

The Foothills Outlook

Connecting Foothills community members with vital resources, organizations and events



HEADING UPSTREAM



by Melonie Ancheta

When we talk about health, most people picture hospitals, clinics, and moments when something has already gone wrong. But if we want to reverse the downhill health trajectory we're on, we must look at how we live long before we enter a doctor's office.

Only 20% of health outcomes depend on clinical care. The remaining 80% comes from the conditions in which we live:

- Social and economic factors (40%)
- Health behaviors (30%)
- Physical environment (10%)

These Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) include safe housing, reliable transportation, nutritious food, quality education, economic stability, protection from discrimination, and access to supportive communities and resources. These are the conditions that

allow people to thrive physically, mentally, and spiritually. When they are missing, we see predictable "downstream" consequences: higher rates of chronic disease, mental illness, and preventable suffering.

Upstream Health Determinants (UHDs)

Upstream health determinants are the community conditions that make good health possible. They are the foundation of **health equity**, which recognizes that people have different needs and therefore require different supports to reach similar outcomes. Equity is not about giving everyone the same resources, it's about ensuring everyone has what they need to thrive.

When upstream needs are met, people gain real choices. Having reliable transportation, safe and affordable housing, and access to nutritious food doesn't just improve physical health; they increase our right to self-determination, reduce stress, and strengthen confidence and independence.

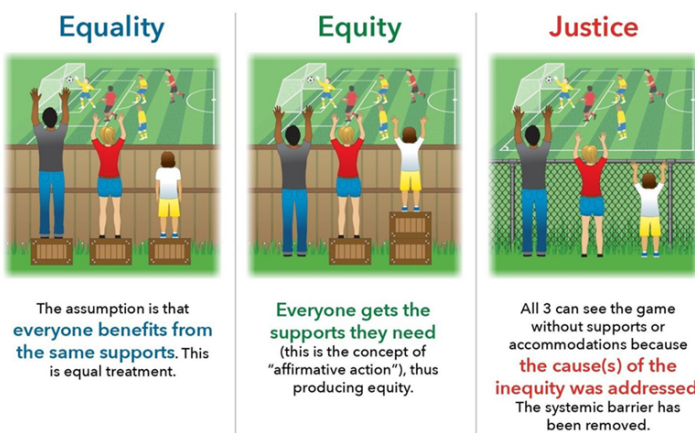
Having options is empowering—and empowerment is a health intervention.

The Real Causes of Poor Health

Everyone in the Foothills knows the challenges we face daily with food and health care access, transportation, and other issues, but most people do not realize how deeply our health is impacted by these problems.

For decades, the U.S. has invested heavily in treating illness after it appears, even though clinical care is "a relatively weak health determinant" compared to the forces shaping people's lives long before they reach a doctor. When people lack stable housing, transportation, or access to healthy food, they are forced into unhealthy patterns that are not a matter of personal responsibility or choice but of structural barriers.

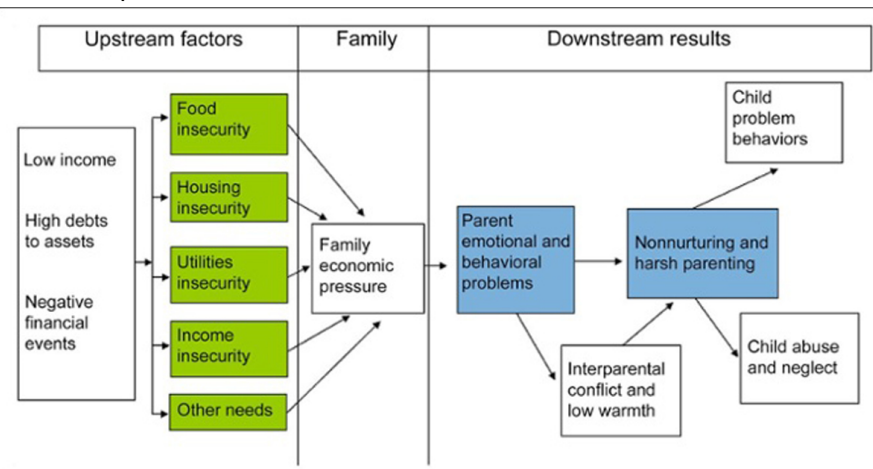
Creating conditions where healthy choices are possible is how we create conditions where good health is possible.



The assumption is that everyone benefits from the same supports. This is equal treatment.

Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.

All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.



The Weight of Inequity

Chronic stress, poverty, and environmental hazards shape health across entire lifetimes and even generations. Children raised in unstable or unsafe environments face obstacles that follow them into adulthood and that flows into the lives of their own children. Investing in upstream determinants interrupts these cycles and creates benefits that ripple forward for generations.

Breaking the System

Our healthcare system is chronic stress, poverty, and environmental hazards shape health across entire lifetimes and even generations.

drowning in the cost of preventable illness. "Approximately 90% of the nation's \$4.9 trillion in annual healthcare expenditures are for people with chronic and mental health conditions." We cannot afford to keep pulling people out of the river after they've fallen in.

Upstream healthcare asks a different question: "What would it take for this never to happen again?" Prevention, not reaction, is the only sustainable path.

The Shape of Upstream Action

Communities across the country are proving what's possible when we invest in root causes:

- Housing supports that keep people stable
 - Early childhood education that closes achievement gaps
 - Transportation systems that connect people to jobs, resources, and care
 - Healthy food access through schools, farmers markets, and community gardens
 - Medicaid innovations linking patients to social services
 - Place-based initiatives like Harlem Children's Zone that transform entire neighborhoods
- These are not side projects. They are the infrastructure of a healthier, more equitable future.

The Mortal Imperative

"Without disruption, these cycles of social inequities and the resulting health disparities continue." We cannot keep accepting preventable suffering as inevitable. Health equity is not a luxury—it is a responsibility and a smart investment.

To build thriving communities, we must:

- Fund upstream solutions, not just downstream treatment
- Embed health considerations into housing, transportation, education, and economic policy
- Strengthen partnerships between healthcare systems and community organizations
- Support Medicaid and public health programs that address social needs
- Advocate for policies that reduce poverty, discrimination, and structural barriers

Everyone deserves to live in a community where good health is possible, not just treatable.

Helping Ourselves

Real change requires people coming together to ensure their communities receive the resources and conditions they need. Local groups like the Mt. Baker Community Coalition are already working to create environments where youth and families can thrive. Many Foothills organizations are doing upstream work—but they need more hands and more voices.

For more information on this topic, or to help, contact us at info@foothillsinfo.com.

You don't need special skills to make a difference; you only need the desire to make life better for yourself and for those who will come after you.

Issue 2, no. 19
May 2026

Free

Publication of The Foothills Communication Hub ©2025
www.foothillsinfo.com

Contact Editor:
Melonie Ancheta
info@foothillsinfo.com
360.306.4413
Contact Editorial Board
chair@foothillsinfo.com

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

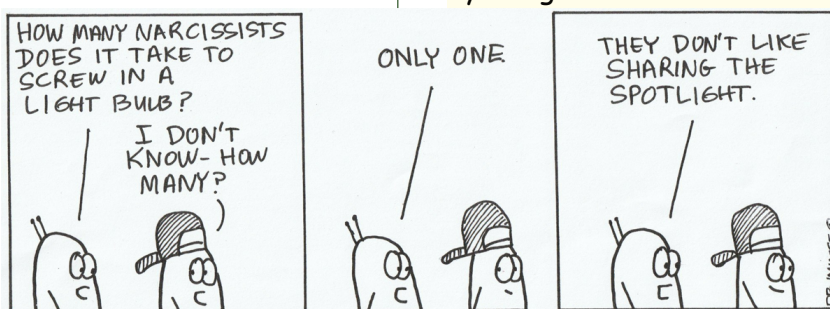
You can find our **Submission Guidelines** under Contributor Information on our website at foothillsinfo.com

Inside

- 2 Community Scene**
Ranch Quarry Mine Updates
Book Shelf
May Garden
- 3 Community Scene**
Thank You to Our Local Businesses
Outdoor Adventure Safety
Kendall Summerfest
Health Fair
Van Zandt Hall Events
Growing for Health and Happiness
- 4 Community Scene**
Kid's Corner
Food Matters: Creamy Tuscan Chicken
Mother's Day
- 5 Healthy Choices**
Dear Deb
To Your Health
From Kristi
The Dirt on...DIRT!
- 6 Healthy Choices**
NAMI
We are What We Eat
4-7-8 Breathing
Sudoku
- 7 School Zone**
From the Superintendent
Mt Baker High School Clinic
Eddie's Scoreboard
Does a School Board Matter
- 8 Resources**
Crisis
Health Care
- 9 Resources**
Seniors
Veterans
Family
- 10 Resources**
Utilities
Mental Health
Children
Housing
- 11 Resources**
Education
Employment
Immigrants
Mt Baker Community Coalition
South Fork Valley Community Association
- 12 Community Calendar**
Puzzle Solutions

bugwalla

by Doug Imhoff



COMMUNITY SCENE

COUNTY MEETING ON RANCH QUARRY ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

This is our chance to find out how the County will address our concerns!

May 13, 6-8pm

The Ranch Quarry 30-day comment period runs from April 29 thru May 29, 2026. The County has scheduled a virtual meeting to inform the public of the 3 phases of the environmental process and our opportunities for written comment. Call in details to access the Zoom meeting will be posted on the HOMEWhatcom.com website for those streaming directly.

For your convenience, HOME will be hosting an in person opportunity for virtually attending this meeting at the: East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRC) 8251 Kendall Road, Maple Falls, WA. 98266

This is a County meeting to explain the process, so time may be limited to voice concerns. Let us know how we can help you make sure you can participate by contacting us at HOMEWhatcom.com. Food will be provided.

Save May 13th - 6 to 8 pm

NOTICE OF PROPOSAL & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Name of Proposed Project: Ranch Quarry Mine

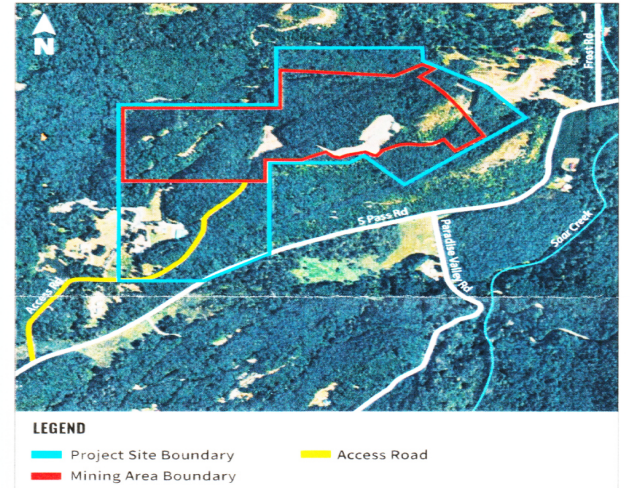
Location: 5268 South Pass Road

Project Description: Whatcom County is evaluating a proposal from an applicant, Cowden, Inc., to create a new, approximately 64-acre open-pit rock quarry on an approximately 108-acre site near Sumas, Washington. The site is within Whatcom County's Mineral Resource Lands district. Normal operations would involve about 25 trucks entering and exiting the site daily to transport mined material, with traffic potentially doubling during seasonal peak operations. Other activities would include on-site rock sorting and crushing. Operating hours would be approved by Whatcom County.

More information about the project and EIS process is available on the project webpage at whatcomcounty.us/RanchQuarryMine.

Para solicitar la traducción de este documento, envíe su solicitud por correo electrónico a RanchQuarryEIS@co.whatcom.wa.us.

RANCH QUARRY SITE MAP



Request for Comments on Scope of EIS

The public comment period begins at 8 a.m. on April 29, 2026, and ends at 4.30 p.m. on May 29, 2026. Comments can be submitted through the following channels:

Online: Submit your comment by 4.30pm on May 29, 2026, at RanchQuarryEIS.infocommunity.org.

By mail: Mail your comment to Whatcom County postmarked by May 29, 2026.

Attn: Amy Keenan, Special Projects Manager
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham WA 98226

By email: Email your comment by 4.30pm on May 29, 2026, to RanchQuarryEIS@co.whatcom.wa.us



At a public meeting: Provide verbal comment at the online public meeting on May 13 from 6-8pm on Zoom*. Register at bit.ly/zoom-ranchquarryeis or via the QR code.

*You can comment in person at the meeting on May 13 at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRC), 8251 Kendall Rd from 6-8pm.

Please note that scoping comments are public records. If you provide personal information, it may be publicly available or published in future project documents.

COMINGS & GOINGS

Foothills Families & Friends

Do you have a new family member you would like to announce?

Or have you lost a loved one you wish to honor?

The Outlook is now accepting birth and death announcements for our newest section, *Comings & Goings*.

To submit your notice, please complete this notification form: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhsd7xf>.

We can only accept notifications about someone who is or was a resident of the Mt Baker School District.

This is a free service of the Foothills Communication Hub.

The Book Shelf



May events at the North Fork Library

Crafting Community, Every Tuesday 6pm

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. Some knitting supplies will be available. Coffee and tea are provided.

Dreamcatcher Workshop, Saturday 5/2 from 2-4pm

Nooksack Tribe members Tammy Cooper-Woodrich and Angela Letoi are bringing their Dreamcatcher workshop to North Fork Community Library. Participants will create a dreamcatcher to take home. Space is limited; registration is required.

Neighborhood Watchdogs, First Tuesday 5pm

Group varies in size, some agencies join and report. All are welcome.

Puppet Show (Hansel & Gretel) Tuesday 5/12 from 3:45-5pm

Join us for an original puppet show based on the beloved traditional tale complete from the Brothers Grimm, with breadcrumbs, candy houses, scary witches, and a happy ending. Grades K-5

Dog Day Afternoons, Tuesday 5/19 and 5/26 from 3:34-5:45

Cuddle up with a good book

North Fork, cont.

and read to a canine friend and volunteer from the Whatcom Humane Society. Choose your half-hour between 3:45 and 5:45 p.m. Participants should be able to read with minimal help.

May events at the Deming Library

Summer Saturday Book Sales

The Friends of the Deming Library open their book room for self-service browsing on Saturdays in June, July and August. Books can be paid for using cash, checks, or the Give Butter donation website. Open during library hours 10am to 5pm.

Deming Library Writers' Circle

Join in for monthly drop-in meetups, hosted by writer/author Teresa Bruffey Kaufman. 2nd Thursday of the month from 5:30-7:30pm. Please register for this program at wcls.org.

Deming Puppet Show: Hansel and Gretel, Saturday, May 16th from 10:30am to 11:30am

Join us for an original puppet show based on the beloved traditional tale from the Brothers Grimm, complete with breadcrumbs, candy houses, scary witches, and a happy ending. Grades K-5.



by Mo Brown

My garden is, and always has been, an experiment. So, I have had lots of failures but many successes as well. One of the major mistakes I made in the

last several years was converting my large asparagus plot from in-ground to raised-bed. Asparagus don't like being transplanted and they don't like growing in a bed that needs additional soil added to the top every year, especially if you started the bottom of your raised bed with woody materials or straw in the hugelkultur method, as I did. The roots get lower and lower every year and the soil climbs up higher on the stalk, eliminating a lot of veg and making the plants mad. I don't recommend it!

This year, I soaked half my pea seeds overnight before sowing and half went in the bed ungerminated. The soil temperature was 55 degrees, 1" down and the soil was wet (of course). I will report the differences in germination time and plant hardiness, if any. Good trellises for bush peas are all those twigs you pruned off your shrubs. I like to leave a good, long stem to push into my 17" beds and place one twiggy limb between plants as soon as they are a few inches tall. Works great!

Besides using copper tape on my raised beds, I also keep a container of dish soap in the shed. Every time I go through my garden gate, I carry a bucket of water dosed with dish soap. Slugs go in (I wear gloves) and drown. This year, because the population of stink bugs has been increasing, they will go in as well. Aphids and flea beetles can be controlled with insecticidal soap spray and if you see cutworms in the soil or experience damage, don't forget to cut the bottom from a one-cup yogurt container and push it into the ground around your new transplants.

In May, I have bush peas, leek seeds and radishes already in the ground as well as various veg seeds. The winter mulch of straw is off the lavender plants and the garlic, planted by the 15th of every October, is about 8" tall and bright green. I usually wait for the second half of the month to sow flower seeds outside, although the first planting of nasturtiums has been done. If you visited your local school, conservation district or library plant sales (or plan to), in-between storms is a good time to get those new plants in the ground. All cool weather greens and root veggies can be planted now. I am partial to the small white turnips you can eat raw or cooked and plant them two or three different times during the season, including early in the fall. Yum!

This year, I am adding a lot of perlite to my raised bed soil. I just got tired of growing weird, misshapen carrots. They're great conversation starters, if that's what you like to talk about, but I personally prefer a nice, straight carrot, whether long or short. I like Nantes, rhymes with want, because they are short and grow well in the 100% cotton grow bags that I made from a \$7 tarp a couple of years ago. If you have cutesy carrots, your soil is probably heavy, clayey or compacted.

If you are using seeds that you overwintered in your fridge, it's a good idea to let the container come to room temperature before opening it. This eliminates the possibility of condensation which could decrease viability or even lead to rotting of the seed or increased seedling weakness.

When the first dandelions flowered, the mason bees were taken out of my fridge where they overwinter every year and went to live in their backyard nest box. The males hatch first, the females about three days later. They pollinate everything within 300 feet, so they benefit my neighbor's gardens as well as mine.

If you did not fertilize your peonies last month, it is not too late. Just a half-cup of bone meal, watered in, will improve the bloom and strengthen them overall. If you don't fertilize now, you can add the bone meal after blooming is done.

If you start your seeds indoors, you should have seedlings now and lots of reusable plant tags. After years of starting seeds indoors, only to fail at hardening them off, I am only direct sowing or buying starts this year. If you have hardening off tips that have worked for you in our increasingly unpredictable spring weather, please let me know.

Happy Gardening!

COMMUNITY SCENE

Thank You to Our Local Businesses!

To all the businesses that keep our community going, THANK YOU!

Everyone in the Foothills is challenged by the lack of food access and services that can be found in other areas. That makes all of our local business owners and employees especially valuable members of this community.

In the past the foundation of a town was laid by local people who invested in the long-term success of their community by creating businesses that served the local population. Today with corporate this and corporate that, the opportunity to start a small business is more difficult than ever and competition is brutal, but not in a rural area like ours.

Your presence in the Foothills provides goods and services that are otherwise unavailable to us. You keep us afloat day to day with a gallon of milk and loaf of bread, that first morning coffee, and so much more. Whether we need a haircut for an important meeting, washers to fix a faucet, or are craving fresh baked goods, you have us covered.

You create gathering places, offer jobs, and help make our neighborhoods feel like home. Whether you're roasting coffee at dawn, fixing a flat tire in the rain, stocking shelves late into the evening, or welcoming customers with a familiar smile, your efforts ripple far beyond your checkout stand.

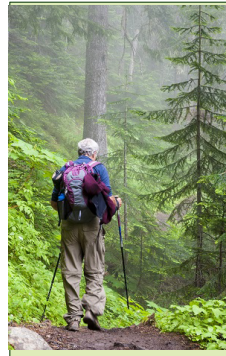
Through your contributions you help support local causes and events that help us create a stronger, healthier and happier community. You donate, sponsor, host, and cheer us on. You help keep local money circulating locally which improves the economy of our area.

You inspire others to follow their dreams of owning a business, and you provide examples of entrepreneurship for our youth. You make it possible for our community to grow, to connect, and to take care of one another.

We see the long hours, the creativity, the resilience and persistence despite hard times, and we see your hearts. Your position in our community gives us a sense of place, of belonging and home. You help define the character of our community.

Thank you for being the backbone of our local economy and the soul of our shared home. We're proud to support you, and even prouder to call you neighbor and friend.

But most of all, you offer a welcoming, helpful smile. You are one of us, and your presence helps strengthen our community relationships, often over generations, and we're grateful you are here!



Outdoor Adventure Safety

With the weather inching toward spring, most of us are craving outdoor time. While engaging in outdoor activities it is important to take care of our physical health no matter whether it is a short walk or an all-day hike. Too often we think, "Oh, I'm just going a short distance," or, "I'll only be gone an hour," but as we all know, that short distance could turn into miles and an hour can end up all day, or longer. Here are a few things to keep in mind about ensuring our physical health and safety while seeking relaxation in the outdoors.

1. Even if just going for a walk around the block, take more water than you think you might need. Do not drink from natural water sources such as streams or lakes.
 2. Keep high protein and carbohydrate snacks handy to maintain energy.
 3. Always apply sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher to protect your skin from damage. Wear a wide brimmed hat and clothing that protects your skin.
 4. Use bug repellent to keep mosquitoes and ticks away. There are many good natural bug repellents available today.
 5. Check weather forecasts, keep to marked trails and always let someone know where you plan to go and when you should be back.
 6. Carry a basic first aid kit including band aids and antibiotic ointment such as Neosporin should be used for wounds and blisters. Tweezers come in handy for ticks or splinters. Antihistamines, Ibuprofen and personal prescriptions are also recommended.
 7. Carrying a compass may seem like something your grandfather did, but when your phone has no signal, that compass can become a life saver.
 8. Wear layered, comfortable, loose, moisture-wicking clothing and always wear shoes that are made for the activity and are broken in. Those new shoes might look great on your feet, but half way up that trail isn't the place to discover every step is hell!
 9. Beware the wildlife. Always make plenty of noise, or wear a bell, to warn away bears. Carry bear spray; it can be used on any animal showing aggression.
 10. Pay attention to where you are putting your feet. Walking while trying to take a photo of a spectacular scene can end up as a photo of you on crutches. Carry a walking stick. If you are unsure of the ground ahead of you, grab a long stick and probe it for soft spots or even voids. Do not try to cross flooded streams or rivers, and watch your footing on wet or mossy rocks. Remember wet leaf litter can be slippery.
- Getting outdoors can be one of the most beneficial things we can do for our health, but we need to remember to be proactive in caring for ourselves, and others, while out there.



CALL FOR VENDORS & PROVIDERS

When: Aug 1, 2026 4-8pm
Where: Kendall Elementary School

To register as a vendor,
scan QR code or go to:
<https://forms.gle/Jshv9RjY5FYgZMdr>
There is a \$20 booth fee for vendors.



For more information
email kendallsummerfest@gmail.com

To register as a provider,
scan the QR code or go to
<https://forms.gle/73aoXPYSVGqqJdp46>
There is no booth fee for providers.







May 15-30 2026

Fri May 15: Grand Opening Ceremonies 3-5 PM
Sat May 16: Everybody's Public Market 10 AM-3PM
Sat May 16: Band Zandt! 7-9 PM
Sun May 17: Third Place Coffee House 10 AM-2:00 PM
Mon May 18: Open House including KAVZ 4-8 PM
Tue May 19: Yoga with Penny 10:30 AM
Tue May 19: Foothills Seniors Noon-2 PM
Tue May 19: Van Zandt History Enthusiasts 7-9 PM
Wed May 20: Foothills Entrepreneur Collective 4-3:30 PM
Thur May 21: Potluck and Open Mic 6-9 PM
Sat May 30th: Robert Sarazin Blake and the High, Wide and Handsome Band! And Potluck! 6 close

info@vzstewards.org **vzstewards.org**
4106 Valley Hwy/SR 9, Deming WA 98244



KAVZ
102.5 FM

Join the
CELEBRATION!



Point Your Camera Here
And Click the Link

Growing for Health & Happiness

In every neighborhood — from a sunny backyard in Acme to a patio dotted with pots in Glacier, gardens have a way of helping us shake off our troubles, clear our heads, and bring us back to what we can actually manage as an individual. We are reminded through the act of growing plants that growth is slow and often invisible, that everything we do requires nourishment, and that our lives are well worth tending.

Research today demonstrates gardening isn't just a pleasant pastime or hobby, it's a powerful, accessible way for anyone no matter age or ability, to reduce stress, increase mental and physical well-being, and have fun doing it. And while gardening can be done alone, it offers opportunities for building social connections through plant sharing and swaps, sharing useful hacks and tips, and creating gardening groups.

Gardening offers significant mental and physical health benefits, including reduced stress, anxiety, and depression while increasing physical activity. It acts as a moderate aerobic exercise, improving heart health, hand strength, and muscle tone. Additionally, it promotes better nutrition through home-grown produce, boosts vitamin D, and fosters a sense of accomplishment.

A Natural Boost for Body and Mind

Spending time gardening does more than brighten your mood. It reduces stress, builds self-esteem, provides a good dose of vitamin D, builds hand and body strength and improves motor skills, balance, flexibility and physical strength, just to name a few benefits. It also provides the freshest produce you could ever ask for.

The exercise we get gardening is surprisingly effective. Digging, planting, and carrying soil all add up. One Harvard summary calls it "exercise with a purpose," a phrase that captures the joy of moving your body while creating something beautiful.

And the benefits don't stop at the physical. Gardening helps calm the nervous system, reduce stress, and improve memory. Even a few minutes with your hands in the soil can shift your whole day.



THE FIFTH ANNUAL EAST WHATCOM HEALTH FAIR

HEALTH & WELLNESS RESOURCES LIKE:

Medical, Dental, & Vision Services • Pediatric Wellness Services
Memory & Hearing Services • Insurance Resources & Registration Assistance • Community & Other Wellness Services • Massages • Free Food • Fun Extras & MORE

When: Saturday, May 16, 10 am – 2 pm
Some services available on Fri, May 15

Where: East Whatcom Regional Resource Ctr
8251 Kendall Road, Maple Falls, WA

Who's Invited: All are welcome!

Cost: FREE, registration may be required

CONTACT US

360-599-3944
ewrrc-allstaff@oppco.org
oppco.org/ewrrc/healthfair

REGISTER





FOOTHILLS ALIVE



KID'S CORNER



Eggshell Geode Experiment

This colorful experiment will fascinate your kids (and you)! This experiment mimics how crystals form in nature, but is a lot faster and way more fun!

Materials

- Clean, dry eggshells, halved
- White school glue
- Alum powder (spice aisle at grocery store), or Borax
- Hot water
- Food coloring
- Small containers

Instructions

Clean empty eggshells with warm water and let dry completely. Paint school glue over the entire inside and before glue dries, liberally sprinkle alum or borax to cover the entire inside. Pour out excess and use for the next egg. Let glue and powder dry completely, preferably overnight.

Boil water and dissolve large amount of borax or alum until it will not dissolve anymore. Pour equal amounts into containers and add food coloring. When cool, about 30 minutes, submerge egg shells in this solution making sure they're covered. Let the containers sit, undisturbed, for 12-24 hours (the longer they sit, the more crystals will grow). Carefully remove the finished geodes from the solution with a spoon and let dry.

Note: Moving the containers or shells slows crystal growth.

Lost Letters

Ch and gh got lost from these word. Can you reunite the ch and gh with the right words?

li__t ri__t __ore
 wren__ tea__ mun__
 fli__t wat__ __ocalate

Food Matters



It can be tough thinking up healthy, simple and budget-friendly meals for a family day after day, and for most of us, the amount of time spent cooking is a big factor. This recipe for Creamy Tuscan Chicken ticks all the boxes, the family will ask for it over and over again, and you can have it on the table in just 30 minutes!



CREAMY TUSCAN CHICKEN

Svs 4-6
Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 25 minutes
Total Time: 30 minutes Yield: 4-5

Ingredients

- 4- 4 oz. boneless skinless chicken breast salt & pepper
- 1 tablespoon neutral oil like canola
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 cup diced sweet onion
- 1/3 cup dry white wine (dry vermouth is an inexpensive, reliable substitute)

- 1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 1 cup full fat coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, chiffon

Instructions

Season both sides of the chicken with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a skillet over medium-high, then add the chicken and sear both sides for 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

Melt the butter in the same pan and cook garlic for 30 seconds, then add the onions and cook for 2 minutes, or until softened.

Pour the wine into the pan and scrape up the brown bits with a wooden spoon. Add salt and red pepper flakes.

Add the cherry tomatoes to the skillet and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, or until softened. Gently press on them to burst.

Stir in the spinach and once it wilts, add the coconut milk. Simmer for 3 to 4 minutes.

Stir in the lemon juice and basil, then nestle the chicken into the skillet. Once the chicken is warmed through, remove from heat and serve.

Tips: Try a different protein. You could use shrimp, bay scallops or pork instead of chicken.

Add chard or mustard greens instead of spinach (cook the stems with the onions and add the greens when you'd add the spinach), or kale for a heartier option.

Swap coconut cream for regular cream and use chicken broth in place of the wine for an alcohol-free dish.

Nutrition per serving

Calories: 452, Sugar: 3gm, Sodium: 448mg, Fat: 29g, Saturated Fat: 17g, Carbohydrates: 7g
Fiber: 1g, Protein: 36g, Cholesterol: 124mg



To the Women Who Hold Us Together

by Mahalia Blue

Mother's Day is more than a date on the calendar. It's a reminder to honor the women, mothers, grandmothers, Aunties...the older women who steady our lives with love, grit, humor, and the kind of everyday magic that often goes unnoticed.



May 10, 1908 marked the first official observance of Mother's Day in the US and was founded by Anna Jarvis to honor her mother, Ann Jarvis. Anna's mother was a social activist and community organizer during the American Civil War era who had earlier founded

Mothers' Day Work Clubs in Appalachia to improve sanitary conditions, reduce infant mortality, and provide medical aid. These clubs offered in-home assistance and later united families during the Civil War. This inspired Anna to petition for Mother's Day as an official day of commemoration. However, as Mother's Day became more commercialized, Anna tried to get it rescinded claiming the intent had been corrupted by commercialization.

Over the years commercialization has only increased, but it does not detract from the fact that a mother's job is 24/7 every day of the year even when children are grown and on their own. Mothers nourish our bodies and minds, they strive to keep us safe and healthy, they teach us how to manage being human and they support us in ways that are often unseen. The phone is never far from a mother's reach even as her kids are raising their own kids. Some mothers nurture entire communities with their generosity and care. However motherhood shows up, it shapes the world in quiet, powerful ways.

On this day, we celebrate the hands that put bandages on owwies, wipe snotty noses, show up in the rain and snow to cheer for us, who feed us and our friends no matter how tight the budget, and who get up in the night to make sure we're safe in our beds.

Whether chosen or biological, mothers hold us together. We celebrate these women who teach us resilience, creativity, and compassion simply by living those values out loud.

If you're lucky enough to have a mother figure in your life, take a moment to reach out. Share a story. Say thank you. Let her know the ways she's made your world bigger and brighter. And for those of us who were like me, apologize for the gray hair and stress we caused when we were teens.

And if this day brings mixed emotions, you're not alone. Mother's Day can be tender, complicated, and bittersweet all at once; there's room for all it together.

No matter how you mark the day, may it be filled with gratitude, connection, and the kind of love that lingers long after the flowers fade.



Cooking with your kids is a great way to teach them math, science, and creativity! Try this simple, delicious recipe and see the glow of pride on their faces when the family digs in!

INGREDIENTS

- 22 lrg pepperoni slices 4Tbsp butter 4Tbsp flor
- 1 1/4C milk 1/2C heavy cream 1tsp garlic powder
- 1tsp dried oregano kosher salt black pepper
- 2C shredded mozzarella 3/4C grated Parmesan, divided
- 8oz elbow macaroni Fresh basil, torn, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Arrange racks in upper and lower thirds of oven and preheat to 400F. Cut a slit in the center of each slice of pepperoni, place in cups of regular size muffin tin. Chop remaining pepperoni into small pieces.

In a large pot over medium heat, melt butter. Add flour and whisk until golden. Slowly pour in milk while whisking. Add cream, garlic powder, and oregano.

Season with salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer and cook for 2 minutes. Add mozzarella and 1/2 Parmesan, stir until cheese is melted.

In another large pot of boiling, salted water, cook pasta until al dente, minutes. Reserve 1/2C pasta water, then drain pasta.

Add 2Tbsp pasta water to cheese sauce and stir well. Add pasta to sauce, toss to coat. Add more pasta water if needed to loosen sauce.

Spoon macaroni into pepperoni cups. Sprinkle 2Tbsp Parmesan and pepperoni pieces over tops. Bake until tops are golden and macaroni feels firm, 20-30 minutes. Remove from muffin tin, garnish with basil and remaining Parmesan and serve.



In the Garden

O T H B E A N S F F
 S B O X M S C O J O
 L R S G U P H Y B L
 U O E T D R R W I B
 G L N Q E I A X R U
 S L W A W N K C D T
 F Y O B E K E A S T
 M P R E E L C R D E
 L O M E D E O R H R
 S L S S S R R O F F
 N L T I O F N T C L
 A Y D I R T U S Y I
 I S C X L H P B K E
 L A D Y B U G S D S
 S E F L O W E R S N

WORD SEARCH: Things in the garden

SPRINKLER FLOWERS LADYBUGS BIRDS CARROTS
SNAILS BEES WEEDS SLUGS WORMS CORN
RAKE DIRT BEANS MUD HOSE

HEALTHY CHOICES



Dear Deb...

Answering your questions with compassion,
not criticism!

Deb Shawver, LICSW



The Lasting Echo of the Covid Shutdown

Dear Deb,

My teen complains of feeling depressed, anxious, and often announces that they hate school and might as well just give up since they are sure they will fail anyway. How can I help them when I can't find the solutions that they are willing to utilize??

Signed, *Stressed in Peaceful Valley*

Dear Stressed,

You are not alone, and I totally understand where you are coming from. Being a mom of a young adult and a teen myself, this is a common predicament in my home, as well as for the many parents I talk to in a given week.

We cannot forget the reality of the train wreck that was COVID for our kids. It is easy to mislabel their resistance as laziness or stubbornness, but we must view it through the lens of a direct interruption in healthy development. For our youth, the shutdown didn't just stall academics—it drastically disrupted the formation of *competence, identity, self-confidence, and independence*. These developmental stages occur through the experience of navigating classrooms, social scenes, and accomplishing tasks, lessons or other small achievements.

For many East Whatcom County youth, the "solutions" adults find convenient are the very things they find triggering. While telehealth is a vital bridge for rural adults, many teens associate video screens with the isolation and stress of the shutdown. To them, talking to an adult over a camera isn't a resource; it's a reminder of "bad times." Even asking for homework help can feel heavy if their previous experiences with remote learning were stressful. Our youth had to rely on us as parents to support their learning during Covid. I don't know about most parents, but I don't speak math very well. When asking for help leads to any type of upset, it leaves a negative mark that they aren't eager to repeat.

As adults, we can provide extra understanding and be open to creative, low-pressure ways to offer support.

— Say yes when your kids ask to study with friends; socialization is the laboratory where they rebuild their confidence. — Say yes to any organized social activities, as they need the practice in navigating real-world interactions. — Listen to their ideas for unique solutions; they often have insights into what they need that we adults completely overlook. — Validate their screen aversion to adult help, even if they want to be on screens for social reinforcement. — If they refuse video counseling, explore local in-person options or peer-led groups.

Our kids are often left to their own devices for coping with emotional ups and downs, especially in our rural corners where social services are sparse. Let's rally to connect as a community to create healthy spaces for role-modeling and support. Sometimes the best "access" we can provide is simply being a safe, non-judgmental space while they navigate their way back to themselves

From Kristi's Desk

by Kristi Warren Slette

Director Whatcom Family & Community Network

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

We ALL have Mental Health—just as we all have physical health. The mental wellbeing of a family unit is important. You are encouraged to assess concerns and identify actions for improved well-being.

What exactly is "mental health"? The term is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community (2014)" (National Council for Mental Wellbeing, (2025). *Mental Health First Aid USA Youth Manual*, p.4).

Two factors considered in assessing the well-being of children via the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) survey is whether a person under 18 has lived with an adult caregiver, who is living with untreated mental health or substance misuse challenges.

As an adult, you can set your children up for success and better health across their life span, if you care for your own mental health. That can mean seeking professional services like therapy and counseling or engaging in self-help, like attending support groups, calling on resources such as 988, and a setting up a strong self-care routine—like healthy eating, solid sleep routines, exercise, and reflective-thinking time.

Adults who model positive mental health awareness and attitudes demonstrate for their children healthy habits for their future.

"According to the American's Mental Health 2018 study, nearly one-third of Americans, or 31 percent, have worried about other judging them for seeking mental health services" (p.15). This concern is associated with the concept of "stigma." Stigma is when someone views a person in a negative way due to a condition or way of life, such as having a mental health disorder (p. 14). We reduce stigma by recognizing that we all have varying degrees of mental health and it is strong and positive to seek help for concerns.

Youth experience mental health challenges, too! 1 in 5 students will experience a mental health challenge, according to the National Council for Mental Wellbeing's Mental Health First Aid course (2025). The median age of onset for anxiety disorders is age 6. The median age of onset for ADHD and behavior disorders is age 11. Mood disorders onset at the median age of 13 and substance use disorders onset at the median age of 15 (p.8) Only 7.5% of youth will ever receive any type of mental health screening (2025). If your family has history of serious or chronic mental health and/or substance use disorders, it can be helpful to talk to your children's primary care health provider about family history and what to be aware of across the developmental stages.

Childhood trauma is often a common denominator linked with mental health concerns. As a community we wish to reduce and eliminate all exposure to toxic stressors for future generations. Mental health stressors are linked to substance use concerns in youth and adults.

If you or someone you love is living with untreated mental health concerns, there are many resources available. In a mental health crisis when imminent danger to self or others exists, call 9-1-1 and ask for a mental health response. In a mental health crisis when there is not immediate concern of harm, calling 988 is a great option. In Washington State, if you are concerned about the mental health of a young person under age 25, who you think needs help and is not getting support, you can text Hearnemwa to 738477 or call 1-888-537-1634. Other local behavioral health resources can be searched at www.whatcomresources.org and in the Resources pages of this paper and at foothillsinfo.com. Learn more about becoming a mental health first aider at MHFA.org

To Your Health

When Rest Isn't Laziness: What Sleep Is Actually Doing for Your Family

By Dr. Rachel Culleton, ND, FABNP— Pediatric Naturopathic Physician

There's a particular brand of tired that's become almost a badge of honor in modern family life. Parents running on coffee and good intentions. Kids staying up past nine because the evening finally got quiet enough to connect. Teenagers who seem nocturnal by design. We normalize it because everyone around us is doing the same thing. But when I see it showing up in the exam room, the picture starts to look less like a busy season and more like a slow drain.

Sleep isn't passive. It's one of the most active things a body does.

What Happens When We Sleep

For children especially, sleep is when the real work happens. Growth hormone is released primarily during deep sleep. The immune system consolidates its memory of pathogens it encountered during the day. The brain sorts and files new information, which is why a well-rested child learns more efficiently than a tired one, even if the tired one sits dutifully through the same lesson.

The gut also does a kind of housekeeping overnight. Motility slows, repair processes activate, and the microbial community that influences everything from immunity to mood gets a chance to rebalance. It's not a coincidence that kids who sleep poorly tend to have more digestive complaints, more skin flares, and a harder time recovering from illness.

What I'm Seeing in Practice

Families often come in focused on food, supplements, or symptoms. And those things matter. But when I ask about sleep, the answers are telling. The child who wakes up two or three times a night and has been doing so for years. The toddler who fights bedtime for ninety minutes and wakes up irritable. These aren't just inconveniences. Chronic sleep disruption raises cortisol, suppresses immunity, affects blood sugar regulation, and shifts mood and behavior in ways that can look like something else entirely.

Simple Shifts That Support Better Sleep

We're not after perfection. But a few consistent patterns make a meaningful difference.

Anchor the mornings, not just the nights. A consistent wake time is actually more powerful than a consistent bedtime for resetting the body's internal clock. Light exposure in the morning — even ten minutes outside or near a bright window — helps anchor the circadian rhythm for the whole day.

Wind down the inputs before the lights. Screens aren't just about blue light — they're stimulating. The brain needs a buffer between high-input activity and sleep. Even thirty minutes of quieter time (reading, drawing, a bath, slow conversation) can shorten the time it takes to fall asleep.

Feed the rhythm. Eating at regular times, and not too close to bedtime, helps regulate the systems that also govern sleep. A small protein-containing snack in the early evening can help kids whose blood sugar dips overnight and causes early waking.

Cool and dark matters more than we think. The body's core temperature naturally drops as we fall asleep. A cooler room that gets genuinely dark supports that process — especially relevant here in the Pacific Northwest when summer evenings stay light far longer than our kids' bodies expect.

If something is consistently disrupting sleep — in your child or in yourself — it's worth looking at. Not because sleep problems are catastrophic, but because better sleep tends to make nearly everything else easier.

Rest is not a reward for finishing everything on the list. It's part of the work.

The Dirt on...DIRT!

by Mahalia Blue



Many of us grew up hearing, "Go play outside. A little dirt won't hurt you." My mother didn't hesitate to yank a carrot out of the dirt, wipe the clods off on her apron and munch away, insisting dirt made us healthier. I figured she had some ulterior motive, but science has proven her right (again!).

Healthy soil doesn't just grow food; it grows resilience, joy, well-being, and good health. And it's available to everyone, free of charge. As one researcher puts it, "Exposure to healthy soil and 'dirt' provides significant physical and mental health benefits through microbial interaction and sensory engagement."

Dirty Medicine

Roughly 40% of prescription drugs come from soil organisms. "Scientists continue to find new drug discoveries in soil..." including Streptomyces, which produce antibiotics, anticancer compounds, and antiparasitic medicines. Researchers are still uncovering soil-derived molecules that may help fight diseases like tuberculosis and diphtheria. The ground beneath us is, quite literally a pharmacy.

A Mirrored Universe

Healthy soil teems with bacteria, fungi, viruses, and more, and astonishingly, the human gut contains about the same number. This creates a stable, competitive ecosystem that supports immunity, digestion, and disease resistance. A complex, balanced community, both in the dirt and our gut, known as homeostasis, prevents any single harmful species from dominating and causing disease. Our microbiome is a vast, dynamic community of microorganisms including bacteria, viruses, fungi, all living on and in our bodies (skin, gut, etc.) shapes digestion, immunity, hormones, and even mood. Yet as our lives have become more sanitized, contact with soil has become almost nonexistent for many. At the same time, asthma, food allergies, and autoimmune disorders have risen. Many experts believe these trends are connected and recommend some form of touching the earth to help diversify our gut and skin microbiomes, strengthening immune defenses and reducing inflammation.

Dirt: The New/Old Mood Booster

Soil even contains a natural antidepressant: "Mycobacterium vaccae... stimulates the brain to release serotonin." This lowly microbe can reduce anxiety, improve focus, and support cognitive function. Working in the dirt a way to regulate emotions and ease the weight of stress, illness, or mood disorders.

But healthy soil is under threat. At our current pace, 90% of Earth's land surface could be degraded by 2050. Soil health is not just an environmental issue; it's a public-health, community, and human-well-being issue. Protecting soil means protecting our food, medicines, climate, and collective mental health.

And when we touch soil, when we garden, plant, compost, or simply dig our fingers into the earth, we engage in a reciprocal relationship as old as humanity that doesn't require acreage or expertise. A pot on a windowsill, a raised bed, a patch of yard, or a shared project with neighbors all count. Beneath our feet lies one of the most powerful, generous, and overlooked sources of healing we have.

HEALTHY CHOICES



National Alliance on Mental Illness

How do I Access a Counselor and Psychiatrist While Living on a Limited Income?

by Laurie Maxwell

I volunteer with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) so I have met many people who live with mental illness, which affects 1 in 5 people. Then there are people who live with Serious Mental Illness (SMI), which affects 1 in 20 people who need more qualified mental health care to cope and live. Many people living with SMI receive disability benefits or work more limited/part-time hours. People with disability benefits and part-time income generally only qualify for Medicaid, and sometimes Medicare. These public health insurance plans provide minimal mental health coverage for people with SMI.

As a person living with SMI, I began looking for extra support (besides professional MH providers) and I found NAMI Whatcom. They provide support groups and education classes led by peers and loved ones living with mental health conditions, for the corresponding groups. They also provide information about local community resources and education forums. And all these services are free!

Many people attend our NAMI peer support groups where they ask, "How do I find a counselor and psychiatrist"? Many people suggest looking at the Psychology Today.com reviews of local mental health providers or Whatcomresources.org. Then I discuss the difference between private health insurance and public health insurance. People with private health insurance have more choices. People with Medicaid/Medicare insurance primarily only have Community Health Clinics for a choice.

As someone with Medicare and Medicaid, my primary access to mental health providers is the local community health centers where a client is assigned providers. Many of these MH providers are straight out of college and have limited experience working with individuals with SMI.

Because I live with SMI, I need more extensive therapy treatment with an experienced therapist. This is the evidenced-based best treatment for my diagnoses. For me, therapy is not optional, it is a long-term medical need. Because of my insurance, I struggle to receive this qualified mental health care.

In defense of mental health providers in private practice, many are qualified to see Medicaid clients but the Medicaid reimbursement rates are so low that they lose money seeing clients on public health insurance. Also, the insurance paperwork is very cumbersome.

For over a decade I was assigned freshly trained counselors for limited sessions each month. During that decade of mental health care, I was hospitalized every year and had poor mental health outcomes.

Because of special programs, I was able to see private counselors for the past decade. The difference in my life? I went back to work, I have not been hospitalized since, and I volunteer with NAMI providing hope and support to peers.

People with SMI need access to more consistent qualified mental health providers who have the skills to support people living with SMI. Instead, people with SMI have very limited access to the health care they greatly need. When people with SMI are provided access to quality mental health care, this can transform lives.

4-7-8 Breathing for Fast Stress Relief

When I was a kid I'd get so excited about something my words jumbled all up and my grandmother would say, "Ok, stop! Now take a deep breath." That was great advice that I have employed throughout my life during times of stress, excitement, exhaustion, and anger.

With everything we have to pack into a day, it's no wonder we are feeling stressed to the max. A high level of stress can bring down our mood as well as keep us from getting a good night's sleep – and both of those things wear away at our health and well-being. So what we need is an easy way to decompress, fast. Research has long shown that the ancient techniques of conscious, controlled breathing is a simple and easy way to destress and get our feelings under control with a technique called 4-7-8 breathing, which is a super-simple, super-calming trick that you can start using today to feel much, much better.

What is 4-7-8 breathing?

Also known as "breathing gymnastics," 4-7-8 breathing is an intentional breathing technique, meaning you control the pace and depth of how you're inhaling and exhaling. Designed to relax both your body and your mind, 4-7-8 breathing began in ancient times as a regulated breathing process for Pranayama yoga and is proven to reduce blood pressure and increase energy, among other things.

How do you do 4-7-8 breathing?

First, find a quiet place. (Often the quietest, most private spot is a restroom), but you can do 4-7-8 breathing anywhere you're comfortable. Then:

Take a deep, cleansing breath and exhale

Inhale through your nose for a count of 4

Hold your breath for a count of 7

Exhale through your mouth for a count of 8

Take another deep, cleansing breath and repeat this cycle three times. It's important to start slow, because controlling your breathing for extended periods of time can make you feel lightheaded. Stop if this happens to you, and take it slower next time.

What are the benefits of 4-7-8 Breathing?

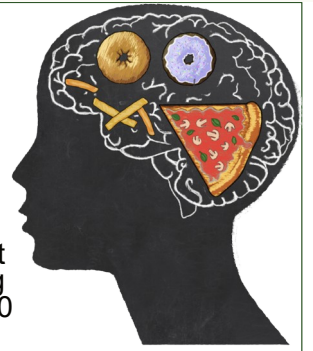
Research has shown that the 4-7-8 technique can slow your heart rate and lower your blood pressure, modulate cortisol, and calm us. In a matter of minutes, it will help you settle into a calmer state. Also, by activating your body's parasympathetic response, 4-7-8 breathing has added benefits, like boosting your immune system and helping your digestion.

Another great result that 4-7-8 breathing can produce: a better night's rest. Focusing on how your breathing feels and counting breaths is an effective method of "counting sheep". And, if you



We are What We Eat: Is Fresh Truly FRESH?

by Linda Kerth



Many articles in this column have talked about the quality of the "fresh" produce available in most grocery stores today, but what about all the claims of produce being "fresh" when it has been transported 3,000 miles— in this case oranges from Florida.

The citrus industry pursued an aggressive ad campaign, beginning in the 40s and 50s, of nostalgic images with statements like: "As close to the grove as you can get." But when we learn that oranges have traveled thousands of miles, and held in refrigerated storage for long periods of time, up to years as frozen concentrate — why are we still believing the claim that the orange juice we drink every day is "fresh"?

This A.I. image resembles those advertisements, emphasizing the immediacy of the transfer "from tree to table." The image, unfortunately, is pure fiction. The actual process oranges undergo is incredibly complicated, and starts with cleaning and sorting the fruit once it arrives at the processing plant.

The Path from Grove to Consumer Oranges can only ripen on the tree but the quality of the fruit

begins to deteriorate immediately after picking. Therefore, the time between picking fruit and processing it into juice and other products should ideally be as short as possible — less than 24 hours. For oranges grown to be eaten fresh, a certain amount of fruit (up to 20%) is rejected because of poor appearance and processed into juice.

As juice is produced on a seasonal basis, it must be stored between seasons to ensure a year-round supply to consumer markets. Most orange juice is processed into frozen concentrate, which is stored for long periods of time and shipped at lower cost because concentrate requires 5–6 times less water than whole juice.

The steps to stabilize enzyme and microbial activity in extracted orange juice are indispensable before concentration, bulk storage, packaging and distribution. These steps include: extraction (pressing out the juice); separating the juice from the pulp, pasteurization by heat, evaporation (when volatiles are flashed off), cleaning the pulp (e.g. from seeds), and freezing pulp and volatiles for later restoration into packaged juice, and oil recovery. All unused pulp and some extractions are used in animal feed.

During the production of juice concentrate, most of the volatile flavors are removed in the evaporation step by being boiled off together with water, giving the juice concentrate a flat, cooked taste. However, the volatiles boiled off from juice are collected in an essence-recovery system and the orange flavor is later restored by adding back the recovered fractions called "flavor packs."

Fresh, ready-to-drink (RTD) orange juice is already at the strength at which it will be consumed. Two categories for the types of RTD juice are:

- Freshly squeezed orange juice: Juice packaged directly after extraction but without pasteurization or any other physical or chemical treatment. Its shelf life is very short.
- Not-from-concentrate juice (NFC): Juice that has neither undergone a concentration step nor dilution during production. It may be pasteurized.

The rest of the juice you see in markets has been reconstituted from the frozen state and will cite "from concentrate" on the carton. Consumers also note marketing and/or additional processing with terms like enhanced, vitamin enriched, calcium enriched, fiber enriched (pulp restored), and reduced acid, among others. The small quantity of freshly squeezed orange juice that is packaged without any treatment at all has a shelf life of a few days at most.

And after all this, even the health value of truly fresh orange juice is debatable: it has a moderate concentration of vitamin C, but also a high concentration of simple sugars, which makes it comparable to soft drinks. Some government nutritional advice now encourages substituting the whole fruit for the juice because it is digested more slowly.

So maybe, instead of orange juice, you make a fruit face on a pancake — you know, orange segments for mouth and eyebrows, blueberry eyes, and a big red strawberry nose.

4-7-8 Breathing

wake up in the middle of the night, 4-7-8 can help you fall right to sleep, too.

This breathing technique should be perfectly safe for most people, although you should check with your doctor before trying it if you have a history of any respiratory illness or disease.

Use the time you're breathing to really be in the moment: notice the sights, sounds and smells around you, and let your mind be clear. Ultimately, 4-7-8 breathing lets you drop into a deeper state of presence and the calmer you are, the more you can enjoy every moment of your life.

SUDOKU

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

School Zone



From the Superintendent

by Jessica Schenck

As we move further into spring, there are two important areas of work shaping the future of the Mount Baker School District: our new strategic plan and our ongoing budget and staffing planning. Both are grounded in the same goal of ensuring we are building a strong, sustainable system that serves our students well, both now and in the years ahead. First, I'm pleased to share that we have completed the final meeting of our Strategic Plan Steering Team. This group of about 50 staff members, students, parents, and community members brought forward more than 500 survey responses to guide their work. The result is a clear set of Core Values that reflect what matters most to our community: Academic Excellence, Belonging, Opportunity, Prepared for Life, and Safety.

These values are not just words on a page, rather they will serve as the foundation for the goals, outcomes, and strategies in our next strategic plan. In the coming months, we will begin sharing more details about what this means in practice, with the goal of completing the plan by June and implementing it next school year. This work represents a strong example of community voice shaping the direction of our schools.

At the same time, we are continuing to navigate the realities of our budget. For the 2026-27 school year, we are planning for an enrollment of 1,418 students. This is a conservative estimate, based on recent trends and the need to avoid mid-year funding adjustments like the one we experienced this year. Declining enrollment, combined with insufficient state funding, is not unique to Mount Baker, as it is a challenge faced by districts across Washington.

As a result, the School Board will consider a Reduced Educational Program resolution at the April 23 meeting. This is a required step when staffing reductions are necessary due to enrollment or funding changes. Following that meeting, we will share more specific information about staffing impacts. These are difficult decisions. We value our staff deeply and understand the effect these changes have on people and relationships. At the same time, aligning staffing with enrollment is necessary to maintain long-term stability.

I have also heard questions about class size. Our goal remains the same: keep class sizes as small as possible while maintaining strong instructional programs. This requires careful planning, collaboration with principals, and creative use of our resources. If you would like more regular updates on this work and other district initiatives, I encourage you to subscribe to our monthly newsletter, *Mountaineer Moments* by going to <https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/o/mount-baker/page/mountaineer-moments>. It's one of the best ways to stay informed and connected to what's happening across our schools.

Thank you for your continued engagement and support as we navigate this important work together.



Sea Mar
Community Health Centers
Clínica de la Comunidad
Exceptional service. Every person. Every time.

Mount Baker Health Clinic



A student-focused health clinic available to all Mount Baker students.

At the Mount Baker Health Clinic, registered students may access a range of primary health care, including:

- general health check-ups
- treatment for minor illnesses
- health education
- behavioral health services

Mount Baker Health clinic is designed to complement, not replace, the student's primary care provider (PCP). Your student should see their PCP for ongoing care, specialized services, and immunizations.

"Healthy students are better learners."

— National Association of School Nurses



The clinic is a collaboration between school, community, and medical provider to address the health needs of the whole child.

Call with questions

(360) 722-7770

Open Tuesdays
(when school is in session)
8:00 am to 4:00 pm



DOES A SCHOOL BOARD MATTER?

by Mahalia Blue

In most districts, the school board works quietly behind the scenes shaping the education of every student. Yet many community members can't clearly describe what a board does or why it matters unless controversy arises or an election is underway. But school boards are the community's voice in public education, and our local school board needs to hear from the people they represent.

Elected by local voters, board members bring their community's values and priorities into decision-making. They don't need a background in education, just a commitment to ensuring every child receives the education they deserve and that schools reflect what the community wants for its students.

Board members volunteer many hours each week reading materials, attending meetings, visiting schools, and talking with families. They do it because they care about kids, their community, and the future.

While the superintendent manages day-to-day operations, the board sets the big picture: what students should know and be able to do, district goals and priorities, standards for success, and policies guiding everything from curriculum to safety. "A school board acts as the governing body of a local school district."

Boards make decisions collectively; members have no authority on their own, but together, through discussion and voting, they move the district forward. Even when members disagree, unity after a vote keeps the district stable and focused.

Key Responsibilities

- Hire and evaluate the superintendent. The superintendent functions as the district's CEO. The board chooses a leader who understands the community, its students, and its needs, and evaluates the superintendent's performance throughout their tenure.
- Adopt and oversee the budget. Boards ensure public dollars are used responsibly, balancing programs, staffing, and long-term planning with students at the center.
- Conduct transparent meetings. Most board work happens in open meetings where the public can listen and often speak. Only sensitive topics like personnel or student discipline, are handled in closed session. This transparency keeps public education accountable and community-driven.

Across the U.S., school boards help shape the education of nearly 50 million public-school students. Their decisions ripple outward, affecting families, neighborhoods, and entire communities, for generations to come.

Whether or not you have children in school, you have the right to attend board meetings and raise issues that matter to you. Our communities are diverse and rapidly changing and boards need broad input to serve students well. Stand up at the next meeting and let them know you will share responsibility for our students' success.

And while you're there, say thank you to these often-unsung community leaders.

NEWSOLUTION #5

Maxine's Crabby Road



EDDIE'S SCOREBOARD

Same Old Struggles

In the small town of Deming, Washington, there are three guarantees come Springtime: excessive rainfall, unnecessarily high gasoline prices, and Mount Baker fielding one of the worst baseball teams in the state.

Unsurprisingly, all three are once again true; today however we're focusing on the latter.

Mount Baker's baseball team finds itself in familiar territory. Dead last in the Northwest Conference with zero wins. The team has allowed an aggravating eighty-nine runs in their first seven games played and has also been on the lesser end of three shutouts so far in this young season. The closest the team has come to winning a single game was on March 30th in Burlington. Even then, that was a 0-7 shutout loss to the Tigers. Not only that, but the team has yet to host a single game on their own field. Every home game to date has been played on the turf of either Sehome or Squalicum high school.

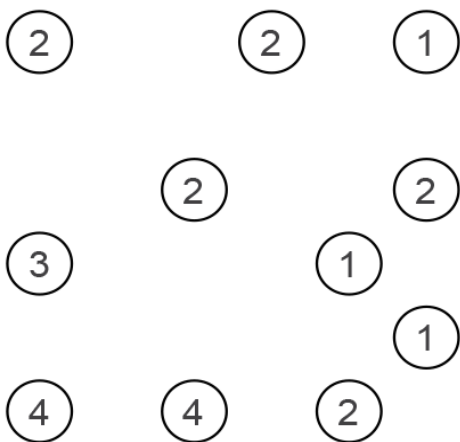
It's not all doom and gloom however. Despite the continuation of prolonged futilities, the team is one game behind the perpetually struggling Nooksack Valley Pioneers for the final wildcard spot. The team is also 5.5 games behind the undefeated Lynden Lions for the division lead. Regarding individual highlights, Tyson Barksdale has been responsible for one triple base hit and Kamden Moa has earned the team two free bases after being hit by the pitch. Mount Baker is seeking its first conference championship since 1996 when the team was part of the former Whatcom County League. The team is also seeking its first state appearance since 2013 and its first outright playoff appearance since 2019. The Cedar Park Christian Eagles of Bothell are the defending district champions while Bellevue Christian is the defending state champion. The district tournament and the final two rounds of the state tournament will once again be hosted locally at Joe Martin Field in Bellingham this May.

Note: Information in this article was written on the afternoon of April 1st, 2026 and will be outdated when it is released.

HASHI BRIDGE PUZZLE

Rules:

1. The island number indicates how many bridges connect to it.
2. Only one or two bridges can connect two any island.
3. Bridges must be straight lines (horizontal or vertical).
4. Bridges cannot cross over other bridges or islands.
5. All islands must connect for travel from one island to another.



RESOURCES

Crisis/Emergency

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

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 Get Connected. Get Help.™

211 helps connect you to community resources statewide.

imhurting CRISIS CHAT

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@wcfcd14.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



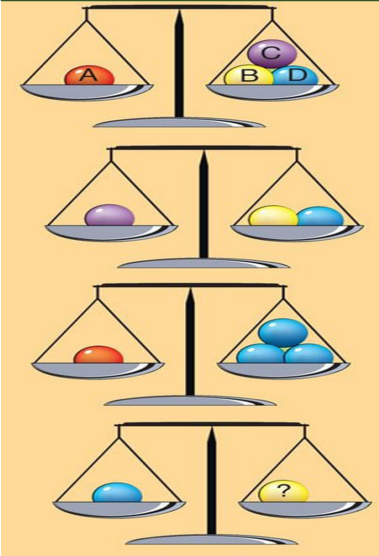
Salvation Army For many, making ends meet is a daily challenge, forcing people to choose between things like

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

DVSAS
Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services

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

Which weight (A-D) should replace the question mark so that the scale is in balance?



Auditions for the new Jackie Chan movie are coming soon!

Food



Distribution Hours

Tuesdays
8:00 am – 11:00 am
Thursdays
4:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Home Delivery: Tuesday mornings. Enroll on our website (<https://www.foothillsfoodbank.org/get-help>) or call 360-392-8149
Closed 12/25 and 1/1 if these dates happen to fall on a Tuesday or Thursday
8255 Kendall Road, Maple Falls, WA 98266
(on the campus of the EWRRRC)
Contact us at 360-392-8149 or director@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!

River of Life Community

THE LORD'S TABLE FOOD BANK
RIVER OF LIFE CHURCH
4037 VALLEY HWY 9, VAN ZANDT, WA
360-592-2279

Questions?
Call 360-595-0430
or 360-594-1775

FOOD DISTRIBUTION:
10:00-NOON
2ND & 4TH
SATURDAYS

Low Income Health Care

Unity Care NW
Health Care for Everyone

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

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
catchmecoachme@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. 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 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
Webserver@nwsrna.org

AA

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

RESOURCES

Addiction Continued

SAMHSA 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 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://nwrwa.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://nwseiors.com/whatcom-county/) <https://nwseiors.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/mbj> **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



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,



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>



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>



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

Bellingham & Whatcom County Housing Authorities 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 Why let rainwater go to waste? Install rain barrels, and you can reuse free rainwater to water your plants. Reuse water to save money and our water! Learn more: www.epa.gov/soakuptherain/soak-rain-rain-barrels 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@hfwhatcom.org <https://www.hfwhatcom.org>

PSE 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?funit_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>

IRIS 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 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

Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network 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



Mount Baker Community Coalition May 2026

The Mount Baker Community Coalition (MBCC) invites community members to join our upcoming coalition meeting on Monday, May 18th at 2:45 p.m. This meeting will be held in a hybrid format, with an in-person option at the Mount Baker School District Office as well as a virtual option via Zoom.

MBCC's mission is to build a strong, healthy community by supporting youth and families through substance use prevention and mental health promotion. We work together to provide education and resources, reduce risks, strengthen protective factors, and build on the strengths already present in our community.

Our coalition brings together community members, partners, and leaders who are passionate about supporting the health and well-being of youth and families in our region. Whether you've attended before or are new to MBCC, we welcome your voice and perspective.

To request the Zoom link or learn more, please contact Allison Ormsby at mbcc@wfcn.org.

We also encourage high school students interested in prevention and leadership opportunities to get involved with One Baker Voice, a student-led group focused on promoting healthy choices and positive community impact. One Baker Voice meets Tuesdays during lunch and Fridays during Club Friday in Room 311. Students can reach out via the email above for more information.

MBCC is always looking to connect with individuals who have a heart for strengthening our community and supporting youth. If you're interested in getting involved, we would love to hear from you.

Together, we can continue building a strong, healthy community for all.

Allison Ormsby, MPA

Prevention Program Manager

Mount Baker Community Coalition

Whatcom Family & Community Network

360.375.0883

wfcn.org



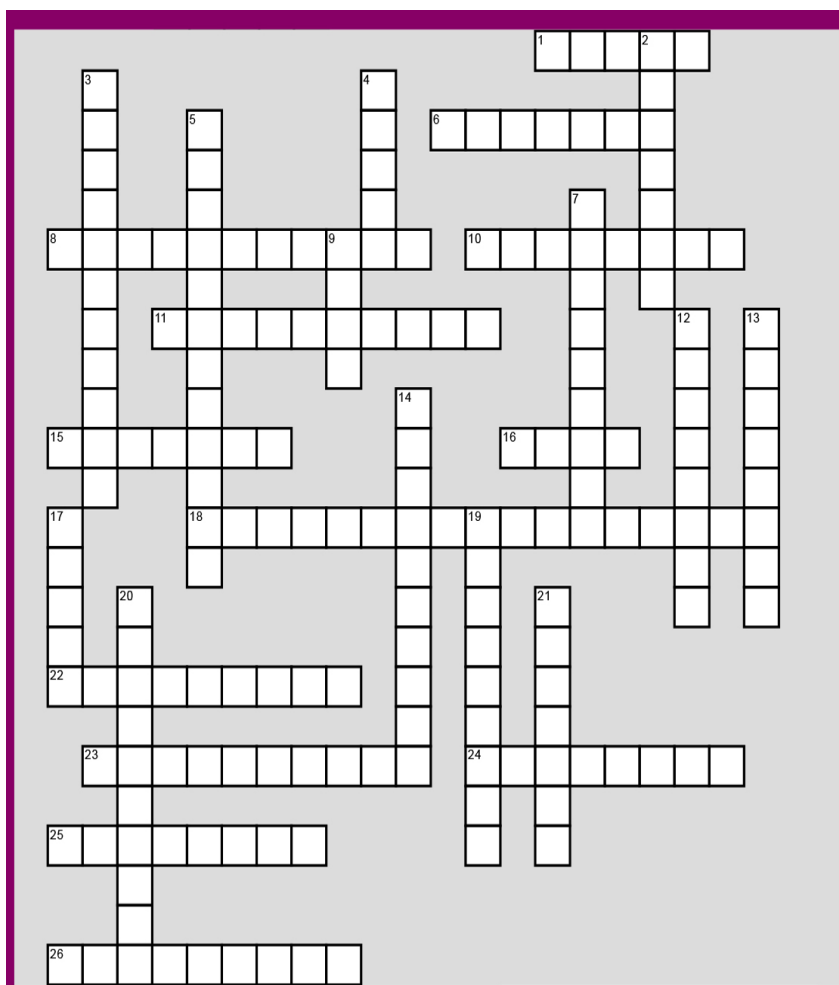
Do you live in the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area? NEED A NEW WOOD STOVE? WE CAN HELP!

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.

WESTWARD HO! Solution on back page



Across

1. Unique prairie home
6. Treacherous mt range
8. Ill-fated cannibal party
10. Prairie ?
11. 1st expedition to map trail to west coast
15. People who settled western US
16. They pulled the wagons
18. Highest point settlers traversed
22. Common prairie bush
23. Deadliest river crossing
24. ? Trail, southerly trail option
25. Key supply point in Idaho
26. Type of wagon

Down

2. Manifest ?
3. One of 2 trails to the west
4. He reported upcoming conditions
5. ? Missouri, last stop before hitting the trail
7. Type of land grant for settlers
9. Independence ?, July 4th milestone on OR trail
12. What lay ahead
13. Pack animals
14. He managed the pack animals
17. Another word for river crossings
19. Oregon ?
20. Caravan crossing the country
21. #1 disease killer of pioneers



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.org 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/>

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH KIDS

- **The "Talking to the Wall" Technique:** When kids are fighting or ignoring rules, talk to the wall about the problem instead of lecturing them directly. For example: "Wall, I wish someone would clean up these toys," which often prompts kids to act without direct confrontation.

- **"Beat the Clock"**

Timers: Turn mundane tasks (like getting dressed or brushing teeth) into a game to see if they can finish before a timer goes off.

- **Wearable To-Do Lists:**

Use a non-toxic marker to write short daily tasks on your child's hand or arm, turning check-offs into a fun activity.

- **Dinner Time Board Games:**

To curb picky eating, play quick games like Connect Four at the dinner table to distract them from resisting food.



Community Events Calendar



May 2026 Calendar of Events

LILAC SCENT RISING, FILLING AIR WITH A PROMISE, SUMMER ARRIVING

If you have an event, activity, or meeting you would like to put on our calendar, email the editor at info@foothillsinfo.com
For more information on each listing, click the title to be taken to their website.

Week 1

Friday 1
6pm Good Yarns @ Deming Library

Saturday 2
Dreamcatcher Workshop @ North Fork Library, 2-4pm

Sunday 3
Third Place Coffeehouse, 3-5pm, Van Zandt Hall

Week 2

Monday 4
1pm Whatcom Mobile Medicine clinic

Tuesday 5
8am Ask-a-Nurse clinic
8am Catch Me: Teen Mental Health
8-11am Foothills Food Bank (weekly on Tues)

Wednesday 6
Storytime @ Deming Library
6pm Good Yarns @ Deming Library
Crafting Community @ North Fork Library Every Tuesday, 6pm

Thursday 7
3pm St Peter's "Thursday with Friends"
4pm Art & Audio for Tweens @ Deming Library
4-7pm Foothills Food Bank
5.30pm Deming Library Writer's Circle
6.30-7.30pm Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District Regular Meeting

Friday 8
10.30am Storytime @ North Fork Library

Saturday 9
10-2pm Water Adjudication help @ Deming Library

Sunday 10
Third Place Coffeehouse, 3-5pm, Van Zandt Hall

Week 3

Monday 11
2.45-4.15pm Mt Baker Community Coalition Meeting

Tuesday 12
8-11am Foothills Food Bank
10.30-11.30 Digital Equity Bus @ Deming Library
10.30-11 North Fork Storytime
Puppet Show: Hansel & Gretel @ North Fork Library, 3.45-5pm

Wednesday 13
10.30-11 Storytime @ Deming Library
6-8pm Good Yarns @ Deming Library

Thursday 14
3-5pm St Peter's "Thursdays with Friends" St Peter's Catholic Church
4-7pm Foothills Food Bank
4-5pm Art & Audio for Tweens @ Deming Library
5.30pm Deming Library Writer's Circle
5.30-6.30 Foothills Communication Hub meeting

Friday 15
10.30am Storytime @ North Fork Library
10.30-11.30am All About Gardening @ Deming Library
Van Zandt Hall: Grand Reopening, 3-5pm

Sunday 16
Puppet Show: Hansel & Gretel @ Deming Library, 10.30-11.30
Third Place Coffeehouse, 3-5pm, Van Zandt Hall
Band Zandt Rocks the Hall! @ Van Zandt Hall, 6-9pm

Week 4

Monday 18
8am Ask-a-Nurse clinic @ EWRRRC
1-5pm Whatcom Mobile Medicine Clinic @ EWRRRC
Van Zandt Hall Open House, 4-8pm

Tuesday 19
8-11am Catch Me: Teen Mental Health Support @ EWRRRC
8-11am Foothills Food Bank
10.30-11.30 Digital Equity Bus @ Deming Library
10.30-11am North Fork Storytime
Gentle Yoga Demo Class @ Van Zandt Hall 10.30-11.30am
Foothills Seniors Gathering @ Van Zandt Hall, 12-2pm
Van Zandt History Enthusiasts @ Van Zandt Hall, 7-9pm
Dog Day Afternoons @ North Fork Library, 3.34-5.45

Wednesday 20
10.30-11am Storytime @ Deming Library
Foothills Entrepreneurs Collective @ Van Zandt Hall, 5-7pm
6pm Good Yarns @ Deming Library

Thursday 21
3-5pm St Peter's "Thursdays with Friends" St Peter's Catholic Church
5.30pm Deming Library Writer's Circle
Potluck & Open Mic @ Van Zandt Hall, 6-9pm
6.30-7.30 Your Right to Read @ Deming Library

Friday 22
10.30am Storytime @ North Fork Library

Sunday 23
Third Place Coffeehouse, 3-5pm, Van Zandt Hall

Week 5

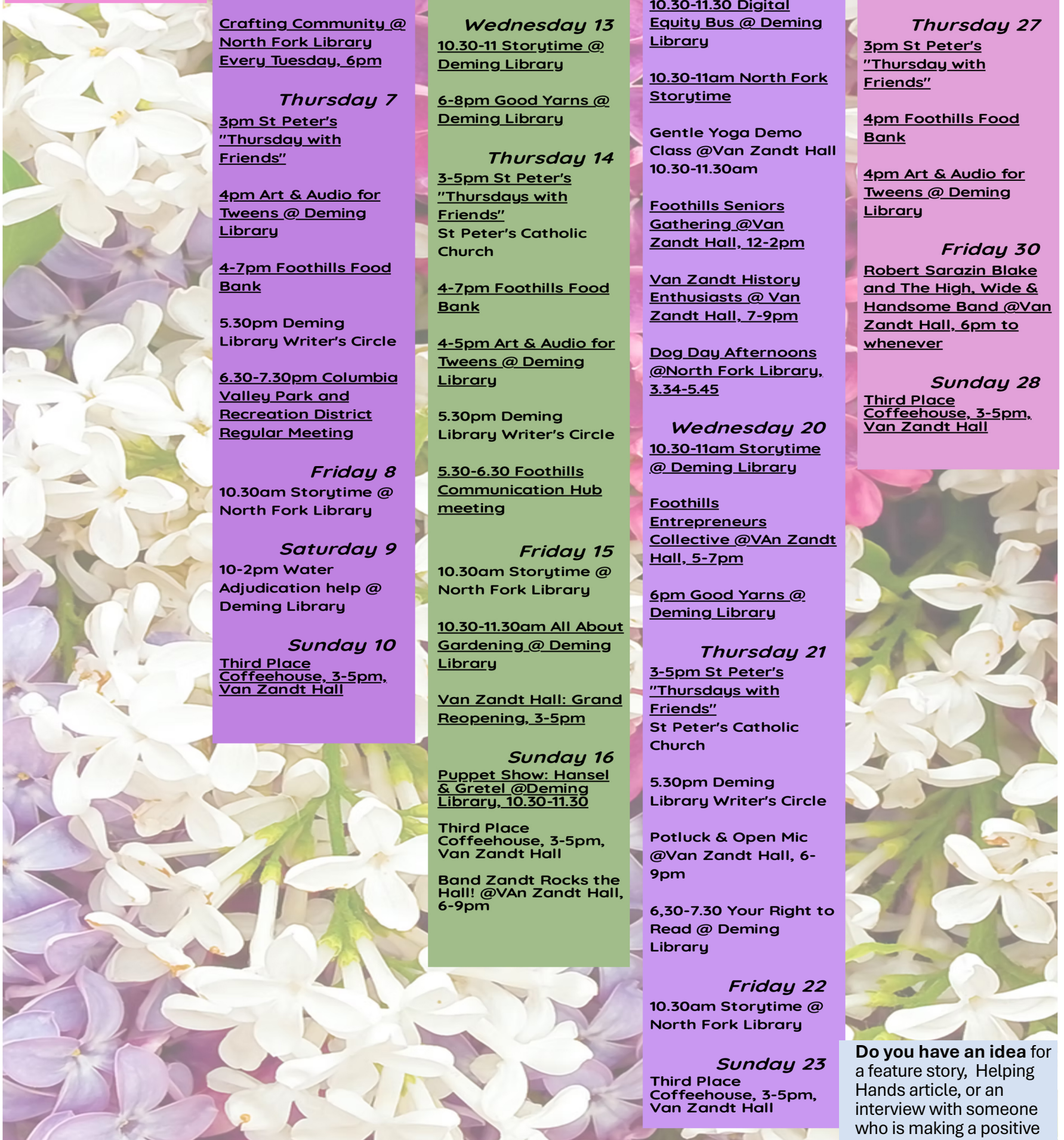
Tuesday 25
8-11am Foothills Foodbank
10.30am Digital Equity Bus @ Deming Library
10.30. Storytime @ North Fork Library

Wednesday 26
10.30am Storytime @ Deming Library
6pm Good Yarns @ Deming Library
Dog Day Afternoons @ North Fork Library, 3.34-5.45

Thursday 27
3pm St Peter's "Thursday with Friends"
4pm Foothills Food Bank
4pm Art & Audio for Tweens @ Deming Library

Friday 30
Robert Sarazin Blake and The High, Wide & Handsome Band @ Van Zandt Hall, 6pm to whenever

Sunday 28
Third Place Coffeehouse, 3-5pm, Van Zandt Hall



PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

- Across**
1. Soddy
6. Rockies
8. Donner Party
10. Schooner
11. Lewis Clark
15. Pioneer
16. Oxen
18. Contintal Divide
22. Sage brush
23. Snake River
24. Overland Trail
28. Conestoga

- Down**
2. Destiny
3. Oregon Trail
4. Scout
5. Independence
7. Homestead
12. Frontier
13. Mule team
14. Mule driver
17. Fords
19. Territory
20. Wagon train
21. Cholera

Soduko

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

Rebus solutions

- Carolina
- Minnesota
- Hopscotch
- Loopholes

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!** Contact the editor at: info@foothillsinfo.com