



In pursuit
Local X-country teams vie for top spots

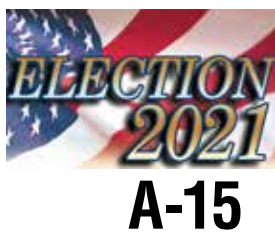
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Wednesday, October 6, 2021

SEQUIM GAZETTE

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Sequim Food Bank ready to receive donations once again

Certain soups, cereals, condiments, more sought

BY MATTHEW NASH
Sequim Gazette

To help mitigate some COVID-19 concerns in recent months, leaders with the Sequim Food Bank switched some food distribution practices. This month, they plan to once again receive community donations to the facility at 144 Alder St.

makes up a significant portion of the food the organization distributes, food bank executive director Andra Smith said. "Pre-Covid, 75 percent of our food was from donations including food and items from the community, emergency food partners and food rescue programs," she said. Demand rose significantly at the beginning of the pandemic, with many residents being out of work or working less hours, so the food bank and multiple community partners increased offerings — including dis-

tribution efforts such as the COVID Relief Food Care Package program. About 500 boxes of food were distributed each session at Sequim High School, and later at Trinity United Methodist Church/Carrie Blake Community Park, on a weekly basis from June-September 2020, twice a month October 2020-March 2021, and once a month April-June. With so much food coming in, Smith said they had to make room, so the food bank purchased one trailer and rented another.

See FOOD, A-13



Andra Smith, executive director of the Sequim Food Bank, left, and volunteer Isabelle Dunlop prep some donations from River Run Farm last week. The facility is readying to begin accepting community donations again after 18 months due to Covid-19 precautions and storage issues. Organizers specifically seek low sodium soups, low sugar cereal, macaroni and cheese, and condiments. Sequim Gazette photo by Matthew Nash



For five years, Mohammad Amin Rahmati has repaired, washed and sold rugs through his Oriental Rug Care on Bell Street. He and his family, including daughter Muzghan "Muzgi" left Afghanistan in 1980 during the Soviet-Afghan War and eventually arrived in Los Angeles on Christmas Day 1982. He's carried on a family tradition with rugs. Sequim Gazette photo by Matthew Nash

The fibers of family

Rahmati shares journey from Kabul to Sequim

BY MATTHEW NASH
Sequim Gazette

Inside his Bell Street shop, Mohammad Amin Rahmati weaves a wool string to repair fringe on a rug that's at least 100 years old. His fingers move effortlessly, as

a Bollywood movie plays in the background. "I remember when this came to Afghanistan," he said. When he was 13, Rahmati began to learn about repairing rugs from his father, Mohammad Ali Rahmati, and 21 when he started designing and making them in Kabul. Now, almost 60 years later, he continues his trade at Oriental Rug Care, 160 E. Bell St., in downtown Sequim.

Whether it's fixing holes from a dog, burned fringe or just years of use, Rahmati has likely seen it all. "The worst? Probably mud, because it eats all the way to the bottom and sometimes half of the wool," he said. But he's not deterred. "If there's anything wrong with a rug, I can fix it," Rahmati said. Another carpet he worked on had a hole eaten away through one side, so Rahmati considered his options. He chose to cut that

portion of the rug off with the OK from the customer and do his best to copy one side's design for the other. He liked the final result. "Sometimes customers are shocked," Rahmati said. "One person said, 'I can't believe it. This is not my rug.'" Rahmati said handmade rugs can last more than 100 years and are more durable and softer than machine-made rugs. Plus there's the personal touch in each one.

See FIBER, A-4

Contract finalized for new city manager Huish, start date Nov. 1

Interim city manager Deschenes to return as assistant city manager

BY MATTHEW NASH
Sequim Gazette

Sequim city councilors closed out the month of September by closing the deal on their new city manager. The council approved the hiring of Matthew Huish official on Sept. 30. The move came with another 4-3 vote in a virtual, special meeting just a few days after the same vote went forward to send an amended contract to Huish on Sept. 27. He currently serves as chief city administrative officer for Sandy, Utah. A city press release went out on Oct. 1 announcing his hiring and start date on Nov. 1 — one day before the General Election where five city council seats are up for vote.



HUISH

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State may consider measures implemented on Peninsula

As one option, Inslee cites health mandate for proof of vaccination

BY PAUL GOTTLIEB
Olympic Peninsula News Group

Gov. Jay Inslee visited the North Olympic Peninsula last week, holding a meeting on COVID-19 at the Peninsula College Longhouse, visiting the state-funded Lower Dungeness River floodplain project site and touring the Composite Recycling Technology Center in events that were closed to the public. The 16 coronavirus meeting attendees on Oct. 1 included Dr. Allison Berry, health officer for Clallam and Jefferson counties; OMC Chief Medical Officer Scott Kennedy, Port Angeles Mayor Kate Dexter, Port Angeles Schools Superintendent Marty Brewer, four area tribal representatives, and two representatives each from the United Food and

Commercial Workers International Union and the Service Employees International Union, which represents nurses. "It was actually relatively positive," Berry said afterward. Points of discussion included the shortage in medical system staffing, the decline in cases and the need for "courageous action" at the state level to control the virus, she said. Participants also discussed Berry's proof-of-vaccination requirement for indoor restaurant patrons in both counties. She noted the decline in protests over the mandate and said "the vast majority of businesses seem to be adjusting to the order very well and steps to get the pandemic under control." A reporter from *Peninsula Daily News* and a reporter-photographer from Fox News 13 in Seattle asked questions of Inslee for 13 minutes outside the Longhouse following the meeting.

See STATE, A-13



Gov. Jay Inslee, second from right, visits the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's River's Edge project along the lower Dungeness River on Oct. 1, talking with partners advancing that and Clallam County's Lower Dungeness Floodplain Restoration. Both projects will greatly reduce flood risk and significantly improve habitat for endangered salmon, project organizers say. Pictured with Inslee are, from left, Clallam County's Cathy Lear, North Olympic Land Trust's Tom Sanford, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's Hansi Hals and Randy Johnson, and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Vice Chair Loni Greninger. Photo by John Gussman

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Fiber

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“This is like art,” he said. Despite retiring to Sequim a few years ago, Rahmati considers the shop his post-retirement career. “I love it,” he said. “It keeps me busy.” Oriental Rug Care offers imported rugs for sale, and rug restoration, such as washes, reweaving, new fringe and more. The shop is open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday, during the winter months, while on Saturdays Rahmati continues working at Andonian Rugs in Seattle after 20-plus years.

Home

With tense situations continuing to rise in his home country, Rahmati said he is well aware of the ongoing news in Afghanistan as the Taliban continues its control. “I listen to the news everyday; it’s a bad situation,” he said. “People don’t have jobs, food; they don’t have rights.” Rahmati is a refugee him-

self, fleeing from the country in 1980 with his wife Hafiza and six children during the Soviet-Afghan War. When Russian soldiers came, Rahmati said his family was tied up and their home ransacked. His family’s lives were threatened due to their prominence in the community with his father owning a rug factory, he said, with his father and uncle arrested and Rahmati and his cousin going into hiding.

It took about a month, but Rahmati said he was able to secure transport for his family to Pakistan and sell his home and family’s belongings.

He recalls riding on a bus with his family and friends and Taliban soldiers stopped them and asked them where they’re going and what Rahmati did for a living.

“I told him I was a doctor, and they told me they needed a doctor, so they took us to some place (unknown) for a night,” he said.

“The person I paid to help us leave Kabul had family on the bus too, and he was able to help us leave.



Father-daughter Mohammad Amin Rahmati and Muzgi Rahmati hold up a rug with a hole inside Oriental Rug Care. “If there’s anything wrong with a rug, I can fix it,” he said. Sequim Gazette photos by Matthew Nash

“I don’t know why they said they needed a doctor. They never brought it up again.”

Once in Pakistan, Rahmati said he sold general wares to make a living as he applied for his Visa to America as a refugee. After some time and with Visas approved, his family arrived in Los Angeles on Dec. 25, 1982, he said.

He worked for a Persian rug company for one year in the city and then more than a decade in Carmel, Calif., doing repairs before moving to Uzbekistan in 1996 to open his own factory to design and make rugs. He did that for a few years before moving to Seattle and beginning to work with Andonian Rugs about 20 years ago.

His daughter Muzghan “Muzgi” lives in Sequim with him while his five other children live in California and Oregon.

“I’m still steady and going strong,” he said.

“A lot of people have, after 9/11, bad connotations

Oriental Rug Care

Rug repair, sales, wash, more

Owner: Mohammad Amin Rahmati

Location: 160 E. Bell St.

Contact: 360-504-3769



Above: At age 13, Mohammad Amin Rahmati, owner of Oriental Rug Care, started to learn from his father how to repair rugs. Almost 60 years later, he continues the tradition in his Sequim shop. Left: To repair this rug, Mohammad Amin Rahmati, owner of Oriental Rug Care, cut off the portion with a hole and realigned its end to match up with the remaining rug.

of Afghans. Afghans are good people with big hearts. They love food and are good people.”

Sequim has been his home for five years now; first in Diamond Point, and now near Bell Hill.

His daughter says they’re

looking for a business spot along Washington Street in the future to increase foot traffic.

In the few years here, he’s found there to be many who love oriental rugs and his efforts.

“People appreciate his work,” Muzgi said.

The father-daughter welcome people to stop in and just say hi, too.

“With such a small community, we want to get to know people,” Muzgi said.

Reach Oriental Rug Care, 160 E. Bell St., at 360-504-3769.

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