

whatcom Independent

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FREE EVERY THURSDAY

County Council awaits EPA ruling on "hazardous waste"

■ *Years of Swift Creek dredgings laden with asbestos*

by HELEN SOLEM

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SUMAS – On Feb. 13 the County Council will hear a report from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on the potential health hazards of asbestos-laden sediment dredged from Swift Creek. Based on that report, the county may be facing hazardous waste disposal costs in excess of \$1 million.

Every few years, since the 1930s, Whatcom County's Public Works Department has applied for a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to dredge Swift Creek, which originates on Sumas Mountain and flows east of Everson. However, two years ago,



Until recently, sediment from Swift Creek had been used for many years as free fill throughout the county. It, however, includes naturally-occurring asbestos, which may be a health hazard.

Photos by Helen Solem

SWIFT CREEK • 20

Library board holds special meeting

■ *Says north side branch not in future plans*

by MARILYN OLSEN

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BELLINGHAM – The Bellingham Library Board held a special "strategic planning" meeting Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the library's lecture room.

The agenda included discussion regarding what taxpayers could expect as the board proceeds with plans to build a new main library building, whether or not these plans would include branch libraries, and how the library would operate on an interim basis if the existing library were demolished.

Regarding branch libraries, Library Director Pam Kiesner referred the board to a report showing which areas of Bellingham were within a three-mile or

15-minute drive from either the main library or the Fairhaven Branch.

Julie Guy, who lives in the Guide Meridian/Cordata neighborhood said, "I've been following the process (of planning for the new library) in the paper. I'm concerned because I don't see library presence on the north side, and I don't mean just a drop box.

David Edelstein, library board

LIBRARY • 4

NEWS AT A GLANCE



courtesy photo

Local teens on "Colbert Report"

BELLINGHAM/BLAINE - Five Bellingham teens were spotlighted on Comedy Central's "Colbert Report" Monday evening, waving signs and dead fish in an attempt to lure Colbert's "adopted" baby eagle back into the U.S. When the San Francisco Zoo named a newly hatched eagle in his honor, Colbert adopted the fledgling, garnering enormous publicity for the zoo. Several months ago the eagle was tagged with a radio transmitter, released into the wild and immediately headed for Canada. Colbert asked residents of Bellingham to do what they could to lure the eagle home. Ali Simmons, Casey Clark, Caitlin Beebe, Julie Stone and Matt Petryni videoed their attempt and, from a posting spotted on YouTube, the video was picked up and highlighted on Monday evening's show. ■WI

Western Airlines out of gas?

BELLINGHAM - Western Airlines, Inc. cancelled its Bellingham-San Diego flight yesterday, no doubt disappointing its 17 passengers who'd hoped to depart at 6:45 a.m. Fortunately, returning passengers will be able to get home thanks to Xtra Airways that contracted with Western for the flights. On Sunday, a Western flight stopped in Seattle to refuel because Xtra suspended services to them until overdue payments were made. ■WI

It's a legend. Go see the Banked Slalom!

MT. BAKER - Twenty-two years ago, a bunch of guys wearing high-topped tennis shoes duct-taped to boards thought it might be a hoot to see what would happen if they tried to head down a snow-covered mountain. Little did they know they were pioneers in a sport that now attracts millions, at least a few thousand of them to Whatcom County's own Mt. Baker, the first ski area in the country to allow snowboarders out on the slopes with the skiers. And, even better, the site of the annual Legendary Banked Slalom is only an hour from here. *Go see it. More info on pp. 10 & 11.*

PANAMA COMMUNIQUÉ



by LAWRENCE KLEPINGER

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BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Last week the Panama Communiqué introduced WI readers to an overall view of the nation of Panama, including demographics, language, currency and religious/ethnic composition. This week we will explore its recent history.

Recent Brief History: Most of Panama's political history in the last 110 years has revolved around the Panama Canal – and the imminent national security challenges it presents to the U.S.

President Theodore Roosevelt realized the immense importance that a proposed canal would play in international relations and was therefore instrumental in supporting wealthy Panamanian landowners to secede from Columbia and declare Panama's independence in 1903.

As a result, the U.S. was the first country to recognize the Republic of Panama and immediately sent troops to protect what it considered to be its vital national interests.

Shortly thereafter, the U.S. signed the Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty, which granted wide-ranging administrative concessions to build and run the Panama Canal (after the French

had failed at their initial attempt). It was finally opened in 1914 – the year World War I began in Europe with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, in Sarajevo. It's an irony of historical consequence that the Panama Canal was completed, and controlled by the U.S. Military, at the literal outset of World War I in Europe.

So, from the very establishment of the Republic of Panama, the United States has played a major role in every aspect of the country from military and economic to the actual construction of infrastructure across the board. Two of the most prevalent benefits of this "association" are the extensive highway system that exists throughout most of Panama and also the fact that Panama is the only country in Central America where you can drink clean water straight from the tap – both accomplishments courtesy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The most recent example of U.S. military intervention was on Dec. 20, 1989, in a military exercise code-named "Operation Just Cause," when Manuel Noriega was ousted from power, during the presidency of George H. W. Bush. The amount of U.S. military deployment to this area of the world was the original "shock and awe" in that it was totally overwhelming – and completely decisive in its outcome – in a matter of a few short weeks.

Ten years later, the full administration and

maintenance of the Panama Canal was handed over to the Panamanian government under a timetable of returning the Canal – and all adjoining real estate – according the Torrijos-Carter Treaty.

One part of the treaty that is little known to most U.S. citizens is that the U.S. reserves the right of military intervention at any time – if it perceives a threat to its own national security. This intervention requires no authorization from the Panamanian government whatsoever.

To this day many people think Jimmy Carter just "gave away the Canal" but this is not entirely true. The U.S. can, and will, step in anytime it deems necessary to protect its national interests and also the interests of the Republic of Panama.

The United States government will never relinquish this military option. If it does, then the security of that country will be placed in extreme jeopardy. The Panama Canal is that important to the maintenance of security and freedom in the United States of America. ■WI

The next installment: *First impressions – the good, the bad, and the ugly*

Your irreverent guide to the stars for the week of February 8

by Taylor Phifer

Aries (March 21 – April 19)

Your insistence to shop locally this week will result in a fine Italian-style meal with some sort of mystery meat. You will then notice several "missing-cat" posters around your local deli.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

Any pressing decisions this week can be easily made with the use of Mr. Marble's 464-sided die. You can find it on-line, although supplies are limited and the cost is substantial. The only things it can't give you advice on are: love, money, the future and friendship. But it's great at almost everything else.

Gemini (May 21 – June 21)

Fight the urge to Google yourself this week. There is someone with your name out there doing things no one should, but everyone wants to.

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

This week you'll discover why weekly newspapers are free.

Leo (July 23 – Aug. 22)

St. Valentine was this dude who was executed by the Romans for marrying young Christian lovers.

Virgo (Aug. 23 – Sept. 22)

You'll start yodeling around the house this week after a love interest reveals a secret admiration for the talent. Your dog will think you're insane, but who cares? Cupid rules.

Libra (Sept. 23 – Oct. 23)

It's hard to describe a Libra without using the words arrogant and loudmouth unless you use the words annoying, over zealous, pious, incorrigible or despot. Although someone loves you and you must have some redeeming qualities.

Scorpio (Oct. 24 – Nov. 21)

You either hate Valentine's Day or you love it. Or you don't really care. Although deep down everyone cares a little. Regardless, it's a good week to take that romantic risk. Not knowing is worse than knowing they're not...interested that is. And even if they're not, now they know you are and it will eat away at them until they can't stop thinking about you and then out of sheer frustration you might just score.

Sagittarius: (Nov. 22 – Dec. 21)

This week you may feel the urge to knock over a Valentine display at your local grocery store. If you fight this urge you'll only end up kicking some unsuspecting cat later, and the fact that it doesn't make you feel bad will make you feel bad.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 – Jan. 19)

A box of rum balls will play an important part in a bad decision this week.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 – Feb. 18)

This week you'll strongly consider doing something really nice for that certain someone in your life and the fact that you strongly considered doing something nice will make you feel better about not doing something nice.

Pisces (Feb. 19 – March 20)

It's never too late. It just gets harder.

Take all of the above with a grain of salt. If you take any of this advice seriously, you need more help than we can offer.

The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz

No. 1227

ACROSS

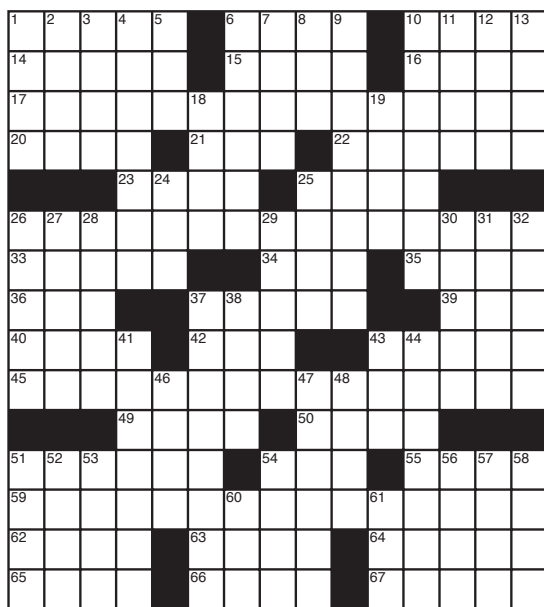
- 1 Indian chief
- 6 Spilling point
- 10 Wild ____
- 14 Without help
- 15 Mystique
- 16 Exploits
- 17 Unsuccessful batter's intro?
- 20 It can take your breath away
- 21 ____ Spiegel magazine
- 22 Sizes up or down?
- 23 Koh-i-____ diamond
- 25 "Waterloo" quartet
- 26 Hot dog vendor's intro?
- 33 Spiritual leaders
- 34 Letters on Challenger
- 35 Nefariousness

DOWN

- 36 Blazing gun
- 37 Belt-attachable device
- 39 Nicknamed
- 40 Clouds (up)
- 42 Work ____ sweat
- 43 Assign, as the blame
- 45 Guard's intro?
- 49 Is bedridden
- 50 Cow-headed goddess
- 51 Rough-cut
- 54 Start and end of the Three Musketeers' motto
- 55 Pinnacle
- 59 Quotation citer's intro?
- 62 Lose strength in the backstretch
- 63 Tent event
- 64 Hazardous
- 65 Regarded guardedly

DOWN

- 1 Outdoor event planner's worry
- 2 A chorus line
- 3 ____ stick (incense)
- 4 Reception aid
- 5 Part of H.M.S.
- 6 Napoleon's place
- 7 Regretful one
- 8 Audit grp.
- 9 "Goldilocks" figure
- 10 Dropped movie scene
- 11 "But, ____ was ambitious, I slew him": Brutus
- 12 Eye drop
- 13 Retired fliers
- 18 Hero type
- 19 Napoleon's place, once
- 24 Green-lights
- 25 Notre Dame niche
- 26 More and more of news shows nowadays
- 27 Stubble remover
- 28 Baja buddy
- 29 Dearie
- 30 Former Mrs. Trump
- 31 Olympus competitor



Puzzle by Manny Nosowsky

- 32 Sweat ____
- 37 "Don't give me that!"
- 38 Knuckle draggers
- 41 Hurt
- 43 23rd in a series
- 44 "That just shouldn't happen"
- 46 "Peace on earth," e.g.
- 47 ____ Collins, former space shuttle commander
- 48 Tropical escape
- 51 Tea for two place
- 52 Anthem opener
- 53 Second
- 54 Fit
- 56 Playbill info
- 57 Karaoke need
- 58 Häagen-Dazs alternative
- 60 Sorry
- 61 Piece-keeping grp.?

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE



Headlines we're glad we never ran:
TV WATCHERS WATCH T.V.
- TORONTO STAR HEADLINE