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Love conquers all: Toni & Sam's wedding story



Photo courtesy of Cortney Gilbert

Toni Cuzzetto and Sam Storino take a walk along the beach in Edmonds after their wedding ceremony, which went on despite the coronavirus.

'Not everything in this life will go as planned, and nothing is really promised to anyone'

BY TONI CUZZETTO
FOR THE BEACON

A decade is a long time to be in love. I've been fortunate enough to love, and have been loved very deeply, for the past 10 years. It's easy to dream of what your wedding day will look like when you've been together for so long.

Simple enough to think of the song you'll dance to, or if you want cake squished on your face. I don't think we ever imagined we'd be faced with a life-changing situation like this, though. A countdown to May 16, 2020, had

been on our chalkboard in our kitchen since December 2018. Five hundred and six times we erased the chalk numbers and rewrote them, counting down the days until we were Mr. and Mrs. We secured a venue – Rosehill Community Center in Mukilteo – hired a DJ, established a caterer, and filed the right liquor permits, all within six months of being engaged. To say I was a little eager to get it all going is an understatement.

We invited over 200 people to bear witness to our love and help celebrate the occasion with us. It was going to be the happiest, loudest, most Italian

wedding anyone had ever attended. We bought plane tickets to Greece for our honeymoon and planned a beautiful tour around the Greek Islands. We picked our wedding party – since Sam has two sisters and I have two brothers, it worked out perfect to have them as our groomsmen and bridesmaids. Our hearts were full, our wedding was almost entirely planned out, and we were coasting towards our future together as husband and wife. Queue mid-March, when all of western Washington school districts closed

see **TONI & SAM** page 19 ▶

COVID-19 notifications Rosewood Courte was slow to get message out

Letters mailed now, thanks to a persistent daughter

BY BRIAN SOERGEL
EDMONDSEDITOR@YOURBEACON.NET

Julie Williams didn't get much sleep the night before Mother's Day. On May 9, she read the Edmonds Beacon's May 7 cover story on Rosewood Courte Memory Care on Edmonds Way, which reported that 12 residents in the 45-bed facility had died from COVID-19. A May 14 report from the Snohomish Health District disclosed that 65% of residents tested had positive results.

Her mother is a resident at Rosewood, tucked into a verdant spot on Edmonds Way on

the way to the ferry. "I was shocked to read in your story that 12 people had died at Rosewood Courte," she wrote in an email to the Beacon. "My mother is a resident, and the statement that all families have been kept informed is incorrect."

Williams, who lives in Edmonds, referred to a comment from Darah Cooney, vice president of Northwest Care Senior Living, which operates Rosewood and retirement, assisted living, and Alzheimer's special care communities in Poulsbo and Sequim.

Williams said she received a call and letter March 25 – the latest ones sent to her – that one patient and one employee had tested positive. She said she was later told that all residents would be tested, and received a call that her mother had tested negative.

But Williams is upset that she received

see **ROSEWOOD COURTE** page 20 ▶

Unemployment fraud claims soar in Edmonds, nationwide – Secret Service says it's a Nigerian fraud ring

Unemployment fraud is rampant in Washington state, and it's illustrated in stark detail in the most recent police report of crimes in Edmonds for the week of May 12-18.

The large majority of recorded crimes were for fraudulent unemployment claims, and they came from all corners of the city.

According to Edmonds Police Sgt. Josh McClure, he was informed that the Secret Service has identified a well-organized Nigerian fraud ring targeting the state.

You may know someone who has fallen victim. It wouldn't be surprising – McClure said even personnel in the Police Department have been targeted.

"This is not just happening here," he said. "It's happening in multiple law enforcement agencies all over the Puget Sound and the state. (But) this is really an Employment Security Department issue. "We're just dealing with the ramifications from the fraud attacks. We're just being responsive to people who have been victimized and trying to do help address the issue after they've been victimized."

McClure said officers are providing information to fraud victims. The department has also provided an online reporting tool (<https://bit.ly/2ToHnbr>) for those who have been victimized.

"The hackers and the fraudsters are doing whatever they can to open unemployment claims, usually with people who don't have jobs, or don't have unemployment, so they're able to create an account with that person's information and then start getting the benefits."

Victims generally discover the fraud after getting a letter from the Employment Security Department, or through their employer.

"Protect your personal financial information," Edmonds Acting Police Chief Jim Lawless said in a video posted to Facebook May 16. "Monitor your bank and credit card accounts, and please report any suspicious activities you might witness. "Particularly those surrounding mailboxes, as mail thief has really increased of late."

If you fall victim, report it to the Edmonds Police. The Employment Security Department has more information on unemployment benefits fraud at <https://bit.ly/36jBJMY>.

– Brian Soergel

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Beacon photos by Brian Soergel

A farmers market shopper on May 9 wears gloves and face mask while a vendor accepts her order.

► from **GARDEN MARKET** page 3

possible, only one family member enter the market to shop. When groups of two or more enter the market area, it means the next customers have to wait that much longer. It also makes it harder to maintain proper social distancing. So, even though the line went down the block now and then, it moved fairly quickly as customers smoothly walked down through the market and exited by the fountain on Main Street. As most of our customers know, we have been a no-dog market for several years now. This year, due to Snohomish Health Department standards, this rule will be strictly enforced. This means that only dogs certified service dogs will be allowed in the market. We also noticed many customers asked farmers about how to pre-order. We are highly encouraging both our vendors and customers to work out systems that work for them to place their orders in advance so that their shopping time is reduced at the market. We will continue to promote how to pre-order on the Edmonds Historical



Rep. Strom Peterson of Edmonds points to a purchase at the farmers market May 9.

Museum blog and the Edmonds Museum Summer Market Facebook page, where our market updates will be posted regularly. Christina Martin is manager of the Edmonds Garden Market.

► from **ROSEWOOD COURTE** page 1

ed no mention of COVID-19-related deaths at the business. "Twelve deaths is one-quarter of the residents. All along they have said nothing except that one resident (was) asymptomatic and quarantined. Nothing else has been told to us. "I'm so sick to my stomach about this - I haven't seen Mom since March 1, to hold her hand and tell her I love her. They told us nothing; we assumed all was going well. Darah Cooney is completely incorrect, and outright dishonest about any information flow about this the families are receiving. "I guess I can only speak for my experience, but I'm absolutely dismayed by this information. Where do we go from here? I want her out of there now. This was a blatant manipulation of the true picture. I feel totally betrayed by Rosewood Courte." When the Beacon contacted Cooney May 11, she said: "We've kept in contact with all families during this difficult time to keep them informed regarding the conditions of their loved ones including updates regarding the testing of all residents, with those families with sick relatives receiving more frequent contact. "Our administrator spoke again with this person today to address any outstanding questions, and it is our understanding that her concerns have been met. We will continue to keep residents, families, and the public regularly informed."

"If I had not been informed by your article, it would never have caught me so off guard." Williams said she appreciates the difficulty and stress of the coronavirus pandemic and its effects on assisted living businesses such as Rosewood. After speaking with Rosewood administrator Mary Shepard and director of nursing Julia Klimchuck, she was told Shepard was sending an updated letter to all families. Williams has now softened her approach to Rosewood's administration after initially being upset. "Rosewood is a good facility," she said. "I appreciate the hard work of the staff and managers at the facility, and would never want to reflect negatively on them or the facility during this time of crisis."

New numbers released

On May 14, the Snohomish Health District published its first weekly report on COVID-19 and long-term care facilities, which included 519 confirmed COVID-19 cases - 274 staff, 240 residents, and five visitors. It reported 56 deaths, 149 in home isolation, 27 hospitalized, 280 recovered, and seven under investigation or unknown. Rosewood Courte has had 46 confirmed cases of COVID-19, second only to the Sunrise View Everett, with 77. Cedar Creek Memory Care on 72nd Avenue West has had 22, and Sunrise of Edmonds on Edmonds Way six. There could be others in Edmonds with positive cases, but the district said that "long-term care facilities with fewer than five cases are not identified to protect patient privacy." The May 14 report noted that out of 50 tested at Rosewood, 44% returned positive results. Twenty-nine residents were tested, with 65.5% positive, and 21 staff were tested (14.3% positive). At Cedar Creek, 75 were tested (18.7% positive); 35 residents were tested (25.7% positive); and 40 staff were tested (12.5% positive).

Williams confirmed that she did get calls from Cooney and Rosewood. "I was able to express my frustration about having to read this in the newspaper. I had also called and spoke to my mother yesterday, and a member of staff told me about how chaotic this past month was for them. I was able to explain that my frustration was that while I had talked to them several times during the month, I was never told that they were in such a crisis.