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LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

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WE LOVE YOU! STAY HOME – From the tulip fields, where they are not supposed to be (see page 7), out-of-towners flock into La Conner. Yes! say the coffee shop owners. No say the vulnerable population of old-timers. Mayor Ramon Hayes wants to slow but not stop these golden geese. – Photo by Ken Stern

Limited Access signs posted at town entrance

By Bill Reynolds

As a prank, someone once spray-painted the word “Don’t” atop a Visit La Conner promotional sign outside town.

Fast forward a generation to last Saturday when motorists entering La Conner at the roundabout were greeted by signs reading “Locals Only” and “Limited Access.”

But this time it was no prank.

Mayor Ramon Hayes authorized placement of the signs in response to concerns of residents about the potential spread of COVID-19 here by tourists and following a Friday news conference during which Gov. Jay Inslee urged local officials in Washington state to underscore his “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” policy.

The temporary signage, put in place on a beautiful sunlit spring day, created an immediate buzz on social media and around town.

There was, however, enough pushback on its tone that the “Locals Only” sign was quickly removed.

“I think it was very uninviting and rude,” Kim Broadhead of Stompin’ Grounds Coffee Co. said of the Town’s messaging.

She and others took their complaints directly to Hayes.

“I chatted with him. We had a difference of opinion,” Broadhead said diplomatically. “He said people haven’t been practicing social distancing. He did agree to meet us halfway and take down the “Locals Only” sign.”

The “Limited Access” signage remained in place through Sun-

day.

Posters on social media were split between support and disapproval of the signs. All doubted the signs would either be obeyed or enforced.

Some sought a middle ground, suggesting that a “Stay Home, Save Lives” sign – similar to the one at the south Anacortes roundabout – might have struck a more favorable chord.

Hayes, himself a business owner and, as a musician, someone who well appreciates perfect pitch and maintaining harmony, seemed to agree. He indicated changes are in the works.

“The Chamber of Commerce most likely will be putting up a banner (at the entrance to town) saying that essential businesses will be open,” Hayes told the Weekly News.

“It’s a difficult balance, for sure,” Hayes said. “On one hand you have businesses who are trying to survive and don’t need the mayor making it harder. On the other hand you have a choir of locals concerned with people shoulder to shoulder some days downtown with little to no social distancing. All of this preceding what would normally be one of the busiest weekends of the year and all of that in the shadow of the governor’s directives.

“We started out with a ‘Locals Only’ sign along with ‘Limited Access’ signs,” he said. “After a plethora of complaints and a concern from the businesses that they did not know this was coming – I viewed that as a legitimate

criticism – we modified the sign to say, ‘Limited Access’ and removed the ‘Locals Only.’”

Broadhead confirmed that having not been given any forewarning was an issue for business owners allowed to remain open under state pandemic guidelines.

“The right thing to have done was to have given us a heads-up,” Broadhead said. “They should have let us know those protocols were in place.”

Nor was the timing ideal, said Broadhead, pointing out the town is “on pins and needles” due to consequences of the COVID-19 threat.

Increased vandalism of local businesses has led the Town to hire a private security firm to conduct night patrols while the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” mandate is in effect.

Hayes is uniquely positioned to see all sides of the issue.

As the owner of what is deemed a non-essential business, his projected spring revenue stream has dried up. As a town resident and parent, he was among the first to be alarmed at the potential spread of COVID-19, questioning whether the State 2B Basketball Tournament in Spokane the first week of March – at which the La Conner High girls’ team was a participant – should have been held as scheduled.

He pondered the COVID-19 situation recently while at his Trumpeter Gallery store on First Street.

“From my shop, where I work

(Continued on Page 7)

Church members ‘Stay Home’ with on-line Holy Week services

By Bill Reynolds

La Conner area pastors spoke to empty pews on Easter Sunday, but their messages were heard by many.

At La Conner United Methodist Church, it was a combination of a colorful Living Cross of spring greenery and flowers placed on the front door and use of new technology that got the word out.

Meanwhile, parishioners at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in La Conner were able to view Easter Mass livestreamed in English and Spanish on social media in either real time or in an archived mode.

Attempts to reach the La Conner Christ the King Community Church by press time were unsuccessful, though Christ the King Church in Bellingham has been regularly livestreaming its services. So, too, has His Place Community Church in Burlington, which enlisted La Conner Mayor Ramon Hayes to perform a piano solo from his home on Easter Sunday.

Local churches have turned to new ways of sharing the gospel, sometimes with surprising success, while the state observes a “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” policy in order to stem the spread of COVID-19.

Those were much in evidence during Holy Week.

“It’s challenging,” Skagit Valley Catholic priest Fr. Paul Magnano told the Weekly News, “but we’re connecting in this new way. Even though it can’t totally make up for when we all gather together, we know people are watching from their homes or wherever they’re plugged in.”

Magnano is part of a pastoral team under Fr. Tom McMichael that has been conducting livestreamed worship services on a rotating basis from the Skagit Valley’s Catholic parishes over the past month. Those have received more than 1,000 views and offer parishioners the opportunity to post comments, he said.

“It’s been well-received,” Magnano said of the on-line format,

“and we’re learning how to do it better each time.”

Magnano said no more than eight people are allowed in the sanctuary for each livestreamed service, an experience akin to working in a recording studio.

Rev. Marcella Baker of La Conner United Methodist Church knows the feeling.

“I preached Easter Sunday in a church with empty pews,” she said, invoking the charge of St. Francis of Assisi, who famously challenged the faithful to preach the gospel at all times and, when necessary, use words.

That’s where the Living Cross came into play.

(Continued on Page 7)



EASTER RENEWAL – The front doors were closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, but hearts were still opened at La Conner United Methodist Church on Easter Sunday. A Living Cross placed there served as a colorful reminder of the Easter message. – Photo courtesy of Rev. Marcella Baker

Washington, Oregon and California pledge COVID-19 control cooperation

OLYMPIA —Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced on Monday an agreement on a shared vision for reopening their economies and controlling COVID-19 into the future.

Joint statement from the governors:

COVID-19 has preyed upon our interconnectedness. In the coming weeks, the West Coast will flip the script on COVID-19 – with our states acting in close coordination and collaboration to ensure the virus can never spread wildly in our communities.

We are announcing that California, Oregon and Washington have agreed to work together on a shared approach for reopening our economies – one that identifies clear indicators for communities to restart public life and business.

While each state is building a state-specific plan, our states have agreed to the following principles as we build out a west coast framework:

- Our residents’ health comes first. As home to one in six Americans and gateway to the rest of the world, the west coast has an outsized stake in controlling and ultimately defeating COVID-19.
- Health outcomes and science – not politics – will guide these decisions. Modifications to our states’ stay at home orders must be made based off our understanding of the total health impacts of COVID-19, including: the direct impact of the disease on our communities; the health impact of measures introduced to control the spread in communities – particularly felt by those already experiencing social disadvantage prior to COVID-19; and our health care systems’ ability to ensure care for those who may become sick with COVID-19 and other conditions. This effort will be guided by data. We need to see a decline in the rate of spread of the virus before large-scale reopening, and we will be working in coordination to identify the best metrics to guide this.
- Our states will only be effective by working together. Each state will work with its local leaders and communities within

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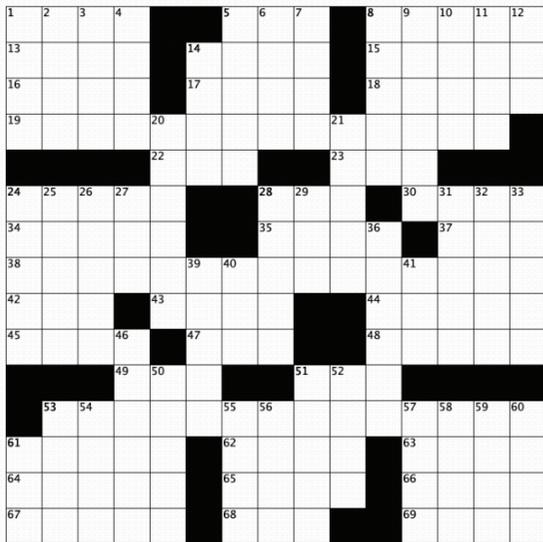
JUST WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST – Supermoon to the rescue. Rising above the Cascades last Tuesday, the 7th, a reminder of our natural world, big, beautiful, calm, serene. The moon rises with or without us. We might as well stop, breathe, pay attention and be with it. – Photo by Nancy Crowell

COVID-19 Cautions

Stay safe. Stay healthy. Stay sane.

- ACROSS**
1. Facts and figures
 5. Highest note
 8. Hawaii, but not Guam
 13. Sacred bird of Egypt
 14. Dire
 15. Cantina crunchies
 16. Annual lead-in
 17. Twisted treat?
 18. Remains to be seen?
 19. STAY SAFE (3 wds)
 22. Dinghy propeller
 23. Make up your mind
 24. Turn the tide
 28. Course of action
 30. Many online messages
 34. Construction girder
 35. "Castaway" locale
 37. Poetic tribute
 38. STAY SAFE (3 wds)
 42. USN officer
 43. Tiny tantrum
 44. Author Joyce Carol
 45. Goes green at a salon?
 47. Dumpster diver?
 48. Twisted wit
 49. 60s protest song "___ of Destruction"
 51. 60s instrumental "Classical ___"
 53. STAY SAFE (3 wds)
 61. Collars may cover them
 62. Tiny amount (2 wds)
 63. Govt. work watchdog
 64. Turn the tide
 65. Scarlet and ruby
 66. Moxie
 67. Family code carriers
 68. The science guy Bill
 69. Perfect prose?
- DOWN**
1. Flying saucer?
 2. Adam's second son
 3. It flies, some say
 4. Home to most of Turkey
 5. Not keeping adequate social distance right now, e.g.

Peter Silzer



- © 2020
6. In ___ of (replacing)
 7. Latin love
 8. Guitar add-on
 9. Razzes
 10. Dropped drug?
 11. Freight weights
 12. Start of a slalom
 14. "Duchess of Alba" painter
 20. Peggy Lee and Marilyn Monroe, at birth
 21. Big game guy Edmond
 24. Like some onions
 25. Wonder and McCartney's "___ and Ivory"
 26. Like these times of uncertainty
 27. Have lunch
 28. Quick with a quip
 29. ___ Wednesday, after Shrove Tuesday
 31. ___ Alegre, Brazil
 32. Some Clio winners
 33. Like Oscar Madison's room
 36. "I" problem
 39. Draw a conclusion
 40. Zip
 41. Part of ENT
 46. Dire
 50. Kevlar garments
 51. Tour leader
 52. Dance, music, etc.
 53. Give in or give up
 54. Ready for business
 55. Tall tale
 56. Follow the rules
 57. Seep out slowly
 58. Second-hand
 59. Native of Bangkok
 60. Stem the spread
 61. Badger



THIS IS WHAT STAY AT HOME LOOKS LIKE – What to do when the weather turns warm in April? Drive up to Skagit Valley tulip fields and visit La Conner, of course. Before those Seattleites come into town, they stop at the Best Road fields north of McLean. This is not what social distancing looks like. This is 7 p.m. Sunday. – Photo by Ken Stern

Governors . . . (Continued from Page 1)

its borders to understand what's happening on the ground and adhere to our agreed upon approach. Through quick and decisive action, each of these states has made significant progress in flattening the curve and slowing the spread of COVID-19 among the broader public. Now, our public health leaders will focus on four goals that will be critical for controlling the virus in the future.

- Protecting vulnerable populations at risk for severe disease if infected. This includes a concerted effort to prevent and fight outbreaks in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

- Ensuring an ability to care for those who may become sick with COVID-19 and other conditions. This will require adequate hospital surge capacity and supplies of personal protective equipment.

- Mitigating the non-direct COVID-19 health impacts, particularly on disadvantaged communities.

- Protecting the general public by ensuring any successful lifting of interventions includes the development of a system for testing, tracking and isolating. The states will work together to share best practices.

COVID-19 doesn't follow state or national boundaries. It will take every level of government, working together, and a full picture of what's happening on the ground.

In the coming days the governors, their staff and health officials will continue

Church . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

"The Living Cross had a powerful Easter message," said Baker, "that spoke to many without words."

As for words, Baker found those in no short supply, either.

"I have been doing Sunday services and daily Holy Week meditations using low-tech videos and MP3 recordings of hymns sung by soloists," she said. "This is more the preference of many people in our congregation, who have an aversion to Facebook or Zoom."

Church members and others were encouraged by email to drive or walk by and say their 'Alleluia' on Easter Sunday, Baker said.

For those who did, the Living Cross became a symbol of new life and beauty that connected the church and townspeople, she said.

"The pews were empty inside," Baker said, "but people even stopped to have a picture taken at the cross."

That seemed quite fitting given the impact of the virus crisis.

"Creation always inspires us to remember that new life comes after death," Baker said. "Somehow spring seems to announce that best to many of us here in La Conner with daffodils and tulips."

ue conversations about this regional pact to recovery.

On Monday a similar agreement was reached by the seven governors of Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey,

Hard times . . . (Continued from Page 5)

a couple of years we went four weeks at Christmas time without paying ourselves to keep our bills paid."

Smith lamented a tanking Skagit County budget that targeted the historical museum in La Conner for a 30 per cent cut..

"If this cut is finally agreed upon," Smith wrote, "staff members will undoubtedly find themselves flipping burgers at Burger King with other unemployed county workers."

In another column, written a month before the 2008 general election, Smith took note of the \$700 billion taxpayer bailout of Wall Street. Smith, who grew up in Woonsocket, South Dakota, wondered who was looking out for Main Street.

"If I had my way," Smith asserted, "there really would be a Main Street in every town, and every one would be different from the other, defining the identity and filling the needs of each particular community."

Week by week, Stokes chronicled steps employed by Town officials to wade

New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. All 10 governors, on both coasts, are Democrats.

Source: Gov. Jay Inslee's office

through the rising tide of financial distress, reporting the "brutal budget squeezing" made necessary by a "tanking economy."

She also related the desperate measures some took in response to the Great Recession, including a bank robbery at Washington Federal and burglary of Pioneer Market.

The Town, Stokes noted, launched a major print and broadcast promotional campaign as one of its strategies to rebound from the economic downturn.

Fast forward to 2020 and a similar game plan is under way. Only with newer technology.

La Conner has begun a web-based campaign to reach on-line shoppers.

Ever the optimist, Hayes – having survived the Great Recession – is buoyed by the potential on-line marketing can provide the La Conner business community going forward.

"The good news and one of the bright spots," he said, "is at the end of this maybe we've come up with a new revenue stream."

LAFF - A - DAY



"...And another thing—she's never ready on time."



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LaConner Regional LIBRARY
closed to the public through Friday, April 24, 2020.
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We are closed until further notice.
No donations for now, please. Stay safe!
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All proceeds go to support the La Conner Library.

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COVID-19 . . .

(Continued from Page 2)

The Washington 211 call center is not able to provide clinical information or test results. For test results and other information specific to your health, contact your health care provider.

Washington 211 offers:

1. No dropped calls. Reduced wait times.

2. An option of requesting a call-back and not having to wait on hold for an answer.

3. Callers who need interpretative services can press # when the operator answers and say their language.

Text the word "Coronavirus" to 211-211 to receive information and updates. There are links to the latest information on COVID-19, including county-level updates, and resources for families, businesses, students and others.

In response to a high volume of inquiries from health care providers, the department is also working to ensure Washington 211 call takers have the right information to address common provider questions on basic, nonclinical topics.

The Department of Health's Novel Coronavirus Outbreak website is doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus.

Source: Washington Department of Health

Limited . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

all day with my door locked, I watched a steady stream of cars all day, but we certainly weren't overrun," he said. "I'll be the first to acknowledge there are no perfect solutions in this environment."

Broadhead, meanwhile, vows to maintain a glass half-filled approach despite her business being off 60 per cent from this time last year.

"It's hard," she said, "but I'm staying positive. I'm thankful for what I have."

GOT NEWS? Please let us know.

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