

From the editor —

Serving the nation, protecting the country

At this time of year, we remember and honor our war dead, especially those who have died in vain on various far flung shores. Our military personnel have been in too many battles in too many places over too many decades of our country's history. The dead need to be remembered. All who have been in service to this country need to be remembered. Some of our bravest and most patriotic citizens have dedicated their lives to this country by insisting on saying no and incessantly asking why. They, too, are patriots serving the nation.

The early 20th century poet Claude McKay wrote "Service, a beautiful word that has fallen on bad days."

This Memorial Day week offers the opportunity for reflecting on how we choose to best serve and protect our country today. There is the necessary work citizens do to continue our vital democracy, the social purpose of our protection and promotion.

There is the country itself — the purple mountain majesties that we walk in, paint and log as well as sing about.

We long ago lost the War on Poverty. For decades we have been mired in the War on Drugs. Some want a wall but no explicit war has been declared against immigrants.

The biggest destruction we are living through, where American fatalities have piled up from coast to coast and one community after another lies in wreckage, comes from the environment. We are totally defeated by Mother Nature's flames, floods, storms, winds and waves, an ongoing onslaught yet to be acknowledged, much less declared public enemy number one, by Congress or the president.

As much as the scientists have measured the rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide, reduction in sea ice and loss of species, the insurance companies have equally measured the annual billions of dollars in claims from nature's destruction.

The Pentagon's generals have seen their bases swamped and their weapons destroyed. The military lives to plan but they won't execute without leadership. That leadership comes from Congress and our nation's chief executive.

The citizen militias we need to form are to organize letter writing and telephone campaigns and mass meetings to gain our representatives' attention and require that they protect and serve the public by addressing the needs of Mother Nature.

We cannot defend ourselves against the perils of climate change or defeat the environment. Coddling Mother Nature and serving her with the respect and love she deserves, now that might provide the ammunition to win this war. — ken stern

Musings — on the editor's mind

I was 12 in 1967 and 15 in 1970. I grew up watching the six o'clock news on a black and white TV. My family's good TV then was a portable black and white, on a wheeled stand. It was in the room over the garage we called the porch: an exterior door led to it and the windows were opened by metal turn knobs.

I barely knew what or where Africa was, but I watched people in Biafra fighting for their own country, a revolutionary war.

I came into my teen years watching the Vietnam War unfold nightly on the news. I can't remember if I saw the girl in flames running down the road, her clothes burned off by the jellied gasoline called napalm. I can't remember if I watched the last load of Americans leaving by helicopter from the American embassy. I would have seen that in San Francisco in April 1975. I had hitchhiked out to California

that January.

I do remember the near constant live coverage from Kent State in 1970. I grew up in Toledo, Ohio, 150 miles west. In those days local stations had news reporters. Cleveland, or perhaps the Kent station, was beaming reports as the story unfolded: students taking over the ROTC building, being chased by helicopters through town at night. Those kids were maybe five years older than me.

Until I was 50 years old, in 2005, I thought Vietnam would always shape our culture and our country's decision making. I was wrong, of course. Whether my elders and peers died or not, Vietnam faded from the nation's consciousness. It has faded from mine.

But not entirely, and so when an exhibit of Vietnam War photos came to the San Juan Islands Museum of Art, I went. I hope you will go, too. I try not to use the word should, but you should go. You have this weekend: it closes June 3. The museum is open Friday-Monday.

And bring your kids and your grandkids and for their sakes more than yours, remember and tell them what life was like in this country fifty years ago. That history lights our future. It always will, unless we forget about it. Don't.

Clarification

Allen Rozema, executive director of Skagitians to Preserve Farmland, is responsible for ordering the "marshmallow" sign that la beled the Messman's hay field on Chilberg Road east of town. Bob Raymond carries out orders to put the signs up.

LETTERS •

Johnson's outstanding record

Lettuce consider this bunch of actions:

A simple online search for the "La Conner Food System" results in a variety of sites — some with logistic details that highlight nutrition information, free/reduced lunch ratios, farm partnerships and practices. A simple online search for the La Conner School District website depicts similar information, along with the importance of establishing and supporting wellness, placing a high priority on serving students the most nutritious meals possible and the value placed on optimum good health.

Students are fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in culinary classes and learn the operations of a professional kitchen. All of these developments that support building community in a collaborative manner simply don't line up with recent actions taken by the Superintendent to terminate Georgia Johnson, food services director.

Georgia is an active, enthusiastic and humble member of the Skagit community who has been dedicated to creating and expanding a vision and a plan of action that K-12 youth can participate in, and one that involves parents and the larger school system.

She has supported numerous community events as a volunteer chef, donor of delicious dinners and shared her wordsmithing and poetic talents. Just looking at the size of the La Conner school district (approximately 605 students) compared to the overall population of La Conner (approximately 900) and Swinomish Indian Tribal Community (of similar size) we are talking about a great many youth, parents, staff and faculty who have benefited from Georgia's work.

As a state employee (WWU, Career Services Center) I work in the realm of public service, going above and beyond what the state classification might describe, and no one without just cause should ever experience the scenario Georgia currently is going through.

I encourage the La Conner School Board to ask themselves what merit the school superintendent has demonstrated in this case, and likely others coming forth. What message has been sent to the district employees, students and the larger school community? What message is being sent to incoming students, and to alumni who have chosen a culinary profession based on the enriching experiences provided over the past 17 years and to anyone who can now identify (and possibly even prefer) a garden-grown carrot over a corndog.

Thank you for considering this request.
Britta Eschete
Mount Vernon

Town needs turkeys

While walking along Third Street recently I found myself pining for a weirder, stranger time in La Conner history. This town could use an injection of weird stat, before it succumbs to being a sterile, Norman Rockwell painting come to life as an interactive exhibit for day tripping Seattleites.

It is time we right the wrong done almost ten years ago and bring back the La Conner turkeys. That's right: the bird that Benjamin Franklin so wisely recommended as the symbol of the United States of America. A bird that helped keep the charm and true spirit of our strange town on the channel alive. Not to mention they keep tourists coming, even after the tulips lose their heads.

Sure, they may stop traffic on occasion and leave their droppings in a few yards. The claims that these turkeys were unsanitary were silly and downright ornithophobic. With the logic used to give the turkeys the boot that means we must get rid of all our feathered friends and how about the dogs, cats, squirrels and deer that run rampant in our streets?

La Conner is an eclectic town built by farming, fishing and art. Let's keep it weird. Fecal matter be darned, let's bring back the town bird!
Wes Dunbar

Private Johnson-Board meeting needed

Dear editor

Georgia Johnson is a dear friend of mine, and I hate seeing her go through all this pain. When I have spoken to her about the outcome she would like to see, it has always been to tell her story in private to the school board without the superintendent present. This does not seem to be an outrageous request, and I am hopeful that the board will grant it.
Cathie Wyman



1. ADVERTISEMENTS: Which company's ads feature a character called Elsie the Cow?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What is the capital of America Samoa?
3. MUSIC: Which 1960s song features the lyrics, "Sont des mots qui vont tres bien ensemble"?
4. INVENTIONS: In what year did American Express introduce an international credit card network?
5. MOVIES: Which island is the setting for the film "The Tea House of the August Moon"?
6. HUMAN BODY: What does a Brannock device measure?
7. CHEMISTRY: What is the first element on the Periodic Table?
8. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: How many red and white stripes are on an American flag?
9. LITERATURE: What was Shakespeare's wife's name?
10. LANGUAGE: What does the German term "blitzkrieg" mean in English?

Answers

1. Borden Dairy Company
2. Pago Pago
3. "Michelle," by the Beatles
4. 1958
5. Okinawa
6. A person's shoe size
7. Hydrogen
8. 13, for the number of colonies that declared independence from Great Britain
9. Anne Hathaway
10. Lightning war or rapid attack

Council passages: May 14 meeting

By Ken Stern

During the first half of its May 14 meeting the Town Council approved:

- Closing Second Street between Morris and Washington for the MoNA auction, June 6-10.

- An ordinance amending the sewer code. This creates general facilities charges for new connections to the sewer system for residential and commercial customers and eliminates historic credits.

- The ServPro agreement for \$3,120 for the April work to remove mold from the Town Hall vault and reception area. The estimate had been for \$10,400.

- A resolution committing itself to necessary compliances ahead of submitting for a Community Development Block Grant from the state department of Commerce.

- Tabled the agreement with Crown Castle.

Councilmember Jacques Brunisholz expressed surprise at the scale of the new sculpture on Ward Phillip's Morris Street property at Fifth Street. Planner Marianne Manville Ailes explained the permitting process, including posting a notice in Town Hall.

Residents Rick Dole and Kevin Sunrise brought up speeding on Third and Sixth Streets and in town and Sunrise submitted a plan for slowing traffic.

Resident Tracy McCain complained about persons speeding on North Third Street on their way to and from work at the boat yards. Sgt. Willard is the Sheriff's Office traffic sergeant as well as managing the La Conner detachment. He said he will deploy a motorcycle patrol.

Mayor Ramon Hayes offered to meet with employers in response to Councilmember Bill Stokes and McCain's suggestion. Brunisholz advocated speed bumps. Hayes lamented the costs challenge for the Town and said "2020 will be the year of traffic." Hayes and Administrator Scott Thomas met with the owners of the Moore Clark property again. The owners are not interested in development or selling. Dialogue will continue.

The Mayor's Roundtable and the last 80 minutes of the meeting were devoted to resident comments and discussion on putting the former Kirsch property on North First Street up for sale. The May 22 Weekly News reported the story.

Councilmember Mary Wohleb's absence was excused. Councilmembers Brunisholz, Chamberlain, Leaver and Stokes were present.



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Please write! Letters up to 350 words are welcome as are longer analyses and statements. Write a 450 word guest column. Letters must be typed. Emailed files preferred. Deadline: 5 p.m. Sunday for next issue. Include your name, address and phone number for verification. Letters are only edited for punctuation and grammar. Send to: editor@laconnernews.com



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From the editor —

Grounding the Growlers

Who are the patriots and the heroes: the guys with guns and blue uniforms, more so in Washington, D.C. than Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, or Washington state's skinny attorney general and the Citizens of Ebey Reserve who got Bob Ferguson's attention and gained him as their ally? The right political cartoonist will draw Ferguson as David with his slingshot taking on the U.S. Navy, Goliath. Ferguson and COER filed lawsuits July 9 in federal court, halting at least temporarily the Navy's plans to add 36 EA-18G Growler aircraft at the base.

For over four years the Navy has moved ahead with plans to add Growlers and increase take-offs and landings by a dramatic "100,000 per year for the next 30 years," as the Sound Defense Alliance puts it in last week's press release. Objectively speaking, the Navy failed as a good neighbor and collaborator, its defiance's defining moment leaving negotiations with a bevy of local, state and federal organizations instead of reaching an agreement for researching and mitigating the jets' noise last November.

Ferguson, acting for us citizens as the state's lawyer, and COER, a Coupeville area citizens' organization, have a Martin Luther length list of the Navy's failure to comply with federal law: the National Environmental Policy Act and the Administrative Procedure Act. For good measure, COER has also sued because documents were not fully provided under Freedom of Information Act requests.

The state's lawsuit asserts the "Navy arbitrarily dismissed impacts to human health and child learning from increased noise," failed to analyze harm to wildlife and "did not consider reasonable measures to provide" protection to the 17,000 acre Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve.

The closer one examines the Navy's inability to take seriously researching and documenting the breadth and depth of the impact the Growlers have on our complex, fragile ecosystem, the more one is left wondering what our military is protecting and why it is indifferent to disruption of life for fellow U.S. citizens.

And, not only are orcas and salmon threatened, but so is another endangered species, the marbled murrelet, a small seabird.

Most troubling are the intangibles: the truth and the rule of law. The Navy's filing of seriously deficient Environmental Impact Statements brings to mind the star athlete who doesn't study and expects to pass exams based on his connections. When the biggest player on the block has its sworn purpose to protect and serve and yet does not adequately research and prepare reports stating the consequences of throwing its weight around, citizens feel they are confronted and offended instead of respected and defended.

If we have to destroy villages in order to save them, maybe the mission needs to change. Maybe our policy needs to be to leave the villages alone, let them be in peace.

Peace. Now there is a novel idea.

— ken stern

Musings – on the editor's mind

If you were alive then, reflect back on July 20, 1969. Were you watching NASA's, and our, moon landing?

I was 14. My siblings and I were on the porch, our house's TV room. My very smart older sister wanted to be an astronaut – while still in high school. She majored in physics and then earned a Ph.D.

What a different world we lived in in 1969. Most adults could not have imagined – made up – that anyone would claim the moon landing was staged.

Almost everyone, maybe even the libertarians and the communists, was in unison that landing on the moon was a good thing.

Oh, what a time it was when we could all agree on an unbridled good and could bask in a sense of shared mission.

While waxing poetic about this, I need to remember that by the summer of 1969 a majority had either turned against the Vietnam War or would soon be

in that camp; we were a year out from Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination and almost no straight persons had the Stonewall riot on their radar screens.

So serious divisions among us, yes. But we were also a nation that did come together under the light of the moon. We were a nation in awe of the photos of a blue and white marble planet Earth adrift in the blackness of space.

And maybe some were even then analyzing the crowning achievement, the true miracle that powered the success of NASA. It wasn't the engineers, not the rockets, nor the space capsule or the space suits and certainly not the computer technology, which pales against today's smart phones.

No, some figured out, the success of the missions to the moon was in getting tens of thousands of people to work together, from coast to coast to coast, to build teams and support each other and to achieve an impossible dream whose purpose wasn't for the few, but was for all of us (even if the fear of the Soviets and the heat of the Cold War fueled our zeal).

We did it, us, one nation indivisible.

Such a world did exist on the narrow, Win one for the Gipper level.

That's what I want to believe our world was like 50 years ago this week.

CLARIFICATION

Citizens planning or considering write in campaigns for La Conner Town or School District positions will file for the November election. There is no primary for these offices. Skagit County's Election Office has write in candidate guidelines.

• LETTERS •

Some positive comments on the Seattle Cascade Drum and Bugle Corps

Our house fronts the school playfields, so there are few people in town more directly affected by the Corps than we are. Although we understand that the length and intensity of the Corps practices can be annoying to some people, we found the experience a very positive one. The dedication, talent, tenacity, and grit shown by these amazing young people was very impressive. Talented musicians to begin with, these young people endure 12-hour days of intense physical activity (comparable to Army boot camp) to perfect a 15 minute routine. And they pay for the privilege!

So regardless of whether you love or hate the sounds of their practices, you can only admire the dedication shown by a remarkable group of young people! Rick and Reinhild Thompson

More thanks for Nell Thorn in our lives and in our town

Susan and Casey,

Thank you for supporting our Wednesday night "book club" at Nell Thorn's these past several years. We are grateful for the many magical birthday celebrations we had at the communal table you religiously reserved for us.

You have always demonstrated the value of community and the importance of celebrating with each other. We will forever cherish that. Enjoy the next chapter! We will miss you dearly.

Rene'e Matthews
And the Wednesday
Night Book Club

Casey and Susan:

Thank you for so many years of sweet pleasure – at the Wild Iris Bistro for guests and "special guests" at Nell's on the Hill where locals ruled and everyone else knew about the cuisine before they arrived and at the New Nell's with the gorgeous bar and beautiful deck. Thank you for Natalie, Aaron, Rebecca, Denise, Jen, Beth Ann, Emily Ann and Madison, who have made Nell's feel like home. Thank you for the flowers and all the special touches that show you care. And thank you for Shea, Tamara, Rianna and the new owners that will carry your amazing vision into the future.

We have said many times that if we ever listed our house for sale, the tag line would read "lovely single family home three blocks from Nell Thorn Restaurant," because La Conner would not be what it is if you had not taken the big risk and shot for the moon.

Much love,
Allan Olson and Charlotte Underwood

Warning: rifle shots in town

Dear neighbors on Rainier and Talbot streets,

On Saturday, July 13 at 4:30 p.m., I witnessed the tenant at 525 Rainier shoot a rifle at my cat. He was on his back porch and shooting toward his back fence. There were no less than 5 small children within the trajectory of his aim.

The deputies who responded, informed me that because of the way the town code is written, discharging a pellet rifle within the city limits would be only a civil matter.

I hope that no small pet or child has to suffer an injury before a pellet rifle is considered a "firearm." Until then, be advised that this person has possession of this weapon and could suffer no consequence if he chooses to use it again.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Johnson

An open letter to the La Conner community

On June 7, the school board received a vote of no confidence against Superintendent Meissner from our unions. We met with union leadership to better understand their concerns; we value their perspectives and have listened deeply. The board has also been listening to other voices and perspectives in our community.

One of the board's main responsibilities is to hire, supervise and evaluate the superintendent. We believe that this situation presents an opportunity for all of us to learn and grow, including the board. We also believe in our collective ability to work together to find common ground and a positive path forward.

The school board and superintendent operate as a team. When we hired Dr. Meissner, we recognized the passion, conviction and leadership skills she would bring to La Conner. As we have worked with her through some difficult issues, she keeps us informed, seeks our input and consults with us on all major decisions. As a result, the board renewed and extended her contract last February.

The board and Dr. Meissner have taken to heart the concerns raised. Over the coming weeks, we will be working together on an action plan to improve communication and culture, and to clarify the district's decision-making and problem-solving processes. We trust that all parties will work together in our shared commitment to the district and the children we serve.

Sincerely,

The La Conner School District Board of Directors
Janie Beasley, Chair; Brad Smith, Vice Chair; Lynette Cram
Susie Deyo; Kate Szurek

So long, it's been good to know you

Dear La Conner:

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you...

It has been two weeks since Nell Thorn landed in the skilled hands of her new ownership, and there are already murmurings of deliciousness...

Two years ago we realized that we needed to offer the good ship Nell for sale.

It took us a year to have the courage to list her and just about another year for her new captain and us to find one another, thanks to Mark Hesch.

Casey and I each made our way to La Conner when we were nineteen years old, brimming with enthusiasm and happiness to be in this beautiful place. Our family raised each other here, this is our home. Our daughters worked side by side with us through the years bringing their unique skills to Nell's table. Louisa and Madeline from the early years to Natalie (aka Baby Nell) who saw us through many a closing over her 10 years of bartending, including the especially tender Sunday night this June, sprinkled with a quite a few of our favorite locals as well as Nell's new owners Ted and Cathy sending us off...

We started Nell Thorn in December of 2001 on a shoe string budget, with blessings and loans from family and friends. In 2014 when she needed a new home and landed on the waterfront, once again she needed blessings and loans as well as miracles to be where she is today . . . from the building vision of Joy-Joy, Dan and Bill, to the endless support of friends and family including Jim and Anne, Rick and Kay, Tom and Patty, Sally and Bill, Sally and John, Aunt Janie and Uncle Fred; and our dear locals who volunteered helping us move, Gary and Gordon!

We are amazed and grateful for the skilled work of all the brilliant contractors, designers, artists who were involved in the tender "wright-ing" of a historic building, including Ray Williams' traditional cedar blessing upon completion of construction just prior to opening. We also thank Marc Perry of Sysco for spotting us and our shaky re-opening nerves with round the clock humor and know-how.

Thank you La Conner, for taking Nell Thorn and her vision of real food, into your hearts, including us in all your celebrations of love, moving up and out, here and there, and coming home. Thank you for building and embracing community with us; supporting our beautiful farms, radiant service clubs, amazing museums, growing sweet library and all the merchants, from the bustle of our town and port to the small store fronts that constantly and beautifully reinvent themselves each season bringing new intrigue and guests to this village...and our neighbors...thank you too!

Wisdom tradition reminds us that "it takes a village to raise a child". Thank you La Conner for raising the good ship Nell, for supporting and loving her and all she supported and loved and on and on and on and on.

We are grateful to all our crew over the years, many came, some stayed, some moved on; we have a special place in our hearts to all of you, and then there are those special few who weathered long years of dedication and service; our love and deep gratitude to Jennifer, Michael, Kenny, Will, Toni, Aaron, Holly, Alma, Travis, McKenzie and Madison

Our Lady Nell tells us it is with a clear heart that she welcomes her new Captain and crew in the wake of releasing Casey and I. She is sturdy, brave and grateful, looking forward to her brand new adventure, as are we.

Thank you for holding her and all of us in your tender embrace of release and deep welcoming . . . with every good wish to Ted, Cathy, Albie, James, Nell and her crew.

May all beings be blessed.

Signing off,
Susan and Casey, Natalie, Madeline,
Louisa, Rowan and Baby Kelti

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WELCOME HOME LOANS

From the editor —

Transparency issue clouds school board's vision

At last Wednesday's school board candidates forum, all four candidates agreed that confidentiality is required while discussing personnel matters. They are right, of course.

Whether considering retaining Georgia Johnson or finalizing Superintendent Whitney Meissner's evaluation, reaching these decisions must be done behind closed doors.

That is not a breach or a masking of transparency but standard operating procedure for any employer-employee interaction.

The larger issue that staff and residents are insisting on is engagement and participation. Once decisions are made, residents are right to ask questions, provide their perspective and share their astonishment. They are also right to expect responses from their elected leadership.

The school board's silence at summer's start and their statement of "Expectations for Public Comment and Questions" at September's board meeting disappoint many citizens, the board members' constituents. Residents want their public comments to start a dialogue. They attend these meetings to hear board members, officials elected by them. They look to their representatives to discuss and debate agenda issues and explain why they are supporting and passing an item.

The September board statement on public comments has the goal of conducting business meetings in a "professional and congenial manner."

Residents interacting with their elected officials are asking to be heard. Having taken the time to show up, citizens want a response.

A decent respect for the opinion of mankind, as the founders wrote in the Declaration of Independence, requires decent participation between constituents and elected officials.

Congenial is nice. That trait might have a role in and be at the start of democratic engagement, but vigorous, heated and even contentious debate are more necessary ingredients. Congenial may not lead to problem exploration and eventual resolution but instead may mask and delay solutions. Congenial may be an initial handshake but it is not at the heart of debate or even discussion. Congenial is tidy. Residents and staff have shown that a vibrant democracy is gloriously messy. Congenial may slow progress, preventing or delaying hard questions from being asked.

Residents and staff are not asking for the school board or administration to be nice to them. They want to know they are being heard. They want to hear from school board members in public meetings. They want their elected officials to actively participate with them and show by their public actions that they are working for them.

Nice isn't the goal. Genuine engagement is a two way street. Citizens and staff want the school administration to walk the path with them, not for easy agreement but for authentic conversation and mutual results.

— ken stern

Musings – on the editor's mind

Our apple pie and salute the flag American values start with standing for the truth and protecting the country. The American way is about truth, first and last, because we know we are the good guys. We are always the good guys. God made us that way, sent us forth to multiply.

Part of being right is not being angry. And, if you say you are not angry, it is about staying calm. If your worst fears come to pass will you stay calm?

We don't have to love our neighbors, despite what the Bible says. We do have to get along. If you think the nation is on the brink of a civil war, which side is most eager to secede? If it is the other side, why do you think they want to start this civil war?

If you are absolutely convinced that this, too, will pass, what is your response to four more years of the status quo?

Do you agree that the Constitution is the glue holding the country together?

If the Constitution is not the touchstone, the bedrock of our nation, what is? Is it that we are all Americans? What is our defining characteristic and cause? Once we agree what it is to be an American, what do we do with such a person who does something un-American? When we say we love this country, what is it we love?

If our metaphors are not merely cliches, or worse, lies, then doesn't the shining City on the Hill we extol have to have the same rules and the same justice for everyone?

Really, it comes down to two little tests: 1. If you are traveling abroad, are you bragging about your president, proud to be an American? 2. What do you think about what people in other countries – even European ones – think about us?

What if the president is playing everyone, from the New York Times to his most ardent supporters, for fools?

What if the only person he is committed to helping to succeed is himself?

When we look back at this presidency years hence and our options for reflecting on it range from wonderment that Trump won the Nobel Peace Prize to wondering why he wasn't tossed from office sooner, where do you think historians and your fellow citizens are going to line up?

Are you able to work through this musing line by line with someone you disagree with? Will you truly try?

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• LETTER •

Dissent valuable freedom

I have been reading my fellow American's letters of opposition to the content of my letter ("A letter I should not need to write," viewpoint, Aug. 28). I did expect "push back." That is a valuable freedom we have – to disagree – which is not allowed in some countries. May this freedom always exist in America. Nancy Burlison

Cops . . .

(Continued from Page 8)

ed trespass. The caller said there were two subjects on her property illegally cutting wood. Deputies contacted the suspects, the male was arrested on outstanding warrants and both were given trespassing admonishments. Farm to Market Rd., Greater La Conner.

Sunday, October 6

7:37 p.m.: No proof – Deputies responded to a possible DUI. Deputies checked the area, Unable to locate. McLean Rd. / SR 20, Greater La Conner.



Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

• On Oct. 25, 1881, Pablo Picasso, one of the greatest and most influential artists of the 20th century, is born in Malaga, Spain. Picasso's work comprises more than 50,000 paintings, drawings, engravings, sculptures and ceramics produced over 80 years. He had his first exhibit at age 13.

• On Oct. 24, 1901, schoolteacher Annie Edson Taylor becomes the first person to take the plunge over Niagara Falls in a barrel in an attention-getting stunt. She reached the shore alive, if a bit battered. Taylor claimed she was in her 40s, but records later showed she was 63.

• On Oct. 26, 1942, the last U.S. carrier built before America entered World War II, the USS Hornet, is so badly damaged by Japanese warplanes in the Battle of Santa Cruz that it must be abandoned and was later sunk. The Hornet launched the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo.

• On Oct. 21, 1967, in Washington, D.C., nearly 100,000 people gather to protest the war in Vietnam, and more than 50,000 later marched to the Pentagon. Polls taken that summer showed that American support for the war had fallen below 50%.

• On Oct. 22, 1975, Air Force Sgt. Leonard Matlovich, a decorated Vietnam War veteran, is given a "general" discharge after publicly declaring his homosexuality. Matlovich's discharge was later upgraded to "honorable," and he was buried with full military honors in 1988.

• On Oct. 23, 1989, 23 people are killed in a series of explosions sparked by an ethylene leak at a Phillips Petroleum plant in Pasadena, Texas. The blasts were caused by inadequate safety procedures.

• On Oct. 27, 2006, the last Ford Taurus rolls off the assembly line in Hapeville, Georgia. The keys to the silver car went to 85-year-old Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-A, who added it to his automobile collection.

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top ten

Vanity Plate-Loving States*

1. Virginia
2. New Hampshire
3. Illinois
4. Nevada
5. Montana
6. Maine
7. Connecticut
8. New Jersey
9. North Dakota
10. Vermont

*percentage of registered vehicles
Source: AAMVA/Stefan Lonce

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Candidates . . . (Continued from Page 1)

and miscommunications in the administration's responses.

Szurek, a lawyer, also championed the board's transparency, but noted "we are constrained from saying everything we know," mandated by the law. She, too, said she was committed to protocol, but working for the community.

Agen said he was astounded that the board lacked a "conduit" for the unions to provide information to it. He was critical of Meissner's "large role in setting her goals" and said while she had good accomplishments she "was not performing well in what the two unions (cared) about." It was not good people management, he concluded.

Baker said board members "need to be accountable to students, teachers and parents" and called for the board to "create a way to have better communications" and create ways to be transparent.

Here Szurek challenged Agen, saying the board understood hearing from the public, but the vote of no confidence was a confusing time and again referenced confidentiality in personnel decisions.

Agen's response: "It is amazing to me in a community as small as ours that there is so much passion with the two unions. The board seems oblivious. It is the board's duty to manage the superintendent so that the superintendent gets along with all the staff."

Beasley said protocol was not followed when the unions sent the board their letters of no confidence, saying "protocol is to go to the immediate supervisor. . . . The protocol is for the unions to go to the superintendent, to Human Resources." She ended "Things have gotten off balance."

Szurek later echoed that, asking "How did things go so terribly wrong?" Her answer: protocol and policy guidelines were not followed, which "says put it in writing and go up the chain of command. The channel to be followed was not followed." She defended having Meissner attend the board's meeting when union leaders laid out their grievances.

Suzann Keith, a high school English teacher, offered a different view in an email summary to the community Thursday. She cited a school board policy "that solutions should be sought at 'the lowest possible supervisory level' [and continued] The school board is the superintendent's only supervisor," pointing out that the unions acted appropriately.

Agen championed his proposal of having two teacher representatives from each school participate in board meetings "to make the board aware of issues faster when they occur." He sees the union-administration turmoil as unresolved.

Baker said she did not have enough experience with the dis-

pute to choose sides and called for "more community, more accountability and more transparency" and communication with Meissner in setting goals and making her accountable.

Many issues were covered in the 90 minute forum, including drop out rates, minority students, large class size, the McCleary decision and school funding, budgets and the district's deficit.

Candidates made self-introductions at the evening's start. Points each stressed included:

Agen: The intentional district budget deficit in good economic times and students' health and nutrition, including obesity.

Szurek: Is committed and passionate about public education. Teaching children the value of learning is critical.

Beasley: Referenced her roots with the Swinomish Tribe and her desire to have Native students succeed.

Baker: Four sons are in the schools now and she wants to be an active voice for all students and emphasize raising the test scores of tribal students

The gathering took place at the youth center building on the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community reservation.

All residents vote for all director positions on the ballot. Four of the five directors will be elected this year. Lynette Cram and Susan Deyo are running unopposed.

Get candidate information through the Skagit County elections office website: <https://voter.votewa.gov/GenericVoterGuide.aspx?e=566&c=29#/>.

Ballots are mailed Oct. 16. Nov. 5 is election day.

Skagit County has new emergency medical services director

Josh Pelonio is the new Director of Skagit County Emergency Medical Services (EMS). In the 14 months prior to his appointment by the Skagit County Commissioners, Pelonio was interim director.

Pelonio was hired as the county's EMS provider liaison and training coordinator in August 2018. He has 15 years of public and private sector work with emergency medical services

Source: Skagit County government

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