home, in 1972 from Vesta Elgin.

A brief search by Okanogan County Historical Society volunteer Barry George shows Vesta (Rice) Elgin graduated from Omak High School in 1915 - as a member of a class of seven students.

She married William Grant Elgin on Oct. 20, 1915.

"William Elgin was the son of Grant Elgin, who owned a ranch south of Shellrock Point (near the current Precht-Harrison-Nearents Chapel)," George said. "The small creek passing there is Elgin Creek, flowing out of Elgin Canyon."

In 1920, the Elgins apparently lived on Fourth Avenue, but

See **ARTWORK**, page A7



BROCK HIRES | The Chronicle

Wayne and June Turner study the history of the Axis leaders of World War II - Adolf Hitler, Hideki Tojo and Benito Mussolini - at their kitchen table.



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS



ANIMAL FOSTER CARE

A shelter for outdoor cats, made by an Animal Foster Care Cat Shelter supporter.

Picnic coolers sought for cat shelters

OKANOGAN — Old picnic coolers are being sought by Animal Foster Care Cat Shelter for use as insulated shelters for outdoor, un-owned and feral cats.

A volunteer recently transformed an old cooler into a shelter and donated it to the cat shelter, 4 Spring Coulee Road. Several colonies of un-owned cats are being tended by volunteers around the county.

The volunteer offered to make more shelters, said shelter officials. Donations of coolers with intact seals may be made before Nov. 30 at the shelter.

To transform the shelter, a hole is cut near one end and the cut is lined.

FBLA seeks sponsors for competition

TONASKET — Tonasket High School senior and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) member Emma Alexander is looking for individual sponsorships for the upcoming state competition, to be held during the State Business Leadership Conference in Spokane April 8-11.



Alexander

Alexander, the vice president of the north central region, said FBLA works with high school and middle school students to prepare them for careers, and a \$110 sponsorship would provide a student to compete at the national conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Contributions are tax deductible.

The Washington Awards Program offers students the opportunity to compete in over 65 unique areas of business, entrepreneurship, marketing, accounting, graphic design, information technology and management.

Sponsors receive benefits including recognition in the conference program as the competitive event sponsor, recognition on screen during the Awards of Excellence Session, and the ability to personally present awards in the sponsored event.

To become a sponsor, see www.wafbla.org and look for sponsorship opportunities under the "Partner's" tab.

Omak student wins OSU scholarship

STILLWATER, Okla. — Omak native Riata Marchant, an agribusiness major at Oklahoma State University, has received a scholarship from the school.

Tom Coon, vice president for agricultural programs, and Cynda Clary, associate dean of academic programs, presented the CHS University Scholarship to Marchant during the university's recent College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources new student scholarship reception.

The scholarship is part of \$1.7 million in total scholarships students received for the 2019-2020 academic year from the college and its academic departments.



Marchant

Glacier declares quarterly dividend

KALISPELL, Mont. — Glacier Bancorp Inc., parent company of North Cascades Bank, has declared a quarterly dividend.

The dividend of 29 cents per share was declared by the company's board during a Nov. 13 meeting. The company has declared 139 consecutive quarterly dividends and has increased the dividend 45 times.



An outline of what appears to be the Axis leaders of World War II — Adolf Hitler, Hideki Tojo and Benito Mussolini — accompanied by the phrase, "Beat the Axis," is painted on an Okanogan couple's basement wall.

ARTWORK
Couple seeks info on paintings

from page A1

later moved to the Nighthawk and Loomis ranching area in the 1930s and 1940s

"William's World War II draft card list his address as Loomis, Wash.," George said.

From July 1948 to August 1951, the W. G. Elgin address was listed as 255 Conconully St., in the phone book. As of August 1952, the W. G. Elgin address is 225 Conconully St.

Why the address changed remains unclear.

Although William Elgin was in the service, George said he doubts the Elgins created the drawings.

"I don't think they had anything to do with the artwork," he said.

Kay Sibley with the Oroville Borderlands Historical Society echoed.

"I think you are looking for someone that had the house between 1940 and 1947," Sibley said. "Then, if it is not one of the individuals in the home it would have to be a good friend that was allowed to draw on their walls. The plane might indicate that someone from the family is flying."

The Turners, who vacationed in Germany earlier this summer, said discovery of the artwork is almost eerie.

"We spent close to two weeks in Germany," June Turner said. "There was an emphasis on the Cold War and World War II; we saw the ruins of Hitler's

Tribe, Pasco plan agreement

NESPELEM — The Colville Confederated Tribes and City of Pasco are close to signing an agreement affirming their intent to work together on several issues of mutual interest.

The agreement in principal is scheduled to be signed at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 20 in Pasco. Leaders from the city and tribe announced the agreement Nov. 15.

"This is an historic agreement for the Colville tribes," said Colville Business Council Chairman Rodney Cawston. "We are very pleased to lay the groundwork for future cooperation on important projects and matters for the benefit of all our community members."

"Growing up in Washington, many of us have a basic

familiarity with the indigenous tribes of our area and region like the Confederated Tribe of the Colville and I've always enjoyed personally visiting and camping weekends on reservation lands," said Pasco Mayor Matt Watkins. "What's been a learning opportunity for me, given their recent purchase of land in Pasco, is the wider breadth of their traditional ancestral lands and history, including the Palouse region, and that hundreds of Colvilles have long lived and worked in the Tri-Cities."

The tribe recently purchased property in Pasco as part of its efforts to recognize the area as the homeland of the Palus, one of the confederation's 12 tribes.

"The Palus people lived in

"This is a historic agreement for the Colville tribes. We are very pleased to lay the groundwork for future cooperation on important projects and matters for the benefit of all our community members."

Colville Business Council Chairman Rodney Cawston

this part of the country for millennia, and their connection to their historic territory is strong to this day," Cawston said. "The word 'Pasco' is in fact derived from the Palus place name 'Pasx a.'"

The written historical record since Lewis and Clark recognizes the region as Palus homeland, said Cawston.

"We will be working with the City of Pasco to expand public awareness of the Palus' culture and traditions," he said.

"The city is looking forward to a long and fruitful relationship with the Colville tribes as we work together for the betterment of our communities," said Pasco City Manager Dave Zabell. "I am pleased that the Colville tribes have chosen Pasco to invest in for the long-term."

The agreement in principle was passed unanimously by both the Colville Business Council and the Pasco City Council earlier this month.

HOSPITAL

Three Rivers will close OB unit

from page A1

spent the following month gathering data, running financial analyses, and having discussions with Family Health Centers leadership and providers regarding the future of obstetrics at Three Rivers.

Based on the analysis, hospital officials determined the financial resources needed to recruit the necessary physicians would be too significant. The board determined it wouldn't be feasible to continue OB services without the Family Health Centers physicians.

Three Rivers Hospital records an average of 90 births

per year.

In July, Mid-Valley had 20 deliveries, bringing the year-to-date total to 108.

Confluence Health announced last winter that its doctors would no longer provide obstetrics services at North Valley. The ability to provide cesarean sections was a particular concern.

That prompted leaders of Okanogan County's three hospitals to talk about the possibilities of additional cooperation and possibly designating specializations at each facility.

Mid-Valley Hospital commissioners were briefed March 12 on early discussions by the administrations of Mid-Valley, North Valley and Three Rivers hospitals.

In May, Fisher said the hospital districts talked about "what it might look like" if the three cooperated even more, perhaps

by designating one as an obstetrics center, another as a long-term care and rehabilitation hub, another as a surgery center and so on.

Area hospitals, clinics and doctors began working on ways to coordinate and provide obstetrics services to patients county-wide, Fisher said.

Dr. Jennifer Thill, Mid-Valley chief medical officer, told the Mid-Valley board in May that doctors are looking at OB care on a county-wide basis, not just by community. Doctors have met separately from the main hospital group.

"We will look at combining services to provide OB care to the county," she said.

By August, Mid-Valley had added new equipment to its obstetrics department and had absorbed North Valley Hospital's obstetrics load. It also gave its obstetrics department

a facelift.

With a fresh coat of paint and a new partnership with BluElephant Photography, mothers and babes began seeing artwork of local newborns on the wall, as well as a Mid-Valley-provided, complimentary gift basket and professional photo of their baby after delivery.

With the help of the Omak-Okanogan Civic League and the Mid-Valley Hospital Foundation, the hospital also was able to secure a brand new BiliSoft Blanket to treat jaundice in newborns. Other planned additions include new, state-of-the-art patient monitoring systems, Panda baby warmers and some room remodeling.

Coulee Community Hospital, Grand Coulee, also offers delivery services. Ferry County Memorial Hospital, Republic, has not offered an OB unit for several years.

SUIT

Suit filed over I-976 Suit filed

from page A1

those fees.

The state Office of Financial Management estimated the loss to those districts would be \$349 million over the next six years, according to the filing.

Anticipated impacts to other plaintiffs also were outlined in the filing.

The suit also alleges transit services and transportation projects will be impacted

statewide, and argues that state law allows formation of transportation benefit districts funded by motor vehicle fees.

In addition, the measure would eliminate funding sources — license fees and a 0.3 percent sales tax on vehicle sales — for the state multimodal account, causing an estimated \$1.5 billion cut to the account over the next six years.

That and other fund losses would prevent completion of necessary local transportation and transit projects throughout the state, according to the suit.

King said the association's board of directors has adopted increased transportation funding as a key priority for the 2020

legislative session and is asking the Legislature to "adopt a comprehensive set of transportation policies that provide robust new resources and local options."

The association will pursue that priority "with a renewed sense of urgency," he said.

According to the Association of Washington Cities, Bridgeport took in \$41,323 in transportation benefit district revenue in 2018, Electric City had \$15,503, Elmer City had \$6,415 and Grand Coulee had zero.

All rely on a \$20 vehicle license fee.

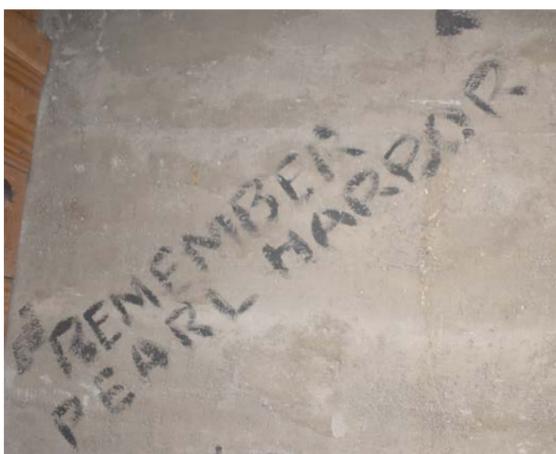
The Twisp transportation benefit district, funded by a 0.2 percent sales tax, took in \$45,987.

Several public works officials in Okanogan County and its cities said they're waiting to seek how the initiative might impact their transportation budgets and state funding programs.

"We have not been contacted regarding projects being un-funded," said Jeffrey Sarvis, Winthrop public works superintendent.

The town has one state Transportation Improvement Board-funded pavement preservation project funded in 2019 for \$110,000 that will not be complete until next spring.

"I do not anticipate that this project will be affected," he said. Other 2020 projects will rely on federal funds.



The phrase "Remember Pearl Harbor" is scribed on Wayne and June Turner's wall.



An airplane is accompanied by the words "Keep 'Em Flying"

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