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Vaccine rollout still in phase 1

BY QUESTEN INGRAM
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The COVID-19 vaccine is here, but neither Island Hospital nor all of Skagit County have yet received what they expected or need to advance in the distribution phases laid out by the state Department of Health.

Skagit County remains in the initial phase 1a, which limits the vaccine to health care workers, first responders and residents in long-term care.

Island Hospital was still vaccinating health care workers, though officials expect to finish that group by week's end.

Hospital officials are in communication with Skagit County Public Health to determine what role they will have in the next phases.

The updated state plan outlines in what order people could expect to receive the vaccine. However, Island Hospital CEO Charles Hall told the Anacortes American on Friday that timing depends on actually having the vaccine to give them.

"The flow of these vaccines are being distributed throughout the state to those who need it so we can all relatively move together one phase to the next," Hall said.

Skagit County received fewer doses

See Vaccine, page A7

When can I get my vaccine?

• **Phase 1A1:** High-risk health care workers, first responders, long-term care facility residents and staff <—Current

• **Phase 1A2:** All workers in health care facilities. <—Current

• **Phase 1B1:** Age 70 and older; 50 and older in multigenerational homes

• **Phase 1B2:** High-risk essential workers 50 and older in: agriculture, food processing, grocery, K-12 schools, child-care, corrections facilities, public transit, law enforcement, fire

• **Phase 1B3:** Age 16 and older with two or more comorbidities or health conditions

• **Phase 1B4:** High-risk essential workers in certain congregate settings under age 50; staff, volunteers, residents in congregate living settings; homeless people using group settings

• **Phase 2:** Critical workers not covered previously; disabled; age 65 and older

• **Phase 3-4:** All others who are eligible, including children once vaccine is approved for them

BACK TO CLASS



PHOTOS BY BRIANA ALZOLA / ANACORTES AMERICAN

Students in fifth grade and younger are back in classrooms this week as the district returns to in-person learning for some students. They are attending half days, four days a week. Above: Students at Island View Elementary School line up with their classes before going into the building at the start of the school day Monday, Jan. 11. Right: Teacher Melissa Goforth welcomes students into her kindergarten class. She gave each student hand sanitizer as they entered the building.



Schools superintendent Irish finds footing at district during pandemic

BY BRIANA ALZOLA
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In his first six months as head of the Anacortes School District, Justin Irish has watched teachers lead via Zoom, he's seen projects completed by students in their homes and he's seen drive-thru activities that help young people connect with school.

What he hasn't seen is in-person instruction, and he can't wait. Though schools opened for a few weeks in November, Irish didn't get in to see the teachers in action in the classrooms before doors closed again.

"This has been the biggest challenge of my career," said Irish, who came to Anacortes from the Edmonds School District, to fill the role vacated by Superintendent Mark Wenzel.

Leading during a pandemic

Irish started officially July 1 but had been working with Wenzel for months before as the district navigated the state-



BRIANA ALZOLA / ANACORTES AMERICAN

Anacortes School District Superintendent Justin Irish (right) welcomed students on the first day back at in-person school Nov. 2. They returned again Monday.

ordered school closures and moved to remote learning for the first time.

Now, several months into his tenure, Irish said he is continuing to learn and work with his team to navigate the pandemic. Every step of the way is taken alongside the Skagit County Health Department, Irish said.

He's also trying to focus on listening to

parents and community members who have many concerns regarding their children and the other young people here.

Irish said recent months have been difficult for everyone, including himself.

"It's been really emotional," he said. "Every day, I want kids to be in school, but I always want them to stay safe."

Bringing a team together, like he did when he created his administrative cabinet, has helped. It means more people are bringing ideas and possible solutions to the table, he said.

The last time the schools opened, they stayed open for only three weeks, but the transition back to in-person learning at the time went very smoothly. Irish stood outside Mount Erie Elementary School on the first day back in October, greeting families, waving at students on school buses and meeting members of the district. His smile, though hidden by a mask, was evident.

To help with staffing issues that shut down schools last time, Irish and his team are making sure the substitute pool is full and that all administrators can step into a classroom or take on

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New plan begins for two-phased safe reopening

BY QUESTEN INGRAM
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Gov. Jay Inslee's new COVID-19 safety "Healthy Washington" plan to reopen businesses across the state was enacted Monday, grouping counties into regions as they work toward reopening without worsening the pandemic.

Skagit, Whatcom, San Juan, and Island counties will be considered the "North Region" in the two-phase plan.

"Our efforts have saved lives, but we're not done yet. Every single choice we make in the coming weeks and months could ensure that more people are able to see this pandemic through," Inslee said in a news release.

Every region begins in phase one, which has

similar restrictions to the ones previously in place, although indoor fitness and outdoor entertainment will be slightly relaxed.

Fitness centers can have appointment-based indoor training with one person per room or 500 square feet, and no-contact sports, such as dancing, climbing and gymnastics, will be allowed with no more than five athletes in set groups.

Phase one restricts indoor capacities to 25% for retail, worship, professional and personal services. Weddings and funerals are limited to outdoor ceremonies of 30 people or less.

For a region to move into phase two, it must meet four metrics: at least a 10 percent reduction in the two-week trend

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Irish

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another role as needed. Irish is learning to drive a school bus, just in case.

No one has shown any hesitation about learning different roles and preparing to help where they can.

"That's something I'm really proud of, the people that I work with are powerful, amazing people," Irish said.

Living in Anacortes

Irish moved to Anacortes last May with his husband Ken Sturtz. Despite distancing regulations, unprecedented challenges in educating children remotely and



CONTRIBUTED

Irish and husband Ken Sturtz moved to Anacortes in May. In their spare time, they love hiking and exploring nature.

the stress of starting a big new job in the middle of a pandemic, they said they

are getting to know Anacortes, meeting people and enjoying the outdoors.

"So far, it's been incredible," Sturtz said. They moved here

from the Seattle area, but both have backgrounds in smaller towns. Sturtz is from Lynden; Irish is from Maple Valley.

Anacortes had everything they were looking for, and it all just clicked, Sturtz said.

"It just made sense," he said.

Sturtz is a psychotherapist. So far, the move has been smooth because he was able to switch his practice from the Seattle area to Bellingham while also meeting with most of his patients virtually.

The couple loves to take multiday hikes and be out in nature. Moving to a town like Anacortes means more opportunities to connect with nature, especially during the pandemic.

"We are just surrounded by this beauty," Irish

said.

In their spare time, the couple enjoys snowshoeing, hiking and overnight backpacking.

In normal times, travel is also very important to them, both in and outside the country.

"I have a lifelong goal of visiting every continent and experiencing as many cultures as possible," Irish said.

Sturtz said it's been a little difficult to meet new people during the pandemic, but he's still already met more of his neighbors than he did in the Seattle area because Anacortes is full of great people, he said.

"We're just loving it here," he said. "The moments we have been able to connect with people, they have been kind, sweet and caring."

Obituaries

DUANE CALVIN EASTMAN

February 1, 1940 -

January 8, 2021



DUANE CALVIN EASTMAN passed away on January 8th, 2021.

He was born in Twin Falls, Idaho, on February 1st, 1940.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Roy and Alma (Hunter) Eastman; three brothers, Roy Earl (Doris), Darrell (Virginia), Steven (Juanita); and two sisters, Virginia Lee Ricketts (Claire), Noreen Kalbfleisch (Darrel).

He leaves behind one sister, Bertina Eastman; two grandsons, Pastor Jacob (Hannah) and Joshua; two sons, Timothy, and Pastor Trenton (Christie); and the woman he loved, Myrna (Reimer) Eastman.

In 1951, an 11-year-old farm boy found himself in a revival where Jesus grabbed hold of him. The preacher at the revival announced: "This is no ordinary salvation." The rest of Duane's life, and his church and family legacy, have confirmed these words. Though his call to ministry would be many years later, his pastoral legacy now stretches into the third generation.

After being a lumberjack, the Lord led him to Mountain View Bible College in Alberta, Canada, where he met his "beautiful and energetic" wife-to-be, Myrna Reimer. Duane and Myrna married on September 7th, 1963, and moved to Twin Falls, where their first son, Tim, was born.

A few months later, Duane began his pastoral ministry in Portland, OR at an inner-city Reformed church while attending Cascade College. In the next few years, Duane pastored Bethel Evangelical Methodist Church near Ridgefield, WA (Trent was born during this time), taught high school in Milwaukee, OR, and served on staff at First Baptist Church of Portland.

In 1977, Duane and his family moved to Athena, Oregon, where Duane was called to pastor Athena Baptist Church. In 1985 Duane and Myrna moved to Salem, OR, where he pastored Judson Baptist Church and earned his Master of Divinity. While pastoring in Oregon, he served multiple terms as the president of American Baptist Churches of Oregon. In 1992, they moved to Anacortes, WA, where he pastored the First Baptist Church of Anacortes for 14 years. While pastoring in Anacortes,

he earned his Doctor of Ministry. Duane officially retired in 2006 after 40 years of full-time ministry. That year, he and Myrna enjoyed a long road trip, traveling 30,000 miles and visiting 30 states and some of the time with a couple of grandkids in the back seat.

After retirement, to supplement his wood-working, Duane also served as interim pastor at churches in Lamar, CO, Ontario, OR, and Kent, WA. From 2013 to 2015, Duane served at New Baptist Church in Huntington WV with his son Trent. In 2017, after more than 50 years of ministry, Duane authored his book, "Refining Fire" sharing the message of God's grace.

Duane lived a three-point sermon. Love the Word and grace of God, love your family, and love the church. Each one of those points he preached throughout his life and during his final days. A sub-point to this sermon would be to love your friends, of which he had many. To the friends of Duane Eastman, THANK YOU for how you have loved and encouraged us.

Visitation will be at Evans Funeral Chapel on Wednesday, January 13th, from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm.

A private committal will be held at Fernhill cemetery the following day. When Covid is over, we look to throw a party in honor of Duane and hope you can come.

To share memories of Duane, please sign the online guestbook at www.evanschapel.com.

EUGENE GEORGE KOVACH

May 18, 1922 -

January 3, 2021



On January 3, 2021 the patriarch of the Kovach family and founder of the Anacortes Senior College, Eugene "George" Kovach, age 98, died peacefully at Chandler's Square in Anacortes with family at his side.

George was dedicated to his country, his community, science, and his ever-growing family. To each he devoted his mighty intellect and energy, as well as his many talents.

Born in Irvington, NJ on May 18, 1922, his family moved to Detroit six months later and George always considered himself a native Michigander. He received his BS and MS degrees in Chemistry from Wayne University (and ultimately was awarded their Distinguished Alumnus award in 1961). When his coun-

try called in 1943, he joined the Navy and was assigned to the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, DC where he worked on creating false targets designed to combat acoustic torpedoes, developing oxygen generators (still used today in rebreather equipment) and occasionally blowing the roof off his laboratory when an experiment went awry.

Following the war George returned to his studies, earning a PhD in Organic Chemistry from Harvard University in 1949. While he was there, as he described it, he was lucky enough to spot Mary Eleanor Frenning on an enchanted evening across a crowded room, and smart enough to marry her in 1950. He taught and did research at Colgate, the University of Florida, and Georgetown University. George had retained his commission in the Naval Reserve, and in 1954 was assigned to Commander Naval Forces Germany where his small Navy Unit (consisting of other scientists) were tasked to "investigate and assess research activity" in Europe and the Soviet Union.

George, Mary Eleanor and their two children lived in Frankfurt, Germany for three years. He then returned to the US and civilian life, but not to universities. He became a Foreign Service Officer when he was invited to join the State Department to advise on issues embodying both foreign relations and scientific interests. In 1970 the Department seconded George to NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium as Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Scientific Affairs. This gave him a wonderful opportunity to work closely with scientists of many countries and in many disciplines and happily herd his family, now his wife and five children, on grand adventures throughout Europe.

George returned to Washington in 1976, and six years later retired from State as Director of the Office of Advanced Technology. He continued with frequent temporary missions for the Department until the early 90s when, having already retired from the Navy Reserves with the rank of Captain, he retired fully.

But not really. After several visits to family, George and Mary Eleanor left the east coast and moved permanently to Anacortes, WA in 2005, where he again went to work. A staunch believer of lifelong learning, he harnessed the rich opportunity of resources, the energy of engaged residents and talented educators, and the responsiveness of civic leaders to form the Anacortes Senior College.

After his wife's passing in 2008, he volunteered for Meals on Wheels and was grateful to find opportunities to deepen his ties to and understanding of the area by participat-

ing in various groups. He made friends and enjoyed classes at the College and the Senior Activity Center, in particular the weekly Miracle of Art sessions held there, at Tippler's dinner outings, and through the fellowship at Sacred Heart Church in La Conner, while freely sharing his unbounded enthusiasm for all things Anacortes. He was delighted to share the town and other events of his life in the last ten years with his very dear friend, Enid Austin.

George will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery later this year, and a memorial service will also be delayed until it is safe to gather.

His family suggests those interested in honoring George consider enrolling in an Anacortes Senior College class when it reopens post-Covid.

He is survived by his sons George E. Kovach and wife Teresa of Vienna VA; Peter Kovach and wife Brenda of Anacortes, WA; daughters Mary Edith Kovach-Heise and husband Joseph of Campton, NH; Katherine Cochran of Bethesda, MD; Christine Kovach of Washington DC; seven grandchildren and three of their spouses; six great-grandchildren; and Enid Austin of London, England, whose friendship spanned both decades and continents, and whose companionship provided him much happiness and comfort in his later years.

To share memories of Eugene, please sign the online guestbook at www.evanschapel.com.

ROGER LYNN BORN

July 9, 1933-

December 13, 2020



Roger was 87+ when he passed at home with his family at his side. He was born in Minneapolis, the oldest of five brothers to Bernard and Hertha (Klawitter) Born. He graduated from Patrick-Henry High in 1951; member of the gymnastic team and lettered in swimming. Roger had a BS in Geology with minors in Math & Physics from University of Minnesota, 1956. He earned an Electrical Engineering Certification at UofM, 1963. He worked on a Master's in Business Administration at Southern Methodist University 1968-1970. Roger continued his education at Columbia University; obtained certifications in Business Planning and Finance. He joined MENSA in 1980.

In 1957-1967 he joined the U.S. Army Reserves stationed at White Sands

Proving Grounds in Las Cruces, NM. A course in programing large scale digital computers on his first vacuum tube computer, a UNIVAC 1103, initiated a life-long venture into computers.

As a seismologist, Roger worked for the Continental Geophysical Co. and Sinclair Research Inc.

He joined the Sperry Rand Corp, UNIVAC Division as an Associate Programmer and advanced to System Development Engineer supporting geophysical and oceanographic operations.

Roger was proud of being in "Who's Who in California 1985-86" for his patent: Methods and Apparatus for Processing Seismic Data in the Field, 1970.

He worked for Texas Instruments; Mosler Information Systems; Global Atmospheric Research Programs, and NOAA-Data Buoy Office as a technical program manager of an international data collection experiment. Research with Ocean Data Systems Inc. landed him in Monterey, CA.

There he joined Pro-Log Corp. as National Sales Manager. His last computer job was Chief Engineer for Planning Research Corps at Fort Ord, CA. He implemented CAD tools for project management adaptable to field experiments; an integrated ballistic missile program. Not ready to retire, he and several Real Estate Brokers started Roger Born Associates which evolved into Roger L. Born Associates Consulting in Technical Business Strategy.

Roger was not all business and computers he knew how to have fun; scouting, backpacking, golfing, bowling, skiing, sailing, traveling and driving his 1970 green Ford Mustang Convertible fast. He was a boy scout, a leader and sat on BSA Councils. He learned to ski on bunny hills in Minneapolis. He served on the National Ski Patrol at Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley for 25 years. Retiring he became the Winter Sports/Ski Reporter for the Monterey Herald. He was a member of the Carmel Ski Club and an Assistant SCRAM Director for 20+ years.

Sailing was his summer passion. He built his first sailboat a Snipe 16' in his garage in MN. He earned his American Sailing Association Certificate; taught and sailed OPB's. He was involved with getting the Small Boats Organization functioning at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA. He was a member of the Monterey and Anacortes Yacht Clubs. He was especially proud to have earned his USA Merchant Mariner Credential in 2010 to become an official "Captain". He loved the freedom of being on the water.

In Anacortes, WA he

joined Afternoon Kiwanis and served on the Board for six years. He was the regional representative to the International Kiwanis Conference in Geneva, Switzerland. He also served as VP to the Anacortes Historical Museum and involved with the Anacortes Maritime Museum.

Roger is survived by his wife of 42 years, Patricia Kreider (Patti); their daughter, Ashley of Yosemite, CA; son Mark & grandson, Justin of Monterey; two step children: Steven Smale (Annie) of Dorset, England, Nancy Sue MacDonald (Jim & daughter, Kelly Anne) of Redwood City, CA; their and Mark's mother, Virginia Aders of TN.

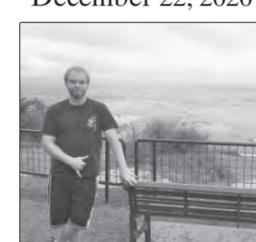
Roger was a multi-talented man filled with smiles and laughter. He enjoyed life to the fullest and was happy in the life he led. We are thankful that Roger is at Peace. His ashes will be interred beside his mother. A celebration of his life will be observed on his birthday in July 2021.

To share memories of Roger, please sign the online guestbook at <https://www.evanschapel.com>

ROSS MICHAEL TIBBLES

May 22, 1992 -

December 22, 2020



Ross Michael Tibbles passed away unexpectedly on December 22, 2020 in Anacortes.

Ross was born at Island Hospital on May 22, 1992 to John and Denise Tibbles of Anacortes, WA. He graduated from Anacortes High School in 2011 and obtained an Associates Degree at Bellingham Technical College.

His passion was cooking, and he worked several jobs in that field. He loved learning from mentors and TV cooking shows, practicing the art at family tables.

Ross enjoyed hiking, longboarding and disc golf. He had very close relationships with friends from childhood.

He is survived by his parents, two brothers, Chris Ellis and Rick Ellis. There are numerous aunts, uncles and cousins left behind, all who loved and miss him so very much.

There are never words to express the grief in the sudden death of a young person. We keep him in our hearts and memories forever.

There will be no public services due to covid, but a private scattering of ashes will take place.

The family is grateful for the outpouring of sympathy in this difficult time.