



FRESH VEGETABLES ALL WINTER LONG – Talk to and buy from your farmer the second Saturday monthly through April at the Anacortes Farmers Market. Billy Tate and Nicole Brown, behind the tables, come down from Moondance Farm in Wickersham to share their bounty with you. – Photo by Ken Stern

Book review: 'The Cold Millions'

Spokane's 1910 free speech battles

By Ken Stern

How cold has your family been? Hopefully, they are not suffering in this pandemic year, or even your lifetime, but reflect on your family however many generations they have been in America, or perhaps throughout your family's history: For how long has comfort been the norm?

In 1909 in the Skagit Valley, in Seattle, in Spokane, would your ancestors have hopped freights and hitched rides in the back of wagons as day laborers, with all the possessions they owned rolled up in their blanket slung over their backs?

Many of them probably did, as did countless unknown others. Award-winning novelist Jess Walter, Spokane-based and with a grandfather who rode freights and whose father supported his union and believed in fairness, re-creates Spokane's 1909 and 1910 free speech riots in "The Cold Millions," published last year. Immigrants, socialists, unionists and Wobblies battled, with the police, private detectives and hired assassins, the former for fair hiring and decent wages, the latter to maintain the status quo, literal hired guns of robber barons.

Teenage brothers Rye and Gig Dolan are at the center of this historically-based novel. Gig, the bright, charismatic and handsome older brother, is soon in jail, pulled off a soap box while advocating for free speech. Rye becomes the center of story, though all he wants is a job that will earn him savings to buy a house with

a garden out back for the two of them.

Ryan's story is told in the third person, but a rich cast of characters weave in and out in their own first person chapters, providing glimpses of their lives, as far back as when the Spokane Indian Jules was a boy in 1864 and forward to the novel's last days, in 1911, when Spokane Police Commissioner John Sullivan is assassinated in his home, a shot from a rifle fatally wounding him.

The history is accurate, with the events unfolding in 1910 and 1911, when intermittent day workers were terribly cheated by hiring houses run by lumber mill and mine owners. Some workers were members of the one big Union, the International Workers of the World.

Elizabeth Flynn Gurley, a 19 year-old union organizer of national renown, came from our east and was arrested for speaking.

But Walters fictional characters are as complexly drawn. Ursula the Great, also golden throated, is a cougar tamer on the vaudeville stage who nightly entered the beast's cage and tamed him before a full house of cheering men.

And the bad guys are each bad in their unique way. The mine owner Lem Brand, so rich and not trusting, hires independently two private detectives to infiltrate the union. "Detective" was a euphemism for assassin. Their targets were organizers. Walter recounts a history we refuse to learn, both of our past and of the present moment: The powers-that-be kill in the name of the law, blame the victims and are exonerated.

It is through Rye's eyes, and mind, that the story unfolds. The title comes from his being

brought to the palatial estate of the robber baron Brand. Rye is hit with the pain of the unfairness of life, recalls his family, parents and siblings dead, dying much too young, only his brother alive, and he in jail.

He reflects: "All people, except this rich cream, living and scraping and fighting and dying, and for what, nothing, the cold millions with no chance in this world."

But Rye, thrown into the center of the fight, has rich adventures, taking a ticketed train ride to Seattle to deliver Flynn's manuscript to a union newspaper, which breaks the story of the Spokane jailings to the outside world. Both assassins develop relationships with him, but he survives while they die as they lived, violently.

This good tale of class warfare is of a simpler time, when divisions were clearly economic-based.

State Parks Free Monday

OLYMPIA — Walk in a state park for free Monday. In honor of the holiday celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday it is free: no day-use fee. Think about justice for all whether you are on or off the trail.

State Parks staff reminds visitors to recreate responsibly by hiking only with members of their household, socially distancing from other groups and wearing face coverings when passing on busy trails.

There are 12 free days annually when the Discover Pass is required to visit state parks. State Parks free days are a result of legislation that created the Discover Pass. The Discover Pass is still required to access lands managed by WDFW and DNR on these days.

The free days do not apply to Sno-Parks.

Information: parks.state.wa.us/

Friends of Skagit Beaches lecture series resumes on-line

By Bill Reynolds

The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the tide of public forums to on-line sessions.

For Friends of Skagit Beaches, a local group in its second decade highlighting life in and around shoreline and marine ecosystems of the Salish Sea, that is the case both literally and figuratively.

Friends of Skagit Beaches is launching the 16th year of its popular lecture series on-line 7 p.m. Jan. 15. Details for the Zoom link to this Friday's lecture are at skagitbeaches.org.

The one-hour program will address "Seals and Sea Lions: Pinnipeds of the Salish Sea." Dr. Cindy Elliser, research director of Pacific Mammal Research (Pac-Mam), is guest speaker.

Friends of Skagit Beaches spokesperson Sue Ehler said Dr. Elliser "will present her fascinating marine research."

Elliser provided the Weekly News a brief preview.

"They're called pinnipeds due to their feathered or winged feet," Ehler said of the lecture topic. "(You can) learn to distinguish between seals and sea lions," she said, "and how scientists are identifying individuals of these local marine mammals."

On-line Friends of Skagit

Cell tower . . .

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Town received \$100,000 from Castle Crown, which acts as something akin to a property manager for carriers utilizing the tower, explained Town Public Works Director Brian Lease.

Installing the extension was no simple feat, Lease told the Weekly News, noting access from the northeast edge of Pioneer Park to the cell tower base is made via a steep and narrow access road with a sharp hairpin curve.

"They had to get a specialized crane up there to do the job," he said.

The effort was well worthwhile to all parties.

Under terms of an agreement negotiated in 2019, the Town stands to realize increased revenue from lease fees collected for having earlier made space available for the tower. On the Castle Crown side, the extension allows it to take on another carrier and provide better reception and service to customers.

Lease and Town Administrator Scott Thomas said the project was subject to a rigorous permit process, including public input.

Prior to moving forward with the tower extension plan, Hayes and Town Council members in February 2019 hosted a presentation by a trio of Crown Castle reps who said sun glare would not be a problem due to masking technology developed to refract light. That also solved the 20 foot extension's visibility problem for concerned councilmembers.

Once the camouflage issue and those related to excise taxes and potential erosion were resolved, the Council moved forward with endorsing the project.

"It's been quite a lengthy process," Lease said. "This has been taking place over the course of the last year and a half or two years."

Beaches lectures are also scheduled in February, March and April.

The Feb. 19 program, led by Dr. Jacques White, will focus on salmon recovery. The March 19 lecture is devoted to an introductory study of the Asian Giant Hornet provided by Cassie Cichorz of the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

On April 16, Dr. Deborah Kelley, professor of oceanography at the University of Washington, keynotes a Friends of Skagit Beaches examination of deep-sea volcanoes.

Technology, of course, is not foolproof. Because of that, Friends of Skagit Beaches acknowledges that a high level of participation might preclude some from being able to join the live Zoom presentations.

To mitigate that potential inconvenience, Friends of Skagit Beaches will prepare videos of the lectures to be made available within a week of the live programs.

Information: skagitbeaches.org.

Inslee . . .

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(DOH) will evaluate progress weekly for passing regions into Phase 2. To remain in Phase 2, regions must show downward trends in three of the four metrics. Regions in Phase 2 that fail to continue meeting two or of the metrics are set back to Phase 1.

Phase 1 metrics are 1. Decreasing trend in two-week rate of COVID-19 cases per 100K population; 2. Decreasing trend in the two-week rate of new COVID-19 hospital admission rates per 100K population; 3. ICU occupancy of less than 90%; and 4. COVID-19 test positivity rate of less than 10%.

A statewide report from DOH dated Jan. 8 lists regional results from late November to Jan. 2, depending on the metric. Various time frames are a result of different data sources DOH integrates.

Skagit County's North Region is trending downward or reporting low rates in three of the four metrics. It is failing in new COVID-19 hospital admissions, with a 50% increase in the two week period ending Jan. 2. Any new coronavirus hospital admissions count as an increase.

The proclamation is effective immediately, and extends through the COVID-19 state of emergency.

For information: coronavirus.wa.gov/.

Island Hospital hosts COVID-19 vaccine briefing

ANACORTES — The Island Hospital Foundation and Island Hospital are hosting a free, online community briefing on the COVID-19 vaccine 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 14 with a panel of Island Hospital providers and senior leadership. The types of COVID-19 vaccines, side effects and current recommendations from the CDC on who should receive it will be discussed.

Panelists will include Dr. Jason Hogge, Family Medicine/Obstetrics with Anacortes Family Medicine and medical director of the Walk-in Clinic, Dr. Brandon Greene, pediatrician with Anacortes Family Medicine, hospital CEO Charles Hall, MSN, MBA and hospital COO Elise Cutter, MBA.

The COVID-19 Vaccine Executive Community Briefing is an opportunity for the community to learn more about the vaccine and distribution plans. Current guidance from state and county officials on the phased distribution to the community will be reviewed. Questions from attendees will be taken via the chat feature during the briefing.

Registration is required: <https://islandhospital.org/event/covid-19-vaccine-executive-community-briefing-hosted-by-the-island-hospital-foundation/>. To email questions in advance: foundation@islandhospital.org.

Source: Island Hospital

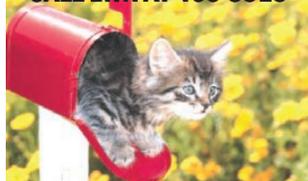
Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

1. MOVIES: Who was the first African American to win the Academy Award for Best Actor?
2. ASTRONOMY: How many phases does the Moon go through each month?
3. MEDICAL: What are leukocytes?
4. TELEVISION: What are the names of the three animated "Powerpuff Girls"?
5. INVENTIONS: Who is credited with inventing the first battery?
6. GEOGRAPHY: What is the largest country in Africa in land area?
7. MEASUREMENTS: What does a Geiger counter measure?
8. LITERATURE: What item did the crocodile swallow in "Peter Pan"?
9. FOOD & DRINK: What is grenadine made from?
10. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a baby goat called?

Answers

1. Sidney Poitier, in 1964
2. Eight
3. White blood cells
4. Blossom, Buttercup and Bubbles
5. Alessandro Volta
6. Algeria
7. Radiation
8. A clock
9. Pomegranates
10. A kid

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