

January 13 through January 19, 2022

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"Road to Nowhere" p. 8



Film festival celebrates the revolutionary '60s

By **Kathy Reed** Whidbey Weekly

The fourth annual Whidbey Island Film Festival (WIFF) is truly something revolutionary – well, at least its selection of featured films were revolutionary in one way or another.

The festival – titled "You Say You Want a Revolution" – gets underway tonight at Whidbey Island Center for the Arts in Langley, and over the course of the next two weeks will feature nine of the most iconic movies of the 1960s, lectures by film experts and a ShortsFest featuring the work of local students before closing Sunday, Jan. 23. Festival passes are available and tickets may be purchased for films individually as well. Check whidbeyislandfilmfestival.org for a complete schedule and to buy tickets to any of the featured events.

"Each of the films featured in this year's festival was revolutionary for the time in its own way – from the films themselves to the stories of how they came to be made," explained Deana Duncan, acting executive director of WICA and WIFF producer. "Through them, we gain insight into the shifting cultural tide of that time."

First on the schedule is the opening party at 6 p.m. tonight, at which filmgoers can pay tribute to Sidney Poitier, who died last week. His film, "To Sir, With Love" is the first movie of the festival, starting at 7 p.m.

"I think it's extraordinary when life and art collide," said Duncan. "While deeply saddened for the loss of legendary actor Sidney Poitier, we are honored to kick off the festival with an opening night party dedicated to him. We will be raising a champagne toast in his honor and are thrilled to screen 'To Sir, With Love,' a classic film about overcoming racism, prejudice, and learning important life lessons. Sidney's character stays above the 'fray' and leads by example. That type of inspiration is why Sidney is such an important actor to learn from."

The films selected this year run the gamut in terms of genre. From the steamy love affair in "The Graduate," the racy theme of "Lolita," the crazy race to stop the end of the world in "Dr. Strangelove," to the odd future laid out in "Fahrenheit 451," the slate of films to be presented is packed with star power and strong themes organizers feel sure will please audiences.

"There is something really special about coming together during this time," said Duncan. "The festival is running two weeks this year and will feel celebratory. WICA will welcome you with the red carpet, step and repeat wall for photos, our very popular popcorn bar and Zech Hall will be open one hour before every screening for your drinking pleasure! It's rare to see these classic films on the big screen in full sound. The film talks are strong, the local student films are worth supporting and how exciting for Whidbey Island to have its own film festival!"

There are two guest film talks scheduled, the first on Saturday at 12:30 p.m., featuring Beth Barrett, Artistic Director of Seattle International Film Festival and Amy Lillard, Executive Director of Washington State Filmworks.

"Beth and Amy will be discussing film festivals overall and their importance to Washington State, especially in smaller, rural communities," Duncan described. "They'll be speaking to the artistic and economic boom the industry creates and taking questions from our audience."

Portland author and film critic, Shawn Levy, will be the featured speaker at a virtual film talk Saturday, Jan. 22 at 6 p.m. He will discuss his book "Newman: A Paul Life," and the making of Newman's film, "HUD," which will be screened at 7 p.m.

The annual ShortsFest has moved in a new direction this year as well, according to Duncan.

"We are super excited to be working with South Whidbey School District film instructor Justin Silva, who reached out to us regarding some strong local student documentaries," she explained. "We sent our ShortsFest curator, Seattle independent filmmaker Zachary Schneider, into the local school district to work with the youth and curate this year's ShortsFest. This is our first time featuring an entire student-driven event and we're excited to promote local student films and give them some exposure!"

Awards will be given for best documentary, best director and best cinematography. Winners will have an opportunity for a one-on-one film class on their work.

Another new aspect to WIFF this year is an effort to collaborate with other businesses on Whidbey Island.

"This year WIFF is in collaboration with Whidbey SeaTac Shuttle," said Duncan. "They took the WIFF poster design and literally wrapped the back of one of their buses. They are also working with the festival to bring people down from the north end of the island for movies. This kind of cross-business partnership helps bring the island together around a piece of programming geared to help bring tourists to the island and offer something fun for our locals."

"The current wrap promoting the film festival is bold, and a different format than we normally use," said D'Arcy Morgan, owner of Whidbey SeaTac Shuttle and Charter. "The wrap definitely reminds everyone of movies of the past that we all love. Over the holidays, the wraps caught

See FILM continued on page 8



Island County considers sales tax increase

By **Kathy Reed** Whidbey Weekly

Island County commissioners will hold a public hearing Tuesday, Jan. 18 at 10 a.m. to discuss a one-tenth of one percent increase in the county's sales tax to support affordable housing.

Commissioner Janet St. Clair held a town hall meeting via Zoom last Thursday to help increase public awareness and to discuss how the money generated from the proposed sales tax increase could be used.

"Let's talk a little bit about housing needs in Island County," she said to those attending the virtual meeting. "This is something that has been an issue before the board for a while. It is a pressing need, not just in Island County, but across our nation. It impacts seniors and their ability to age in place, families, workforce, employers as they try to find folks to work here and high-need individuals, such as those in need of supportive housing."

According to Island County Human Services, there are 1,897 households in the county that are severely rent-burdened, meaning 50-percent or more of their income goes towards paying for housing and utilities (according to 2019 Census data).

St. Clair said the ongoing affordable housing challenge has only worsened during the pandemic, with the Human Services Department seeing an exponential increase in calls for housing and mortgage assistance. She said while there are resources for housing development, such as grants, housing trust funds and document recording fees available locally, those sources are inadequate.

"What we've found is those alone have not necessarily proven to meet the need of our housing shortage in Island County," she said. "The board, in recognition of this and what a challenging issue it has been, dedicated about \$9.3 million of our American Rescue Plan dollars to this issue. In addition, last year the Washington State Legislature passed House Bill 1590, which offers yet another solution."

The legislature passed House Bill 1590 in early 2020, which took effect in June of that year. An amendment to the original RCW now allows the tax to be imposed by a "councilmanic authority." In other words, it can be enacted without a vote of the people by a city or county. Should commissioners eventually approve the measure, the sales tax in Island County would increase from 8.7 percent to 8.8 percent. In Oak Harbor, which has a sales tax of 8.9 percent, the sales tax would increase to 9 percent.

It is estimated the increase in the sales tax would generate about \$1.1 million per year. Under the law, 60 percent of the funds must be used for constructing affordable housing. The state legislature also approved House Bill 1070 in April 2021, which allows for the acquisition of property with those funds. Those eligible to live in designated affordable housing would have to have earnings at 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) or below.

If commissioners do approve the increase, the earliest it could take effect would be July 1. Also under the terms of HB 1590, cities can adopt the increase on their own prior to a county

See TAX continued on page 6





Bits & Pieces

learn more about the brief amount of time they spend on terra firma. Join the Whidbey Audubon Society for a lively, entertaining and in depth look at their lives, their strengths and their perils.

Osterlund spent her career as an advanced practical nurse in the acute care hospital setting. During those years she was the principal investigator for the Comedy in Chemotherapy study. She also performed a comedy character, Ivy Push, RN, for national audiences. She now devotes herself full time to the well-being of Hawaii's native birds, with a special focus on the Laysan Albatross. She wrote *Holy Mōli: Albatross and Other Ancestors* (Oregon State University Press, 2016, 4th printing), produced a short documentary called *Kalama's Journey*, www.albatross-kauai.org, and a bird guide for Kaua'i.

[Submitted by Susan Prescott, Whidbey Audubon Publicity Chair]

Whidbey Island Grown Cooperative Launches Fundraiser to Expand Food Hub Operations

Whidbey Island Grown Cooperative (WIGC), a multi-stakeholder cooperative on Whidbey Island, has launched a campaign to raise \$50,000 in funds to purchase equipment and infrastructure to expand operations of its Food Hub program.

WIGC's mission is to support a viable agricultural economy, increase the production and sales of local agricultural products, and build a resilient and healthy community. The Food Hub—launched during the pandemic in May 2020—provides a robust online marketplace for local farmers and producers to list their products. Retail customers pick up their orders weekly at one of three distribution spots across Whidbey Island, assured that their produce, meat, and dairy are the freshest and healthiest possible. Business customers receive weekly deliveries of local products.

Central to the Food Hub's success has been the generous donation by member farms of infrastructure, space, and equipment. Evenstar Farm has allowed the Food Hub to use its refrigerated van to safely and efficiently transport orders up and down the island. Bell's Farm has allowed the Food Hub to use its barn for packing, storage, and headquarters. Mutiny Bay Blues, Orchard Farm & Kitchen, Sherman's Pioneer Farm, and the Oak Harbor Elks Lodge all allow Food Hub producers to drop off products or distributors to hand out orders to customers.

In 2021, the Food Hub experienced more than 25 percent growth in sales and customers. On its biggest distribution day, over 100 orders and \$9,000 in local products were distributed across Whidbey Island. Annual sales topped \$230,000 with \$198,000 in direct payments to local producers and farmers. Over 900 customers placed 3,000 orders on the Food Hub.

Anticipating even more growth in 2022, WIGC is ready to source a larger refrigerated truck and lease space to use as headquarters for office space, product aggregation and storage, order packing and distribution. Infrastructure of its own is an important next step in the development of the Food Hub.

Two generous community members have agreed to donate the funds to purchase a larger refrigerator truck for the Food Hub. In addition to the truck, WIGC would like to purchase a walk-in cooler and freezer, and build infrastructure into the space and truck, including a humidity and temperature controlled storage space for winter crops such as potatoes, and racks/shelving for transporting new items such as plant starts through the Food Hub.

As food supply chain problems continue, and increasing droughts and flooding affect crop yields, it's more important than ever to strengthen the local island food system, making it as strong and resilient as possible. The Food Hub provides local farmers, ranchers, and other food producers with additional markets and income.

The Food Hub also connects the north, central, and south areas of Whidbey Island, allowing farmers and producers to reach new customers, and allowing customers to buy from farmers all over the island without additional travel time. Both producers and customers point to the island-wide connections as a major benefit of the Food Hub.

WIGC's fundraiser will continue until its goal is reached.

Donate now at: <https://nabc.betterworld.org/campaigns/whidbey-island-grown> Visit WIGC's fundraiser page at: www.whidbey-islandgrown.com/fundraiser

[Submitted by Shannon Bly, Whidbey Island Grown Cooperative]

Commissioner Named to State Pandemic Review Task Force

Melanie Bacon, chair for the Island County Board of Commissioners for 2022, will represent all of Washington state's 39 counties on a task force formed to improve the response to, and recovery from, possible future pandemics.

Bacon, whose district encompasses South and Central Whidbey, was recently appointed to the state Pandemic After-Action Review (AAR) Task Force by Gov. Jay Inslee.

"Serving the citizens of Washington is a real privilege, and I hope you find this to be a rewarding experience," Inslee said in a Dec. 29 letter to Bacon. "Thank you for your willingness to serve the people of Washington."

Bacon, who represents District One on the board of commissioners, was nominated to the task force by the Washington Association of Counties.

"I'm honored to have been selected and I'm very excited about it," she said.

While nobody was fully prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic, Bacon said she believes she was selected to serve on the state task force because Island County had "one of the better responses."

"We all knew there would be a pandemic sometime, and Island County did have an

emergency plan in place, but that plan hadn't been updated, nor were people trained to respond to a pandemic," Bacon said. "It was the same across the state."

Island County was very proactive, being among the first, for example, to purchase special vaccine storage units prior to release of the vaccines, Bacon said. As a result, Island County was one of the first to receive the COVID-19 vaccines and was able to refrigerate vaccines for other entities in the county.

"I'm proud of how we handled our response to the pandemic," Bacon said. "This task force's findings will enable us to do even better next time." The Board of Island County Commissioners is planning to conduct its own post-pandemic review, and Bacon said what she learns from serving on the state AAR task force will undoubtedly provide valuable information that will benefit Island County's effort.

As a member of the Washington Association of Counties, Bacon said she will also be sharing what she's learned with that organization so that all counties in the state benefit.

The state Military Department is facilitating the task force and conducting a comprehensive after-action review of the state-wide pandemic response and recovery," said Sheri Sawyer, senior policy advisor for the governor's office.

The AAR task force is funded under the Legislature's 2020-23 operating budget, she said.

The task force is expected to report its initial findings and recommendations to the governor and legislative committees by June 20, 2022 and final recommendations and findings are due June 20, 2023.

[Submitted by Keven R. Graves, Public Information Officer for COVID Outreach, Island County]

WhidbeyHealth Welcomes James Golder to Board

WhidbeyHealth board of commissioners and staff welcomes James Dean Golder as the commissioner for District 2. Golder was elected to the seat during the 2021 general election. Elections of Hospital district commissioners are non-partisan. The seat was previously occupied by Commissioner Kurt Blankenship, who was appointed to fill a vacancy in 2017.

Golder is a former Idaho State Representative and brings his substantial experience as a business owner before moving to Whidbey Island.

"We welcome Mr. Golder to the Board and would like to thank Mr. Blankenship for his dedication to our community," said board President Ron Wallin.

WhidbeyHealth is an accredited Critical Access Hospital with seven primary care and specialty clinics serving the community of Whidbey Island, Wash. Learn more about WhidbeyHealth system and Board online: whidbeyhealth.org.

[Submitted by Conor O'Brien, Marketing Manager, WhidbeyHealth]

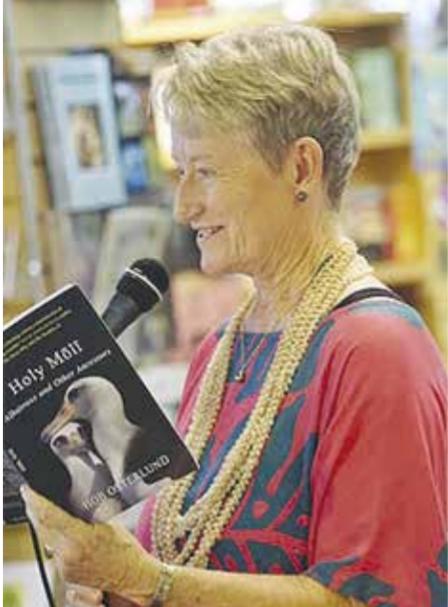
NAS Whidbey Island's SAR Unit's First Missions of 2022

A Search and Rescue (SAR) team from Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island conducted its first two missions for this calendar year last week, as well as two other missions late last year.

Both 2022 missions were Medical Evacuations (MEDEVACs), one from Coupeville Jan. 5 for a six-year old boy suffering from pneumonia, the other from Lopez Island the day prior for a 73-year old woman suffering cardiac complications.

The NAS Whidbey Island SAR team received notification for assistance for the child in Coupeville while on a training mission just before 2:30PM. After refueling

The Superlative Laysan Albatross



Hob Osterlund reading from her book, *Holy Mōli: Albatross and Other Ancestors*.

Everything about Laysan Albatross is superlative: they fly unbelievable distances, live longer than any other wild bird and are iconically devoted to their chicks. They spend about 90 percent of their lives airborne and most of that time is solitary. Whidbey Audubon Society is hosting Hob Osterlund, founder of the Kaua'i Albatross Network, Thursday in a virtual educational program from 7:00 to 8:30PM. The public is welcome to attend but must register by noon, Jan. 13 at www.whidbeyaudubonsociety.org, see Events. A link to the Zoom address will be sent that afternoon. There is a brief general membership meeting at 7:00PM and the program begins at 7:30PM.

All species of albatross nest on remote islands, however, it can be difficult to see them in person. The Hawaiian Island of Kaua'i is an exception to the rule and is the only place in the world where albatross nest within a good-sized community of humans. Laysans likely nested there for millions of years but disappeared when people arrived about a thousand years ago. In the 1970s a few birds, likely from Midway Atoll, began visiting Kaua'i again. In 1979 the first chick fledged from its shores in perhaps a millennium. Since then, the population has grown gradually and has given observers a chance to



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they proceeded directly to WhidbeyHealth in Coupeville, then flew the boy to Seattle Children's Hospital in Seattle.

For the Lopez Island request, NAS Whidbey Island received an alert Monday afternoon and was able to transport the patient from Lopez Airfield to St. Joseph's Medical Center in Bellingham at approximately 3:30PM.

NAS Whidbey Island's SAR unit closed out 2021 with another MEDEVAC from Coupeville to Swedish Medical Center in Seattle for a 72-year-old man who suffered a severe stroke Dec. 30, 2021. The day prior, a SAR team rescued a man who suffered a broken leg in the Cascades, approximately 15 miles north of Berdeen Lake, and flew him to St. Joseph's Medical Center.

Naval Air Station Whidbey Island SAR conducted 54 missions in 2021, which includes 14 MEDEVACs, 35 rescues, and five searches.

The Navy SAR unit operates three MH-60S helicopters from NAS Whidbey Island as search and rescue/medical evacuation (SAR/MEDEVAC) platforms for the EA-18G aircraft as well as other squadrons and personnel assigned to the installation. Pursuant to the National SAR Plan of the United States, the unit may also be used for civil SAR/MEDEVAC needs to the fullest extent practicable on a non-interference basis with primary military duties according to applicable national directives, plans, guidelines and agreements; specifically, the unit may launch in response to tasking by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (based on a Washington State Memorandum of Understanding) for inland missions, and/or tasking by the United States Coast Guard for all other aeronautical and maritime regions, when other assets are unavailable.

[Submitted by Mike Welding, Public Affairs Officer, NAS Whidbey Island]

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Illustration by D. Montgomerie

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TAX continued from page 2

taking action, which would include Langley, Coupeville and Oak Harbor. Should Island County commissioners not pass the increase, those jurisdictions would then be able to do so on their own.

Langley and Coupeville have relinquished that option, deferring to Island County commissioners to enact the tax increase. Oak Harbor City Council members discussed the issue at last week's regular council meeting, with several of them voicing concern over taking the decision out of the hands of the people.

"I really have a problem with dipping into people's pockets for something we don't have a plan on and without their vote," said Councilman Dan Evans. "When you read the RCW for this specific situation, the first paragraph states that you can do this with a vote. Well, now they've made an amendment to it so the second paragraph says, 'or you can skip the vote.' That doesn't sit right with me or the people that voted for me, so I'm encouraging us to not send a letter championing a hope and dream tax."

"By the city sending a letter of support of this without having public comment or public hearing or input from our constituents and the people in this city, I almost feel like we're speaking out of turn," said Councilman Jim Woessner. "We're basically saying the citizens of our community are in favor of this and I don't know that we have enough information to say that... I guess I just have a problem endorsing this on behalf of the people of our community without having that public hearing or public comment period."

"What we're talking about is 10 cents out of every \$100 spent, to put it in perspective," said Councilwoman Tara Hizon, adding she believes the people have spoken. "The number one



public comment we receive here at meetings is, people are concerned about affordable housing, they are concerned about the homeless population and they want their local government to do something to help...I think [Island County Human Services] would be very good stewards of any funding they receive. They have the manpower and the infrastructure and the systems to do it."

"On the campaign trail I'm not sure if affordable housing or 'Quit raising our taxes' came up more," said newly elected Councilman Shane Hoffmire. "Something needs [to be] done with both."

After lengthy discussion, council members agreed to allow Mayor Bob Severns to send a letter to Island County commissioners outlining their concerns, specifically in terms of the matter of public comment.

Public involvement in the process, said Commissioner St. Clair, is exactly what she wants.

"This is an issue of extraordinary importance to us," she said. "I think public input and public outreach is important...so I encourage you, if you want to have official comments on this issue, please send them to commentbocc@islandcountywa.gov or attend the public hearing coming up on Jan. 18 and be heard and have your comments recorded there."

Pam's Prayer Corner

In honor of my late mother-in-law, Pamela Kaye Young, this column is a place where believers can share their prayer requests for others to help lift them up in faith.

The prayers can be for you, a family member, or anything weighing on your soul. Email info@whidbeyweekly.com or call 360-682-2341 to share your prayer requests.

We hear the wonderful and joyous celebration of the peoples of the world gathering in Jerusalem for the annual Pentecost feast (a type of Thanksgiving holiday for harvest and provision from God). At this gathering, ethnic and linguistic diversity is drawn together by a move of the Holy Spirit. Languages are bridges to the soul of people. To hear and share the wonders of God in a multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic gathering would surely be heaven come down to earth. In a manner of speaking, this is the heart of our annual MLK day of celebration. Let us pray that this move occurs again on earth as it will be in heaven.

Holy Father,

Let your righteous and truthful ways lead us in this season of dark skies and blustery, whipping winds. May the storms and tempests of this world cause us to look to you to be the strength of our lives. Grant us a full measure of devotion to your kingdom as we seek to gather our diversity under the language of love. Let us all hear, through the translating convictions of your Holy Spirit, the testimony of praise as we hear the wonders of God in our own languages. Speak to us this day, O Sovereign Lord. Let us be moved into the meaning of kingdom citizenship and the manner of your loving heart for the world. We place our loves, our community, our nation, and our world securely in your arms of love. We trust you for the journey that lies ahead. May your kingdom come, and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!

Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray, Amen!

Pastor David Parker
First United Methodist Church

"How is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'" Acts 2:8-12



SATURDAY, NOV. 6

4:22 pm, Sandberg Ln.

Advising subjects taking pictures and flash is blinding her; can't see person, only flashes. Said "It needs to end" and disconnected.

SUNDAY, NOV. 7

9:09 am, NE 8th St.

Sometime this morning car drove through reporting party's yard. Followed grass tracks to car. Car has vomit all over the side of it.

4:08 pm, Deer Lake Rd.

Advising subjects just cut gas line to his tan Chevy half-ton truck at location. Reporting party is going to try to make it from location back to residence on Harding Avenue, requesting contact.

MONDAY, NOV. 8

8:09 am, Goss Lake Rd.

Calling about February of 2020 and people keeping her up all night.

4:22 pm, SR 20

Caller advising old box truck is pulling motorhome with no wheels; dragging it down the road; metal on roadway sparking; Transferred to state.

TUESDAY, NOV. 9

9:25 am, SR 20

Advising went from district court to Safe-way to pick up a mask; advising is being raped by the church; Spiritual rape.

4:13 pm, Cornet Bay Rd.

Caller advising found deceased male subject on beach; appears to be 50-year-old male; may have washed up with tide. Obviously deceased; at Cornet Bay; walked from boat launch on the walking path.

THURSDAY, NOV. 18

1:45 am, Cork Ln.

Reporting party advising heard some strange sounds around her window. Had young people casing her home yesterday.

6:47 am, Robin Ln.

Reporting party advising dump trailer full of garbage was stolen from location; occurred sometime last night. Unknown who would have taken it.

8:3 1 am, Mutiny Bay Rd.

Reporting party states vehicle is partially blocking road with female driver asleep.

9:44 am, Crescent Dr.

Requesting call regarding mail carrier running into her mailbox last February.

12:31 pm, Alder View Ln.

Reporting party states his neighbor is harassing him. States neighbor came on his property and is using foul language.

4:36 pm, Scenic Heights Rd.

Reporting party states item was just delivered to his door and person put on ski mask to do so. Not sure if person was just cold, using ski mask as his mask to deliver package, or if male was casing the house. Subject delivered package and left.

7:06 pm, Meadowood Ln.

Reporting party advising two males and female about 20 years old come to location and make lots of noise; play music really loud; subjects at location right now.

9:31 pm, S Main St.

Reporting party advising someone stole her tire off her vehicle in the back parking lot of location.

FRIDAY, NOV. 19

12:45 am, Apollo Rd.

Advising heard subject walking around house; unknown where subject is now, since reporting party yelled at subject when she woke up; requesting drive by.

6:19 am, S Main St.

Reporting party advising male subject was in store; tried to get into employee vehicle; tried to get into store before they opened. Was walking around bare foot.

1:47 pm, Lakeside Dr.

Reporting party says her mother is freaking out and throwing rocks at her. Mother is still there.

3:51 pm, NW Front St.

Caller wants construction signs removed so people can park. Says they are not doing anything, anyways.

4:28 pm, Storkson Dr.

Reporting party states man outside of location lit torch in his hand. No weapons.

7:28 pm, S Main St.

Reporting party advising guy just said he is going to steal liquor from Red Apple. Reporting party does not know person.

Report provided by OHPD & Island County Sheriff's Dept.

January Fundraiser Saturday, January 15

10am-3pm

A little bit of everything: kitchen, collectibles, clothing, toys, electronics, baby items, home decor, tools & much more!



All proceeds go towards our operating expenses.

800 SE Barrington Drive
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MEET MICHAEL

Mechanic with Facilities and Maintenance

It's not hard to find Michael at Island Transit. He'll be under a bus. Not that he was thrown there. He likes working in the enormous mechanic's shop at the bus barn. It's in his DNA. His grandfather was a mechanic for King County Metro and his father works for Boeing as an airline mechanic. After getting his start working on cars at Simmon's Garage in Clinton, Michael decided to move up to working on buses at Island Transit. He brought electrical, body shop skills and mechanic skills with him. Though he's only 28, he took the job for the health and retirement benefits. Michael graduated from South Whidbey High School and married a young woman from an old island family, so he's here for the long haul. So far, he's put in three years at Island Transit and enjoys his work.



When the pandemic hit in March 2020, Michael's supervisor asked if he could make a protective screen for our bus operators. Bus drivers come into close contact with hundreds of people a day. They needed a barrier to protect them from direct exposure to COVID-19, was see-through and could move aside for bus operators to help people in wheelchairs when needed. Michael and his supervisor came in one Saturday, cut plexi-glass and re-purposed materials on-site to make these protective barrier "sneeze guards" for the first five buses that would be used during the lock-down. Months later, as the pandemic continued, routes were expanded and Michael was able to retrofit 45 more buses with these protective plexi-glass barriers in order to keep our bus operators safe. In 2021, he was voted Employee of the Year by the Island Transit staff.



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SPIDER-MAN: NO WAY HOME (PG-13)
Friday - Tuesday: 4:00pm & 7:00pm

SING 2 (PG)
Friday - Tuesday: 4:30pm & 7:30pm

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SPIDER-MAN: NO WAY HOME (PG-13)

SCREAM (R)

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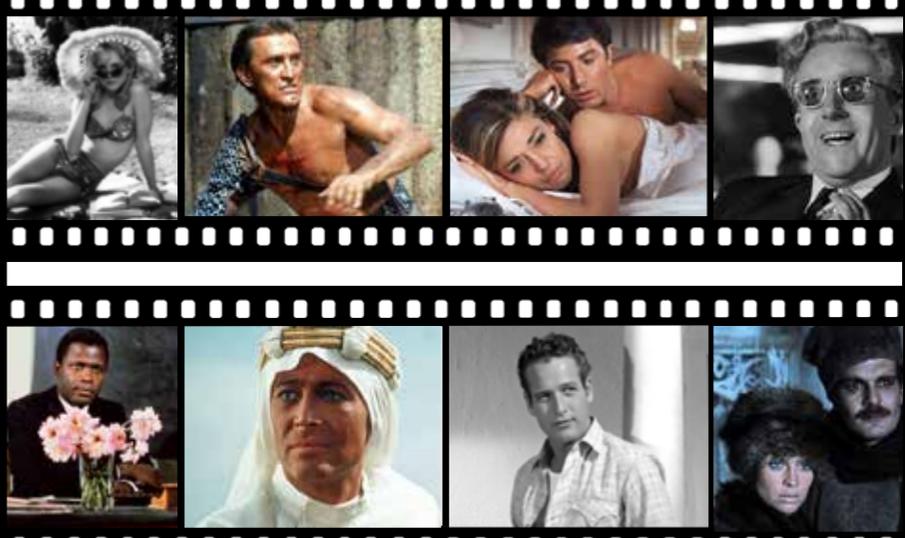
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Developer contradicts city claims regarding Oak Harbor's "Road to Nowhere"

By **Kathy Reed** Whidbey Weekly

Excruciating.

That's how the project manager for U-Haul Oak Harbor describes the process of trying to get the company's building plans approved by the City of Oak Harbor.

Terry Wellner appeared before the City Council at its regular meeting Jan. 4 to push back against information presented in two December council meetings regarding the Fakkema Access Road project, for which council members approved an engineering contract extension. (Read our story on page 6 of the Dec. 23-29 issue of *Whidbey Weekly*.)

The City of Oak Harbor has proposed building a "minimal" road on the east side of several parcels of land along State Route 20 in north Oak Harbor, between Mariner Self Storage on Regatta Drive to the south and Fakkema Road to the north. The city owns four parcels of land at Fakkema and Highway 20, where a stand of Garry Oak trees has been planted and which the city plans to develop into a park in the future.

The project was identified by the city in 2016 and was placed on the Capital Improvement Plan in 2018, with a projected cost of \$481 thousand. In December, *Whidbey Weekly* publisher and planning commission member Eric Marshall questioned council members about why the city was planning to spend nearly a half million dollars on what he called a "road to nowhere" in previous conversations with City Administrator Blaine Oborn. City staff told council members at the Dec. 7 meeting the cost of the project had increased to just over \$700 thousand. Additionally, Marshall questioned why the property owner was not being asked to pay for the road.

But according to Wellner, U-Haul was not consulted about the Fakkema Access Road design and said the company has offered to completely pay for better access off Highway 20.

"Early on, we offered to provide 100 percent of the cost to establish a safe right in/right out access off of Highway 20, with speed up lanes, slow down lanes, median barriers, whatever was required," Wellner told council members during the public comment portion of the meeting. "We also offered to move the entrance a couple hundred feet north, to where it would be a joint access for the city property and U-Haul, again with all of the appropriate slow down, speed up lanes, median barriers, etc."

At the Dec. 7 City Council meeting, city staff told council members they were not allowed by the Washington State Department of Transportation to access those parcels from Highway 20, despite an existing access point from a previous business, due to safety issues. However, Wellner said state DOT officials he spoke to seemed surprised to hear that. *Whidbey Weekly*



Map Courtesy of U-Haul Oak Harbor

The plans submitted by U-Haul Oak Harbor show its proposed plan to access the property from State Route 20. The portion outlined by the red circle shows the right in/right out turn lanes which would allow access to both U-Haul's property and the parcels owned by the City of Oak Harbor. The portion outlined in the red box on the left illustrates the road the city is requiring U-Haul to build that connects to Case Road on the left. City officials have suggested connecting that road to its proposed Fakkema Access Road thereby making a north-south alternate through route, but Case Road is currently a private road and the U-Haul plans call for ending their portion of the road more than 300 feet from Case Road.



Photo Courtesy of the City of Oak Harbor
Terry Wellner, project manager for U-Haul Oak Harbor, shares comments related to the city's proposed Fakkema Access Road with members of the Oak Harbor City Council Jan. 4. Wellner described the process of working with the city as excruciating, saying it has already taken more than twice the amount of time as other similar projects across the country.

spoke to Chris Damitio, assistant regional director for the DOT's Northwest Region Tuesday afternoon. He said in cities, the DOT leaves those decisions with the city.

"In this case, we have encouraged that access not be allowed, but at the end of day, it's assigned to the city," he said. "Whether it's up to a city or whether we regulate [a portion of roadway], we are essentially trying to maintain safety and mobility. We agree with the city's position on this and have shared that with them, but at the end of the day, it is the city's decision."

Wellner told *Whidbey Weekly* by phone the access road planned by the city is inadequate for their needs and said they would still like to work with the city to gain access off Highway 20.

"We have semi-trucks that go in and out with U-boxes (large shipping containers)," he explained. "Folks in the military, and other folks, load them up, U-Haul stores them for a while, then they are shipped through common carrier, so there will be semi-trucks going in and out. The road the city is planning is inadequate."

"It was a surprise to me their [proposed] road is so inadequate," Wellner continued. "It was like a slap in face. There was no consideration for trucks, no visibility of the site, it couldn't have been planned worse. We would like safe, right in/right out access, with a median barrier to prevent left turns. We're even glad to help with the 'road to nowhere,' provided they don't hold it over our heads and prevent us getting State Route 20 access."

In addition, City staff told the council at the Dec. 14 meeting that U-Haul would be extending the proposed road south to Case Road as part of the second phase of its development, thereby creating a north-south alternative route drivers could use in the future. Case Road is currently a private road. Wellner told council members U-Haul does not have permission to access Case Road from its property.

"We were coerced into providing the 1200 feet, so we're paying for 1200 feet of roadway across the east side of Phase Two of our site," Wellner told the council. "Lanktree Surveying investigated the easements for us on Case Road

and found that U-Haul has no right to use Case Road for access. The owners of the properties on Case Road said that we could use that access for emergency only and they were not interested in increased traffic from U-Haul or anybody else."

In a subsequent email to *Whidbey Weekly*, Wellner said U-Haul is committed to building the road, but it will be blocked off about 340 feet north of Case Road.

"This was a condition of our obtaining site plan approval for Phase I," he wrote.

In addition, Wellner told council members issues with the city's former interim engineer slowed the entire building process down.

"Your part time city engineer at one time, held up our project for years, informing us that his time was more valuable than ours, that he only worked for the city two days a week and he usually talked with his traffic engineer Friday afternoon and if either one of them weren't available, well, too bad," he said. "The same engineer withheld site plan approval to us continuously until our traffic study was rewritten to say exactly what he wanted."

There were several changes in city staff between 2018 and 2021, and the city has confirmed it hired people on an interim basis to fill the city engineer vacancy. Alex Warner was hired as a civil engineer in 2015 and was promoted to the city engineer position in May 2021. Wellner said communication with the city has improved, but much of the planning was already cast in stone before Warner became the city engineer.

Wellner refutes much of what city staff has told city council members, and those who responded to *Whidbey Weekly's* request for their reaction to his comments said they think more questions need to be asked.

"There is, of course, two sides to every story," Councilman Bryan Stucky wrote in an email. "I have no reason to fault the information that Mr. Wellner has provided, but I also need to give the city staff time to work on a presentation that shows the situation from their perspective. A project with a long history like this is likely to have discrepancies and the truth is often somewhere in the middle."

"More important, however, is where do we go from here?" he continued. "If U-Haul is indeed willing to pay for a road and does not require the city to purchase one, why would we proceed to build one? What is the impact on U-Haul's proposed road regarding safety? If the city parcels are only suitable to be a park and no other businesses will be entering, why is the city's proposed road still necessary? Could this money be better suited to other road projects? I know city staff is working on questions such as these, and I am looking forward to hearing their answers."

Wellner, who is himself a contractor for U-Haul, told council members the process has been "excruciating," citing cost overruns and huge carrying costs on the property.

"This has been particularly difficult," he said to *Whidbey Weekly*. "I've built many larger facilities in other cities across the country and it's taken about two years to complete them. We've been at this four-and-a-half years and we've barely scratched dirt."

Still, Wellner said U-Haul Oak Harbor wants to be an asset to the community going forward.

"U-Haul wants to be a good participant in the community," he said. "We want to feel like a part of the community and contribute. We've done that all over the country; we like to participate in all kinds of helpful activities. But we sure feel like we're not being treated fairly."

The Fakkema Access Road is currently on the city's Capital Improvement Plan for this year. If the council decides to move forward with the project, construction could begin in the second quarter.

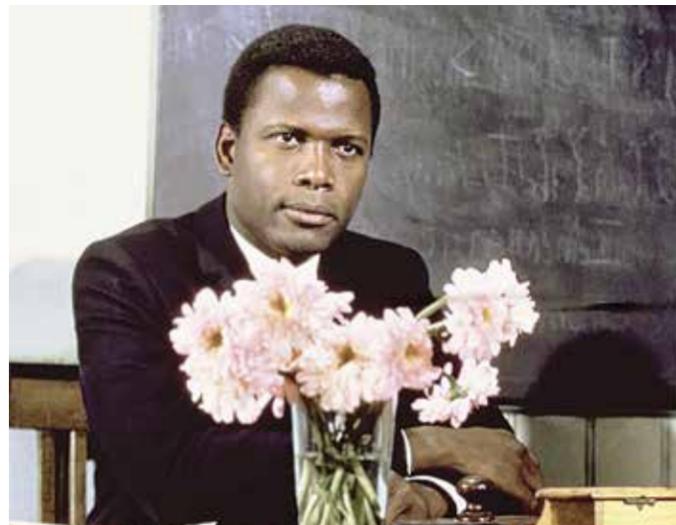


Photo Courtesy of Whidbey Island Film Festival
The late actor Sidney Poitier will be honored at the Whidbey Island Film Festival. Thursday evening's opening gala will celebrate him beginning at 6 p.m., to be followed by the screening of his movie, "To Sir, With Love," at 7 p.m.

FILM continued from page 8

our customers' eyes, and people are excited about the upcoming festival."

Morgan said the shuttle and charter service is no stranger to supporting local festivals and events.

"What excites us is to move people to events such as the film festival, that would not normally be able to attend," he said. "Or if they wished to attend and enjoy a social beverage without the worry of driving."

All COVID-19 safety protocols will be followed, said Duncan, which includes masking, proof of vaccination and the theater is operating at half capacity to provide distancing. The theater also boasts a state-of-the-art HVAC system to help provide clean air inside the facility. All these measures are aimed at making audiences feel comfortable and encouraging people to come out and enjoy the festival.

"WIFF is relatively new programming in a community looking at ways to partner and grow relationships between patrons, artists, and businesses," Duncan said. "Attending WIFF helps fuel local economic and artistic growth. Please consider coming to even just one film to show your support for a Whidbey Island Film Festival."



OUR Community

An Upbeat Question of the week

By Helen Mosbrooker

What is the best book you read last year and why?



Marge Glenn, Oak Harbor

I am picking a book that had useful information, "Inconspicuous Consumption: The Environmental Impact You Don't Know You Have," by Tatiana Schlossberg. Schlossberg focused on four areas—the internet and technology, food, fashion, and fuel in her book. The book has pertinent data. For example, "Globally, nearly 70 percent of e-waste is unaccounted for, meaning that it doesn't end up in formal recycling centers. There are estimated to be about 100,000 workers in Congolese cobalt mines, including children, who toil hundreds of feet below the earth's surface, earning up to \$2-3 on a good day. Governments and tech companies have abandoned responsibility for this problem and millions of vulnerable people are exposed to the damage of our collective tech addiction." (loc. 971, 828, 1014)

This current consumption profligacy is not sustainable and results in social and material inequity.

Merry Malloy, Oak Harbor

The book that stands out for me is "Educated," an autobiographical memoir by Tara Westover. It's about getting educated. But what is education? The young author was born in Idaho in 1986. Family, religion, violence, conflict and loyalties all play a part in her "education." What I found insightful was how her family lived. Of course, all families are different. I found it disheartening that in this place and time in the U. S., things like this are still happening.

Interesting and eye opening on many levels. Inspiring and easy to read.



Diane Grace Barner, Oak Harbor

My favorite book for 2021 was "The Eye of the World," book one of the "Wheel of Time" series by Robert Jordan. The series has 14 books and I was able to complete all 14. I started in July and completed the series in October. Even after all 14 books, and the fact that the last three were written by another author because Robert Jordan passed away before completing the series, the first was my favorite.

This book followed the usual formula of the fantasy genre, where the reluctant hero struggles against the ultimate evil, and as the first book in such a long series, the author must

capture the attention of the reader early and convince her, as soon as possible, to fully commit to seeing the story through. Jordan did not disappoint; the story has the perfect balance of action, adventure, romance, soul searching and world building.

Pam Thompson, Coupeville

In the past year, I have been reading a lot of World War II novels. Something lighter was needed. "West With Giraffes," by Lynda Rutledge, was perfect. It is a wonderful book based on a true event.

1938 was a grim time in America. We were in the midst of the depression, and there was not much to smile about. Then came the news that the first two giraffes in America would be arriving in New York, followed by a 12-day trek to their new home at the San Diego Zoo. The cities on the route were elated.

Also arriving in New York was a teenaged orphan from the Dust Bowl, Woodrow Nickel. Woody got the first break of his life when he was hired to replace a driver on the truck hauling the giraffes. Woody, in helping to care for the giraffes, found the first two friends of his life. He felt saved.

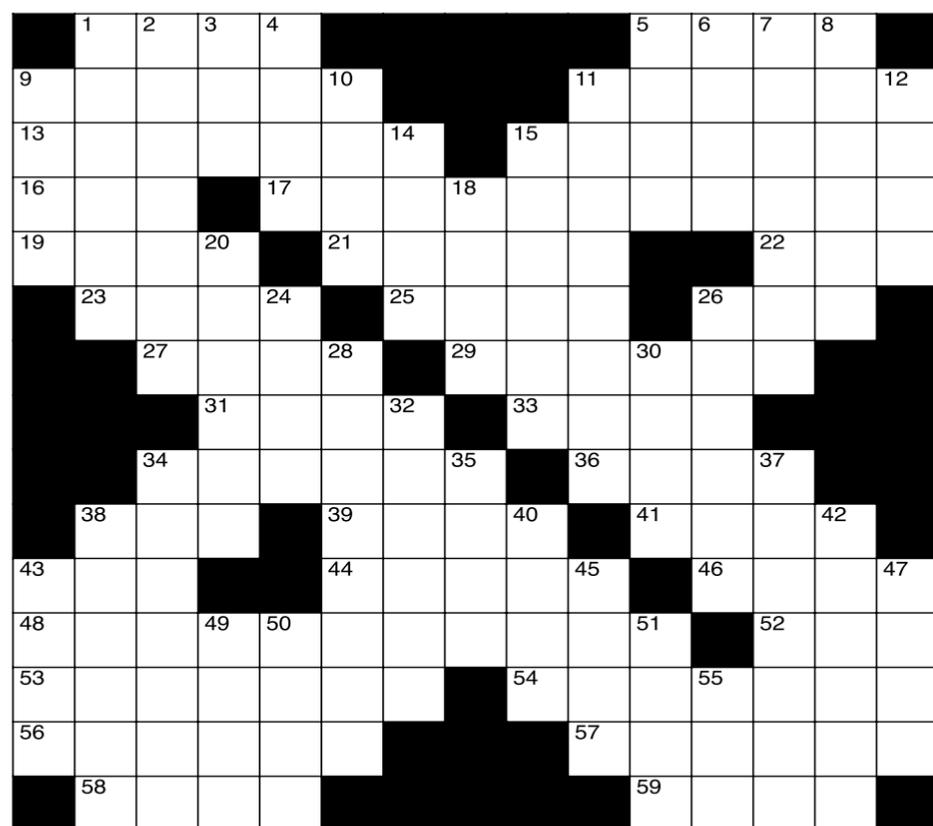
It was a sweet book. I might just read it again.



YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS OURS WEATHER FORECAST

Thurs, Jan. 13	Fri, Jan. 14	Sat, Jan. 15	Sun, Jan. 16	Mon, Jan. 17	Tues, Jan. 18	Wed, Jan. 19
North Isle H-49°/L-40° Rain and Drizzle	North Isle H-47°/L-42° Cloudy	North Isle H-48°/L-39° Cloudy	North Isle H-49°/L-41° Mostly Cloudy	North Isle H-47°/L-40° Mostly Cloudy	North Isle H-48°/L-39° Cloudy	North Isle H-48°/L-41° Showers Possible
South Isle H-49°/L-42° Rain and Drizzle	South Isle H-46°/L-41° Cloudy	South Isle H-47°/L-37° Cloudy	South Isle H-47°/L-40° Mostly Cloudy	South Isle H-45°/L-40° Cloudy	South Isle H-46°/L-37° Cloudy	South Isle H-46°/L-41° Showers Possible

Crossword Puzzle



CLUES ACROSS

- Breathe noisily
- ___ Nui, Easter Island
- Reddish browns
- Produce alcohol illegally
- Home to famed golf tournament
- Tax collector
- Famous people
- Urban area
- Units of syllable weight
- Pituitary hormone (abbr.)
- Dismounted
- Actor Damon
- Vietnamese offensive
- Retail term
- Netted
- Partner to carrots
- Witnesses
- Caulked
- Satisfy
- R&B performer ___ Lo
- Monetary units of Macao
- Give advice, explain

CLUES DOWN

- Illinois city
- One of the original disciples chosen by Christ
- Young form of a louse
- Type of powder
- Finger millet
- Share a common boundary
- Assumed as a fact
- Provide clear evidence of
- Invests in little enterprises
- A way to be
- Monies given in support
- Fashion accessory
- Steal
- Becomes less intense
- Geological times
- Hooray!
- Monetary unit
- Male reproductive organs
- Earnings
- Close by
- Small integers
- Fixed in place
- Used to treat Parkinson's disease
- Large, imposing building
- A rooflike shelter
- Stiff, hairlike structure
- Print errors
- To show disapproval
- Body of traditions
- Without
- ___ Clapton, musician
- Dangerous illegal drug
- Infrequent
- Sound unit

Answers on page 11

CAN DO SUDOKU!

On a scale from 1 to 10...4.7

Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order
Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order
Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9

6		8	1					4
			7			3	6	
		2		6			9	1
	2			7			4	
			5		2			
	1			3			2	
4	8			9			2	
	5	1			7			
3					4	5		6

Answers on page 11



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- ✓ FREE Battery Fluid & Fill

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- Check Charging System
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The Whidbey Island community is encouraged to try out the paddling sport of dragon boating with the Stayin' Alive team. Our team's mission is to promote the physical, social, and emotional benefits of dragon boating. It has been shown to be especially beneficial to cancer survivors. Practice with us for up to 3 times for free. Life-jackets and paddles provided. Saturdays at the Oak Harbor Marina, 8:45am. Contact njlish@gmail.com. More info at our Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/NorthPugetSoundDragonBoatClub?ref=hl

Medical Marijuana patients unite; If you need assistance, advice, etc. please contact at 420patientnetworking@gmail.com. Local Whidbey Island help.

If you or someone you know has been a victim of homicide, burglary, robbery, assault, identity theft, fraud, human trafficking, home invasion and other crimes not listed, Victim Support Services has advocates ready to help. Please call the 24-hr Crisis Line 888-388-9221.

Free service. Visit our web site at <http://victimsupport-services.org>

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Island Shakespeare Festival is seeking new members to join our Board of Directors. We're looking for people who are passionate about high-quality live classical theater and can devote time and energy to support the work of Island Shakespeare Festival's important cultural, social, and fiscal position on Whidbey Island. Our current needs include individuals with backgrounds in the following areas: human resources, donor relations, finance, as well as other skills related to overseeing a performing arts organization. Board members are asked to provide input and feedback to the Board and staff of ISF, attend one full board meeting per month, serve actively on board committees, and attend activities and events sponsored by ISF. Women and persons of color strongly encouraged to apply. For more information, please contact jeff.natter@island-shakespearefest.org.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Island County (BBBSIC) is actively seeking new member(s) for its Board of Directors. Join the board's exciting array of professionals! BBBSIC is seeking individuals who are committed to defending the potential of youth in our community through their time, skill sets, and influence in the community. To complement the existing board, candidates with expertise in accounting, law, nonprofit management, networking, or fundraising are of particular interest. Committed to diversifying its board to better represent our community, BBBSIC encourages BIPOC and LGBTQIA community members to inquire. Please contact admin@bbbsislandcounty.org for more information.

The Island County Medical Reserve Corps (ICMRC) is a local network of volunteers organized to improve the health and safety of communities on Whidbey and Camano Islands. Volunteers primarily include medical and

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public health professionals but other volunteers who have no healthcare backgrounds are also utilized. MRC responds to local emergencies such as natural disasters and public health emergencies. If you are interested in volunteering please contact us at Island County MRC website for application and information.

If you are looking for a meaningful volunteer opportunity, look no further! When you volunteer at one of the Habitat for Humanity of Island County stores, you are helping local families attain decent, affordable housing. Income from the stores is vital to giving families a path to homeownership. We need people who can commit to help out in our Oak Harbor or Freeland store at least two-hours per week. Schedules are flexible. Our friendly volunteers provide customer service, help with receiving donated household items and furniture, and maintain the store. We also need drivers and driver helpers who will professionally represent Habitat as they pick up donated items using our trucks. Please call either store for more information. Oak Harbor: 360-675-8733, Freeland: 360-331-6272.

College student? Student of history? History buff? Opportunities are available to spend constructive volunteer hours at the Pacific Northwest Naval Air Museum. Go to www.pnwnam.org and click on "Volunteer" or just stop by and introduce yourself.

Mother Mentors needs volunteers! Oak Harbor families with young children need your help! Volunteer just a couple of hours a week to

make a difference in someone's life! To volunteer or get more info, email wamothermentors@gmail.com or call 360-321-1484.

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Island Transit is Hiring! If you are looking for a solid career with great pay and benefits including two retirement plans, we are hiring. Visit www.islandtransit.org/employment to apply. Island Transit is a drug and alcohol free workplace and an equal employment opportunity employer.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Steinway vintage pianos – Pro-Tech rebuilder, refinisher collection. Probate Sale: Steinway "A", 6'-2" ebony satin; Steinway "B", 6'-11" ebony polished; Steinway "O", 5'-10" ebony satin; Steinway "D", 9' ebony polished; Total of 12 Steinways available. Other makes and models also available. At this time, we have 19 pianos we would like to sell as a package to an investor. Maybe to be sold overseas. 360-632-5440 (1)

ANIMALS/SUPPLIES

Good Quality Grass Horse Hay round bales for sale, \$70: Feeder Round Bales for sale, \$60. 360-321-1624 (1)

If you or someone you know needs help in feeding pet(s),

How'd you do?

6	3	8	1	2	9	7	5	4
1	4	9	7	5	8	3	6	2
5	7	2	4	6	3	8	9	1
8	2	5	9	7	1	6	4	3
9	6	3	5	4	2	1	7	8
7	1	4	8	3	6	9	2	5
4	8	6	3	9	5	2	1	7
2	5	1	6	8	7	4	3	9
3	9	7	2	1	4	5	8	6

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FARMERS INSURANCE

WAIF Pet Food Banks may be able to help. Pet Food Banks are located at WAIF thrift stores in Oak Harbor (465 NE Midway Blvd) and Freeland (1660 Roberta Ave) and are generously stocked by donations from the community. If you need assistance, please stop by.

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	P	A	N	T			R	A	P	A				
S	E	P	I	A	S		S	A	B	O	T	S		
B	O	O	T	L	E	G		A	U	G	U	S	T	A
I	R	S		C	E	L	E	B	R	I	T	I	E	S
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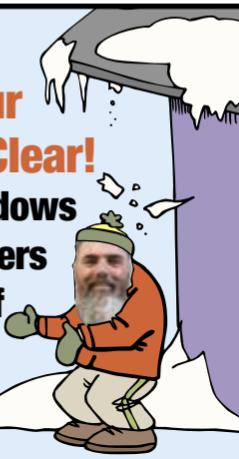
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The Seeds of Service are Sown Deep at Island Herb

By Kae Harris

When it comes to customer service, you want to know that wherever you go, whatever the establishment, the staff understands a thing or two about their industry. At Island Herb, a 21+ cannabis dispensary and shop, the staff is a wonderful mix of knowledgeable believers in natural medicine and the recreational value of cannabis. Couple this passion for the plant with expertise and the desire to dispense nothing but the best customer service and you have an experience second to none.

Lucas Jushinski, owner of Island Herb, has first-hand experience with cannabis and alternative medicine after serving in the Middle East as a medic and dealing with the subsequent fallout post trauma often brings. Striving to educate everyone who wants to know more about the plant and the wealth of positive benefits it can provide, Lucas leads the way when it comes to the pure motivation to succeed in all areas – not just in the business world. His drive goes beyond profit; it's about the removal of a stigma and this is palpable from the moment you enter the dispensary.

Island Herb is a step outside of the 'traditional store' and, with a mixture of calm and serenity working in conjunction with functionality, has it all in one location. From edibles and drinkables to tinctures and topicals, the products are extensive and impressive, to say the least. With gorgeous wood counter tops, it brings a little of the Whidbey Island outdoorsy feel inside and is all part-and-parcel of your shopping experience.

Working with growers who provide only the most superior plants, Island Herb is proactive in providing nothing but the best, connecting with like-minded people throughout the industry from the word go. Teaming up with innovative minds and transferring those ideals into the very core of the far above par customer engagement, you will always have the benefit of professionalism, skill and expertise invested in the interaction you have with any member of the Island Herb team.

If the quality of the products, the depth of knowledge and understanding of an age old plant and the warmth and calm of the staff's attitude isn't enough to usher you in to take a look at their product line, then perhaps consider the 10 percent military discount offered to those who serve, and have served. It speaks volumes of their dedication not only to the community of which they are a part, but to those who willingly answered a call to serve their fellow citizens. It's the epitome of customer service!

Want to take a look for yourself? Check out their website, which offers a regularly updated online menu for your convenience. It can be found at www.whidbeyislandherb.com or call 360-331-0140. Even better, just stop in and get all the goods from start to finish - interaction, information and products, at 5565 Vanbarr Pl, Unit F, Freeland.

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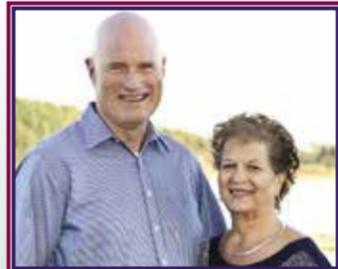
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