

THE OKANOGAN COUNTY CHRONICLE

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Essential Reading for Okanogan and Ferry counties - Year 111 No. 5

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Meme post draws wrath, calls for removal

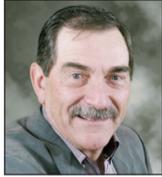
Commissioner maintains only 'extreme left' is upset

By DEE CAMP
The Chronicle

OKANOGAN — A removal petition has been posted on change.org against Okanogan County Commissioner Jim DeTro in the wake of a meme he posted on his Facebook page last weekend about protests related to the death of a black

man in Minnesota. George Floyd, a black man, died after a white Minneapolis police officer - during an arrest attempt - held his knee to Floyd's neck for several minutes while other officers looked on. The incident was recorded on video. The four officers have since been fired and one was charged with third-degree murder.

The death sparked protests and demonstrations across the nation over police brutality against people of color. Some of the protests turned violent, with



Okanogan County Commissioner Jim DeTro

"I had no idea that the radical left would wait to pounce on something and blow it out of proportion."

additional injuries, plus looting and fires.

The meme shared by DeTro on May 30 showed a blood-stained tractor-truck and the caption "Just drove through Minneapolis. Didn't see any protestors."

People were quick to react to

DeTro's post, which had drawn more than 550 comments by Monday afternoon. A second post, claiming he'd been hacked, garnered an additional 365 comments.

The change.org recall petition, posted by Caleb Knowlton, had 311 virtual signatures as of

mid-afternoon Monday.

"As a man who holds the office of county commissioner, in Okanogan County, I believe he should be held to a very high standard that represents everyone," said the petition description. "He just doesn't represent those who voted for him, but also the ones who disagree (with) him."

The petition encourages him to resign or for someone in higher authority to ask for his resignation.

"By stepping down hopefully someone else will take his

place, someone who doesn't side with causing violence against those he disagrees with," said the petition. "Civility doesn't belong to a political party, it belongs to everyone and Jim DeTro doesn't fit the description of a man of honor, respect, and civility."

"I'm not responding to that hate mail," DeTro said of those who call for his resignation.

He said "the extreme left" people are asking for his resignation and that "only the radical

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Frost hits some cherries

Crop estimate revised; apples, pears look good

By DEE CAMP
The Chronicle

OKANOGAN — Some Washington cherry growers got hit by frost earlier this spring, but since then growing conditions have been good.

Northwest Cherry Growers issued a revised crop estimate of 16.4 million 20-pound boxes.

"We did experience some frost damage across the state, bringing down the estimated crop size," said Tim Kojis of the Washington State Tree Fruit Association. "However, once we made it out of frost season, we had good growing conditions and growers are expecting an excellent cherry crop."

Okanogan County growers were among those it by frost.

Rick DeLap, Malott, said his soft fruit trees got hit pretty badly in mid-April.

DeLap Fruit Stand, on social media, posted that the frost was "more like a freeze."

Cherry growers and industry officials also are on the lookout for little cherry disease and a separate virus causing similarly small fruit. Exports to China also are expected to be down, but shipments to other Asian markets are expected to be up.

Apple and pear crop estimates will not be out until mid-summer, Kojis said.

"Our apple estimate is traditionally comes out the first week of August," he said.

"We anticipate strong crop quality and excellent color for the year ahead," said Todd Fryhoyer, president of the Washington Apple Commission. "The current 2019-20 season had terrific color and quality which is a testament of the growers' expertise, variety selection, and nurturing care, in combination with cooperative weather."

Shipments of the 2019-20 apple crop have rebounded from the chaos of the transportation/logistic system brought on by the coronavirus-related run on retail in mid-March,

See FRUIT, page A2

Three injured



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Malott and Okanogan firefighters and LifeLine Ambulance crew members (above) free driver Myrna Legaspi Serna, 49, Tonasket, after cutting the top off her van following a two-vehicle crash on Highway 97 at Malott HUD Road on Friday afternoon, May 29.

Crews had to prop up the vehicle with lumber to stabilize it, and Okanogan firefighter E.J. Lind Jr. (right) held Serna's head and neck level while the vehicle's top was removed with power cutting and spreading tools. The Washington State Patrol, which also responded, said a van driven by Ethan La Fountaine, 49, Malott, had stopped for a stop sign on Malott HUD Road, heading west, and then attempted to cross the highway but failed to yield the right of way to Serna's southbound van. After the collision, La Fountaine's vehicle spun around, stopping in the southbound lane facing north and partially blocking the highway. Serna's van flipped into its passenger side and came to rest facing northeast. La Fountaine, Serna and Serna's passenger, who was not identified, all were taken to Mid-Valley Hospital, Omak, by LifeLine Ambulance, the patrol said. No citations had been issued as of Monday morning, June 1.



AL CAMP | Special to The Chronicle

Tonasket mayor resigns

Kriner will serve as mayor on interim basis

By BROCK HIRES
The Chronicle

TONASKET — Dennis Brown resigned from his post as mayor Tuesday, May 26.

"I Dennis Brown, effective immediately, resign

from being the mayor of Tonasket," Brown wrote in his one-sentence, handwritten resignation letter, signed at 1 p.m. May 26.

Mayor pro-tem Marylou Kriner will assume mayoral duties for the next 90 days.

She declined to comment.

"The council now has 90 days to appoint a successor," City Attorney Mick Howe said Wednesday afternoon May 27. "In the interim, the mayor pro-tem, council member MaryLou Kriner, will preside."

Brown came under scrutiny in early 2019 after disbandment of the Tonasket Police Department. Council cast votes of no confidence in the mayor and he nearly resigned Jan. 22, 2019.

"It takes a lot of courage for anyone to run for an office," said Councilwoman Christa "Teagan" Levine. "These days people are scared to run for office; it's really hard for anyone to step up."

Levine said she hopes people will be respectful to Brown.

"I wish him the best," she said. "His effort is appreciated and we're going to make the best of this."

Brown defeated former Tonasket resident Patrick Plumb in the Nov. 7, 2017, general election.

The city will have a special meeting via Zoom video conference at 7 p.m. June 4, to appoint a mayor. The zoom meeting ID is 830 4907 5699. The phone number for the meeting is 253-215-8782.

THE CHRONICLE
Essential Reading
For Okanogan County

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Floyd support march set for Omak

OMAK — A march for George Floyd is planned at 5 p.m. Thursday in Omak.

Floyd, a black man, died

after a white Minneapolis, Minn., police officer held his knee to Floyd's neck during an arrest.

The Omak event, labeled as "a peaceful march for George Floyd," is scheduled to begin at the Cornerstone Christian

Fellowship church, 328 Riverside Drive, and go to the Omak Public Library, 30 S. Ash St.

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