

The FOOTHILLS OUTLOOK

Connecting Foothills community members with vital
resources, organizations and events



THE COLLECTIVE VOICE

by Melonie Ancheta

When a community, or coalition of communities come together to effect changes such as providing safer infrastructure for children, something fundamental and powerful occurs. Grassroots community action does not just address immediate needs—it creates a ripple effect, inspiring more people to get involved and take ownership of their community's future. Whether it is a program for young people or providing a safer environment for children, the power of community is inestimable and infinite.

Power from Within

Grassroots initiatives have a unique power. Unlike top-down programs, which are often led by formal organizations or government agencies, grassroots efforts originate within the community itself. This means that the people who best understand a community's unique challenges, needs and resources—its residents—are the very ones leading and directing change. When a community sees a need and grasps the opportunity to fulfill that need, they are taking charge of their own lives and relying on the strength, talents, skills and experience from within the community rather than asking others to do it for them. Working together collaboratively builds a sense of shared purpose and social capital that is the hidden glue that strengthens communities over time.

We Rise by Lifting Others

While a letter writing campaign, like the one needed to improve the safety at the intersection of Mitchell Rd and the highway is done in the privacy of the home, when the results of that campaign become visible the idea that solutions to big problems are out of reach of ordinary citizens vanish. Rather, it proves that change begins with a handful of committed people and a willingness to act.

When taking action to ensure the safety of our children, those efforts have long-term benefits; it sends a message to the children who use that intersection daily that the adults in the community care for them and are willing to ensure their safety. This is something that stays with a child all their life: the feeling of security and being cared for is a solid foundation for becoming a responsible, caring adult. It also provides good role modeling and examples of being proactive that will encourage them to act.

Side Effects

One of the side effects of grass-roots action is a healthier, stronger and more resilient community. But it also has positive effects on those engaged in community action. People feel a sense of empowerment in taking charge of their own needs. They often learn new skills, get a boost to their self-esteem and self-confidence, and they build relationships with like-minded people. In addition, becoming involved in a project such as advocating for improving safety at the schools, reduces stress, decreases depression, relieves social isolation, and significantly improves one's overall well-being.

It really is true that in the act of giving we are taking better care of ourselves.

"Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world." – Howard Zinn

In many communities, trust in outside institutions can be low. However, when assistance from outside agencies is required, such as government entities, a united community has far more leverage than a few

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BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR

If you are a resource provider, belong to an organization, or have a local event, and wish to be included in our listings, please contact us at info@foothillsinfo.com or go to foothillsinfo.com to request an account.

Submissions Deadline: 15th of each month

You can find our **Submission Guidelines** under Contributor Information on our website at foothillsinfo.com

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**Don't forget to check out
our website at
foothillsinfo.com for more
on events and other local
information. You can
download a digital version
of the Outlook on the
Print & Radio page.**

bugwalla

by Doug Imhoff



Check out our website, foothillsinfo.com, for more information!

Go to our Event Calendar and click on any listing to learn more about local events, meetings and other activities. You can also find back issues of the Outlook in our Archive, contact us with questions, story ideas, and more through our contact form.

COMMUNITY SCENE

The Communal Voice, continued

parents or concerned citizens. Take the example of the traffic revisions that need to be made at Mitchell Rd and the highway. While the parents and students involved in a recent collision at Mitchell Rd and the highway have appealed to the county council and the state for revisions, they are a small voice trying to be heard over the “bigger issues” on the world map. But when our elected officials start hearing from ten, fifteen, or forty voices, raised on the same issue, they are more likely to take it seriously. They understand that as taxpayers and voters, community members have power and elected officials need to pay attention to the issues raised by their constituents.

Easier than Pie

No special skills or experience are needed to lend a voice to these efforts; it simply takes a few minutes to write a letter or email or make a phone call. One voice in the wilderness is barely heard, dozens of voices become a force to be reckoned with; they make positive, lasting change.

Lasting Impacts

While grass-roots community action can solve one-time problems, over time the ripples spread leading to stronger and more resilient communities, higher rates of volunteering, and even policy changes as local efforts make headway and results become apparent. Crucially, it fosters a sense of possibility—a conviction that ordinary people have the power to shape their world.

Below are links for the petition and more information, as well as contact information for the county council and Senator Shewmake.

*SIGN THE PETITION: https://www.change.org/p/install-traffic-lights-at-mitchell-road-and-mount-baker-highway?source_location=search

A sample letter/email you can use is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/3jawac54>

Email Whatcom County Council: council@co.whatcom.wa.us

The Whatcom County Council usually meets every other Tuesday, at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at the Courthouse (311 Grand Ave, Bellingham). For more information about how to join a meeting and request to be heard go to: <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/3415/Participate-in-Council-Meetings>

Whatcom County Calendar: <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/calendar.aspx?CID=23>

Contacts for Senator Shewmake

sharon.shewmake@leg.wa.gov

360.786.1909

Mail: Sen. Sharon Shewmake

215 John A. Cherberg Building

PO Box 40442, Olympia, WA 98504

HELP FOR FLOOD VICTIMS

With the recent and continued flooding in our area, many people have been evacuated from their homes and are facing months, if not years, of home repairs, cleaning up, and restoring their property and lives.

Whatcom Strong has a wide variety of resources for those impacted by flooding, as well as offering ways to help out. <https://www.whatcomstrong.com>

Whatcom County also has an extensive list of resources that includes pets, livestock, tenants, landlords, and more: <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/4742/Resources-for-Flood-Impacted-People>

This group provides assistance to farmers and ranchers: <https://www.scc.wa.gov/programs/disaster-assistance-program>

Disaster Cash Assistance Program has sever options for help including one to replace food bought with benefits, for those hit by flooding: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/emergency-assistance-programs/disaster-cash-assistance-program>

Sustainable Connections has a good list of resources as well: <https://sustainableconnections.org/flood-relief-resources/>

2021 Flood Victim Offers Experience and Advice

This is an open letter from community member, Linda Moore about her experience and advice from having been a 2021 flood victim.

December, 12, 2025

Hello,

Many of you have seen pictures of the flooding that took place in Everson/Nooksack/Sumas over the past two days.

I share this information just for context and so you have a bit of an idea what our colleagues in the Nooksack Valley School District are dealing with. If you would like to help out, check out the [WhatcomStrong Website](#) . This group was established after the 2021 flood and has information on ways you can be involved in the recovery.

If you are interested in learning a bit more about the impact this has on the families who had their homes touched by water, read on. I have included some \$ amount information about my personal experience from 2021 for reference, this is just a way to help you understand the impact of going through flooding. This is in NO WAY a veiled request for money.

My house was at the edge of the inundation zone. This means that water began creeping onto the property at around 2 AM Thursday morning, rose to a height of 12 inches by 4 AM and had receded from around our structure by noon. Families who live closer to the overflow spit might have been surrounded by water for 15 hours from the start to the end of the event.

Water fill the crawl space and entered the garage to a height of 6 inches; no water entered the living space. (The same damage we experienced in 2021) MANY homes had water in the living space.

What this means for all those affected (including potentially some of our students)

Flood water is considered black water in terms of safety. It contains sewage, chemicals, contents of the dairy barns in the area. When the water recedes it leaves a layer of silt on everything. Hard surfaces touched by the floodwater should be cleaned with soap and disinfected. Any porous material that cannot go into a washing machine must be thrown away.

For my home, this means all the insulation and ductwork under the house will need to be removed and replaced. Our furnace ducting was filled with water so we cannot use our furnace until the ducting is replaced. First the wet insulation and ducting has to be removed, and the area has to be dried sufficiently to avoid mold growth. While it dries, there is no insulation in the floor. In 2021 this was a 5 week process. In the garage the lower 2 feet of drywall and insulation will need to be removed and replaced. I had MINIMAL damage.

Many homes in this area are single story construction and sustained significant damage. They will have to tear out flooring, carpets, drywall and more for their entire home. If they did not have the chance to clear out their belongings before the flood they will have to throw away furniture that has fabric on it, or soaked up water. The clean up effort will be overwhelming and they will be displaced for MANY months. Some people in our community were out of home over a year.

In 2021 our uninsured losses/expenses were \$10,000. Families facing interior damage will have expenses upward of \$80,000. Homeowner policies do not cover floods, FEMA assistance was available in 2021, and is income based. I think our FEMA award was \$1300.

In 2021, flooding was just in the north Whatcom county. Considering the widespread flooding that has happened in the state the past week, supplies and contractors are going to be a challenge. In 2021 I could not get a contractor to even call me back, because the damage was small. A flooding event happens relatively quickly, the recovery takes a long, long time.

This picture was taken Thursday morning at the northwest corner of



Nooksack Valley Middle School. The area behind that white shed is the soccer field. The water behind that is the Nooksack River overflow travelling north to Sumas from Everson.

Linda Moore

Tackling our challenges and hurdling life's obstacles takes one breath and one step at a time. Breath deeply, step solidly.

~anonymous

Available Dec. 17 - Jan. 15:

Disaster Cash Assistance

Affected by flooding? You might qualify for emergency funds.

See caption for more details.

Alert. Disaster Cash Assistance is available Dec. 17 to Jan. 15 for eligible households affected by flooding in specific counties.

To apply, call the DSHS Customer Service Contact Center at 877-501-2233 or visit your local Community Services Office between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Find more information about Disaster Cash Assistance on the DSHS website. <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/alert/food-benefits-and-flooding>



Call for Board Members

The Foothills Communication Hub is seeking board members. We are a nonprofit organization based in the Mt Baker School district providing timely and reliable local news, information and vital resource listings through a website (foothillsinfo.com) and the Foothills Outlook, a monthly, broadsheet print publication available throughout the Mt Baker School District.

The time commitment is less than 3 hours per month, including monthly board meetings that occur on the third Thursday of each month at 5.30pm. Meetings can be attended in person or via zoom.

To apply, please fill out this short form: <https://forms.gle/qxxL7veiUYCsNJu8>, and we will contact you within 5 business days.



FOOTHILLS ALIVE





KID'S CORNER



THE FAMILY VISION BOARD

Replace hard-to-keep New Year's resolutions with an activity the whole family can participate in and prepare for a more joy filled New Year!

Gather old magazines, newspapers, or download images of whatever represents each person's hopes, dreams, and goals for the new year.

Paste all the pictures on a large poster board or piece of cardboard and talk about you each of you can support each others New Year aspirations!



Rainbow Rubber Egg Experiment

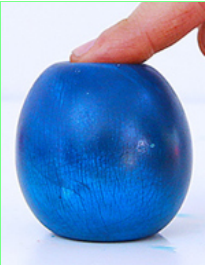
This experiment takes a bit of patience so let your child know ahead of time that it takes a couple of days.

Supplies:

- Glass
- Spoon
- White vinegar
- Food coloring
- Raw eggs

Carefully place a raw egg in a glass and pour in enough vinegar to cover it by half an inch. Add a few drops of food coloring. Place a spoon in the glass so it holds the egg down. Look closely at what's happening in the glass. There should be hundreds of bubbles coming out of the egg shell!

Now leave the egg for 24 hours then replace the vinegar and coloring. Leave egg for another 24 hours then remove from the glass and gently wash off the remaining shell and membrane. Remember, the egg is still raw so handle gently. Once your egg is clean feel how squishy it is. Try bouncing it and see how high it will go. Shine a light through it to see it glow. You can store your bouncy egg in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.



KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Cooking with your kids is a great way to bond! Make this simple, delicious recipe with them and enjoy the glow of pride on their faces when the family digs in!

With just four common ingredients, these mini calzones are fast and inexpensive, and the kids will have fun making and eating them!

MINI CALZONES

Prep time: 10 min Cook time: 15 min Svs: 8 mini calzones

Ingredients:

- 16 oz package refrigerator biscuits or pizza dough
- 1/4 cup pizza sauce/marinara
- 1 cup shredded low moisture mozzarella cheese
- 1 package presliced pepperoni (you an substitute other meats here)

Instructions:

Place rack in middle of oven and preheat to 350F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or aluminum foil.

Open biscuits and roll out to 5-6 inches in diameter. Place a scant teaspoon of sauce on one half of each biscuit, then top with cheese, and meat making sure to leave a clean edge for pinching. Brush a drop or two of water along the edge of each biscuit then fold over, pinching the edges with fingers, or pressing with a fork to ensure they are well sealed. Brush tops with melted butter and a bit more cheese if desired. Bake for 15 minutes until puffed up and golden brown.



Wildlife Word Search

Kangaroo

Giraffe

Camel

Llama

Panda

Warthog

Koala

Turtle

Buffalo

Emu

Skunk

Yak

Bat

Peacock

Penguin

Meerkat

Gecko

Beaver

Sloth

Q N C E U P T T P E A C O C K

B U N Z A N S G U L L Q T G R

U G W R A C O O N R P N D P J

S I W V Y E D L V B T H X L Z

K R A N A R M I L E U L Y W Q

U A R P B A T U L A R N E S I

N F T E U Y J M A V C A M E L

K F H N R A H D M E X P I P C

G E O G Z K K Z A R Z Y O N U

P Q G U O K A N G A R O O S U

E A O I G S T C B P H Y V L D

A Z N N F M E E R K A T X O G

M T B D K M P V K G B X Z T V

K O A L A E B U F F A L O H D

U Q G E C K O V Z Z O M P V D


Food Matters



Both broccoli stems and florets are packed with nutrients and insoluble fiber. They are high in vitamins C, K, folate and smaller quantities of A and E. In addition, they are rich in potassium, calcium, phosphorus and magnesium. If you're looking to increase your antioxidant intake, you don't need to look further than broccoli. While the florets are higher in vitamin A, the stems have a bit more calcium, iron and vitamin C.

The recipe below is an excellent way to add broccoli to your family's diet.

TURKEY BROCCOLI CASSEROLE



Prep Time: 15min
Cook Time: 15 mins
Broil: 5 mins
Total Time: 35 min
4svs

Nutrition

Calories: 318kcal, Carbohydrates: 8g,
Protein: 26g, Fat: 21g
Saturated Fat: 11g, Cholesterol: 99mg,
Sodium: 489mg

Potassium: 475mg, Fiber: 2g, Sugar: 3g, Vitamin A: 1160IU, Vitamin C: 81mg, Calcium: 231mg, Iron: 1mg

- Ingredients:**
- 4 cups broccoli florets and stems
 - 1/2 cup cream cheese, softened
 - 2 tbsp mayonnaise
 - 1/2 cup grated cheddar
 - 1/2 tsp garlic powder
 - 1/4 tsp sea salt
 - 1/4 tsp pepper
 - 1 1/2 cups chopped, cooked turkey (ham or chicken would work well here too)
 - 1/4 cup grated cheese, for the topping the casserole

Directions:

Heat oven to 375, grease a 9 x 9 casserole dish and set aside.

Remove florets from stems and cut into bite size pieces. Peel tough skin off stems then slice into 1/8 inch rounds. Put a large saucepan with about 2 inches of water over medium-high heat. Once water is at a rolling boil, add broccoli; let them blanch for 2 minutes or until fork tender. Drain water, return broccoli to sauce pan and set aside.

In a large bowl combine softened cream cheese with mayo and seasonings. Add the cheddar, then the cooked and chopped turkey. Finally, stir in the steamed broccoli and blend it all together.

Pour chicken and broccoli mixture into prepared casserole dish and sprinkle with last 1/4 cup of grated cheese.

Bake 15 minutes. Next, set the oven to broil and broil for 2-3 minutes or until the cheese is bubbling and browning in spots.

Serve warm.

Store leftovers covered in the fridge for up to three days.





eat those skins!

Do you ever look at the peelings from fruit or vegetables and think those should be used somehow? Well, there are a lot of uses for them including soup stock for vegetable peels and flavorings for baked goods, beverages and more for fruit peels. Or you can compost them or add them directly to your garden. But the most useful way is including them in your family's

diet. To learn more about which fruit and vegetable skins are the most nutritious, check out this website: <https://tinyurl.com/e8mdmubn>.

The benefits of fruits and vegetables are well known. Full of vitamins and minerals, eating them is important for a healthy diet. However, what about the peel which we normally discard? Turns out, you might want to give that a second look.

While the amount of nutrients differs based on the fruit or vegetable, generally speaking, eating the produce with peel intact can provide higher amounts of vitamins, minerals and fiber compared to its peeled counterparts. Studies have found that a raw apple with the skin contains up to 332% more vitamin K, 142% more vitamin A, 115% more vitamin C, 20% more calcium and up to 19% more potassium than an apple without its peel. Likewise, a boiled potato with the skin can contain up to 175% additional vitamin C, 115% extra potassium, 111% more folate and 110% added magnesium and phosphorus than one without the peel.

Most people just use orange peels for zesting, but just one tablespoon of the fruit's peel provides 14% of the daily value of vitamin C. That's almost three times more than the inner portion. The same serving also gives you about four times more fiber.

Speaking of fiber, you probably never thought of eating a kiwi with the peel on, but if you do, you'll get 50% more fiber. The texture of the peel isn't as tough as you might think. It is similar to that of a peach. Kiwi peel also provides 34% folate and 32% vitamin E. Not to mention, kiwi fruit is much easier to eat if you don't remove the peel.

Up to 31% of the total amount of fiber in a vegetable can be found in its skin. Higher fiber content will keep you fuller for longer and research has shown that fiber found in fruits and vegetables can be especially effective at reducing your appetite.

Don't forget antioxidants that fight against free radicals, which may play a role in heart disease, cancer and other diseases. Levels of antioxidants can be up to 328 times higher in fruit peels than in pulp.

While eating fruits and vegetables with the peel does provide more nutrients, it is always important to consider food safety. Make sure you thoroughly wash any fruits or vegetables whether you eat the food with the peel or decide to peel and cut it, to rid the produce of any dirt or germs.

From: <https://tinyurl.com/mrbdtsjf>

COMMUNITY SCENE

Helping Hands, *continued*

Fair and Inclusive Evaluation

Habitat strives to be fair, looking at each applicant's situation with an open mind and remaining aware of economic and cultural differences in banking and credit usage. If someone has no credit history, they accept utility bills, bank statements, or landlord references to evaluate eligibility.

Diverse Housing Options

Recognizing shifting demographics such as multi-generational households, older adults remaining in homes due to rising housing costs, and young people just starting out, Habitat has a variety of programs designed to fit each of these situations. They recognize the importance of building smaller homes, including one and two-bedroom units, as starter homes or for those who are down-sizing or adapting to changing family circumstances.

Senior Housing

By 2030, 20% of Americans will be 65 or older, but even now there is a large population of older people who need housing, or repairs to their existing home to remain in it; Habitat is responding to that need by actively exploring ways of expanding into senior and elder housing, especially to support aging in place.

Home Preservation and Aging in Place

Habitat's Home Repair program addresses health, safety, and security issues including accessibility improvements and repairs that support aging in place and provide modifications to meet the needs of disabled homeowners. They also offer all homeowners repair services such as roofing, painting, weatherization, and minor repairs to home exteriors.

Mortgage Arrangements

The home price is dependent upon the appraised value of the home. Habitat sells the homes with a combination of state and local subsidies, affordable mortgages, sometimes with 0% interest, and second mortgages which are due upon sale or transfer. In some cases home buyers with higher incomes may be asked to purchase the homes outright, notably in the Everson Matteo Meadows community, to generate funds for future projects.

Special Assistance Programs

Habitat utilizes unique assistance programs like the Covenant Homeownership Program, which provides down payment forgiveness after five years, particularly for people of color and those historically discriminated against due to systemic inequalities, offering up to 20% of home value, typically \$150,000. Additional support comes from state programs such as down payment assistance, offering between \$75,000 to \$150,000 per home to lower-income buyers.

Funding Sources

The organization prioritizes transparency about their funding sources, which primarily come from local grants, gift-in-kind services, and home sale proceeds rather than federal funds like HUD. Additional support comes from grants like CHIP and various state programs. They are continually seeking additional funding sources, including grants and partnerships, to grow their affordable housing and repair programs.

Lend a Hand

Volunteer and community involvement remain pivotal to Habitat's operations. They facilitate group volunteer days, often organized via a third-party platform called Volunteer Hub, where participants are background-checked and can sign up for shifts, sometimes with special skills in mind.

Organizational Philosophy and Impact

Habitat's approach emphasizes the importance of community-building, social responsibility, and proactive efforts to serve diverse populations, including those with special needs like elders or individuals starting families. They design smaller, efficient homes within available land and maintain a flexible, inclusive process for applicants.

Focusing on affordability and inclusivity, Habitat makes efforts to inform potential applicants at all stages of the process. They also stress having patience; the average time from that initial interest form and receiving your new house keys is typically two to three years.

Drawing from national models that are adapted to local needs, their operations are continually evolving. They consider a wide variety of factors when developing a new program so it is inclusive and truly meets the needs of those seeking housing in Whatcom County.

They encourage community involvement, volunteer participation, and awareness-raising, stressing that housing stability profoundly reduces social issues such as crime, poverty, and mental health crises. Their programs seek to empower individuals, foster resilience, and build stronger communities through accessible, fair, and scalable housing programs, actively looking for new methods, models, and collaborations to expand reach and impact.



"When a family slides that key into the lock of a house they've helped build, they're unlocking more than just the physical front door to their new home. They're unlocking their fullest potential. And where does that lead? Health. Education. Opportunity. Community."

— Jonathan Reckford, CEO, Habitat for Humanity International

For more information about programs or to volunteer: <https://www.habitat.org>

or contact Hillary Pritchard | Director of Homebuyer Services

1825 Cornwall Avenue | Bellingham, WA | 360.715.9170 x1013

HFHWC on Facebook | @hfhwhatcomco | www.hfhwhatcom.org

Interested in donating or volunteering? For more information on both go to: www.hfhwhatcom.org.

Primary Medical Care Services at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center

Medical Care will be available on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at the EWRRRC from 1-5pm. Services available will include:

- Wellness exams
- Sports physicals
- Care for non-emergency acute and chronic health concerns
- Walk-in appointments as available

Appointments can be scheduled by calling **360-230-8157**

Most major insurance accepted including the following:

- Molina
- Premiera
- UHC
- Lifewise, and more

If uninsured or not in our insurance network, sliding scale fees are available based on income. Patients will not be turned away for inability to pay.



Gabriel Durben, ND has been a primary care naturopathic doctor in Bellingham since 2014 and lives in rural Whatcom county. He believes that the best healthcare happens when we recognize and value our shared experience as humans.

The Book Shelf



whatcom county
library system



January events at the North Fork Library

Crafting Community

Drop in with your favorite arts and crafts to spend time creating alongside other crafters. Color, stitch, hook, paint, draw — all while connecting with others every Tuesday starting January 13th. Some knitting supplies will be available. Coffee and tea are provided. Tuesday, Jan 13, Jan 20, Jan 27 6:00pm - 7:30pm

North Fork Storytime

For ages 2-6, 30 minutes. An open program that includes stories, rhymes, and songs with opportunities for movement and interactive participation. Tuesday, Jan 23, Jan 30 10:30am - 11:00am

January events at the North Fork Library

Good Yarns

All needleworkers and crafters are welcome to share a casual evening with old and new friends while doing something you love. Wednesdays from 6pm to 8pm.

Secrets of Dying Well

Join local end-of-life planning consultants for an open, honest conversation about what it means to die well—and

January events at the North Fork Library

live with intention. You will be guided through the tools, decisions, and discussions that help ensure your values are honored, your affairs are in order, and your loved ones are supported. Whether you're planning ahead or supporting someone else, this session offers practical insight and emotional clarity for one of life's most important transitions.

Thursday, January 15 from 4pm to 5:30pm. Space is limited; register at wcls.org,

Sa'le Q'ewet Netse-lh/Our Hearts Beat as One: Book Event and Artist Presentation

Join us at the library for a special presentation of Sa'le Q'ewet Netse-lh/Our Hearts Beat as One, a children's book that celebrates the story of a young orca named Sk'aliCh'elht-enaut that was stolen from her family and sold to a theme park. Learn how she became a beloved performer, inspired people across the world to fight for her freedom, and how the Lummi Nation worked to bring her home. Saturday, January 31st from 3pm to 5pm. Register for a seat at wcls.org



Spotlight on Mount Baker High School's Drama Club and Thespian Troupe #11564

by Nena Pierce



Mount Baker High School's Drama Club and Thespian Troupe have been very busy this school year, having just wrapped up Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* Musical and diving straight into rehearsals for our next show... Mount Baker is ecstatic to announce our version of Kate Hamel's *Pride and Prejudice*, and we hope to see you there on January 30th, 31st, February 6th, and 7th at 7pm – and our matinee on February 8th at 2pm, at the Mount Baker High School's auditorium. We have eagerly been preparing this show by rehearsing lines, developing characters, and learning blocking while our stage crew create props and builds our set as we're rapidly approaching tech week and show dates by the end of this month!

This show is a comedic, heart-warming, and emotionally charged two-act stage play that follows young and awkward Elizabeth “Lizzy” Bennet as she confronts social expectations on women, family dynamics, the meaning of love, marriage, shame, and her conflicting feelings of Mr. Darcy, who challenged her initial impression of his character. As Lizzy says herself, “Mr. Darcy was right – he did hurt my pride, over and over again, from almost the first moment we met... and so I endlessly indulged in my own cleverness, all in the service of my prejudice!”

Our Thespian Troupe, an extension of our Drama department, has also been hard at work preparing for *Thespy's North* at the end of this month. “Thespy's” is the annual Thespians Excellence Awards, an exciting opportunity to showcase student's theatrical capabilities and receive written feedback from industry professionals in the wonderful world of theater and the fine art of storytelling. This will be Mount Baker's second year participating as we just formed our troupe in 2023, making us one of the newest troupes yet!

“Break a leg,” Troupe #11564!

To fund raise for the troupe, our Thespians are currently in the works for a “Fine Arts Variety Show” or, “Our FAVS,” for short – to showcase the artistic talents of MBSD students from grades 6-12, we will soon be posting a call seeking acts ranging from short acting performances, to spoken-word poetry, visual arts, musical performances, and more! Further information will be posted next month, so stay tuned!

For additional information on show dates and tickets, visit <https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/o/mbhs/page/mbhs-drama-club> or to stay updated on current events, follow @MBHStespians on Instagram.



International
Thespian
Society®

Seven Good Rules to Live By

1. Let it go
2. Ignore them
3. Give it time
4. Don't compare
5. Stay calm
6. It's on you
7. Always smile

HEALTHY CHOICES



Year 2026 — Fresh Starts, Real Change, and the Courage to Try Again

A new year carries a special kind of hope. “*Starting fresh*” feels powerful — like clean snow, untouched and full of possibility. But if you’ve made the same promises to yourself over and over, it’s natural to wonder: *Will this time be different?* This week’s letter gets right to the heart of that struggle.

Dear Deb, “How Do I Keep My Promises to Myself... and My Kids?”

I am ashamed to admit that I’ve broken promises, canceled plans, and haven’t followed through on things I said I would do — especially in front of my kids. I worry I’m teaching them bad habits and it’s showing up in their behavior. I want to make changes, especially with my eating habits, but I’ve tried so many times and failed. Should I stop saying my new goals outloud? How can I follow through this time and make my kids proud of me? ~fearful of failure

Dear Fearful Parent, First, let me say this clearly:

Your honesty is not a weakness — it’s a strength your kids desperately need to see.

You’re not failing as a parent. You’re *modeling being human*, and humans grow in front of each other. Your kids don’t need a perfect parent; they need a parent who shows them what it looks like to fall down, get up, and keep going with compassion.

Let’s break down a few truths that might shift how you see this situation:

1. Your kids don’t need you to succeed — they need to see you trying well

Parents often believe “*I shouldn’t tell my kids I’m struggling to change, because it will stress them out*” or *showing weakness will make them not respect me*”.

But think about what that teaches:

- Change should be private
- Struggle is shameful
- Growth happens offstage

Instead, imagine what your kids learn when you say: *“I’m working on this, and sometimes I stumble. That’s part of change.”* That’s a life skill they can use forever.

2. Consistency is built from compassion, not pressure

You’ve been trying to change your eating habits under the weight of self-judgment — which makes the goal heavier than it needs to be.

Nothing sustainable grows from shame.

Everything sustainable grows from *gentle structure + self-respect*.

Instead of promises like: “I’ll never eat ___ again,” try: “I’m practicing one small shift today.” Small changes repeated create big results .

3. You’re not teaching bad habits — you’re teaching repair

Kids don’t copy our behaviors as much as they copy how we respond when we slip. When you:

- acknowledge a mistake
- talk about what you learned
- show them how you reset
- keep going, even imperfectly

...you’re teaching resilience, not failure. And resilience is worth far more than flawless follow-through.

Why One Small Thing a Day Actually Changes Behavior (and Why Punishment Never Does)

Most of us were taught that change happens through *willpower, discipline, and consequences*.

Try harder. Do better. Be stricter with yourself. But decades of behavioral science — and everyday lived experience — tell a very different story:

Lasting change is built through repetition + positive reinforcement, not punishment.

The brain doesn’t change from pressure — it changes from success
Every time you complete **one small, doable action**, your brain gets a message:

- “*I can do this.*”
- “*This is safe.*”
- “*Effort leads to success.*”

That tiny success releases dopamine — the same chemical involved in motivation and learning. **Dopamine doesn’t just make you feel good; it tells your brain “Remember this — do it again.”**

That’s how habits are formed.

When goals are too big, the brain responds with:

- avoidance
- fatigue
- shutdown
- “I’ll start again Monday” thinking

Small steps keep the brain engaged instead of overwhelmed.

Why repeating one small thing works better than extremes

Rules like “*I can’t eat sugar*” or “*I must eat healthy*” set you up for a pass/fail system. And when life happens — stress, exhaustion, emotions — the rule breaks.

Then comes the punishment:

- self-criticism
- guilt
- giving up entirely

That cycle actually **teaches the brain to avoid trying**, because trying feels unsafe. Repeating *one small behavior* does the opposite:

- It creates predictability
- It lowers resistance
- It builds confidence through completion

Completion — not intensity — is what wires new habits.

Rewards teach the brain what to repeat

Here’s an important reframe: **Rewards aren’t bribes — they’re feedback.**

When you acknowledge effort, even silently, you are reinforcing the behavior. Examples of healthy rewards:

- saying “*I did that*”
- checking it off a list
- telling someone you followed through
- allowing pride, not dismissal
- doing something pleasant afterward (tea, music, a walk)

Rewards tell the brain: “*That mattered.*”

Punishment tells the brain: “*Trying is dangerous.*”

Which message do you want your kids — and yourself — to absorb?

Let’s share our tiny successes within our community this year, and make it a Happy 2026!

To Your Health

CORTISOL & STRESS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

By Dr. Kelley Garrison, ND

Cortisol, often called the “stress hormone,” is one of the body’s most important tools for handling challenges. When something stressful happens, whether it’s a real emergency or just a hectic day, cortisol rises to give us energy, sharpen our focus, and help us react quickly. This response is normal and even helpful in short bursts, with cortisol levels dropping back to normal after the stressor passes. The trouble begins when stress becomes constant. Long-term stress can keep cortisol levels high, and that imbalance may affect both physical and emotional health.

Cortisol is made in the adrenal glands, which sit just above the kidneys. Under healthy conditions, it follows a natural rhythm: peaking in the mid-morning to help us wake up and gradually falling throughout the day to its lowest levels at night, supporting a healthy sleep-wake cycle. When working correctly, cortisol also helps regulate inflammation by turning off the inflammatory response triggered by adrenaline during stress.

Chronic stress can throw this natural rhythm off balance. Cortisol may stay elevated for too long, rise again at night and contribute to insomnia, or fail to rise enough in the morning, leaving you feeling fatigued. When stress is ongoing, cortisol becomes less effective at calming inflammation, and levels don’t return to their normal baseline. This keeps the body’s stress-response system switched on. Over time, this constant activation can lead to a range of health issues, including fatigue, sleep problems, chronic inflammation, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, mood changes, and difficulty with memory or concentration.

No one can avoid stress entirely, but you can support a healthier stress response with a few simple lifestyle habits. These include regular movement, balanced nutrition, quality sleep, and stress-management techniques.

Regular exercise is one of the easiest ways to reduce stress. Walking, stretching, swimming, yoga, gardening, and even yard chores help calm the nervous system.

Balanced nutrition also supports steadier cortisol levels. Including healthy proteins, fats, and fiber at each meal helps keep blood sugar stable and prevents unnecessary cortisol spikes. Fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains all support a calmer stress response. Foods rich in omega-3 fats—such as salmon, sardines, walnuts, chia seeds, and flax—may also help the body cope with stress. On the other hand, caffeine, excess salt, and diets high in fried or fatty foods can raise cortisol in some people, so moderating these may be helpful.

Good sleep is another essential tool. Adults should aim for at least seven hours of quality sleep each night. Poor sleep raises cortisol and makes daily stress harder to manage. Keeping a consistent bedtime, limiting screens in the evening, and creating a calming nighttime routine can all improve sleep quality.

Mindfulness practices, such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, walks in nature, or guided relaxation, can also lower cortisol and support emotional well-being. Consistency is key; even a few minutes each day can make a difference.

It’s also important to know when to seek help. If stress feels overwhelming or symptoms such as fatigue, mood changes, or sleep problems persist, professional support can be valuable. Healthcare providers can evaluate cortisol patterns, rule out medical conditions, and guide individualized treatment. Counseling, nutrition support, and stress-management therapies may also play a helpful role.

Cortisol plays a vital role in helping us navigate life’s challenges. But when stress becomes constant, elevated cortisol can affect both physical and emotional well-being. With small daily habits—regular movement, nourishing food, good sleep, and mindfulness—you can support a healthier stress response.

Supplements vs Vitamins: Should You Take Either? Both?



While vitamins and supplements can be beneficial, they carry risks because the **FDA regulates them as food, not medicine**. This means the FDA does not review their safety or effectiveness before they hit the market.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), dietary supplements—which include vitamins, minerals, and probiotics—are regulated as a **subcategory of food** rather than medication. This classification has significant implications:

- **Lack of Pre-Market Review:** The FDA does not have the authority to review the safety or efficacy of the estimated 100,000+ supplements currently on the market before they are sold.
- **Manufacturer Responsibility:** Manufacturers are permitted to introduce any ingredients they deem safe, placing the burden of safety verification on the producer rather than the regulator.
- **Claims and Labeling:** While the FDA does not vet effectiveness, it does regulate marketing claims. Manufacturers are prohibited from making disease-specific claims (e.g., “prevents cancer”) that are not supported by clinical evidence.

Nutritional Requirements vs. Supplementation

Medical experts, including Dr. Stanford and Dr. Cummings, suggest that the majority of the population can meet their nutritional requirements through a well-balanced diet.

1. Vitamins Defined: These are essential substances not produced by the body that must be obtained via external sources.

2. Dietary Sufficiency: A diet rich in lean proteins, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables typically renders supplementation unnecessary.

3. Fortified Foods: Many common staples, such as milk, flour, and cereal, are already fortified with essential nutrients like Vitamin D and folate.

Due to “loose” federal regulation and the efficacy of nutrient-dense diets, consumers should exercise caution. **Supplements should not be viewed as a substitute for a balanced diet or as a medically vetted category of healthcare products.**

To mitigate health risks and ensure nutritional efficiency, stakeholders and consumers should adhere to the following guidelines:

Prioritize Whole Foods: Focus on a “food-first” approach by consuming lean proteins, whole grains, and a variety of produce to meet daily vitamin requirements naturally.

Consult Healthcare Providers: Before starting any new supplement regimen, consult a physician to determine if a true deficiency exists, rather than relying on marketing trends or news stories.

Verify Product Labels: Carefully review labels for specific ingredient amounts (e.g., magnesium, iron) and be skeptical of any product claiming to treat or cure a specific medical condition.

HEALTHY CHOICES



We Are What We Eat

The Global Food System and the Need for Local Sovereignty (Part 2)

by Linda Kerth

Last issue, the effects of the global food economy on farmers and consumers was discussed. Today we talk about a response to that global market — the rising demand for locally grown food, and the reciprocal need by nearby farmers for local markets.

Consumer Demand for Local Food

While there is increasing consolidation and globalization of agriculture and commoditization of food, there is also an opposing push against this through a demand for locally produced food for health and better nutrition. Farmers' markets are a crucial marketing channel for small farmers, who otherwise face an overwhelming challenge by corporatization of the agro-food system.

A 2001 survey (American Farmland Trust) showed that over half of US voters wanted their food to come from their own state, a finding regarded as a "strong undercurrent for preference" of local foods.

Another national survey in 2003 showed that 71% said they would "be willing to pay more" for locally grown food.

A survey of two Oregon communities responded to why they preferred to buy local food, and almost half replied it was "very important" to keep local farmers in the area. An Oregon survey found that 80% of farmers' market shoppers would pay more for local food, over supermarket prices. Collectively, these responses indicate that customers do distinguish between local and nonlocal foods and are willing to pay a little more if necessary to get them. *These responses of "consumer preference" create an opportunity for small farmers.*

Farmers Demand for Local Markets

A California marketing study (2002) found that their customers enjoyed their produce, but also getting to know them, and farmers reciprocate appreciation for their customers. Many said they were most dependent on farm-direct marketing, with 78% reporting that direct marketing was important or very important to their business; 63% reported higher per-unit profit margins; 80% used direct marketing as their predominant sales strategy, and 54% used it exclusively (Stephenson, Farmers' Markets, 2008).

Farm-direct marketing includes U-pick, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture (CSA), farm-to-institution (schools, hospitals) and farm-to-retail (restaurants, food banks) as well as farmers' markets. But of all of these, only farmers' markets have proven successful for millennia. They have performed faithfully and successfully in America since the first days of the colonies and they are considered a "keystone" today in the development of local food systems.

While people are leaning toward avenues other than the corner grocery for obtaining food, there are problems with some of those other avenues. CSA, for example, is problematic due to customers not receiving desired foods, wasting of foods not liked by customers, and anxiety on the part of farmers about not having sufficient product to fill orders. Other avenues require longer transportation of produce and increased costs.

Small farms compete against global and/or national agribusiness with product quality rather than quantity or lowest cost. Replacing the entire food supply with locally grown foods is not realistic; some foods are grown only in certain climates or regions (e.g., tropical fruit). International markets will continue to provide exotic foods or spices not found in the U.S. But most farmers' markets allow these non-local goods to be available.

Farm-direct marketing allows farmers to capture a higher proportion of the food dollar. Local growers are able to carve out their own market niche and therefore increase their financial viability. With farm-direct marketing, farmers have the power to redefine the entire local system — in product, price, distribution and promotion. This also ensures consumers can provide more input on what they want to buy. The key issue is the shifting of our major food production from corporate control to the community, to suit our own specific needs. Farmers' markets are a major approach to solving multiple problems in our local food system.

Food Security in a Global Economy

It bears repeating that we must make our food access secure. Today, we are almost totally dependent on the global economy for food. We saw, first hand, the results of the break in the food transport system during the pandemic. We felt the immediate loss of access to many foods. We felt the sharp rise in cost for those items that remained available. Many of us, for the first time, found it necessary to take advantage of food banks and other means of supplementing our food supply.

I believe the addition of a thriving farmers' market, in or around the Kendall area, will go a long way to securing our community's access to local foods — foods that are innately better than what we buy at the supermarket. Store-bought foods should be minimized in any case — with their loss of flavor, freshness and wholesomeness. Previously discussed issues of food additives, ultra-processed foods (UPFs), color dyes, and many other issues inherent in the global market, would be reduced or even eliminated.

The health and well-being of our local residents resides in the availability of farm-fresh produce, including fruit and vegetables, fresh dairy products, quality grain-fed beef and other meats, raised by local farmers. Farmers' markets will increase job opportunities, ease the burdens of marketing and low income, and strengthen the local economy, by keeping our dollars circulating locally.

Many here have expressed a need for a new store; however, we believe such a store would only provide the self-same UPFs and additives cited above. Wouldn't the fresh produce provided by a farmers' market be better?

You will see an opportunity in the near future to vote on an initial proposal for a farmers' market, limited to the first year — for purchase or renewable lease of suitable land and to set up further resources. Due to the scope of this project, it will take several years to complete. The initial vote will be sponsored by the Health Equity Zone. Stay tuned.



1 in 3 People are at Risk of Kidney Disease

from Mt Baker Kidney Health

And most (90% of people with kidney disease—9 in 10 adults)—don't know they have it. Why? Kidney disease often has no symptoms until its later stages. Many people are also unaware of their risk factors and don't know when to get

tested.

Are You at Risk?

The best way to prevent an unexpected diagnosis is to:

1) Manage your risk factors:

Common risk factors (and what to do) include:

- Family history of kidney disease (get tested)
- High blood pressure (manage with stress reduction, take meds as directed, limit salt, no smoking)
- Diabetes (screen for Diabetes risk, and manage with diet, activity, and medications)
- Having Obesity (Healthy eating, active lifestyle, screen for Medications to help)
- Age (60 and older)
- ALSO: Limit pain medications that are NSAIDS (such as Motrin, Aleve, Advil)

2) Another way to prevent an unexpected diagnosis is to get regular health checkups:

What to Ask Your Doctor

- Do I have risk factors for kidney disease?
- How can these factors impact my kidney health?
- What tests will help me monitor my kidney function? (there are 2 simple tests. urine and Blood)
- What are the early warning signs of kidney disease?
- How often should I have my kidneys checked?
- How can I lower my risk?
- What lifestyle changes will help protect my kidneys? (see manage risk factors above)
- Should I see a nephrologist (kidney doctor)?
- Can my prescribed or over-the-counter medications affect my kidneys?

Learn more about protecting your kidney health at www.kidney.org/



Whatcom Healthy Children's Fund

by Kathryn De Felippo

Families in East Whatcom often share the joys of raising young

children here—the close-knit community, the beauty of nature, and the small-town vibes. At the same time, they note the challenges: long drives for groceries, fewer nearby stores, and limited access to services.

We know that families in East Whatcom work really hard, and even a little support can make a meaningful difference. During the holiday season, this time of year can be joyful but sometimes stressful. Programs that offer food, diapers, and other basics help families focus on what matters most—good food, good company, and the reassurance that help is available when needed.

WIC: Women, Infants, and Children

The WIC Nutrition Program provides healthy food and much more. WIC serves pregnant people, new parents, infants, and children under age 5. The program supports parents and young children through nutritious foods, formula, breastfeeding help, nutrition guidance, and connections to other resources.

Many families share that WIC has helped with breastfeeding, finding the right formula, navigating developmental changes, and feeling supported during early parenthood. Families of four (including unborn children if pregnant) with incomes up to \$59,478 may qualify. WIC also offers virtual services, making access to resources that much easier. Call **360-788-7150** to get started.

SNAP (Basic Food)

SNAP helps families buy groceries each month, making mealtime less stressful. Benefits are loaded onto an EBT card and can be used at most grocery stores. Many families qualify even if they're working. Applications can be completed online (at [Washington Connections](http://WashingtonConnections.org)) or at the East Whatcom Resource Center (EWRC).

Cash Assistance Programs Through DSHS

DSHS programs provide direct cash support during tough times:

- **TANF:** Monthly cash assistance for pregnant individuals and families with children.
- **Diversion Cash Assistance (DCA):** One-time emergency payment.
- **State Family Assistance (SFA):** For families ineligible for TANF.
- **ABD Cash Assistance:** For adults who are 65+, blind, or disabled.
- **Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA):** Short-term support for refugees without dependent children.

Apply online at [Washington Connection](http://WashingtonConnection.org/home/) (www.washingtonconnection.org/home/) or at the EWRC.

Check out the local, [holiday meal guide](#).

Energy Assistance

Programs help income-eligible households keep the heat on through winter. The EWRC can collect paperwork and fax it to Bellingham or schedule in-person visits locally. An energy outreach specialist visits twice a month.

Diapers & Formula

Families can access diapers, pull-ups, wipes, and formula at the EWRC and through the support from the Healthy Children's Fund; diapers and formula are now available at all food banks, including the Foothills Foodbank.

Medical & Dental Services

A mobile doctor and dentist visit the EWRC twice a month. The doctor provides well-child checkups, sports physicals, and non-emergency care. The dentist provides fillings, extractions, and other care for all ages. Insurance is billed first; any uncovered costs are supported by grants or sliding scale fees.

These programs reflect the heart of community—connection, care, and support for one another. As parents and caregivers ourselves, we know how meaningful it is to feel supported, especially this time of year.

We wish you and your family warmth, comfort, and lots of moments of connection in the weeks ahead. May this season bring peace, full bellies, and plenty of time with the people who matter most.

Asbestos...An Issue We Don’t Want to Confront

by Kathleen Greenbaum



I sense an unwritten rule I call the ACS rule. It is not OK to mention **Asbestos**, **Chrysotile** or **Serpentine** presence in Whatcom County. Despite the unspoken ACS rule, here are some facts uncovered by research and my opinions regarding the Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA) safety hazard we face.

Chrysotile is NOT the “Good kind of Asbestos!” There are 6 types of Asbestos, 5 have microscopic straight short fibers. Chrysotile has microscopic fibers that are long and curly. Airborne Chrysotile fibers can lodge in the head and neck, causing cancer of the brain and larynx and can also travel deeper into the body. These cancers have previously not been measured by the WA State Department of Health (DOH) when tracking health issues arising out of the Swift Creek contamination. Starting this year, 2026, DOH will add these cancers into their protocol.

Swift Creek is the worst NOA contamination on the planet. It is expected to last 400 to 600 years. NOA enters Swift Creek through continuing landslides. It flows into the Sumas River, crosses into Canada to the Fraser River and into the Strait of Georgia, where fresh water meets the Pacific Ocean. The cycle of flooding, sediment deposits and subsequent shrinking of waterways due to droughts, expose fine asbestos fibers which become airborne when disturbed. This sediment needs to be removed to prevent flooding in the next rainy season which also disturbs the ACS contaminated sediment. Sediment containment ponds are being built to capture future sediment, but any missed ACS fibers and the existing sediment on the flats is an ongoing safety hazard.

Where is Naturally Occurring Asbestos and where does it come from? NOA runs along the edges of the Pacific and North American tectonic plates. The tectonic pressure on minerals at that border, such as Olivine and Pyroxene can form Serpentine. Adding water from glaciers to this pressure zone can create quarter inch veins of Chrysotile asbestos in the Serpentine. A 1962 DNR report by Moen documents this occurrence on the west side of Sumas Mountain, which is a landslide zone. However, NOA veins run from Alaska to California. And while the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) deals with asbestos contamination in buildings, they do not deal with NOA. When searching the EPA site for NOA I was referred to Alaska and California websites. Alaska has excellent examples of having mapped out NOA statewide. California has excellent examples of regulations, coding and testing procedures. Washington has a NOA problem that needs to be mapped and regulated due to the public health and safety hazard. I know one miner, active on the west side of Sumas Mountain who valiantly fought brain cancer and lost. It can take from 10 to 50+ years for cancer from NOA exposure to manifest.

Whatcom County sends out annual notices warning of the Swift Creek contamination and protocols to protect against this health hazard.

Some of these residents who receive the notification live miles from Swift Creek. Beyond that, the county needs to coordinate code, publications and website postings to confront the NOA health hazard and inform all the people who live here.

Please take this Naturally Occurring Asbestos contamination seriously!

EDDIE’S SCOREBOARD

when one door closes, another one opens

by Eddie F Whirley III



Mount Baker's run came to an end on November 29th at the hands of Cashmere. The #2 seeded Bulldogs made easy work of the Mountaineers by finishing them off in a 41-14 blowout win on the turf of the Apple Bowl in Wenatchee. With the win, Cashmere has secured it's fourth Gridiron Classic (it was called the "KingBowl" when the team made their first two appearances) berth in school history. The Bulldogs will face Washington's High School Football equivalent of the evil empire in Royal at Husky Stadium in Seattle on December 6th. Cashmere is 2-1 in championship games with their most recent title coming in their last appearance in 2009.

For Mount Baker, the 2025 season saw "D-Town Football" clinch it's twenty-fourth league championship, twenty-fifth playoff appearance, twenty-first state playoff appearance and fourth semifinal appearance. The team's 8-1 regular season record that included a 4-0 sweep over its four rivals was the best finish since the 2016 season. While the team didn't clinch its desired ending, the positives overwhelmingly outweigh the negatives.

A third place trophy should compliment secretary Kelli Blockley's desk in the high school's office within the next few weeks.

Football wasn't the only sport being played on November 29th, the Girls Wrestling team took part in their first tournament of the year at Bellingham High School. Unfortunately no information or results could be provided due to it being a simple round-robin meet. More information about both teams will be provided in February's edition.

Writer's note: the information provided in this article was written on November 29th, 2025. Information may be outdated.

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Too Deep to Drive



Q: We’ve been getting flooding alerts where I live. So far no flooding here fortunately (sorry to all the folks in flood areas), but I’m wondering, when there’s water over the roadway, at what depth does it become a hazard?

A: If I can take this in a direction that’s a bit off track from where you were heading, a lot less than you might think. Parts of western Washington are generating real time evidence that flooding is dangerous for drivers (and pedestrians), but before we get to those depths, even a tenth of an inch of water could be too much.

I’m talking about hydroplaning. If speeds are slow, you needn’t be concerned. Hydroplaning happens when you drive faster than your tires can displace the water on the road. Because of so many factors that contribute hydroplaning, there’s no magic speed threshold where it crosses from safety to danger, but there is some math that can get you close. It looks like this:

$$\alpha=(F_V(x_c)-D_R+D_S+(F_V-F(V,S))\mu)/I$$

No, I’m not figuring that out either. But if you assume that the water is deeper than the tread depth on your tires, you can multiply the square root of your tire pressure (in psi) by ten and get pretty close to the best-case scenario speed (in mph) likely to result in hydroplaning. (For those who don’t want to do any math, it’s around 55 to 60 mph for a typical car). With the right (or wrong) conditions, it can happen as slow as 35 mph. Vehicle speed, volume of water on the road, tire pressure, and your tires’ ability to drain away water are all factors in hydroplaning. Of the four, drivers can control three. The correct tire pressure and sufficient tread depth on your tires reduces the risk. Choose a slow enough speed while driving and it’s preventable.

And what about actual flooding? Maybe you’ve seen recent pictures of stranded cars submerged up to their windows. That’s too deep, obviously, but is there a depth that’s safe to drive though? Kind of, but with a big caveat. First though, the standard guidance:

In still water, any water deep enough to get sucked in through your engine’s air intake is going to be a hard limit – your car will decide it for you when it quits running. And it might require a new engine. On some cars that could be as little as six inches.

Moving water is where things get serious. Six inches of rushing water is enough to sweep a pedestrian off their feet. Twelve inches can carry away most cars. Two feet of moving water can carry away SUVs and trucks.

Here’s the problem with offering those numbers; they’re not that helpful if you can’t tell how deep the water actually is. Flood water is dirty – just a few inches and you can’t see the road anymore. It might look like it’s shallow enough to drive through, but that’s probably what the folks who ended up in window-deep water thought too.

And then there’s what’s happening underneath the road. Rushing water can erode the ground supporting the roadway. From the perspective of the driver’s seat, that erosion will be invisible until the road collapses. You don’t want your car to be the proverbial straw that broke the asphalt camel’s back.

All this adds up to real consequences. The US averages **113 flood fatalities a year**, and **over half** of those occurred when a vehicle was driven into flood water. Given all the unknowns when a road is covered with water, the smart move is, as they say, **“Turn around, don’t drown.”**



Strategic Planning Starts With Your Voice

By Jessica Schenck, Mount Baker School District Superintendent

Now the holidays are over and we're settling back into the rhythm of the school year, I want to thank our community for the continued support you

show our students and staff. We’re off to a strong start — and we’re also thinking ahead.

This year marks the beginning of an exciting journey for the Mount Baker School District: we are creating a new five-year strategic plan to guide our work and set our direction. This plan will reflect our shared values and aspirations, and we want to hear from you.

Your voice matters. Please take a few minutes to complete a short community survey by going to: <https://tinyurl.com/5ef2anbr>. The insights you share will help ensure our schools are places where every student thrives, feels a strong sense of belonging, and is prepared for the future. The community is also invited to a Community Listening Session on Thursday, January 15 at 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. in the district office board room. That session will be an opportunity to discuss the district’s needs and for input on priorities for the strategic plan.

As always, please reach out to me if you have questions, concerns, or ideas. My email is jschenck@mtbaker.wednet.edu and the district office phone number is (360) 383-2000. Thank you for being an essential part of the Mount Baker community. Your partnership helps us grow stronger together.

Go Baker!

New Year Resolution #1



“It keeps me from looking at my phone every two seconds.”

RESOURCES

Crisis/Emergency



The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.



211 helps connect you to community resources statewide.



24/7 Crisis Line
800.584.3578



The Kendall Fire Station (Whatcom County Fire District Station 92) is housed at the roundabout in Kendall Washington and has fire fighters highly trained in fighting building fires as well as wild fires. They provide a number of other emergency services including medical aid, as well as offering fire safety and prevention education to our community.
Non-emergency number: (360) 599-2823
Remember: in an emergency dial 911
info@wcfd14.org



The **Red Cross** is a registered(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing disaster relief whether it's loss of home due to fire or flood to mobilizing volunteers, supplies and services in disaster stricken regions of the world.
1 800 RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)
<https://www.redcross.org>



Salvation Army
For many, making ends meet is a daily challenge, forcing people to choose between things like heating their homes and putting food on the table. We understand the stress these situations put on families and are here to help.
360-733-1410
shevaun.malone@usw.
salvationarmy.org <https://bellingham.salvationarmy.org>
2912 Northwest Ave., Bellingham



Serving individuals throughout Whatcom County, DVSAS is a volunteer-driven 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working to heal victims and end domestic and sexual assault. With client-centered, accessible housing and support services, DVSAS empowers victims and survivors while offering safe housing and the possibility of a new life. 24 HOUR HELPLINE 1.360.715.1563
Business Line: 360.671.5714
<https://www.dvsas.org>

Maximizing your Heating Capacity: Wood Stove Tips

It's getting to be that time of year again when we're trying to keep the house warm. Follow these tips to maximize the heating capacity of your wood stove.

–Wood burning stoves are built and optimized to burn firewood. Other types of combustibles can create significant challenges with respect to controlling the combustion process, which can result at best in higher emissions, and at worst in a chimney fire.

–Different types of firewood have different properties. Hardwood, like birch, have a higher density than softer (more porous) varieties like spruce. The energy density of hard firewood is correspondingly higher. It follows that the volume of wood used has to be reduced. Bark has a different composition than the wood it protects and gives higher emissions of certain compounds. Try to avoid inserting many thin logs with lots of bark at the same time in the stove.

–When loading your wood stove, pile the logs horizontally in two layers so they aren't touching the sides or door. Place largest logs on bottom, medium next, then smallest (kindling or firestarters) on top. Avoid using

Food



Foothills Food Bank
Tuesday: 8-11am
Thursday: 4-7pm

Mobile Pantry outside Food Bank:
1st Saturday of every month 11:30 - 12:30
And third Friday of every month 10am-11am
Contact:
Foothillsfoodbankcontact@gmail.com
360-392-8149
*We are always looking for volunteers!www.foothillsfoodbank.org



St. Peter's Catholic Church Social

Action invites our community to join us every Thursday afternoon from 3:00 -5:00pm at 6210 Mt. Baker Hwy. Deming.
We are happy to accept your donations of lightly used clothing and household items. Also shelf stable food items, feminine care items, paper products, body wash, and cleaning products for our community resources bank. Our friends have access to these items as inventory lasts each week.
On the last Thursday of each month each family receives 4 pack toilet paper and laundry soap.
If you are in need of a specific item let us try to help you!



Low Income Health Care



Unity Care

NW provides affordable primary medical, dental, behavioral health, and pharmacy services for children and adults. Care NW accepts Washington Apple Health (Medicaid), Medicare, and most private insurance plans. For those who do not have insurance or who have high deductibles or co-pays, we offer a Sliding Fee Discount Program that can reduce the cost of care. Eligibility for the Sliding Fee Discount Program is based on household size and income. No one is ever denied services because of an inability to pay.
360-676-6177
<https://unitycarenw.org>

Sea Mar Community Health Center



is a community-based organization committed to providing quality, comprehensive health, human, housing, educational and cultural services to diverse communities. Sea Mar proudly serves all persons without regard to race, ethnicity, immigration status, gender, or sexual orientation regardless of ability to pay for services.
360.671.3225
<https://www.seamar.org/whatcom-medical-bellingham.html>

paper to start your fire. Light your fire from the top. This ensures reaching optimal temperatures quickly and will spread the flames to larger combustibles below. It takes considerably longer for your fire to reach the temperatures required for clean combustion if you light it from below, and the emissions will be higher.

Rebus 1



Homeless Help



Bridge 2 Services is a mobile outreach program that bridges

homeless people to the organizations and services they need. We help make connections to vital services like housing, medical assessments, substance treatment, case management, and more. Supplies we offer: basic triage supplies like water, food (sometimes hot), snacks, clothing, hygiene items. Tents, sleeping bags, tarps, blankets.
info@ferndalecs.org
Text: 813-957-4935
<https://ferndalecs.org/bridge-2-services/>

Local Healthcare



Ask-a Nurse Clinics

Health Ministries Network volunteer nurses provide free blood pressure checks, health counsel, referral and telehealth, as well as limited screening. On the fourth Tuesday of the month, the “Ask a Nurse” program is augmented by community partners that include the Family YMCA., Baker Foundation, of Whatcom County, and Support Northwest.
8-11am—2nd and 4th Tuesday each month at EWRRRC.

DON'T FORGET!

Stop by an Ask a Nurse clinic at the EWRRRC on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of each month between 8 & 11.30 am, and get your A1C tested. It's the best way to understand your blood sugar levels and see if you're at risk for diabetes.



Whatcom Mobile Medicine

Primary care services the 1st and 3rd Monday each month from 1-5pm at East Whatcom Regional Resource Center. For an appointment, call 360.230.8157. We take non-emergency, acute and chronic health problems. Walk-in appointments are available.
Sliding scale or Molina, Premera, UHC, Lifewise and more. Patients will not be refused help based on ability to pay.

Mental Health



NAMI Whatcom

Mental Health Support Group meets the 2nd Thursday of each month 10:00am -11:30AM at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center, 8251 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls WA 98226.
This no-cost structured support group, facilitated by trained peers offers respect, encouragement, connection, and hope for individuals 18 and over affected by mental health conditions, including family and friends.
THERE WILL BE NO NAMI WHATCOM SUPPORT GROUP MEETING On JANUARY 8th, 2026
GROUP WILL RESUME FEBRUARY 12, 2026
For more information visit www.namiwhatcom.org, call us at 360-671-4950 or email namiadmin@namiwhatcom.org
NAMI Whatcom Office
800 E. Chestnut St., Suite 1C
P.O. Box 5571, Bellingham, WA 98227
Phone: (360)-671-4950
Website: namiwhatcom.org

Deb Shawver, LICSW offers individual counseling sessions in-person and on telehealth for ages 13+, as well as support groups for teenagers and parents.

On the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month, she will be joining the Ask-A-Nurse program from 8-11 AM. In addition, Deb is offering a free drop-in group for teenagers starting July 1st. This group will meet weekly on Tuesdays 6-7:30 PM through the summer.
Deb accepts most insurances, including Cigna (out of network) Molina, Medicare, Kaiser, Premera, Blue Cross, Regence, CHPW, Humana.
Catch-Me, LLC
360-536-1565
catchmeccoachme@gmail.com
<https://www.catch-me.io>



Additional Health



SEAS is a free local resource navigation service available to families in Whatcom County. SEAS provides resource navigation for all families that have a child with a disability or developmental concern under 21. Additionally, in 2022, SEAS expanded to provide resource navigation for all families with a child under 5, and expecting families. From questions about your child's development or behaviors, to connecting to services or resources, SEAS works with you to help you get what you need so your children and family can thrive. SEAS family resource navigators are experts in Whatcom County's programs for families and children. They provide confidential, judgment-free, multi-language navigation services. Staff are multilingual and interpretive services are available. Our goal is to help every family get connected to the resources that they need.
360-715-7485
seas@oppco.org
<https://www.seaswhatcom.org>



Center for Independence

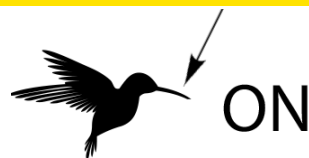
(CFI) is a non-residential, community-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization operated by people with disabilities, serving people with disabilities ages 14 and up. We serve as a resource for individuals with disabilities to fully access and participate in the community through outreach, advocacy, and independent living skills development. We work together with participants to achieve independent living goals such as self-advocacy, self-sufficiency, and self-determination.
1-888-482-4839
info@cfi-wa.org
<https://www.cfi-wa.org>



Washington Connection

offers a fast and easy way for families and individuals to apply for a variety of services such as Food, Cash, Child Care, Long-Term Care, and Medicare Savings Programs. Individuals that are age 65 or older, blind or disabled may also apply for medical assistance. (877) 501-2233
<https://www.washingtonconnection.org/home/>

Rebus 2



Addiction



Lifeline

Lifeline Connections is a community-based behavioral health organization that specializes in providing confidential and compassionate care to individuals who experience a substance use and/or mental health condition. Dial or Text 988 the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, if you or a family member is experiencing a mental health crisis. The Lifeline is available for everyone, is free, and confidential.
info@lifelineconnections.org
(800) 604-0025
<https://lifelineconnections.org>



ALANON

A part of the Al-Anon Family Groups' fellowship for younger members whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. Find an Alateen meeting: <https://www.whatcomafg.org>
Find an Alanon meeting: <https://www.whatcomafg.org>

NA
Find a Meeting: <https://nwsrna.org/meetings/>
360-647-3234
Webervant@nwsrna.org

AA
Find a Meeting: <https://whatdcomaa.org/meetings>
altwebservant@district11aa.org
<https://whatcomaa.org/>
(360) 734-1688

RESOURCES

Addiction Continued



SAMHSA's
National Helpline,
1-800-662-HELP

(4357) (also known as the Treatment Referral Routing Service), or TTY: 1-800-487-4889 is a confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.
1-800-662-HELP (4357)
<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/helplines/national-helpline>

Seniors

Whatcom Council on Aging



WHATCOM
Council on Aging

Aging, in partnership with the people we serve, offers nutritional, health, social, recreational, and educational programs that promote lifelong independence. Vision: Lifelong empowerment through education, advocacy, and support: Independence through affordable housing, nutritious food, health care and programs that support lifetime wellness. Connections with community Senior Centers, programs and outreach. Opportunities for civic and community life engagement through education, recreation, and volunteerism. Self-respect through self-determined and independent living to prevent premature non-independent living and through opportunities for seniors to maintain autonomy. Good physical and mental health through proper nutrition, exercise, and other social activities. Community support built through advocacy for older adults and through a positive image of aging. Values: Whatcom Council on Aging engages in partnerships with agencies and community groups that support the values of Accessibility, Connectedness, Involvement, Independence, Individual Respect, Health, and Advocacy.
360-733-4030
<https://whatcomcoa.org/contact-us/>



Northwest Regional Council

connects and creates new

solutions to navigate the challenges of aging and disability. NWRC provides an extensive array of services and resource to assist the elderly and disabled improve their lives with short- and long-term solutions including health care, medical transportation, in-home care, case management, resources for veterans, housing, food, a variety of support services, and much more.

(360) 676-6749
<https://nwrcwa.org>
600 Lakeway Drive
Bellingham, WA

resources

A guide to services and resources for seniors in Whatcom County
360.344.3333
guide@olypen.com
<https://nwseniors.com/whatcom-county/>

Home Owners/Utilities



Adult
Protective
Services (APS)

is dedicated to serving vulnerable adults. We investigate reports about abuse, abandonment, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect of vulnerable adults in Washington State. We collaborate with other agencies to offer protective services as needed. Our goal is to promote lives free of harm while respecting individual choice.

Make an APS Report: Report Online or Call 1-877-734-6277
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/adult-protective-services>

Catholic Community Services

is the largest local private provider of assistance to individuals and families struggling with poverty and the most vulnerable in our communities.

(360) 676-2164
info@ccsww.org
<https://ccsww.org>



Medicare.gov

provides information on how to get started with Medicare, with what Medicare covers, as well as information about prescription drug/dental/vision plans, has health counseling, assists in finding a provider, and other health-related resources.
1-800-MEDICARE(1-800-633-4227)
TTY users can call-877-486-2048
<https://www.medicare.gov>



Volunteer Chore Program



provides volunteers to help the elderly (60 and over) and adults with functional disabilities remain independent in their own homes. The Chore Program serves as a safety net, helping those for whom other resources are unavailable. Chore assists 200+ Whatcom County residents each year.
(360) 734-5121 ext. 1172
chore@whatcomvolunteer.org



Each year we provide hundreds of hours of

support to caregivers in Whatcom and Skagit County through our free programs: Adult Day Programs for scheduled caregiver respite Support Groups for adults caring for those affected by dementia Adult Children Support Groups for those adults caring for a parent affected by dementia Dementia-Friendly events Art Access Classes with Allied Arts of Whatcom County Project Lifesaver (a partnering with the Whatcom County Sheriff) providing electronic technology to locate those who wander All seek to provide a support to those living with dementia as well as to those providing their care.
(360) 671-3316
<https://www.dementiasupportnw.org>

Family Services

FAMILY SERVICES & PARENTING SUPPORT



There are four Family Services Coordinators at Mount Baker School District. Our mission is to create partnerships between families, school, and the community. All our services are confidential.

We provide support which enables children and adolescents to live in a safe and healthy environment, as well as encourages them to be present and do their best in school. We assist families with resources, information and problem solving to help their children succeed in school.

We are available for confidential meetings by phone, at school, or at home.

(360) 383-2000
(360) 383-2009
Kendall Elementary
(360) 383-2055
<https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/o/kendall>

7547 Kendall Road
Maple Falls, WA 98266
Acme Elementary School

(360) 383-2045
<https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/o/acme>

5200 Turkington Road Acme, WA
Mt Baker Jr High School

(360) 383-2016
5100 Mitchell Road Deming, WA
<https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/o/mbjh>

Mt Baker Senior High School
(360) 383-2015
<https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/o/mbhs>

4936 Deming Road Deming, WA



PARENT TRUST

Because kids don't come with instructions! The Family Help Line is free call from anywhere

in Washington State, available to parents, caregivers, and anyone who has an interest in or questions about a child in their community. We can help you find resources, parenting classes, community resources and so much more. We are here to talk and problem solve with you! If you need a translator, please call and let us know – in most cases we can have a translator available in minutes!
800-932-4673
familyhelpline@parenttrust.org
<https://www.parenttrust.org>



Care Connect

helps pregnant and newly parenting women prepare for delivery and parenthood with a series of classes. Lessons include topics such as Understanding Pregnancy, Labor and Delivery, Postpartum, Infant Hygiene, Infant First-Aid and Getting Your Baby to Sleep. At each weekly appointment, clients will meet one-on-one with a trained peer mentor for one hour. With each lesson that is completed, clients will earn “baby bucks” for supplies such as diapers, wipes, clothing and blankets.
(360)-9057
info@whatcomclinic.com
<https://www.whatcomclinic.com/services/education/>



NYS offers a wide variety of programs, services and support for Whatcom County youth, including

housing, health care, mental health, employment and education, gender identity support, and teen court. Youth are welcome to drop in.

(360) 734-9862
hello@nwys.org
<https://www.nwys.org>
1020 North State St. Bellingham,



ECEAP & Head Start

ECEAP (pronounced "E-Cap") is the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program funded by Washington State for children 3 and 4 and, in some locations, infants or toddlers who are younger than 3 years old.

Both ECEAP and Head Start include: Free early learning child care or preschool to support child's development and learning. In some locations, Head Start may also offer home-based services. Family support and parent involvement.

Child health coordination and nutrition. Services responsive and appropriate to each child's and family's heritage and experience. Children who attend ECEAP and Head Start learn to manage their feelings, get along with others and follow classroom procedures. They build the beginning skills for reading, math and science.

The programs work closely with parents to support their children's health and education and to meet family goals. They help families access medical and dental care and social services.eceap@dcyf.wa.gov for ECEAP
dcyf.hsco@dcyf.wa.gov for Head Start
<https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/eceap-headstart>.

Family Reconciliation Services

(FRS) is a voluntary program serving runaway adolescents and youth who are in conflict with their families. The program targets adolescents between the ages of 12 through 17. FRS services are meant to resolve crisis situations and prevent unnecessary out-of-home placement. They are not long-term services. The services will assess and stabilize the family's situation. The goal is to return the family to a pre-crisis state and to work with the family to identify alternative methods of handling similar conflicts. If longer-term service needs are identified, FRS will help facilitate getting the youth and their family into ongoing services.

If you experience any difficulties when calling to make a referral to the FRS program, contact Hannah Merley at 253-254-3473.

For FRS intakes call: 1-866-363-4276 and tell the intake worker that you would like “Family Reconciliation Services” to start working with your family.

Department of Children, Youth, and Families

DCYF is a cabinet-level agency focused on the well-being of children. Our vision is to ensure that "Washington state's children and youth grow up safe and healthy—thriving physically, emotionally and academically, nurtured by family and community.

Report Child Abuse and Neglect | 1-866-ENDHARM (1-866-363-4276) <https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/child-welfare-system/cps>

Rebus 3



The Parent to Parent Support Programs

provide emotional support and information to families of children with developmental disabilities, delays, and special health care needs. Personal support from another parent, who has a child with similar needs, can be helpful in coping with many challenging experiences and feelings. Helping Parent volunteers have completed a training program and are available to provide support and information to other parents. All information will be kept confidential. There is no cost for this service.
(360) 715-0170
p2p@arcwhatcom.org
<https://www.p2pwhatcom.org/home>

Parent to Parent of Whatcom County

Veterans



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Administration

Serving

Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, and Island counties, we offer confidential help for Veterans, service members, and their families at no cost in a non-medical setting. Our services include counseling for needs such as depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the psychological effects of military sexual trauma (MST). We can also connect you with more support in VA and your community.
800-698-2411
<https://www.va.gov>
3800 Byron Av, Suite 124,
Bellingham,



WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS



"Serving Those Who Served"

Vet Center

Serving Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, and Island counties, we offer confidential help for Veterans, service members, and their families at no cost in a non-medical setting. Our services include counseling for needs such as depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the psychological effects of military sexual trauma (MST). We can also connect you with more support in VA and your community.
800-698-2411
Hours: 24/7
<https://www.va.gov>



WHATCOM COUNTY
HEALTH AND
COMMUNITY
SERVICES



If you're a Whatcom County veteran,

we can help you or your family access local, state, and federal benefits and services. Call or visit us in person to find out how.
509 Girard Street, Lower Level,
676-6724 ext. #50700
M/W/F 12:30-5pm; information for all available

Education

ESL: English Language Learning



Whatcom
Literacy Council
Opening Doors. Changing Lives.

Roughly two thirds of the people we serve are immigrants who are learning English for the first time. More than half of our learners have no high school diploma or GED, and the majority have no computer at home. Our free, customized, individual tutoring and small group classes make a difference in their lives by...

*Improving their basic reading, writing, math, computer, and parenting skills. *Helping them prepare for a GED test and/or further education.
*Helping them attain US citizenship.
*Increasing their employment opportunities.
*Enabling self-sufficiency.
*Enhancing the stability of their daily lives.
ell@whatcomliteracy.org
(360) 685-6756
<https://www.whatcomliteracy.org/english-language-learner>



WASHINGTON STATE
Department of Social
& Health Services

Vocational Rehabilitation

Providing vocational rehabilitation services for disabled and displaced workers.
(360) 812-6610
DVRBellinghamReferral@dshs.wa.gov <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/location/dshs-dvr-bellingham>
4101 Meridian St Bellingham,

RESOURCES

Education/Jobs



Evergreen Goodwill offers ESOL classes at basic and intermediate levels for people who want to develop English literacy and improve language skills for the workplace. Classes include ESOL Basic through ESOL Level 4 and Citizenship Test Preparation. **Digital Skills:** With our different Digital Skills classes, you'll learn the basics of how to operate a computer, including file management (saving), typing (keyboarding), internet, and email. Later, you can take classes in Microsoft Word and Excel to learn to create spreadsheets for organizing data and documents for writing a resume or cover letter. We also offer online job search classes and special computer classes for non-native English speakers. No previous computer knowledge or experience is required. **Wraparound Services:** Evergreen Goodwill's instructors, case managers, and employment specialists support students holistically based on their individual needs and help remove barriers to employment and education. Students can receive support for barriers like housing, transportation, legal or immigration matters, among many others. **Reentry Services:** Finding work with a conviction history can be a challenge, but Evergreen Goodwill is here to help. Initially, our Employment and Reintegration Strategies class focuses on mental and physical health, stress management, the theory of change, and goal setting exercises. The second half of the curriculum helps students plan their careers, search for jobs, and prepare for interviews. (360) 752-2080 evergreengoodwill.org

WorkSource is a statewide partnership of state, local and nonprofit agencies that provides an array of employment and training services to job seekers and employers in Washington. We also offer assistance in applying for unemployment. 888-316-5627 <https://www.worksourcewa.com>



Vocational Rehabilitation Providing vocational rehabilitation services for disabled and displaced workers. (360) 812-6610 DVRBellinghamReferral@dshs.wa.gov <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/location/dshs-dvr-bellingham> 4101 Meridian St Bellingham,



Employment Security Agency dealing with employment/unemployment issues. Apply for unemployment insurance. Paid family and medical leave. 360-890-3500 <https://www.esd.wa.gov>

Home Owners/Utilities

Washington State Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) provides individual support and federal relief funds to qualified Washington homeowners behind on their mortgage due to pandemic hardship. This program is administered by the Washington State Housing Finance Commission (WSHFC). Pre-Purchase Homebuyer Education Classes or Housing Counseling Down-Payment Assistance Programs or other help buying a home Foreclosure Prevention Housing Counseling Legal Aid Home Repair or Home Modification Assistance Payment Assistance Programs (Availability varies. Call for information) 877.894.4663 www.homeownership-wa.org



Are you eligible for free home weatherization?

Check it out at PSE: <https://tinyurl.com/t6ue8bt2>

Home Owners/Utilities



We are a local government agency that serves thousands of residents in Whatcom County. **The Bellingham Housing Authority(BHA)& the Whatcom County Housing Authority** work together provide needed housing in our community. We serve Low-Income Families, Elderly People, Those with Disabilities, & Working Families in need of affordable housing. (360) 676-6887 ext. 1025 info@bellinghamhousing.org <https://bellinghamhousing.org>

You can be emailed important Columbia Valley Water District News and Updates by creating a login at Xpressbillpay. Go to www.cv-wd.com On the home page you will see a button that says "Pay Your Bill Online" hit that button and it will take you to Xpressbillpay.com. Create a login by providing your email address and answering a couple of questions. It's that simple! Once you have a login you will begin to receive email updates about Columbia Valley Water District activities like: Emergency Notifications and Newsletters. Although creating a login will ensure you receive email notifications - Here you can also pay your bills online, sign up for auto-pay and/or paperless billing if you choose. All you need is an internet connection and an email address. Once you sign up for your account and start using this service, you'll wonder how you ever got along without it! It's simple to use. If you choose paperless billing, every month we'll send you a reminder email to let you know when your bill is online. Then, you just log into your account at xpressbillpay.com or use our mobile app to view your bill. You can also see two years' history of your account online, so you can compare your current bill to a previous bill. When you're ready to pay your bill, select a payment type. You can pay with a credit card, or debit card. Enter the information and you're done! It's that easy, and only takes you a few minutes each month. Or you can set up your bill on Auto Pay and have it automatically paid for you each month! 6229 Azure Way, Maple Falls, WA (360)599-1699 admin@cv-wd.com



Whatcom County Water District 13 is committed to protecting the environment and the natural habitat while supplying pristine water and reliable wastewater services to our customers. 360-599-1801 admin@wcwd13.com 532 Sprague Valley Drive, Maple Falls



Whatcom/Skagit Housing Since 1976, we have assisted over 700 families in building their own homes in Whatcom and Skagit Counties. Mutual Self-Help combines your sweat equity with technical assistance from WSH and affordable loans from USDA Rural Development. (360) 398-0223 julia@whatcomskagithousing.com <https://whatcomskagithousing.com>



Habitat for Humanity in Whatcom County provides a unique opportunity for hardworking families to help build and buy their own homes. We work closely with qualified individuals and families to build safe, decent, and affordable homes here in Whatcom. 360.715.9170 info@hfhwhatcom.org <https://www.hfhwhatcom.org>



Energy Assistance

Do you need help with energy costs?

Apply for Energy Assistance directly through PSE now by going to: <https://www.pse.com/en/account-and-billing/assistance-programs> 1-888-225-5773

PSE's Bill Discount Rate (BDR) program provides you with ongoing help on your monthly energy bill. Depending on your household income and household size, you can save 5% to 45% a month on your bill. There is one simple application to fill out. In most cases, no proof of income is required to apply. And the application only takes a few minutes to complete online. If you've received energy assistance in the past, it's likely you qualify. 1-888-225-5773 <https://www.pse.com/en/account-and-billing/assistance-programs/bill-discount-rate>

PSE customers: Manage your energy usage online. For personalized energy-saving suggestions, complete an online home assessment to update your home's energy profile in the my usage of your online account. Measure, and monitor your home's usage. Find additional energy efficiency suggestions in our to Save library. To learn more or receive personalized advice over the phone, call an Energy Advisor 1-800-562-1482, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Whatcom County Property Tax Exemption for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities If you are a senior citizen or a person with disabilities with your residence in Washington State you may qualify for a property tax reduction under the property tax exemption for senior citizens and people with disabilities program. 360-778-5000 <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/265/Property-Tax-Exemption>

Immigrants/Refugees



Supporting Families of Those Detained/

Deported The Whatcom Community Foundation has three funds (they established them when the last ICE raid occurred several years ago) open to support immigrant families and those detained. The Immigrant Relief Fund is set to support families in need. The Immigrant Bond Fund helps post bond for those while they are being detained. And the Immigrant Legal Defense fund helps provide funding for legal defense. 100% of donations go to those families impacted. Other organizations that are providing family support include the Immigrant Resources and Immediate Support (IRIS), school-district based family engagement specialists, and Racial Unity Now. 360.671.6463 wcf@whatcomcf.org https://wcf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?fund_id=1523



Whatcom Human Rights Task Force The Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) provides

comprehensive immigration legal services and community education to advance the human rights and well-being of low-income immigrants and refugees. 360-389-3898 whatcomhrtf@gmail.com <http://www.nwirp.org/>



Office of Refugee and Immigrant

Assistance Resource Tool The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance goal is to help refugee and immigrant families and individuals succeed and thrive in Washington state. <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=8e7e2fd0641f4f1e90bbaa36a0bc232d>



Helping Immigrant Families

IRIS primarily serves immigrant women and children who are survivors of violence. IRIS responds to the urgent and unmet needs of immigrants in our communities in Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties in an inclusive and comprehensive manner. IRIS connects immigrants with needed resources in our communities by acting as liaisons for our recipients. IRIS also directly provides funding for items and services that are not accessible to this marginalized population. info@irisnw.org 1050 Larrabee Ave. Ste. 104 #498 Bellingham 360-935-1688 irisnw.org



WHATCOM DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER

Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center services focus on both conflict

prevention and conflict intervention and include mediation, training, facilitation, coaching, supervised visitation, and community education for youth, adults, families, organizations, and businesses throughout Whatcom County. Services are offered in-person and virtually. 206 Prospect Street, Bellingham 360/676.0122 wdr@whatcomdrc.org www.whatcomdrc.org



Immigrant Rights Resources

WAISN-Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network At WAISN, we are committed to defending immigrant and refugee communities from deportation while advocating for meaningful, systemic change. Our work focuses on both deportation defense and pushing for policies that ensure justice for all Washingtonians. Deportation Defense Hotline (Monday-Friday; 6am-6pm) at 1-844-724-3737. info@waisn.org <https://waisn.org>

The dementia journey isn't easy.

Reaching us is.



You're not alone. We're here to help.

24/7 Helpline • 1.800.272.3900

Visit us online at www.alzwa.org

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

Rebus 4



Septic Systems Evaluation Rebates

Do you need your septic system evaluated? Washington State and local public health regulations require septic system owners to have a complete evaluation of their septic system performed one to three years (depending on the type of system) and to report the condition of their system to the local health jurisdiction. Whatcom County Health Department is offering enhanced rebates for homeowners who have senior or disability tax exemptions who need their septic system evaluated. You can learn more at: whatcomcounty.us/septicrebate, or call: 360.778.6267.



RESOURCES ORGANIZATIONS



ORGANIZATIONS



Columbia Valley Park and Recreation

District is a local government body serving the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area in the East Whatcom Foothills. Learn more about our commissioners and the work CVPRD is doing on our About page at cv-prd.org. We welcome the public at our meetings on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6.30 pm at 8251 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls, Rm 3. You can contact us at: cvparksandrec@gmail.com



KAVZ Radio is Your Voice of the Valley

in the South Fork Nooksack Valley and East Whatcom County. We are the only community, low-power FM radio station in East Whatcom County. Please contact us at info@kavz.org if you want to find out how you can contribute, participate and learn. You can stream music from our website 24 hours a day at: <https://foothillsinfo.com/print-and-radio/> (360) 230-8176 info@kavz.org <https://www.kavz.org>



Local community-led Watch Group focused on safety in the Columbia Valley UGA area.

Monthly meetings held the first Tuesday of each month at the North Fork Library. nwmaplefalls@gmail.com 360-933-1620 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/718686472042194>



The Foothills Community Alliance

(FCA), a 501c3 organization was formed in 2020 by local community members with the purpose of funding projects aimed at improving the lives of the residents of Columbia Valley UGA. JOIN US THE 2ND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH at the Kendall Elementary Library, 7547 Kendall Rd. Maple Falls at 5:30pm in person and via Zoom Look for our event on our Calendar and in The Foothills Outlook and on www.foothillsinfo.com. info@foothillscommunityalliance.com 360-410-9114 foothillscommunityalliance.com



East Whatcom Regional Resource Center

The East Whatcom Regional Resource Center Information and Referral (I&R) Team serves the East Whatcom Community as a branch of the Opportunity Council. We provide the same access to services that can be found at our downtown Bellingham Opportunity Council location. 8251 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls. Or contact us at 360-599-3944. 8251 Kendall Rd (360) 599-3944 ewrrc-allstaff@oppco.org <https://www.oppco.org/ewrrc/>



Mt. Baker Chamber of Commerce

Staff and Volunteers are on hand to answer questions and provide suggestions to travelers and locals alike. Some business support services are available including printing, laminating, and notary. Stop by, Rebecca and Sonya will be happy to see you! The Chamber Board of Directors meets once per month on the second Tuesday at 6 o'clock in the Maple Falls Town Hall. Members and visitors are welcome. Contact Rebecca if you'd like to make a presentation. The Mt. Baker Visitor Center in the Maple Falls Town Hall is open daily from 10 am to 4 pm, 360-599-1518 mtbakervisitorcenter@gmail.com



Dear MBCC, Mount Baker Community Coalition's mission is to strategically build a strong community that offers well-being to all by supporting youth and families through substance use prevention and mental health promotion. This past year was a powerful reflection of that mission in action — a year

defined by youth leadership, family connection, collaboration, and resilience, even in the face of significant change.

As we reflect on 2025, we are deeply grateful for the partnerships, people, and shared commitment that continue to make this work possible..

Here are a few highlights from the year:

Youth Leadership on a National Stage: In February, Shana Axelson and I had the honor of bringing four Mount Baker youth to CADCA's National Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C. These young leaders represented our community with thoughtfulness, curiosity, and courage — engaging in prevention education, advocacy, and conversations at the national level.

A Clear Roadmap for the Future: We completed and delivered MBCC's five-year strategic plan to the Washington State Health Care Authority. This plan emphasizes plain language, accessibility, and community voice, ensuring our prevention work remains understandable, inclusive, and grounded in local strengths.

Strengthening Families — en Español: We successfully implemented a round of Strengthening Families in Spanish, serving eight families. This was a powerful step toward increasing access to evidence-based prevention programming and supporting family connection, communication, and resilience.

Learn, Serve, & Earn — Year Four:

This marked the fourth consecutive year of our Summer Youth Prevention Fellowship, Learn, Serve, & Earn. We paid 10 youth to participate in six days of prevention education, community service, and pro-social engagement — learning important skills, giving back to their community, and yes... having FUN!

Peer 2 Peer Reaches New Heights: Our Junior High Peer 2 Peer leaders delivered every available prevention lesson to elementary schools across the district and broke the record for the number of presentations completed in a single school year. Their leadership, preparation, and confidence continue to inspire us.

At the same time, this year brought real challenges. MBCC experienced the loss of our federal Drug-Free Communities (DFC) grant, resulting in a 50% reduction in funding. This required us to pivot quickly, rethink how we operate, and learn how to continue serving our community with literally half the resources.

Thanks to strong partnerships, committed staff, and the creativity of our coalition, we are still here — adapting, learning, and staying rooted in prevention. While the path forward looks different, our mission remains the same: to support youth, families, and the greater Mount Baker community in building well-being and resilience together.

Thank you for being part of this work — whether as a partner, supporter, youth leader, family participant, or community advocate. We couldn't do this without you.

With gratitude,

Allison Ormsby, MPA, Prevention Program Manager
Mount Baker Community Coalition
Whatcom Family & Community Network
360.375.0883
wfcn.org



Do you live in the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area? NEED A NEW WOOD STOVE? WE CAN HELP!

A major Northwest Clean Air Agency effort focuses on reducing wood smoke in the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area. We

do this in part by helping people replace old, polluting wood stoves with new stoves and ductless heat pumps. This helps cut down on smoke during winter periods when stoves are in heavy use. To date, NWCAA has funded the replacement of nearly 200 wood stoves in Columbia Valley.

For more information, check NWCAA's website: <https://nwcleanairwa.gov/resources/columbia-valley-air-quality-improvement-project/> Columbia Valley (Whatcom County) air quality improvement project - North West Clean Air

Wood stove Change-Out Program: This program helps residents in the Columbia Valley urban growth area of Whatcom County replace old wood stoves with new, certified wood or pellet stoves and/or heat pumps. It is open to Columbia Valley residents who meet certain qualifications.

JANUARY CROSSWORD: BEATLEMANIA!

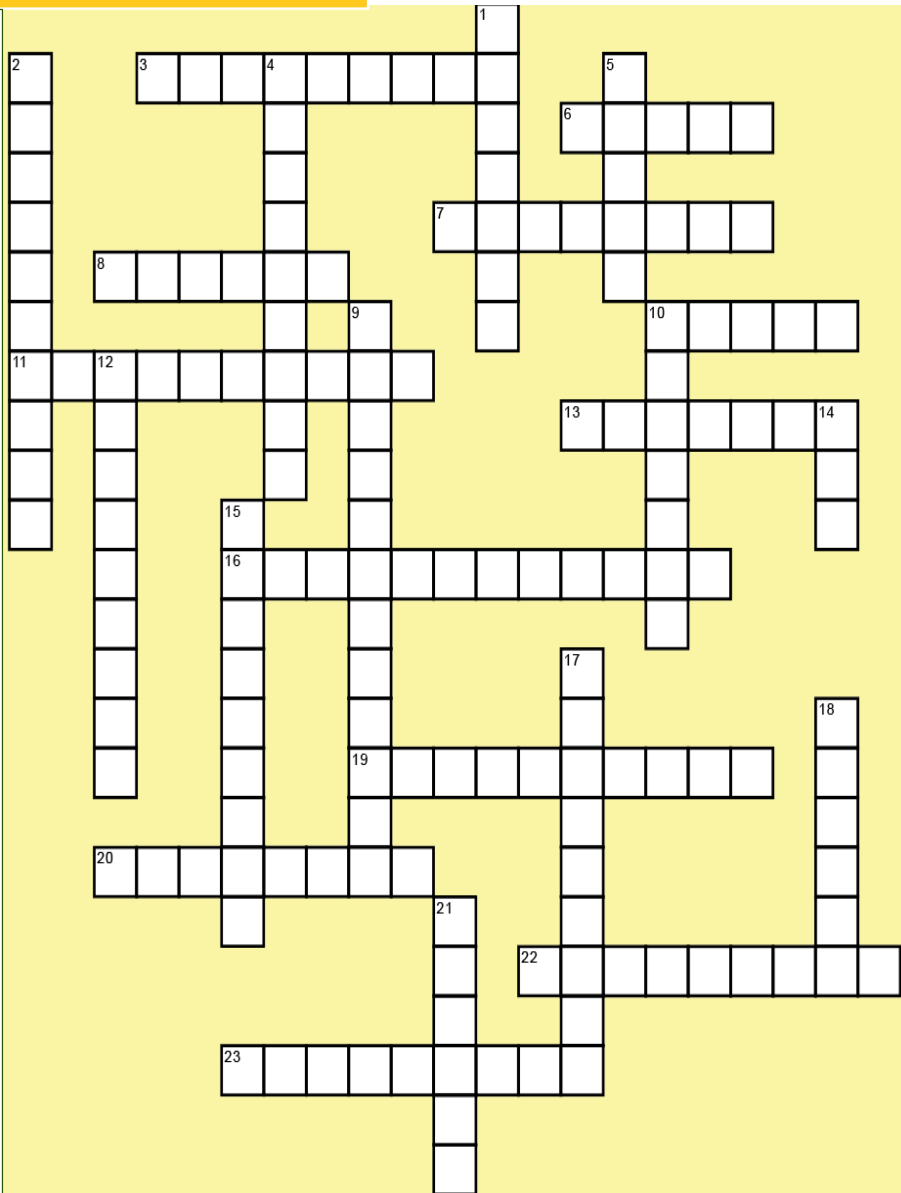
ANSWERS ON BACK PAGE

Across

3. Children laugh behind his back-song
6. Loves her ? days a week
7. You can find wax versions of Fab 4 where?
8. Maxwell's hammer is made of ?
10. Dizzy? had head's spinning
11. First live TV performance on what show?
13. Ringo invites us to ? garden
16. She keeps her face in a jar
19. Fruity fields
20. British ? hit the US in 1964
22. Sinatra said "Greatest love song ever!"
23. He's mean and sleeps in a hole

Down

1. Song named after John's son
2. He's just wandering through life
4. Good wood
5. Harrison's Eastern instrument
9. Final US concert city
10. Words of wisdom
12. In Hamburg ordered fish n chips with side of ?
14. It's been years since it's been gone
15. It's all about reminiscing
17. Album named after ? street
18. Liverpool club
21. What was their haircut called?



South Fork Valley

Community Association RENOVATION NEWS

Why have just one re-opening event when you can have a whole week of celebrations? The renovated Van Zandt Hall will officially open April 10-17, 2026. Details to follow. Meanwhile, the To Do list is stubbornly long, and money to do them is getting thin. You may want to rent the Hall one day for a reunion, a birthday party, a wedding, or a graduation party. When you do, you'll be proud to know you were part of making it beautiful. If you can help with a donation, please contact info@southforkvalley.org, or visit southforkvalley click on the orange DONATE button.

Save the Date: South Fork Nooksack River Fish and Flood Forum - Tuesday, January 27, 2026 from 4pm to 7pm at the Rome Grange (2821 Mt. Baker Hwy)

Join the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe for a community forum focused on the South Fork Nooksack River. This event will bring together residents, landowners, Tribes, and partner organizations for a shared conversation about the future of the river corridor—complete with refreshments, raffle prizes, and opportunities to connect.

This forum is designed to foster understanding, build trust, and support ongoing community-led discussions about the river. Please RSVP by emailing outreach@triangleassociates.com or call (206) 981-2229 ext. 102 by January 19.

SFVCA INFO

The South Fork Valley Community Association (SFVCA) is a small, all-volunteer group focused on maintaining and improving the Van Zandt Community Hall, providing opportunities to gather as a community, and sharing information of interest to the Mt. Baker Foothills area.

Planning an event or celebration? For Hall rental rates and availability, call 360-230-8176.

Learn more about upcoming SFVCA events and programs at southforkvalley.org/ or facebook.com/southforkvalley/.

If you have information that would be of interest to people in the South Fork Valley and Mt. Baker Foothills, we'll share it in the South Fork Scoop. Email info@southforkvalley.org or call Will at 360 393-9583.

Listen to KAVZ, your Voice of the Valley, at 102.5 FM, or online at <http://kavz.org/>



Community Events Calendar



For more information about each event, go to foothillsinfo.com and click on our Events Calendar. You can find a description of the event, see the cost, view the location on our map, visit their website, and more.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!
JANUARY 2026
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SUN 28	MON 29	TUE 30	WED 31	THU Jan 1	FRI 2	SAT 3
	<div>● 1pm Whatcom Mobile M</div>	<div><div>● 8am Ask-a-Nurse Clinic</div><div>● 8am Catch Me: Teen Me</div><div>● 8am Foothills Food Bank</div><div>2 more</div></div>	<div><div>New Year's Eve</div><div>● 10:30am Storytime @ De</div><div>● 6pm Good Yarns</div></div>	<div><div>New Year's Day</div><div>● 3pm St Peter's "Thursda</div><div>● 4pm Foothills Food Bank</div></div>		<div>● 10am Foothills Food Ban</div>
4	5	6 <div><div>● 8am Foothills Food Bank</div><div>● 10:30am Digital Equity E</div><div>● 10:30am North Fork Stor</div><div>● 5pm Neighborhood Wat</div></div>	7 <div><div>● 10:30am Storytime @ De</div><div>● 6pm Good Yarns</div></div>	8 <div><div>● 3pm St Peter's "Thursda</div><div>● 4pm Foothills Food Bank</div><div>● 6:30pm Columbia Valley</div></div>	9	10
11	12 <div><div>● 1pm Whatcom Mobile M</div></div>	13 <div><div>● 8am Ask-a-Nurse Clinic</div><div>● 8am Catch Me: Teen Me</div><div>● 8am Foothills Food Bank</div><div>3 more</div></div>	14 <div><div>● 10:30am Storytime @ De</div><div>● 6pm Good Yarns</div></div>	15 <div><div>● 3pm St Peter's "Thursda</div><div>● 4pm Foothills Food Bank</div><div>● 4pm Secrets of Dying W</div><div>● 5:30pm Foothills Commu</div></div>	16 <div><div>● 10am Foothills Food Ban</div></div>	17
18	19 <div><div><div>Martin Luther King Jr. Da</div><div>● 2:45pm Mt Baker Comm</div></div></div>	20 <div><div>● 8am Foothills Food Bank</div><div>● 10:30am Digital Equity E</div><div>● 10:30am North Fork Stor</div><div>● 6pm Crafting Communit</div></div>	21 <div><div>● 10:30am Storytime @ De</div><div>● 6pm Good Yarns</div></div>	22 <div><div>● 3pm St Peter's "Thursda</div><div>● 4pm Foothills Food Bank</div><div>● 6:30pm Columbia Valley</div></div>	23	24
25	26 <div><div>● 1pm Whatcom Mobile M</div></div>	27 <div><div>● 8am Ask-a-Nurse Clinic</div><div>● 8am Catch Me: Teen Me</div><div>● 8am Foothills Food Bank</div><div>3 more</div></div>	28 <div><div>● 10:30am Storytime @ De</div><div>● 6pm Good Yarns</div></div>	29 <div><div>● 3pm St Peter's "Thursda</div><div>● 4pm Foothills Food Bank</div></div>	30	31 <div><div>● 3pm Sa'le Q'ewet Netse</div></div>

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

BEATLEMANIA Crossword Answers
Across
3. Penny Lane
6. Eight
7. Tussaud's
8. Silver
10. Lizzy
11. Ed Sullivan
13. Octopus'
16. EleanorRigby
19. Strawberry
20. Invasion
23. MrMustard
Down
1. Hey Jude
2. Nowhere man
4.. Norwegian
5.. Sitar
9.. SanFrancisco
10. Let it be
12. Saurkraut
14. Sun
15. Yesterday
17. AbbeyRoad
18. Cavern
21. Moptop

Soduko

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

Rebus solutions

1. Soul music

2. Beacon

3. Lobster

4. Household

YOU KNOW YOU'RE OLD WHEN:

You cough, fart, sneeze and pee all at once!

Do you have an idea for a feature story, Helping Hands article, or an interview with someone who is making a positive difference in the Foothills communities? Do you have photos of the area you'd like to share with the community? Would you like to write reviews of local events and activities? Are you interested in writing about local history, interesting sites, local geology, and more?
LET US KNOW!
We're always interested in what you'd like to see in the paper as well as what you'd like to share. Contact the editor at: info@foothillsinfo.com



Do you have an upcoming event? Let us know by the 15th of the month prior and we'll help promote it. Email the editor at info@foothillsinfo.com.