

Calling the shots

New owner takes over at Kind Grinds

STORY Page A6

Making a point

A look at Blue Lives Matter, Juneteenth events

PHOTOS Page A8

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\$1

County health director explains contact tracing

Answers concerns raised about process

BY MARCY STAMPER

Okanogan County Community Health Director Lauri Jones explains contact tracing as a standard, essential public health technique used for 150 years to control the spread of disease.

Jones' explanation at the county commissioners' meeting on June 22 was in response to a letter from the Okanogan County Farm Bureau to the commissioners that expressed concerns about "involuntary enforcement of contact tracing."

"Okanogan County Farm Bureau members are currently under increased, extreme pressure from Washington State to protect the health of their families, workers and communities while still growing and harvesting food for our county, state, nation and the world. ... As law abiding citizens, we will comply with voluntary contact tracing. We will not submit to involuntary contact tracing," the June 14 letter said [bold and italics in original].

The Farm Bureau fears that involuntary contact tracing will increase

division and polarization, violate civil liberties, and strain law enforcement, according to the letter.

"Forceful isolation could create unrest and reaction in Okanogan County. We want to maintain the voluntary aspect. People are thoughtful and concerned and will comply," Okanogan County Farm Bureau President Dick Ewing said in an interview this week.

"The first thing, is I'd get rid of the words 'contact tracing.' It's gotten political," Jones said, preferring to call it "case investigation."

"If you found 50 cows had died, what would you do?" she asked the Farm Bureau representatives at the meeting.

Jones gave a short lesson on the history of public health and how epidemiologists trace disease outbreaks. The first use of what's now called contact tracing was in London in 1854, during a cholera outbreak. Health workers interviewed people who'd lost family members and ultimately tracked the disease to a single water system contaminated by a leaking sewer pipe.

Since then, the technique has been

See CONTACT, A2



Photo by Marcy Stamper

Three-Fingered Jack's Saloon has experienced a peculiar wave of shortages, most recently, pork products, beer and salad dressings.

Restaurants' recovery lacks key ingredients

Some basics still in short supply

BY MARCY STAMPER

All restaurants have made adjustments to do business in the COVID era, moving tables apart and sanitizing bottles of ketchup. But some have had to change their menu because they can't get basic ingredients.

For some restaurants, ingredient shortages mean small tweaks, like substituting a different cut of meat. For others, it's made it impossible to do any business at all.

After months of closure, Vickie Malone would love to at least offer take-out at Oliver's Artisan Kitchen in

Winthrop. With just a handful of tables in an intimate setting, the restaurant is too small to meet physical-distancing requirements for dine-in service. But Malone, who prides herself on homemade dishes, still can't find essential ingredients.

"I've had trouble getting supplies — I can get things one week, but not the other," said Malone, who wants a reliable supply before she re-opens. "Yeast has been the biggest challenge."

Malone bakes all her bread from scratch. Finding yeast without preservatives is even harder and has become "outrageously expensive," she said. She's squirrelled away a tiny bit to bake bread for her family and to feed her precious sourdough starter.

Malone typically goes through 25

pounds of flour a week, but many stores still restrict purchases to 5 pounds. Specialty cheese and other dairy products are becoming more reliable and, with the growing season in full swing, Malone can get local produce.

Meat shortages

While Malone hasn't had trouble sourcing meat, other restaurants in town are grappling with meat shortages.

Since Three-Fingered Jack's Saloon in Winthrop opened early this month, the restaurant has experienced shortages of beef, pork and dairy, although things are slowly returning to normal, owner Seth Miles said.

"Currently, pork products, beer and

See RESTAURANTS, A3



Statewide mask mandate

In response to a growing number of coronavirus cases in Washington, Gov. Jay Inslee on Tuesday (June 23) announced a statewide mandate that requires facial coverings in all indoor or outdoor public places. The order, which will be issued by the Secretary of Health, takes effect on Friday (June 26).

The mandate specifies that

children under 5 are exempt from the order, as are people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Masks can be removed while eating in a restaurant, or during outdoor activities either alone or with family members.

A violation of the order could carry a misdemeanor charge. Violations are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 and as many as 90 days behind bars.

Commissioners refine anti-racism proclamation

Includes support for constitutional rights

BY MARCY STAMPER

A denouncement of racism and social injustice and support for the rights to free speech, peaceful assembly, and to own and bear firearms are the focus of the proclamation currently under consideration by the Okanogan County commissioners.

County Commissioner Chris Branch read the first draft of a proclamation last Monday (June 15) that takes a stand against racism. The proclamation acknowledges violence across the country in response to excessive force in policing and mentions a peaceful dem-

onstrations in Omak.

The proclamation stressed support for people's exercise of their First and Second Amendment rights, but noted that the presence of people with assault-style weapons had intimidated some individuals who were seeking to exercise their First Amendment rights to speech and assembly.

The presence of an unregulated and untrained militia could hamper a peaceful gathering, Branch wrote in the draft proclamation. The county commissioners believe that the presence of professional law enforcement officers is adequate, it said.

The proclamation referenced a peaceful Black Lives Matter rally in Omak attended by almost 500 people, where an additional 100 to 200 armed commu-

nity members spread out along the street and on rooftops to protect businesses. Branch said he'd heard from people who'd felt intimidated by the presence of so many armed individuals.

After input from County Commissioner Andy Hover and Okanogan County Sheriff Tony Hawley, the proposed proclamation was revised to remove references to intimidation.

"I fully agree with denouncing racism and social injustice," Hover said. But Hover had concerns that the proclamation put the right to speech above the right to bear arms. "It's tricky to decide which right is more right — the person carrying a gun intimidates a person who wanted to speak," Hover said. The sug-

See ANTI-RACISM, A3

Fundraising for new Loup Loup Ski Bowl day lodge nears the finish line

Grant match needed to launch construction

BY DON NELSON

The fundraising drive to support replacement of the Wolf Lodge at Loup Loup Ski Bowl with a new building is in its crucial home stretch.

The Loup Loup Ski Education Association, the nonprofit that operates the ski bowl, launched a campaign last October to raise \$1 million for a new day lodge.

Craig Howard, a fundraising consultant, and foundation board member Jeff

Brown said this week that an anonymous donor has pledged \$50,000 toward the project — if the foundation can raise a matching \$50,000 by July 1. Brown said early this week that the fundraising effort to match the grant was about \$20,000 short of the goal.

The foundation intends to carry through on its plans to demolish the existing lodge and build a new one this summer and fall if the fundraising is successful, Howard and Brown said.

Fundraising slacked off after coronavirus containment measures were imposed earlier this year, Brown

See LOUP, A2



Photo courtesy of Loup Loup Ski Bowl

The existing lodge at Loup Loup Ski Bowl is more than 50 years old and requires costly maintenance.

ADDRESS LABEL

THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.	MON.	TUES.
June 25	June 26	June 27	June 28	June 29	June 30
88°	90°	77°	73°	74°	78°
58°	58°	50°	54°	58°	51°
Partly sunny	HOT and HOT	That's better	Mostly cloudy	Showers possible	Cloudy

WEATHER DATA BASED ON ACCUWEATHER.COM FORECAST FOR TWISP

INSIDE ...

OPINION	A4-5
HARTS PASS	A6
CLASSIFIEDS	A7
COMMUNITY	A9
VALLEY LIFE	A10

Winthrop's CARES Act funds to support small businesses

Emergency grants for local owners

BY DON NELSON

The Town of Winthrop will devote a significant portion of federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds it received to small business emergency grants.

Okanogan County, along with towns and cities in the county, received CARES Act funds awarded to the state to address COVID-19-related costs the jurisdictions incur. The Town of Winthrop will receive \$25,000.

The funds are flexible, allowing cities and counties to use

their allocation for everything from public health and human services expenses to small business and economic support.

At last week's Town Council meeting, Mayor Sally Ranzau suggested earmarking \$10,000 to \$15,000 of the town's CARES Act to funding small business emergency grants of \$1,500.

The grants would be solely for businesses within Winthrop, and would be administered through the TwispWorks Small Business Emergency Grant program. Town Clerk Michelle Gaines said Brewster and Omak have similar agreements with the Economic Alliance, which is administering grants to small businesses for the towns.

Ranzau said the town has spent

about \$7,000 of the \$25,000 grant on hand sanitizing stations, air filters for town hall and a couple of laptop computers.

A total of 25 small businesses have received emergency funds through the grant program, which was launched by TwispWorks to help local businesses impacted by the economic crisis stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The grants provide \$1,500 to businesses to help them pay rent, utilities and other fixed expenses, as well as helping them develop ways to become more resilient.

The Small Business Emergency Grant program has raised money and distributed \$37,500 during two grant cycles. The program has sought to include

a variety of businesses. Priority was given to businesses that hadn't received other forms of state or federal financial assistance, or that don't qualify for existing programs.

In other COVID-related news, Ranzau reported that she intended to distribute 4,000 surgical masks the town received from Okanogan County Search and Rescue to local businesses. She said town staff are working on where to distribute the hand sanitizing stations the town acquired with CARES Act funds.

"I have been noticing more people wearing masks downtown," Ranzau said.

During the council comments portion of the meeting, council

member William Kilby said he had received a couple of suggestions from constituents. One would be to increase signage coming into town, asking visitors to wear masks.

Another idea was to hire "mask ambassadors" — perhaps high school students in need of summer work — to walk around town offering masks to visitors.

Ranzau said she would be concerned that such an effort would "encounter resistance."

"It could lead to confrontations," she said.

Regarding complaints about local businesses not adhering to the state's Phase II guidelines for gradually restoring the economy, Ranzau said she refers those to the state Labor and Indus-

tries Department, which has the authority to levy fines.

The town is not issuing citations to businesses, Ranzau said.

In other business, the council:

- Formally adopted a resolution allowing town staff to waive \$10 late fees for utility payments for the April, May, June and July billing cycles.

- Approved an amended agreement with Okanogan County under which the county's public works department will do chip sealing on several Winthrop streets, including Norfolk Avenue, Sundown Road, Saddleback Road, Bridge Street, Englar Street and Corral Street. Gaines said the \$54,414 contract represents a cost savings by having the county do the work.

RESTAURANTS

From Page A1

salad dressings are short, but I imagine next week will be something different," he said. "So far, it has not had a huge impact. I'm able to adjust my menu or just claim an outage until the next order day."

Carlos J. Pérez is waiting to open Carlos1800 Mexican Grill & Cantina until he can devise a system to keep staff and diners safe, but he also has to re-think the menu. When restaurants shut down, a lot of food in coolers had to be thrown out. Then the supply chain — for things like steak, chicken and fish — was disrupted, he said.

Distributors used to deliver twice a week, but now it's less frequent. There are hiccups at the supply end, and there aren't as many delivery drivers. "It's a domino effect," Pérez said.

Large food-service distributors like Sysco and Food Services of America are still trying to catch up after liquidating their inventories, since they didn't know when restaurants would reopen, said Jackson Konrad, meat manager at Hank's Harvest Foods in Twisp.

Before re-opening for dine-in service two weeks ago, Arrowleaf Bistro in Winthrop offered take-out on weekends. They were grateful to have that option, compared to other industries that had to shut down completely, said Joanne Uehara, who co-owns the restaurant with Jon Brown.

But the owners had to figure out how to adapt their artistic food presentation so it would survive the trip home. "Jon tried for a beautiful display, but different things are more durable for a 20-minute drive," Uehara said. "Our background is in high-end service and fine dining. To do high-end take-out, we had to make up our own rules."

Arrowleaf always has some trouble getting ingredients, since what the restaurant uses is often unavailable from major distributors. The restaurant relies on a lot of local meats and other ingredients, which proved key to being able to offer take-out service.

The restaurant bought two cows at the beginning of March. At first, Uehara and Brown



Photo by Marcy Stamper

Oliver's Artisan Kitchen is still closed because owner Vickie Malone can't get essential ingredients, including flour and yeast for her home-baked breads.

wondered what they'd do with 1,200 pounds of beef. "But it turned out good — we had a freezer full of beef," Uehara said.

Because the restaurant only offered take-out two days a week, they weren't going through staples as quickly, which was handy, since things like sugar were hard to find, she said.

Panic buying

"We created our own shortage," with panic buying of anything shelf-stable, like flour, yeast and powdered milk, Konrad at Hank's Harvest Foods said. Suppliers have only started catching up in the past few weeks, he said.

At the Methow Valley Thriftway in Winthrop, the biggest problem is stocking the brands people expect. Certain brands of flour or beans still aren't available, store manager Bart Northcott said. Canned goods, peanut butter, pasta and Rice-A-Roni are also scarce. "Variety is still the issue. You can always get black beans, but not specific brands," he said.

"It's sporadic. I get something one day, but the next five times, it's not available," Northcott said.

Although Thriftway never ran out of chocolate chips, when school closed, the store sold more chips in three months than it typically does in years, Northcott said.

When the economy ground to a halt, many companies stopped producing some products so

they could keep up with fast-selling items. "There are still a few companies that are not producing as many slower movers like bologna, hot dogs and sausage," Konrad said, although things have improved.

Early in the closure, distributors had millions of pounds of fresh product with nowhere to go. Anticipating meat shortages, Hank's bought two truckloads of beef, Konrad said.

Part of what contributed to local shortages is that many workers at the meat-processing plant in Toppenish were concerned about health risks and afraid to go to work, Konrad said. Meat plants were paying bonuses to encourage people to work, he said.

Northcott has had no problems getting meat and fish, although there was a spike in price, which he attributed to collusion among meat processors. "There was some ridiculous pricing," Konrad said. Beef and pork are finally coming down in price, he said.

With restaurants closed, there was a lot of fish available, although less processing of fish. Specialties like Dungeness crab were rare, because fewer people were harvesting them, Konrad said.

People don't always understand why certain products aren't available, Northcott said. "If I could, I'd have it in my store," he said.

"As Jon said, 'It will be really interesting, in a decade or two, to get the historic perspective on this,'" Uehara said.

COOL TREAT



Photo by Marcy Stamper

Although she's still a little young, Grace Crouch got a taste — literally — of elementary school when she accompanied her big sister to the annual summer send-off.

ANTI-RACISM

From Page A1

gesture that "the right to carry a gun hampers the First Amendment right — I don't agree with that."

The proclamation is still "a work in progress," Branch said in an email last week. He was willing to remove the language regarding intimidation because he believes it's important for the commissioners to adopt a statement about racism and excessive force, he said.

Rumors had circulated before the rally that "bad people were coming to Omak to stir things up," Hover said. Branch said it was apparent to him and to others that armed individuals showed up because they thought law enforcement couldn't handle the situation. When Hover asked why people thought that, Branch said, "Because they watch TV."

The Sheriff's Office, working in conjunction with the Omak Police Department, made a big effort to have a presence in case there was a problem, Branch said in the discussion. These other people aren't trained law

enforcement officers, he said.

Commissioner Jim DeTro was not present when Branch and Hover discussed the proclamation, and was away on personal business the week of June 22, so it's not known if he has weighed in on it.

Exercising rights

All the folks at the demonstration were exercising their rights, Hawley said in an interview this week. Both groups have the ability to assemble and voice their concerns, and everyone did it without violating laws, he said.

Although it's unlawful to carry or display a firearm with the intent to intimidate, "merely being there with a firearm doesn't qualify as intimidation," Hawley said. Even if some people didn't attend the rally because they felt intimidated by guns, that doesn't prove an intent to intimidate — they need to show an actual act, he said.

Hawley spoke with representatives from both groups before the rally — those protesting social injustice and police brutality and those wanting to protect businesses through an armed presence. He instructed the armed

individuals to step aside so that the marchers could walk on the sidewalk unimpeded.

Hawley also instructed both groups in advance to clear the area and let law enforcement handle any violence or destruction of property. The event was peaceful and that wasn't necessary.

Organizers of the anti-racism rally contacted Hawley before the event after becoming aware of postings on social media that referred to the demonstrators as "target practice," said Jordan Williams, who helped coordinate the Omak rally. The organizers informed those who'd be attending the rally that there would be armed individuals and urged everyone to respect their presence and avoid escalating conflicts, she said.

Some people felt intimidated by their presence and, in particular, by the presence of armed individuals on rooftops, Williams said.

Hawley supports the current working draft of the proclamation. "I'm very thankful people in our community have been doing everything very peacefully and respecting each other's opinions," he said.

Commissioners' draft proclamation

The county's proclamation denouncing racism and supporting First and Second Amendment rights is still a work in progress. Here is the current draft, which has not been adopted or approved by the commissioners:

"Whereas, the Okanogan County Commissioners acknowledge that violence is escalating across this nation in response to the use of excessive force in policing; and

Whereas, on June 12, 2020, there was a peaceful demonstration organized and implemented in the city of Omak without violent incident; and

Whereas, the county commissioners support citizens' right to peaceful assembly under the 1st

amendment; and

Whereas, the county commissioners support the right of citizens to own and bear arms; and

Whereas, the county commissioners understand through social media and conversation that [there will be] additional efforts to raise awareness of racism and use of excessive force [and] that there will be future peaceful assemblies; and

Whereas, the county commissioners advocate for respectful and diplomatic forms of solving differences; and

Whereas, the Okanogan County sheriff is elected to office and holds the obligation and authority to ensure peace and safety in Okanogan County

unencumbered by the desires and intent of the Okanogan County board of commissioners.

Now, therefore, the Okanogan County commissioners hereby resolve the following:

1. Denounce violent action and excessive force in enforcing the laws of the cities, county and state; and

2. Denounce any form of racism and/or social injustice; and

3. Promote peaceful and respectful presentations and discussions that may help in resolving issues of social injustice; and

4. Will make every effort to participate in peaceful and respectful conversation in an effort to resolve social injustice and conflict."

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