

Flurry of appointments and resignations

# Sloniker and Hiller on La Conner school board

By Bill Reynolds

Comings and goings continue with the La Conner School Board. The school district's governing panel lost its most senior member, Brad Smith. He submitted his resignation June 19. Smith represented District 3, the Shelter Bay area, for 14 years and was the board's liaison with the state legislature.

La Conner High seniors Avery Sloniker and MacQuaid Hiller were welcomed aboard as new student representatives for the 2020-21 academic year during the same June 22 video-conferenced meeting.

Sloniker and Hiller will succeed recently graduated seniors

Dom Wilbur and Yareli Lopez-Fernandez as student voices on the Board.

The Smith resignation is the most recent change atop the school hierarchy.

Amanda Bourgeois was appointed to the board earlier this year when Marlys Baker, who had been elected to the Swinomish director district seat last fall, resigned to move with her family to Mount Vernon.

La Conner Middle and High School Principal Todd Torgeson announced his resignation this spring and has been succeeded in that role by Assistant Principal and Athletic Director Kathy Herrera.

Superintendent Dr. Whitney Meissner resigned, effective yesterday, to take an administrative post in the Lake Washington school district.

In addition, four veteran staff members have retired. They are elementary school teacher Jenny Mortenson, elementary school secretary Ann Van Pelt, nurse Maggie Woodard and custodian Ken Allen.

In related notes:

- The La Conner Rotary Club has donated funds to cover outstanding student meal balances.

- La Conner Schools has received over \$4,000 in donations to purchase yearbooks for students.

## School board director needed

The La Conner School District seeks candidates to fill the District 3 board seat held by Brad Smith until his June resignation. Residents must live in District 3, which includes Shelter Bay. The term runs through 2021.

Applications need a statement with reasons for seeking appoint-

ment, a statement of philosophy regarding public education, completion of a questionnaire and supporting documents. The position is open until filled. The first screening of applicants is July 14.

People applying must be U.S. citizens, legal residents of Wash-

ington and registered to vote.

Email the application and supporting documents to Cheri Kahns, executive assistant, ckahns@lc.k12.wa.us. Information: 360-466-3171.

For district boundaries, contact the school district.

## La Conner Schools' exodus of leaders

By Ken Stern

Since Whitney Meissner became superintendent of the La Conner School District in July 2017, the unexpected administrative departures include:

Person	Position	Date Left
John Thulen	School Board	February 2019
Bev Bowen	Principal, Elementary School	May 2019
Georgia Johnson	Food Services Director	June 2019
Janie Beasley	School Board	December 2019
Kate Szurek	School Board	December 2019
Marlys Baker	School Board	April 2020
Todd Torgeson	Middle and High School Principal	June 2020
Brad Smith	School Board	June 2020
Whitney Meissner	Superintendent	June 2020

Lynette Cram is the sole school board director elected before 2019.

## New La Conner High football coach ready to tackle job

By Bill Reynolds

Jeff Scoma plans to Wing it as La Conner High's new head football coach, and that should be a good thing.

Winging it, after all, doesn't mean leaving anything to chance. Quite the opposite, as far as Scoma is concerned.

A seven-year veteran of the powerhouse Bellevue system, Scoma told the Weekly News on Thursday he will bring classic time-tested Wing-T offensive concepts with him to Whittaker Field.

"I learned the Wing-T and most of what I know from the many great coaches in Bellevue," Scoma said.

The new Braves mentor coached at all levels in Bellevue, from youth to high school. Bellevue High won 11 state 3A football titles between 2001 and 2013, earning national recognition for its precision running of the Wing-T, which features a wing back just off the tight end on the strong side and a split end lined up on the weak side.

The Wing-T is primarily a run attack but is also conducive to play-action passes.

Defensively, Scoma will employ different fronts and coverages, he said.

"We will be a disciplined team with strong fundamentals, that flies around the field," Scoma said.

Scoma grew up in Peoria, Illinois, previously resided in East Grand Rapids, Michigan and



JEFF SCOMA

graduated from Arizona State University.

"Being part of a smaller community where I can get to know the kids, the families and the entire community is exciting," he said of his La Conner position.

Scoma has lived in the Seattle area since 2003 and is employed as a sales manager with Sports Endeavors, Inc.

"Fortunately," he said, "I have a very flexible schedule that allows me to commit the time to the kids and the program."

Scoma arrives in La Conner amid the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The biggest challenge," Scoma said, referring to the virus crisis, "is setting up our calendar as the dates aren't firmed up at this point."

Scoma is hopeful the coronavirus can be curbed and is excited about the prospect of coaching in La Conner this fall.

"La Conner is a great place," he

said, "with a history of success in athletics."

The Braves reeled off six straight 2B post-season grid appearances starting in 2011, with Scoma's predecessor, Peter Voorhees, having guided La Conner to the state playoffs in 2016.

Voorhees, a La Conner High social studies teacher, leads the school's track-and-field program.

Scoma enjoyed a tremendous run at Bellevue, guiding the Wolverines junior varsity to an 8-1 mark and KingCo Conference title a year ago. His youth teams compiled an overall 52-2-1 record and four championships.

But wins and losses are just a fraction of the equation for Scoma. He believes playing football and being part of a team can have a lifelong positive impact.

"I'm looking to establish a culture where we win in the classroom, on the football field and as family members," Scoma said. "From a football-only perspective, we will look to engage the community and create Friday nights that are special in La Conner."

Scoma is recognized for his ability to develop players, including those with little or no prior

(Continued on Page 6)

• The La Conner Education Association (LEA) submitted a statement praising collaborative teamwork employed on all levels to navigate the end of the school year through the COVID-19 crisis.

• Finance Director Bonnie Haley reported at last week's school board meeting that the La Conner Schools Food Services Department served 40,000 student meals

during the pandemic.

• La Conner Elementary faculty members Cammy Alumbres, Sherry Vanderpool and Kerry Salazar shared a presentation on Zoom addressing several facets of the Native Education Certificate Program, which promotes an interactive approach to teaching Swinomish history and culture. Their talk met a graduation obligation.

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