

# Statesman Examiner

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Observing National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

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## Lessons from a difficult journey

RaeLynn Ricarte  
Statesman-Examiner

Crystal Lofts was relaxing in a chair at her Colville home in April when she crossed her arms and felt a hard lump in her right breast.

She debated about going to the doctor because her mammogram in February had shown nothing abnormal. There was also no history of cancer in her family.

However, Lofts was unsettled enough about finding the lump that she decided to have it looked at — and she is thankful for making that decision. Another mammogram, followed by an ultra-

sound and biopsy, in May revealed that she had an aggressive form of cancer that grows and spreads rapidly.

“I’m glad that I went in when I did because this type of cancer would have been everywhere before long,” she said.

Lofts has undergone 14 chemotherapy sessions at Cancer Care Northwest in Spokane, the nearest facility to get treatment. She has two more infusions of anti-cancer drugs and then her surgery will be planned, followed by six weeks of daily radiation treatments (weekends off) and reconstruction surgery.

“It’s hard to explain what getting

this diagnosis is like,” said Lofts, who recently spent her 44th birthday at the cancer center undergoing chemo. It certainly wasn’t the way she would have planned to spend the day, but she has learned to be thankful for every moment in this battle for her life.

“It makes you really stop and think about what is and isn’t important in life,” she said. “Before this, I might have been concerned about making sure the house was spotless, but not I’d rather spend time with people—they are what’s important. I want to make sure that everyone in my life feels loved.”

Conversely, she had to learn to

let others take care of her, which has not been easy because she has always striven to be independent and take care of her own business.

Lofts has two grown children and a 15-year-old, and said they have all been great about helping out, as have friends and other family members. Their support is especially important on bad days when she feels physically ill and exhausted.

“I do what I can and, when I need help, I have learned to ask,” she said.

Chemo sessions occur every other week and she is sick for the



Crystal Lofts of Colville is fighting a battle against breast cancer.

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# WHO'S NEXT?



Graphic by Taylor Newquist



RaeLynn Ricarte photo

The Stevens County Courthouse in Colville is shown in summer splendor.

## Ballots will be mailed out Friday

RaeLynn Ricarte  
Statesman-Examiner

Stevens County Auditor Lori Larsen, who oversees local elections, said ballots are being mailed out to voters early this year to address concerns brought by speculation that there could be problems getting returns through the U.S. Postal Service.

“We have full confidence in the post office to handle Washington’s elections, but we know that citizens are concerned that they will be overwhelmed,” said Larson.

For that reason, ballots will be sent out to registered voters on Friday, Oct. 9, which is about a week earlier than in some locations of the state, said Larsen.

As of Monday, there were 33,098 local voters on the rolls, although the count is expected to rise with nearly a month left until the Nov. 3 general election.

Larsen said mailing ballots out early was seen in Stevens, Spokane and other counties as preferable to setting up more drop sites that require monitoring.

People can, as usual, drop ballots at Lake Spokane Elementary School and the Loon Lake Fire Station on the south end of the county. Ballots can also be left at the United Church of Christ in Chewelah,

See VOTE, Page A2

## GOP to select replacements for three county commissioners

RaeLynn Ricarte  
Statesman-Examiner

The Stevens County Republican Party is expecting a long day on Saturday, Oct. 10, when they convene to select nine nominees for three vacant county commissioner positions.

Mitch Short, chair of the party, said there were 28 candidates as of press time on Monday. He said more applicants were expected and everyone

who came forward would be given the opportunity to make a short speech and then answer a question posed by all or some of 28 elected Precinct Committee Officers.

Each candidate has been asked to provide a cover letter, resume and answer a questionnaire in advance of the proceedings.

The doors at the Chewelah Civic Center, 301 E. Clay Street, open at 9 a.m. on that day and the proceedings begin

about an hour later.

“People are welcome to come and observe,” said Short.

He said masks will be required for entry and those in attendance will be spaced out to comply with social distancing guidelines.

“If we start filling up the space then we will need to limit attendance to meet the guidelines,” he said.

Once all of the candidates have been heard from, Short said the PCOs will vote on

three candidates for each of Districts 1, 2 and 3.

Those districts no longer have representation following the conclusion of a lawsuit that found them liable for mispending public funds on two private projects.

Wes McCart, Steve Parker and Don Dashiell, all Republicans, could no longer serve following that ruling by Spokane Superior Court Judge Maryann

See GOP, Page A2

## Colville to open ‘hybrid’ school

RaeLynn Ricarte  
Statesman-Examiner

The Colville School District is getting ready to welcome K-12 students back on a part-time basis, but administrators and health district officials are keeping an eye on the rising local COVID-19 case count.

“Let’s keep our fingers crossed and let’s get the community spread to stop,” said Supt. Pete Lewis.

If everything is a still a go, he said classes will resume on Tuesday, Oct. 13, at all schools.

The “hybrid” plan approved by the school board on Friday is to stagger in-classroom days so teachers can meet social distancing guidelines. Some students will go to school Monday, Wednesday and every other Friday, and others will be in class on

Tuesday, Thursday and every other Friday.

When not in class, students will continue learning lessons remotely.

“It’s going to be different for families, different for teachers and different for students this year,” said Lewis.

He said in-school classes are an option for parents, but they can also have their children learn completely from home if they prefer during the COVID-19 crisis.

Zoom lessons through the Google classroom involve teachers providing instruction in the morning and then providing students with assistance on lessons in the afternoon, he said.

All staff and students will be required to mask up to be school buildings, said Lewis, and social distancing of six feet or more between all parties will be practiced.

There will also be a greater focus on hand washing and extra steps are being taken to keep schools disinfected.

The district received funding from the CARES Act to cover the cost of providing personal protective gear and other supplies necessary in the post-COVID-19 world, said Lewis.

“From an educational standpoint, we know that the best place for students to be is in the classrooms with teachers,” said Lewis. “And, quite frankly, we have missed having them around.”

He said food will be provided to students for the days they aren’t at the school, as well as the days they are. In fact, he said any child in the community under the age of 18,

See SCHOOLS, Page A2



Photo courtesy of Brandon Hansen/Chewelah Independent

## Show of Support

A rider is shown carrying a Trump sign on a horseback “protest” parade that began just south of Chewelah on Saturday morning and traveled through town to the city park and then headed back.

# Inside

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Sports: Kettle Falls gets new logo painted, Page B1



(USPS 520-680)

# COMMUNITY

## Volunteers step up during crisis

Michael Brock  
Deer Park Tribune

During a time of crisis, volunteers banded together in the area to provide resources for firefighters and people displaced by wildfire damage.

Area resident KS Brooks, who helped start the Eastern Washington Firefighter Support Network in 2015, has been among those coordinating and delivering donations.

The majority of supplies have gone to Inchelium, while one delivery went to each of Malden and Bridgeport.

The first distribution was made to Inchelium after fires caused level 3 evacuations in early September.

At the time, items such as gallon plastic bags, sandwich bags, napkins, coolers, ice, bottled water, coffee, paper plates and cold sandwiches were in high demand.

There was also a major need for hay—the fields in Inchelium burned, leading many ranchers to rely on hay to feed their animals.

The community center in Inchelium became a hub for people to get meals, food and supplies.

Some people remained without power or running water for several days, and

were living in the community center.

As such, the need increased for canned food, granola bars, instant soup, snack food that doesn't require refrigeration, paper towels and toilet paper. A few days later, Brooks made contact with people in Bridgeport and Malden, who were in "dire need."

In Malden—where a reported 80% of homes in the 200-person population were destroyed—items such as women's and children's underwear, duffle bags, work gloves, blankets, coloring books and other activity books for kids, bottled water, snack items were requested.

In mid-September, shipments went out to Inchelium, Bridgeport and Malden. Three others have been made to Inchelium since.

Churches and neighboring towns in Malden also had stores set up where people could walk in and get what they needed for free.

"One of the churches had a personal shopper available to each person who lost a home because the people were in shock and they didn't know what they needed," Brooks said.

"Everybody has been incredibly generous and thoughtful and it's just been really wonderful."

Items have been consistently collected at United Church of Christ in Chewelah and at the fairgrounds in Colville, while Heroes Homestead in Clayton has been a drop point as well.

Currently, these locations are not taking donations, as most of the firefighters have moved on to different parts of the Colville Indian Reservation and people who did not lose their homes have returned to them.

The five fires that started over Labor Day Weekend burned more than 200,000 acres of the Colville Indian Reservation and have taken out at least 80 homes).

"Luckily people were able to go back to their homes," Brooks said. "So then it just mostly became feeding the firefighters and making sure they needed."

Normally, firefighters are working for about three weeks and then they take a break, before being on for another three weeks.

"But a lot of these guys came straight from another fire, so they didn't have time to go get new supplies, like more socks and tents and things like that," Brooks said.

Firefighters as well as community members have been grateful to receive do-



Michael Brock photo

Volunteers outside the UCC Church in Chewelah. Brian Henderson (far right) volunteered to drive a shipment to Malden and Holly Peterson (second from right) coordinated the donation drop point at UCC Church, while the other two women helped load the truck.

nations, she added.

When she was delivering in Inchelium, one firefighter said he'd been wearing the same socks for three days. Another, who was covered from head to toe in soot and dirt, started beaming when Brooks asked if he needed clean socks.

"His face, you would have thought I offered him a million dollars," she said. When fires devastated the area in

2015, a distribution center was set up in Inchelium.

"That was the worst year in history for fires here," Brooks said. "And it was the people in Inchelium who used their community center as a distribution point... For them to be on the receiving end now... it was awkward for them, but they were super grateful and I could tell some of them were very, very moved."

None of this could be possible without the community's generous donations, she added.

At the Inchelium Complex fires, I'm aware of four homes that were lost," Brooks said.

"We're waiting for things to settle down to determine what those folks need. And then we'll look for more donations to help them rebuild their homes."

### Around Town

#### Flu vaccine offers extra protection

Northeast Tri County Health District is stressing the need for the flu vaccine this year due to complications that can occur to a person's vital organs if battling both influenza and COVID-19, whether it be simultaneously or in succession.

Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses, say health officials.

COVID-19 can affect multiple organ systems, and the effects of COVID-19 in combination with the

flu could cause long term damage to a person's health, quality of life, and unfortunately, health officials say that a person may not fully recover.

Vaccination of people at high risk for flu complications is especially important to decrease their risk of severe illness. Many people at risk from the flu also seem to be a higher risk from COVID-19. Social distancing and good hygiene are protections.

Locations to get a flu vaccine can be found at: [www.netchd.org](http://www.netchd.org).

#### Vitalant seeks help with blood drives

Vitalant will be holding a blood drive at the AG Trade Center from noon to 5 p.m.

on Tuesday, Nov. 10.

Vitalant is looking for one or two additional volunteers to help out with their local blood drives. These duties include: hanging printed posters around town, calling neighbors (who have given permission to be called) to schedule an appointment to give blood, as well as greeting donors and checking them into the blood drive the day of.

Anyone interested in helping out is invited to contact Amber Short at [ashort@vitalant.org](mailto:ashort@vitalant.org).

#### Library trustees meet for budget

The Stevens County Rural Library District Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing on the 2021 pre-

liminary budget and revenue sources.

The meeting will be held virtually at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 15. Arrangements to provide reasonable accommodations can be made with 48 hours of advance notice. For more information, call 509-233-9621.

#### Sign a vet up for a patriotic quilt

Tri-County Economic Development District will hold an online raffle for one of the patriotic quilts made by Judy Lockner and Valerie Lamont.

The drawing for the next veteran to receive a quilt will take place during a Facebook livestream at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 10. There is no charge to en-

ter the raffle for veterans who live in the area. People who have served in the military can submit an entry for themselves and anyone can sign up a veteran they know.

Entries can be submitted at TEDD's office, 986 S Main, Colville, WA, 99114 or via email to Liv Stecker at [lstecker@teddonline.com](mailto:lstecker@teddonline.com). Electronic entries are also welcome through TEDD's Facebook page. know.

For more information, or to sign up to sponsor a quilt, call Stecker at 509-684-4571.

#### Chamber cancels luncheons in 2020

The Colville Chamber has canceled its weekly luncheons at the Eagles until after January 2021, or until

it is safe to do so.

#### Moonlight Madness coming soon

The Northeast Tri County Health District has signed off on the Colville Chamber of Commerce plan to hold Madness Sale from 6 to 9 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30, as long as there are no outside sales. Social distancing guidelines must be followed, including the requirement that customers wear face masks.

The Kiddie Parade that was usually held the same day has been canceled this year due to the COVID-19 crisis.

For more information, call the chamber at 509-684-5973 or visit [www.colville.com](http://www.colville.com).

## Cancer

Continued from Front Page

days immediately following treatment, and then gradually it gets easy to force herself to eat. She relies on broth, fruit and other light fare that is easy on the stomach.

By the next week, she can hold down an entire sandwich, which has become a huge accomplishment.

"You know that you need to eat because they give you a lot of vitamins that you can't take on an empty stomach, but it's pretty tough

sometimes," admits Lofts.

As a woman, one of the most difficult aspects of treatment has been losing her hair. She said after the third chemo session, "clumps" started to fall out so she asked her beautician to just cut it all off.

She had a couple of friends also cut their hair to show support, and an entire crowd of supporters who came with her to the salon to applaud her new look.

"Hair is part of our identity as a woman so that was a hard one," she said.

Losing your hair also identifies you as a cancer patient, she said, which was

**"It makes you really stop and think about what is and isn't important in life ... I want to make sure everyone in my life feels loved."**

— Crystal Lofts on her battle with breast cancer

difficult because she is a private person.

On a positive note, Lofts said the shape of her bald head is nice and she is getting to be a hat and scarf fashionista.

Despite her health challenges, Lofts is working as much as she can at the Stevens County emergency dispatch center, which is run through the sheriff's office. Before her illness, Lofts worked in law enforcement, starting as a reserve officer

for the Kettle Falls Police Department in 2001 and moving to the sheriff's office in 2007 as a reserve deputy. In 2006, she went to work at the dispatch center and then returned to Kettle Falls as an officer in 2016. She accepted an appointment to the sheriff's office last year and remains a reserve deputy.

"I'm able to still be working because everyone has been so supportive," she said. The support from Sheriff Brad Manke and the rest of

the team has been wonderful and has helped her stay upbeat, she said.

Getting through a life-threatening illness makes you introspective, said Lofts.

"You really look at your priorities and make sure you don't have an unresolved grudge against anyone, or that you try to settle a grudge someone might have against you," she said.

What advice would Lofts give other woman battling breast cancer?

First and foremost, she said they should rely on their faith to get through the myriad of challenges they will face.

Then they need to find a good support base because the fight against the disease is something that no one should try to do alone.

"On bad days, it's okay

to cry," said Lofts. "Everyone expects you to be super strong, but you are allowed not to be at times."

Although an occasional breakdown is allowed, Lofts said patients have to maintain a strong mindset to get through the mental and physical obstacles they will face.

"This is a game changer," she said.

Friends wanting to support a cancer patient should not be afraid to ask questions and talk about what is going on, said Lofts.

"Just let the patient know that you are available to talk or provide support," she said.

It would be nice for cancer patients from the more remote areas of the region to have a treatment options in a more convenient location, Lofts said.

"When the weather is bad, or you are exhausted and sick, the trip to and from Spokane can seem like it takes forever," she said.

One day, Lofts looks forward to no longer having to make the 144-mile roundtrip journey. She wants to be there as a survivor to cheer on other patients as they endure treatment.

She advises all women to make sure they get into the doctor anytime they feel a lump or something feels wrong in their bodies. Time is of the essence with some types of cancer, she said.

Lofts has one last word for new cancer patients: "Everybody's journey is different and when you are going through treatment you shouldn't get discouraged if someone seems to be responding better to their chemo than you are. Make the journey your own."

### Colville School District 115

A Lifetime of Learning

#### COLVILLE SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS DISTRICT #1 VACANCY

Colville School District Board of Directors has accepted a letter of resignation from Board President Sid Green, who represents District #1. The Colville School Board has declared the position vacant and will appoint a replacement to the board. Interviews for applicants will be conducted Tuesday, October 27, 2020, beginning at 5:00 PM.

Any person interested in being appointed to the school board vacancy should submit a letter of interest and application to Pete Lewis, Superintendent, as soon as possible. DEADLINE TO ACCEPT APPLICATIONS IS THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020 at 3:00 PM. An application can be picked up and returned at the Colville School District Office, 217 S. Hofstetter, Colville, WA.

The appointee shall meet the requirements provided by law and shall be appointed until the next regularly scheduled board election. Any applicant is required to be: 1) a citizen of the United States and the state of Washington; 2) a registered voter and resident of the school district; and 3) currently residing within the specific director district area.

For further information, contact Pete Lewis, Superintendent at 684-7857.

#### Director District #1

Starting at the intersection of Gold Creek Loop Rd. and Valley-Westside Rd Northeast on Valley-Westside Rd to HWY 395 Southeast on HWY 395 to 5th Ave. East on 5th Ave. to Main St. South on Main St. to 3rd Ave. West on 3rd Ave. to Wynne St. South on Wynne St. to Dominion Ave. West on Dominion Ave. to Washington St. South on Washington St. to Glenn Ave. East on Glenn Ave. to Main St. South on Main St. to HWY 395 Southerly on HWY 395 to School District boundary Clockwise following School District boundary to the SE corner of Township 36, Range 38E., Section 35 East. 5 miles more or less to Gold Creek Loop Rd. Northerly and Easterly on Gold Creek Loop Rd. to the point of the beginning

A map showing the five Director Districts is posted on the wall at the Superintendent's Office.

POSITION IS OPEN UNTIL THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020 - 3:00 PM.

## Attention All Medicare Beneficiaries and those close to celebrating 65!

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