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Real News ⚡  
Real Impact

## Hundreds filled Rosehill to celebrate womanhood



13th International Women's Day hosted by Ayesha Khan, wife of Councilman Riaz Khan, on March 3, 2023. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By **MARIO LOTMORE**

**MUKILTEO**—Over 200 people from Spokane to Edmonds, British Columbia to Oregon, filled Rosehill Community Center on Friday, March 3, for 13th annual International Women's Day awards—a night celebrating the accomplishments of womanhood. The event was organized by Mukilteo resident and community organizer Ayesha Riaz Khan.

"What I am seeing from you is a spark," Ayesha told attendees in her opening remarks.

As an engaged resident of

Mukilteo, Ayesha has worked on several projects supporting refugee families, and leading the communication panel of the Islamic Center of Mukilteo as a board of director. She is the wife of Mukilteo Councilman Riaz Khan, mother of their three kids, and is a substitute teacher within the Mukilteo school district, specializing in English and history.

In our interview, Ayesha shared that coming from India, she wants other women to know there is more to being a woman than cooking, cleaning and taking care of the kids.

"So, most of the woman say af-

ter I awarded them and coming to my parties and everything, they got confidence," Ayesha told the Lynnwood Times. "They are opening their own books of poetry. A few have started going to the college, a few started running their own businesses...One said, I got confidence in speaking after I met you."

Through Ayesha's efforts, she is proud to be unlocking the hidden talents many women didn't know they possessed.

"I'm boosting their energy and I'm boosting their confidence," Ayesha said. "I really appreciated the men who came

to support their daughters, their wives, and their mothers."

Ayesha is thankful to be celebrating this year after recently having open heart surgery but shared she is passing the torch for future International Women's Day celebrations to the next generation. She will, however, continue to help others strive to be their best and volunteer in the community.

After brief speeches by the Tacoma Mayor Victoria Woodards and Mukilteo Councilman Khan, 26 women were announced, one-by-one, to receive a gold-colored plaque

with their respective name and the words, "For your outstanding contribution and support to our community. Women around the world are making a difference and you are one of them."

Achievements ranging from being pioneering leaders in their professions to their respective local communities were read aloud. The audience enjoyed songs performed by several awardees.

Demi Chatters, Vice Chair of the Snohomish County Human Rights Commission, shared

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## The Hand Up Project reeling after allegations of fraud against Founder

By **KIENAN BRISCOE**

**LYNNWOOD**—Lynnwood-based The Hand Up Project, which helps those experiencing homelessness as a result of substance abuse, officially terminated its relationship with its founder, Robert Smiley, after ongoing internal investigations exposed he allegedly pocketed thousands of dollars in contributions from individuals using the nonprofit's name and reputation.

"The evidence they had was breathtaking and overwhelming, yet irrefutable," a Board member told the Lynnwood Times in an exclusive interview.

"I know that there are a lot of people, like myself, that saw Robert's intent and admired it, approved it, and wanted to be a part of it," a second Board member added. "I can understand that this is hard news."

Since its founding in 2014, The Hand Up Project has provided outreach for homeless populations, disposed over 10,000 drug needles on public and private property, and gained admittance for detox service for over 1,000 clients. The organization has also helped over 20 clients find employment through its Open Door Program since 2021, helped residents secure Social Security and Social Security Disability Insurance through its SOAR Program, and housed a

Continued **PAGE 12** >>



SOURCE: The Hand Up Project.

# The state of Lynnwood is solid for growth into the future

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**LYNNWOOD**—Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell delivered her state of the city address on Friday, March 3, at the Lynnwood Event Center, covering a wide array of topics from public works; to public safety; to transportation, financial strength, and growth.

According to Frizzell, Lynnwood is successfully positioned for growth by securing key state and federal grants, fiscally sound with an AA+ bond rating, committed to remaining a safe place to work and play through recent ordinances and interagency partnerships, and in the process of developing a regional entertainment district within its City Center.

The Emcee for the event was Garry Clark, President and CEO of Snohomish County Economic Alliance, who kicked off the morning by reciting some poetry and acknowledging that the city resides on the native lands.

“The people matter,” said Clark. “Today you’re going to hear about why the people matter here in the city of Lynnwood.”

Also in attendance were Dr. Steve Woodard, Vice President of Community Engagement for Volunteers of America, Olympia Edwards, Founder and CEO of Project Girl, Everett Mayor Cassie Franklin, Stanwood Mayor Sid Roberts, and Lynnwood Police Chief Jim Nelson, among hundreds of others.

**LYNNWOOD CITY COUNCIL ADDRESS AND COMMUNITY RECOGNITION**

Clark then invited Lynnwood City Council Vice President Julieta Altamirano-Crosby and its President Shannon Sessions to the stage to say a few words for International Women’s Day, and recognize several women who made key contributions in community. Also in attendance was Lynnwood Councilman Jim Smith.

The women recognized include former Mayor Tina Roberts Martinez, the first woman to be elected to the Lynnwood

City Council in 1976, Salam Habte, who help immigrant families find a sense of belonging, Svetlana Spivak, a Ukrainian immigrant who decorated the newly constructed roundabout on 36th Avenue, Maria De Jesus Garcia, who works as a Family Resource Advocate in the Edmonds School District, Shawneri Guzman, South County Fire Outreach Manager, Alissa Jones, Executive Director at the Lynnwood Food Bank, and Myra Rintamaki, a Gold Star Mother who is active in supporting the city’s active duty military and veteran community.

One-by-one each of these women were brought on stage, after brief introductions, and presented a certificate by council leadership Session and Altamirano-Crosby.

“I’m so honored this year to be the council President and to have the opportunity to share with you about the wonderful city and the people who go above and beyond in making it special,” said Councilwoman Sessions to attendees. “Long before Julieta and I joined this council, we have been embedded in this community in a variety of ways and still are. Finding ways to volunteer, create meaningful public programs, and assist where our strengths can make a possible difference as mothers, [and] as women, it has always been personally important for us to serve others in this community.”

Councilwoman Sessions is serving her eighth year on the Lynnwood City Council and also her last after announcing she will not be running for reelection in 2023.

**MAYOR FRIZZELL’S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS**

Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell was introduced to the stage for the main event—the State of the City for Lynnwood.

“It’s hard to believe that the last time we held a State of the City in person in this building was all the way back in June of 2019. Back then, I was on City Council and didn’t know that I would

become Mayor of this great City that I have called home for most of my life and where I raised my two daughters,” Mayor Frizzell opened. “While we didn’t know about the devastating effects that the pandemic would have on our community, we quickly learned how incredibly resilient our community was, and how we could work together to care of one another and find ways to thrive under such unprecedented circumstances.”

Frizzell’s first major topic was growth. Lynnwood has had a long history with preparing for its future, Frizzell mentioned, dating back to 1917 with the planned community of Alderwood Manor through Legacy Lynnwood in 1993, under the leadership of then Mayor Meryl Hrdlicka. More recently the city has updated its City Center Planned Action Ordinance for environmental mitigation and efficient processing of City Center projects and is currently working on updating its comprehensive plan to guide and manage growth over the next 20 years. The comprehensive plan update is projected to reach completion by next year.

Some of the most visible progress has been around the new City Center area, as the city prepares for Link light rail opening in 2024, through an increase in mixed-use and mixed-income housing. Frizzell continued to announce that the Events Center is doubling in size as part of Lynnwood’s new entertainment district, The District, which hopes to reach completion by the 2026

World Cup soccer game at Lumen Field in Seattle.

As far as transportation goes, Mayor Frizzell, a member of both the Community Transit and Sound Transit Board of Directors, has been working hard to make way for the influx in commuters the city is expected to experience, when light rail opens next year. This includes the Scriber Creek Trail redevelopment which will present a non-motorized option for traveling to and from the future City Center station.

To mitigate traffic congestion in the city, the Poplar Way Bridge will connect Poplar Way to 196th street, over Interstate-5. To fund this project the city has been awarded a \$25 million RAISE Grant fund by the U.S. Department of Transportation, in addition to a \$15 million grant from the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board – for a total of \$40 million. The city hopes to begin construction on the bridge next year.

The Mayor quickly recognized the city’s Public Works Department for all of the good work they do—snowplowing, and clearing debris, as well as beautifying our parks – before transitioning to the topic of Public Safety.

Through two Let’s Talk About Safety events (with a third scheduled for March 30), the city has learned from community members that the city

*Continued* **PAGE 12 >>**

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**LYNNWOOD TIMES**

12918 Mukilteo Speedway C23, PMB-162 Lynnwood, WA 98087  
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**SEND LETTERS TO**  
Lynnwood Times, 12918 Mukilteo Speedway C23, PMB-162 Lynnwood, WA 98087 or email [editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com](mailto:editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com).

**LETTERS POLICY**

The Lynnwood Times welcomes letters to the editor of no more than 400 words. Letters will be printed as promptly as possible, as space allows.

To be considered for publication, letters must include a **first** and **last name**, **address** and **phone number** for verification purposes. We also reserve the right to edit letters as necessary for brevity, grammar and decorum.

# Sheriff says, ‘Fentanyl crisis is real’ at safety forum

By MARIO LOTMORE

**LYNNWOOD**—The need for School Resource Officers to return to school campuses, increasing gang-related activity, interagency communication, the Community Recovery Center, and current legislation were just a few of the gamut of topics discussed at Saturday’s forum on public safety at Gateway Hall in Edmonds College.

“What can we do and what resources are out there?” Asked by Kurt Russell, Board President of a local condominium association, whose question represented the overall theme after two and a half hours of conversation between residents and panelists.

Hosted by Snohomish County Councilman Strom Peterson with panelist Sheriff Adam Fortney and Lynnwood Police Chief James Nelson, roughly 30 residents including four Lynnwood City Councilmembers—Shannon Sessions, Shirley Sutton, George Hurst, and Jim Smith—gained an understanding to city-county boundary law enforcement coverage and the complex impact of fentanyl to public safety.

“Anecdotally, 85 percent”, Sheriff Fortney responded when asked by a resident to provide his best estimate to the proportion of drugs influencing homelessness and crime. “This fentanyl crisis is real and we need to start looking at it a little bit differently... What we are finding though is the fentanyl that is currently mixed with methamphetamine, or name your syn-



(L-R) Snohomish County Councilman Strom Peterson with panelist Sheriff Adam Fortney and Lynnwood Police Chief James Nelson on Saturday, March 4, 2023. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

thetic drug, is so strong, [most of] these people on the streets aren’t capable of making that decision [to willfully accept help].”

Fortney added later in the forum to express the potency of fentanyl, “We all carry Narcan now... with heroin it use to be one dose and you can bring somebody back [from an overdose]; now we are looking at three, four, or five doses of Narcan.”

The City of Lynnwood will be hosting a public safety forum from 6-7:30 p.m. on March 30 at Meadowdale Community Church that is located at 4900

168th St Southwest.

Residents opened last Saturday’s forum voicing their frustrations with vehicle prowls, “smash and grabs,” and trespassing by vagrants mostly near the Ash Way Park and Ride area and other parts of unincorporated Snohomish County.

“I need you to call 911 when it’s going on, so we can send teams out there,” Fortney told residents on how to initiate Office of Neighborhood resources that will walk the location and either provide help to vagrants or make it clear to them that criminal behavior is

“not acceptable” and to “move on.”

Both Lynnwood Police Chief Nelson and Sheriff Fortney shared the elements of their respective Crisis Intervention Training programs, that involves de-escalation techniques when engaging those from under the influence of drugs to those on the autism spectrum.

Because of recruitment challenges, there are 14 vacancies Chief Nelson and his team need filled to be fully staffed at 81 funded officers.

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# Federal lawmakers seek regulations on Big Tech to protect kids

By **GEORGE FTIKAS, JR.**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Social media companies were once again in the crosshairs of lawmakers last month during a hearing with the Senate Judiciary Committee. The central focus of the hearing, which appears to now have strong bipartisan support, was “Protecting Our Children Online.”

The committee heard testimony from mental health experts and child safety advocates, but not from tech company executives or representatives. One of the witnesses, Kristin Bride, spoke of her 16-year-old son, Carson Bride, who took his own life in 2020 after being a target for cyberbullying on Snapchat.

“I don’t know if any or all of you realize what you witnessed today, but this Judiciary Committee crosses the political spectrum, not just from Democrats to Republicans, but from real progressives to real conservatives,” Senator Dick Durbin, the panel’s chair, said during the hearing. “And what you heard was the unanimity of purpose.”

The Kids’ Online Safety Act is currently being pushed by Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal and Republican

Senator Marsha Blackburn. Similarly, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham announced during the hearing he was working with Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren in a rare show of unity.

“We have pretty divergent political opinions, except here,” Graham said. “We have to do something and the sooner the better. We are going to approach this from consumer protection. We are going to look at a digital regulatory commission that would have power to shut these sites down if they are not doing ‘best business practices’ to protect children from sexual exploitation online.”

A week prior to the hearing, President Joe Biden called for similar action during his State of the Union address.

“When millions of young people are struggling with bullying, violence, trauma, we owe them greater access to mental health care at school,” Biden said. “We must finally hold social media companies accountable for the experiment they are running on our children for profit. It’s time to pass bipartisan legislation to stop Big Tech from collecting personal data on kids

and teenagers online, ban targeted advertising to children, and impose stricter limits on the personal data these companies collect on all of us.”

Few deny the power and influence of “Big Tech” like Google and Meta, but the growing evidence of the detrimental impact social media has on its users is increasingly difficult to refute.

As the Lynnwood Times reported on in 2021, the Wall Street Journal alleged that Facebook’s — now Meta — own internal studies showed their platforms, Facebook and Instagram, were harmful to the mental health of users, particularly for teenagers. These studies indicated that as many as one-in-three teen girls felt worse about their body while using Instagram.

Senators at last month’s hearing also accused Big Tech of blocking previous attempts at regulation. Lobbying efforts by Big Tech have arguably increased, with Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Meta and Apple spending roughly \$69 million combined lobbying in 2022.

Last year, Democratic Senator Michael Bennet introduced a bill to create a federal agency to regulate Big Tech

companies. The bill — which has still only been introduced — is one of several attempts over the last couple years to regulate Big Tech.

However, unlike previous attempts, bipartisan support appears to be increasing.

“There are more bills being introduced in this area than any subject matter that I know of,” Blumenthal said. “All of them are bipartisan.”

Advocates like Bride are hopeful that change will occur.

“It is so difficult to tell our stories of the very worst day of our lives over and over and over again and then not see change,” Bride said. “We really are looking to call for action, and I am confident that you can all come together and do this for us and for America’s children.”

These attempts at regulation also come on the heels of a tumultuous year for tech and Meta announcing just this week that it will lay off an additional 10,000 employees and close 5,000 job openings.

# Finland President Sauli Niinistö addresses WA State Legislature

By **RENEE DIAZ, WASHINGTON STATE JOURNAL**

OLYMPIA—For the first time in history, a foreign head of state has addressed a joint session in the Washington State Legislature. President Sauli Niinistö, of the Republic of Finland, met with Washington lawmakers March 6 to discuss climate change and their partnership in supporting Ukraine. The visit comes as Finland intends to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

“The current critical geopolitical situation has brought us closer together than ever before. We are now strengthening our ties in sectors such as defense, trade, technology and energy security. And soon, we will be able to call each other allies.” Niinistö said.

Both Washington state and Finland have made major efforts to welcome Ukrainian refugees since the war began one year ago. Ukrainian refugees are the largest refugee group in the state. Over 16,000 refugees have come to the state in the last year, more than any other state in the country.

“Washington State stands with the people of Ukraine and Washington State stands with the people of Finland, who have been so courageous and so dedicated to this joint civilized effort to stand for democracy in Ukraine,” Gov. Jay Inslee said.

Currently, Finland has channeled one million dollars in humanitarian assistance through the UN Refugee Agency to support Ukrainians who have fled to Moldova, according to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

In 2021 Washington Lieutenant Gov. Denny Heck signed a Memorandum of



(L-R) Senator Marko Liias (D-Mukilteo), President Sauli Niinistö, of the Republic of Finland, Trudi Inslee, Governor Jay Inslee, and two others on Monday, March 6, 2023. SOURCE: Office of Senator Marko Liias

Understanding to begin a partnership on technological research, port modernization, clean energy and transportation and sustainable forestry. The agreement remains in effect through 2026.

Later in the day, Inslee and Niinistö further discussed their partnership and their efforts on climate change and supporting Ukrainian refugees.

“We have two crises right now that pretty much have united the U.S. with Finland. It is that we are in a climate crisis. We are appreciative of Finland’s efforts to decarbonize its economy and help decarbonize the world economy,” Inslee said.

Last year, Inslee visited Finland on a trade mission to the Nordic countries. During the visit, Inslee and the Washington state delegation discussed

Finland’s strategy to eliminate waste with Finnish officials.

Finland made a promise to be carbon-neutral by 2035 and to eliminate all waste by 2050. They use the circular economy model which involves sharing, reusing, repairing, and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. For example, many

companies in Finland are working to convert forest industry waste into new materials like bioplastics, paperboard and textiles.

After Washington, Sauli Niinistö plans to visit Palo Alto, Washington D.C., and at the end of the tour, Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia.

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# House passes bill prohibiting sale of assault weapons in state

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**OLYMPIA**—The Washington State House of Representatives passed House Bill 1240, with a 55-42 vote, on Wednesday, March 8, that prohibits the sale, manufacture, and import of assault weapons in Washington state while providing exemption for military and law enforcement agents. The bill now moves to the Senate to take action.

“This has been a long journey,” Representative Strom Peterson (D-Edmonds), the bill’s primary sponsor, said during last night’s discussion on the House



Rep. Strom Peterson, LD-21

Floor. “I first introduced this piece of legislation under my prime sponsorship the following year after a shooting in my community in Mukilteo where a young man of 19 years old shot up a house party with kids who had just graduated from high school. They were getting together on a warm summer’s ever to talk about life and talk about what the future is going to bring to them. Well, three of those people, Anna and Jake and Jordan don’t have a future anymore. One other well was shot in the back, but fortunately survived.

“This has been happening in our communities and happening around the state and around the country for far too long. I’ve been doing a little bit of research, and in 2021 there were I think 697 mass shootings around the country. Last year it was 648 – give or take. This year to date in 2023 to date we have nearly 70 mass shootings. We are on a clip to surpass those numbers. And we’ve seen it. You and I have seen, seen the marches, speaker Jenkins. We’ve seen the kids walking out of school. We’ve seen the kids amassed on the mall in Washington, DC. We see them, we hear them, we have to pass this legislation.”

The bill contains an emergency clause and would take effect immediately if approved by the Senate. The bill does not prohibit people from possessing assault weapons.

Governor Jay Inslee praised this along with other legislation in a statement released Wednesday evening.

“I want to applaud legislators for advancing commonsense gun reform, planning for climate change impacts, supports for behavioral health, and more funding for special education,” Inslee said.

Washington would be the tenth state in the nation following California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York as well as the District of Columbia to enact laws imposing various restrictions on assault weapons since federal restrictions expired in 2004.

“This is a bad bill,” Representative Jim Walsh (R-Aberdeen) said during the House debate. “The right of the individual citizen, their arms in defense of himself in the state shall not be paired. That, of course, is Article 1, section

24 of the state Constitution. Madam Speaker, this policy impairs your right to bear arms in defense of yourself and the state...it is unconstitutional.

“We have experimented with so-called assault weapon bans in our past. As I think everyone on this floor knows, in the 1990s at the federal level, we



Rep. Jim Walsh, LD-19

experimented with a so-called assault weapon ban didn’t have a great effect on crime rates to the extent there is data that’s relevant, it’s confounding and inconclusive. It didn’t put a big dent in violent crime and ultimately, the federal government abandoned that experiment as not effective. Not effective for public safety, not effective for decreasing crime and an infringement of constitutional rights of the people.

“Madam Speaker, none of us countenance violent crime but the question, Madam Speaker, is how do we best address violent crime in our public policy?”

“The bill makes the same mistake that many others do. It assumes that by restricting the choices and options of law-abiding citizens in how they choose to protect themselves, it will somehow affect the behavior of psychopaths and criminals and people bent on making mayhem. They’re two different sorts, Madam Speaker. Let’s not penalize law abiding citizens in an effort to deter the actions of criminals.”

The ban of military-style assault weapons is backed by Attorney General Bob Ferguson, along with Governor Jay Inslee, in his sixth attempt since 2017—following the 2016 mass shooting at a Mukilteo house party when the shooter used a military-style assault rifle and a high-capacity magazine.

“My responsibility as Attorney General, but also as a father, is to do what I can to protect folks in our state,” Ferguson told the Lynnwood Times during a visit to Olympia. “For me banning the sale of the those high-capacity magazines and those assault weapons is consistent with the second amendment and will improve the chances of the safety of our kids and community members across the state...the sale of these weapons should be stopped.”

Ferguson introduce SB-5078 that restricted the sale of high-capacity magazines last legislative session. That bill was signed into law by the Governor Jay Inslee last March. Ferguson was also successful in passing a bill banning the manufacturing and possession of ghost guns which passed the legislation in 2019.

David Yamane, Sociology Professor at Lake Forest University, who has spent the last 10 years studying gun culture in America, found that 98.85% of guns and 99.21% of gun owners are not involved in fatal, non-fatal injuries, or victimizations involving guns annually.

Brett Bass, Program Manager of

Forefront Suicide Prevention, Bellevue Gun Club instructor and U.S. Marine Corps veteran, believes there is a good chance all of the bills will pass this session, based on Democrats’ recent voting history, but will fail to survive constitutional scrutiny.

“The assault weapons ban is almost certainly, imminently, doomed judicially because there’s nothing in the text, of either the Washington State text, or the constitution, to support the idea that this is a legitimate action from the state and I don’t believe you can find meaningful historical, or traditional, precedent for broad prohibitions on the most commonly owned types of firearms,” said Bass.

Democrats in favor of the assault-rifle ban argue that the increase in cases, in which assault rifles were being used for mass shootings, is one of the supporting reasons for the bill, but Bass argues mass shooters typically use whatever is the most popular firearm at the time.

As it stands handguns are the most used firearm in mass shooting cases, from 1982 to 2003, by far, according to Statistica.

Summary of assault weapons ban bill  
The manufacture, importation, distribution, sale, or offer for sale of any assault weapon is prohibited in Washington state under HB-1240.

The term “assault weapon” is defined to include various kinds of firearms, including:

- semiautomatic rifles with an overall length of less than 30 inches;
- semiautomatic centerfire rifles that have the capacity to accept a detachable magazine and have one or more additional features listed in the bill;
- semiautomatic centerfire rifles with a fixed magazine with the capacity to accept more than 10 rounds;
- semiautomatic pistols that have the capacity to accept a detachable magazine and have one
- or more additional features listed in the bill;
- semiautomatic shotguns that have one or more additional features listed in the bill;
- specific firearm models identified in the bill; and
- conversion kits and parts that can

be used to assemble an assault weapon or convert a firearm into an assault weapon, if the parts are in the possession of or under the control of the same person.

The term “assault weapon” excludes antique firearms, firearms that have been made permanently inoperable, and firearms that are manually operated by bolt, pump, lever, or slide action.

The restrictions on assault weapons are subject to several exceptions including:

- Licensed firearms manufacturers are authorized to manufacture, import, distribute, offer for sale, and sell assault weapons for the purpose of sale to the armed forces of the United States or Washington, or to state or federal law enforcement agencies for law enforcement purposes.
- Licensed firearms dealers are authorized to import, distribute, offer for sale, and sell assault weapons for the purpose of sale to the armed forces of the United States or Washington, or to law enforcement agencies in Washington for law enforcement purposes.
- Licensed firearms dealers are authorized to distribute, offer for sale, and sell assault weapons that were acquired from an individual legally authorized to possess or transfer the weapon, for the purpose of selling or transferring the weapon to a person who does not reside in Washington.
- Any person may acquire possession of an assault weapon by operation of law upon the death of the weapon’s former owner, if that former owner was in legal possession of the weapon and the person who acquires possession can establish such provenance.

A violation of these restrictions would be classified as a gross misdemeanor. Additionally, a violation is classified as a matter vitally affecting the public interest, not reasonable in relation to the development and preservation of business, and an unfair or deceptive act in trade or commerce and an unfair method of competition for the purpose of applying the Consumer Protection Act.

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# Students learn real-world skills in the courtroom

By YMCA PRESS RELEASE

MARYSVILLE—Marysville Family YMCA’s Mock Trial team recently competed at the district competition at the Snohomish County Superior Court, showcasing skills they’ve learned in a high-drama courtroom competition. The team spent months preparing for the event, working together to present a criminal case before a real judge and jury.

“Mock trial gives young adults the opportunity to learn about law and government in a fun environment that encourages camaraderie,” said Taryn Dinius, Senior Program Director, Marysville Family YMCA. “By focusing on a common goal and getting a job done, the students build relationships and learn valuable lessons. The experience opens doors and exposes to students to new opportunities.”

YMCA Mock Trial is a national program that encourages students to learn more about the legal system, while learning other lifelong skills including planning and preparation, oral advocacy



Photo from YMCA’s Mock Trial competition. SOURCE: YMCA

and more. The team is given a criminal case and they must prepare for all roles, including litigant, witnesses, defense and present the case before a judge and jury.

“I think the most impactful thing I’ve learned through mock trial is the ability to think on my feet and using critical thinking skills,” said Dante

Rieger, Team Captain and a senior at Marysville-Getchell High School. “We are often asked to dissect a complex argument or challenge an objection and need to create a solid argument in the moment.”

Marysville YMCA’s 10-member team is comprised of students from four local high schools. Mock Trial is part

of the Youth and Government program and anyone can join. No previous experience is needed; just a desire to learn, regularly show up, and be an active team member. The confidence, teamwork, and decision-making skills that participants acquire benefit them in all aspects of life.

“When I started mock trial, I could not speak in front of people,” said Rieger. “Now, I can give a 10-minute presentation in front of a jury, no sweat.”

The YMCA of Snohomish County plans to bring Mock Trial to other branches across the county. The next season begins in Fall 2023, but the Y may host mini practices throughout the summer to keep participants engaged.

“Do it, it’s fun,” said Rieger. “You’ll learn a lot and make lifelong friends.”

To learn more about participating in YMCA Mock Trial courtroom competition, contact Taryn Dinius at [tdinius@ymca-snoco.org](mailto:tdinius@ymca-snoco.org).



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# 2023 FIRST Robotics Competition in Snohomish

By STEVE WINCKLER, TEAM 1778 MENTOR

SNOHOMISH—The first event of the 2023 FIRST Robotics Competition season was held at Glacier Peak High School on March 4th through March 5th. After 68 qualifying matches, an alliance of three Snohomish County teams emerged as the District Event Winners.

The winning alliance consisted of Team 2910 (Jack in the Bot, from Jackson High School in Mill Creek) which was ranked number 1 as well as Team 2930 (Sonic Squirrels, from Glacier Peak High School in Snohomish) which was ranked number 2. Team 1778 (Chill Out, from Mountlake Terrace High School in Mountlake Terrace) had some radio connection and drivetrain challenges during the first day of matches, and was ranked 30th. However, during final alliance selection, Team 1778 was selected as the third robot after correcting their mechanical issues improved results Sunday morning, and their ability to support defensive strategies during playoffs.

This year’s game challenge, called “Charged Up”, was announced on January 7 and the teams had seven weeks to design, manufacture, build, and program their robot to compete in this first competition.

Teams were tasked with creating a robot that moved cubes and cones into a multi-tiered grid and then driving onto an unstable raised platform that they needed to bring to balance using only the weight of their robots. Alliances of three teams work together during



District Event Winners Teams 1778, 2910 and 2930 | SOURCE: Steve Winckler, Team 1778 mentor. SOURCE: Steve Winckler

the qualifying matches in randomly assigned alliances. Teams could be partnered with a robot in one match, and against that same robot in the next match, so the goal is to work together rather than intentionally cause damage to the competitor’s robots.

One of the trademarks for FIRST robotics is Gracious Professionalism® which is predicated on the belief that fierce competition and mutual gain are not separate notions. All of the 34 regional teams present showed this both in their attitudes and their willingness to help each other during competition. In the robot “pits” there are often overhead announcements that a team needs a part or needs help and another team will always come to their aid.

Team 2522 (Royal Robotics, from Lynnwood High School in Lynnwood) came to the aid of fellow Edmonds School District team 1778 Chill Out to help troubleshoot their intermittent radio connection issues and provided spare replacement parts which ultimately helped bring 1778 back to life. Without the support of 2522 Royal Robotics, 1778 Chill Out would not have been able to continue to compete.

Team 2910 Jack in the Bot earned the Excellence in Engineering Award and host Team 2930 Sonic Squirrels received the Autonomous Award. Team 1778 Chill Out managed to complete their robot late Friday night, even after the two-week Edmonds School District-wide internet outage severely

hampered their development time. Find more about these teams on Instagram (@sonicsquirrels, @jackinthebot, @chillout1778, @first\_official).

There are 6 more regional qualification tournaments throughout the district, with three to be held in the Greater Puget Sound Area, before the District Championships in Cheney, WA and World Championships in Houston, TX are held in April. There are over 150 teams in the Pacific Northwest District, including many others from Snohomish County!

You can find more information about FIRST Robotics Competition at <https://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/frc>.

# Landon wants a pump track, so does Marysville parks

By **DOUG BUELL**

**MARYSVILLE**—At a Park Board zoom meeting during the pandemic, board members listened as soft-spoken 7-year-old Landon Oliphant pitched his idea to build a pump track where families and bike riders like him could hone their skills through paved pathways and steep turns.

The wheels began spinning in the minds of park officials.

Assistant Parks Director Dave Hall said city staff internally had already met with a pump track company, with the idea to one day build one of the outdoor tracks that are gaining in popularity, with an eye toward Jennings Nature Park.

“So, when Landon showed up, we thought ‘here is a community member saying the same thing, so let’s have him come give a presentation, and maybe we can build some momentum,’” Hall said.

“Pump tracks have like rollers, jumps and turn and stuff like that,” Landon said, now 9 and attends Sunnyside Elementary School. “Once you get pumping right you can go kind of fast.”

A pump track is made up of a series of small and large hills, turns and a looped circuit of banked corners and smooth rollers that allow you to ride and keep up your momentum without pedaling. It works for bike, boards, scooters, inline skates or even little kid bikes where kids use their fee to push themselves.

His dad, Mike Oliphant, added, “Landon’s main goal in the presentation he made was that he wanted people and families to get outside more instead of being at home on their televisions or tablets.”

On February 9, roughly 26 people attended an open house to look over details about the pump track.

Hall said the track area itself covers an area of about 50 by 100 feet, with 2,400 square feet of 6 ½-foot overlapping paved track. It would be located on a raised, relatively flat, grassy hillside halfway between the playground and parking lot entrance on 64th and north to Jennings Ballfield. The largest costs will be asphalt and drainage improvements.

Hall said it was an eye opener when he was researching pump tracks and discovered that they were not only popular with kids and teens, but young families and adult as well. One open house attendee included a man who is pushing 70 years old, and he has been a downhill mountain biker his whole life. He lives about a mile away from the pump track and plans to use it for training runs to boost cardio and conditioning for his downhill riding.

At the open house, many other attendees hailed from South Everett and Mount Vernon. They came to share their support for the future pump track.

The Oliphant’s home is close to the pump track, so the family will be able to ride, with Landon’s younger sister Logan able join them on days where



Photo of Landon holding a drawing of the proposed pump track in Marysville. SOURCE: Mile Oliphant.

there are fewer bikes on the track.

Other pump tracks in Washington they have visited include Leavenworth, where Landon celebrated with a birthday party; Wenatchee, and closer to home, Bellingham.

Hall said the city hopes to go out to bid in April, with construction later this year. The project is expected to cost up to \$300,000.

Mayor Jon Nehring added that Jennings Nature Park is already slated for new

playground equipment and public restrooms later this year.

Landon was asked how often he and his family plan to go to the new Marysville pump track when it opens.

“Maybe once a week,” he said.

“Oh, no, we’ll go twice a week,” said his father, who now serves on the city’s Parks, Culture and Recreation Advisory Board.

## A raising star heads to John Hopkins this Fall for Cyber Security



Daniela Altamirano-Crosby sitting at the US Capitol Building. SOURCE: Daniela Altamirano-Crosby.

By **KIENAN BRISCOE**

**LYNNWOOD**—Daniela Altamirano-Crosby, daughter of Lynnwood City Council Vice President Dr. Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, is headed to John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies to complete her master’s degree in Strategy, Cybersecurity, and Intelligence. She begins classes this Fall.

“At first I was shocked,” Daniela told the Lynnwood Times. “When I opened

up the email, I thought it was going to say we’re sorry we can’t admit you but it said congratulations and I immediately called my parents.”

“I am are very proud of Daniela,” Council Vice President Dr. Julieta Altamirano-Crosby told the Lynnwood Times. “She has always been so determined and hardworking to reach her academic goals. She just had a greatness in her and I believe that she is going to achieve remarkable things in her life!”

From a young age, Daniela has had the goal to get her master’s degree before the age of 25. Just recently turning 24 and knowing “the clock is ticking,” she applied to the Cyber Security program last October, giving herself a couple of months to perfect her essays and application. She received her acceptance letter last week and was approved for the Alperovitch Cybersecurity Fellowship scholarship.

Daniela’s fascination with politics stemmed from witnessing her mother be a champion for minorities in the U.S., particularly with helping underrepresented communities find their voice. She joined ASB while attending Olympic View Middle School, where she also served as President, before attending high school at Kamiak, Archbishop Murphy, and Holy Names Academy, respectively.

She went on to double major in Spanish and Political Science at the University of Washington, where she graduated cum laude and served as President of the Mortar Board, before working as a Congressional Intern for Representative Suzan DelBene (WA-01) and later as legislative aid to Congressman Brad Schneider (IL-10) in Washington, D.C.

In addition to her academic history, Daniela has been deeply imbedded in her community over the years, as an active volunteer at the Lynnwood Food Bank and President of the WAGRO Foundation – a nonprofit 501(c)(3) whose primary focus is to provide resources to people or groups who

belong to the marginalized BIPOC communities – and was nominated as one of the 100 change makers for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Washington State.

Her favorite part about WAGRO is teaching minorities there are people that look like them that do things they may think aren’t possible, she said, while using the example of bringing in BIPOC NASA scientists and airplane pilots to the WAGRO Summer Camp programs to show children that anything is possible.

“It’s my goal, in my community, to teach people that look like me that nothing’s impossible, nothing’s unachievable, you just have to work really hard to get what you want,” Daniela told the Lynnwood Times.

After completing her master’s degree program, Daniela Altamirano-Crosby wants to get involved in international governments, either in Spain, the United Kingdom, or Belgium, to get a “different feel for everything,” having worked in the U.S. Government for two years now. Having traveled all over the world—Spain, Mexico, Italy, France, and Sweden—she makes it a hobby to learn as much as she can about the various forms of government whenever she visits a new country.

When she’s not involved in politics, Daniela enjoys swimming and hot yoga to decompress from the stresses of the legislative session.

# Walmart stores throughout Washington going bagless in April

By WALMART PRESS RELEASE

**OLYMPIA**—Walmart is doing its part to eliminate waste in Washington by removing plastic carryout bags from all stores in the state for checkout and pickup. Beginning Tuesday, April 18, 2023, Walmart stores in Washington will no longer provide plastic bags at checkout or pickup, encouraging customers to use reusable bags or containers.



To make the transition easier for its customers, Walmart will continue to offer a wide array of reusable bags and containers throughout stores and at checkout areas for purchase. Stores have added signing, social posts on store Facebook pages, and messaging on the Walmart App to remind customers of the upcoming changes. Additionally, Walmart makes it easy for customers to recycle their end-of-life plastic and reusable bags by providing recycling containers located in the store’s vestibule area.

said Jane Ewing, senior vice president of Walmart Sustainability. “Our Washington customers want to be engaged on this journey, and Walmart is committed to making the sustainable choice convenient and accessible every day.”

Maine, New Jersey, New York, Colorado and Connecticut. By going bagless in these six states, Walmart avoids the use of over 1.2 billion plastic and paper bags every year.

Delivery will continue to utilize paper bags, and stores will continue providing single-use bags in areas that prevent food contamination or as required by law.

As of October 2021, Washington state law banned single-use plastic bags, and now Walmart is taking it a step further by eliminating all single-use plastic and paper bags at checkouts across the state. Walmart aims to offer solutions that serve a similar function, deliver convenience and reduce environmental impact.

To do its part in reducing plastic bag waste, Walmart has been working to ensure a seamless and convenient shift to reusable bags for its customers and associates, taking learnings from other initiatives.

Stores began rolling out new, Walmart-branded reusable bags in October 2022 to ensure customers have a selection of high-quality, easy-to-reuse bags for their shopping trips.

“Eliminating single-use bags is part of our effort to reduce waste at our stores and help keep Washington communities and ecosystems clean,”

As of January 2023, Walmart has eliminated paper and plastic bags in Canada and Mexico and Vermont,

To encourage their transition away from single-use bags, Walmart has improved the placement of reusable bags in stores, developed new bag designs, and adjusted checkout lines to accommodate more reusable bags.



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## NEUROPATHY BREAKTHROUGH

Bothell resident Dawn R. had been experiencing the painful side effects of Peripheral Neuropathy, “my feet and legs were extremely painful and my doctor told me there was nothing they could do. That I would have to take Gabapentin for the rest of my life.” Then she met Dr. Heintze and her team at Starting Point.

Peripheral Neuropathy is the pain, discomfort and numbness caused by nerve damage of the peripheral nervous system. Dawn explained that daily tasks like opening doors and using the bathroom were overwhelmingly painful. “How can you live for the next 30 years when you don’t even want to get out of bed to do simple things?”

She was experiencing the burning, numbness, tingling and sharp pains that those suffering with neuropathy often describe. “The way that I would describe it, it’s equivalent to walking on glass.” Dawn hadn’t worn socks in five years and was wearing shoes two sizes too big so that nothing would ‘touch’ her feet.

**Unfortunately Dawn’s story is all too familiar for the over 3 million people in the U.S. suffering from Peripheral Neuropathy.**

If you’re unfortunate enough to be facing the same disheartening prognosis you’re not sleeping at night because of the burning in your feet. You have difficulty walking, shopping or doing any activity for more than 30 minutes because of the pain. You’re struggling with balance and living in fear that you might fall. Your doctor told you to ‘just live with the pain’ and you’re taking medications that aren’t working or have uncomfortable side effects.

Fortunately, six months ago Dawn read an article about Dr. Heintze and the work she was doing to treat those suffering from Peripheral Neuropathy, without invasive surgeries or medications.

Dr. Heintze, founder of Starting Point Acupuncture & Wellness in Bothell, is using the time tested science of Acupuncture and a technology originally developed by NASA that assists in increasing blood flow and expediting recovery and healing to treat this debilitating disease.

“Now when I go to bed at night I don’t have those shooting pains. I don’t have that burning sensation. I don’t have pain coming up my legs,” Dawn enthusiastically describes life after receiving Dr. Heintze’s treatments.

“I can wear socks and shoes again!”  
“It’s life altering. As far as I’m concerned Dr. Heintze saved my life!”

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# Stalking offense bill passes House, heads to the Senate

By KIENAN BRISCOE

OLYMPIA— Representative Lauren Davis sponsored bill HB 1696, concerning stalking-related offenses, unanimously passed the House, on February 27, with 97 yeas, zero nays, and three absentees. The bill now moves to the Senate for further consideration.



Rep. Lauren Davis, LD 32

The decision came just two-weeks before a married couple were murdered in Redmond, March 10, after a home invasion that occurred early in the morning by a stalker. The suspect, Ramin Khodakaramzaei, 38, shot and killed the couple before dying of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

The female victim, whom Khodakaramzaei's had allegedly stalked for months, met her murderer through the social voice app Clubhouse—created for Farsi speakers seeking employment in the tech industry, according to police.

The woman sought help from law enforcement in December and January, reporting more than 100 contacts with Khodakaramzaei in a single day. Her stalker also sent gifts and showed up at her home uninvited prior to the home invasion that claimed three lives.

The Redmond prosecutor obtained a protection order, in early March, against Khodakaramzaei yet he was never served because his whereabouts were

unknown at the time.

House Bill 1696 is geared toward protecting individuals of situations like this, by modifying the scope of conduct that constitutes the crime of stalking and certain conditions and exceptions related to stalking, a bill analysis states, while repealing the provision related to the crime of cyberstalking.

According to Representative Lauren Davis (D-Lynnwood), who sponsored the bill, stalking victims often don't know that they're victims of crime. Stalking is a "reading between the lines crime," she told the Lynnwood Times in an interview last week, adding that "stalking is the most lethal behavior that is most highly correlated to intimate partner homicide."

In fact, 89% of femicide victims who had been physically assaulted before their murder were also stalked in the last year prior to their murder, according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, with most cases involving someone the victim knows.

Washington state saw 24 convictions of stalking-related incidents in 2022. What drives stalking, Davis said, is an obsession and fixation on the victim—the same fixation that drives individuals to homicide.

"The psychological literature says that the mental health effects of stalking is long-term on the victim. Psychologists call stalking 'intimate terrorism,' and that it is a sadistic behavior. Stalking is not seen as menacing behavior by those who "lack the context," said Davis.

HB-1696 also revises stalking to include people who knowingly install an electronic device without a person's

consent, repealing the existing the cyberstalking law (9A.90.130) in an act Davis referred to as "statutory cleanup."

The three elements of current stalking laws are: intentional and repeated harassment of a person or following; the victim placed in fear of the stalker's intent to injure them and that the fear is reasonable; stalker intended to frighten, intimidate or harass or the stalker should have reasonably known that their target was experiencing fright, intimidation or harassment.

Davis' bill makes changes to two of the three elements to make it easier to prove stalking, she told the Lynnwood Times.

Federal and most other states' stalking laws include for the second element a reasonable fear of physical injury or substantial or emotional distress. Rep Davis added that Washington laws were "so narrow that it's difficult to prove subjectively that a particular victim had a reasonable fear that a stalker had the intent to injure them." Aligning Washington state law with federal and other states' laws makes it consistent, she said.

Fewer than one third of states in the United States classify stalking as a felony in all circumstances, including on the first offense, according to The Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center, while more than half of states classify stalking as a felony upon the second or subsequent offense.

In the past, legislators have added language to stalking statutes that if a stalker continued to contact or follow a victim, even after they were given notice to stop, then it constitutes as element three of the law. However, jury instructions given by the state say that

such proof is "permissive inference," meaning that the jury can disregard it. With HB1696, that can now be used decisively to prove element three of stalking – dealing with intending to frighten or intimidate.

Rep. Davis met with domestic violence prosecutors to ensure that the language in the bill is accurate and will achieve the intent; to make stalking more easily prosecutable.

Other ways of achieving this, Davis added, is more intensive training for domestic violence and law enforcement agencies about stalking, and potential ankle monitors in domestic violence cases that could ping victims if a perpetrator is near.

Rep. Davis encourages victims of stalking to seek support and resources from a domestic violence agency. Not all stalking is intimate partner stalking, but most of it is, she said, which are often much more dangerous and lethal than stranger stalking. For non-intimate partner stalking, contacting law enforcement is also an option.

The general public is typically uninformed on what stalking actually is, according to Davis who proposed a public education campaign in order to inform the public, recommending victims provide resources to their employers, family, and friends in order to avoid perpetuating insensitivity.

Those who believe they are victims of stalking can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233, or contact the Snohomish County Protection Order Office at 425-388-3638 to obtain a Protection Order.

## Alzheimer's Association to host Dementia Caregiver Conference

By LYNNWOOD TIMES STAFF

LYNNWOOD--The Journey dementia family caregiver conference is a day-long event offering tools and encouragement to unpaid family caregivers supporting a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia. Session topics include: emergency planning, difficult conversations and practical tips for everyday living. Our keynote speaker is Carolyn Birrell, author of *Walking with Fay: My Mother's Uncharted Path Into Dementia*. Providing safety information and emergency planning tips is Greg Sanders, Snohomish County Sergeant of Search and Rescue.

**Time:** 9 am to 4 pm

**Date:** Saturday, March 25

**Location:** Lynnwood Event Center, 3711 196th St SW, Lynnwood, WA 98036

**Cost:** \$10, including lunch and snacks. Scholarships are available so interested attendees should contact that Association if the registration fee is a barrier. Contact the event organizers at [journeyfamilycaregiverconf@alz.org](mailto:journeyfamilycaregiverconf@alz.org) or call 425-654-0947.

**Website:** [https://www.alz.org/alzwa/helping\\_you\\_conferences](https://www.alz.org/alzwa/helping_you_conferences)

In Washington State alone, there are 270,000 unpaid family caregivers supporting a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Combined, they provided 396 million hours of informal care last year valued at over \$5 billion.

The care provided to people with Alzheimer's or other dementias is wide-ranging because of the duration of the disease and the severity of its symptoms. For family caregivers, this often results in increased emotional stress and depression; new or exacerbated health

problems; and depleted finances due to disruptions in employment and the high cost of health care for themselves and the person living with the disease.

The Alzheimer's Association Washington State

Chapter provides a variety of support services for family caregivers including a 24/7 helpline (1.800.272.3900), support groups and free educational programs. For more information, visit [alzwa.org](http://alzwa.org).



# Tulalip's Beef Jerky Outlet has something for every carnivore, jerky enthusiast or not



SOURCE: Beef Jerky Experience Facebook page.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**TULALIP**—At Marysville's Beef Jerky Experience, located on the Tulalip Indian Reservation, there's something for every carnivore whether they're well-seasoned in the beef jerky world or newly tapped in, from different textures, to different flavors, to even exotic, hard-to-come by meats.

Robert Aguilar, 35, Tulalip Store Manager, is the last remaining original employee when the Beef Jerky Outlet first opened up in Tulalip in 2015 - the first and only Beef Jerky Experience location in Washington State. He began as a part-time employee and worked his way up to Store Manager over the years, learning the business and meeting with owner CEO and Founder Scott Parker.

Born and raised in the Marysville area, Aguilar's love for jerky comes from a young age when his parents would give him pieces of beef jerky when he was teething. Over the years he fell in love with different flavors and styles of making jerky so when the opportunity to work in a jerky store arose, he left his food service job and helped open the Beef Jerky Experience in Tulalip.

Aguilar still lives in Marysville to this day with his wife of 10 years and his two sons.

Beef Jerky Experience (formerly called Beef Jerky Outlet) has about 100

franchised locations across the United States. The company was founded by Scott Parker in 2010, who formerly worked at the meat production plant in Tennessee that still supplies meat to the company to this day. Parker's idea stemmed from wanting to provide a variety of jerky in different rubs, marinades, and textures, at a single location. He soon actualized this dream by connecting with a meat smoking plant in Michigan and the rest is history.

Aside from offering a surplus of different textures, rubs, and marinades, at Tulalip's Beef Jerky Experience patrons can find a list of exotic proteins including rabbit jerky, gator jerky, python jerky, camel jerky, shark jerky, and even camel jerky.

"We didn't want to just do regular beef jerky," said Robert Aguilar, "We also wanted to do wild game, so it's just been a great experience just to try out and see all of the different animals you can actually do jerky with."

The store even offers a pet treat line made from the same quality of meat that's used to make its jerky for its human customers.

"They're actually one hundred percent human edible, I've eaten a bag of both of them and they're actually really good," said Aguilar. "I can understand why dogs would be really attracted to them because it's a high-quality, all natural, meat that they can physically

enjoy without artificial ingredients."

All of the meats, at the Beef Jerky Experience, are 100% USDA Graded, U.S.-sourced, which are marinated and smoked for four hours in order to properly tenderize and absorb as much smoky flavor as possible. The cherry maple flavor - the number two best seller nation-wide - deserves a special call-out as does the Cajun BBQ Brisket, the only cut of brisket the company offers.

Aguilar's personal favorites include the lemon pepper biltong - which is minimally processed, high in protein, low in sugar, and low in sodium - as well as the Australian Outback, which taste like a "really well-seasoned steak", he said, and the fire traditional jerky, made up of habanero and ghost peppers.

"For me I honestly think it has the best dry rub in the entire store," said Aguilar. "It has a great mix of flavor and heat at the same time."

Customers visiting the Beef Jerky Experience can expect to be greeted within the first fifteen seconds of walking through the door. The first question asked will be if they are new so newcomers can be led through the different aisles, separated by categories of flavors, and offered a number of samples to experience the five different textures offered.

Before the pandemic the store used to offer every flavor in the store but has now limited their selection to twelve, which rotate every couple of weeks to allow customers something new to try each time they return.

"We've very well informed on the products we sell so we're able to answer any questions you may have about the quality of meat, different hot sauces, popcorns, cheese," said Aguilar. "Don't be afraid to ask; we're more than happy to answer any questions you may have. We strive to be as informational as possible."

The store also offers a, free-to-join, reward system where customers can earn points that can be cashed in for

future purchases, either in-store or online, and earn swag like t-shirts and prizes. Reward members earn six cents for every dollar spent at any location in the United States. The store even offers a 15% discount for customers on their birthday. Points never expire, they only keep accumulating, Aguilar explained.

In addition to the reward program, the store has frequent promotions including every-day specials. Currently each of the four different-sized bags' individual multi-pack are priced at \$10.99 each, three for \$30, four for \$39, or if you buy five the sixth one is free.

"The more you buy the more you save," said Aguilar.

The Beef Jerky Experience's products can also be purchased online and several outdoors festivals including the Arlington Street Fair, Kla Ha Ya Days, and the Mill Creek Festival. While all online orders go directly to the store, Aguilar still encourages people to come shop in person to try different samples, and learn "more about jerky that you ever thought you were capable of knowing about jerky," Aguilar said.

"Every has their idea of what type of jerky they like, or they're used to a certain style, but they haven't really tried anything else. Visiting our store gives them the ability to try multiple different flavors, different textures you never thought you'd like, and maybe re-fall in love with beef jerky all over again," said Aguilar.

The Beef Jerky Experience is located at 8825 34th Avenue Northeast, Suite D, in Marysville, Washington. It's open every day, from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m., except Saturday when they close at 7 p.m.



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from page 1 **WOMANHOOD**

how grateful it was to witness Saturday's event honoring "some amazing women, some amazingly accomplished women" sharing their experience to empower the next generation of women.

"As one of the speakers mentioned, although we are 50 percent of the population, we do not have 50 percent of the rights and the access within the communities that we reside in," Chatters told the Lynnwood Times. "So to have an event like this, that highlights the need to support women to ensure that girls have adequate educations, adequate access to economic pathways to success, to ensure that women have access to all of the reproductive health services that they might need, these are critical issues that women need to have addressed in order to live the most

fruitful, most powerful lives they can."

Currently, the Snohomish County Human Rights Commission is accepting nominees for its annual awards that recognize and celebrate the extraordinary contributions of individuals, organizations, and businesses in furthering the principles of the Universal Declarations of Human Rights and Cultural Diversity. Nominations can be submitted for the following awards: Human Rights, Young People's, Law, Diversity Visionary, Community Organization, and Educator's.

Also attending the event were Snohomish County Councilwoman Megan Dunn and Mukilteo Councilman Steve Schmalz.

Councilman Schmalz added that we must remember the accomplishments of women not only for one day but ev-

ery day.

"Even though International Women's Day is recognized on this day, we should celebrate and be thankful each day for the leadership women all over the world have shown," Schmalz said.

Councilwoman Dunn, an International Women's Day awardee the previous year, thanked Ayesha for hosting the event and how a simple gesture of inclusion can break down barriers.

"Within the first five minutes I met her, she did one of the most amazing things that you can do, she invited me to her home for a meal," Dunn said. "I think that's the best way to get to know your community, get to know one another and the breakdown barriers to meet each other. Thank you so much for welcoming me into your home."

When asked why so many come year-after-year to Mukilteo to celebrate International Women's Day, Councilman Khan shared, "Mukilteo is a family-oriented place, a place to bring families. Some came here to see the job market. Boeing is hiring a lot of people here, so they want to see what the city looks like...that is the beauty about this event."

The 2023 awardees are: Mandeep Kaur, Saba Qadri, Vasudha Sharma Salma Khan, Shabana Shaik, Sawrajpreet Kaur, Widad Gaddah, Akshi Jain, Nabrath Sheriff, Sajida Hussain, Sonia Keshwani, Iffat Gul, Rani Azmat, Sadia Khan, Shree Saini, Dr. Adiba Syeda, Dr. Iffath Sultana, Nousheen Rizvi, Dr. Syeda Bakhtawar, Adriana Mohamed, Sarah Noet, Warda Khan, Amber Iqbal, Asifa Salim, Shazia Khan, and Kulsum Khan.

from page 3 **SAFETY FORUM**

“It’s a tough job, in tough times,” Chief Nelson said. “If we want a Police Department and Sheriff’s Office that reflects our community, we need our community to step up. We need people that are just regular men and women to take this job to do extraordinary things.”

In addition to a joint 10- to 12-member Violent Crime Team comprised of Everett, Lynnwood and County law enforcement, LPD has an internal team devoted to combatting the rising gang-related activity, a cyclical occurrence according to Sheriff Fortney, in South Snohomish County.

“We have rededicated an officer on each squad,” Chief Nelson said. “We kind of formed our own little gang unit internally. So the four patrol squads are talking to each other and they’re being supervised by our patrol commander, who is in an acting position but his normal duties is as a special operations sergeant which is in charge of gang work.”

Despite their frustrations with rising crime, the consensus of attendees was

thankful for the efforts of law enforcement and advocated for the return of the School Resource Officer program (SROs) that was removed by the Edmonds School Board in 2020.

“Contact your Edmonds School District Board and tell them you want SROs back in school,” Council President Sessions said.

“I agree with [Councilwoman] Shannon,” a mother whose daughter knew one of the victims who died in the fatal shooting at Spruce Park said. “I emailed my high school; she goes to Lynnwood [High School]...to get the school district to get SROs back in schools because they are off the beaten path. We live in unincorporated Snohomish County...and I know that they [Sheriff’s Office] are short staffed. So, to get to somebody if something happened there might take longer.”

One of the attendees, Vivian Dong, spokeswoman for the local advocacy group Safe Lynnwood, along with several other residents questioned Councilman Peterson, who also serves in the Washington State House of Representatives, on his stance on several pieces of legislation he voted for this session

that they claim appear to enable criminal behavior—specifically HB 1268.

One of the concerns brought up is that the bill eliminates “stacking” for offences involving a minor in a criminal street gang-related felony and for certain controlled substance violations. According to the bill analysis, some sentences for multiple offenses can be served consecutively in a policy referred to as “stacking.” This bill would eliminate this policy for minors.

“We’re not letting kids off if they’re committing crimes,” Peterson said. “There is a thing on how we would stack these different things on top of each other. So, if you committed a crime here [in Washington state] we would stack the other [offenses] on top of that. We are one of the few states in the country that does that... This was not kind of a ‘soft on crime approach,’ this was much more targeted than that and really dealt with some issues around unfair sentencing.”

When asked by the Lynnwood Times during the forum what incentives the state can offer for the City of Lynnwood to potentially annex portions of land near the Alderwood Boys & Girls

Club to address resident concerns over public safety jurisdiction, Peterson referred to Senate Bill 5522 that passed in March of 2020.

The bill provides “cities with the ability to annex unincorporated areas pursuant to a jointly approved interlocal agreement with the county.” Essentially, annexations can be enacted in Washington if the county and city governments agree to do so.

Lake Stevens became the first city in Snohomish County to utilize this law for its Southeast Interlocal Annexation in July of 2021. No county nor city residents voted on the matter as officials used a new method called interlocal annexation in which the annexation was approved by majority council vote.

Strom also shared a law that would offset expenses to a City annexing new land into its jurisdiction.

Overall, attendees were in favor of Lynnwood’s passage of its ordinance against public drug use, which Sheriff Fortney shared that a similar ordinance is in the works for Snohomish County.

Continued **PAGE 12 >>**

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from page 1 **HAND UP PROJECT**

number of residents seeking recovery in sober living communities.

The Hand Up Project also has contracts with municipalities throughout Snohomish County to address homelessness and recovery—its most recent with the City of Edmonds that was terminated last month, “in light of recent information discovered regarding the organization’s founder,” the city’s news release states.

On February 28, the City of Edmonds contacted The Hand Up Project and shared this information with the Board. The Edmonds Police Department had been tracking Smiley for a considerable amount of time.

This contract with the City of Edmonds was signed by Robert Smiley without the Board of Directors’ approval. Smiley at the time was under an unrelated internal investigation following an October 2022 incident which he accepted an individual contribution through PayPal that did not reconcile with the organization’s account. That investigation found that the donation was never deposited into The Hand Up Project bank account.

Smiley would commonly solicit donations on social media by allegedly, falsely, alluding The Hand Up Project was not sufficiently funded, board members shared.

Following the October incident, the Board of Directors sought legal counsel from a Seattle-based law firm, which recommended Smiley be removed as President, which he willfully did. An interim Board of Directors was put into place and Smiley was again instructed to immediately cease soliciting and accepting contributions under the organization’s name.

In January 2023, the Board of Directors was provided with a video showing Smiley opening a locked safe at one of the organization’s sober living houses and removing its contents: money contributed by house clients to be used for emergency purposes. This prompted a second internal investigation, ultimately leading to his termination.

“We knew this was illegal activity and we couldn’t turn away from it” a Board member told the Lynnwood Times. “We had a responsibility to take action and file the police reports. “We’ve done about everything we could to make sure we’ve navigated this appropriately, ethically, and above board... No one wants to sign up for this but it’s our responsibility.”

The board member added that the organization’s donations were down 87% since the Smileys were removed from organizational bank accounts and more rigid financial policies and procedures were implemented. This along with a second internal investigation launched in January of this year began piecing together a tale of deceit and betrayal.

After that initial approach in October and subsequent new policies implemented, Smiley solicited and accepted, without Board knowledge and approval, \$6,000 in cash and issued a fraudulent charitable receipt. Accepting the cash violated the organization’s financial manual, and, even after Smiley was confronted, has never cleared any of The Hand Up Project’s bank accounts, placing the organization in danger with the IRS.

All of this, however, had nothing to do with the City of Edmonds’ decision to terminate its contract with The Hand Up Project for biohazard cleaning, board members said while adding, “it runs deep.”

The Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office shared with the Lynnwood Times that they were unable to speak on the details of their investigation involving Smiley, but confirmed the county is investigating allegations of fraud.

Throughout Smiley’s tenure as Founder and President of the Hand Up Project, he had a reputation of allegedly mishandling finances. The Board told the Lynnwood Times that the organization was run “quite chaotically” at first with “not a strong sense of tracking receipts.”

Smiley appeared to have genuine love and care for the people that he served and the people around him, the board member added.

“There was a period when, if a staff member called and said they needed help or someone else needed help, Robert would be there to offer help personally,” the Board member added.

“Although he struggled with running the business, particularly the financial side of things, he gave off the impression that he truly cared about his work and was there to help people.”

All of the Board members interviewed requested their statements be made on behalf of the board collectively and their names be redacted. This is because, according to them, several community members have been making unfounded and untrue remarks—even calling their employers as most are volunteers.

Smiley started The Hand Up Project “out of the trunk of his car” in 2014, but, as it continued to grow, it needed more oversight. Over the past two years, the organization implemented strict financial policies and procedures, including the creation of a Finance Committee, its Board told the Lynnwood Times.

Despite the Smileys’ objections, the Finance Committee never comprised of Smiley nor his wife, Theresa, nor any other officer of the corporation. The organization now employs between 15 and 20 individuals at any given time – all but one having a personal history of addiction or homelessness.

Since the creation of a Finance Committee, the organization’s largest program has been audited up to twice monthly by third parties with no issues found—all state and federal monies accounted for—according to the Board. The organization submitted a signed statement to municipalities by its bookkeeper that Smiley’s financial dealings were outside of the organization’s accounts and have not affected its contractual agreements.

The interim Board of Directors at The Hand Up Project have developed a 6-month strategic plan to gain back the public’s trust—as well as answer any

from page 2 **STATE OF CITY**

needs more mental health services. Mayor Frizzell is excited about the addition of the city’s new Community Resource Center, working in conjunction with the Community Justice Center, which is anticipated to reach completion later this year, in order to meet these requests.

The city of Lynnwood is also increasing its proactive policing efforts with its newly formed Violent Crime Reduction Unit, by partnering with the Everett Police Department and the Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office, placing emphasis on rising retail thefts and gang-related graffiti, and brining in new laws that prohibit open air drug use.

Mayor Frizzell concluded by thanking the city’s first responders and mentioning the city ended 2022 with healthy financial reserves, continuing receive recognition from the Government Finance Officers Association and no findings from the State’s Auditor’s Office. The city’s Standards and Poor’s Bond Rating remains a steady AA+.

Other talking points Frizzell shared included recognizing the city’s commitment to its veteran community by becoming the 200th city in the nation, and third in the state, for having a Gold Star Families Memorial, raising and releasing over 30,000 coho salmon into lakes, through the city’s salmon hatchery on Hall Lake, introducing its All Are Welcome Flag through its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and bringing back Lynnwood University after a five-year hiatus – a five week course that teaches the interworking of the city’s Departments.

The Mayor also introduced a new event coming this summer, called Celebrate, that will feature music, games, and a beer and wine garden. The details of this event are still being finalized and will be in addition to the city’s annual Fair on 44th street fair.

**CONCLUDING WITH THE LYNNWOOD SONG**

To conclude the hour-long event, Joanne Davis, 83, closed out the morning with her acoustic guitar singing her original song, The Lynnwood Song, as attendees exited the conference room.

lingering questions about Smiley’s actions and how it impacted the organization. It expects to make several announcements later this month.

“We’re [still] in a good place to continue our operations,” a Board member said. “Our heart is still with the community. Our heart is still in performing our mission and value in affirming the inherent value of every person. Our heart is still in outreach and getting people in[to] detox. There will probably be some structural changes, but we are continuing to serve this community.”

state of Lynnwood

For years, Joanne Davis, 83, has been coming to Lynnwood’s Veterans Park to play her guitar and sing among the flowers and birds. She favors classics from Elvis and Creedance Clearwater Revival to Jimmy Rogers and Marty Robbins.

**DAVIS’ LYNNWOOD SONG**

*As we road into the City of Lynnwood  
On the new light rail where we stood  
Preparing to walk into our town  
Everyone was smiling not a single frown*

*‘Cause we’re living large in Lynnwood  
Getting bigger and better every day  
We’re growing like a mighty oak  
Getting more vibrant in every way*

*Yes, Lynnwood is the finest place to be  
Yes, Lynnwood is the finest place to be*

Davis plays her songs at SnoTown Brewery, located at 511 2nd St, Snohomish, WA 98290, every Thursday during their Open Mic time. Open Mic typically begins at 7 p.m. but has recently become so popular that it’s currently starting closer to 6 p.m.

from page 11 **SAFETY FORUM**

Panelist ended with words of encouragement to empower residents to act and not be afraid nor ashamed to call 911.

“Maybe if they are smoking fentanyl at the bus stop they are going to overdose, and you call the police we can come and help,” Fortney said.

Peterson wants residents to know that there is a text 911 option as well for cases where calling would place the caller at risk. Also, attendees were informed that Community Transit will be increasing the number of social workers on their buses who will provide help to those afflicted by addiction or who are in a mental health crisis.

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