

# whatcom Independent

www.whatcomindy.com Your reliable, independent news for Whatcom County.

ISSUE 179



April 26 - May 2, 2007



FREE EVERY THURSDAY

NEWS AT A GLANCE



courtesy photo

## Up for a piano race?

**FAIRHAVEN** - Little did Fairhaven's founder, Dan Harris, realize that his final piano-related farewell gesture would become a featured event at a festival more than 100 years later. But it, along with a salmon toss, pie-eating contest, scavenger hunt and even an appearance by the members of the Ladies of the Evening Society, has. Join the current Dan, in person, and hundreds of other celebrants for Dirty Dan Days and get in on all the fun. See p.p. 10-11 for schedules, times and a preview of what's to come.

## Hey, Buckeye fans!

**BELLINGHAM** - After all these years of having to make four connections to get from Bellingham to Columbus, Ohio, relief is on the way. Thanks to Skybus Air, the city's newest airline, you can soon fly direct. And, if you hurry, for just 10 bucks. (Well, plus the \$5 per bag - \$50 for an additional bag - plus a fee for anything you want to eat or drink and so on). Also, the carrier plans to sell advertising on the side of the plane. An even better chance for you OSU fans to show a little loyalty. Talk about a tailgate party! ■WI

## Quick, are you open or closed source?

**BELLINGHAM** - If you don't know the answer to that question, or even if you do, this weekend's the chance to show off your computer expertise (or lack thereof) at the region's annual LinuxFest. Organizers assure all attendees there's something for computer users of all levels and the event is even free. See p. 3 for details.

## What do you know about Panama?

**PANAMA** - This week, we're pleased to run the latest in the communiqués from our Central American correspondent, Lawrence Klepinger, now a resident of Panama. In this edition he shares with us a discussion of some of the challenges facing his new home. See p. 6.

## They said what?

"There are a few instances of gross humor, à la Shrek, that make it more fun for the kids." p. 9.

"It's time for the blank looks to be replaced by the start of some program, some action." p. 7.

# The Cordata parks shell game

■ *More development threatens already depleted open land for wildlife*

by **KALEB GUBERNICK**  
writers@whatcomindy.com

Trillium Corp. is planning to apply for permits that would allow them to fill in some pasture wetlands. The land currently for sale by Trillium is shown in red, and the wetlands in green.

Map by the WI Graphics Dept.

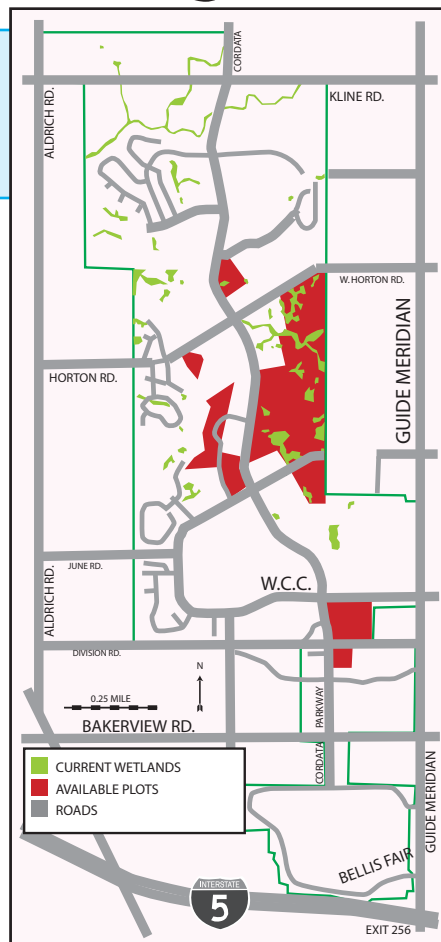
"This process would be done under current city and Corps of Engineers guidelines and would require mitigation."

Kim Spens, an environmental planner for the Planning and Community Development Department, said wetland development requires the proper

permits first and foremost. After the permits are granted by the city, the developer must make arrangements to replace any wetland that is compromised in the process of development.

Depending on the quality and function of the wetland, the ratio of compromised wetland to newly created wetland can vary from 1:1 to however much the city sees fit.

"It can be a huge ratio," Spens said.



CORDATA • 4

**BELLINGHAM** - Residents concerned about the disappearing wetlands and green space in the Cordata area of north Bellingham may have even more to worry about in the upcoming months.

Wayne Schwandt, Vice President of Real Estate and Special Projects for Trillium Corp., said there have been no wetlands built over or filled in since Trillium and the city signed agreements in 1998. However, Schwandt said Trillium is looking to change this.

"We are planning to apply for permits that would allow us to fill some of the pastureland wetlands," Schwandt said.

**"If we misread the market, commit large amounts of capital to a project that the market doesn't want, then we suffer the loss."**

- Wayne Schwandt, V. P. of Real Estate and Special Projects, Trillium Corp.

# Task force toughens highschool requirements



Prospective students check out requirements for admission to WWU. New requirements, under consideration by the Bellingham School District, would qualify all high-school graduates for college. Staff photo

■ *Should a high school diploma automatically make students eligible for college?*

by **KRISTI PIHL**  
kristi@whatcomindy.com

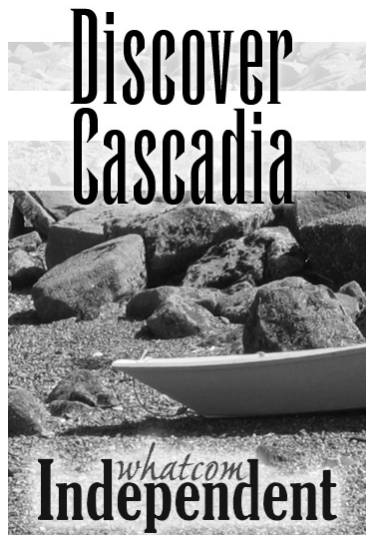
**BELLINGHAM** - The Bellingham School Board will vote on the changes to high school graduation require-

ments recommended by the Graduation Requirements Task Force tonight at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Room at the Roeder Administration Building.

The task force recommended adding a half-year of English, one year of math and two years of world language, Sherrie Brown, executive director of School Administration and head of the task force said. The changes would align the district's requirements with the Higher Education Coordinating (HEC) board's statement of what students need to complete to

COLLEGE READY • 18





**FLATS**  
Tapas Bar

Simple  
Elegant  
Delicious  
...that's Tapas

Open Daily 11:00am-10:00pm  
1307 11th St. • In Historic Fairhaven  
(360) 738-6001

# PANAMA COMMUNIQUE



by **LAWRENCE KLEPINGER**  
writers@whatcomindy.com



As the saying goes, "There are two sides to every coin." And so it is with Panama. In this article I will point out some drawbacks relating to Panama and how they are hopefully going to be dealt with in the coming years. These are just a few of the more glaring problems presently facing this still-developing country.

For those of you who prefer to stay closer to home, or have not traveled much in "developing countries," these negative aspects might seem overwhelming. But readers who have had the opportunity to broaden their geographical horizons will notice these are problems that all emerging economies have to come to terms with sooner or later.

It takes time for market economies to mature, but once they adjust to the competitive realities of the international marketplace they usually do very well. Witness Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong (PRC) and Taiwan, just to name a few.

To begin with, Panama has an extreme environmental problem. It is not nearly on the scale of China but it is there nonetheless. Automobile emissions are basically uncontrolled. Buses and trucks seem to be the biggest offenders, belching out noxious fumes and polluting the air with murky black particles actually floating over the roadways in downtown Panama City. The government is trying to address this problem but, as of this writing, not much has been accomplished.

Not only is the air polluted, but the rivers around Panama City are nothing short of putrid. The original meaning of Hong Kong was "Fragrant Harbor." Although Hong Kong has pretty much gotten its act together in this department, Panama has not. The rivers are teeming with raw sewage. Yes, that means untreated hu-

man waste along with other objectionable pollutants listlessly floating about in Panama Bay.

But to its credit, the government has embarked on an ambitious program to build water treatment plants to the tune of \$350 million over the next five years to rectify this problem. Not only is it an obvious health hazard, it is actually deterring many people from taking up residence in Panama City. It will be dealt with, but it takes time to change habits that have been ingrained for so many years.

I remember the first time I saw Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) in 1966 at low tide. It was simply unbearable to breathe. Back in those days Hong Kong was not much better. And even Japan, as late as 1980, had simply horrendous water pollution problems. I haven't been back to Vietnam but I have been to Hong Kong and Tokyo in recent years. Where once fetid waters flowed freely, there are now million dollar condos on the unpolluted riverbanks and shorelines of both Hong Kong and Tokyo. I have full faith this will also be the case for Panama City in the years to come.

Although the above two problems are infrastructure related, the third problem I noticed is more of a social/moral dilemma – the widening gap between the rich and those who have little or nothing.

All poverty is relative, and with relation to the hundreds of millions of Chinese teetering on the brink of seemingly endless squalor, the Panamanian "poor" seem fairly well off. But it must be kept in mind there are still two thirds of the country living in poverty. Yes, the streets are mostly paved. And yes, most homes have water and electricity—unlike most of the poor in China. But there is a growing gap that is very easy to see – if you are not afraid to look.

I have noticed in the rich neighborhoods there are armed guards, compounds surrounded with broken glass cemented into the tops of concrete walls, and in more and more cases Concertina wire – or razor wire – the type used in the Vietnam War, on the outer edges of many private residences. This stuff can literally cut you to shreds once entangled. It has taken the place of the more placid barbed wire of old.

The economic gap is evident everywhere in Panama. So far the people seem to get along fine. But if the wealth is not more evenly distributed among all the people it will not bode well for the future of Panama.

It is not hard to see why people in Venezuela like Hugo Chavez. With gasoline at 12 cents a gallon, taxi drivers are happy with their ability to make a living. Not so the taxi driver I spoke with a few weeks ago in Panama City. He complained that, with gasoline at \$2.50 a gallon, it was all he could do to make ends meet.

As other countries in Central and South America are turning more to socialist, or even Marxist regimes, it would behoove the government of Panama to take heed and try to correct this problem before it is too late. ■WI

*Lawrence Klepinger is a former resident of Whatcom County who is now residing in Panama. He may be contacted at lawrenceklepinger@hotmail.com.*

## The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz

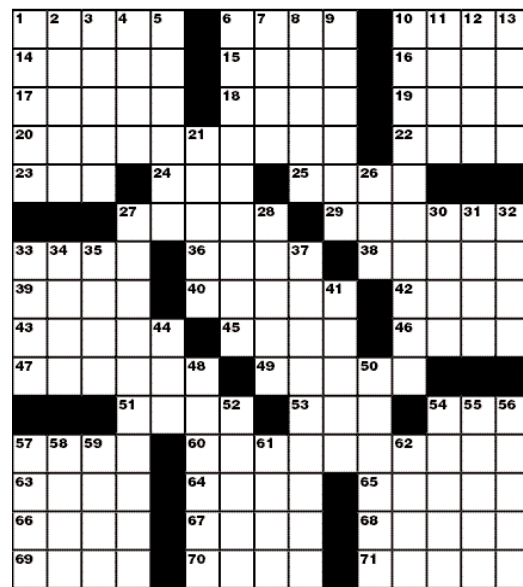
No. 0314

- Across**
- 1 Enlighten
  - 6 A couple CBS spinoffs
  - 10 1972 Broadway musical
  - 14 Metal giant
  - 15 Evict
  - 16 Area
  - 17 Surface again, as a road
  - 18 Pirate or Padre, briefly
  - 19 Camera feature
  - 20 Barracks artwork, perhaps
  - 22 River to the Ligurian Sea
  - 23 Keg necessity
  - 24 "... he drove out of sight"
  - 25 \_\_\_ St. Louis, Ill.
  - 27 Preen
  - 29 Greek peak
  - 33 Vice president after Hubert
  - 36 Patient wife of Sir Geraint
  - 38 Action to an ante
  - 39 Gain \_\_\_
  - 40 French artist Odilon \_\_\_
  - 42 Grape for winemaking
  - 43 Single-dish meal
  - 45 Broad valley
  - 46 See 21-Down
  - 47 Artery inserts
  - 49 Offspring
  - 51 Mexican mouse catcher
  - 53 Medical procedure, in brief
  - 54 "Wheel of Fortune" option
  - 57 Animal with striped legs
  - 60 Editorial

- 63 It gets bigger at night
- 64 "Hold your horses!"
- 65 Idiots
- 66 Europe/Asia border river
- 67 Suffix with laundry
- 68 Leaning
- 69 Brownback and Obama, e.g.: Abbr.
- 70 Rick with the 1976 #1 hit "Disco Duck"
- 71 Yegg's targets

**Down**

- 1 Mastodon trap
- 2 "Mefistofele" soprano
- 3 Misbehave
- 4 Pen
- 5 More pleased
- 6 Treated with disdain
- 7 Enterprise crewman
- 8 Rhone feeder
- 9 Many a webcast
- 10 Mushroom, for one
- 11 Unfortunate
- 12 Nevada's state tree
- 13 Disney fish
- 21 Colonial figure with 46-Across
- 26 Poker champion Ungar
- 27 Self-medicating excessively
- 28 March 14, to mathematicians



Puzzle by Peter A. Collins

- 30 Book part
- 31 Powder, e.g.
- 32 007 and others: Abbr.
- 33 Drains
- 34 Stove feature
- 35 Feet per second, e.g.
- 37 Italian range
- 41 Prefix with surgery
- 44 Captain's announcement, for short
- 48 Tucked away
- 50 Stealthy fighters
- 52 Sedative
- 54 Letter feature
- 55 Jam
- 56 Settles in
- 57 Symphony or sonata
- 58 Japanese city bombed in W.W. II
- 59 Beelike
- 61 Evening, in ads
- 62 Religious artwork

**ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE**



Headlines we're glad we never ran:  
**COMMISSIONER DAVIS TO HEAD "ASSAULT ON LITERACY MONTH"**

### 4 • CORDATA

In addition, Ralph Wenning, a member of the Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood Association, mentioned another threat to the well being of the green space in Cordata. D.R. Horton, another landowner and developer in the Cordata Business Park, is proposing construction of a new 72-acre housing unit in the area he says will take away more of the sorely needed open land for wildlife.

"We've lost a lot of bird and waterfowl area so far," Wenning said. "It'll all be gone some day."

Trillium's Schwandt said because more housing has been included in the Cordata devel-

opment than was originally envisioned, there have been no child- and family-use parks created.

Despite the disappointments, there may be hope on the horizon for the folks of Cordata. Schwandt said Trillium is currently in negotiations to provide significant land adjacent to Cordata's western boundary to the city for use in parkland development.

"It is important to remember that developers are middlemen," Schwandt said. "We do not establish the market, we respond to the market. If we misread the market, commit large amounts of capital to a project that the market doesn't want, then we suffer the loss." ■WI