

whatcom Independent

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ISSUE 142

August 10-16, 2006

FREE EVERY THURSDAY

KCLT gets final approval for Matthei Place

■ *Approval contingent on all units being "permanently affordable"*

by **MARILYN OLSEN**
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BELLINGHAM - Monday, Bellingham City Council gave the Kulshan Community Land Trust (KCLT) final approval to develop 14 single-family lots for permanently affordable owner-occupied homes in Matthei Place located at 15th Street and Harris Avenue. According to documents approved by the hearing examiner, the lots will range in size from 1,149 square feet to 2,818 square feet. Because Matthei Place qualifies as a demonstration project, KCLT is allowed to increase density up to 50 per cent on the site if 100 percent of the units in the project are retained as permanently affordable, owner-occupied homes. Kulshan plans to increase density 40 percent, building 14 units instead of the 10 they would ordinarily be limited to by zoning regulations.

The site was previously occupied by 19 multiple housing units, known as the Barracks, that were demolished after the city purchased the property in 1998 to construct the new Happy Valley Fire Station. The property was declared surplus by the City of

Matthei Place will consist of 14 permanently affordable homes ranging in size from 412 to 1,238 square feet.
Rendering courtesy of Kulshan Community Land Trust

Housing from military bases was provided for returning WWII vets and their families at 15th & Harris in what later became known as the Barracks.

Photo courtesy of Sherry Jubilo

see **KULSHAN** page 14

Adios to Casa Que Pasa

■ *State slams the door on smoking ban dissident*

by **TAYLOR PHIFER**
taylor@whatcomindy.com

BELLINGHAM - The potato burrito, the chiquitos, the 40 tequilas, the flaming burritos flying in an aerial assault, hot pickled carrots – for Bellinghamsters these images are summed up in one word – Casa. At least they *were*.

Last week, the Washington State Department of Revenue entered this Bellingham icon, put up "failure to pay taxes" notices in the window, turned the sign to closed, turned off the lights and locked the door.

Owner Abel Jordan, who made headlines in February for snubbing the state's smoking ban, owes the state \$44,452 in unpaid taxes and penalties and another \$48,748 in federal tax liens.

Jordan did not return phone calls Tuesday but some employees, wishing to remain anonymous, said things have been slowly going down hill and getting weirder over the last few months. The WI heard many reasons for the huge debt including drug and gambling issues but in the end they were all speculative.

Patrons of Casa Que Pasa were surprised to find the restaurant closed by the state because of non-payment of taxes.

photo by Taylor Phifer

see **CASA** page 14

NEWS AT A GLANCE

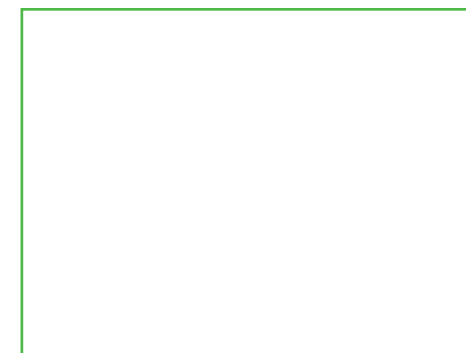


Photo by Marilyn Olsen

It's Farmers Market Week. Go shopping!

OLYMPIA – Governor Christine Gregoire has proclaimed August 12 to 19 as Farmers Market Week in Washington State. In her proclamation, the governor noted that that farmers markets in Washington have increased from 60 in 1998 to more than 90 in 2006. Although that number seems low to us, if the governor's math is correct, Whatcom County is certainly a hotbed (or hothouse) of farmers marketdom. Any week in the summer, farmers markets can be found in Fairhaven, at the Depot Market on Railroad Avenue, on Lummi Island, and on Mt. Baker Highway, just to name a few. The sun's out, the crops are in. Go shopping! ■WI

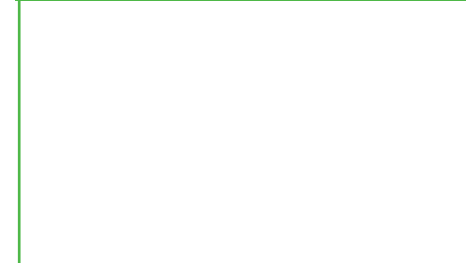


Photo by Marilyn Olsen

Something fishy at the brewery

BELLINGHAM – The next best thing to salmon on your plate may be salmon on your wall. Now you have the chance for both as the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) presents Salmon at the Bay 2006. The month-long event will include 100-plus pieces of salmon art on the wall (bids being accepted now), a wild salmon barbeque dinner, music and dancing, all at the Boundary Bay Brewery, 1107 Railroad Avenue. The dinner will be served August 26 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. with music and dancing from 9 p.m. to midnight. The art will be up from now through the 26th at which time each piece will go to the highest bidder. Proceeds benefit the NSEA. For further information: www.n-sea.org or call (360) 715-0283. ■WI

Lanny's Progress - 8/8/06



BELLINGHAM – Each week, we'll show you the latest progression of Lanny Little's Carnegie Library Mural. Keep watching this spot.

Photo by Sara L. Geballe

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POLE DANCING p. 4

BELLA STRADA p. 8

PIPE BOMB p. 12

BRIEFS

Curious about housing?

BELLINGHAM – The city's gurus of affordable housing will present a community housing report on Wednesday, August 16, at noon. Presenters are David Cahill, who is the manager of the block grant program for the city, Paul Schissler, who is the director of Kulshan Community Land Trust, and John Harmon, who is head of the Bellingham/Whatcom County Housing Authority. The hour-long presentation will be held in the City Council Chambers, 210 Lottie St., and will include time for discussion. The presentation is part of a continuing series of lunchtime presentations by the city Planning and Community Development Department, held on the third Wednesday of each month. For more info, contact Nicole Oliver, 676-6982.

– Whatcom Independent Staff

Healthy Bay Initiative to go on ballot

BELLINGHAM – Tuesday, Aug. 8 the Healthy Bay Initiative was certified by the County Auditor's office. On its second attempt to submit the required number of signatures, People for a Healthy Bay produced a total of 6349, of which 3663 were validated, more than the 3652 required. As a result, the initiative will appear on the November ballot. If passed, the initiative would mandate the Bellingham City Council to "persuade the Department of Ecology and other stakeholders" to clean up the former G-P property to "unrestricted" standards.

– Whatcom Independent Staff

Immigration seminar to be held

BELLINGHAM – Community to Community Development will host a public hearing, "What are the Challenges and Threats of Eroding Human Rights and Civil Liberties in a Post 9/11 World," Wednesday, August 16 at St. Luke's Community Center, 3333 Squalicum Parkway in Bellingham. Food and music at 6 p.m. will be followed by a panel discussion from 7 to 9 p.m. Panelists will include Washington State Human Rights Commission Executive Director Mark Brenman, Whatcom Human Rights Taskforce Co-founder Damani Johnson and Bellingham City Councilmember Barbara Ryan. The seminar is billed as an alternative to the Field Hearing held August 8 on U.S.-Canada border security. Contact: Carl Shook (360) 990-0972.

– Whatcom Independent Staff

Looking for a restoration grant?

BELLINGHAM – The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will hold an open house Tuesday, August 15 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. at the Whatcom County Civic Center, 322 N. Commercial Street. NOAA staff will be on hand to present information about its Community-based Restoration Program and funding for habitat restoration through groups such as FishAmerica Foundation, the Nature Conservancy, American Rivers and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Reservations are requested. Contact Polly Hicks at polly.hicks@noaa.gov or (206) 526-4861.

– Whatcom Independent Staff



The China Communique

by **LARRY KLEPINGER**
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In the fall of 2005, Congressional Candidate Larry Klepinger moved to Fujian province in China and accepted a teaching position at Fuzhou University. The WI invited him to write a series of articles communicating what is really happening in China—through the eyes of a casual observer – without the major media spin. Larry has since returned to the U.S., so this is the final installment.

A Word to the Wise

I've been unofficially "advised" that it's not a good idea to write this article. However, I have always felt that if you see a crime taking place – and choose to remain silent – you become an accessory to that crime.

11th Five Year Plenary Session

At the 11th Five Year Plenary Session of the Chinese Communist Party, held in March of 2006, President Hu Jin Tao highlighted two problems that he was committed to eradicating: faulty construction, and morally questionable links between foreign education "franchises" and universities here in China.

I am very supportive of President Hu and his efforts to "clean up" China. He has undertaken a monumental task trying to wipe out 5,000 years of bribery and corruption that is more deeply embed-

ded in this society than even the most jaded skeptic realizes.

Bribery and corruption in China is truly "Business as Usual."

Faulty Construction – Fuzhou University/ Fuzhou Software College

Having worked in real estate for over eight years, I have seen some shoddy workmanship in my time. But nothing compares to the buildings that the students are forced to attend class in – and where we are required to teach.

Broken windows abound. If there were to be an earthquake, these shards of glass would be like flying swords to anybody in their path. There is no safety glass here in this school.

The foundations and the floors have actually sunk so much that some secretaries had to be evacuated from two of the faulty offices. Mold is growing on the inside walls of some of the classrooms. Apparently, the Chinese are not aware of mold spores and what they can do if breathed into the lungs. Water-soaked walls, faulty light switches and toilets that don't work are the norm.

Sidewalks and steps leading to the buildings are "rolling" due to improper construction practices. Students regularly slip and stumble on the slick surface and some have even fallen down.

The floor of the office that I am now sitting in has sunk over six inches and is a workplace haz-

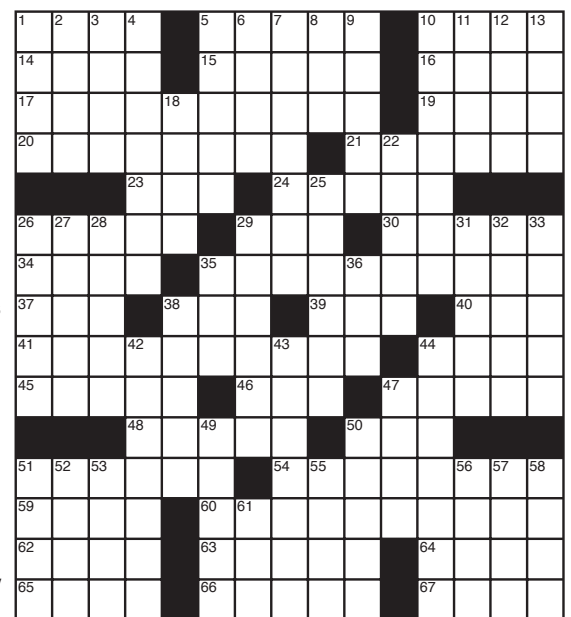
see **THE CHINA COMMUNIQUE** page 16

The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz

No. 0628

- ACROSS**
- 1 Trail fare
 - 5 Tease
 - 10 Many C.E.O.'s
 - 14 ___ homo
 - 15 Rod-shaped germ
 - 16 Kind of pudding
 - 17 Start of a droll observation
 - 19 Fictional plantation
 - 20 Quality of cheeks in a Christmas song
 - 21 Rubs out
 - 23 Cornfield sound
 - 24 Poppy product
 - 26 Wrap in the kitchen
 - 29 Bucs' org.
 - 30 Dangerous toy
 - 34 Pearl Buck heroine
 - 35 Observation, part 2
 - 37 Turned on
 - 38 Honshu honorific
 - 39 ___-Bo (exercise system)
 - 40 First thing Emory cheerleaders call for
 - 41 Observation, part 3
 - 44 Little terror
 - 45 Made anew
 - 46 Ball chaser?
 - 47 Chaucer collection
 - 48 Perfectly vertical
 - 50 Bklyn., e.g.
 - 51 Way to drive
 - 54 Wear out one's welcome
 - 59 "If ___ my druthers ..."
 - 60 End of the observation
 - 62 Retreat
 - 63 Spiral-horned beast
 - 64 "Author" of the observation, briefly
 - 65 Shipshape
 - 66 First name in morning TV
 - 67 One of 12 popes
- DOWN**
- 1 Toothed part
 - 2 ___ Rios, Jamaica
 - 3 Some DVD players
 - 4 Louisiana state bird
 - 5 Extend, in a way
 - 6 Killer serves
 - 7 Explodes
 - 8 Antiquated
 - 9 Some W.W. II internees
 - 10 End man in a minstrel troupe
 - 11 Diagonal
 - 12 It could be a lot
 - 13 Classic septet
 - 18 "___ unrelated note ..."
 - 22 Russian roulette wager?
 - 25 Typewriter roller
 - 26 Alternative to fossil fuels
 - 27 Subtitle of many biographies



Puzzle by Myles Callum

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

LASH FREED TREE
ORCA GENRE AARP
FRENCH HORN BNAI
TONGA ALOU ACTS
SWEEP BALDISH
ROZ ETCHESES
PEWS OJAI COAST
ALI DOUBLEH NSA
LOTTO TELL ADEN
MICROSMUD
HUMIDOR TOPIC
ACHS PACE ARENA
XOUT HITCHHIKER
LONE ORATE NOPE
ETTE NYLON GETS

- 28 Having stars?
- 29 Sarge, e.g.
- 31 Make twisty
- 32 Forearm bones
- 33 Duma dissents
- 35 Crayola shade
- 36 ___ Cruces, N.M.
- 38 Act like a crab?
- 42 Use a towel on
- 43 Boho-chic purse
- 44 Inedible cake
- 47 Of two minds
- 49 Out-and-out
- 50 Hippie adornment
- 51 Delta deposit
- 52 Eastern cuisine
- 53 Speakeasy's worry
- 55 Start of Caesar's boast
- 56 Author Morrison
- 57 Not worth ___
- 58 Cravings
- 61 Soccer chant

Headlines we're glad we never ran:
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Art is spoken here

Downtown Bellingham

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360.756.0000

The China Communique cont.

has sunk over six inches and is a workplace hazard. The wall is flimsy and actually moves if you lean against it.

Yet, all these structures have been built within the past three years.

If a minor earthquake were to occur, the buildings would simply fall down. If inspected by "real" construction inspectors, they would be condemned on the spot – and immediately evacuated. That is how bad they are.

We have experienced water shutdowns, electricity blackouts, and the Internet service is deplorable. The quality, function and layout of the entire complex reeks of intentional wrongdoing. President Hu would be appalled – and ashamed – at such a disgraceful display of Chinese business practices.

Fuzhou Software College link with Hertfordshire University, England

This is officially described as a "business franchise." In reality, it is a joint venture "cash cow."

When students were persuaded to come here, they were told that they would have a beautiful library in which to study. There is no library on this campus anywhere near university level. It is simply a reading room.

The students were told they would have a state-of-the-art gymnasium in which to play basketball. They practice outside at night – in the dark.

The students were promised advanced learning tools and the latest in technological equipment. Instead, the machines are of poor quality and outdated. The one copy machine in the language department is constantly being repaired, printers continually jam. In our classrooms, three of the

five computers don't work, and Powerpoint presentations are nearly impossible.

Students were charged exorbitant prices for tuition, books and materials – then were given illegally photocopied texts in violation of international copyright agreements.

Each student is required to pay approximately 40,000 Yuan a year to attend this school. That amounts to about \$5,000 US. The average cost to attend a reputable university here in China runs about 5,000 Yuan (\$617 US) – or about one tenth the cost of Fuzhou Software College/Hertfordshire University. The average monthly wage for a worker in China is 800 Yuan (\$98 US).

A few weeks ago, laborers were denied their monthly wages (a common practice here in China). They went on strike. The police were summoned to monitor the situation.

The "Moderators" from England come to Fuzhou, stay at the ultra-expensive Shangri-la Hotel, eat at highly rated restaurants and go on extended shopping sprees, all the while dressed in fine clothing, their extremities dripping with gold.

Many students' parents are outraged, some filing lawsuits. Student morale is depressingly low, while others are transferring to "real" universities within China or have decided to go abroad.

If the Fuzhou Software College/Hertfordshire University business franchise is any indication of what is going on all over China – as President Hu seems to imply – then he has his work cut out for him.

For the sake of all Chinese students – and the future of China – I hope he succeeds. ■WI

LUKES

from page 3

areas citywide.

Another part of this parking retrofit was the infamous LUKE pay stations installed on Railroad Avenue and subsequently removed after business owners and residents nearly tore them out themselves.

Some, however, remain. Most notable is the LUKE in the Parkade, where PDS used to have its office.

"The LUKes are working awesome in the Parkade hourly parking, and three more are being installed in August in the hourly parking lot adjacent to La Fiamma," said Clark Williams of Bellingham Public Works. "It's too bad the customers in the 1300 block didn't give them a chance before asking Council to remove them. Since that time, we've lifted the enforcement hours to begin at 9 a.m. instead of 8 a.m., and perhaps this switch alone would have resolved much of the concern without immediately removing the pay stations."

However, some business owners around the Parkade are having a hard time finding the benefits of new pay stations.

"There is still a lack of flexibility," Stamp and Coin Place owner Tim Rathjen said. "Before, you paid for how long you were there. Now you have to pay in advance. Employees show up and then have to go run an errand, they lose that time. It's all messed up for them."

"I know in general people don't like them," Hilton Shoes owner Joe Hilton said. "The feedback we're hearing is people think they are too complicated to figure out. At this point, I don't know how they could re-

solve this. They had a perfectly good office down there and now they're away from what they are supposed to be responsible for."

Despite objections to the new system, Public Works Director Dick McKinley said the LUKes work better than meters.

"The pay stations are a mixed blessing," he said. "Credit cards don't work with meters. These allow you to add time from two or three blocks away and lots of cities have these types of pay stations. We have long-term plans to move away from old meters to new systems that are more flexible for the user. Some people really like them, others don't."

Despite some dramatic changes over the last seven months, the parking picture for downtown Bellingham is a work in progress.

Some of the changes are helping to fund solutions, Williams said. "We didn't end up consolidating enforcement from the Police, ticket administration from the Courts, and Parking Services Operations from Public Works," he said. "What we did do was combine all the parking-related revenues and expenses from both the Parking Fund and General Fund and effective this year, any revenues related to parking tickets and fines over and above directly related parking expenses that the General Fund receives will be annually transferred back to the Parking Fund to be used on improvements to the parking system."

PDS has won some parking battles but the war's not over. And, according to one downtown business owner – "People will complain no matter what." ■WI

WILSON'S

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