

LYNNWOOD TIMES



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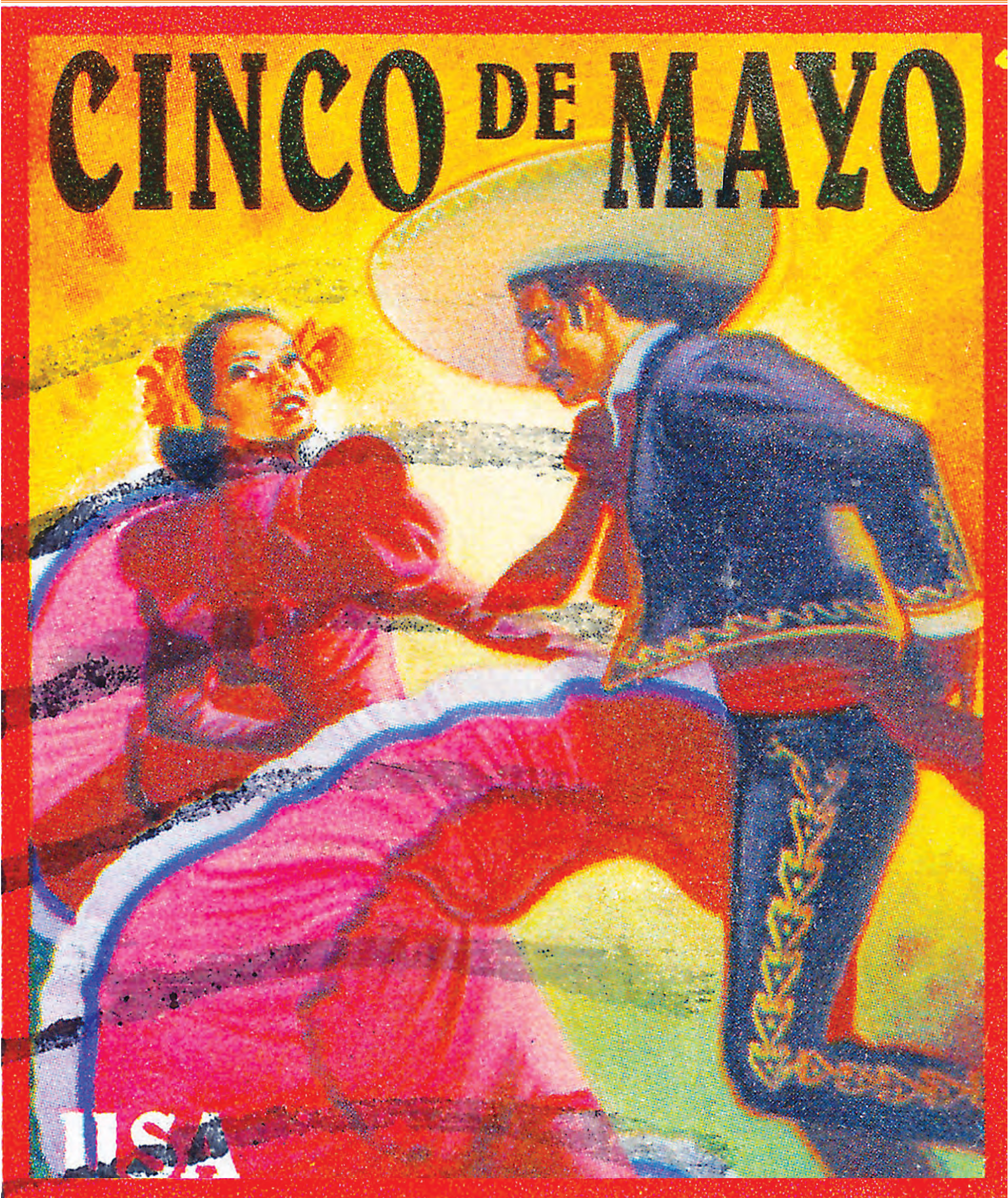


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Washington state continues its effort to reduce fatal car crashes

By KIENAN BRISCOE

Motor collisions and fatalities on Washington roads continue to rise leading legislation to continue its effort to make roads safer. One of these strategies is Target Zero, which is an agenda that aims toward zero deaths and serious injury on Washington roadways by 2030.

Target Zero 'is built on the belief that not one death is acceptable on our state's roadways. Everyone in Washington State should be able to travel our roadways without fear of being killed or seriously injured in a traffic crash,' according to its report.

According to the report's latest revision in 2019, across the nation, fatalities due to collisions increased 11.3% of which impairment by drugs and alcohol makes up 58%.

At a state level, Washington has averaged 108,769 collisions and 518 fatalities a year from 2017-2020. Currently, in 2021, there has been 18,885 collisions and 109 fatalities in its first four months.

Snohomish County has yet to see any decrease in collisions or collision-based fatalities within the past four years, averaging 12,680 collisions and 41 collision-based fatalities from 2017-2020, according to data from the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

According to the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC), the pandemic did have an influence on traffic safety. Vehicular Miles Traveled reduced 10% between 2019 to 2020, yet fatalities stayed the same (540 vs 538 in 2019).

In 2020, fatalities and serious injuries were up; officer reported impairment in serious crashes was up 20%, speeding up 15%, and unrestrained injuries and death up 15%. There was an increase in pedestrian fatalities but a slight decrease in serious injuries. So far in 2021, fatalities are up and serious injuries slightly down from this same time last year.

Safe Systems Approach

Target Zero incorporates what it calls the Safe Systems Approach to assess contributing factors that prevent zero deaths on roadways. It includes four main components: speed, infrastructure, vehicle manufacturers, and users.

The infrastructure component looks at how road design can reduce: fatalities, serious injury, severity of a crash. An example of this would be traffic barriers on roadsides to reduce the severity of a crash.

'Using data-driven safety analysis helps engineers to identify locations, specific treatments, and an overall structure to provide the maximum benefit for all roadway users,' the Target Zero report



states.

Increasing public transportation options, such as buses and light rail, is another solution of Target Zero to mitigate traffic fatalities. The National Safety Council concluded that passengers of public transit are 40 times less likely to experience a fatal crash compared to passengers traveling in different modes.

Two out of three traffic fatalities and serious injuries in Washington occur on local roadways, according to the Target Zero report.

The three most fatal roads in Snohomish County continue to be Interstate 5, with 29 fatalities from 2017-2019,

Highway 2, with 15 fatalities between 2017-2019, and Highway 99, with 17 fatalities between 2017-2019 according to data from the WTSC.

These three highways also remain the busiest in Snohomish County, with I-5 averaging around 200,000 AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic), Highway 99 averaging around 30,000 AADT, and Highway 2 averaging around 25,000 AADT, according to data from the WSDOT.

Data Driven Solutions

Based on the relationship of fatalities to traffic, Highway 2 is the most lethal

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LOCAL MEMORIAL DEFACED

By KIENAN BRISCOE

Lake Stevens, Wash. – In the days leading up to the resolution of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin's conviction, a Lake Stevens memorial, honoring the life and service

of fallen trooper Sean O'Connell, was defaced with an anti-police message.

In May, 2013, motorcycle state trooper Sean O'Connell, 38, was killed on duty during the Skagit River I-5 bridge collapse after serving with the Wash-

ington State Patrol for 15 years. Two weeks later, then Lake Stevens Councilman Sam Low proposed a memorial honoring O'Connell at 83rd and 20th Street SE, the last turn in Lake Stevens O'Connell would make before heading to work. After some code changes by the city, a memorial was enacted on the one-year anniversary of O'Connell's passing.

Over 2,000 attended O'Connell's memorial service at Everett's Comcast Arena back in 2013. He was described by his friends and family as "everybody's best friend," according to the Herald.

In July 2013, Skagit Bridge was renamed to Trooper Sean M. McConnell Jr. Memorial Bridge.

"Sean was very enthusiastic, jokester, a loving, caring father. Just a great, all-over individual with a heart of gold," Lt. Jeff Beazizo, who supervised O'Connell in the state patrol, said of him.

Beazizo worked closely with O'Connell as his sergeant, then continued to oversee him after his promotion to Lieutenant in the motor unit. He was close to his family, having kids of the

same age.

On Friday, April 16, 2021, a bench was added to the memorial. During the widening of 20th Street SE, Mayor Brett Gailey thought the bench would add a nice rest stop for people taking a walk, where they could sit and remember O'Connell's service. One day later it was graffitied with "ACAB."

"It was sad because it was a dedication to Sean and what he gave back to the community, and unfortunately, somebody took it upon themselves to take away something so special – especially for Alissa and the kids and to memorialize Sean. That's upsetting. Especially since it's a great community and to do something like that, which is so precious to everybody," Beazizo said.

ACAB is an acronym for "All Cops are Bastards" which originated in England during the 1920's and became a symbol of anti-establishment, especially within the punk and skinhead subcultures, around the 1980's. Following the murder of George Floyd it has made a recent resurgence as a political message for police reform. Despite its political connotations, Lt. Beazizo says

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LYNNWOOD TIMES

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City Councilmembers get an earful on hazard pay

By **SEBASTIAN MORAGA**

LYNNWOOD, WA – A small but passionate group of people spoke out in favor of hazard pay in the city of Lynnwood for grocery store workers during Monday's city council meeting. Debbie Gaff from the Local 38 chapter of the Teamsters, which represents grocery store workers, told council members that the pandemic is not over and that Lynnwood needs to follow in the steps of Edmonds and Olympia, which have approved hazard pay for grocery store workers.

"Some of your critics would say that the government does not belong in setting wages for private employees," Gaff said. "May I remind you that the minimum wage is set by elected officials?"

Danell Ellingson, a worker at the Lynnwood QFC, described the everyday conditions of workers at grocery stores. "What we go through every day, when we go to work: We are monitoring for mask use, because some customers don't use them. We are doing extra cleaning...customers lower their mask to talk to you instead of talking louder. It's not any safer in the store today than when they stopped paying us hazard pay."

Companies stopped paying hazard pay in mid-2020, Gaff said, while Adrianna Foss Nyberg, who works for a grocery store, could not contain her emotion while talking about the last five months of her life.

"I live with my husband, child and

granddaughter, who was born in December of 2020. My entire family got COVID and the next few weeks were the most terrifying of my life," Foss said. "The worst was knowing that I was probably the one who brought it home."

In addition to her personal struggles, Foss spoke of the struggles at the grocery store at which she works. Turnover is high, regular employees are getting sick and some customers are rude and violent to them.

"It's become a job I fear going to every day," said Brian Smith, a coworker of Foss'. The grocery workers are seeking an extra four dollars per hour.

"While four bucks won't solve our problems, it would encourage people to apply for jobs at a grocery store," Foss said.

Although the council took no action on the subject, a few of the city's leaders commented on the subject later on in the meeting. Council member Shannon Sessions said grocery store owners should handle the topic.

"I don't understand why, with the amount of revenue they have made they are not continuing (hazard pay) through COVID," Sessions said. "I'm not really sure the city government is the proper place to make these decisions."

Council member Ruth Ross said, "I do think it may take some type of encouragement from the city for grocery store owners to work through this."



Lynnwood City Council members in the council chambers at city hall. Pictured left to right: Ian Cotton (vacated), Ruth Ross, Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, Christine Frizzell, George Hurst, Shannon Sessions and Jim Smith.

In other city news:

- Council member Christine Frizzell said South Lynnwood Park is closing this Friday until next year and it's reopening with six pickleball courts. "It'll be great when that reopens, in the most diverse part of Lynnwood," Frizzell said.
- The council voted 6-0 to approve an amendment to the municipal code, section 10.52.010, which adds four stipulations to the municipal code regarding illegal firearm purchases, in order to update the municipal code to incorporate what has been adopted by the state.
- Council president George Hurst reminded his colleagues that council recognized the hard work of senior

staff and directors during the pandemic by offering administrative staff leave days. He suggested that such gesture be extended to staffers who are not senior staff.

- Mayor Nicola Smith reminded those in attendance that COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Snohomish County. "This is not the path that keeps you in Phase 3. We ask you to take all the measures: get vaccinated, keep social distance, wear your mask." Lastly, Smith noted that half a million eligible residents of Snohomish County have been vaccinated fully. "That's one out of three people in the county. A pretty incredible accomplishment in less than five months."



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Youth turn to a Mukilteo warehouse to play basketball

By **KIENAN BRISCOE**

MUKILTEO, Wash. - Even as schools reopen from the worldwide COVID-19 shutdown, available venues for kids to play sports, such as gymnasiums, remain closed. That is why some local Mukilteo moms and dads, decided to take measures into their own hands.

When Peter Zieve, CEO of Electroimpact, received a call from a local Mukilteo father asking if one of his warehouses could be used as a basketball court there was no hesitation to say yes.

"It's very important. It's critical to their sanity," Zieve said, concerning kids having athletic outlets like this. "I don't know who owns the schools. I thought we owned the schools, but it doesn't seem that way."

Peter Zieve founded Electroimpact 35 years ago, which is a world leader in design and manufacturing of aerospace tooling and automation.

According to the father, the basketball playing is nothing official or formal.

"It's just some moms and dads that wanted their kids and friends to get active and play free from the rain... Health and safety is of the utmost importance. Mr Zieve provided a huge space and a great opportunity, and we want to be responsible and safe-so we are keeping the numbers very low. If things improve later, it would be great to invite more kids and let them play games," he said.

Even with some sports programs reopening up, there are not very many options for kids to play sports in indoor venues other than the YMCA, according to the father, which is often packed with older kids.

"We are so thankful that the kids can get away from all the screen time and get back to some normalcy. When basketball leagues start up, these kids will go back to playing for the Boys and Girls club or local Mukilteo elementary and middle schools, but even then, gym time is tough to come by, so hopefully this will continue. I want healthy activities for my kids, and this has been great," he said.

Normally, kids would be practicing

basketball in the school gymnasiums, but this year the schools would not even return their phone calls, according to Zieve.

"Finally, out of desperation a dad reached out to me and I said, sure,

Continued **PAGE 04 >>**



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Lynnwood student earns Eagle Scout rank



Eagle Scout Stephen Heins hands out art baskets at the Boys and Girls Club.

By ERIN FREEMAN

Lynnwood, Wash. — 18-year old Lynnwood High School and Edmonds College Running Start student Stephen Heins of Boy Scout Troop 49 proved that modifying an Eagle Scout Service Project to fit the needs of the community during the pandemic is possible- and is worth it.

For Heins' Eagle Scout service project, he converted Art Club to the virtual platform Zoom for residents of Alpha Supported Living- an organization providing supported living and group home services to adults with developmental disabilities.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Heins says he was hesitant about bringing together a group of boy scouts to participate in a build or clean up, as commonly accomplished for eagle scout projects. Brainstorming something that would have an equal impact on the community but could be done safely, he came up with the idea when his mother, an employee at Alpha Supported Living, suggested that he complete his service project for its residents.

"I asked her what has been taken away from the clients because of the outbreak and one thing was art club because they usually get together to make art," he said." I came up with an idea of how to bring their art club back to them. It kept the clients safe and the



Alpha client receives art basket. Photo courtesy of Stephen Heins.

scouts safe."

Once the project was approved by the Eagle Scout Board, Heins assembled the art kits- baskets with general art supplies inside, including paper plates, paint, tissue papers of multiple colors, craft paper, and glue. A pick-up station for supplies was held at the Alderwood Boy's and Girl's club, where each resident received two baskets.

After picking up their baskets, clients went home, Heins held a Zoom meeting for residents where he demonstrated how to organize the baskets to best

prepare and complete their art projects of a reindeer hat and jellyfish craft. While he wasn't able to observe them create the art, he received photos of the finished products.

"Since they hadn't been able to do art club for a while, I got feedback from the staff and heard that the clients really enjoyed them," he said. "It felt good to be able to help someone in a unique way. Everyone seemed pretty fond of the idea, and I was just glad I got the opportunity to do it."

from page 3 BASKETBALL

"I'll make a basketball court for you!" Zieve said.

Zieve has an eleven-year-old son who plays on Tuesdays and has eight warehouses, about 28,000 square feet each. He led the father through his facilities and evaluated which would be the best for their court. Some had better floors, some were more heavily used. Eventually they decided upon a building, which still had a trench down the middle—not perfect for dribbling over when running a full court. Despite this, it seemed to be the best of all options to play at half-court. It was quiet, was not as heavily used, and the floors were the best of all available warehouses.

Once a building was settled upon, Zieve hired a contracting firm to recondition the floor and installed porta-

ble nets. The cement floor was ground down to floor level, having been rendered uneven by the engineers, and epoxied everything flush. He then had the clean-up staff clean up the floors of any grease or hazardous bi-products from machine manufacturing. The whole project took two weeks and cost around \$2,000.

The kids have been playing basketball six days a week for the past month. They have their own access and can come at any time they want, using a lockbox Zieve set up for them. Currently the building is still operational, so a schedule has been in place to ensure the kids playing do not disturb the on-site engineer, who has been working in the morning before the kids get there.

"He said the sound of basketballs bouncing was a bit much for him,"

Zieve laughed. "But it was no problem at all."

Zieve does not imagine the kids will continue to practice through the summer, when nicer weather allows them to play outside, but when the fall comes, he says they are more than welcome to come back.

"Mr. Zieve has gone above and beyond what we had hoped, the space is huge, he had a work crew clear and repair the floor on his own dime, he gave us the freedom to come and go, and he made us feel welcome. He has been a supporter of area youth for a long time. That is why we initially thought to ask him. He has filled a void and as long as he has some space and is willing to share, there will be kids shooting hoops," the father said.

A roadmap to homeownership in Lynnwood's Housing Action Plan

By ERIN FREEMAN

With affordable housing options expected to be added to the city of Lynnwood's housing market, homeownership may become a tangible reality for some residents in the near future.

The Housing Needs Assessment found that 46% of Lynnwood households are renters and 54% are homeowners, but less than 20% of Lynnwood residents could afford to purchase the median-priced home in today's market. Lynnwood's average home costs \$508,447, according to the assessment.

Kristen Holdsworth, the Lynnwood development and business services senior planner, says that the housing needs assessment indicated a need for rental and ownership housing options.

Lynnwood's Housing Action Plan (HAP) addresses that homeownership is unattainable for a growing percentage of the community. While the HAP does not place a priority on renting or homeownership, it acknowledges homeownership as a key source of wealth creation and housing stability for households.

One of the city's strategies to address homeownership being out of reach for community members is through increasing housing type variety options.

"Missing middle" housing will be developed, providing options between single-family homes and high-rise apartments, including accessory dwelling units, duplexes, multiplexes,

and townhomes.

"Affordable housing can mean a variety of different levels of affordability," said Holdsworth.

Still, providing diverse affordable housing options will not inevitably make homeownership affordable for low-income households and those in specific situations, in terms of having childcare expenses, health care expenses, or other necessities.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) website on buying a home, "what you can afford depends on your income, credit rating, current monthly expenses, down payment and the interest rate."

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA)- which is part of HUD- offers a mortgage loan designed to have less restrictive qualifications compared to conventional loans. Popular among first-time homebuyers, FHA loans are helpful for buyers with limited savings or credit challenges, as they require a lower minimum down payment and lower credit scores than many conventional loans.

However, not all for-sale properties offer buyers the chance to finance with an FHA loan. Within the city of Lynnwood, only 21% of condominiums are currently FHA-approved, equating to 1557 units. An astonishing 88% of all condominiums were once FHA-approved in Lynnwood. Overtime, FHA certifications simply expired removing this financing option for potentially thousands of units.



A local property manager wishing to remain anonymous told the Lynnwood Times that having a property/development FHA-approved opens it up to a whole new community of buyers, allowing for an increased opportunity to sell. However, some managers are hesitant to do so as they prefer the property sell to someone with a conventional loan compared to a household that qualifies for an FHA loan, believing it indicates they are more financially stable.

FHA-approved developments must also be at least 51 percent owner-occupied, with no more than half of the units financed with FHA mortgages. Homebuyers looking to finance a home with an FHA loan are also sometimes not allowed to purchase a particular place because it doesn't meet FHA property standards of security, safety and soundness.

Holdsworth says that housing developers and lenders will continue to determine FHA eligibility on an individualized basis in Lynnwood. All HAP and future developments will be required to comply with Lynnwood Municipal Code, including building and safety requirements.

The Lynnwood City Council hearing for the Housing Action Plan is May 10, 2021 at 6 PM. More information about the public hearing is available on the project website. The Housing Action Plan and a fact sheet are available on the project website at www.lynnwoodwa.gov/housingactionplan.

If council adopts the Housing Action Plan, the city anticipates further research and community conversations to implement the Housing Action Plan over the next five years.

Mother's Day Scavenger Hunt



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 - A gift certificate from Lombardi's Italian Restaurant and Red Cork - \$100



Edmonds School District capital levy passes

By BO JOHN BRUSCO

On March 30, 2021, a virtual forum was held for Edmonds School District's 2021 Capital Levy. During the forum, Harmony Weinberg, the District's Program Manager, presented the case for the capital levy, citing urgent structural, safety, and capacity needs.

The special election for the capital levy took place this past Tuesday, the 27th of April. The ballots are in and the levy is set to pass with the majority vote. As of April 28th at 5 pm, about 55.80% of the 30,423 voters said YES to Proposition No. 1.

With this vote, the District will be authorized to levy excess taxes "upon all taxable property within the district for support of safety, security, renewal and upgrade projects, capacity and educational programs and replacement of Spruce and Oak Elementary Schools" according to the official ballot.

The proposition also includes a detailed tax rate schedule from 2022 to 2027. The "approximate levy rate/\$1000" for 2022 will be \$0.79, and that amount will slowly shrink to \$0.68 by 2027. This is a decrease from the tax rates initially presented.

Lynnwood student off to Carnegie music residency in New York City

By SEBASTIAN MORAGA

ed.

A Lynnwood teenager has been selected to participate in this summer's Carnegie National Youth Orchestra in New York City.

Andrew Vinther, a senior at Michigan's Interlochen Arts Academy, credits spending his senior year in the Wolverine State as the reason he finally achieved his goal of being accepted into the Carnegie National Youth Orchestra. A semester at Interlochen gave him the focus he needed to put in the work required to be accepted at Carnegie, he says.

He had applied to be accepted twice before.

"It finally worked out this time around," he said, adding that after graduating high school a musician is not eligible for the NYO anymore, so this was his last chance.

He flies to New York on June 25, although the journey started a long time ago.

He had to submit an essay, he had to submit a solo piece, four orchestra double-bass excerpts from various symphonies, multiple letters of recommendations and record a video statement.

"I knew it was a really big deal and I really wanted to push myself," he said. "I had a good feeling that if I pushed myself, I would get the results I want-

He said he found out from Carnegie in January, but that the institution did not go public with the chosen names until this month. Vinther is one of two Washingtonians selected. The other, Elliott Lee, from Seattle, is also a bass player.

"We know each other pretty well too, so it's pretty exciting," Vinther said.

Described by Vinther as "pretty much the most prestigious high school ensemble that there is in the country," the NYO gathers some of the best high school musicians in the land. It's an amazing chance to make great music with great musicians "who are just as driven as I am," Vinther said. Not only that, it's 100 percent free.

This is happening for Vinther in 2021, so it's a bit different NYO than in a "normal" year. Every year, the NYO musicians selected go on an international tour. This year, there's a certain virus that's been in the news which has dashed many a travel plan. So instead of a planned tour of Asia, the musicians will stay in New York and be part of a summer residency at Purchase College in Harrison, N.Y., an hour north of the Big Apple. The residency includes live-streamed performance and as many outdoor concerts as possible.

Thinking of life after the five-week Carnegie residency, Vinther said the big goal remains to become a profes-



Andrew Vinther playing the chello.

sional musician someday. College awaits and with it, a lot of college festivals he can apply to.

During his younger years, he participated in the Cascade Youth Ensemble, and the Seattle Youth Symphony, the Bellevue College Jazz Band and the Mountlake Terrace High School Jazz Band. MTHS was his school from grades 9-11 before his move to Michigan.

Vinther started playing the bass at 9 and he has been playing it literally for half his life. Now an 18-year-old, he calls the instrument "an extension of my own voice."

"Sometimes it's hard to express what we are feeling with words," he said. "And the best way to truly get out what we are feeling and how we want to

portray our thoughts is through music. So, I feel blessed to have the opportunity through my instrument and I really don't know what I would do without it."

To listen to more of Andrew Vinther's performances, visit his YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCANKhIZmyyIVds_LEqR0fgA.



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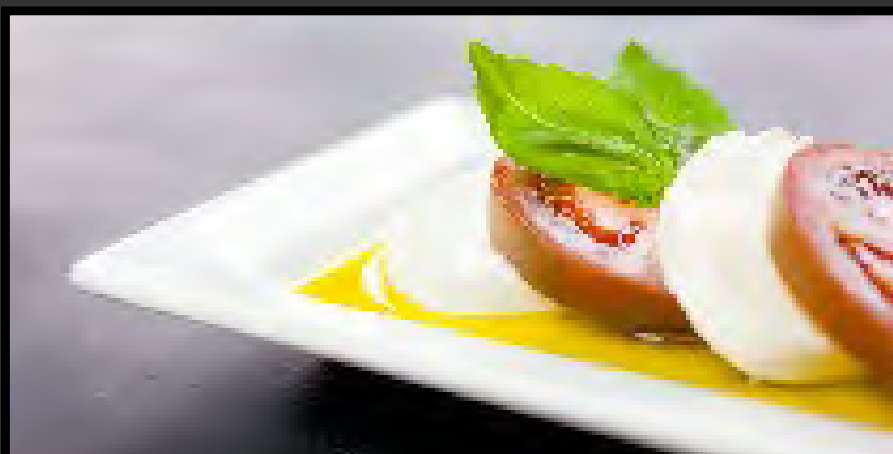


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About 100 members of the West African community gathered for a Ramadan tradition known as “Grandma’s Sukuri Ndogu.”

BY BO JOHN BRUSCO

On April 17, members of the West African community came together at Gambian Talents Promotion’s offices to hold an event called “Grandma’s Sukuri Ndogu,” a West African tradition connected to Ramadan.

In the English language, “Grandma’s Sukuri Ndogu” means giving something sweet to grandmothers so that they have food with which to break their fast. This event traditionally happens at the beginning of Ramadan.

Pa Ousman Joof, the executive director of Gambian Talents Promotion, explains the purpose of this tradition. “We break our fast with something warm and sweet like tea or coffee to get the stomach going. We eat it with bread and rice with different things,” he says. “We respect our elders and serve them with food or money to buy food.”

At Saturday’s event, the grandmas of the West African community were given all sorts of food and supplies by community volunteers in preparation for Ramadan. “We provided them with the groceries that they can break their fast with: sugar, rice, potatoes, onions, fruits,” Joof said.

Saimey Mk Marenah, a Gambian journalist, lent a hand at the event as a volunteer. Expressing his excitement, Marenah said, “I am so excited to join Pa, to come here and volunteer and support the Gambian community.”

“This is what we know,” Marenah continues, “Ramadan is a holy month of blessing where we believe that caring and sharing are cardinal principles of this blessed month. So this is my way of bringing my Gambian grandmas — Gambian parents — to come and enjoy the blessings of the holy month by giving them this food.”

Cultural Importance of Tradition

While it is important for the elders to be well-supplied in preparation for Ramadan, this event also serves significant cultural purposes for the grandmas. In a promotional video for this year’s Sukuri Ndogu, the narrator explains that “this event connects our grandmas with a very important tradition that takes away nostalgia and strengthens their general health and wellness.” Sukuri Ndogu also helps the grandmas in the community to stay connected with their culture and each other. Ramadan in West Africa

Ramadan is the Islamic holy month of fasting and takes place on the ninth month of the Muslim year. According to pewresearch.org, there are 2.15 million Muslim adults in the United States as of 2017, and an estimated 80% of them fast during Ramadan.

While millions of people are participating in Ramadan across the states and even more across the globe, Joof notes what it means particularly to the Gambian community. “West Africans believe in sharing,” he says. “This is a moment that we use to share with ourselves as well as with others our neighbors.”

“Yesterday in Gambia,” he continues,

“we had Christians serve food to Muslims to break their fasts. West Africans are actually tolerant with each other and each other’s religions. That sense of caring and sharing among West Africans is something that is key for us, and we practice it in Ramadan.”

Gambian Talents Promotion

Gambian Talents Promotion is a non-profit organization focused on helping members of the West African community. With almost an endless list of services and resources, it is difficult to summarize all that the organization offers the community. From marriage counseling to transportation services and vaccination resources to graphic design courses, Gambian Talent Promotions does all that it can to support the West African community members.

“We want ourselves to be the hub for the West Africans here,” Pa Ousman Joof explains. “If they need anything, they can come to us. If we don’t have it, we go find it. So it’s a grassroots base. What we are doing is inspired by what the people want.”

Joof registered the organization in the U.S. in 2017, and says that their mission is “to connect the West Africans in Washington with local resources and bridge the gap between [them] and the wider community.”

According to the Migration Policy Institute, there are more than 10,000 West Africans living and working in Washington state as of 2019. Joof hopes to connect all of them to the resources they might need.

“There have been big disparities. We have been underrepresented and underserved, and this is on all levels,” says Joof. “And we are doing all our best to make sure that our voices are heard. We are sitting at the table with lawmakers to actually voice out our opinions and they are listening to us.”

The Youth of the West African Community

Helping the youth in the community has been one of Gambian Talents Promotion’s biggest focuses. Wakacco Kannah, a member of the African Working Group, spoke during Saturday’s gathering about some of the problems the youth have been facing.

“We’ve got many of our children here. There’s so much they’re going through especially with school,” Kannah explains. “Some of them are getting into the criminal justice system. So we are looking at a skill development program that will help them out because they are here to stay. So we can’t just allow them to be on the street. So that’s why we try to help them find work and build relationships so that we can help.”

Joof also spoke about how Gambian Talents Promotion has been helping the youth of the community. “As my brother stated, one of the key things is our youth,” he said. “We want to get them off of the criminal justice system. One of the things we do in our office is to provide our youth with an intern-



Pa Ousman Joof, the executive director of Gambian Talents Promotion, working in his office. Source: Mario Lotmore.



A volunteer handing out provisions during the “Grandma’s Sukuri Ndogu” event on April 17, 2021. Source: Mario Lotmore.



(L-R) Saimey Mk Marenah, Wakacco Kannah, a member of the African Working Group, Councilman Jim Smith, an elder, Pa Ousman Joof, the executive director of Gambian Talents Promotion, Councilwoman Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, Vanesa Gutierrez, Snohomish County Community Relations Manager, and others. Source: Mario Lotmore.





The history between the United States of America and the United States of Mexico are intertwined within generations of politics and tradition. In the USA, Cinco de Mayo is traditionally celebrated as if it were the Mexican Independence Day, which does exist, but is actually celebrated on September 16th; the day generally regarded as honoring Mexico's independence from Spain.

Cinco de Mayo (literally the "fifth of May") does honor a victory in Mexico, but it is for the Battle of Puebla, in which outnumbered Mexican forces defeated the French army in 1862. Here in the US, however, Cinco de Mayo has taken a more representative function, like how St. Patrick's Day is used as a celebration of Irish American heritage.

Mexico and the US have grown together as neighbors over the years since both nations have forged their own destinies away from the empires who once dominated them. Citizens from both countries have moved across their border to pursue lives in each other's lands, and trade and culture have been prominent points of exchange since both nations came to be and have left indelible marks on one another. One only needs to travel across the western and southwestern states of California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas to recognize all the names of cities, states and geographical landmarks whose origins proudly bear their Spanish and Mexican roots.

Food, drink, and the arts have embedded themselves in traditions in the north, as well. Though not entirely representative of actual Mexican cuisine, fast food

has made us familiar with salsa, tortillas, and refried beans, while more traditional restaurants also provide fare that includes tamales, pozole and various forms of molé. And, of course, who can forget tequila or sangria?

Food trucks, also, have broken onto the scene, offering up quick service fare not always found in the brick-and-mortar locations. While we respect the lockdown urging, food delivery services remain available to bring the food right to your door – a good option for anyone looking to support local businesses.

Carnicería Michoacán Local Mexican Market

Nestled in the Lynnwood Convention Center plaza just off 196th St. S.W. stands a charming, unassuming Mexican market, or mercado in Spanish.

"Carnicería Michoacán" proudly adorns the building's façade and once you walk in, you step into a world unfamiliar to most American eyes. Piñatas hang from the ceiling. Fresh nopales (Mexican cactus) and unique Mexican meats like carne molina de res (ground beef) lay at the ready for sale.

The store's owners Armando and Norma Romero and Carnicería Michoacán have been in business 18 years running. The Romeros started their American success story by taking ownership of a previous store to rent movies and sell Mexican products and groceries.

As that business started taking off, the Romeros decided to rent the vacant lot next to them. They tore down the dividing wall to add a carnicería, or butcher shop. It was such a success, that the Romeros began serving authentic cuisine from their home state of Michoacán and thus the name Carnicería Michoacán was born.

On Saturdays and Sundays, they serve carnitas, birria, menudo, tacos dorados, you name it. And the best part? Everything is cooked fresh!

Need catering services for your Cinco de Mayo cele-



(above) Located at 3815 196th St SW #112 in Lynnwood, Carnicería Michoacán is known for its fresh Mexican meats.

(below) At Carnicería Michoacán, they care about what you eat. Making Carna Asada? Let them chose the perfect marinade for you! Don't forget the homemade salsa. Call 425-640-5244 today and let Carniceria cater your next event.





bration? Carnicería Michoacán has you covered, call 425-640-5244. And stick around for winter because you don't want to miss out on their seasonally fresh, homemade tamales! Carnicería Michoacán carries groceries and products you simply can't find elsewhere. They recently started carrying products from South America. Stop by and take a look!

The best thing about being a mercado is that they're a small business and they actually get the chance to get to know their customers and community. The Romeros love Cinco de Mayo. Everyone goes out to drink, eat good Mexican food, and have a great time.



USA & Mexico

Music and dance have always been strong cultural touchstones in Mexico. Each state has its own dance and dance costume, honoring its origins and regional uniqueness. Many musicians, artists and actors have found success on either side of the border, adding more collaborative layers to both nations.

Trade and industry have long been shared between

the USA and Mexico: goods, services, and labor to name a few. It would be almost impossible to imagine how either country would have developed without the deals and treaties that have been signed and shared since both countries grew to power.

One of the struggles encountered by both countries is that of communication. Where many immigrants or visitors do have some functional skill in the other language, it is surprising still that many North Americans have little to no knowledge of Spanish, even though Mexico lies right along the southern border. Approximately 43 million people in the US speak Spanish as their first language, while 12 million people are bilingual, The United States is the second-largest Spanish-speaking nation on Earth, after Mexico, and is estimated to become the largest by 2050.

Don't forget the Tequila at Total Wine & More

You've heard of professional wine tasters. You've likely heard of professional whiskey tasters. Heck, you've probably even heard of professional beer tasters.

But have you ever heard of professional tequila tasters?

It's not out of the realm of possibility. In fact, at Total Wine & More in Lynnwood, it's reality...and just in time for Cinco de Mayo!

Their slogan, "Providing consumers with what they deserve: Service, Selection, Price" is more than just a motto to Assistant Manager and expert tequila taster Travis Tripeny; it's a way of life. One of the best things about the job are the customers.

"It's fun talking and being with them and giving them an experience...because everything here is someone's artwork," Tripeny said.

And speaking of the experience, Total Wine & More employees are full-service professionals.

"We help customers through the whole experience of purchasing alcohol," Tripeny said. "We do a lot of hands-on training and tasting to be able to give recommendations and share knowledge about the alcohol we sell."

Which is perfecto since we could all use some expert advice about tequila for Cinco de Mayo...and Tripeny is the man for the job!

First off, you gotta know what kind of tequila you want. A quality bottle of tequila will run you \$60 plus, according to Tripeny, and then there are different types.

Blanco tequila has citrus and agave flavors and is clear and double-distilled in a copper pot.

Next is reposado tequila. It is aged for 2-12 months and is typically aged in an oak barrel, like French oak, e.g., Añejo is the darkest and is aged 1+ years.

The older the tequila, the more it takes on the characteristics and color of the barrel. Caramel, butter-scotch, vanilla, or smoke from a charred barrel, like with bourbon, whiskey or scotch.

The exception to this rule is cristalino tequila. It's twice filtered in charcoal which filters out dark colors leaving a clear tequila like blanco yet retaining the dark flavors of reposado and añejo. Cristalino accentuates sweeter flavors like vanilla, cinnamon, or chocolate but removes the harsher tones found in other aged tequila.

Some tequilas are aged up to 10 years, and those run a little on the premium side. One brand runs up to \$2200 per bottle!

Certain brands run higher than others for a few reasons. Some are legacy-tier brands. Some have a dedicated social media following which drives their popularity and celebrity endorsements help, too. But it's also the quality. Aging comes into play and sometimes the casks a brand uses to age the tequila are rare or for a limited time only.

There are many ways to drink tequila and one brand Tripeny recommends is El Padrino. You can drink El Padrino neat (which is straight), chilled, with soda water and a squeeze of lime, or in a cocktail.

Another way to enjoy tequila is with mixers. Tripeny recommends Los Cabos as it offers several different flavors. You can drink Los Cabos over ice and have yourself a great teasing ready-made margarita, in no time!

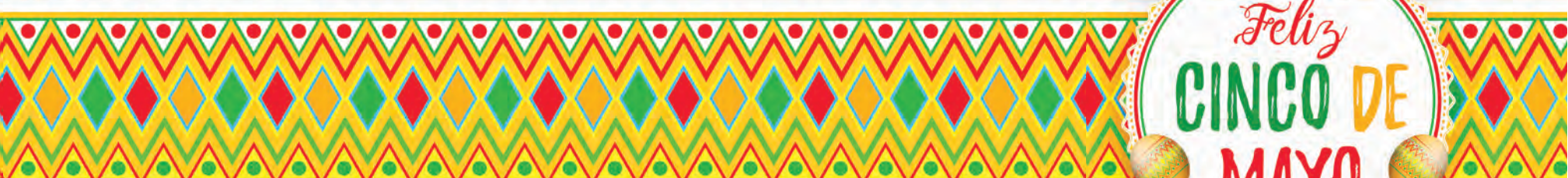
So hop on over to Total Wine & More, meet Tripeny, and don't forget to grab some tequila this Cinco de Mayo!

Feliz Cinco de Mayo

The United States and Mexico have much in common. Our shared struggles, our resolved (and successful) fights for independence from colonial powers, our complex and proud cultures, and our rich heritage have brought us to a 21st Century cultural crossroads of sorts.

This Cinco de Mayo, let us celebrate the opportunity to meet our future challenges and victories together. Let us stand together not just as neighbors across a shared border, but as one American people.

¡Felizidades, amigos míos – que les vaya muy bien!



Pursuit NW church to Health District, “We ain’t cancelling church!”

By KIENAN BRISCOE

Snohomish, Wash. – The Pursuit NW, located in the city of Snohomish, received a 14-page letter from the Snohomish Health District on February 22 warning the church of potential prosecution by the Washington State Attorney General’s Office for complaints that it was violating the Governor’s Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery proclamation orders.

In the letter, the Snohomish Health District stated that, “The Pursuit NW continues to neglect following Governor Inslee’s Proclamation 20-25.4 and associated COVID-19 requirements for safe operation of religious and faith-based services.”

The letter did not specify what requirements were allegedly violated but did provide in detail the requirements for what it defined as a safe operation of religious and faith-based services.

At the time of the letter, the city of Snohomish, including the county of Snohomish was under Phase 2 restrictions that limit indoor services to 25% capacity or 200 persons. Penalties for violating the order include fines and criminal prosecution.

The Pursuit NW Response

Pastor Russell Johnson of The Pursuit NW responded with a YouTube video, published March 7, defiantly challenging the warning stating, “We ain’t cancelling church!”

In the video he declares that the first amendment protects the right to assemble for worship and practice faith.

“How can we go from a county that values religious freedom to having a government that now micromanages religious gatherings,” asked Pastor Johnson in video.

He stated that he trusts the science but not politicians as they tend to lust for power, control, and authority. Pastor Johnson then defiantly proclaimed in the video, “This coordinated campaign of intimidation and harassment against this church will not work.”

As of April 22, the video has over 10,000 views, 527 likes, and 76 dislikes.

Pastor Johnson founded The Pursuit NW church six years ago as part of a fellowship Christian assembly. Johnson stated he received multiple letters from the Department of Health threatening the following: the loss of the building’s liability insurance, fines, lawsuits, and criminal penalties to include time in the county jail.

There has been no correspondence from any state agency since the release of the YouTube video.

“I sensed that they were waging a campaign of intimidation against the church and my reaction was that we weren’t going to shut down,” Johnson told the Lynnwood Times. “We weren’t going to give in.”

Pastor Russell Johnson

Pastor Russell Johnson standing with his congregation. Source: We Ain’t Cancelling Church YouTube video.



Congregation at The Pursuit NW church in the city of Snohomish. Source: The Pursuit NW.



Pastor Russell Johnson standing with his congregation. Source: We Ain’t Cancelling Church YouTube video.

Johnson, born and raised in Seattle before moving to the city of Snohomish about ten years ago with his family. He has ministered for about the same number of years and has an undergraduate degree from Seattle Bible College and currently undergoing a Ph.D. at Northwest University.

Although Johnson has been on the staff of other churches, The Pursuit NW is the first he has ministered as senior pastor. The church is located in a refurbished J.C. Penny building at 265 Pine Avenue in Snohomish.

“I think it’s time for free people to act as if they are free people... We’re hoping this act of courage will spur on other people,” Johnson said.

The Pursuit NW COVID-19 Precautions

Johnson is unaware of any COVID-19 outbreaks within Pursuit Church and according to the Snohomish Health District’s letter there hasn’t been any reported cases.

However, in September 2020 there were two confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus 2019 (SARS-CoV2) detected among staff of The Pursuit NW Child Care/Pre-school. The childcare services were ended voluntarily by the church and both of the confirmed cases have since recovered.

Currently the church provides hand sanitizer and continues to cleanse its facilities to mitigate against COVID-19 transmission. Masks remain optional yet these are provided for attendees.

“I’m not anti-mask but I’m anti big government mandating adult health decisions...It’s not the government’s

role to determine what is and what is not essential,” Johnson said.

The Pursuit NW continues to host about 1,200 churchgoers every Sunday morning. Over the last year, Johnson speculates the church has grown 30-40%. Letters of support from other places of worship around the country as well as some hate mail and death threats have been received but he remains undeterred.

“Every church will have to make their own decision. This is not about me trying to tell people how to live their lives. But for me, in order to be true to my values and my conscious, this is a decision I had to make for my community,” Johnson told the Lynnwood Times.

The Pursuit NW church offers three services, nine, ten-thirty, and noon with the ten-thirty service offered as an online streaming service for those who want to remotely participate. Communion, baptisms, and choir all continue to be carried out.

Snohomish Mayor John Kartak

“I really appreciate Pastor Russell Johnson’s words when he says if a percentage of a church is allowed to gather, a church is not allowed to gather,” Snohomish Mayor John Kartak told the Lynnwood Times.

He continued, “When it comes to emergencies, I understand that the governor, and his or her agencies, have broad powers for safety purposes and I respect that. But after a year has gone by and the state legislature has had ample opportunity to hold emergency meetings to critique the governor’s orders,

which suspend civil liberties, I find that appalling and I find that a dereliction of duty on behalf of the legislative branch.”

Mayor Kartak has attended the church personally and describes it as “amazingly wonderful.” Aside from the service, The Pursuit NW, according to Mayor Kartak, continues to be an asset to the community holding community events at its expense, engaging in social help, and even paying off the student lunch debt for Emerson Elementary which is a school known for its low-income, high Latino immigrant enrollment.

According to Mayor Kartak, Pastor Johnson continually asks what he and his church can do for the community of Snohomish.

“The state constitution is very clear. Right after the preamble...it explains in article one, section one, the purpose for why Government exists. And that is to protect individual liberty. That’s what I’ve sworn an oath to uphold. I’m a man of my word. When I make an oath, I keep it,” Mayor Kartak said.

Washington State Attorney General

As of right now, the Attorney General’s Office and local prosecutors have no intention to pursue any charges. The Attorney General’s Office provided the following statement to the Lynnwood Times regarding any further action against The Pursuit NW.

“We have received complaints and have sent letters to the church, as well [as] notifications to the state. Our focus throughout the pandemic has been on education and knowledge sharing, unless there are cases confirmed and more measures are needed.

“Given that we have no evidence of ongoing transmission in the building, such measures beyond education and outreach are not warranted at this time.

“Most businesses, organizations and faith-based groups in Snohomish County are taking the right steps to protect their patrons and employees. It is our hope that with the case numbers rising and the emergence of more transmissible variants, that these groups who haven’t been following all the regulations come together so we can put COVID behind us.”

Snohomish County braces for the May 3 evaluation which may result in the county reverting back to Phase 2 restrictions by Friday, May 7.

Currently, Snohomish County is in Phase 3 which restricts religious services to an indoor maximum of 50% capacity or 400 persons. Governor Jay Inslee on April 9 updated and clarified the criteria for counties to stay in Phase 3 of the state’s Healthy Washington pandemic reopening plan. Counties now must fail both metrics for case counts and hospitalizations to be downgraded a phase level.

The current data point for new COVID cases as of April 24 is 223 per 100,000 population over 14 days which exceeds the 200 per 100,000 population threshold. The new hospitalizations per 100,000 population for the week ending April 24 is 5.3.

Snohomish County likely to revert to Phase 2 in May

By **MARIO LOTMORE**

Snohomish County, Wash., April 28, 2021 – As Snohomish County braces for the May 3 evaluation, metrics indicate that the county will likely revert back to Phase 2 restrictions by May 7.

Case counts and hospitalizations have been rising in Snohomish County increasing the likelihood to revert back to Phase 2 despite the allocation of 564,265 vaccines of which 202,662 residents have been fully vaccinated as of April 20.

“A rollback to Phase 2 is unacceptable,” Snohomish County Councilman Nate Nehring provided in a statement to the Lynnwood Times. “We keep hearing that much of the spread of COVID-19 is happening through indoor gatherings at private residences; if that is the case, there is no reason to further restrict our local restaurants and businesses which have been working in good faith to keep their customers safe. Furthermore, with vaccinations now widely available the state should be looking to reduce restrictions rather than impose more stringent ones.”

On March 22, 2021, a third phase of the Healthy Washington – Roadmap to

Recovery plan took effect across Washington state. Under the plan, counties are individually evaluated every three weeks. Large and small counties have different sets of appropriate criteria based on case counts and hospitalizations. In order to move down one phase a county must fail both metrics for case counts and hospitalizations.

In Snohomish County, the current data point for new COVID cases as of week ending April 24 is 223 per 100,000 population over 14 days which exceeds the 200 per 100,000 population threshold and a 51% increase when compared to three weeks ago.

Hospitalizations have also been rising. The new hospitalizations per 100,000 population for the week ending April 24 (latest reported value) is 5.3 up from 1.7 on March 20. The provisional (not finalized) value is 6.3 for reported cases as of April 26.

“We are now within a fourth wave,” local health officer Dr. Chris Spitters said in his April 27 COVID-19 briefing. “Those are all north of the threshold of 5 hospitalizations per 100,000 per week. So that clicks both of the parameters the state uses to monitor the return to recovery making it likely

that we will be asked to move back to Phase 2 next week.”

Impact of Reverting to Phase 2

Establishments that were allowed to operate at a 50% capacity will revert back to a maximum capacity of 25%. No sporting tournaments will be allowed under Phase 2 restrictions.

According to Heather Thomas, Public & Government Affairs Manager with the Snohomish Health District, schools are separate from the Roadmap to Recovery framework and hence, it will be up to each district how it will operate if Snohomish County were to revert to Phase 2 next week.

Edmonds School District, Everett Public Schools and Lake Stevens School District confirmed that in-person instruction will still continue unless directed otherwise. However, Athletics may be impacted.

Washington Education Association President, Larry Delaney, has confirmed that he doesn't see a change to current school operations if the county were to revert to Phase 2.

Unless Governor Jay Inslee and the

Washington state Department of Health revise the criterion to remain in Phase 3, the following Phase 2 restrictions will be returning:

- Social and At-Home Gathering Size — Indoor: Max 5 people from outside your household, limit 2 households.
- Social and At-Home Gathering Size — Outdoor: Max 15 people from outside your household, limit 2 households.
- Retail Stores: Maximum 25% of capacity, encourage curbside pickup
- Worship Services: Indoor maximum 25% capacity.
- Eating and Drinking Establishments: Indoor dining available 25% capacity.
- Gyms: Indoor maximum 25% capacity.
- Outdoor Sports: Low, moderate, and high-risk sports competitions allowed (no tournaments), maximum 200 including spectators.
- Indoor Entertainment Establishments: Maximum 25% capacity or 200 people, whichever is less.
- Outdoor Entertainment Establishments: Groups of 15, limit 2 households per group, maximum 200 including spectators for events.

Reed Baldwin, a lifelong learner, talented musician and machinist

By **ERIN FREEMAN**

Mill Creek, Wash- Reed Baldwin was a lifelong learner, a gifted musician, and a machinist “who was one of those people in the background being brilliant,” says mother Connie Baldwin.

On April 1, 2021, Baldwin died in a fatal motor vehicle collision on Bothell- Everett Highway. He was 22 years old.

Following their son's passing, the Baldwin had an abundance of people reaching out asking how they could best provide support to them, offering meal trains, flowers, and housekeeping assistance.

“People wanted to know what we needed, but how do you know what you need in an unimaginable situation? We didn't want people's kindness to go without being appreciated fully,” said Baldwin.

Three days after his death, the family set up a fundraiser to raise money for a scholarship and grant fund on his behalf, recognizing that people's kindness could be funneled into an initiative that would have a lasting impact. Within two weeks, the community had raised almost \$55,000.

“It took off like wildfire, and it's become this beautiful expression of how people felt about my son and how they feel about our family,” said Baldwin. “In such a dark time, it's become a source of joy to see this fund grow and know it represents something tangible and positive.”

The Reed Baldwin Redfellowship is an annual scholarship and grant program aimed at honoring the inclusive atmospheres that Jackson High School's Band and Robotics programs provided Reed as a student. The scholarship is available to those who make their band or robotics community a better experience

for all through infectious and inclusive energy, creative perspective, and intuitive or mechanical skills- as Baldwin did; for those who believe that the group's success is more important than their individual spotlight.

“We chose that name after the professional musical name he chose for himself (Redfellow), with a nod to the great energy, laughter, creativity, and inclusive fellowship he gave to others,” explained Baldwin. “These are two incredible communities. We thought let's create a scholarship for the Reeds of the world in their future academic goals.”

A \$1000 scholarship will be awarded to one student per program every year for 20 years, with applicants having 500 words to express how they have helped others feel welcome or encouraged their band or robotic program peers to view information through a new perspective. The remaining funds will create grants to fund significant contributions to the music and robotics programs at Gateway Middle School and Jackson High School where Baldwin's mother said he found a community of friends that appreciated him and band directors who inspired him.

Reed played alto sax, bass guitar and the piano, participating in Gateway Middle School and Jackson High School band and Jazz bands for seven years. After high school he taught himself the production side of the music business and gained a reputation for having “a great ear” for beats and sound mixing, said Baldwin. He also produced a hip-hop album called “Peppermint”. Following graduation, he worked as a machinist at Birdwell Machine in the city of Everett.

In 2020, Baldwin was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, and seeking treatment changed his life said his mother, who wished to share her son's journey to encourage others to ask for help.



Reed Baldwin plays the guitar for senior graduation photos. Photo courtesy of Connie Baldwin.

“It was like a switch was flipped,” she shared. “It's a gift to yourself, it's a gift for the people who love you. This tragedy would be twice as sad if he hadn't had these last four months of happiness.”

Jackson High School students may apply for the Reed Baldwin Redfel-

lowship Scholarship by visiting EPS-Foundation.org. If you wish to make a direct donation to the scholarship fund, text ‘EPSF’ to 243-275 and type Reed Baldwin in the comment box or go to this link: <https://gofund.me/00b6905b>.

Farmer Frog works to relocated after County dispute

By ERIN FREEMAN

Woodinville, Wash.- Following a land lease dispute between Snohomish County and a non-profit organization that switched from its normal operations to provide emergency hunger relief during the COVID-19 pandemic, a solution is now in the works.

At the end of February, Farmer Frog was directed to relocate from its 3-acres in Woodinville's Paradise Valley Conservation Area Parking and Trail Head to the Evergreen State Monroe Fairground's Pygmy Goat and Sheep Barns or cease its emergency response hunger relief operation.

Before the coronavirus hit, Farmer Frog operated as a farm and education center promoting and teaching sustainable and community-based urban farming. When the coronavirus pandemic hit while preparing for harvest last spring, the non-profit organization began receiving requests from high-risk people for emergency food distribution assistance.

"From there it grew and expanded," said Szabolcs Pasztor, Director of Administration for Farmer Frog.

They now serve approximately two million Snohomish and King County residents through 700 partnerships. The operation assists all the Tribes of Washington State, Tribal governments and Tribal communities, governments and government agencies, veteran groups, low-income and section 8 housing, food banks, food drives, faith-based organizations, pop-up events, and community-based organizations.

Tom Teigen, Director of the Snohomish County Department of Conservation and Natural Resources said in a March 2 statement that while the county applauds the efforts, their operations have expanded to a scale beyond the capacity of their leased site, providing a potential environmental threat to the conservation area.



The floor at Farmer Frog. Photo courtesy of Zsafia Pasztor.

"Farmer Frog's current use of a shared parking area for heavy trucking operations is not included in their lease and has never been authorized by the county," said Teigen. "This heavy truck use is also incompatible with salmon restoration needs of this area. Farmer Frog's continued use of the Paradise Valley Conservation Area for an industrial operation without written authorization or permits is unsustainable and places additional risks on them and the county."

On February 21, Farmer Frog published a study analyzing the county's relocation request, finding that it would limit food assistance during the pandemic, with hundreds of organizations limited to food bank distributors, including all the Tribes of Washington State and most of the BIPOC and Veteran communities.

In March, legal representatives for both parties met privately, arranging to let Farmer Frog operations commence as is until a solution was found.

Pasztor says that one of the most harmful components within the relocation conversation was Snohomish County's

legal documents classifying their food recipients as "poor and infirm."

"When the county was using their language to describe the BIPOC community and the other recipients we serve, they described them as poor and infirm."

In response, Farmer Frog started a social media campaign called #richandstrong in direct counter to the county's legal language.

"We're sharing with the world how strong our food recipients are and how rich and strong our team members are, who are reflective of the community we serve," said Pasztor.

Through the campaign, they've gathered the different flags of the countries and communities that team members and recipients associate with. They will be hanging hundreds of the flags around the parameter of the Farmer Frog property, "so when someone drives in, they see how rich and strong we are," said Pasztor.

As of April 24, Farmer Frog is in the planning phase of finding a plot of land to relocate to that is still in an acces-

sible location for its food recipients. They're hoping to stay along the Snohomish County and King County border.

The new emergency food operation center will be dubbed a Hunger Relief Hub, focusing on preparing food for partner distribution in an appropriate environment.

Zsafia Pasztor, Executive Co-Director of Farmer Frog, says they need a space where they can establish a small commercial kitchen supporting partner organizations that need to prepare food for their clients before distribution.

"Here at Farmer Frog, any time there's any kind of barrier, we see the opportunity to make something bigger," said Pasztor.

Farmer Frog says that they asked Snohomish County to collaborate with them on this relocation, as they interpret that leadership understands the need. However, in a letter from the county sent in February, they stated that they weren't qualified to help relocate their food distribution.

"They don't feel as though their team can help us find a suitable solution," said Szabolcs Pasztor. "We're really hoping that the county can change its mind to support the community."

When asked to elaborate on not being equipped to collaborate on the relocation effort, Rose Intveld, Spokesperson for Snohomish County Parks, Recreation and Tourism told the Lynnwood Times that, "no matter the value of their work, Farmer Frog must abide by their legal obligations."

"The county cannot allow them to use land outside of their lease and in a manner that is detrimental to conservation requirements," Intveld continued. "The county will continue to work with Farmer Frog on finding a suitable location for their operations and continue to collaborate with Farmer Frog on efforts to relocate."

Local homemade birdbaths would make a great Mother's Day gift



By ERIN FREEMAN

A Lynnwood resident found a unique way to grow closer to her community during the coronavirus pandemic- crafting and selling homemade birdbaths.

Last spring, when nearly everything shut down across the state following a stay-at-home order, Marilyn Blackburn found herself looking for things to do.

She settled on an idea; drawing inspiration from a project she came across online, where someone was making birdbaths out of glass dishes.

"I thought that was cool, but I like color, so I wanted to use dishes with color, rather than clear glass," Blackburn said.

Blackburn began visiting her local thrift stores, securing colorful pottery to assemble into birdbaths. When they began to crowd her yard, she figured she would sell them to her community.

"I started just going out and looking for the brightest and craziest colors I could find," she said. "I was just having so much fun making them, and I looked around my yard and I thought 'we have way too many birdbaths'."

In the spring of 2020, Blackburn had sold 98 birdbaths. She's made 55 in 2021, as of April 14. Each is priced at \$65. If a person wants a fountain-style birdbath, Blackburn sells solar spray fountain attachments separately for approximately \$20.

"I also sometimes make custom birdbaths for people who want a specific color combination, which is fun to understand what they are looking for and create something that matches their image," she said.

Blackburn attributes last year's success to pandemic-induced restrictions, with fewer people visiting traditional shopping spaces. Her yard of birdbaths provided community members a safe and unique

way to shop.

"I always have at least a dozen of them lined up along my picket fence for people to shop outdoors in a COVID safe environment."

The community took to the birdbaths, providing Blackburn with a lot of thoughtful feedback regarding how colorful and lovely they are and what a good gift they make. She says that people sometimes even drop by to leave pottery for her on the front porch.

The birdbaths have become a popular gift for Mother's Day due to the unique nature and longevity.

"Everybody can go to the store and get the same things- the flowers, the candy- but no two of these are the same, so if you want to do something different for mom," she said. "It's not gone after she eats the candy or the flowers die, she can enjoy this for a long time."

"There's never two that are the same because each piece I find is unique," Blackburn added.

Blackburn updates community members about which birdbaths are in her inventory daily on Nextdoor, Facebook Marketplace and Offerup.

CANNABIS AND THE COMMUNITY

Standing with the AAPI and other communities against hate



BY JOSH ESTES, PACIFIC NW REGIONAL STRATEGIES, LLC
SPONSORED FEATURE

Navigating the complex and constantly changing recommendations from the Federal, State and Local authorities has become a full-time position. The pandemic has forced many of us to change course, try new things, and apply for new jobs in new industries. With record sales in the cannabis industry during the past year, Washington state continues to generate consistent revenue from sales of the

plant. Many local cannabis retailers have used these dollars to support the local community.

After all, it is the local community that the cannabis industry interacts with and serves every day. The people of the community are not only retail cannabis customers. They are also employees, friends and family. It is in this very same community that the employees of retail cannabis stores live and contribute to the local economy.

Simply put, “Cannabis is Community” and for this month’s column I would like to bring awareness to the increasingly hateful and harmful rhetoric that is plaguing our nation.

The recent increase of horrific and senseless acts of hate, targeted at the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities has generated significant outpourings of support from across the country.

Locally, in Snohomish County there have been a number of events and rallies aimed at denouncing hate. Each socially-distanced, in-person gathering for unity, has drawn on average more than 100 supporters and speakers. I had the privilege of attending both the Bellevue and Edmonds rallies against hate and I was inspired by the words of the many speakers in attendance.

The message that “Hate has no home here,” was very clearly received and has been carried to other communities including recent rallies in Mountlake Terrace, Everett, Mukilteo and others. Additional efforts to raise anti-hate and racism awareness are also taking place across the county.

The city of Lynnwood has recently issued a proclamation to “Stand Against Racism,” and the Leadership Snohomish County program is hosting its annual “Step Up Conference, to Move Racial Equity Forward.”

Step Up, offers a variety of workshops for people with diverse interests and different levels of knowledge and experiences. A variety of solution-based workshops cover a variety of topics including how to address institutional racism, implicit bias, and microaggressions.

Attendees will also explore decolonization of education, the intersection of race and LGBTQIA people, systems change, and more. This year’s program will be held virtually on April 30, 2021 from 8am to 5pm. To learn more about the event or to register, visit www.leadershipsc.org.

Cannabis retailers across the state employ a diverse group of people from many backgrounds. It is not uncommon to find multiple languages spoken at a retailer. I was recently in a retail store in Mukilteo that had four different language translations offered to customers, including Russian, Spanish, French and Japanese. Some of these stores are also event sponsors of the Step-Up Conference, including two retailers who operate in the unincorporated areas of Lynnwood.

The Cannabis Community values diversity and understands the importance of standing with those in the AAPI community, and all communities that are the targets of senseless hate.

If we are going to stop hate in all forms, we must be unified and we have to speak out as one voice. I encourage you to attend an AAPI event in your community, use your voice to raise awareness and denounce hate!

Safety, a top priority to Sound Transit



By KIENAN BRISCOE

In a study conducted by Morgan Neiss, Department of Economics at the University of Akron, in 2015, it was found that public transportation affects crime rates in neighborhoods surrounding its implementation.

“It can give criminals easier access to potential targets and decrease the probability of getting caught” according to Neiss, Morgan (2015) “Does Public Transit Affect Crime?” The Journal of Economics and Politics: Vol. 22 : Iss. 1 , Article 3.

However, given Sound Transit’s crime history, John Gallagher, Public Information Officer for Sound Transit, assures that with the opening of the Lynnwood station in 2024 there is nothing to worry about.

“Riding Link and using Link stations is very, very, safe. The safety and security of passengers is Sound Transit’s top priority which is the focus of multiple levels of staffing and investments”, Gallagher said.

Security begins with the designs of the facilities. Stations are designed with ample lighting and consideration of maintaining lines of sight within passenger areas. They have security cameras, as well as alarms that passengers can trigger in an emergency. Sound Transit also makes significant investments in security staffing, employing uniformed guards who patrol stations and trains, and fare checkers aboard the trains who also provide watchful eyes.

Sound Transit also maintains a force of uniformed police officers contracted from the King County Sheriff’s Department who patrol facilities. They have \$40.4 million budgeted this year for security and law enforcement, which will only grow as new stations - like Lynnwood - open, according to Gallagher.

“We have not yet identified the specific budget that will be in place when the Lynnwood extension opens,” Gallagher said.

Both Sound Transit’s law enforcement officers and security work in close partnership with local law enforcement. There are already strong lines of communication in place with the Lynnwood Police Department, whose offi-

cers already maintain a presence at and around the existing Lynnwood Transit Center.

In 2019 there were 225 property crimes and 64 violent crimes on Sound Transit vehicles and property. Of the property crimes, more than half (117) were trespassing and vandalism. The majority of the violent crimes (44) were assaults, mostly disputes among passengers.

In 2020 there were 218 property crimes, of which 171 were trespassing and vandalism. There were 58 violent crimes, of which 47 were assaults, according to Gallagher.

Link served 26 million riders in 2019.

“The Neiss study isn’t really applicable to the Lynnwood Link extension in that a bus line with 58 stops in a dense urban area isn’t comparable to a light rail line running through largely suburban areas with three new stops over eight miles. In addition, the Lynnwood Transit Center already is a transit hub, not a new one,” Gallagher said of the Neiss study.

When the light rail to Lynnwood opens in 2024, it will connect Seattle and Snohomish County residents to numerous destinations across a 62-mile light rail system—nearly triple the 22 miles operating today—that is linked to bus and Sounder services.

Later voter-approved light rail extensions are planned to increase the Link system to 116 miles, providing fast, frequent and congestion-free travel. Benefits in Snohomish County will be particularly noteworthy, with its I-5 corridor being one of the most congested in the nation.

Riding Link from Lynnwood to downtown Seattle will take just 27 minutes, which will save passengers hours every week compared to sitting in traffic.

The environmental benefits of light rail, powered entirely by electrically from sustainable sources, are also huge in a state where transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. The ST2 initiative, passed by voters in 2008, estimated that the expanded transit projects would result in a savings of more than 138,000 metric tons of CO2 annually, (ST 2 includes Lynnwood Link, Federal Way Link and East Link.) according to Gallagher.





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Gimme a Break!

C'mon man, what do you mean you don't smoke crack?

By CHAD LEE

I was half joking when I noted in my December article that Washington's progressive rivalry with Oregon would lead the Evergreen State to push for de facto decriminalization of hard drugs.

If you thought that there's no way in hell that our elected officials would be so detached from the everyday Washingtonian simply trying to survive the COVID-19 pandemic, support their families or enjoy retirement...well, I got a wooden horse to offer you.

State Senator Manka Dhingra's (D-Redmond) Engrossed Senate Bill 5476 decriminalizing hard drugs like heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine in Washington state passed April 25. The State House passed it 80-18 and the State Senate passed it 26-23.

The bill comes on the heels of Oregon's Election Day passing of Measure 110. The measure, which took effect February 1, 2021, decriminalized personal possession amounts of ALL hard drugs in the Beaver State. The Washington/Oregon rivalry over who's more progressive keeps getting better and better...dare I say higher and higher?

When this bill becomes law, I foresee multitudes of Tyrone Biggums from *Chappelle's Show* sauntering up and down Aurora Ave. Well, at least more than usual.

But wait, there's more. What makes this bill even better is what Senate

Democratic leadership snuck in. ESB 5476 includes a declaration of emergency which robs Washington voters of the right to use the referendum process to repeal the bill. For the life of me, I can't understand why they snuck that little declaration of emergency in there. So much for being champions of democracy and letting the people's voices be heard!

What our elected representatives have created is a vicious circle that erases any incentive for offenders to seek treatment ensuring that offenders become repeat offenders, destroying accountability and a never-ending cycle of hard drug abuse. It's basically Catch and Release, but for hard drug abusers.

Isn't Washington already in the midst of a narcotic Golden Age?

There's no doubt that the illicit hard drug market will thrive and the number of dealers in the Greater Seattle Area will increase exponentially when Governor Inslee signs the bill into law.

Reasonable Washingtonians agree that de facto decriminalization of hard drugs will escalate the existing epidemic and bring irrevocable harm to our communities. Hard drugs are addictive substances for a reason: they ruin lives, families, and society in general. Decriminalization of hard drugs isn't progress, more like inevitable regression into societal psychopathy.

Just look at the opioid epidemic. According to a January 2020 press

release from Attorney General Bob Ferguson's office, between 2006 and 2017, opioid overdoses killed more than 8,000 Washingtonians, more than were killed by car accidents or firearms.

Remember: opioids are legal; heroin isn't. Talk about making a bad problem worse...yet our elected officials voted to escalate the death count by decriminalizing ALL hard drugs?

Gimme a Break!

In Snohomish County alone, heroin killed 147 people from 2016-2018. In that same two-year span, heroin killed 886 Washingtonians statewide. You may think that number is relatively insignificant but feel free to tell the families of the deceased that.

Call me crazy, but I'd rather not have my own neighborhood resemble (or smell like) 4th and Pine, overrun with tweakers and sleepers. I know that crackheads are part and parcel of the downtown experience (thanks, Seattle politicians) but it's not one we want in our Snohomish County neighborhoods where families reside.

Politicians play with our lives while we and our families are stuck being guinea pigs in their trite, little social experiments while they observe safely from the comfort of their uptown bourgeois neighborhoods or remote country residences.

This bill is a win for Democrats but surely, SURELY the Washington State Republican Party fought tooth and nail to prevent this?

Although no Senate Republicans voted for ESB 5476, 26 House Republicans lost their damn minds by voting for it. Were House Republicans so rapaciously eager to be "woke" that they conveniently forgot what they stand for?

So much for your commitment to "family values," House Republicans! Or were you so grossly negligent in your legislative duties that you simply voted for the bill without reading it? It certainly sounds like you did! You must have Nancy Pelosi on speed dial.

I wonder if Sen. Dhingra would be alright with her family members snorting cocaine or shooting up meth? Tell me, would a good mother allow that? But, hey, if it's okay for other parents' kids to use hard drugs, Dhingra must be okay with it for her family!

It's quite ironic that Dhingra's campaign slogan was "Strengthening Communities." But, who cares? If it's not her community being destroyed, it's fine. Better us than her, I suppose.

I applaud the three House and three Senate Democrats for bucking their party and voting against such a fecklessly dangerous experiment.

As a proud UW alumnus, I always cheer on my Huskies when they play the Ducks. But in this Washington/Oregon rivalry over who can out-decriminalize hard drugs, I don't want the Evergreen State to win.

Moreover, it's a battle that both states will eventually lose.

Gimme a Break: *Thought-provoking humorous insight for the reader on the run brought to you by Chad Lee.*

The views and opinions expressed by Chad Lee are those of the author's and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Lynnwood Times. Any content provided by our bloggers or authors are of their opinion and are not intended to malign any religion, ethnic group, club, organization, company, individual or anyone or anything.

Jim Smith announces run for City of Lynnwood Mayor



Vice President, Smith has been the Chairman of the Snohomish County Health Board, Founder and President of the Lynnwood Chamber of Commerce, President of the Washington Pilots Association, personally produced and financed Lynnwood Christmas tree lighting for 13 years, and much more.

Ditching Plastic Feels Fantastic!

"Each plastic campaign sign is equivalent to about 480 plastic straws" according to Smith. "Campaign signs clutter our roadways and our landfills. Our campaign is committed to NO PLASTIC SIGNS! Your vote for our campaign will send a message that you don't need a kazillion plastic signs in order to win an election."

To learn more why Jim Smith would be the best choice for mayor of Lynnwood, visit www.Elect-JimSmith.com.

Experience...Leadership...Vision

Lynnwood, Wash., April 20, 2020 – With over 25 years experience on the Lynnwood Council Jim Smith has announced his intention to file for mayor of Lynnwood. Smith has stated that his focus from day one will be to:

- Back off of the maxed out Lynnwood taxes
- Reduce street homelessness and drug use
- Make Lynnwood safe for ALL residents

There is no other candidate in this race that has more experience, been more dedicated to their community, or has as many years serving local organizations in so many areas.

Lynnwood residents deserve to have their voices heard and be represented by leaders that are seasoned in the community and sensitive to their issues.

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LARSEN'S EARTH DAY MESSAGE: CONGRESS, INDUSTRY MUST ACT TO MAKE U.S. AVIATION CLEANER, GREENER



OP-ED BY CONGRESSMAN RICK LARSEN (D WA-02)

Right now, Congress is debating an historic, FDR-like investment in the nation's infrastructure to create U.S. jobs, drive economic recovery and turn the corner on having a cleaner and greener transportation system.

As chair of the House Aviation Subcommittee, I recognize that aviation and aerospace mean well-paying jobs in the Pacific Northwest and across the U.S. More than 130,000 women and men are employed by over 1,300 aerospace-related companies in my home state of Washington. But, as the world celebrates the 51st Earth Day, I also recognize aviation's contributions to climate change. The aviation and aerospace industry are responsible for 9 percent of carbon emissions in U.S. transportation, and up to 3 percent of total emissions globally. Clearly, Congress and the industry must act to reduce the sector's environmental footprint.

The U.S. aviation's response to climate change must be multifaceted. Without immediate action, the U.S. risks losing its competitive edge in

cleaner aviation technologies. In June 2019, 23 European aviation stakeholder groups, research organizations and universities signed a Joint Declaration acknowledging the Paris Agreement's goals and urging a diligent response from the aviation sector to reduce carbon emissions. Although President Biden recently signed an Executive Order to rejoin the Paris Agreement, the U.S. must make up for lost time to ensure it remains a leader in the global fight against climate change.

In addition, the FAA and EPA must continue to develop and issue guidance on aircraft design standards, emissions data collection and monitoring to meet the ambitious objectives outlined in the 2016 International Civil Aviation Organization's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSA) agreement. In December 2020, EPA finalized a rule adopting emission standards for new commercial aircraft to help put U.S. aviation manufacturers on a level playing field with manufacturers in other countries.

While much more needs to be done, progress has been made. Recent Congressional action has shown our renewed commitment to environmental stewardship, such as the House-passed Moving Forward Act, which includes new investments I championed to build resiliency, foster zero-emission technologies and develop sustainable aviation fuels (SAF). I am committed to ensuring robust funding for the FAA's Continuous Lower Energy, Emissions and Noise (CLEEN) program, which supports the advancement of SAF to move the aviation industry to reduce carbon emissions.

In Washington, the Port of Seattle is working toward achieving its goal of powering every flight fueled at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport with

at least a 10 percent blend of SAF by 2028. The Dutch airline KLM is also partnering with Microsoft to cooperate on sustainable air travel initiatives, including the purchase of SAF. To keep pace with growing demand, Congress must fully fund research and development so SAF adoption can play a larger part in reducing carbon emissions in aviation.

The future of cleaner fuels is not only in SAF. Companies like magniX in my district are developing electric propulsion systems for smaller aircraft. Further, Airbus hopes to deliver aircraft hydrogen-powered by 2035. ZeroAvia also seeks to use hydrogen as its fuel source in its proposed propulsion system. While electric and hydrogen-propulsion bring their share of limitations, I support the development of these technologies and its application to cut carbon emissions from air travel.

With newer and cleaner fuels, airports will need to invest in supporting ground infrastructure. That's why I am currently working with my colleagues on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to ensure airports have access to critical funding that would support that investment.

Another sustainable innovation concept is the growth of Advanced Air Mobility (AAM), sometimes called "air taxis." I recently met with NASA's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate who noted nearly 100 different companies are considering AAM as an opportunity to help meet environmental goals and create jobs. The carbon emission reduction opportunity tied to AAM is on the ground, moving people over traffic congestion using largely electric or hybrid-electric aircraft. As the FAA considers certification of the first air taxis this year, the industry must do more to ensure

equitable access to these services of.

When the world celebrated the first Earth Day in 1970, reducing emissions from air travel was science fiction. More than 50 years later, that is no longer the case. Public and private investment is bringing cleaner and greener aerospace technologies closer to fruition. Consumers demand the aviation industry show its commitment to fighting climate change, and while several airlines are taking some action, the traveling public expects more. However, the burden is not just on airlines. The federal government must lead through continued investment in research and development that results in, well, results. This week, the Biden administration is expected to announce a proposal to cut U.S. carbon emissions by at least 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. I support this pledge, and I also support moving the country to a net-zero carbon emission economy by 2050 at the latest.

The future of greener travel is not a choice between planes and other modes of transportation, like high-speed rail and electric buses. The U.S. can have, and the public is demanding, a cleaner and greener transportation system. Let's not wait until the 52nd Earth Day to make an aggressive and progressive investment in the nation's infrastructure to lay the runway—and the tracks, roads and bridges—for the future. The sky is the limit.

Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Everett) is Chair of the House Aviation Subcommittee and a senior member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Larsen represents Washington's Second Congressional District, which stretches from Mountlake Terrace in the south to Bellingham in the north and includes all of Island and San Juan counties.

from page 7 PA OUSMAN JOOF

ship program that will help teach them skills."

Gambian Talents Promotion has a second operating office in Africa, located in the city of Serrekunda, The Gambia. Joof says that this project and these youth programs are modeled after what he has been doing at that office in Gambia, where he is from.

These internship programs include teaching graphic and web design skills, as well as public speaking, and video shooting and editing. Youth can also study journalism, computer repair, and more.

Pa Ousman Joof: Connecting, Caring, and Leading

In addition to connecting community members with various resources, Gambian Talents Promotion has also connected members with each other. One of the Grandma's who attended Saturday's event thanked Joof for his efforts in bringing them together. "We had been disconnected," she said. "Now we are all one and the same when we didn't know each other. We thank God a lot. We never had anything like this.

We have a lot of things now thanks to Pa's efforts."

Pa Ousman Joof's wife, Amy, also spoke about her husband's great efforts, saying how he cares for the community in the same way he cares for his family. "He is always taking care of us," she says. "What he has been doing for the community he started with his family. He takes great care of us. He is always committed to providing for his family."

Lynnwood Councilwoman Julieta Altamorano-Crosby, who was also in attendance at the Sukuri Ndogu event, spoke about Joof's leadership. "It's amazing," she said. "One thing that he mentioned that he emphasized a lot is to keep the culture and keep the identity and the language so they developed a lot of programs that focus on those three core values you know."

"He cares a lot about the Grandmas because of all the language barriers," she continued. "So the grandmas teach to the kids the culture and he teaches [the youth] photography and how to edit different things so he prepares them."

Councilwoman Altamorano-Crosby also mentioned that she had spoken with Joof about the youth in communities of color. "We are more at risk of



"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom"
--- Aristotle

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youth joining gangs," she said, "and he doesn't want that to happen. So that's the reason he cares a lot about the community. He is very active and he's really a true leader."
Partnerships

Joof says that "right now Snohomish County is our key partner," but Gambian Talent Promotions also partners and coordinates with many other community organizations such as the City of Lynnwood and the Islamic Center of Puget Sound.

Other organizations that work or partner with Gambian Talent Promotions include Group Health Foundation, Community Transit, Philanthropic Northwest, Building Changes, Washington Arts, All in Washington, University of Washington Bothell, Leadership Tomorrow, Coalition of Color, and

CHANGE OF NAME

I Radha Krishnavel Chathadi R/o 5528 168th Pl SW, Lynnwood, WA 98037, USA, have changed my name to Radha Gurumurthy for all purposes.

Sno-Isle Library.

The Sukuri Ndogu event that took place this past Saturday was also aided by WaGro and the Lynnwood Foodbank, which have partnerships with Gambian Talent Promotions as well.

Gambian Talent Promotions will soon be changing its name to the Washington West African Center.

For more information visit <https://gt-promotion.org/>.

from page 2 **TROOPER MEMORIAL**

it's difficult to surmise whether the defacement had political backings.

"I was extremely disappointed someone would do the cowardly act like defacing the memorial of a local trooper who was a citizen of our community and paid the ultimate sacrifice in serving this community," Mayor Gailey said.

Mayor Gailey saw the defacement around 8:30 a.m. Sunday morning and reached out to Chief of Police John Dyer to have it removed.

"It's a memorial of a fallen law enforcement officer, and a defacement of that, and really any defacement of

someone who has passed away is a scar on the community," Chief of Police Dyer said.

A memorial service was held for Sean O'Connell the Friday his memorial bench was added, where his wife, Alissa, two kids, and Lake Stevens PD joined together to honor his memory. Due to COVID restrictions the city decided to keep the service fairly small for a select group of individuals who were close to O'Connell.

"I want to thank Mayor Gailey and the city for placing a new sign and adding a bench in [O'Connell's] honor last week," Sam Low, who was a friend and neighbor of O'Connell, said.

Low made an appearance at O'Connell's

memorial service Friday and rode in the motorcade with Washington State Patrol. On the 5-year mark of his passing, at Low's request the Lake Stevens Rotary Club granted a \$1,000 scholarship for a graduating high school senior in O'Connell's honor.

Many people flooded the community forums on social media Sunday to share their disgust of the defacement of the Lake Stevens memorial for trooper O'Connell's. Many posts from residents were offering to take it upon themselves to paint over or clean it. The defacement was cleaned off within hours of Mayor Gailey's call to Chief Dyer.

Currently, despite some social media rumors, there are no suspects and no

one has been apprehended. Two security cameras at 79th & 20th were unable to catch any suspects.

According to Mayor Gailey, what was misinterpreted as suspect apprehension by witnesses was a blue blanket over the bench, which was unraveled by O'Connell's kids. The LSP officers surrounding the unraveling were there to honor Sean during his memorial, not to apprehend suspects, according to Gailey.

"We'll continue to keep that memorial there because it's the right thing to do and it's important that our community shows support for those who protect us and that's a great way to do it," Mayor Gailey said.

from page 2 **TARGET ZERO**

with a fatality rate of 0.06%. Much of this is due to infrastructure, according to Snohomish County Councilman and member of the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission, Sam Low.

While infrastructure and addressing unsafe road conditions are core components of Target Zero, according to Low about a third of its budget focuses on the behaviors of drivers rather than road conditions.

"When you look at I-5, obviously it's heavily traveled, but it's divided so you don't have as many head-ons. The head-ons that we have on I-5 are usually from drunk drivers driving on an on-ramp the wrong way. But those are rare. Where if you look at Highway 2, we don't have the dividers," Low said.

Barriers, repaving, and widening on Highway 2 was completed between Snohomish and Monroe within the last three years, costing around \$10

million in funds. In 2022, \$17 million of funding will go towards traffic safety improvements on Highway 2 from Snohomish to Gold Bar, which involves repaving and widening but will not be enough to cover the cost of the dividers.

"There is a transportation package in Olympia, but it's the same one they've been doing for years. There's not an expanded transportation package which is what we were hoping for this year," Low said.

According to Low, there may be a special session in Olympia this summer to tackle these transportation needs. On April, 24, Senate Bill 5165 and House Bill 1135 passed the House 90-6, which allocates \$11.8 billion to transportation efforts but does not address Highway 2 improvements such as the much needed barriers.

"Fixing a roadway is easier than fixing people's behaviors," Democratic Representative, 27th Legislative District, Jake Fey, who introduced the

bill, said.

"That \$11.8 billion is basically the status-quo package. But we've been fighting for a new transportation package that would increase spending on Highway 2," Low said.

Low's preferred transportation package would cost about \$17.8 billion within the next sixteen years allowing an additional billion per year that would go to state-wide projects including work on Highway 2, 522, and a bridge connecting Vancouver to Portland.

Most of the pavement of Highway 2 has not been updated since 1998. The old pavement, which consists of ruts, crack, and potholes can fill with water, causing vehicles to slide, and possibly freeze creating ice on the asphalt.

According to Low, one of the solutions to Highway 99, which is the second most fatal road in Snohomish County partly due to its stop lights and resulting stopping and starting, is the introduction of the Light Rail System

which coincides with Target Zero's plan to reduce the traffic on roads by introducing Public Transportation alternatives.

According to Low, safe roads are just as important as driver's behaviors to mitigate collision-based fatalities. Where the Traffic Safety Commission works to the impairment and driver behavior's, the state legislature-funded road improvements work toward the effort of safer roads.

"Infrastructure projects cost more, so in terms of spending, infrastructure is probably higher. Neither however is more important or prioritized over the other, both are required and are the focus of the agencies responsible for each of these respective areas of traffic safety," Erica Stineman, Communications Consultant with the WTSC told the Lynnwood Times.

Over the next year the WTSC plans to work with partners and stakeholders to identify specific priorities and develop an implementation plan.

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