

Sunnyside schools survey supports hybrid model

Public prefers alternating class schedule for fall

■ ELIZABETH SUSTAITA
Reporter

SUNNYSIDE — The first parent and community survey released by School District closed on Friday, July 10, leading the first of what Superintendent Kevin McKay has stated won't be the last survey parents will be asked to participate in to determine the model to be implemented for the upcoming 2020 school year.

At the third General Advisory meeting on Zoom hosted by McKay, Yakima Health District's Chief Operating Officer Ryan Ibach attended, along with Melissa Sixberry from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to discuss concerns with reopening the doors to schools.

With health worries being at the forefront, Ibach

suggested daily temperature checks or health forms for students and parents to fill out listing possible symptoms before going into the classroom should be considered among the advisories when formulating the plan to have class on campus.

Ibach stressed that should a student become infected with COVID-19, the student must be isolated and anyone in close contact with the student for 15 minutes or longer will also have to be isolated. To combat this, Ibach stated "Make sure social distancing happens all day long between staff and students."

Sixberry reiterated this point by stating an investigation will be put

see **SUNNYSIDE SCHOOLS SURVEY**, page A2



Patrick Shelby/Sunnyside Sun

FREEFALLING GUIDANCE FOR FUN

Washington Elementary second grade student Carlos Duran of Sunnyside receives instruction with two helping hands of support from Grandview High School sophomore Eli Cruz as the seven-year-old successfully rolls down the skateboard ramp at Sunnyside Park on Monday evening.

2020 Voter Ballots are in the mail

Primary Election is August 4

■ JULIA HART
Reporter

SUNNYSIDE — The Yakima County's 119,699 registered voters should find their 2020 Primary Election ballots in their mailbox beginning Thursday, July 17, according to Yakima County Elections Supervisor Yolanda Arellano.

The mail-in prepaid postage ballots are due back Tuesday, Aug. 4, and cover a lot of issues, as well as the long list of individual seeking public office.

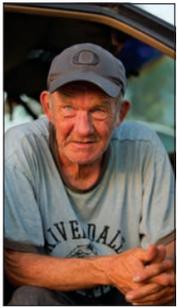
"Mail-in Ballots have already been sent to voters living out of state or overseas," she explained.

With many congressional, state and county issues on the ballot, Arellano pointed out there is a sample ballot on the county elections website for voters to review.

The complete voter's pamphlet with candidate information is available on the Secretary of State

see **VOTER BALLOTS**, page A2

Sunnyside vehicle encampment leans on parking lot confines



"It's so tough here. I would like to see a day when something could be easy. Where people could live a little bit easier and a little bit more comfortable. But nowadays, everything is just tough, tough, tough."

— Steve Pendergrass

■ PATRICK SHELBY
Managing Editor

SUNNYSIDE — When life presents a person with character defining obstacles, testing one's resilience for dealing with such hardships can be a difficult road to travel — in spite of the broken-down vehicles which are presently home and surrounded by those confronting a similar situation in the southeast corner of the city's public parking lot on Seventh Street.

Living in a car is not easy but neither is life at times. For the five vehicles parked next to one another in the marked stalls at the back

of the lot with another car across in the next row, it's about self-preservation, matched with a driven determination to make it through the long summer day.

"Things can happen; things can fall apart. People keep going around thinking it's not going to happen, and they just live life like nothing is going to happen and it's just going to be the same every day. But what happens if one day it does happen. They're all going to panic," 67-year-old and U.S. Navy veteran Steve Pendergrass described while sitting in his well-traveled

see **ENCAMPMENT**, page A3

Overnight downtown public parking out of control

Councilman Mike Farmer tackles camping issue

■ JULIA HART
Reporter

SUNNYSIDE — After months of receiving frantic phone calls from downtown businessowners complaining about junk vehicles being used as homes in the South Seventh Street public parking lot, Councilman Mike Farmer took the issue to his fellow councilmen on Monday, July 6.

"I was appalled at what the businesspeople in the area and local residents are having to deal with," he told fellow councilmen during their workshop to discuss what options are available to the council for curtailing the overnight camping problem.

"People are afraid to take out their garbage for fear they will be accosted by those who have taken up living in the parking lot," Farmer described

He said the people are letting their trash fly all over and leaving a mess on the city property. "Some have even set out lawn chairs," he added. "It looks like crap."

It was the second time in as many weeks that Farmer had talked about



Patrick Shelby/Sunnyside Sun

Sunnyside City Councilman Mike Farmer is leading a campaign to remove abandoned vehicles being used as living quarters from a downtown public parking lot, a project he has worked since March.

what he sees as a growing problem with unlicensed, undrivable cars parked on city property.

"I've been called by several people and owners who complained that human feces being thrown over the fence into the backyards of homes near city parking lot," Farmer reported.

He said they also told of numerous incidents what was described as criminal behavior from break-ins and possible drug deals.

Not all councilmen felt the situation was as dire as Farmer described it.

Councilman John Henry took it upon himself to drive by the parking area during the telephonic meeting, noting he had visited the Seattle's Capitol Hill Organized Protest (CHOP) camp, expecting the Sunnyside parking lot to resemble the Seattle encampments, however, he noted the parking lot was nothing like that.

Still, he added, the cars are located in an inconvenient spot "...but I didn't see anything illegal going on. And I agree we need to do something about it," Henry admitted.

Homelessness issue

Councilman Dean Broersma echoed Farmer's concerns adding that while it is not illegal to be homeless, a solution needs to be found before it becomes a real problem. "We have to be concerned about the safety of both businesses and residents," Broersma allowed.

But, because there are people staying overnight at the lot, "the issue of homelessness now must also be addressed," City Manager Martin Casey conveyed.

Deputy Mayor Ron Stremmer

see **OVERNIGHT PUBLIC PARKING**, page A2

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ENCAMPMENT

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Buick Park Avenue car with the front passenger door open.

"I don't like to think old. I like to keep thinking young," he added.

The longtime valley resident said he grew up and graduated from Granger High School and has been a community member of Sunnyside for 30 years. He's worked in a variety of agricultural jobs and now lives on a fixed income within his nonoperating vehicle which needs a starter, battery and set of tires after recently being slashed in the lot.

From the safe quarters of his car underneath the streetlight, Pendergrass shared his neighbors' concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic. "We need to eliminate this coronavirus and get things back to normal. I see everyday people are so paranoid, they're so frightened. I want to see the day when this disease is finally conquered and things can get back to normal," he optimistically

stated.

As the sun began to sink behind the foothills of the lower valley last Wednesday, a solaced state of color beamed with insight for people finding comfort in leaning on the confines of the asphalt environment and at times, one another.

Daniel Fayard has been a Sunnyside resident for the past three years. Originally from Prosser, the father of two children, an 11-year old daughter and 14-year-old son, who he said are staying with his brother while he and their mother, Raquel Garcia reside in two separate cars at the parking lot adjacent to K and U Auto Parts.

"It would be nice to find a job. I've never not worked. This is the longest I've ever not had a job. It's absolutely driving me insane," Garcia frustratedly informed.

The two parents use Zoom on their phones to communicate with their children because of the airborne disease. Even though they're able to communicate



Patrick Shelby/Sunnyside Sun

VEHICLE ENCAMPMENT — Roma Francis carries a collapsible chair through the southeast corner of the city's public parking lot on Seventh Street.

with them electronically, Fayard acknowledged the situation is tough on everyone but he's glad they're not here and having to go through this ordeal.

"It's just another challenge — it makes us who we are. Gives us all character," Fayard warmly pondered. "My kids' mom stays right here with me too. So, we kind of have to rely on each other a little bit here and there. It kind of helps out."

Wearing a protective face mask outside his 2000 Honda Civic, silver, four door car and resting on top of two hydraulic jacks, Fayard detailed the vehicle's troublesome past. He said the sporty sedan had been previously broken into several times before it was stolen. Over the course of about 10 days, he witnessed the car being driven around town and with the help of Garcia, they were able to recover it. Subsequently, the car



Patrick Shelby/Sunnyside Sun

TWO WHEEL PEDAL POWER — Raquel Garcia pedal her bike downtown with Mira the kitten in the basket and Lucky walking steady on the leash. "Nobody here is messing with any of the businesses, we're not trashing the place. We're not selling drugs, we're not prostituting, we're just sleeping in our cars," Garcia informed.

blew a head gasket which significantly contributed toward the downturn of Fayard's financial adversities. The unemployed auto mechanic was then hit

with the insecurities of COVID-19 and finding steady employment has been unsuccessful. He decided his only option was to move into his car about six months ago.

Fayard used his stimulus check and money earned from working on auto repair side jobs to rebuild the top end of the car's engine after business hours in the parking lot. "All I need is an impact wrench and that's what I'm having trouble getting my hands on," he reported.

He said there's a bolt on the crankshaft pulley that can't be removed without the tool and no electrical power close by, has delayed his repair or he would have been out of the lot a week ago. "Just another hurdle. To be honest, sometimes I'm not sure how I do this. It's basically, just do whatever I can," Fayard voiced. "I'm ready to get off the streets. I don't know how some people do it their whole lives, it's outrageous."

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Patrick Shelby/Sunnyside Sun

PARKING LOT CHALLENGES — Daniel Fayard wears a protective face covering outside his 2000 Honda Civic as he secures the passenger door after taking part in a Zoom meeting with his children.

BIRTHS

ASTRIA SUNNYSIDE HOSPITAL

Daniela De la Mora, 6 lbs., 5 oz., born on July 6, 2020 at Astria Sunnyside Hospital to Cristina Alvarez and Efrain De la Mora, Grandview.

Kendra Negrete, 6 lbs., 11 oz., born on July 6, 2020 at Astria Sunnyside Hospital to Carolina Rangel and Samuel Negrete, Sunnyside.

Aiden Benitez-Casas, 8 lbs., born on July 7, 2020 at Astria Sunnyside Hospital to Maria L. Casas and Jorge L. Benitez, Sunnyside.

PROSSER MEMORIAL HEALTH

Baby boy, 7 lbs., 14.6 oz., born on June 28, 2020 at Prosser Memorial Health to Chastitee Garza and Nathon

Davila, Sunnyside.

Baby girl, 4 lbs., 5 oz., born on June 29, 2020 at Prosser Memorial Health to Sara Sosa and Ebany Delgado, Grandview.

Baby boy, 8 lbs., 8.7 oz., born on July 2, 2020 at Prosser Memorial Health to Dana and Scott McCollum, Prosser.

Baby girl, 7 lbs., 14.6 oz., born on July 3, 2020 at Prosser Memorial Health to Wendy Magana and Steven Rodriguez, Grandview.

Baby boy, 7 lbs., 6.74 oz., born on July 4, 2020 at Prosser Memorial Health to Shelby and Wyatt Oswald, Prosser.

Baby boy, 6 lbs., 6.5 oz., born on July 4, 2020 at Prosser Memorial Health to Karina Fajardo and Derrick Escamilla, Grandview.

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