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# LA CONNER WEEKLY NEWS

VOL. 14 • NO. 27

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2021

[www.laconnerweeklynews.com](http://www.laconnerweeklynews.com)

\$1.25



A SMALL SNOWFALL OF SNOW GEESE – There are not billions but there are thousands and thousands of snow geese, with cackling geese among them. Birders are saying that there are an extraordinary number of snow geese, far more than normal migrating here this year. They say arctic fox, predators in the summer arctic breeding grounds, were scarce this year. This early October photo was taken at Hayton Farms Preserve on Fir Island – *Photo by Sarah Walls*

—Photo by Sarah Walls

## Five Channel Cove homes will be built in 2022

**By Ken Stern**

Finally! Construction is set for five homes along the northern edge of Channel Cove, the Home Trust of Skagit development on Park Street near Caledonia Street and Maple Avenue in La Conner. Executive Director Jodi Monroe says construction will start in January. That is a disappointing two year delay, a result of a long regulatory environmental review before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, assembling funding and then construction related labor, material and cost complications.

Monroe has been optimistic all along. "It's a lift of love to get these homes built," she said Thursday. "I want to see kids at a kitchen table and kids in their bedrooms."

The potential homeowners have had pandemic-related challenges of their own, she said. “When they lose their jobs, you don’t have home buyers.” She has three buyers who have qualified, going through a process that includes a home buyers education class, pre-qualifying for a loan, getting pre-approved from a lender and working with Home Trust staff through steps leading to home inspection.

Home Trust makes purchasing possible for people living in Skagit County earning up to 80% of the area median income: \$42,600 for one person and \$70,550 for a six person household. Potential buyers go through standard mortgage qualifying processes. “A first time home buyer is a big endeavor, especially during a pandemic,” Monroe emphasized. “They have to get banked and stay banked.” Their mortgage on the \$200,000 purchase is \$150,000.

Home Trust of Skagit assists with some \$62,000 toward the down payment, half of the escrow fees, title insurance, first year's property taxes and homeowner's insurance, appraisal and recording fees.

The Channel Cove homes will be three bedroom, two baths and 1,300 square feet.

Of all the numbers Monroe is calculating, her favorite – and hardest to solve – is two. Monroe's quest is finding two more qualifying families to purchase the last two homes.

While she seeks qualified buyers, Monroe is moving the project through the permitting process and coordinating with BYK Construction, the builder. The Sedro Woolley firm's "bid was a big pill to swallow," she said. "It was an honest bid but a very expensive bid." She is paying market rate construction. It is not discounted or subsidized by BYK.

In December they will update her on costs, but she is confident that the numbers will align and they will break ground in January, finish substantially in May, and have families moving in by late June.

Building out Channel Cove fulfills the dreams of Cathie Wyman and others who had the vision to make Southfield a reality in 1995, Monroe said. As a community land trust, Home Trust of Skagit, owns the land underneath the homes.

Home Trust of Skagit has managed the Channel Cove neighborhood since 2011. Their Mount Vernon properties are the Summerlynd neighborhood and some scattered housing.

Monroe is seeking applicants. She questions the viability of home ownership for people in this income range. They will qualify, but expenses rise faster than their wages over the years. She is championing them, if they find her.

“Let them text me,” she says. She will analyze their applications and get them pre-approved for loans. She notes they will be buying their homes in a very traditional way.

"I don't want to call it affordable housing. There is nothing low income or affordable about it. It's affordable compared to a market rate home," she said.

"Text," she says. "Everyone has a smart phone in their hand and I have to make it easy on them."

**You have your ballots  
Use them!**

Help get all ballots counted quickly:

- Vote and return your ballot now
- Sign your ballot envelope
- Use a county dropbox
- Mail your ballot by Oct. 27

Election drop boxes nearby:

La Conner Regional Library, 614 E.  
Morris Street

Swinomish Indian Tribal Community:  
Social Services Building, 17337 Reservation Road.

Ballots must be in drop boxes by 8 p.m.  
Nov. 2.

You can register to vote on election day.  
Voting information and register to vote  
at [VoteWa.gov](http://VoteWa.gov).

Skagit County Elections: 360-416-1702

## 2014 dog death brought burglary felony conviction

**By Ken Stern and Judy Booth**

Linda Clark presented an incomplete narrative of her advocating for and intervening “on behalf of two dogs in town” in 2014 in her guest column “Why I challenged the sale of Hedlin Field” in the Oct. 13 Weekly News. Skagit County Superior Court, Skagit County Sheriff’s Office and Washington state appeals court documents offer a detailed, official record showing that in January 2015 she was arrested, went to trial that October and was convicted on two counts, burglary in the second degree, a class B felony, and taking/injuring/killing pets, a gross misdemeanor.

In addition to providing fact, the court, as State of Washington, plaintiff, v. Linda Renae Clark, imposed a ten year harassment no contact order, filed as protected persons, the victims/family of Clark's actions and convictions.

In a state appeals court opinion dated Sept. 25, 2017, the court found that a La Conner family owned two dogs and hired Clark as a dog walker in 2014. After they dismissed her that spring, Clark threatened them. The family called Skagit County Sheriff's Office Deputy Brad Holmes, who told Clark "that she cannot go back to the residence for any reason or she could be arrested for trespassing." Clark agreed not to return to the property.

But on Nov. 6, 2014, the appeals opinion recounts, the dogs were missing from the property and the “fence had been cut.” Later that day Sheriff’s Office Sergeant Sheahan-Lee went to Clark’s house. Clark admitted she had the dogs and turned them over. The court found “Sergeant Sheahan-Lee also noted that both dogs did not appear to be neglected or in need of any care.” One dog was under veterinary care and was taking medication and had not had his medication yet that morning. He was not to be exercised, yet Clark had walked him vigorously.

In a two day jury trial on Oct. 19-20, 2015, the jury took less than three hours to find Clark

(continued on page 2)



**THE NEW NORMAL INCLUDES OLD FASHIONED HOMECOMING DANCES** – It is great that La Conner High School students once again had a Saturday night dance as part of Homecoming. Before they went to festivities at The Vinery, Hallie Walls (sophomore), Samuel Williams (sophomore), Zaira Najera (sophomore Class Princess) and Steven Willcutt (sophomore Class Prince) hung out in front of Nasty Jack's.

— Photo by Sarah Walls