



Making a splash

Clockwise from above, Shelton High School's Abram Ordonez competes in the 100-yard butterfly at the Shelton High School pool Jan. 13.

Shelton's Sean Morson competes in the 100-yard breaststroke race.

Shelton's Roman Watkins swims in the 100-yard backstroke while someone films him competing in the race.

Journal photos by Matt Baide





The Mary M. Knight High School Class of 2021 throws their caps in the air during the school's graduation ceremony on Saturday afternoon in Matlock. MMK graduated 14 seniors. *Journal photo by Matt Baide*

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RED WIND CASINO

North Mason fire holds Safety Days for kids

By Matt Baide
matt@masoncounty.com

Up the hill from Belfair Elementary School is a patch of grass that overlooks trees and the Olympic Mountains, a perfect spot for the North Mason Regional Fire Authority to bring back its annual Safety Days event.

The event is not back to what it was before the pandemic, but Emergency Prevention Specialist Lacey Newman is happy to be back in-person hosting the event instead of the digital event last year.

“It’s really nice to actually get to see the kids in person and have a little bit of hands-on experience for the kids,” Newman said. “We were really excited to be back up in person and hopefully, next year, we’ll be able to get everyone up here again: the Sheriff’s Office, dispatch, the whole group in the community.”

The normal event is two full days at the end of the school year, but the event was spread over four days this year to accommodate for social distancing between Belfair and Sandhill Elementary schools.

Students were able to participate in five stations. The stations included learning how to fit bike helmets and life jackets, first aid, CPR and when to call 911. There was a station for information about what to do in a house fire, how to evacuate your home during a fire and stop, drop and roll, as well as cooking safety and burn prevention to teach what household objects might burn you. The final station taught about smoke detectors and fire extinguishers and how to use one to put out a fire.

After students visit each station, they will end their Safety Days with a goody bag that includes safety information for the kids to bring home to their families just in case they need a reminder over the summer.

As someone who went through the program, Newman says these programs are popular with the kids.

“I can say I went to Belfair Elementary when I was a kid and so I still remember Safety Days when I went to school here,” Newman said. “It’s really fun now getting to plan the events. I know I’ve gotten a lot of feedback from teachers. A couple teachers even came up earlier today because we were here on Monday as well and telling me how much their



Students crawl underneath tape to simulate staying low to avoid smoke during Safety Days last Thursday at Belfair Elementary in Belfair. Journal photo by Matt Baide

students enjoyed it.

“It’s fun because as you go station to station or as we’re giving goody bags out to the kids, they’ll pop off facts that they’ve learned throughout it so it’s really fun to get that feedback and know that the kids do remember the information and that they’re able to have fun.”

North Mason Chief Beau Bakken taught the kids at the first aid and CPR station and knows how important this information is to teach.

“From a fire education and prevention standpoint, these are two of the most important days of the year,” Bakken said. “Last year, we had virtual and so it made it really tough to get the message out, but there are so many things, calling 911, using fire extinguishers, some of the things we’re talking about today that kids miss. We take a day in Safety Days to be able to provide that information.”

Although there is a lot of good safety information in Safety Days, the top piece of information for the kids to retain is what to do in the event of a fire.

“Something happens and we’re in our home or

we’re not in our home, what exactly is it that we do? We talk about getting out of the house,” Bakken said. “The other thing, and I know it seems super simple and we as adults take it for granted, it’s calling 911. We’re not brought into this world automatically knowing and so when we’ve got kindergarteners and first-graders that are coming in and we’re seeing that today as they go around the stations, the younger kids, they’ve never heard of 911 before.”

While Safety Days is about education, the NMRFA enjoys coming to this event every year to get out of the office and have fun while passing on fire safety knowledge.

“I said it for me personally and I can probably speak for just about everyone in this group, two favorite days of the year,” Bakken said. “Getting out here with these kids, getting away from the office, getting away from the emergencies that we’re dealing, I mean certainly, we’re still going on emergencies, but for most of the staff, being able to take time with our kids in this community and connect with them one on one, it’s the best four days of the year.”

County commissioners approve body, car cameras

By Matt Baide
matt@masoncounty.cojm

Mason County commissioners approved body and in-car cameras for the Sheriff’s Office at the commissioners meeting on Tuesday.

The request was made by the Sheriff’s Office to help with accountability and transparency between law enforcement and the residents they serve.

“We very much welcome having that new asset here in the department and our folks do a great job day in and day out we think capturing that on video and having that for evidence of the good work that they do and as well for evidence in cases,” Mason County Undersheriff Travis Adams said during the meeting. “I think it’s going to be very beneficial for Mason County and I appreciate you having the foresight to

take the action on that that you did.”

The commissioners added their input after Adams thanked the commission for approving the cameras. Commissioner Kevin Shutty shared his support for the Sheriff’s Office and said he knows how much work they have on their plate.

“I think our Sheriff’s Office is really proactive when it comes to being held accountable in the community,” Shutty said. “They don’t shy away from those difficult conversations. I think they also want to do it with transparency, and I think the body cam conversation speaks to that.”

Commissioner Sharon Trask drew from her experience in the Prosecutor’s Office about the hard work the Sheriff’s Office performs and she said that the body cams are extra support for the officers and community.

“I don’t think that we have any issues, and I don’t think that we have any down the road but this is just protection for everyone knowing that we’re open, we’re very transparent,” Trask said. “I appreciate that about all of you.”

Commissioner Randy Neatherlin shared his fellow commissioners’ support and said he wants the public to know that the commissioners didn’t approve this because the Sheriff’s Office is doing anything wrong.

“It’s quite the opposite. We want you to see that they do things professionally,” Neatherlin said. “As a person that is surprised when I’m standing there watching how they deal with large groups that have even gotten unruly, I have great pride in their professionalism.”

The overall cost to purchase enough equipment, install everything and hire

an evidence technician to manage everything is about \$744,000.

Chief Criminal Deputy Ryan Spurling said the move is exciting for the Sheriff’s Office. Spurling said the department has had car cameras in 2017 but had to take them out of their vehicles due to not being able to follow public disclosure laws.

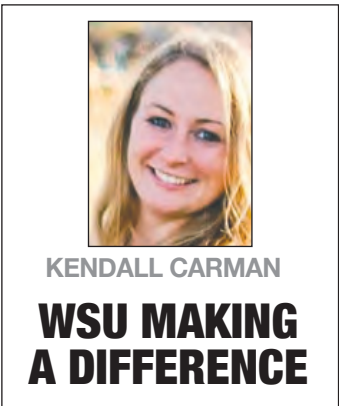
“We’re excited to have both and it’s going to be a great piece. Our deputies do the right things all the time and I’m super excited to see that we have the videos to back that up now,” Spurling said. “If a complaint comes in, we can go to the video and see and if somebody is doing something wrong, we’re going to deal with it. It’s just a good thing for law enforcement.”

Spurling said the Sheriff’s Office is hoping to have the cameras installed and operational by October.

Free septic system maintenance workshop next week

If you would like to learn more about your septic system and the maintenance it requires, consider attending a free septic maintenance workshop with WSU Extension and Mason County Public Health.

Septic systems are expensive and complex. Understanding their function can save you money and help the environment. At the workshop, you will learn what type of septic system you have, how it works and what maintenance it



requires. We will even go over how to perform your

own inspection of a conventional gravity system, which is easier and less gross than it sounds.

In all septic systems, waste first travels to a septic tank, but that’s not where most of the treatment takes place. The tank is instead used to settle and separate wastes: oils to the top, solids to the bottom. Some people have advanced systems like aerobic treatment units or sand filters that treat the wastewater further after the tank. Ultimately, waste is

distributed through pipes into your drain field where bacteria and other organisms treat the water until it is safe for the environment.

Failed systems can leech bacteria, viruses, organic matter and nutrients into area waters. Those pollutants not only threaten aquaculture but can sicken boaters and swimmers. Furthermore, the nutrients emitted by failing systems increase the likelihood of toxic algae blooms in our lakes and oxygen-free “dead zones” in

locations, including Hood Canal.

The workshop date is from 6-7:30 p.m. June 24. It will be conducted over Zoom. Contact Kendall Carman at kendall.carman@wsu.edu for the registration link. Materials can be found at www.co.mason.wa.us/health/environmental/onsite/index.php.

■ For more information on the Mason County WSU Extension office, call 360-427-9670 ext. 680 or go to mason.wsu.edu.



MotoAmerica rides at Ridge

Clockwise from top: Riders put their knees to the ground on the final turn of the track to complete a lap during a MotoAmerica race Saturday at Ridge Motorsports Park in Shelton.

A rider tries to brace himself as he slides across the ground after failing to complete a turn during a MotoAmerica race.

Fans take shade in the bleachers with umbrellas during the 100 degree temperatures on top of the ridge at the Ridge Motorsports Park on Saturday.

A rider waves to the crowd in the bleachers after the end of a MotoAmerica race.

Journal photos by Matt Baide



Mason County events return



Boosting the Climbers

Tracy West, left, leans over to pick up a ball marker after draining a putt while teammates Ryan Heitz, center, and Mark Nault, arm raised, celebrate during the Shelton Highclimber Baseball Booster Club golf tournament Monday at Alderbrook Golf Course in Union. More photos on A-23/24. Journal photo by Matt Baide

Man linked to Maple Fire convicted

Staff report news@masoncounty.com

In the first case in which tree DNA evidence was used to convict a defendant in a federal criminal trial, former Hood Canal-area resident Justin Andrew Wilke was convicted last week of conspiracy, theft of public property, depredation of public property, trafficking in unlawfully harvested timber and attempting to traffic in unlawfully harvested timber.

Wilke was convicted July 8 after a six-day jury trial in U.S. District Court in Tacoma. The jury deliberated seven hours before reaching a verdict, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

According to charges filed by the U.S. attorney for the Western District of Washington, the 39-year-old Wilke was the lead defendant in a 2018 scheme to steal maple wood near Elk Lake, west of Brinnon in northwestern Mason County, which resulted in what would become the Maple

see MAPLE, page A-10

Candidates share views at forum

By Gordon Weeks gordon@masoncounty.com

Candidates seeking positions on the Nov. 2 general election ballot shared their views Friday at the Mason County Republican Women's annual Candidates in the Park event at Kneeland Park in downtown Shelton.

About 50 people showed up to hear candidates for Shelton City Council, Fire District 11, Public Hospital District 1 and the North Mason School Board. Two candidates for the 2022 election also spoke. Elizabeth Kreiseimaier is seeking the Sixth District congressional seat occupied by U.S. Rep. Derek Kilmer, and Travis Couture will run for state legislative seat representing the 35th District.

Trenton Powers, George W. Blush and Miguel Guitierrez are seeking a four-year term as Position 7 on the Shelton City Council. The top two vote-getters in the Aug. 3 primary election will face off in the Nov. 2 general election.

Gutierrez did not attend the forum. Powers sent a statement that was read aloud. Powers said he is a veteran, has lived in Shelton for five years, and owns a security business.

Tyler "Mad Dog" Elliott is challenging incumbent Joe Schmit for a four-year term representing Position 6. Blush, the owner of Nita's Koffee Shop in downtown Shelton, joined them onstage.

Schmit has been on the Shelton council for three years. Focusing on improving the town's economy will allow the city to create "a community by design, not default," he said.

see FORUM, page A-11

Wall between state, Union owner

By Gordon Weeks gordon@masoncounty.com

A decade ago, a driver on state Route 106 near Union didn't make a hairpin turn and struck a large tree in front of Jill Halverson's Hood Canal Airbnb.

A few years later, another vehicle veered off the road and rammed the tree, damaging it so badly Halverson had to remove it.

Two years ago, a third driver traveling from Union crashed through a group of small trees next to Halverson, narrowly missing her bedroom, and plunged into Hood Canal.

Halverson considered building a fence to protect her property, but the Mason County planning department rejected that idea, she said in an interview with the Shelton-Mason County Journal.

That's when Halverson bought 45,000 pounds of rock and placed them in a gabion wall that measures 3 feet high by 2 feet wide, a barrier between the road and the house she said was approved by Mason County.

But after an inspection by the state Department of Transportation, Halverson was told she has until July 20 to remove the stone wall. If she fails to do so, the state will do it and send her the bill.



The state Department of Transportation has given Jill Halverson a deadline of July 20 to remove a 3-foot-high stone gabion wall she constructed to protect her Airbnb on state Route 106 near Union. In recent years, three drivers have failed to negotiate the corner along the Hood Canal and struck trees on her property. Journal photo by Gordon Weeks

Halverson said drivers cruising past her house typically exceed the 35-mph speed limit. Many drivers are unfamiliar with the bends in the road, and some have been drinking, she said.

"It's dangerous for us ... Everyone else has a fence," Halverson said.

On June 24, Halverson sent a letter to Duke Stryke at the state DOT office in Port Orchard requesting that the state freeze the July 20 removal deadline to allow an engineer to examine the site and offer suggestions "more palatable" to the state.

"We really want to be good

see WALL, page A-3

INSIDE TODAY



District gives update on MET Academy Page A-2

City, county give Focus on Future updates Page A-8

Union artist paints Mason County murals Page A-15



Bite of Mason County

Oscar Elgeuro, left, saws with Aidan Dickerson to sever the end of a log at the Green Diamond Resources booth during the Expo & Bite of Mason County on Friday in Shelton. See more photos on Page A-20/21. Journal photo by Matt Baide

Date set for murder trial

Matt Baide
matt@masoncounty.com

Kyle Alexander Baker, charged with first-degree murder in the slaying of a man whose body was found June 24 at a Shelton homeless camp, had his trial date set Monday, according to Mason County Prosecuting Attorney Michael Dorcy.

An omnibus hearing is scheduled for Aug. 9, a pretrial hearing is set for Aug. 23 and the trial is scheduled from Sept. 7 to Sept. 17.

Baker, 24, is charged with first-degree murder with a deadly weapon in the death of John L. Farmer, 22, near Turner Avenue.

According to the affidavit of probable cause, authorities received a call in the morning of June 24 about a body found at a homeless camp near Turner Avenue. Police found a blue tarp covering the victim's body. The body had a deep cut on the right hand and a large laceration to the head. The wounds appeared to be defensive, according to court documents.

After speaking with the person who reported the body, police talked with others to identify Baker as the suspect. Baker had previously been arrested for assaulting a City of Shelton employee, malicious mischief and obstructing a police officer.

Lacey Police apprehended Baker without incident in the early morning of July 6. He was transferred to Shelton Police and held in custody on \$1 million bail.

The maximum penalty for first-degree murder with a deadly weapon is life in prison without parole and a \$50,000 fine.

City to repave road, bar logging trucks

By Gordon Weeks
gordon@masoncounty.com

On Tuesday afternoon, a logging truck lumbered east on Seventh Street through downtown Shelton, crossed a bridge over Goldsborough Creek, and turned left onto Park Street.

For decades, this has been the popular path to deliver logs to the Shelton waterfront, first for Simpson Lumber Co. and now Sierra Pacific Industries.

That route is about to close for logging trucks after the Shelton City Council on Tuesday evening gave final approval to awarding a \$263,000 contract to Granite Construction to overlay asphalt on Park Street from South Seventh Street to South First Street. The council gave preliminary approval at its July 6 meeting.

The heavy trucks have cracked Park Street, last paved more than two decades ago.

The project includes planing the roadway and adjusting the existing utility structures. It also includes erosion control, signs, striping, traffic control and other related work. The city's engineering department estimated the project would cost \$295,000. The paving is expected to begin next month. When it's done, logging trucks will no longer be allowed to use Park Street and traffic signs will say so.

The city received six bids on the project ranging from \$263,000 to \$416,000, Ken Gill, the city's engineer, told the council.

"So it's a huge big-time win for Shelton," Gill said. He added, "That road should last long beyond my lifetime."

No one commented during Tuesday's public hearing on

see **ROUTE**, page A-2

North Mason 'clarifies' levy ballot

By Kirk Boxleitner
kboxleitner@masoncounty.com

The North Mason School Board unanimously voted July 15 to replace its resolution for a levy for educational programs and operations, but District Superintendent Dana Rosenbach said the action was taken to make its existing terms clearer rather than to change those terms.

"You have already approved a resolution to run a levy in November," Rosenbach said. "This levy is intended only to fund those things that the state will not fund for us."

Rosenbach emphasized that the millage rate that is required to be listed in the bond rate is an estimate only, but she also noted that the county specifically requests that the language it places on its ballot is in the school district's approved resolution, "and we didn't have that in the one we approved a couple of months ago."

Rosenbach added, "Those are the changes in this. Nothing else about the dollar amount — the \$3.8 million you already approved, or the estimated millage rate of \$1.50

— has changed."

Rosenbach said the total assessed valuation for the community has increased, "because many of us received our tax assessments that had a new, higher number on it," which means that the district's previous estimate, of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, will now be less because the district is still only approved to collect \$3.8 million.

"We did not change that amount," Rosenbach said. "As those property values go up, the amount per \$1,000 goes down, but we're still always collecting the same \$3.8 million."

If it were to become possible to change the millage rate, Rosenbach told the school board she would call them back for a special meeting to make another amendment to the approved resolution, but as of that evening, her understanding was that this is not possible.

Although the county Assessor's Office did make available to the district an estimated new total valuation, that number will not be certified until after the levy language is due to the county. According

to state law, the millage rate must be based on the certified total property valuation within the district.

"It can't be based on the new one that we know is going to be certified later," Rosenbach said. "We can't put it on the ballot, because it's not a certified number."

Rosenbach said the need to communicate with the public that "the ballot says this, but really, you're only going to pay this much, and here's why. We'll have to work really hard, both from the district and from our citizens committee, to get that message out."

District 5 Director Arla Shephard Bull shared concerns expressed by the marketing subcommittee of the citizens committee that "over-explaining," in ways that might contradict what voters will see printed on their ballots could instead "turn people off" to the district's pleas.

"So if that information does go out, we start with, 'You're going to see this on your ballot,'" District 2 Director Leanna Krotzer said. "What this means is, that's how much it

see **LEVY**, page A-8

INSIDE TODAY



Shelton library
hosts author, artist
Page A-7

Federal agencies
warn of forest fire risk
Page A-10

Journal announces awards
for top boys athlete, coach
Page A-23



Golden Knight Sgt. 1st Class Joe Abein glides into Sanderson Field for a landing last Thursday in Shelton. See more photos from the Army's Golden Knights trip to Shelton on page A-20/21. Journal photo by Matt Baide

Knights in the sky

By Matt Baide
matt@masoncounty.com

Strapping yourself to another person and jumping out of a plane is nothing new at Sanderson Field, but when the people you're attached to are the best skydivers in the military, that is not something that happens often.

The Army's Golden Knights is a demonstration and competition parachute team that tries to connect people with the Army. The team took 30 educators from around Washington on tandem skydives in an effort to gain the educators as advocates in the Army's recruiting efforts.

Sgt. Jon Pemberton has been jumping out of planes for the Golden Knights for two years, although he's been jumping out of planes for eight years and officially skydiving for five years.

"We're from all parts of the Army, all parts of the nation and we are assembled as a team here today as tandem teams to take people on an experience that would help connect them with something that's really fun for them to do," Pemberton said. "If they've never talked to a soldier before, talk to us, converse and convey what the Army has to offer for someone who may be interested in joining the Army or talking about the Army."

Pemberton said that after high school, he didn't

see **KNIGHTS**, page A-7

Three vie for Pioneer School Board seat

By Gordon Weeks
gordon@masoncounty.com

In one of only two contests on the Aug. 3 primary ballot in Mason County, Stephanie Schlitz and Shawn Montano are challenging incumbent Robert B. Clark for director position 3 on the Pioneer School Board.

The top two vote-getters in Tuesday's election will face off for the four-year term on the Nov. 3 general election ballot. Clark is filling a seat that was vacated in February, when the school board appointed him.

All three candidates answered four questions posed in a questionnaire by the *Shelton-Mason County Journal*.

see **BOARD**, page A-8



Robert Clark
Courtesy photo



Shawn Montano
Journal photo by Gordon Weeks



Stephanie Schlitz
Courtesy photo

Tuesday vote will pare ballot in council race to 2 candidates

By Gordon Weeks
gordon@masoncounty.com

On Tuesday's primary ballot, two Shelton small business owners and a longtime special educator are competing for the opportunity to face off for a Shelton City Council seat in the Nov. 3 general election.

George W. Blush, Miguel Gutierrez and Trenton Powers are seeking a four-year term on the council as member No. 7. Incumbent Megan Fiess, who was selected by the council in 2020 to complete Bob Rogers' unfinished term, is not seeking a new term. The top two vote-getters will advance to the Nov. 3 ballot.

Blush owns Nita's Koffee Shop in downtown Shelton. He is the executive director of the non-profit 5XL Shelton pet food bank and is chairman of the Mason County Housing Authority. Blush ran unsuccessfully for a council seat two years ago.

Gutierrez taught special education and wrote grant proposals for the Conservation Corps. He also trained volunteers for BAYAC AmeriCorps and developed a youth camping program for the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. This is the first time he has sought public office.

Powers is a U.S. Army veteran and Missouri native who moved to Shelton in 2015. He owns and operates a security company. He sought to finish Roger's unfinished term.

The *Shelton-Mason County Journal* sent four questions to the three candidates. Powers was the only candidate to respond.

Trenton Powers

What inspired you to run for the position?

I first interviewed about a year and half ago after feeling like I wasn't being heard by the city when addressing some concerns I had on a city project. Instead of complaining, I decided to run so that I could make a difference. I want to help the City of Shelton grow and see all its residents be successful.

What is the biggest challenge facing the City of Shelton?

I think currently one of the biggest issues facing Shelton is housing. Shelton is growing and there are many business opportunities here, however the lack of housing keeps Shelton from being able to continue to grow.

What skills would you bring to the position?

I believe my time in the military has taught me great leadership skills, the ability to adapt and think outside the box. I currently manage a small business in town, which has given me the opportunity to understand the local business community, and skills to work with individuals in the community.

see **COUNCIL**, page A-8

INSIDE TODAY



Shelton School Board adds to budget
Page A-2

Locally filmed 'Ring of Fire' offers fiery finale
Page A-17

Journal announces awards for top girls athlete, coach
Page A-23

Sports & Outdoors



Mary M. Knight High School's Robbie Strain reaches for a pass while covered by Washington School for the Deaf's Kwabena White-Star on Thursday in Matlock. *Journal photo by Matt Baide*

Owls take down Terriers 44-2 in home opener

By Matt Baide
matt@masoncounty.com

Mary M. Knight opened its home season right after school Thursday afternoon, and the fans in Matlock were treated to a 44-2 win against the Washington School for the Deaf. The game was close early and it was 13-0 Owls after one quarter. The Owls offense was too much for the Terrier defense in the second quarter en route to a 26-2 halftime lead. "Overall, we played all right," Mary M. Knight head coach Tom Kerr said. "A lot of mistakes that we made. We

made some mistakes that could have cost us if we weren't that athletic, we didn't play up to our potential. We didn't play to where I think we should be at at this point." The offense and defense were led by seniors Ryan Good and Quinnton Krippelez. Good played quarterback and played well in the passing game and Krippelez scored most of the Owl touchdowns, shaking off tackles and running past Terrier defenders. "Right now, till we get the big guy back (lineman Tristin Murray), Quinnton and Ryan are our go-to guys on both sides of the ball," Kerr said.

"We changed our defense in the second quarter and then they really couldn't do anything on the offensive side of the ball. Our plan is to get the ball in No. 1's (Krippelez) hands. We're going to try to do as much as possible and we're not shy about it." The Terriers had some success on offense in the beginning of the game before Kerr changed the Owls defense. Some turnovers also cost the Washington School for the Deaf. Senior quarterback Jace Lewanoski and running back Yovany Barragan were the best players for the Terriers. "I didn't know a lot about them.

Something I told the kids, they're always a physical team," Kerr said. "They weren't afraid to go hit you and they executed pretty well. They're well-coached by Coach McArthur, well disciplined. I'm glad to see they had some athletes to match up with some of our athletes as well." Kerr highlighted the play of senior center and nose guard Danny Goeders, saying he played a great game and did his job to allow the Owls to execute on offense and defense and earn the win. Mary M. Knight (2-0) hosts Lake Quinault at 1 p.m. Saturday in Matlock.



The Shelton High School girls cross country team competes in a tri-meet Sept. 15 at the Huff 'N' Puff Trail in Shelton. The Climbers won the prestigious Salt Creek Invitational Saturday in Port Angeles. *Journal photo by Matt Baide.*

Shelton girls harriers win Salt Creek Invitational

By Justin Johnson
justin@masoncounty.com

In March, the Shelton High School girls cross country team won the Evergreen Conference championship and finished third at the 2A District IV meet during a pandemic-shortened season. Returning to fall competition and a full-length season this month, the Climbers haven't missed a beat. Led by a second-place finish from senior Alauna Carstens, Shelton won the Salt Creek Invitational on Saturday at Salt Creek Park in Port Angeles. Carstens finished with a time of

18 minutes, 31.7 seconds on the 3 mile course. Senior Ali Clifton was ninth (19:17.6) and senior Faith Linthicum was 15th for Shelton, which scored 62 points and finished 12 points ahead of Nathan Hale High School. North Mason High School's Kezlie Thygesen finished 13th overall at 20:40.2. The Shelton boys team finished third with 92 points. Junior Jacob Miller was the top Climber, finishing eighth with a time of 16:41.2. Shelton sophomore Carson Busch (16:47.9) and junior Jaydon Blackburn (16:49.7) were 12th and 13th, respectively.



Twilight fishing

Mark Hougen and his son, Brayden, fish Monday in Oakland Bay near the Bayshore Peninsula while the fading sunset illuminates the trees across the water. *Journal photo by Matt Baide*

Camping ban nears approval

By Gordon Weeks

gordon@masoncounty.com

The City of Shelton is one step away from outlawing camping on city right of ways, a measure designed to persuade homeless people to either accept official shelter and other services or move along.

The Shelton City Council on Tuesday gave preliminary approval to the ordinance, which would make it a misdemeanor to stay overnight in a tent, hut, lean-to or other temporary shelter or structure on city land “which is reserved for any public purpose, including city-owned rights of way, parks, public facilities, easements, critical areas and buffers.” The council can make the law official at its Nov. 2 meeting.

The crime would be a misdemeanor, punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Under the proposed ordinance, personal property associated with the camping on

see **BAN**, page A-2

Downtown shooting takes bizarre twist

By Matt Baide

matt@masoncounty.com

Siblings Christopher Floe, 40, and Caroline Harris, 34, were arrested in connection with the Oct. 7 shooting in the 500 block of North 4th Street in Shelton.

Floe, who was allegedly shot by Harris, was booked into Mason County Jail for first-degree assault, first-degree criminal conspiracy assault, false reporting and criminal conspiracy to commit a drive-by shooting. Harris was arrested for first-degree assault, first-degree criminal conspiracy assault, and criminal conspiracy to commit a drive-by shooting. Arraignment hearings for Floe and Harris set for 9 a.m. on Oct. 25.

According to the probable-cause affidavit, Floe was interviewed about the incident and inconsistencies

began to show in his statement. Security footage from the jail showed a vehicle blacked out leaving the scene at the same time as the shot was heard on multiple cameras.

During an interview Oct. 14, Floe admitted, according to court documents, to talking his sister, Harris, into shooting him. Harris was contacted later that day and confirmed that Floe had asked her to shoot him, and Floe provided her a firearm Oct. 6. Harris said Floe asked her several times to shoot him and the requests started five to seven days before the incident. Harris initially refused, but Floe kept asking so she agreed to shoot him.

Harris said she went to Floe’s office Oct. 7 because Floe, a Community Corrections Officer with the state Department of Corrections, said there were

no cameras, and no one would know it was her. She couldn’t do it at first, but then parked with her passenger door next to his driver’s door.

Floe turned around and pointed to where Harris should shoot him. Harris was seated in the driver’s seat and used a two-handed shooting grip to fire one round, striking Floe in the right forearm, through the right side of his lower back and exiting out of his abdomen, with the bullet lodging in his vehicle.

Harris left the scene and went home and put the spent shell in a small cardboard box in her bedroom and left the pistol in her vehicle. A search warrant was granted for the residence, with the firearm and shell casing where Harris said it would be.

No motive was provided as to why Floe asked Harris to shoot him.

North Mason schools levy on Nov. 2 ballot

By Matt Baide

matt@masoncounty.com

The North Mason School Board hopes the third time is a charm for passing a levy that’s on the Nov. 2 ballot.

North Mason tried to pass levies in February and April 2020, but was unsuccessful, which prompted the formation of a levy committee to allow for community input to produce the best levy for the community.

“Our levy committee is an outstanding group of individuals that represent all different facets of our community,” North Mason School District Superintendent Dana Rosenbach told the

Shelton-Mason County Journal. “We were very deliberate in growing that committee once it got started to ensure we had people represented who had had really strong negative feelings about the levy last year. We asked them to be a part of the committee and those voices, and those ideas are what helped us really hone down our request and make it the smallest that we could make it but still meet the needs of kids. We really appreciated having those folks on the committee because they asked really hard questions and we worked together to build a levy request that makes sense for our community and our district, but that they felt that

they could strongly support.”

The projected tax rate per \$1,000 assessed property value is estimated to be \$1.32 in 2022, meaning a home worth \$300,000 would pay \$396 in levy costs in the first year. The tax rate is projected to decrease over the time of the levy due to more houses and buildings being built with more taxpayers to support the levy.

The levy amount is \$3,831,125 each year from 2022 to 2025.

“Historically, this district has always kept the levy flat for the life of the levy,” Rosenbach said. “The failed first levy in 2020 was the first time we tried to adjust it year per year like most

districts do and our community didn’t like that. That was often cited as the reason that folks were not in support of that levy.”

The projected tax rate is cheaper than the levy in 2020, which was \$1.87 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Levies pay for a lot for schools, including athletics, clubs, music, theater, smaller class sizes, school supplies, technology, transportation and staff, according to North Mason School District website. The state does not fully fund all programs, just services that fall under basic education for schools.

see **LEVY**, page A-48

INSIDE TODAY



17 vie for area school boards
Page A-3

Humane Society of Mason County helps, needs help
Page A-15

National weeks
Women in Business
Forest products

A-10/11
A-28/29