

PRIDE

From Page A1

the school’s Facebook page. Still, Carpenter said in the interview that he wasn’t sure that their action was an intentional counter-protest, and that the groups of students were not at odds with each other.

“Some people will suggest that if you’re uncomfortable with, or don’t agree with what the Pride flag stands for, you should fly an American flag in protest,” Carpenter said on Facebook, calling that notion “misguided.”

“The Pride flag and the American flag are symbols of inclusivity and freedom. This is not a zero sum game. Both can coexist,” he wrote.

There were several other instances in recent days where students on both sides of the divide were singled out for their beliefs and values, Carpenter said in the Facebook post.

Lots of listening, conversations

Carpenter and other staff

members conducted multiple discussions with advisory classes and met individually with students and with small groups of students and families. Staff members encouraged students to slow down, practice empathy and grace, and to put themselves in others’ shoes, Carpenter said.

The primary goal was to lead with empathy to understand where the students were coming from. Staff members listened and asked questions to comprehend why the incidents had occurred. The discussions were all well received, he said.

The discussions included concepts of identity and individuality. Every student should feel dignified and that they have a place at Liberty Bell, Carpenter said.

“One of our primary goals at Liberty Bell continues to be fostering a school climate and culture of inclusivity, empathy, and belonging, where every individual feels dignified. With this goal in mind, there is no place for bigotry and hatred—zero tolerance,” Carpenter said on Facebook.

Carpenter noted that the students involved are 12- and 13-year-olds, who learn from their mistakes, particularly when surrounded by caring adults.

These matters and conflicts typically become less of an issue as students mature and become more comfortable with their own identity—and less reactive to others’ identity, Carpenter said. In such a small community, we can’t divide into camps, he said.

“I stand with all students regardless of their political or social views, I stand with what the American flag is intended to represent, I stand with what the Pride flag is intended to represent, I stand with all people,” Carpenter said on Facebook.

The school has taken some punitive action and is in discussion with the students about using the restorative-justice process, which requires both parties to opt in, Carpenter said.

“When you take the time to slow down and ask why, you get a better understanding of where kids are coming from,” he said.

COVID

From Page A1

In addition to asking people not to go to emergency rooms, hospitals are imploring people to avoid risky behaviors and activities that could land them in the hospital, to get routine care from a primary care provider, and to protect themselves from COVID by getting vaccinated and wearing a mask.

Central Washington Hospital in Wenatchee is also overwhelmed. They were treating 54 people for COVID, including 12 in the ICU and 14 on a ventilator, as of Sept. 14. Most of those patients—25—are from Chelan County, and eight are from Okanogan County. But they are also caring for patients from counties across Washington, and one from Uinta County in Wyoming. Eighty-four percent of those being treated at Central Washington for COVID are not vaccinated.

Highest case rate yet

Okanogan County is facing its worst COVID crisis in the 18 months of the pandemic. “We have never been this busy with cases. It’s impacting our health care resources and many community resources across the county,” Wallace said.

Businesses, long-term care facilities and schools are all seeing high numbers of COVID cases. They’re doing an excellent job of screening people and identifying cases, and have been working with Public Health to keep the cases from spreading. “It’s an impressive display of community collaboration,” Wallace said.

Many groups and businesses are voluntarily closing, he said. The Okanogan School District closed in-person instruction for sixth grade because of the number of COVID infections among staff and students, Okanogan County Community Health Director Lauri Jones told the Board of Health on Tuesday (Sept. 14).

The Okanogan County Fair was held last week with protocols recommended by Okanogan County Public Health and the county’s emergency manager. Fair organizers posted signs at entrances and throughout the fairgrounds telling people to wear masks, even outdoors; to practice social distancing; and to wash their hands regularly.

Reports and photos from some events at the fair show almost no attendees wearing masks and people crowded together to watch events. The

OKANOGAN COUNTY STATISTICS

Okanogan County recorded 231 new COVID infections in the week ending Sept. 13. Although that included the county’s highest daily case count ever, at 89, there were 41 fewer total cases for this week than last. There were eight cases in Twisp, eight in Winthrop, and one each in Carlton and Methow.

Still, the county’s infection rate for 100,000 population over 14 days is nearing 1,200, Okanogan County Health Officer James Wallace told the Board of Health.

That number is “through the roof”—few places in the country have rates that high, he said.

Public Health calculates the incidence rate for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals once a week. As of Sept. 9, the rate for the unvaccinated population was 2,225 per 100,000, and for the vaccinated population, it was 293.

The county is also seeing more cases of “long” COVID, where debilitating symptoms linger for months, Wallace said.

fair advisory committee had a good plan and compliance with protocols improved after reminders, Jones told the Board of Health.

Masks are required in all public indoor spaces in Washington. Gov. Jay Inslee expanded the requirement last week to include outdoor gatherings with 500 or more people.

Proven treatments

Although COVID cases have been surging across the country because of the extremely contagious Delta variant, there are now effective prevention and treatment measures.

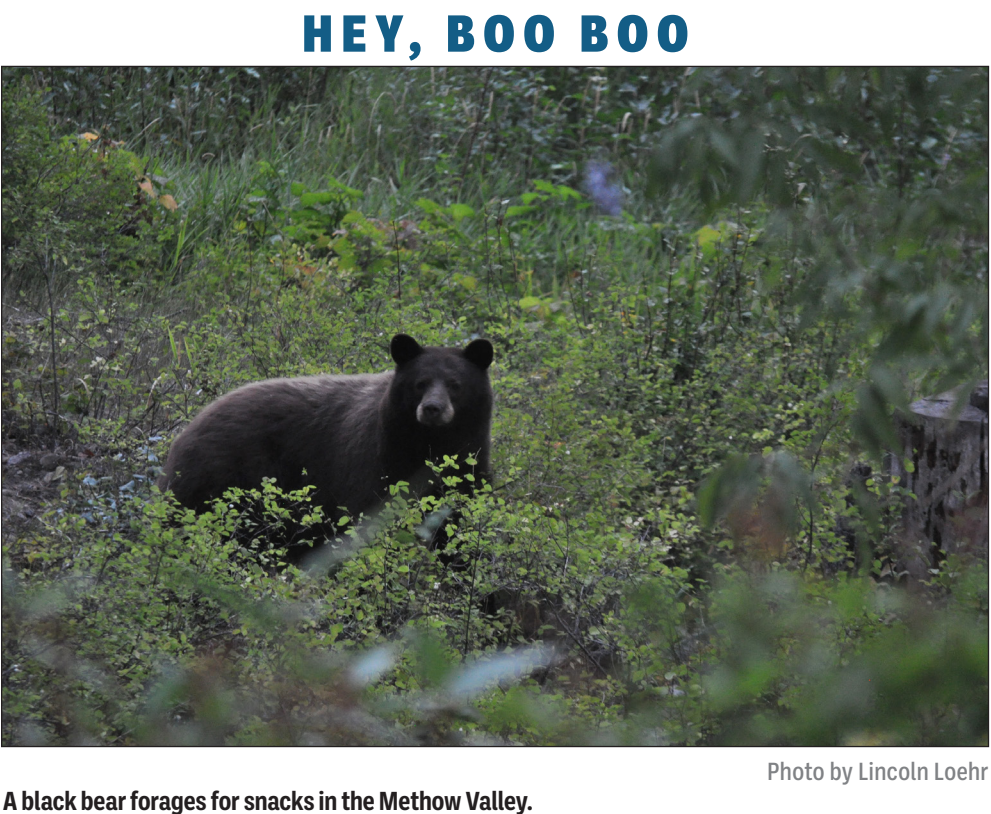
Monoclonal antibodies have proven effective at reducing hospitalization and death, and local medical providers are working to expand capacity to offer that treatment, Wallace said. Because it’s a resource-intensive therapy, it requires considerable staffing, he said.

Drugs including Dexamethasone and Remdesivir continue to be mainstays in severe cases to prevent further progression to intubation and death, Wallace said.

“The best treatment for this disease is prevention, and we know that we have high success rates in the prevention layers of vaccination, masking, and avoiding indoor gatherings and large, crowded gatherings,” Wallace said.

It’s not clear if county residents are turning to Ivermectin, an antiparasitic drug used in humans and animals, which has been touted in some circles as a treatment for COVID. But local feed stores report more requests for the drug.

Omak Feed & Supply said they’ve sold more Ivermectin than usual. They don’t ask customers how they plan to use the drug, according to the clerk.



JOIN RESILIENT METHOW FOR CLIMATE ACTION WEEK

9/20 6pm - Screening of 2040, a film about climate solutions at Barnyard Cinema

9/23 4pm - Virtual Community Climate Action Discussion with Methow at Home and KC Golden

9/25 12:30pm - Climate Action Celebration with valley partners, community updates, tables and activities, and new OSB "Clear the Haze" IPA at Twispworks Art Walk

Visit resilientmethow.org/events for more info!

The North Cascades is Bear Country!

Did you know: Black bears can hibernate for up to seven and a half months without drinking water, eating food or producing waste! Grizzly bears typically hibernate between five to seven months. Before they hibernate, these bears go through hyperphagia – a constant state of eating and drinking when bears can consume over 20,000 calories per day!

Tips to recreate successfully in bear country: Surprising a bear while it is feeding is more likely during late summer and into fall. Hike and travel in groups when possible. Groups of people are noisier and smellier than a single person. Bears often become aware of groups of people at greater distances, and because of their cumulative size, groups are also intimidating to bears.

This ad sponsored by Methow Valley Citizens Council, National Parks Conservation Association, and Defenders of Wildlife.