

# FERNDALE'S SIMON SEFZIK APPOINTED TO REPLACE SEN. DOUG ERICKSEN

A7



# Lynden Tribune

LEWIS FAMILY OWNED SINCE 1914

JANUARY 12, 2022

LYNDEN, WASHINGTON • \$1.50

## Lynden says goodbye to Jerry Kok

*Longtime Lynden Youth Sports board member and untiring servant of the community's youth dies at 70*

By Connor J. Benintendi  
connor@lyndentribune.com

LYNDEN — Though his passions lied in coaching and providing athletic opportunities to Lynden's youth, Jerry Kok's identity and impact stretched far

further.

He was a father, grandfather, brother, husband, mentor, friend and no excuse volunteer who never requested anything in return for his countless hours of service. Sometimes it seemed impossible he could do so much in just a 24-hour day.

No matter the task, however glamorous or otherwise, Kok would do it without worrying about the amount of personal time he would have to sacrifice. That was simply who he was.

On Wednesday, Jan. 5, Kok, longtime Lynden Youth Sports board member and untiring servant of the community's youth, died at age 70.

"He was never the person who would say 'no,' and it's a big part of why I coach,

See **Kok** on A3



Lynden Youth Sports' Rich Waldemar, Becki Berendsen, and Jerry Kok, from left. The trio won the Sol H. Lewis community award in 2018. Kok, 70, died on Wednesday, Jan. 5. (Calvin Bratt for the Tribune)

## Head-on accident on Birch Bay Lynden Road



First responders survey an accident off Rathbone and Birch Bay Lynden roads at approximately 9 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 9. Story on A2. (Photo courtesy Lynden Fire Department)

## 5.5 million at-home COVID-19 tests coming to Washington

By Leora Watson  
leora@lyndentribune.com

WASHINGTON — About 5.5 million at-home COVID tests coming to Washington state by the end of next week. This will help keep schools open and the likelihood that the pandemic in Washington state will get worse before it gets better.

These were among the array of items the Washington Department of Health covered in its Jan. 6 media advisory.



Shah

The at-home rapid tests will be available to Washingtonians by the end of next week, according to Dr. Umair A. Shah, Secretary of Health at the Washington State Department of Health, who spoke during the media advisory.

"One million of those set aside for schools, another million for our [health professionals] on the ground and 3.5 million that would be available to be ordered by Washingtonians," said Shah.

Dr. Lacy Fehrenbach, Deputy Secretary for COVID-19 Response from Washington State Department of Health: "We are also hoping that that number grows, we continue to order more tests and we'll do so through the month of January as we navigate this."

DOH has heard questions and concerns on protecting students and staff from COVID-19 and future outbreaks in schools, according to Fehrenbach.

However, the department wants to reiterate and emphasize that in person instruction is the best option for kids.

See **COVID-19 tests** on A2

## Post office says weather affecting mail delivery

After business hours were to have begun on Monday, packages wait for attention at the Lynden Post Office. (Courtesy photo)



By Bill Helm  
bill@lyndentribune.com

LYNDEN — The Lynden Post Office's hours are from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

However, the post office had not opened to the public on Monday, Jan. 10 until later that morning.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Lynden Tribune* and *Ferndale Record*

newspapers have been mailed, not delivered, to their subscribers.

For some, mail deliveries have come to a screeching halt over the past week.

Lynden resident Khush Brar said Monday that for "much of last week" her family had not had a mail delivery.

One reason for the delay in

See **Mail** on A2



### Weather

Thursday 51°/37°  
Friday 46°/36°  
Saturday 44°/34°  
Sunday 43°/34°

### 16 pages • Volume CXXXIV • Number 48

Classifieds • B4	News • A7	Puzzles • B5
Country Life • A9	Obituaries • A5	Roads • A2, A8
Dairy • A10	Opinion • A4	Sports • B1
Gardening • A10	Public Notices • B3	Weather • A2

## Nooksack Valley girls basketball team beats Meridian 75-44

See page B1

**Born in 1957? Ready for Retirement?**  
**GO SEE JEFF** for your Medicare insurance plan options!  
 • Medicare Advantage Plans • Medicare Supplement Plans • Part D Rx Plans  
 Your Hometown Medicare Insurance Specialists Since 2002



**LAMPHERE INSURANCE**  
 113 Third Street, Lynden  
**360-354-5333**  
[www.jefflamphere.com](http://www.jefflamphere.com)



# Kok: Lynden says goodbye to youth advocate

Continued from A1

and why I teach, and a big part of my program at Burlington is servant leadership," said Chas Kok, Jerry's son, and the head coach of the Burlington-Edison boys basketball team. "I think that comes from him - always being willing to serve others regardless of, maybe you don't have time or you're not in the mood for it - he was always willing to do that."

In 1994, Jerry Kok coached Chas' YMCA basketball team. He expanded his coaching duties as Chas continued to get older.

Jerry coached Chas and his Lynden class of 2007 teammates in football, basketball and baseball as they grew up. Chas said that's where he believes his father discovered his passion for coaching and ability to relate to kids. From there, he continued to be called into that role.

Even while serving so many others, he always reserved time for his family. Jerry never missed a home game when Chas played basketball at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia.

"If it was snowing out, he didn't really care. He was doing all that he had to in Lynden and still I could always count on him being at a game," Chas Kok said. "He was a pretty unbelievable father, that's for sure."

He served on the board of the Lynden Youth Sports organization for more than 15 years, though his efforts were not contained to that of a typical board member. Jerry had a hand in many other jobs and tasks that he also volunteered himself into.

"He was the ultimate servant warrior," said Blake VanDalen, Lynden's head football coach. "He had the servant's heart, there are so few things that he hasn't had a part in."

Since his impact started with kids at such a young age, the fruits of that labor were apparent in the success of Lynden's high school programs.

VanDalen said Jerry would see a kid play another sport and call him because he thought they would be great at football. He had a knack for helping kids realize and reach their potential.

"My first thought is it will honestly take 10 people to do all the things that he did, and that's just the epitome of a selfless person," VanDalen said. "I like the word legend, but he was almost like a father to the community."

Jerry would drive football gear to kids' houses if they weren't going to be able to get it themselves. It was never contingent on how it worked into his schedule, but rather whenever the family needed it.

He told VanDalen "I knew this was going to happen seven years ago," when the Lynden football team won the 2A state championship this past fall season, as that's when he coached the team in little league. Jerry could see their talent and promise well before they ever set foot on a high school field.

Mike McKee, Lynden's athletic director, said the structure Jerry put in place for football at the youth level provided opportunities for kids to learn to love the sport early. "Every kid was important, when we picked teams, we didn't have an All-Star team. We tried to balance all the teams so everyone, competitively, was having a great experience and everyone was getting to play," McKee said. "Some of those kids that were younger, as a result, ended up playing later on when they might not have been that good early on."

If there was a way to get kids excited about playing sports, Jerry would find it. He embodied everything the Lynden Youth Sports organization was trying to do with each passing year. Skill level didn't

matter, it was the ability to provide an opportunity for experience. It was important to him that every kid saw the field or court.

"He had a way of motivating and rallying kids to have fun, and play hard," said Rich Waldemar, a longtime friend of Jerry and president of the Lynden Youth Sports organization. "He was not doing it for pay, there's no pay for it ... He had a passion for kids. It was just unbelievable."

He wasn't worried about coaching the best of the best all the time. Jerry would be the first to respond to a call about leading the team of kids who didn't make final cuts and still wanted to play.

"He didn't so much as coach teams, but coached individuals on teams," said Brian Roper, Lynden's head basketball coach. "I think he really valued the role that he had in investing in young kids."

Roper said every one of the current players on the Lynden junior varsity and varsity basketball rosters was coached by Jerry at one point or another. His reach was so far beyond one generation.

Many classes of kids before now could likely say the same thing.

"The guy was always just upbeat and positive," Roper said. "You felt better when you saw him, he made each person feel special who he talked to - like you were the most important person to him. That's a unique quality."

Brady Bomber, Lynden Christian's head girls basketball coach and childhood friend of Chas, echoed Roper's feelings. Jerry coached Bomber in youth football and basketball.

Bomber said it was how Jerry made others feel that was so important to his legacy in the Lynden community.

"He was obviously very talented at what he did coaching others, but I think what truly set him apart was how much he cared for others," Bomber said. "He did so many things tangibly well with his organization, his coaching and his leadership, but I think it's the special character qualities and the way he made others believe, about themselves, is what sticks out most to me."

Jerry was also a committed basketball official, who would referee a game wherever he was needed. When

the COVID-19 pandemic slimmed the group of readily available officials, he was always prepared to fill in for middle school and C-team games.

Those were among the games that struggled the most to find officials, and Jerry was still there to do so the entire current season up until his passing.

"Every time I turn around and need something, and ask for it - Jerry was always there," McKee said. "He's just the absolute best, and he never, in all those years, asked for anything. It was just to serve and to do his thing."

Additionally, he helped coordinate referees to other games and always helped find someone if he couldn't be there himself. That method of operating was present in all things asked of him.

Similar to how VanDalen viewed Jerry's impact, Waldemar knows his role and level of servitude to so many people are utterly irreplaceable.

"You don't find volunteers that do that type of thing anymore, not like he was doing," Waldemar said. "As well as I know Jerry, and as long as

I've been on the LYS board, I'm not sure we know just how much he did and what it's going to take to try and replace him. We're going to find out now what we're missing, and I'm afraid the void is going to be even bigger than we think it is."

In 2018 Waldemar, his daughter Becki Berendsen and Jerry were awarded the Sol H. Lewis award for their work providing Lynden Youth Sports' services to the community. Chas said he'll always remember Jerry for the efforts he made to show up for every one of his games, in helping him realize he had a servant's

heart of his own, and the joy on his face when he met his two granddaughters for the first time. Additionally, Chas hopes that the strength of the youth sports culture remains in Lynden and the neighboring communities.

"I hope to find people that are passionate about that as well and that can continue on," Chas said. "It would just be great if people continued to step up and do what they do to honor my father and everything he did."

There will be an open house service for Jerry in the Gillies Funeral Home Chapel on Thursday, Jan. 13, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**Diane the Barber is Back to WORK!**



**Everson Family Salon**  
210 W. Main St, Everson WA  
Next to Smokehouse Café/west side door

Appointments: **(360) 319-4274**  
Tuesday & Thursday 9:30am-5pm  
Walk-ins welcome!

Regular Price \$16  
Seniors, Military, Children 12 years & under \$13  
Formerly worked  
Ferndale, Anacortes, Everson, Sumas & Bellingham



# FURNITURE CLEARANCE SALE



## SAMUEL'S QUALITY AT CLEARANCE PRICES!!

UP TO 70% OFF

- BEDROOMS
- RECLINERS
- SOFAS
- DINING ROOMS

- LAMPS
- CHAIRS
- SECTIONALS
- LEATHER

- OCCASIONAL TABLES
- MATTRESSES
- AREA RUGS

- ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS
- PICTURES
- ODDS & END




THIS IS ONE SALE YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS!

HUGE Savings  
Many less than cost items  
Floor samples  
No lay-aways  
Discontinued & overstocked merchandise  
Many items sold "As-is"

## CLEARANCE SALE ON NOW

Hurry In For Best Selection!

\*Plus, with approved credit and minimum purchase, take advantage of:

# 0% INTEREST FOR 12 FULL MONTHS! \*

\*See store for details

We follow state and local guidelines to ensure the safety of our guests at Samuel's Furniture.

The Largest Furniture Store in Northwest Washington

Store Hours: Monday-Saturday 10am-6pm  
Weather permitting Sunday 11am-5pm



# SAMUEL'S

FURNITURE • MATTRESS • LA-Z-BOY COMFORT STUDIO

1904 Main Street, Ferndale (Exit 262) • Just 10 minutes north of Bellingham  
(360) 384-3388 • www.SamuelsFurniture.com

