



WHMC New Year's baby

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Local Stop the Steal protest

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WHITMAN COUNTY GAZETTE

Thursday, January 14, 2021

\$1.00

• VOL. 144, NO. 2 •

COLFAX, WA 99111

Pugh: Students on campus full-time Feb. 1

School Board still has to vote on recommendation

COLFAX — Schools Superintendent Jerry Pugh announced Monday that he intends for all students to be back for daily, in-person learning Feb. 1.

Addressing the School Board — which will need to formally approve of the plan at its Jan. 25 meeting — Pugh noted the district's experience with elementary students this fall, in-person full-time, new research and available data, discussions with interim County Health Director Chris Skidmore, the teachers' union and

“The No.1 focus is first and foremost the safety of students and staff...”

— Superintendent Jerry Pugh, Colfax School District

more, all of which have led to a path to bring all students back.

“The No. 1 focus is first and foremost, the safety of students and

staff,” Pugh said.

Grades 7-12 returned to part-time, in-person learning in October.

Pugh reiterated to the board of “one substantial issue” with the virus this fall with one sport's practices, after which the program was stopped.

He noted that after Thanksgiving, little-to-no change occurred regarding the virus and after

Christmas now, up to 25 students and adults are being tested and staying home, some of whom have tested positive.

In looking at how to bring back all students, high school Principal David Gibb and Maintenance Supervisor Mark Brown went around the building, measuring

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Session opens

Sen. Mark Schoesler sworn in for his fifth term at his hometown of Ritzville.

BY KATIE TEACHOUT
THE RITZVILLE ADAMS COUNTY JOURNAL

RITZVILLE — Republican Sen. Mark Schoesler was sworn in Friday, Jan. 8, in the Adams County Courthouse for his fifth term representing the Ninth Legislative District in the state Senate.

Adams County District Court Judge Carolyn Benzel administered the oath of office.

Schoesler said this was his first and only time taking the oath in his hometown — and assuming things go back to “normal.”

The ability to take the oath here came as Gov. Jay Insee continued to shut down the state, citing the coronavirus.

Meanwhile, lawmakers had to appear Monday in the Capitol Building in Olympia to vote on working remotely and generally shutting down all in-person access to legislative proceedings. (See story on Page 2.)

The session opened Monday, Jan. 11, and is scheduled to adjourn April 25.

But one benefit of being home, Schoesler said, was the opportunity to have his grandchildren witness the event.

“Considering how many of the decisions we make in the Legislature affect the generations to come, I thought it was appropriate to have them with me,” Schoesler said.

Surprise to Schoesler

The chance to honor the tradition from home actually came as a bit of a surprise.

“It's usually a big opening event, and only due to health concerns would someone be sworn in from home,” Schoesler said. “Typically, a member of the state Supreme Court visits the Senate and House chambers on the



SCHOESLER



ROGER HARNACK | THE GAZETTE

The Capitol Building is off limits to the public as a crime scene tape, a chain link fence, the Washington National Guard and Washington State Patrol now protect the perimeter from incursion.

Autopsy shows shooter died of self-inflicted gunshot to head
Perpetrator called emergency dispatch after first attempting to kill of his wife

BY ROGER HARNACK
GAZETTE PUBLISHER

OAKESDALE — An autopsy determined that resident Chester David Hathaway's death was the result of suicide.

Whitman County Coroner Annie Pillers released the autopsy findings in Hathaway's death Thursday, Jan. 7.

Hathaway, 82, died Dec. 26 at the home he shared with his wife after an attempted murder-suicide, according to initial reports. Hathaway shot his wife, Irene Louise Hathaway, 83, and then himself at about 1:04 p.m.

“The cause of death was a self-inflicted gunshot wound,” the coroner wrote in her findings. “The manner of death was suicided.”

His intended victim and wife, Irene Hathaway, survived being shot twice.

“She got very lucky,” Whitman County Sheriff Brett Myers said. “Both bullets went through her mouth cavity.”

The Sheriff's Office is handling the investigation.

According to an initial report by the Sheriff's Office, a man, later identified as Chester Hathaway, called 911 and told dispatchers he had shot his wife.

When deputies arrived, they found Irene Hathaway lying in the entryway of the couple's East Bartlet Street home with two gunshot wounds to the face.

The victim was able to tell deputies she had been shot by her husband, whom she believed then shot and killed himself, Myers said. Deputies entered the home and found the husband deceased from what appeared to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

The sheriff confirmed Chester Hathaway had used a handgun that he owned, noting the shooter used the same gun on his wife and himself.

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Small aircraft crashes at Palouse Airport

The Cessna crashed in a field near the Schoepflin airport

STAFF REPORT

PALOUSE — A small airplane overturned after touching down at 2:05 p.m. Friday, Jan. 8, at a private airstrip two miles east of town.

Two people — a flight instructor and presumed student pilot — were aboard the Cessna 170 at the time of the crash at Schoepflin Airport, 801 Ringo Road, the Whitman County Sheriff's Office reported.

At press time, The

Gazette was still awaiting the release of the names of the flight instructor and student pilot.

A spokesman at the airport said the plane was at the field “for instructional purposes,” but was unable to offer any details on those aboard the plane when it flipped over.

The aircraft, a 1955 fixed-wing single engine plane, is registered to William Cannan of Petaluma, Calif., FAA records show.

A preliminary report from Whitman County Undersheriff Chris Chapman said deputies determined a flight instructor and student were practicing landings just after 2 p.m. in the Cessna 170

aircraft when the plane bounced on landing, went into an adjacent field and flipped onto its top.

The two occupants received minor injuries and were transported to a local hospital in a private vehicle, the report said.

The FAA was contacted and is investigating the incident, the report said. The FAA investigator was unable to be reached for comment by press time.

Schoepflin Airport has a paved, 2,200 foot runway with non-standard edge lighting, according to FAA data available online. Twenty-one aircraft are based there, but not the crashed Cessna 170.



WHITMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Cessna 170 rests upside down in a field near the Schoepflin Airport after the Jan. 8 crash.

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