

EXPLORING THE UNEXPECTED BEAUTY OF LOST HIGHWAYS - B1

CHINOOK OBSERVER

\$2.00 119th Year — No. 16 CHINOOKOBSERVER.COM Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Twister hits Ilwaco, 1st in county since '91

Windows broken but no injuries

By JEFF CLEMENS
For the Observer

ILWACO — The Portland National Weather Service office has confirmed that a tornado did touch down in the Vandalia neighborhood of Ilwaco late in the evening on March 19. The tornado came on the heels of an extraordinarily active weather pattern along the Wash-

'IT WAS A VERY BRIEF TORNADO, AS THEY OFTEN ARE WHEN THEY AFFECT US. IT LIFTED BACK UP OFF THE GROUND RIGHT NEAR CHINOOK VALLEY ROAD AND [U.S. HIGHWAY 101]. WE ESTIMATE THAT THE MAXIMUM GUSTS WITH IT WERE ABOUT 65 MPH.'

NWS Meteorologist Shawn Weagle

ton coastline where special marine statements were issued for possible waterspouts, and tornado warnings near the Olympic Peninsula towns of Kalaloch and La Push. "Yesterday, we had a lot of active

storm cells off the coast, just pretty strong showers that were brushing along the coast," NWS Meteorologist Shawn Weagle said. "One of them got a bit of rotation with it as it started to move inland. So basi-

cally it got just enough spin at the right time where you ended up with a weak tornado."

It didn't seem weak to those in its path. "He said it sounded like a freight train hit the side of his house,"

according to a witness statement to the police officer who responded to the call at 8:24 p.m. Saturday. "All the neighbors there said that no one was hurt and they were helping each other to board up broken windows. ... There was a fence that was torn up and a metal awning that had been torn off of a house. Multiple windows had been broken including the rear driver-side window on a pickup truck." At least four homes were damaged during the storm.

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Cases drop as county enters Phase 3

So far so good on staying in Phase 3

By BRANDON CLINE
Chinook Observer

SOUTH BEND — Pacific County is seeing a reprieve in covid-19 cases at a critical time, as the county and the state as a whole entered Phase 3 of Washington's reopening plan on Monday.

The Pacific County Health and Human Services Department reported a total of 21 new cases and zero new hospitalizations from March 8 to 21, low enough to keep the county in Phase 3 if the metric check from state health officials took place today.

To remain in Phase 3, smaller counties with a population of 50,000 or less must maintain a 14-day average of new cases at 30 or fewer, and have a new seven-day hospitalization average at three or fewer. If a county fails either or both of the two

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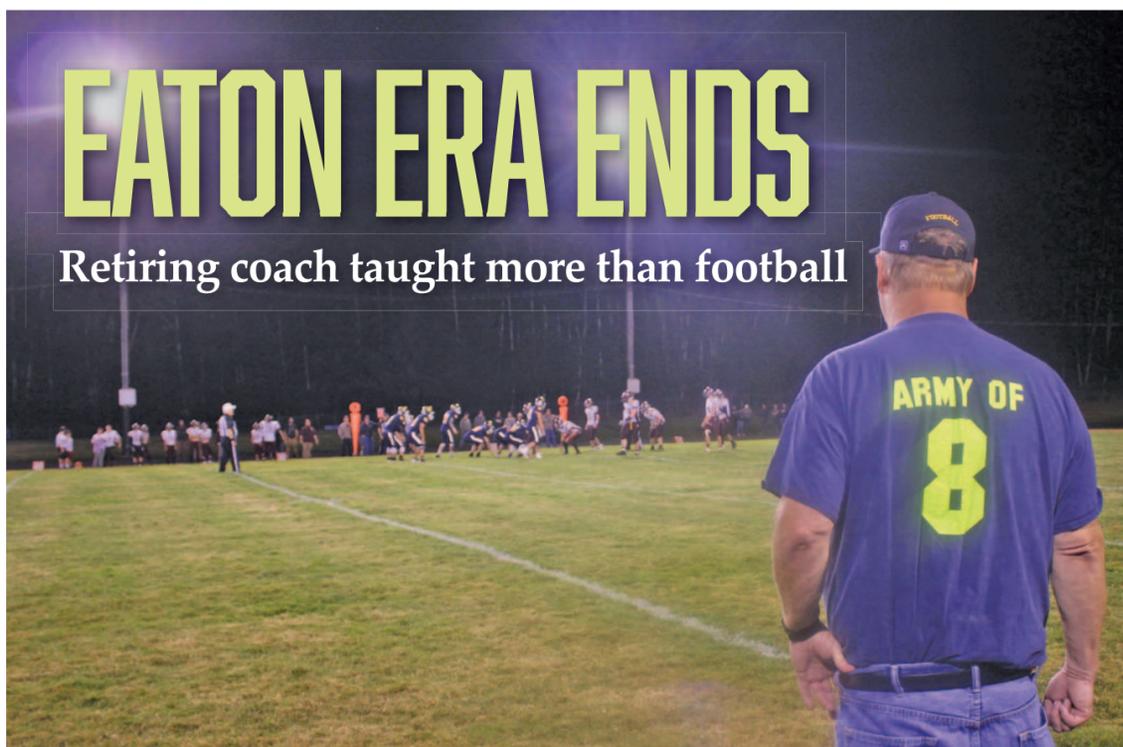
Drug court hit hard by court ruling

Simple possession defendants drop out

By JEFF CLEMENS
For the Observer

SOUTH BEND — Last chances are hard to come by, and many Pacific County residents were given one when they were accepted into drug court and had an opportunity to turn their life around. The success has primarily been due to consequences for failure hanging over participants' heads.

See Drug court, Page A10



PATRICK WEBB/FOR THE OBSERVER

When Naselle's move to 1B meant a switch to 8-man football, Coach Jeff Eaton had a special T-shirt made. "Army of 8" became the motto for the team. The longtime coach announced his retirement Thursday after three decades of coaching. Achievements include one state final and two semi-final appearances.

Naselle stalwart mixed life lessons in with sports skills



By PATRICK WEBB
For the Observer

NASELLE — Does a coach teach football or life lessons?

Jeff Eaton hopes he has done both.

The Comets' long-time head coach is retiring after being the program's backbone for three decades.

He made public his decision to retire at Thursday's season-ending game against Mossyrock.

"I have been thinking about it for a couple of seasons," said Eaton, who built a squad of just 12 into a winning unit. "This one has been a pretty challenging year."

With free time looming this fall, he is eager to catch up on 30 years of missed elk and deer hunting.

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'I AM PRETTY LAID BACK, BUT FOOTBALL DOES BRING OUT SOME STUFF.'

— Jeff Eaton

Retiring Naselle football coach

Naselle applauds Coach Eaton for his community service

By PATRICK WEBB
For the Observer

NASELLE — Football coach Jeff Eaton's retirement brought loud community applause for his service.

"He is going to be missed," said Brian Macy, athletic director, who attended Eastern Washington University with Eaton in the 1980s. "Just think of the positive impact he has had on our community."

"It's just amazing — you don't get people who are willing to stick around in one place for so long. He has done it longer than most of the people in the stands have lived. He loved doing what he was doing — it didn't seem like work for him."

See Service, Page A11

County's high-speed hopes hang on Legislature, satellites

SpaceX board member Steve Jurvetson holds a Starlink user terminal, a satellite-based broadband internet service coming online in Pacific County and elsewhere.



BY STEVE JURVETSON FROM LOS ALTOS/COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA. ORG

Group declines \$3.3M grant-loan offer from state

By BRANDON CLINE
Chinook Observer

PACIFIC COUNTY — The Pacific County Broadband Working Group met virtually for the first time in 2021 on March 17, covering an array of topics critical in the effort to bring high-speed, affordable broadband internet to the area.

Along with recapping local developments, the group vigorously discussed a pair of bills making their way through the Washington State Legislature. Each bill, if enacted into law, would respectively alter the landscape of how broadband services are offered in rural Washington communities moving forward.

The working group was formed in 2019 and comprises the county government, all four cities, all four ports, Pacific County PUD No. 2, Pacific County Economic Development Council, Shoalwater Bay Tribe and the Pacific County Visitors' Bureau.

House bill shows promise

Of the two bills currently in the legislature, House Bill 1336 is the one that is clearly favored by members of the working group. Passed in the state House in February on a 60-37 vote, it would allow an array of local governments — including PUDs, ports, counties and small cities — to get back into the broadband game.

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Eaton

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So how will fans remember the Eaton Era?

“I think I have done a good job,” he said, uncomfortable when asked to measure his own success. “I did it because I always wanted to — I wouldn’t have wanted to do it anywhere else. I love the community and the school and wanted to give back.”

Taking on a challenge

Eaton is 57. He grew up in Naselle, sharing a Halloween birthdate with life-long friend Kevin McNulty, who lived next door and also became a coach and educator. Eaton was initiated into the mysteries of the offensive line in seventh grade, and even kicked field goals during his school years.

He graduated from Naselle High School in 1982 then played lineman at Western Washington University for three years before transferring to Eastern to complete his degree in community health and physical education.

He returned to his hometown to work at the Naselle Youth Camp. Eaton joined McNulty as Ilwaco’s defensive coordinator for a year in 1988 before coaching legend Lyle Patterson, their highly respected mentor during high school, asked both men about the Naselle job. Eaton said McNulty declined because he had made a commitment to the Fishermen.

“It was a challenge and something I wanted to do,”



PATRICK WEBB

Coach Jeff Eaton, left, was still giving positive encouragement to his Naselle team at the WIAA state semifinal, even when they were down 82-28 to eastern Washington powerhouse Almira-Coulee-Hartline in December 2018. He announced his retirement Thursday at the Comets’ last game of the Covid-changed 2021 spring season.

Eaton recalled. It meant taking a demotion at work so he could switch to the graveyard shift to allow evenings for coaching, a lifestyle that lasted an unexpected five years.

As the years passed, Eaton served as head coach, occasionally taking supporting roles, such as when Robin Andrea took the helm in the early-mid 2000s. Assistants have included his current trusted crew of Matt Scrobeck and Pete Riley, who also work at the Naselle Youth Camp; Francis Fabela also contributed greatly to the Comet program, Eaton noted.

He recalled many highlights. One was in 2008 when Naselle advanced to the state 2B semifinal against powerful Napavine. “They were supposed to beat us up,” said Eaton, remembering the 18-13 scoreline with pride, even though it was a loss. “They went on to win a close

final against Asotin, which was highly favored that year.” (28-24, with a long passing touchdown in the final minute.)

Football family

For the Eatons, football is all about family. Jeff’s wife, Amber, has baked countless batches of chocolate chip cookies that refuel exhausted players after the handshakes are done. It’s been common for a dozen boys to cram into their home Sundays to watch videos of upcoming opponents.

In the years that followed that Napavine loss, Eaton coached his two sons to statewide recognition in Comet uniforms. “That was probably the biggest highlight, looking back,” he said. “Both boys were good football players. They played all sports, but football was their best sport.”

The oldest, Robert, now an oysterman, was an all-state

football player selected for the east-west all-star game in 2012. Dustin, a deputy with the Pacific County Sheriff’s Office, received all-league recognition at quarterback, all-state football honors and selection for the all-star game. Unsurprisingly, daughter, Abbie, was active in sports, too.

The brothers’ playing years coincided with success for Seth and Sam Scrobeck, sons of Matt Scrobeck, now in charge of Comet special teams.

The four boys contributed greatly to Naselle’s success in that era, with Jeff Eaton mindful to allow his other coaches more direct contact with his sons, especially when Dustin played quarterback.

“I knew that I could not be the offensive coach,” Eaton laughed, adding a guarded reference to fathers who coach their children setting unreasonable expectations. “If I had been the offensive coach, we probably wouldn’t have talked at dinner!”

‘Army of 8’

Little changed in 2015 when the WIAA shuffled the Comets into 1B, insisting they play eight-man football with the likes of eastern Washington powerhouses Odessa and Almira-Coulee-Hartline. Eaton had a blue and yellow “Army of 8” T-shirt printed, and wore it whatever the weather.

With three fewer players on the field, one missed tackle almost guarantees a score. But Eaton reminded his speediest runners they had

larger gaps to run through.

His last two “normal” seasons were measured by playoff success. Quarterback Cole Dorman and Eaton’s nephew, Jacob, spurred the Comets through a sparkling season into a state semifinal loss to Almira-Coulee-Hartline in 2018; the following year saw Ethan Lindstrom lead Naselle to the state championship game. A rainy day and a pulverizing by mighty Odessa couldn’t dampen Comet fans’ spirits as they celebrated the rare achievement of reaching the final.

“Those semi- and final highlights were when we were getting into the groove with 8-man,” he said. “We had a good solid group of kids those years — they were big moments.”

This school year the covid pandemic wrecked hopes of fall sports and eventually forced the WIAA to switch football to a February start, with a curtailed season and no traditional championship path.

With only 12 boys turning out, and only 10 available for each game, Naselle walloped Mossyrock in its home opener 46-0, swamped Winlock 38-14, defeated Ocosta 52-12 then piled on 58 unanswered points against Taholah. Thursday’s second matchup with Mossyrock ended 48-22 and the Comets were undefeated as Region 4 champions.

Lessons in football and life

For Eaton, a coach’s mission is not just repli-

cating the perfect three-point stance at the line of scrimmage.

“One of the biggest reasons for me is to be out there with the kids and teach them some things to help them along the way,” he said. “Maybe in years to come, they will be saying, ‘Old Coach Eaton said that way back.’”

Lessons from the training field continue, he believes.

“There are life things — sticking to it, not quitting, showing up for jobs. Life lessons,” he said.

Among his favorite achievements has been guiding boys who were not immediate stars.

“It’s seeing those successes, especially kids that were not the great athletes, who found a niche. They were able to do good kinds of things. That was pretty rewarding, especially when they learned things like when not to quit.”

Eaton rarely publicly laments his players’ errors. Instead, a withering look or a brief, quiet word guides them back on track.

But sometimes his voice reverberates across Rueben Penttila Field, amplified this season with fewer fans at the stadium because of covid rules. The decibel level rises mostly when referees didn’t penalize opponents making unsafe tackles.

“I am pretty laid back, but football does bring out some stuff,” he conceded. “It’s the safety things that really concern me — I yell a bit more.”

Cases

Continued from Page A1

metrics, they will be moved down one phase of the reopening plan. Counties will be evaluated on an individual basis once every three weeks.

With higher capacity levels in restaurants and other indoor spaces now in effect, county health officials are warning that precautions such as mask-wearing and social distancing are more important than ever if the county wants to continue to enjoy the relaxed restrictions.

“It will take all of us working together to ensure that Pacific County can stay in Phase 3,” the department said in a March 21 news release.

The county’s total count sits at 822 cases since the pandemic began. With just five active cases, Pacific County’s case rate per 100,000 people over a two-week period stands at just 92.4, down sharply from 217.2 a week ago. Recent new cases, health officials say, are largely attributed to social gatherings. Coronavirus deaths in the county stood at 10 as of March 23.

Clatsop County reported 816 total cases as of March 23, an increase of 19 cases since March 16. Statewide confirmed covid-19 cases totaled 334,392 on March 22, with 20,154 patients hospitalized and 5,183 fatalities reported since the pandemic began.

CDC issues new school guidance

Last Thursday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced new recommendations that opened the doors for schools to provide in-person instruction to students more than just twice a week.

The updated guidance for K-12 schools now calls for all elementary, middle and high school students maintaining three feet of distance while in the classroom — less than the six feet the CDC had previously called for. The guidance is for all elementary schools that practice universal masking, and for middle schools and high schools that have universal masking and are located in communities where virus transmission isn’t high.

The CDC’s guidance continues to recommend six feet of distance between adults in school buildings, as well as between adults and students. Six feet of distance is also still called for in common areas, when masks can’t be worn (such as during lunch), in band, choir and gym classes, and in community settings outside of the classroom.

The CDC’s new recommendations must first be adopted by the Washington State Department of Health before they can go into effect in the state and in Pacific County schools.

Ocean Beach School District Superintendent Amy Huntley said the district is currently working to figure out how many students its schools can accommodate if the state Department of Health sign off on the new guidance — which Huntley expects they will. She said OBSD will start with its younger students and work its way up, but she was “pretty sure” that not every student would be able to be on-campus five days a week.

Also on the schools front, practices began last week for the traditional spring sports season, including baseball, softball, golf and track and field. Competition is set to begin this week, and a full schedule can be found at <https://fishermenathletics.com/events>.

Service

Continued from Page A1

Lisa Nelson echoed that. “Jeff Eaton of football has become the Lyle Patterson of basketball for Naselle athletics,” the superintendent said. “While they may not share the same personality — off the field or court — they both exhibited a great passion and love for what they do. They stand for a long tradition of dedication and success for our student athletes.”

Following district policy, she will post the job and see who applies. Macy noted that will happen rather quickly, because if WIAA reverts to traditional season dates for fall 2021, the new coach will want to open the weight room this summer.

“Jeff will leave a huge hole to fill,” Nelson added. “He has been such a stalwart for our program and a great role model for our kids. We were really lucky to have a quality

guy like Jeff at the helm to run a classy program for so many years. He has had a great career and will be missed dearly.”

Eaton’s lifelong friend Kevin McNulty, the former Ilwaco football coach, was his next-door neighbor when they were kids in Naselle. The two share a birthday, were best man at each other’s weddings, and coached with and against each other.

“He is a class act and is well respected by coaches and officials,” said McNulty. “Jeff is a good man, a great role model, a motivator, passionate and easygoing yet fierce competitor. His laid-back style works for him, but don’t let that fool you — he can get excited!”

Respect and development

Naselle stadium announcer Chris Dorman added to the applause. “A calm, fair man with an occasional ‘bite’ that garnered the respect of players and led programs to

big stages,” he said, when asked to describe Eaton’s impact.

His son, Cole, captained the Comets to the state semi-final in 2018. “Since he didn’t get after us too much, we knew that when he did, we were doing something wrong which had to be fixed,” said Dorman.

As quarterback in his senior year, he benefited from Eaton’s extra lineman drills. “I sure do appreciate how he coached them, because the linemen that I had throughout my career protected me very well, which made my job easier,” he said.

Carson Bergeson, a 2018 graduate, played on Naselle’s offensive line. In eight-man football, extra-point plays are passes or runs. When Eaton signals “Jumbo,” one lineman moves to the backfield to receive the ball and power into the end zone.

The play was called twice for center George Wilson in the next-to-last home game this season against Northwest Christian. The cheers from teammates when the enthusiastic 265-pound junior scored

were the loudest of the night.

Bergeson savored his moments handling the ball and was full of praise for Eaton. “He is very passionate about the game of football,” he said. “He loves to work with kids and give them as much knowledge as he can about the game — and always has a good attitude.”

“I’ll never forget his voice at the end of practice saying, ‘Everybody on the goal line!’ — which means it was time to run.”

‘Enjoyable times’

Hayden Gudmundsen, who is married to Eaton’s niece, Taylor, cherishes his memories, too. He played quarterback for Naselle in his 2015 senior season.

“For the past 30 years, Jeff Eaton has been Naselle football,” Gudmundsen said. “Dedicating so much of his life to not only coaching but mentoring so many players has led to an incredible impact on kids and the community. Personally, Jeff made being a Comet football player one of the most enjoyable times of my life.”

Twister

Continued from Page A1

The NWS sends a team to the location of any suspected tornado touchdowns to investigate the damage and determine its strength using the enhanced Fujita scale, which involves surveying the damage. The team arrived in the area around 8 a.m. March 20 and concluded that a low-intensity EF-0 tornado touched down at the

intersection of Redwing Way and Captain Gray Drive.

“It was a very brief tornado, as they often are when they affect us,” Weagle said. “It lifted back up off the ground right near Chinook Valley Road and [U.S. Highway 101]. We estimate that the maximum gusts with it were about 65 mph.”

It has been about three decades since the last confirmed tornado in Pacific County on June

13, 1991, which touched down near Megler and was rated as an F-0. The year before, on Dec. 1, 1990, a tornado touched down in South Bend.

“I would be willing to bet there has been weak tornadoes in that time period [but] just affecting rural areas, and nobody sees them,” Weagle said. “But this one actually touched down in a neighborhood. The damage definitely looked tornadic, albeit a weak tornado.”

While tornadoes are relatively scary to hear about, Pacific County Emergency Management Agency Director Scott McDougall, who has followed the incident closely, mentions that the weak storm’s strength is something fairly common to be seen along the coast, just without it being a rotational storm cell.

“I think that one thing that’s real important to remember is that we don’t

usually see tornadoes here at all, and obviously this was a tornado,” McDougall said. “I want people to understand that this was something that had 60 to 65 mph winds. Even though the tornado part of it is really a scary term, we also know that we had some straight-line winds up and down the length of the peninsula, and those potentially were just as damaging as the tornado was. I think the tornado becomes more intense because the winds swirl, and it did do some damage clearly.”

“I don’t want to take anything away from the people who suffer damage because of this, and I don’t want to take anything away from the scariness of it, but this is something in a lot of ways [that’s] very similar to what we normally see. A lot of times, we get those gusty winds, and this just so happened to have sustained winds,” McDougall added.



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SPRING FORWARD

Daylight Saving Time begins this weekend. Move your clocks ahead one hour Saturday night.



INSIDE

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10 years on from Japanese tsunami, what's next?



A tsunami struck Japan 10 years ago this Thursday.

By BRANDON CLINE
Chinook Observer

This Thursday marks 10 years to the day since a megathrust earthquake off the coast of Japan triggered a devastating tsunami, leaving more than 20,000 people dead. In Pacific County, residents watched with bated breath.

While coastal communities in North America were ultimately spared from the carnage experienced along the eastern Japanese coast on March 11, 2011, the event halfway around the world

left an indelible mark on those in Pacific County tasked with preparing for an event of the same magnitude to strike along our shores.

For Stephanie Fritts, the Pacific County Emergency Management Agency director from 1996 to 2016, her most vivid memory from that day was watching the early coverage of the tsunami's destruction on CNN — and the waiting that ensued.

"We were just sitting and watching and trying to decide if this was going to be truly some-

thing momentous when it reaches the West Coast," Fritts recalled. "So it was horrifying to sit and watch all those videos and think, 'Oh my gosh, if this hits here, what will be left?'"

PCEMA's current director, Scott McDougall, had just retired over health concerns as fire marshal of the Raymond Fire Department in 2011. He joined PCEMA as the agency's deputy director in 2014, and took over as director in 2017 following Fritts' retirement.

See *Tsunami*, Page A8

New local covid cases pile up

County, cities in line for federal funds

By BRANDON CLINE
Chinook Observer

PACIFIC COUNTY — New local covid-19 cases continued a troubling surge over the past week, as Pacific County nears 800 cases since the pandemic began a year ago.

The Pacific County Health and Human Services Department reported 36 new coronavirus cases over the past week, pushing the county's total to 798 cases. There were 35 active cases in the county as of Monday, March, 8, with cases spread "throughout all

See *Covid*, Page A8

Deputy fires pistol inside his LB home

Investigation still active

By JEFF CLEMENS
For the Observer

LONG BEACH — Pacific County Sheriff's Office Deputy Logan Macomber has been involved in a third significant incident in less than a year. He was involved in two single-car collisions, for both of which he was found to be at fault due to distracted driving. However, the most recent mishap generated more significant law enforcement attention.

On Feb. 21, fellow Deputy Nick Zimmerman responded to Macomber's residence on California Avenue in Long Beach to the report of a firearm discharge. Due to the incident involving a deputy, the Long Beach Police Department was asked to handle the scene, and Officer Michael Parker responded to the apartment shortly after 10 a.m.

See *Deputy*, Page A8

A MILLION MILES

WSP applauds retiring Naselle trooper



PATRICK WEBB

Trooper Lonnie Eaton has been a familiar fixture patrolling Pacific and Wahkiakum counties in his Chevrolet Tahoe. He retired Thursday on the exact 30-year anniversary of starting with the agency as a cadet.

Tributes label Eaton's 30 years 'service with humility'

By PATRICK WEBB
For the Observer

NASELLE — Lonnie Eaton wears many hats in Naselle.

But he is hanging one up. Eaton has retired from the Washington State Patrol after 30 years of service.

Colleagues celebrated his three decades in the distinctive blue uniform with cake Thursday plus tributes for his soft-spoken leadership, his example — and his smile.

"It is time to get out," said Eaton, who is 53. "It has been a great job and career."



PATRICK WEBB

Thursday's retirement cake was decorated with Trooper Lonnie Eaton's badge number, 574.

With the exception of the beginning, when he was mentored by experienced officers in the Interstate-5 corridor, Eaton has been assigned to patrol Pacific and Wahkiakum counties.

His smile and football-player physique have been a fixture as he has added 10, three-year yellow service

hash-marks to his uniform sleeve.

"I try to be friendly and cordial," he said, at first self-conscious about talking about himself during an interview then warming to stories about high-speed pursuits.

"I look to do the lowest amount of enforcement to get the job done," he said. "I have a confidence in myself — you have to have in any law enforcement job. A lot was learned. You get a 'comfort level,' learned out on the road."

'Cat and mouse'

Eaton was born in South Bend, graduated from Naselle High School in 1985 and earned his bachelor of arts degree in recreation from Eastern Washington University. A role model was Sheriff John Didion, who coached Comets football. "He was a big influence."

See *Trooper*, Page A9



LUKE WHITTAKER

Pacific County public health nurse Amanda Berube slips on insulated gloves before unpacking Pfizer vaccine doses for distribution on Wednesday, March 3 in Long Beach.

Local teachers step up to plate in vaccine push

Signups begin for next sets of shots

By BRANDON CLINE
Chinook Observer

PACIFIC COUNTY — Local teachers and school staff started to get vaccinated en masse last week, in a bid to return more quickly to full in-person instruction.

Vaccination efforts for teachers, school staff and licensed childcare workers began after Washington Gov. Jay Inslee announced

on March 2 they were immediately eligible to receive the vaccine. Inslee's announcement came hours after President Joe Biden pleaded with states to prioritize vaccinating these groups to more quickly allow for a full return to in-person instruction.

"Like President Biden, I am grateful for the hard work and sacrifice of educators every day, and especially during this pandemic. The president has directed us to add preK-12 educators, school staff and licensed childcare workers to our cur-

rent vaccine prioritization," Inslee said in a statement.

Existing vaccine providers — such as Ocean Beach Hospital, Willapa Harbor Hospital and the Pacific County Health and Human Services Department — will be able to vaccinate the newly eligible group, as well as national and independent pharmacy

See *Teachers*, Page A8



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The trooper who was never alone

Eaton reflects on changing attitudes to law enforcement

By PATRICK WEBB
For the Observer

NASELLE — Trooper Lonnie Eaton has never felt alone.

“There’s always someone else with me,” he said.

In his 30-year career with the Washington State Patrol, Eaton has responded to fatal crashes with survivors, some injured, all shocked.

He has drawn on his faith for strength.

“With family members, you just try to be as supportive and open as you can with them about the situation,” he said. “You try to get somebody else to come help them and you try not to let them stay on scene.”

The trooper began his career in Kelso patrolling Interstate-5 in 1991. At two of his first three fatal accidents, he was unexpectedly assigned as the lead investigator.

“You just try to be a good human,” he said. “It’s a hard thing to deal with. It’s a sad time and you have just got to try to help.”

But once he left the scene of terrible accidents, he found comfort. “Back in my car, me and God had a little chat,” he said. “I have my talks with God, praying for the families of the people that are injured and killed.”

Hometown challenges

After eight years on freeway duty, he was transferred to Raymond in 1999. Soon afterward, the detachment moved to Naselle.

That offered inevitable challenges.

“I have known that in your hometown you are going to stop people — and people that you know pretty well,” Eaton said.

For minor offenses, a trooper’s options of a verbal or written warning or a ticket offer flexibility. “I probably gave people one break, but they then know I’m out here. They get one opportunity and then they know that I had to do what I have to do.”

Almost reluctant to say so, he said he became somewhat hardened.

“When I first started, I was naive. I would take what people threw at me. But about eight or nine years in, I started being ... I found that my grace has disappeared.

“I never had any real issues with anybody,” he added. “I feel like I have done a pretty good job being as professional as I can. When I stop and contact people I will listen, but I’m not going to start an argument about it.”

Some laws make it harder

Eaton’s career began during the week of rioting in Los Angeles after the police beating of Rodney King was caught on video. In the intervening 30 years, American society’s attitude toward law enforcement has become less supportive.

That provokes mixed thoughts when asked whether he recommends it as a career. “It’s a lot harder for me to do that,” he said.

Recent decriminalizing of drug possession in Oregon and Washington has disappointed many in law enforcement. “The laws are changing. It makes it harder,” Eaton said. “I thought that lawmak-

ers would make things easier. It is the opposite.”

The world has changed in three decades.

“In my first seven or eight years on the freeway, I never wore my (bullet-proof) vest,” he recalled. “Maybe that was feeling young and ‘invincible?’”

Now protective gear is mandatory and his Chevrolet Tahoe includes a rifle, as well as a shotgun that can fire “non-lethal” rounds.

“You had a feeling then that people were not out to get you,” he said. “I feel you have to be way more concerned and ‘on top of your game.’ It feels there’s no time to just be ‘a guy.’”

Prepare for anything

Academy cadets watched a video of officers being shot. “Your No 1 job is to make it home at night,” he said, repeating his instructors’ mantra. “You get training and walk up to a car and know what might happen. You must be cordial, but you have to be prepared.”

Although he discovered weapons while making arrests, they have never been used to threaten him. “I have

never had any really hairy things happen to me. No one has tried to use gun against me.”

One sad memory happened when returning from an oil change in Warrenton. A car stopped on top of the Astoria Bridge.

“I thought he had broken down,” Eaton said, pained as he recalled the memory of watching the driver get out and jump to his death. He radioed the U.S. Coast Guard while managing stopped traffic, regretting he could not help. “There was no eye contact. I didn’t have a chance to say anything,” he said.

Highlights of 30 years

Despite some negatives, Eaton reflects on his 30-year career with pride. His voice lights up when asked about highlights — his was the first car up to the lookout on Mount St. Helens when the Spirit Lake Memorial Highway was opened in the 1990s. He savors hosting drunk-driving awareness programs at schools or taking kids to “shop-with-a-cop.”

He never seriously sought promotions, which likely would have taken him away



‘IN YOUR HOMETOWN, YOU ARE GOING TO STOP PEOPLE — AND PEOPLE THAT YOU KNOW PRETTY WELL.’

Lonnie Eaton, Retiring WSP trooper

from Naselle, where he could work but still coach, attend his children’s events, and be near family.

After family prayers the night before, he took the sergeant’s test, but flubbed a simple question at the interview. “We took that as ‘a sign’” he smiled.

Trooper

Continued from Page A1

WSP Trooper (later Sheriff) Scott Johnson whetted his appetite with a ride-along. “I knew that he was going to be a perfect fit,” Johnson told guests at Eaton’s retirement party. “If people in the community look for help, Lonnie is the go-to guy.”

Eaton chose March 4 for his retirement because it was the exact 30-year anniversary of the date in 1991 when he signed on as a cadet.

In those days, WSP required recruits to be 6-2. “I had to lose some weight to get into the academy,” he laughed. “I have always been pretty husky.” Comet and Eagles football had conditioned him for vigorous physical exercise and he was familiar with firearms. “I have been a hunter all my life.”

He was assigned to Kelso where freeway duty offered excitement. “If you haven’t hit 100 mph, you are having a bad day,” he said. “I enjoyed that!” He recalled racing to catch a speeding motorcyclist south through Woodland that ended with an arrest on a county road. Another time, he chased four Canadians in their speeding vehicle, stopping them three times in half an hour as they changed drivers after each ticket.

“Right from the get-go, you are the cat and they are the mouse,” he said. “You get excited and then try to calm yourself so that so you can see what’s going on around you.”

“It’s excitement, right up to when you close it out and



EATON FAMILY PHOTO

Trooper Lonnie Eaton of Naselle and his children, Taylor and Jacob, at the Wahkiakum County Fair in 2002. Staying assigned to the Naselle detachment has meant he has been able to coach sports and fill leadership roles in the community, including the school board and at his church.

then there’s paperwork to be done — to explain what you did!”

Early fatalities

The stint introduced him to realities of his chosen career — not all traffic encounters end with a fun anecdote.

“I was pretty active and busy,” he said. “We had three fatal collisions and I took the lead on two. It was pretty crazy. I knew that I would be handling things like that. I didn’t think that I would be the lead so soon. But you learn from doing it.”

He and an academy classmate assigned to Kelso benefited from mentors with 15 to 25 years of service. “I really respected those guys,” Eaton said. “Those guys kept me safe and taught me how to do stuff. They helped us out a ton. You have to learn all the little things. The academy isn’t the nitty gritty.”

After eight years, he trans-

ferred to Raymond; the WSP detachment office soon moved to Naselle, convenient because parents Bob and Rosalie Eaton and in-laws Tim and Martha Tienharra were local and he wanted his children to attend Naselle schools.

A positive guy

The Naselle Detachment is part of a WSP district based in Bremerton which covers nearly 3,000 miles of highways in seven counties. Even using a conservative estimate, Eaton has patrolled one million miles.

WSP district commander, Capt. James Mjor, commended Eaton’s longevity and example.

“From a very high level, I can say as a district commander, you do not often see one person stay in a profession, one geographical area, and retire after 30 years of public service with the moti-

vation and positive outlook Lonnie has on things,” Mjor said.

“Clearly one for many of us to look up to, mirror our careers after, and attempt to duplicate the Lonnie smile he always has when around him.”

Mjor and Rod Green, district representative from the WSP Troopers Association, made presentations Thursday.

They were joined by Capt. Ron Mead of Bellevue, Eaton’s academy classmate. “He was a big man with a small voice,” Mead chuckled, recalling their first meeting in 1991. “You have left the profession and the agency better for your 30 years’ service.”

Leader in every sense

Sgt. Brad Moon took charge of the detachment about 11 years ago after stints on the Interstate-5 corridor, including Kelso. Back then, Eaton had 20 years in.

One trooper who gave everyone nicknames has somehow dubbed Eaton, “The Colonel.”

“That said a lot to me — that he was a leader, formally and informally,” said Moon, an 18-year veteran of the WSP. In his absence, Eaton has regularly been his first choice to take temporary charge.

“He is just a natural leader, a calm and humble person, not easily excitable, and he is good with people at the scene (of an accident),” he said. “It’s not just a motto: ‘service with humility.’”

As technology has added a layer of complexity to law enforcement, Eaton has embraced new methods. “Our computers in cars now are for word processing, tickets, collision reports and we have cameras. He has been able to pick it up and train some of

the newer troopers.”

But he excels in personal interactions, he said. “The hole that he will leave behind will be difficult to fill.

“Lonnie is that person you want to talk with an audience and explain complex things,” Moon said, adding that Eaton’s leadership as a “pillar of the community” goes way beyond his work life. “It’s been one of the highlights of my career working with someone of such integrity and dedication to the community.”

Community matters

Eaton coached middle school football for 15 years and has helped his brother Jeff, the high school football coach. He also has coached youth basketball and baseball teams. In 2015, he filled a vacancy on the Naselle-Grays River Valley School Board, perfect timing to tearfully present daughter Taylor with her diploma the following June and son Jacob in 2019. Both were academic high achievers as well as sports standouts. His wife, Kim, teaches special education at Naselle and was the district’s long-time volleyball coach.

Lisa Nelson, Naselle school superintendent, commended Eaton’s continued support for students in his fifth year on the school board. “I appreciate Lonnie’s quiet and thoughtful leadership,” she said.

Eaton is a board member at the Naselle Assembly of God where he serves as a deacon.

“I really appreciate having school board members who are civic minded and involved in other aspects of local leadership, besides the school,” Nelson added. “This demonstrates a commitment to not only our school community, but the larger community as well.”

Thanks for the support

Eaton plans to work next in forest security. As he departs WSP, he is eager to commend those who helped him, plus the agency itself which was supportive as he rehabbed back to full duty after hip replacement surgery.

“I have had good sergeants,” he said, praising Moon. “I’m ending with a good one.” Mentoring a cadet was especially rewarding. “The friendships, getting to know the new guys and work with them a little bit, they are good friendships that I have made through out the years.” Dispatchers deserve credit, too. “They sure watch out for us.” He commended Washington Department of Transportation staff who assist at crash scenes. “I want to say thank-you to all of them.”

Going to miss him

Nikki Footh, who works at the Naselle detachment office, is in her 29th year with the agency. She has served alongside Eaton with the WSP, as well as school and community projects.

“My daughter Haley and his daughter Taylor went into pre-school together and then graduated together in 2016.

“After working with him as many years as I have, he has become one of my best friends in the whole world,” she said. “I am going to miss that guy, that’s for certain.”

After enjoying cake decorated with his badge number, 574, Eaton signed out Thursday with the traditional end-of-watch radio call. While the trooper grumbled he had spent much of his last week filling out retirement paperwork, Moon said Eaton had insisted on responding to two highway wrecks on his final morning, “so he could drive fast with the lights on one last time!”

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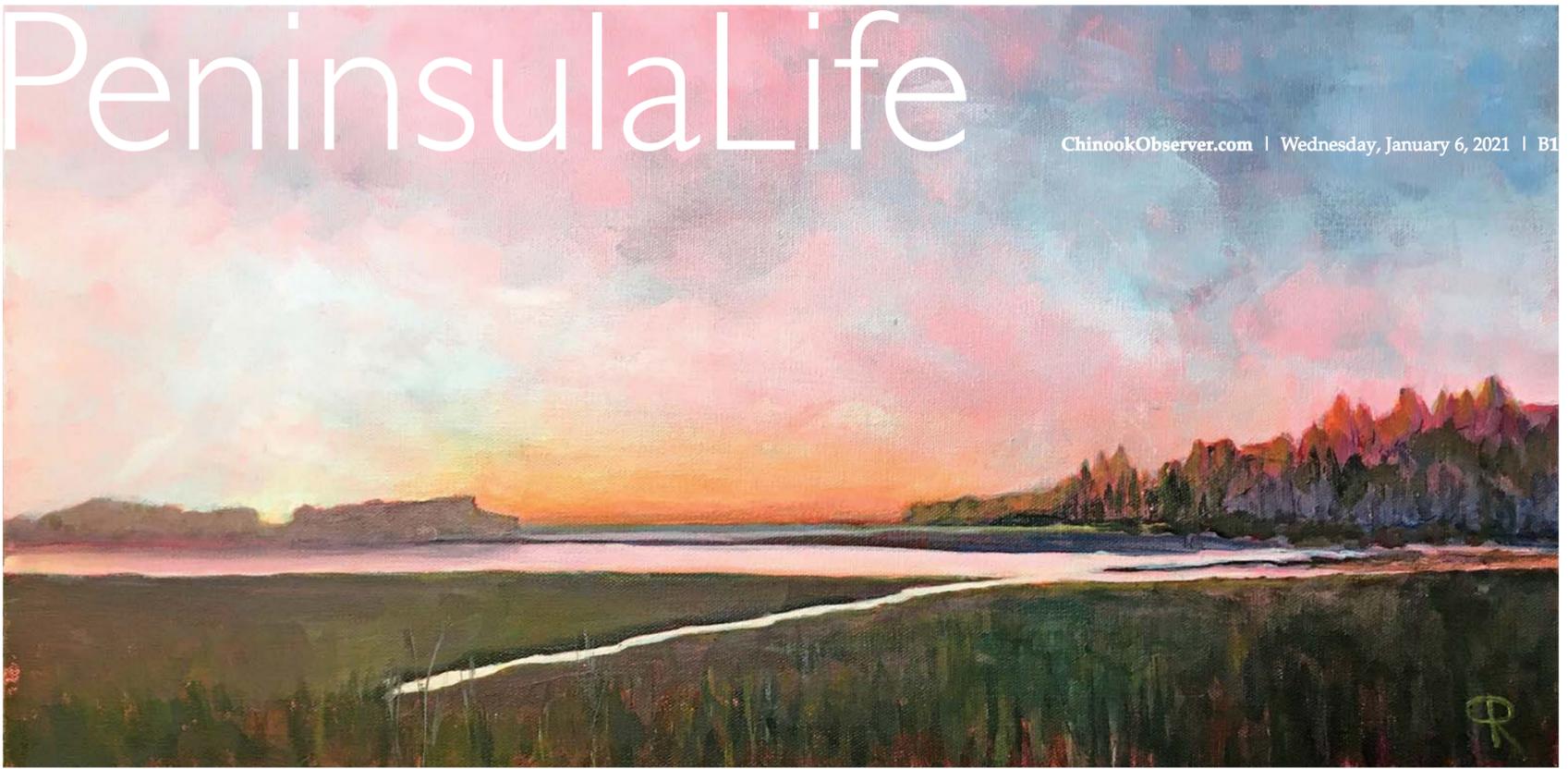


PHOTO COURTESY RON PULLIAM

This painting of the Palix River Delta features acrylics on gallery-wrap canvas. Artist Ron Pulliam first painted the canvas a pink-orange before adding detail.

Rediscovering talents

Bay Center artist delights with scenic views

After decades, Pulliam returns to his art; is eager to grow, learn

By PATRICK WEBB
For the Observer

BAY CENTER — Is painting like riding a bicycle — once learned, you never forget?

Perhaps. Ron Pulliam put down his brushes almost half a century ago.

Now the North Pacific County man is delighting fellow residents of Bay Center with attractive artwork of familiar scenery.

He posts his finished art — and sometimes works in progress — on his own Facebook page or on the Bay Center Remembered site.

Positive comments from residents spur him to create more.

“I paint for pleasure for sure, but it’s not all pleasure. Sometimes it causes temporary grief, but I get a lot of satisfaction from it,” he said, when asked to sum up why he does it.

“Nothing else exists except the canvas, the colors and my brush.

It’s like I am in a vacuum or maybe an hour in a warm pool.

It’s a pleasant feeling.”

Pulliam is married to Jane Pulliam, a member of the Chinook Tribal Council. They split their time between their home in Tacoma, where he has a tiny basement studio, and an older property in Bay Center. “We love it there, the town and the people.” They bought the North Pacific County home, which they are restoring, 13 years ago; there his painting is confined to a corner of their dining room.

Rediscovering his talents

One facet of his creative talent has been on hold for almost 50 years.

Pulliam grew up in Ohio and attended Kent State University in 1968. He was drafted into the U.S. Army and served a tour in Vietnam as a surveyor and photographer. “It was a period of prolonged, unrelenting stress and threat,” he shared.

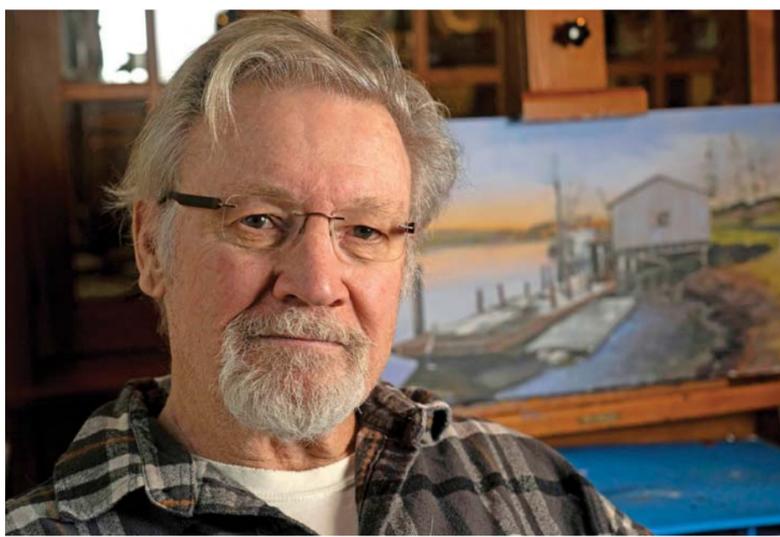


PHOTO BY AMIRAN WHITE

Bay Center artist Ron Pulliam paused in the midst of painting on Dec. 19, 2020.



PHOTO COURTESY RON PULLIAM

This painting of the highway curving into Bay Center elicited positive comments from online viewers. “This makes me feel like I’m actually driving down that road,” wrote Mary Edwards.

*‘NOTHING ELSE EXISTS
EXCEPT THE CANVAS,
THE COLORS AND MY BRUSH.’*

— Ron Pulliam
Bay Center artist

WHERE TO VIEW ONLINE

Facebook: Ron Pulliam-artist

www.facebook.com/nautilusdesign.biz

Remembering Bay Center, Washington

www.facebook.com/groups/446375956155087

He returned changed, and wasn’t keen on resuming his early artistic endeavors. “I painted now and then, but had to go looking for my brushes,” he said. “It was a long period in between paintings.”

In the years that followed, Pulliam had a 32-year career as a graphic designer, including running his own business.

Now retired, he is rediscovering his talents, gaining a considerable local fan base, while remaining cautious about expanding into too much marketing. Years back, he used to turn wooden bowls with considerable skill, but extending art into commerce killed the hobby. “They were more artistic than functional, but because I started thinking about selling, going to arts fairs, I lost interest at that point.”

A ‘recovering perfectionist’

Pulliam teases that he is a “recovering perfectionist.” Some years ago, he immersed himself in elements of Japanese culture. He spent seven years honing his skills in the aikido martial art, nurtured trees in the bonsai style and bred koi fish. He was fascinated by the Japanese trait of exactitude, which extends to perfecting the rear surfaces of a fence which is hidden from view.

He is reflective looking back at that phase. “I didn’t want to be reminded that I had lost an opportunity by not going back to painting,” he said.

The breakthrough moment came after he and Jane were stimulated by Landmark Education personal coaching classes in Portland. “It challenged my way of thinking,” he said.

See Pulliam, Page B4



JULIA TRIEZENBERG

Cape Disappointment Lighthouse in Ilwaco.

Quick guide to Pacific County’s deceptively depressing names

By JULIA TRIEZENBERG
For EO Media Group

Our area is home to diverse ecosystems and spectacular views — but many of these amazing sites on the Washington state and Oregon coasts are accompanied by downright depressing names. Was everyone on the coast 200 years ago having a bad time?

Despite their bleak histories, each individual niche and cove that dots the coast contributes to a mysterious character, making the area more compelling.

On the northern shore of the Columbia River is Dismal Nitch, east of the Astoria-Megler Bridge. This spot’s bleak title traces back to the Corps of Discovery’s transcontinental journey from 1804 to 1806.

As the corps headed down the Columbia in the winter of 1805, they were anxious to catch a trading ship that would allow

them to resupply and send notes to President Thomas Jefferson that they had taken during their journey.

The group never reached a ship because of the terrible weather conditions they faced while trying to get there. A winter storm on Nov. 10, 1805, blew the group into a north shore cove, where they were stuck for six days.

In his journal, Capt. William Clark described that finally, “about 3 o’clock the wind lulled and the river became calm. I had the canoes loaded in great haste and set out, from this dismal nitch where we had been confined for 6 days ...”

Today, Dismal Nitch is a popular rest stop and scenic overlook that must be quite a departure from what Lewis and Clark faced over 200 years ago.

See Names, Page B4



PHOTO COURTESY RON PULLIAM

The Weyerhaeuser Mill at Raymond, painted in acrylic on canvas and shown in a temporary frame, was one of Pulliam's earlier pictures.

Pulliam

Continued from Page B1

Around that time, he connected with artist Lori Beth Chandler who invited him to her Seattle studio. Together they dumped acrylic paint on 4-by-5-foot pieces of heavy canvas in an exercise in process, "without thought toward design or results."

"We squeezed, we splashed, we splotted the paint all over," he recalled with a laugh. "It was kind of cool. Looking back, that was part of the break in my way of thinking."

Surprising success

Once he took out his brushes, his own skills surprised him. "I was flabbergasted by my first paintings," he recalled, noting he was way better than in his youth. "I said, 'Dang, I can do this!' I was fully prepared for a lot of failure — you have to be. You have to be prepared to do a lot of crappy things. It's a skill and it takes practice and work. It usually takes years."

He painted the Weyerhaeuser mill and its Raymond waterfront setting and a street scene showing the town's Park Avenue. As he toyed with choosing a consistent style for his preferred artist's signature, he painted his initials as if they were chalked on the sidewalk.

From those early works, rural landscapes have dominated.

"The area comprising Raymond, South Bend and Bay Center is the source for many of my paintings. There's no end of subject matter and weather to work with," he said.

On journeys between their Tacoma and Bay Center homes, he scouts scenic views. "My wife drives the last 50 miles. I sit with my phone and take pictures out of the window. Sometimes I get her to stop the car."

From these, plus photos he takes on walks around their Bay Center neighborhood, he chooses his subjects and angles. "I see a sunset. I look for composition, contrast and color, and take pictures then review them. I go over 10, 15, 20 and find the one."

Social media reactions

The Palix River Delta and various views of the Niawia-kum River at the mouth and at low tide drew favorable compliments when shared on his Facebook links. With the Palix scene, which almost glows



PHOTO BY AMIRAN WHITE

Bay Center artist Ron Pulliam pays careful attention to the accuracy of his local landscapes featuring Willapa industries.



PHOTO BY AMIRAN WHITE

Bay Center artist Ron Pulliam's brushes.



PHOTO BY AMIRAN WHITE

His palette reflects some of Ron Pulliam's taste in colors.

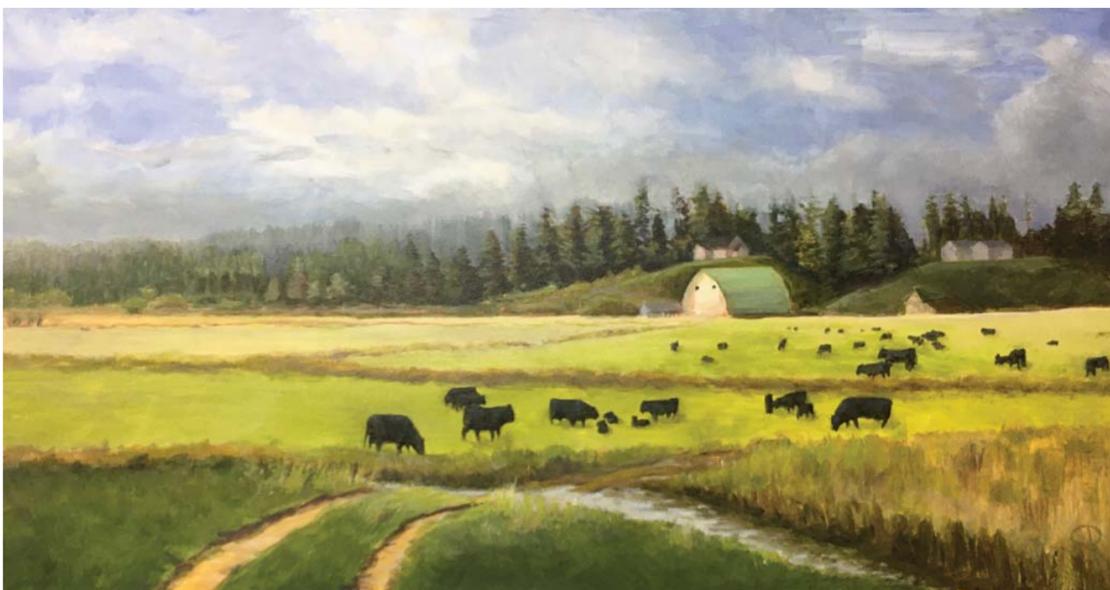


PHOTO COURTESY RON PULLIAM

This scene shows the landmark Rose Ranch in northern Pacific County. "Most people take their pictures from the highway side. I like this one," Ron Pulliam noted.

Names

Continued from Page B1

Just a few miles west of Dismal Nitch is the iconic Cape Disappointment State Park. It's a name that might go unnoticed by locals, but newcomers never fail to ask — "Wait a second, 'disappointment?'"

The native Chinook people first referred to Cape Disappointment as Ka'heese. The first known European to have explored the area is Bruno de Heceta, a Spaniard who traveled along the coast in the late 1700s.

Credit for Cape Disappointment's name, however, goes to the Englishman John Meares. Meares sailed by the cape in 1788 while looking for the entrance to



JANE WINCKLER WEBB



JULIA TRIEZENBERG

LEFT: The surf at Waikiki Beach in Cape Disappointment State Park. MIDDLE: A view of Dismal Nitch and the Columbia River. RIGHT: A derelict ship near Dismal Nitch in Washington.

the Columbia River. Visibility was so poor that day that Meares couldn't manage to locate the entrance. Assuming that the cape would only take him to the interior of a large bay, he named it after his predominant emotion at the time.

Just a few years later,

Capt. Robert Gray took credit for the official first European entrance into the Columbia River in 1792 aboard the ship that gave the river its current name, the *Columbia Rediviva*. Gray originally named the area north of the river Cape Hancock but changed it back to

"Disappointment" after learning that Meares had already branded it.

Within Cape Disappointment is a popular photo-op en route to Cape Disappointment Lighthouse: Dead Man's Cove. Contrary to its name, Dead Man's Cove isn't known to be a reference

to any specific person.

One common story is that the cove's label is an ominous homage to the wreck of the *Vandalia*, which sunk at the mouth of the river in 1853. The victims' bodies washed ashore along the area and the name stuck.

Today, Dead Man's Cove

is closed for the safety of the park's visitors and to protect the area from erosion — but it's still a beautiful landmark along Washington's southwest coast.

As the coast is plunged into the depths of wet winter weather again, it becomes easier to see how some of these places may have earned themselves such dismal titles. Thankfully, tourists and locals alike can appreciate the full spectrum of emotions that the Pacific Northwest inspires. Even with a soggy raincoat and battered boots, it's impossible to say that the people and places that surround the coast are anything close to disappointing.

Julia Triezenberg is an educator at the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

with pinks and light blues, he first painted the entire canvas a pinky orange. "It helps me be freer with color."

"Of all the work you've shared, this one is my favorite. The colors really are lovely," wrote Lilli Cuevas.

A sweeping view of the highway curving toward Bay Center was almost photographic. "Oh, this makes me feel like I'm actually driving down that road. Great job, Ron," wrote Mary Edwards.

Another, of the landmark Rose Ranch, was intentionally from an unusual angle. "Most people take their pictures from the highway side. I like this one."

Still learning

His progress still amazes him, as he shares online. "Some days I'll walk into the studio, and stop dead and think, 'Did I paint that last night?' It's a weird feeling."

But Pulliam is down-to-Earth, too. He shuns watercolors or oils, preferring the more forgiving medium of acrylic paint. "I am still learning, I learn from just about every painting I do. I have 'happy accidents' — most mistakes that can be corrected."

If not happy with a perspective, color or other element, he takes a break. "If I get to that part where it is as much as I can do, I set it down and pick it up later when I can see what it needs."

"That happens when I think, 'This is good enough' or if somebody says, 'Put down your brush and step away from the painting.' There is a danger of overworking."

Occasionally Pulliam selects unexpected topics for variety and fun. One was of pop icon Freddie Mercury, originally seen in a black and white photo but painted in color to resemble stage lighting. Another was a set of four still lifes of pears which he posted online seeking votes; just about every respondent agreed with his own favorite.

Generating emotions

But at 73, he is in no rush to cash in on his revived talents. His pleasure comes from others enjoying his work. "I don't want it to become a business; it's a love," he said.

"I want something that generates emotions in a person at first glance or else something they can identify with."

Masti-Denise Mayrand is among those captivated. "Your painting is so good for the soul," she posted.

New biography honors 'Little Old Lady in Logging Boots'

Legacy Washington celebrates legendary Cathlamet congresswoman

The first major biography of Julia Butler Hansen, the legendary congresswoman from Cathlamet, has been published by Legacy Washington, the oral history program of the Office of the Secretary of State.

"Julia Butler Hansen, A trailblazing Washington politician," was written by John C. Hughes, Legacy Washington's chief historian. Hughes became a reporter

for *The Aberdeen Daily World* in 1966 as Hansen was poised to become the most powerful woman in Congress. The first female chairman of a House appropriations subcommittee, she controlled billion-dollar budgets. Her purview was the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service, the Fish & Wildlife Service, the Bureau of

Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Land Management.

"In the 1960s, three Washington politicians were household names: 'Scoop,' 'Maggie' and 'Julia,'" Hughes writes. "The two U.S. senators — Henry M. Jackson and Warren G. Magnuson — had known Julia since their days together as Young Democrats in the 1930s. In the beginning, I always called her 'Mrs. Hansen,' but after a few years she said, 'Call me Julia. Everyone else does!' That was absolutely true in the sprawling 3rd Congressional

District filled with loggers, mill workers and fishermen." Columnists and editorial writers dubbed her "The Duchess of Cathlamet," "The Sage of Wahkiakum County," "The Little Old Lady in Logging Boots" and "Mrs. Highways." At one point, her district stretched from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the Columbia, and from the Pacific to the Cascades. "She was a get-things-done Democrat even Republicans could vote for."

See Biography, Page B8



THE HANSON FAMILY COLLECTION
Remarkable state and federal lawmaker Julia Butler Hansen, of Cathlamet, worked with Sid Snyder of Long Beach to win approval for the Astoria-Megler Bridge. The cover photo shows Hansen with State Sen. Bob Bailey, her district aide, at the dedication of the bridge in 1966.



PHOTO COURTESY ANNIE ALLENBACK

In the early days of the rescue, the rabbits' fur stood up and did not have that silky, healthy feel. Some kitten replacement milk helped them gain body weight.

Bunny angel: Long Beach woman's rabbit rescue touches hearts

Cute critters' story came along right when we needed it

By PATRICK WEBB
For the Observer

Sometimes the world's most vulnerable critters need a helping hand from a guardian angel.

Meet Annie Allenback.

The Long Beach woman leaped into action when she learned of a family of baby bunnies that had lost their mother in a dog attack.

The U.S. Coast Guard veteran, who has worked in myriad fields since leaving the service years ago, drew on her experience running goat and cow dairies to bottle-feed them and nurture them back to health.

At a time when the world continues to be turned upside down by the pandemic, and the nation divided by the election, the positive news brought the community together as the rescue and its aftermath played out on the Friends of the Long Beach Peninsula Facebook group's web page.



PHOTO COURTESY ANNIE ALLENBACK

The page, carefully administered by Peninsula resident Frank Lehn, intentionally focuses on the positive. People reading the posts the past couple of weeks had some fun. Sandi George labeled Allenback a "bunny angel." Cortne Stricker added that the rabbits were, "adorable. You are such a good person with a very big heart."

"What a fine bunny momma you are!" posted Kathy Lueker Pearson as she thanked Allenback for posting regular online updates. "They're so cute."

Allenback prefers to stay out of the limelight, although she was an emotional guest speaker describing her PTSD experiences exactly a year ago when the Long Beach community marked Veterans Day at an event hosted by the American Legion and the Elks Lodge.

But for this occasion, she was happy to recount her role.

See Bunnies, Page B8



MAKING SALMON

Naselle Chinook production aims to aid orcas

By LUKE WHITTAKER
Chinook Observer

Part 2 in a series

NASELLE — The Naselle Hatchery has been "making salmon" for decades but has never before been so much at the forefront of rearing Chinook salmon popular with humans and orcas alike.

"We raise 1.2 million normal-time coho, 200,000 late-time coho, 5 million Chinook, 500,000 chum and 75,000 steelhead," Naselle Fish Hatchery Specialist John Larson recently said. "Five years ago we were only releasing 800,000 Chinook. Four years ago it jumped up to 2.5 million. And now we're releasing 5 million. It's different in the fact that in my career I've only seen decreases, so it's been refreshing to see some increases."

The coho return has been exceptional on Willapa waterways this fall, including the Naselle — something of a surprise compared to most other recent years when returns haven't been so abundant.

"It was really good. We did well in our returns compared to the rest of the state. We only got 4.5 million Chinook [eggs] but we got all of our coho and chum," Larson said. "We got well over 20,000 adult coho back to hatchery. We've seen as high as 43,000 in 2014, but this has been the second best year."

"We just wrapped up surplus coho," he said.

Larson and other hatchery staff are being exceptionally careful to avoid catching covid,

See Salmon, Page B4



LUKE WHITTAKER

Chinook salmon eggs are processed through a Van Gaalen egg sorter at the Naselle hatchery. Any misshapen or undersized eggs are separated with the machine.



LUKE WHITTAKER

ABOVE: A technician walks along the weir to clear debris at the Naselle hatchery during the coho run in late September. The weir directs salmon into the hatchery from the Naselle River. Coho returns this fall far exceeded early predictions. The hatchery is playing a significant role in producing more Chinook salmon, the preferred prey of endangered orcas and a high-value catch for fishermen. TOP: Marc Solano, Naselle hatchery technician, sorts Chinook salmon eggs. Chinook production in Naselle has ramped up in recent years from less than 1 million to 5 million currently.

Biography: Hansen was the granddaughter of Wahkiakum County pioneers

Continued from Page B1

During her years as chairman of the Legislature's Interim Committee on Highways and Bridges, two of Hansen's protégés were Bob Bailey, the lanky lawmaker from Pacific County, and Sid Snyder, the Long Beach grocer who was deputy chief clerk of the House of Representatives. Together, they were instrumental in the push for construction of the landmark toll bridge across the Columbia River from Megler to Astoria.

The granddaughter of Wahkiakum County pioneers, Hansen grew up steeped in history, believing "girls can do anything," Hughes writes, "even though she was from a town of scarcely 500 people." She always said she "was raised with one fundamental belief — that you should serve your country." Her mother, Maude Kimball Butler, a suffragist, was elected Wahkiakum County school superintendent at the age of 23 in 1903. Her father was the county sheriff.

Hansen's rapid rise on Capitol Hill after 21 years as a power in the state Legislature came as no surprise to those who had followed her storied political career. "Overcoming male chauvinism with her competence and charisma," Hughes writes, she was the first woman to serve on the Cathlamet Town Council; the first woman to head the Education and Roads & Bridges committees in the Washington State House of Representatives; the first female chairman of the 11-state Western Interstate Committee on Highway Policy; the first female speaker pro-tempore of the Washington State House, and the second Washington woman elected to Congress. Together with her good friend, Oregon Congresswoman Edith Green, Julia championed the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and was a co-sponsor of the Equal

Rights Amendment. In the twilight of her political career, she became the first woman to head the Washington State Transportation Commission. She was largely responsible for creating its predecessor, the State Highway Commission.

Hansen always listed her profession as "author." "Singing Paddles," her children's book about Columbia River pioneers, won a national award in 1934. An avid reader since girlhood, she helped secure funds for the first purpose-built Washington State Library. She was also a trustee of the Washington State Historical Society.

Hansen retired from politics in 1975, undefeated in 42 consecutive elections, including primaries.

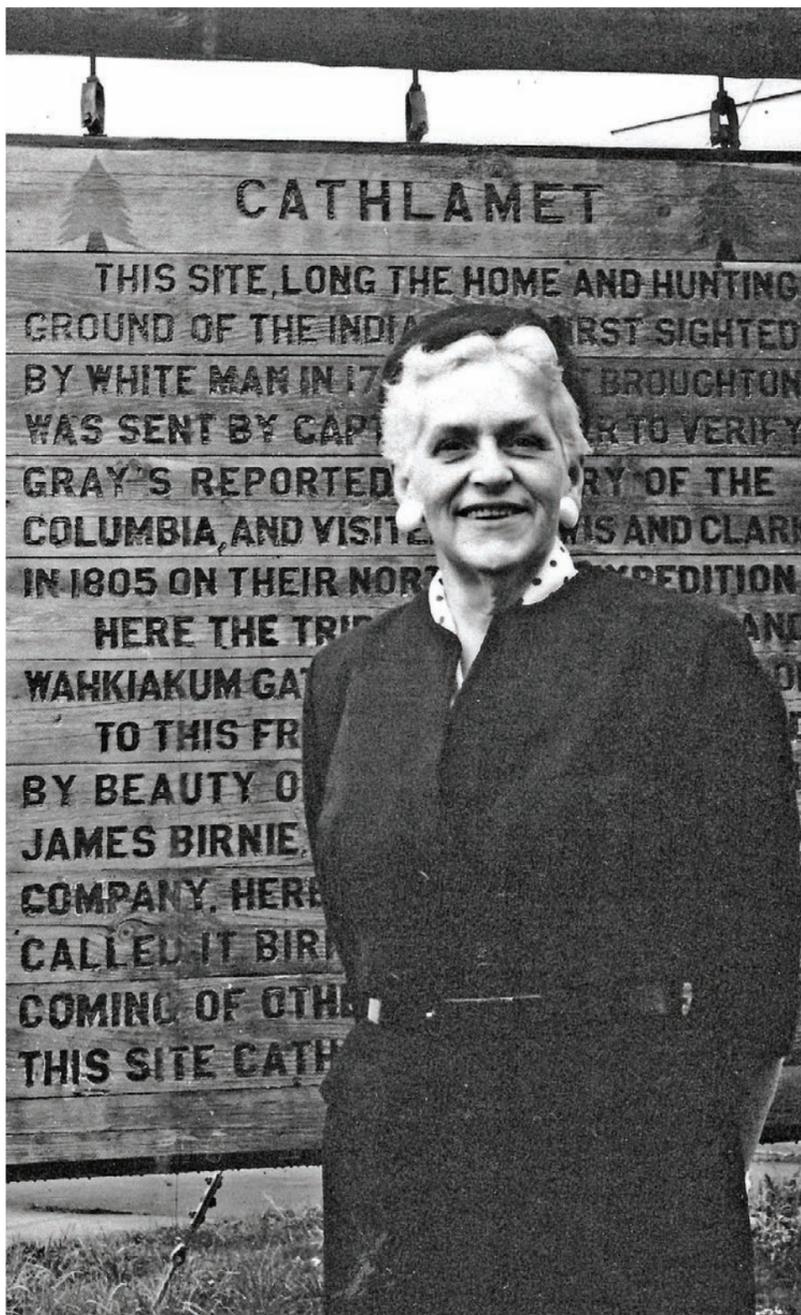
The congresswoman's son, David Hansen, a retired Fort Vancouver historian, gave Hughes full access to his mother's journals, which she began keeping at the age of 15 in 1922. "Off and on for the next 65 years, Julia confided her hopes, dreams, anxieties and fears to her journals," Hughes writes. "They are a remarkably intimate, revealing window on the life of an extraordinary woman."

She died in Cathlamet in 1988 at the age of 80. "No one ever represented her people better than Julia Butler Hansen," said Sen. Magnuson.

Saluting Hansen as Washington's "grand lady of politics and transportation," the Legislature and Transportation Commission had voted to rename Cathlamet's historic Puget Island Bridge in her honor. As a freshman legislator in 1939, she played a key role in securing final funding for the span.

The 300-page book, which features nearly a hundred photos, is available for purchase for \$20 through the Secretary of State's online book store at: <https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy>.

SHE ALWAYS SAID SHE 'WAS RAISED WITH ONE FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF — THAT YOU SHOULD SERVE YOUR COUNTRY.'



HANSEN FAMILY COLLECTION
Julia Butler Hansen posed next to the historic Cathlamet sign outside the Wahkiakum County Courthouse in 1960.

Bunnies: 'It is a way to be of service back to nature'

Continued from Page B1

With initial help from a Naselle resident, Allenback took charge after learning the domesticated bunnies were wandering free after the apparent loss of their mother. She rescued seven, although two died as she drove them home in her truck. The other five were close to succumbing when she fed them kitten replacement milk and sugar-free organic whipping cream. The diet moved to wild dandelion leaves, Timothy grass hay and a little alfalfa. Later, she added dehydrated fruits and vegetables.

Bonus help came from Allenback's 5-year-old miniature schnauzer Molly-bella, which allowed the rabbits to curl up against its warm flank.

"It is a way to be of service back to nature," Allenback said. "It's been fun watching the Peninsula react to this. It's lifted their spirits. This whole year being what it has been, it lifted my spirits, too."

Allenback noted that after some TLC, the rabbits' fur started to feel more healthy and silky to the touch.

As the saga unfolded, people reading the Facebook posts stepped forward to offer permanent homes once the five surviving rabbits are nursed back to good health. "I'm glad they all have 'forever homes' to go to," noted Alison Wathey. "I would want to keep all of them!"

A Facebook post from Rita Dirks pretty much summed things up. "Thanks to everyone who had a part in this rescue and in rehoming. You are all angels on Earth."

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF ABANDONED VEHICLE SALE

To the highest bidder, pursuant to RCW 46.55.130:
SALE TO BE HELD AT 11:30 A.M. NOV. 27, 2020.
2008 CHRYSLER PT CRUISER #245EEG
2002 HYUNDI ACCENT #758BMB
Vehicle Inspection, Day of Sale: 8:30am to 11:30am
HILL AUTOBODY AND TOWING INC., 25901 Hwy. 103,
PO Box 462, Ocean Park, WA 98640. (360) 665-4447
Published November 18, 2020
Legal 290-20

The Naselle-Grays River Valley School District is giving notice according to RCW 28A.335.180 of property declared surplus/obsolete by the Board of Directors. The surplus property will be available for purchase by public schools, private schools and general public in the state of Washington. **A public sale will be held on December 2, 2020 between the hours of 12 and 3 p.m.**

All items sold will be "as is," and all sales are final. Purchasers are responsible to remove items immediately after purchase. The entire list can be viewed at <http://www.naselle.wednet.edu/files/user/2/file/Surplus%20list%20fall%202020.pdf>

Interested parties may contact Karl Johnson at kjohnson@naselleschools.org to set an appointment to view technology items. Social distancing guidelines will be in effect and masks are required.

Sealed bids are required for the lawnmower and laser engraver. Sealed bids may be sent to Superintendent, Lisa Nelson at the following address: 793 State Route 4 Naselle, WA 98638 and will be received until 3 p.m. on 12/2/20. Inquiries regarding the lawnmower and laser engraver can be directed to Lisa Nelson at 360.484-7121 ext. 2.

Published November 18, 2020
Legal No. 287-20

SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR KING COUNTY

ESTATE OF FELIKSA BARRAN, Deceased.
NO. 20-4-06214-3 SEA, FIRST AMENDED PROBATE NOTICE TO CREDITORS, RCW 11.40.030

The Administrator named below has been appointed as Administrator of this estate. Any person having a claim against the decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner as provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing to the Administrator or the Administrator's attorney at the address stated below a copy of the claim and filing the original of the claim with the court in which the probate proceedings were commenced. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) Thirty days after the Administrator served or mailed the notice to the creditor as provided under RCW 11.40.020(1)(c); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of the notice. If the claim is not presented within this time frame, the claim is forever barred, except as otherwise provided in RCW 11.40.051 and 11.40.060. This bar is effective as to claims against both the decedent's probate and nonprobate assets.

Date of First Publication: November 4, 2020
Administrator: NICHOLAS BARRAN; Attorney for the Administrator: DEREK D. CRICK, Esq., WSBA # 28759; Ryan, Swanson & Cleveland, PLLC; Address for Mailing or Service: DEREK D. CRICK, Ryan, Swanson & Cleveland, PLLC, 1201 Third Avenue, Suite 3400, Seattle, Washington 98101-3034
Published Nov. 4, Nov. 11 and Nov. 18, 2020
Legal No. 270-20

PACIFIC COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 7 PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Pacific Co. Fire Dist. #7 will be holding its annual budget meeting on **Wednesday, November 18th at 6:00pm** at the Nemah Fire Hall. All interested parties are encouraged to attend.

Andrea Shotwell, Secretary
Published Nov. 4, Nov. 11 and Nov. 18, 2020
Legal No. 280-20

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Bank of the Pacific, 300 East Market Street, Aberdeen, Washington 98520, has filed with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, an application to establish a branch office at 651 SE Marlin Avenue, Warrenton, Oregon.

Any person wishing to comment on this application may file his or her comments in writing with the regional director of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation at its regional office, 25 Jessie Street at Ecker Square, Suite 2300, San Francisco, California 94105-2780 before processing of the application has been completed. Processing will be completed no earlier than the 15th day following the publication of this notice or the date of receipt of the application by the FDIC, whichever is later. The period may be extended by the regional director for good cause. The non-confidential portion of the application file is available for inspection within one day following the request for such file. It may be inspected in the corporation's regional office during regular business hours. Photocopies of information in the non-confidential file will be made available upon request. A schedule of charges for such copies can be obtained from the regional office.

Bank of the Pacific, Denise Portmann, President and CEO
Published November 18, 2020
Legal No. 286-20

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate of TERRENCE JOSEPH STARK, deceased.
IN THE SUPERIOR COURT of the State of Washington in and for the County of King, in the Matter of the Estate of Terrence Joseph Stark, Deceased, CASE NO. 20-4-06563-1 SEA. Probate Notice to Creditors (RCW 11.40.030)

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE. Kendra Stark has been appointed as personal representative ("personal representative") of this estate. Any person having a claim against the decedent must, before the time the claim would be barred by any otherwise applicable statute of limitations, present the claim in the manner as provided in RCW 11.40.070 by serving on or mailing to the personal representative or the personal representative's attorney at the address stated below a copy of the claim and filing the original of the claim with the court in which the probate proceedings were commenced. The claim must be presented within the later of: (1) 30 days after the personal representative served or mailed the notice to the creditor as provided under RCW 11.40.020(1)(c); or (2) four months after the date of first publication of the notice. If the claim is not presented within this time frame, the claim is forever barred, except as otherwise provided in RCW 11.40.051 and RCW 11.40.060. This bar is effective as to claims against both the decedent's probate and nonprobate assets.

Date of First Publication: November 18, 2020
Personal Representative: Kendra Stark, 2925 SE 50th Ave, Apt 2, Portland, Oregon 97206. Attorney for the Personal Representative: Mark Ropp, WSBA #53876, Address for Mailing or Service: SW Portland Law Group, LLC, 8455 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Highway, Portland, OR 97225. Court of probate proceedings and cause number: King County Superior Court Case No. 20-4-06563-1 SEA Southwest Portland Law Group, LLC, 8455 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Highway, Portland, Oregon 97225. 503.206.6401
Published Nov 18, Nov. 25 and Dec. 2, 2020
Legal No. 288-20

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR PACIFIC COUNTY

Case No. 20-2-00125-25
SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION
LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC, Plaintiff,
v.
WILLIAM C. DALE and TERRI M. DALE, husband and wife, Defendants.

TO THE DEFENDANT: William C. Dale: You are hereby summoned to appear within sixty (60) days after the date of the first publication of this summons, to wit, within sixty (60) days after October 14, 2020, to defend the above entitled action in the above entitled court, and answer the complaint of the Plaintiff. You are asked to serve a copy of your answer upon the undersigned attorneys for Plaintiff at her office stated below. In case of your failure so to do, judgment will be rendered against you according to the demand of the complaint, which has been filed with the clerk of said court.

The purpose of this lawsuit is to obtain declaratory relief relating to real property legally described as follows: The South half of the North half of the South half of the Northwest quarter of the Northeast quarter of Section 4, Township 11 North, Range 11 West of W.M., Pacific County, Washington. EXCEPTING THEREFROM the Westerly 280 feet thereof. TOGETHER WITH appurtenant easements as shown on the face of Short Subdivision No. 80-560 and Short Subdivision No. 75-42. TOGETHER WITH a non-exclusive easement for ingress, egress and utilities over and across a strip of land 80 feet in width being on each side of a centerline described as follows: Beginning at the Northwest corner of the Northeast quarter of Section 4, Township 11 North, Range 11 West of W.M.; Thence South 89° 06'13" East along the North line of said Section 4, a distance of 40 feet to the true point of beginning; thence South 01°13'13" West a distance of approximately 3378.19 feet to intersect with the North right-of-way line of the Klipsan Beach County Road as it now exists, and the termination point of said center-line; TOGETHER WITH a non-exclusive easement for ingress, egress and utilities over and across a strip of land, the centerline description of which is as follows: Beginning at the Northwest corner of the Northeast quarter of Section 4, Township 11 North, Range 11 West of W.M.; Thence South 89° 06'13" East a distance of 1120 feet; Thence South 01° 07'19" West a distance of 30 feet and the true point of beginning; Thence South 89° 06'13" East a distance of 185 feet; Thence South 01° 07'19" West a distance of 300.85 feet to intersection with the South line of the North quarter of the Northwest quarter of the Northeast quarter of said Section 4 and the termination point of said line; ALSO TOGETHER WITH a non-exclusive easement for ingress, egress and utilities over and across a strip of land 30 feet in width, being 15 feet on each side of a centerline described as follows: Beginning at the Northwest corner of the Northeast quarter of the Northeast quarter of Section 4, Township 11 North, Range 11 West of W.M.; Thence North 89° 06'13" West a distance of 15 feet; Thence South 01°07'19" West a distance of 330.85 feet, and the true point of beginning; Thence South 01°07'19" West a distance of approximately 3019.45 feet to the intersection with the north right-of-way line of the Klipsan Beach County Road as it now exists, and the termination of said centerline description. Assessor's Parcel Number: APN: 111104 238; Commonly Known As: 23604 U Street, Ocean Park, WA 98640
Dated: October 12, 2020.
Wright, Finlay, & Zak, LLP, By: /s/ Joseph T. McCormick III, Joseph T. McCormick III, WSBA No. 48883, Attorneys for Plaintiff
Published Oct. 14, Oct. 21, Oct. 28, Nov. 4, Nov. 11 & Nov. 18, 2020
Legal No. 259-20

Covid hits home for English expatriate



WEBB FAMILY PHOTO

During the early 1960s, Patrick Webb's career dream was a cowboy. The journalism idea came later.

Long Beach man mourns after 'The Virus' takes his Mum

By PATRICK WEBB
For the Observer

Mum is dead.
Because of *The Virus*.
And because of *The Virus*, I will not be there to say goodbye.
I will not be there to thank her for the gift of life.
I will not be there to hug my family as we grieve her loss.
I will not be there.
Coronavirus takes no prisoners.
Like pirates who raise the black

flag, it descends on lungs and rips them through with its cutlass.

She was diagnosed on a Sunday, and dead by Wednesday.

She died just before this nation hit the 100,000 mark; Great Britain has about 60,000.

But she is not a statistic. She was my Mum.

Grim news from abroad

My brother's first report from England pinged into my email at 5 a.m. on a Sunday. Residents at her residential care home were checked for covid-19. "Guess who tested positive?"

The following day, his update arrived at 4 a.m. "She's stopped

See Mum, Page B4



PATRICK WEBB

May Webb, Patrick Webb's mother, photographed for her handicapped parking pass, before deterioration in her mobility and health meant she had to move from assisted living to a residential care home.

WHERE THE GEESE GATHER

WITNESSING THE EVOLUTION OF THE RIEKKOLA UNIT



DAVID CAMPICHE

Storm clouds gather over Willapa Bay. This dike and others used to curve around most of the bay's southern shore. Now, the southern tideflats are returning a more natural condition.

Visit to Willapa National Wildlife Refuge reveals a treasure getting even better

By DAVID CAMPICHE
For the Observer

As a young man, I hunted the south tide-lands of Willapa Bay, an area known today as the Riekkola Unit or the South Bay Unit of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. My mission was to shoot the majestic Canada goose — the Tavenger honker, or to be more specific, the largest and most majestic of the geese that feed on the rich green grasses that grace this estuary. At the time, the alluvial fields lay behind man-made dikes that snaked beside the bay and restricted the natural flow of bay waters surging off the Pacific Ocean and into the Willapa. Though I seldom fire my old double-barrel shotgun anymore, happy memories linger of my hunting excursions.

In the last decade, the landscape has changed dramatically. Gone are several miles of dikes. Those have been replaced by thousands of acres of tidal flats and the return of the natural ebb and flow of the saltwater. Along with the reappearance of indigenous habitat — fish, plants and an unobstructed view that extends this exquisite panorama for miles and miles — is now an offering akin to the gift of a basketful of fresh wild mushrooms.

This project is the culmination of a decade of hard labor by many U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees, but particularly, this dream was spearheaded by a determined and vigilant woman by the name of Jackie Ferrier, the project manager of this wildlife refuge. Another organization, the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge (let's call them The Friends) chipped in mightily.

The mission is simple: Wildlife first. Every national refuge is established in law for the conservation of a particular species (the Columbian white-tailed deer in Cathlamet, for example) or a suite of species. The Willapa unit's mandate is the conservation of migrating birds. Stand on the tideflats or beside one of the hundreds of sloughs that inundate this estuary and one quickly reaches the conclusion that, indeed, the confluence of waterfowl, and their swelling numbers (a quarter of a million a year), is dramatic and generally in synch with the rapid beating of a heart. The area is vast — and so is the array of waterfowl, songbirds and raptors. Otters swim their enchanting way up and down the sloughs, deer and elk roam, and bear maraud. This land is their land!

See Refuge, Page B4



DAVID CAMPICHE

Removing old dikes has begun returning the south end of Willapa Bay to more natural conditions.

North Cove community steps up to aid stranded mariner

By MELISSA VERGARA
For Grays Harbor News
Group

NORTH COVE — William “Road Dirt” Flower is in a predicament in North Cove at the north side of the mouth of Willapa Bay.

His sailboat, the *Crown Royale*, ran ashore on Washaway Beach May 19 as he was heading up the coast to Alaska. The self-proclaimed “tramp” has been stranded since then, digging around the boat each day and trying to pull it a little farther back toward the sea.

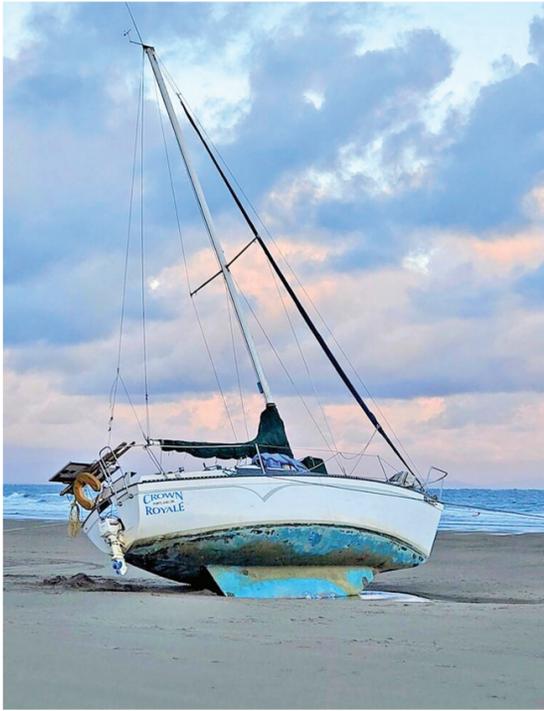
His travails have not gone unnoticed by the community.

The tiller was broken when the boat washed up on the beach; a local man fixed it for him. Other beachside residents have brought him food and other supplies, and helped him dig.

“If you see someone in distress, you need to help them,” said Danny Hahn, one of the North Cove denizens who took Flower some food.

Every night during the high tide, he can be seen digging out his boat and pulling it toward the water. Others occasionally show up to help him, for which he is very grateful.

On May 24 the boat sat at a 45-degree angle, and Flower was frightened that it might tip over. But he said someone dug around it while he slept that night, and by morning the boat was up to a much less precarious 25-degree angle.



LEFT: A broken tiller and the area’s notorious breakers landed *Crown Royale* on Washaway Beach in north Pacific County. RIGHT: William “Road Dirt” Flower’s sailboat, the *Crown Royale*, ran ashore on Washaway Beach May 19 as he was heading up the coast to Alaska.



PHOTOS BY JAENETTE HUDSON

“I can’t believe there are that many nice people left in the world,” he said. “I thought there were a few, but ... it is way more than I expected it to be.”

Coast Guard notice

On May 26, Flower’s journey took a new twist as he received an order from the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Columbia River. It stated that, based on a “ cursory visual inspection,” authorities had determined the *Crown Royale* needed rudder repairs and a follow-up

inspection.

“The Coast Guard has an obligation to respect the rights of maritime industry organization, but we also have an obligation to protect the environment and do our utmost to ensure the safety of mariners,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Clark, public affairs specialist for the Coast Guard in Seattle.

The order allows Flower to make the repairs himself, but the quality of repair must meet maritime standards, Clark added. “If the ves-

sel poses a threat to mariner safety or the environment, the Coast Guard would then intervene.”

As of this writing, Flower was making the repairs and had scheduled an official inspection.

He’s growing increasingly frustrated at his inability to reach the water. Still, he’s optimistic that he will be able to get underway again. It just seems to be a matter of how long it will take.

“I’m playing it by ear, second by second,” he said.

Next steps

Once his boat passes inspection and he gets it close enough to the water, he said, it will take about 2,000 feet of rope, two personal watercraft and a vessel on the water to pull him off the beach. He’s hoping some folks might be willing to help him with that when the time comes, as he can’t afford to pay for such services.

Once a professional welder, Flower suffered life-changing injuries in a 1981 car crash. He has been

living on disability since then. But he has found solace on the water; he acquired the *Crown Royale* through bartering and trade.

Early this year, he was camping on an island in St. Helens, Oregon, on the Columbia River. When spring came along, he decided to head for Alaska to pan for gold.

He spent time in Astoria before successfully battling the brutal Columbia River bar. From there, he got as far as North Cove before the sea tested him again. He said he saw the breakers, and the next thing he knew he was on the beach.

Flower hopes to complete his journey to Juneau, Alaska, where he intends to sell his sailboat and buy a vessel with a motor to explore the islands and pan for gold.

He said that if he had been able to rectify the situation quickly on his own, he would look back at Washaway Beach as just a trouble spot; however, with the kindness and caring he has received from this community, he feels he has been adopted. When he looks back at this experience, he said, he will see it as an extraordinary time in his life when his faith in humanity was restored and he did not feel alone in his struggle.

“This will be a spot I remember for sure,” he said, “and the people what’s done it.”

Melissa Vergara is a freelance writer based in Raymond. Reach her at publisherlv33@gmail.com.

Refuge

Continued from Page B1

Linking the refuge’s far corners are two new trails, each weaving through the Willapa Hills, through the tall evergreen and then alongside the borders of the refuge at tideland. Here are hundreds of acres of bird hunting from the eight waterfowl and goose blinds to further access of boundless acres that crisscross the march lands on the edge of the Willapa. Hunters are allowed to trek across this vast pristine landscape. Lo and behold: Fees have been dropped to encourage refuge use.

On the hillside overlooking the lovely visage is the refuge headquarters. A new office headquarters is nearly completed, and it’s a beauty. Its offerings and benefits will be many. A second project calls for an expanded visitor’s interpretation center. All this is attributable to Jackie, her dedicated staff and hundreds of supporters including The Friends.

The visitor’s center will

temporarily be housed in the new office building and later moved to its own facility. Refuge expansion will also include an expanded network of trails for visitation and exploration. School excursions are part of this plan.

Tarlett Slough extends easterly from Pioneer Road at 67th. Trails and viewing platforms punctuate this large slough and culminate on a ridge, perhaps a half-mile from trailhead. From this knoll, a spectacular view unfolds of the south end of Willapa Bay that can happily compete with many of the extraordinary vistas in Southwest Washington, and certainly with other National Parks that scatter across our country. A plan to enhance this vista is in the works with a viewing platform and indigenous plantings. If a person takes in the entirety of this project; takes in the miles of bay and shoreline and the perpetual dance of sky with the kaleidoscope of dynamic Pacific weather, then one can appreciate these efforts as the marriage of dedicated



DAVID CAMPICHE

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge’s new headquarters at the eastern end of 67th street east on Long Beach is well on its way to completion.

men and woman from our government, as well as an outpouring of energy from local participants.

On an afternoon when the weather was as changeable as a six-course feast, I visited with Ferrier. We walked along one of the recently developed trails

that exposes the full extent of this huge refuge. We were joined by a family of four. The father, Dustin Wanke, lingered and began to express his appreciation for the refuge and the sacrifices of so many who had offered the opportunities for him and his.

“Making nature user-friendly,” he explained. “That’s ultimately important.” Wanke described himself as a fan of conservancy, as well as a conservative. “Balance,” he stated. “A balance established between the needs of human beings and the importance of protecting our environment.” He essentially suggested that the Riekkola Unit achieves all that in spades. “Launch your kayak, pop in a slough and paddle to the bay — the opportunities are many.”

Ferrier was so pleased to hear kudos from one of the Peninsula’s faithful that her face lit up like the intermittent sun ball that briefly burst through the pewter-colored clouds.

“Connecting,” she said. “The project is reconnecting the natural evolution of plants, animals and the tidal water of a bay we think of as ours, as home.”

“I could have left (the Peninsula),” Wanke said. “There were opportunities. But I love it here.” Truth be told, you could not drag him away.

We stopped at Parker Slough and I marveled at its reincarnation. All around, the new landscape — just like the unspoiled bay of long ago — unfurled in the soft afternoon light. The edge of the bay had been resurrected and reborn to the eye’s delight.

“Our job is to reconnect nature, all its intricate offerings. At the same time, we seek to connect with our citizens. How can the project like this fail?” Ferrier asked.

The economic impact is clear to see. So is the physical and emotional. In an age when human beings congregate in massive numbers, and quarrel incessantly, here is an opportunity to explore a rare and pristine environment as well as a trumpeting of joy that can be shared by all. Here is Willapa Bay at its finest. Build it, and they will come. Or more aptly put: It’s happening here, and the benefits are as far reaching as the long tongue of tides, and the living, breathing entity we call Willapa Bay.

Mum

Continued from Page B1

taking antibiotics (not that they can help against the virus), stopped eating, stopped drinking, stopped any and all taking of any medication and apart from the fact that she’s currently hanging in there, is not responding to anyone or anything.”

I spent the following two days staring at my phone — something I ridicule in snarky Facebook posts.

She is 94. Our family has known death must be looming, just not the “how” or the “when.”

But this?

How does a “mummy’s boy” prepare for the dead of the woman who gave him life?

He doesn’t, of course.

I was pretty sure during my visit in February that I wouldn’t see Mum alive again. Oddly, though, when the pandemic hit, I had a notion that this elfin woman who had survived Hitler’s bombs, serious adult health scares, and nine decades worrying about everyone else, would survive.

No.

When I squeezed her

gnarled hand in our final goodbye, I noticed Mum had a red-bordered “Do Not Resuscitate!” order Scotch-taped to her bedside furniture. She repeatedly maintained she was “ready to pop off.”

During the wait, I kept myself busy updating letters I had written four years ago, ready for when needed. I changed my chatty, “see you soon” finale to, “No idea on any funeral yet because of the coronavirus restrictions.”

I have lived in the United States for 40 years. In the first decade, I welcomed Mum and Dad three times and shared pride in my new homeland. Since the 1990s, I have visited them every year, watching them age and Dad die, delighting in their retirement hobbies, allowing them to quiz me about American differences in language, food and beliefs.

I feel so far away from jolly olde England now.

What am I supposed to think or do?

Am I supposed to remember the good things about my life and Mum’s role in them? I was nearly born at 4 a.m. in an ambulance; Mum laughs at the



WEBB FAMILY PHOTO

May Webb has an encounter with wildlife. Birdwatching was one of Patrick Webb’s parents retirement hobbies when the aging process took away their ability to enjoy the sports that had kept them active for decades.

memory, which must have been painful. Boyhood summers were highlighted by

one-week seaside vacations. Faded black-and-white photos celebrate Webb fam-

ily adventures on pebbled beaches with grinning normalcy. Soon, they will be all that remain.

She taught me to read and to love to read. Words have been my entire life, and yet, as the cliché goes, I am lost for them now.

The next day’s report is grim. An early morning call from the care home signals Mum’s breathing was labored; staff invite one final visit. My brother reports that Mum, withered, rasping, didn’t seem aware he and his wife were there. They endure 20 minutes. After driving home, they work in their garden, therapy of a kind, awaiting the second call.

It did not take long. My notification, just before midnight U.S. time, was simple. “Your phone is not accepting calls. Mum passed away at 5 this morning.” My reply brings the first lump to my throat. “Take care, mate. Just you and me now.”

Going on, in these awful times

In “usual times,” I would have called United Airlines, wheedling for a ticket without paying the short-notice surcharge, grabbed my packed suitcase, and

trekked to PDX and Heathrow. Instead, I trot down the hall and plug in the kettle. That’s what British people do, unfailingly. A scalding cup of tea with milk and sugar has magical properties like hugging a favorite teddy bear.

After an oddly untroubled night’s sleep, I seal 27 pre-printed letters then phone my two cousins. No one is surprised; all are sad. They ask about a funeral, because they must, but they anticipate my answer. I wrote Mum’s funeral eulogy eight years ago, flying home from mourning Dad. Practicing alone in my car has reduced it to 11 minutes; I will never deliver it.

Covid-19 has another victim. Diagnosed on a Sunday, dead by Wednesday.

But this is not a statistic. My Mum is dead.

And I will not be there to say goodbye when her tiny coffin rolls up the conveyor belt at the crematorium to the music of Glenn Miller.

It will be watched by just five people. Socially distanced, of course. Because of *The Virus*.

Long Beach Peninsula resident Patrick Webb is the retired managing editor of The Astorian.