

Edmonds Beacon

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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Sherman Pruitt opens up

'I will forever be wounded and hurt by this experience'

BY BRIAN SOERGEL

EDMONDSEditor@YOURBEACON.NET

This is the second of a two-part series on Sauk-Suiattle Police Chief Sherman Pruitt, who Mayor Nelson initially selected as Edmonds' new police chief. City councilmembers, with a 4-3 vote, confirmed Pruitt's appointment on Dec. 8.



Sherman Pruitt

A week later, on Dec. 15, Nelson rescinded his offer, announcing that newly unearthed information showed Pruitt "omitted relevant details from his application materials."

Specifically, in a personal letter to Pruitt the Beacon obtained, Nelson said Pruitt had failed to disclose that he had applied for a lateral position with the Lake Stevens Police Department, a position he was denied after a background check.

In part one of the series, Pruitt explained that he applied for the job and that he was aware of public opposition to his appointment as the other candidate for police chief was Acting Chief Jim Lawless, a 25-year veteran of the Edmonds Police Department.

Pruitt also spoke about a domestic violence allegation from more than 20 years ago, an allegation eventually rejected by a prosecuting attorney after the case was reviewed; and of his claim that Councilmember Vivian Olson acted with "intent and malice" in attempting to derail his appointment.

(Read Olson's response in a Guest View column on page 4.)

As with part one, the Beacon agreed to publish Pruitt's story on his terms, offering a question-and-answer format that he was able to read before publication. He had a few changes that did not attempt to alter the main narrative – that this was Pruitt's side of the story.

You can read the first part of The Beacon's story at bit.ly/3sUusOb.



Comments have been edited for clarity.

Beacon: Can you talk about the Lake Stevens job that you were not hired for more than a decade ago? Mayor Mike Nelson said this was the reason he rescinded the job offer – that he later discovered you didn't disclose that on your application.

Pruitt: I was told by the HR Director (Jessica Neill-Hoyson) and the mayor that they received information that I submitted an employment application with the city of Lake Stevens in 2009. I told Jessica I don't remember applying with them.

I believed the city of Edmonds was providing me accurate information. Therefore, I submitted two public information requests with the city of Lake Stevens to verify if I submitted an employment application.

I don't remember submitting an employment application with the city of Lake Stevens. The two public information request responses from the city of Lake Stevens means that they do not have any record of

see PRUITT PART 2 page 11 ▶



Doug Lofstrom with his "Edmonds ... It's Our Town," which has a prominent place at the Edmonds Waterfront Center.

BUSY ART, BUSY ARTIST

Doug Lofstrom started painting in his late 70s – turns out he's pretty good

BY BRIAN SOERGEL

EDMONDSEditor@YOURBEACON.NET

It's never too late to start something new, and 83-year-old Doug Lofstrom is exhibit one. Long taken by the thought of painting – but never putting inner thought to canvas for 75 years or so – he somehow has managed to become one of Edmonds' most prolific artists.

A longtime Edmonds resident and former real estate agent for Windermere Edmonds, Lofstrom now works furiously to catch up on years of blank canvases.

You could call it a hobby, but Lofstrom's painting rises above the quotidian, and buyers hand over good money for his bright-sized work.

And visitors to the soon-to-open Edmonds Waterfront Center will take in one of his grandest works: "Edmonds ... It's Our Town," a 10-foot-wide acrylic-on-canvas triptych with a 48-by-72-inch mid-



Beacon photos by Brian Soergel

Detail from "Edmonds ... It's Our Town," with the Waterfront Center and the Edmonds Center for the Arts. Below, the full painting.

dle piece and two accompanying side pieces.

Lofstrom completed the piece in 2017, soon after he started painting in his home and outside, in good weather, in front of Windermere's office on Fifth Avenue South. He gave it to the Waterfront Center, but hopes a donor will purchase it from him and donate it to the museum.

You might say the "Edmonds ... It's Our Town" is busy, and Lofstrom would agree.

"It's extremely busy," he said the other day as he stood before his work and attempted to explain it all. If that were possible.

There's certainly a lot to look at, and repeat viewings will no doubt bring new discoveries. There's an abundance of blues, of reds, of yellows. Mount Baker is in view, as is Mount Rainier, no matter that their geographical proximity is not exactly spot on.

The Sound is there. The Olympics.

see LOFSTROM page 12 ▶



Bringing it all back home

Edmonds letter carrier Todd Hoover retires after 40 years

BY BRIAN SOERGEL
EDMONDSEditor@YOURBEACON.NET

“We never, never ever thought this was going to happen,” said acting postmaster Tammy McGowan. She smiled while turning to Todd Hoover as co-workers watched Saturday during a retirement ceremony at the U.S. Postal Service carrier facility in Perrinville for the longtime letter carrier.

It turns out 40 years serving Edmonds is enough. There are grandchildren waiting in the wings.

If you spent any time in the Edmonds Bowl, you’ve probably spotted the 61-year-old on his rounds.

He’s the lanky gentleman who, day in, day out – rain, snow, and sleet, of course – delivered the mail in his navy-blue shorts. He had about 650 deliveries a day – all residential except for four churches and the Edmonds Center for the Arts.

He’s Norwegian, and says Western Washington’s mild climate is no sweat.

“I want to thank my family for putting up with years of crazy work hours,” Hoover said in his farewell speech after McGowan handed him a service pin and read a letter of appreciation from USPS Seattle District Manager Pam Cook.

The spotlight trained on him, but Hoover didn’t immediately turn to his thoughts.

“Everybody’s who’s trained, re-trained, or shadowed me, come and stand up with me,” he said, looking around the room.

“That would be everybody,” a colleague shouted out to laughter.

“I didn’t want to retire until there was a good crew in the office,” Hoover said. “And you guys made that happen.”

He called others who had worked with him as well. Carrier technicians, shop stewards, management.

After all that, Hoover allowed himself a few words.

“I love my customers,” he said. “They’re like friends and family to me. It’s in our



Beacon photos by Brian Soergel

Todd Hoover in his work attire. Any day, any year, any season. Right, the Edmonds post office has retired his uniform.

name, right? Postal Service.”

He thanked those who he trained under, his voice breaking. He spoke of his work, work that he loved. He said he loved his co-workers, who loved him back by chipping in about \$800 for a Delta Airlines travel voucher so Hoover could scratch his travel itch.

“This is honest work. It’s hard work,” he said. “And it’s really hard work in this modern era. You see the packages out there – and I’m glad we have those packages. It keeps us busy. The atmosphere that you all have given this place makes it the Disneyland of post offices. It’s the happiest place on earth. I have so loved coming here every day.”

Wrapping up, Hoover said he had one more thank you.

“Eighteen years ago this month, I came to know God. Or he came to know me. And I’m so thankful for that. I thank him for this career, and I praise him for that.”

Hoover certainly received plenty of praise



himself.

Tom Snyder was postmaster in Edmonds from 1983 to 2003.

“During my tenure as postmaster, we have had many excellent letter carriers, but what set Todd apart was his ability to provide such consistent quality service and always be willing to do extra when needed,” Snyder said.

“His work ethic and pleasant attitude are admired by his co-workers and customers. The average carrier works between 30 and 35 years; Todd has continued this for 40 years. Just an inspirational person, in and out of the post office.”

Hoover’s wife, Carla, and family helped plan the retirement party. That included hosting a drive-by retirement parade the weekend before last. It was a cold and blustery day.

“He would never brag about himself, but the way he has served the Edmonds community as a mail carrier for 40 years is truly special,” said Terra Mangum, one of his

two daughters. She and her husband, Soren, have two children, Aria and Zach.

“On the worst weather day of the year, over 140 of his mail route clients drove by to wish him well, to cry with him, and to thank him for his above-and-beyond service. He spent 40 years passionately delivering mail to a large portion of downtown Edmonds.”

Mangum said that, as a child, she remembered the bulk of Christmas cards and gifts that stuffed the mailbox. He had plenty of customers, as Edmonds United Church at the top of Caspers Street was about the center of his route, with boundaries extended out a half-mile or so in each direction.

“We would help him open them, and he would send thank-you notes for each one. His customers notice the way he tries to deliver his mail at the same time every day, how he stops to hear their family updates along the route, how he prays for his cus-

see **TODD HOOVER** page 10 ▶

Volunteers help to keep the Edmonds Senior Center Thrift Store humming

Now open six days a week

BY BRIAN SOERGEL
EDMONDSEditor@YOURBEACON.NET

The Beacon has written about European travel expert Rick Steves Volunteer Corps, employees from Rick Steves’ Europe on Fourth Avenue North who do work in the community.



Matt Yglesias

Steves started the program to help keep employees busy during the pandemic by volunteer doing some of their paid time on. Steves continues to pay employees even though the pandemic has cut work hours.

Regan Van Swell and Matt Yglesias are among a number of Steves’



Regan Van Swell

employees who have kept Edmonds Senior Center Thrift Store afloat during the pandemic.

There is plenty of work.

As of April 1, the thrift store is open six days a week, Monday through Saturday.

“This is the first time the store will be open six days a week since the closing of the store last March at the beginning of the pandemic,” said manager BJ Whitman. “The volunteers do all kinds of jobs in the store, from receiving donations and organizing the storage room to pricing and explaining

products for sale to customers.

“Some of the volunteers are cashiers, and others price the many multitude of products that are so generously donated by the Edmonds community. Most of all it is a gathering place for seniors and to contribute to a wonderful cause and be with fellow seniors.”

Those interested in volunteering or supporting programs can email thriftstore@edmondswaterfrontcenter.org.

The store is in the Westgate shopping center at 100th Avenue West and Edmonds Way. Donations can be dropped off every day of the week except Sunday.

Information: 425- 977-0411.

The BEACON

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The Beacon welcomes letters to the editor of 400 words or fewer and will print them as promptly as possible as space allows.
However, letters must include a first and last name, address and daytime phone number for verification purposes.
We also reserve the right to edit letters as necessary for brevity, grammar and taste.
Published letters will include the author’s name and city of residence.
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Edmonds School District Foundation raises \$162K

The Foundation for Edmonds School District raised \$162,879 during its annual A Recipe for Success! breakfast fundraiser March 17. The event drew more than 300 local civic and business leaders, district staff, and community supporters.

Funds raised will be used to provide a wide range of programs, including post-secondary scholarships, classroom and school-wide grants for innovative teaching ideas, school supplies, and test fees. Importantly, funds will provide financial and nutritional support to children and families who are facing financial instability, persistent poverty, and homelessness, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, through the Whole Families, Whole Communities and Nourishing Network programs.

During her presentation, Executive Director Deborah Brandi highlighted the important partnership between the Foundation and the Edmonds School District and praised the efforts of the Nourishing Network and the District's nutrition staff.

Their coordinated efforts continue to provide thousands of meals each week to children in need.

In a typical year, the Foundation serves roughly 8,000 students across the Edmonds School District struggling with underemployment and poverty, with more than 650 children facing homelessness. Due to the pandemic, the Foundation has served dou-

ble the amount of students in the last year. "Support from our community is vital," said Brandi. "Without the help of our community partners, businesses, and grantors, we wouldn't be able to provide such important programs."

Emergency funding from Verdant

In addition to its fundraiser, the Foundation has been awarded \$54,325 in emergency COVID-19 relief funding from the Verdant Health Commission.

Verdant is providing local nonprofits with important emergency COVID-19 funding to help the vulnerable gain access to important health and nutrition services, in addition to its multiyear health program and project applications.

The funds will help provide emergency food services through Nourishing Network, a Foundation initiative created in partnership with and at the request of the district to provide meals and services to hungry and homeless students and their families.

Programs include weekend meal kits, summer meals program, pop-up pantries, home meal deliveries, and holiday meals.

Nourishing Network currently serves 470 students each week with weekend meal kits, delivered to wherever children are sheltered in place, alongside thousands of additional food items to supplement Edmonds School District grab-and-go meals kits for more than 4,000 children.

Bus line from Edmonds College gets \$37 million allocation

The Swift Orange Line bus rapid transit project, an 11.3-mile corridor with 13 stations between Edmonds College in Lynnwood and McCollum Park and Ride in Mill Creek, will receive a \$37 million allocation from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration.

The Monday, April 5, announcement is part of \$187 million in federal funding for bus rapid transit (BRT) infrastructure projects in Washington, California, and Utah.

Funding is provided through FTA's Capital Investment Grants Small Starts Program.

The Swift Orange Line connects with two other Swift bus lines, as well as Sound Transit's Lynnwood Link Extension light rail project.

Swift Orange Line service is expected to improve connectivity in the region, better meet the needs of riders.

It's scheduled to begin operating by March 2024.

Through Your Lens | Out on a limb



Photo courtesy of Bob Sears

Bob Sears was driving down 100th Avenue West when he saw a barefoot girl climbing a magnolia tree in bloom. "I quickly hung a u-e to get a shot off before she climbed back down," he said. "I caught her attention and was lucky to get her to look at me through the branches, then down the tree she went. Kids climbing trees - it's what they do." The expert tree climber is 7-year-old Kaelani Inzunza Gonzalez.

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King County sheriff receives worker's comp benefits

King County Sheriff David E. was serving his community when his patrol car was hit by a drug-impaired driver. He suffered significant injuries to his knee and neck. The defendant's insurance company refused to accept full responsibility so David hired our team. We obtained a substantial settlement to compensate David and his family for medical expenses, lost income, pain, suffering and future wage loss. David and his family also suffered the loss of a loving father while recovering from the crash. Even with the insurance settlement, David was still eligible and received additional workers' compensation benefits. Our experience in workers' compensation and personal injury allowed David and his family to receive just compensation and have peace of mind knowing they had a skilled legal team on their side.

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GUESTVIEW

Vivian Olson responds to Sherman Pruitt story

While I appreciate you offering a platform for Chief Pruitt's story ("Sherman Pruitt speaks out about his experience," April 1), I ask that you correct factual errors in the resulting article.

No matter how you define the word, I am not "friends" with the attorney involved in the Pruitts' civil case against the city of Arlington.

After finding out that our city did not have the court testimony from that case, and with the mayor's appointment made and the council confirmation vote in the near future, I reached out to the law firm that tried that case (and ultimately to one of the lawyers) by phone.

This contact was merely a stepping stone on the way to finding the documents.

Mr. Jolley and I have never met in person and have no relationship. Pruitt's statement, "So she admitted that she already had some implicit biases; automatically, she's going to side with her friend," is factually false. I had no friend with whom to side and furthermore liked Pruitt from the beginning.

Here are the inputs on the police chief decision that I sent to Mayor Nelson shortly after the interviews:

From: Olson, Vivian
 Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 8:00 PM
 To: Nelson, Michael
 Subject: Thoughts
 Mayor Nelson,
 I am sorry we did not connect by phone today – I thought that would have been easier than writing all of this.
 The following are my inputs on the police chief decision.
 For starters, both are very likable people.
 And both have a good work ethic.
 My gut is that they would both do the job to the best of their ability.
 We have seen the acting chief's best under the most trying of circumstances.
 It is my assessment that the job couldn't be done better than he did it. It would be a great loss of community and departmental knowledge if he is not hired on permanently, as he intends to be chief and will go elsewhere if it doesn't happen for him here. I have been proud to have him representing our city,

see **OLSON** page 9 ▶

GUESTVIEW

Police chief hiring process flawed; executive session denied

Thank you, Edmonds Beacon, for publishing Chief Sherman Pruitt's article describing his perspectives regarding Edmonds Police Chief hiring process.

Unfortunately, this process was flawed from the beginning (when the mayor publicly announced the selection of Chief Lawless for police chief, inconsistent with established hiring procedures/policy).

I am empathetic for the two candidates, and I am sorry for the damage to the credibility of the hiring process and the erosion of public trust that was created.

My perception is different from that expressed by Chief Pruitt.

It was me who initially asked for an executive session, after receiving a 67-page publicly available court document (obtained by Councilmember Olson for \$337) indicating relevant issues to the candidate vetting process that the city had not identified (or shared with council).

Two of these were associated with domestic violence allegations and were a serious concern to me, since I have previous experience helping domestic violence victims as a volunteer with the Portland Police Department.

Councilmember Kristiana Johnson had also requested an executive session so council could collectively review the issues and their potential implications. The executive session would have protected all parties interviewed for this position from potential inappropriate disclosures.

And the need for an executive session took even more importance because it had become apparent that the confirmation vote had been moved up a week for undisclosed reasons. But the executive session requests were denied.

During the confirmation vote deliberation, I once again requested an executive session as there were unanswered questions and it was apparent that the public had become aware of some of the apparent issues that led to potential misinformation being shared in the media and on social media.

As a result, it was important for council to assess fact from fiction and have a clear understanding on any implications impacting the confir-

see **BUCKSHNIS** page 5 ▶

GUESTVIEW

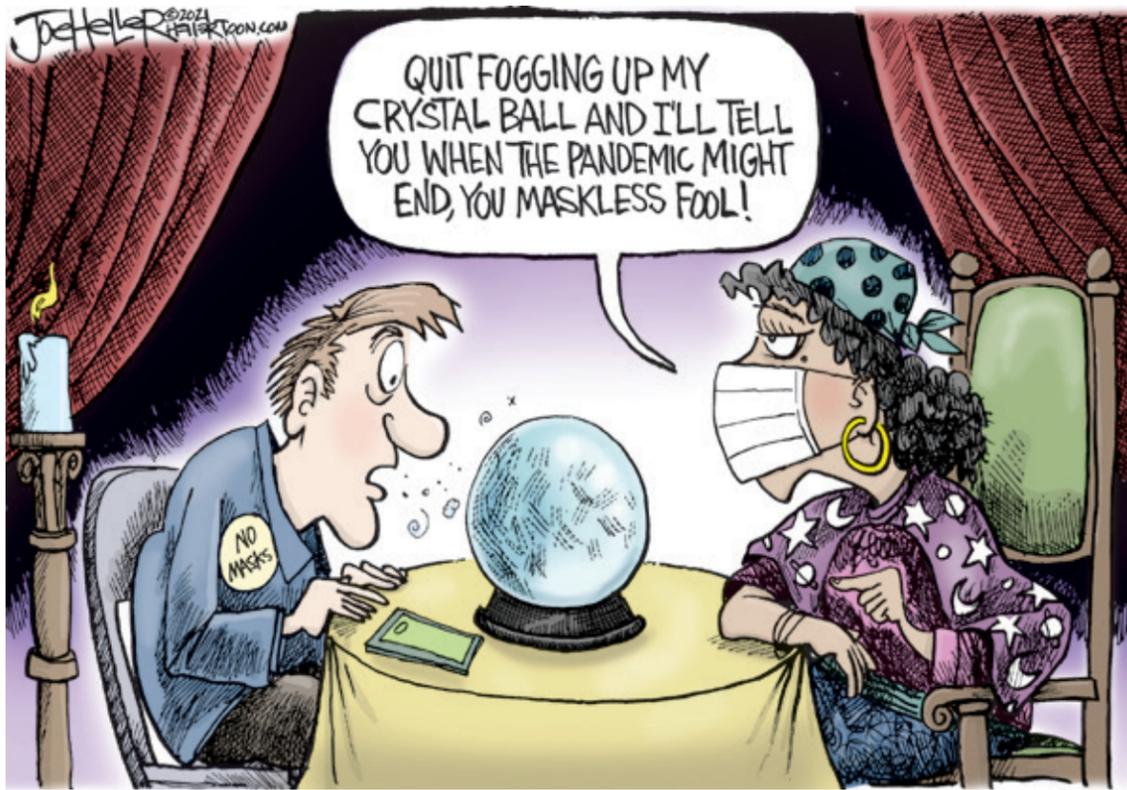


BY VIVIAN OLSON
 EDMONDS CITY COUNCILMEMBER

GUESTVIEW



BY DIANE BUCKSHNIS
 EDMONDS CITY COUNCILMEMBER



MOMENT'S NOTICE

Renewal, COVID-style

- Resurrection (n)
- a: the rising of Christ from the dead
 b: the rising again to life of all the human dead before the final judgment
 c: the state of one risen from the dead
 - Resurgence, revival
 - The act of bringing something that had disappeared or ended back into use or existence

On this Easter Sunday, my uncle and I were talking about resurrection and the COVID vaccine. Although not two topics we would normally expect to discuss together, in 2021 the conversation flowed logically.

Hope and revival, salvation and safety, religion and science. We have all been hoping to restore not only our own lives, but also those of everyone around us, so we can function as a community again.

The revival of our "normal" lives seems in view if, as the vast majority of scientists and physicians advise, we get enough people vaccinated. Widespread protection from the virus creates more immunity and restores that human interaction so sorely missed, as

well as what resembles a functioning economy. The sooner more get vaccinated, the better we prevent additional mutations of the virus, which will keep us safe for the longer-term. For my uncle and I, the word "resurrection" applied to both the celebration of the Easter holiday and the expansion of vaccine access because the word itself has both religious and societal meanings.

No matter what our belief system, this is a time of hope – a time to bring something back that disappeared, as the definition says.

We lived through so much stress, social upheaval, and loss in the past year. The conflict and anger and fear and suffering can leave an indelible mark, but we finally have what we need, a gift that will wake us up from all of that.

As we wait for our awakening and reopening, we have to temper our anticipation with the knowledge that more vaccines still need to be administered. In the meantime, we could, perhaps, reflect on a year that demonstrated our lack of control or supremacy over the world around us.

We can strive to build on the lessons from this pandemic, especially how seeking success for ourselves, and not for others, is not a sustainable strat-

see **MONTALVO** page 5 ▶

MOMENT'S NOTICE



BY MARIA MONTALVO
 MOMENTSNOTICE@GMAIL.COM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Down in the weeds

Re: "Let's be blunt: Rick Steves is in a position of power as chair of national marijuana reform group," March 11).

Just a thought.
 How about using that political energy towards building an America one doesn't have to be stoned (or otherwise impaired for the wine crowd) to be able to stand the US of A?

Jim Beck
 Edmonds

Hazard pay: A slippery slope

So the mayor now has the authority to dictate what private businesses pay their employees? Slippery slope, but meanwhile ... Can he give them extra paid vacation and a fat bonus too? They deserve it. ("Mayor proposes \$4 an hour hazard pay bump for Edmonds grocery store workers," April 2, edmondsbeacon.com.)

The real pandemic isn't the virus – it is the unknown long term damage of the fear propaganda being sold to

the good citizens of this country driven by greed and power and the ridiculous politicians and government officials who have suddenly confused their stations in the public service arena with the delusional idea that they are now emperors and empresses.

Since he thinks money is free, maybe the good mayor would like to donate his salary to help the struggling folks in the real world, like out-of-work hospitality workers, for starts.

I will be happy to make the phone calls letting folks know about his personal generosity.

Shelley Michael
 Edmonds

Question on Olympic Avenue turn lane

I witness during normal school hours during morning rush hour (pre-COVID) at least 20-plus buses turning northbound daily onto Olympic Avenue to travel to Edmonds Elementary School (I live nearby).

Can someone at the city inform me how much this turn lane has been narrowed? It appears from

see **LETTERS** page 10 ▶

Online Poll

Last week's question & results:
 Sherman Pruitt has given his first interview since being offered the police chief position in Edmonds before it was rescinded. Do you feel Pruitt was treated fairly during the process?
 • 58% Said YES • 42% Said NO

This week's summary:

City Council this week passed an ordinance mandated \$4 extra an hour in hazard pay for grocery store workers.

This week's poll question:
 Do you agree with the decision?

We want to know what you think:

Vote online now at www.edmondsbeacon.com and look for the results in the Apr. 15 issue of The Beacon.

www.edmondsbeacon.com

CHUCK'S WORLD

Speaking for a minority, we're doing fine

As we began to shut down a year ago, some of us were talking about our upcoming dystopian hellscape. It was all in good fun, as these things are, and we were mostly chatting about movies.

A couple of friends were adamant that we were mimicking the poor souls of the 1959 film "On The Beach," survivors of a nuclear war left awaiting an inevitable future. That seemed a little dark, although the first one I thought of was "Soylent Green," the 1973 sci-fi thriller about a world starved and scarred by unchecked population growth.

There was something about no toilet paper that set me off, I think. It was more of a mood thing, in other words, not the actual facts of life at the moment. We were all doing OK and not particularly worried.

CHUCK'S WORLD



CHUCK SIGARS
CHUCKSIGARS@YAHOO.COM

There was just something about the immediate shortages and empty streets getting the apocalypse vibes working overtime that led to cinematic thinking.

Several people mentioned the Tom Hanks film "Castaway." That didn't really resonate with me, but it makes a sort of sense from an isolation standpoint. And I guess many of us will have an adjustment to make once we start venturing out into civilization again.

And it reminded me of a favorite joke. A man is stranded on a desert island for years. When a ship finally arrives and a crew rows ashore, he proudly shows off his handiwork.

"This is my house, and that's where I exercise," he said, spreading his arms to demonstrate several buildings scattered about. "This is where I study," he continued, and upon reaching a small, carefully constructed hut, he said, "And this is where I go to church."

His rescuers took this all in respectfully, and then one of them spotted another building in the distance and asked about it.

"Oh, that," said the castaway. "That's the church I used to go to."

I love this joke purely for what it says about human behavior, how it pokes fun at our tendency to develop personal passions that can seem a little ridiculous from offshore. I'm thinking maybe of people who write in their spouse's name because they don't like any of the presidential candidates – that kind of human behavior.

But if you really want to hear some laughter, tell that joke at a church. Those people know.

Those people are my people. I don't really understand how that happened.

The nice folks at Gallup have been tracking church attendance for over 80 years, and recently they dropped some interesting news just in time for Easter. For the first time since 1937, fewer than half of Americans say they belong to a church, synagogue, or mosque. Most of us still own up to a belief in some sort of higher power, but we've been getting far less religious for a while now.

It's not news to me, or to a lot of people with a compelling interest. Americans have been an outlier, in fact, for years now, as most of Europe and a big chunk of Asia become increasingly secular. Young people in particular have lost interest in organized religion and don't seem likely to regain it anytime soon.

In many ways, the American church has been dying for a while now, and it seemed possible the pandemic would just finish the job.

That may be the case. It's still an awfully fluid picture out there, even as we see hope. In many ways, this would be an economic crisis more than a spiritual one, as dwindling attendance gives small churches little in the way of financial reserves.

And it was necessary. If I wanted to catch this coronavirus, I'd go to church or a crowded bar on a Friday night. They're massive vectors for disease transmission, as they were a century ago during the flu pandemic.

There was a little noise last summer as certain churches began to push back, staring at an existential crisis with no resurrection guaranteed, but in general they just closed down.

This weekly routine that now a minority of us engage in became as distant a memory as kids waiting for a school bus.

It feels a little odd to be in the minority on this, actually, but I was one of those people. I was in church most Sunday mornings, and I really enjoyed it. My wife is an associate pastor at a Presbyterian church, so a lot of this is spousal support, but I wouldn't go if I didn't want to.

We held one sparsely attended service on March 8, 2020, and that was that. There was never really a question, even with what little we knew back then. What was a routine, valued part of my life went away all at once.

And we survived. We actually thrived, but this is personal and specific; I have no information to share on the current state of worship except for my own experience. Somehow we managed to stay together while apart, tethered by faith and technology, not always an easy blend.

This doesn't compare to kids not going to school for over a year. There turned out to be far worse things than a year away, and some of those worse things were avoided by staying home.

It's been a bright spot for me, our capacity to change and adapt, to recognize new realities and accept them graciously.

That's the church I used to go to. It's going to be fine.

SKETCHING EDMONDS



Sketching Edmonds | Spring, rebirth, new life

Driving down Fifth Avenue South, I was greeted with the explosion of blossoms on the trees in front of Beck's Tribute Center. After such a dark year, it struck me as such a hopeful image for our future. Spring, rebirth, new life.

SKETCHING EDMONDS

BY MACK BENEK
EDMONDS RESIDENT

The sun was bright, creating interesting shadows as well as raising my spirits. I only included a sliver of the sign identifying the business, as my focus was the trees.

It seems as I drive around looking for subjects to sketch I am increasingly drawn to trees. The lush green of summer gives way to autumn's warm hues, followed by the bones of winter and then welcoming spring.

There is just so much emotion in trees.

from BUCKSHNIS page 4

mation vote. Again, the request was denied, and it was evident to me that the necessity to move this confirmation forward was ill conceived.

The \$337 charge for the court document was in question because council presidents from last year and this year denied reimbursement for Councilmember Olson's due diligence (that had not been part of the city's vetting process record).

As a result, the council revisited

the reimbursement decision. Sadly, some councilmembers used this opportunity to make baseless or contrived personal accusations regarding Councilmember Olson's motives and potential consequences for reimbursement, which only further confounded and eroded public trust in our processes.

The deliberation was suspended without reimbursing the funds to Councilmember Olson.

While we can't reverse the course of events associated with the police chief hiring process to

date, I'm hopeful and confident we can learn from the mistakes as we move forward.

And I'm thankful that a very well-qualified acting police chief – Michelle Bennett – was appointed by the mayor to lead our police department while the city continues its recruitment. I'm glad she will consider becoming a candidate for the permanent job.

And I look forward to learning more about her and other candidates the mayor selects for council confirmation.

from MONTALVO page 4

egy. Most importantly, we need to ensure that immunity is fostered around the world, not just in the U.S.

As long as the virus is infecting people from even the smallest of villages, thousands of miles away, it is a risk to all of us or, as we may have

read, whoever is the least among us is the greatest.

In a recent interview, the director of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Francis Collins, who calls himself a doctor, a scientist, and a Christian, encouraged Americans of all faiths to get the vaccine.

"Science and faith are not in

conflict," he said. "They offer complementary perspectives, with science answering questions of how and faith better responding to questions of why."

Hope means we find better ways to care for and serve each other – a truly "love your neighbor" moment.

Corrections

In "Sherman Pruitt speaks out about his experience" April 1, City Councilmember Laura Johnson's name was misspelled. In "Best Books are on the fence," Chris Walton's name was misspelled. The Beacon strives to write fair and accurate stories and will run corrections when warranted. Contact Editor Brian Soergel at edmondseditor@yourbeacon.net.

Sudoku solution

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

H	A	N	D	G	R	A	M	G	E	A	R	S			
T	H	E	E	L	A	L	A	A	T	R	I	P			
T	E	A	L	E	P	I	C	Z	A	P	P	A			
P	A	T	R	I	O	T	G	A	M	E	S				
D	O	I	N		N	U	M	B		A		P			
S	T	R	O	M	E	G	A		S	T	U	D			
T	H	E	B	R	A	S	S	V	E	R	D	I	C	T	
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G	D	O	D	W	N		W	A	D	I					
Y	E	S		H	C	A	R		I	N	G	A			
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I	R	A	T	E		H	I	N	A	I		C	O	C	O
D	E	F	E	R		N	O	S	E		T	E	E	S	



News Tips

The Beacon invites readers to share story tips and ideas. If you see or know of some news deserving of coverage, email Editor Brian Soergel at edmondseditor@yourbeacon.net or call the newsroom at 425-347-5634 ext. 235.

Cascadia Art Museum hires director of development

Cascadia Art Museum in Edmonds has hired Sally Ralston as director of development.

With 20 years as the director of marketing & admissions at King's Schools, Ralston brings with her extensive experience in the areas of marketing and development. Through her leadership, the school's annual auction has grown to be one of the most successful auctions in the region.

Ralston, who has lived in Edmonds for 34 years, has been an active member of the arts community by serving on the Edmonds Center of the Arts board for over nine years. Her tenure with ECA has been supporting the development, marketing, and auction committees.

"Cascadia is happy to add Sally Ralston to our museum staff," said Cascadia president Lindsey Echelbarger.

"The past year has been challenging for all nonprofits, and we know that Sally's expertise will be essential to our fundraising efforts. The board was particularly impressed with her wide-ranging skills as well as her deep roots in the greater Edmonds, north King County and south Snohomish County communities."

Cascadia Art Museum, at 190 Sunset Ave. S, is once again open to the public, Thursday through Saturday.



Sally Ralston



Beacon photo by Brian Soergel

Marina Beach in Edmonds is filled with sun worshippers and beach goers, all enjoying the sunny August weather. (Photo taken in August 2020.)

Volunteer on Earth Day at four Edmonds parks

Looking for a way to make a difference in your community on Earth Day? You can join your friends and neighbors to help remove invasive plants, plant native trees, and remove litter in Edmonds parks.

The city will be hosting work parties on Saturday, April 24, from 10 a.m. to noon at four parks. Due to safety concerns regarding COVID-19, group sizes are limited and pre-registration is required.

Registered participants will work under the leadership of Parks staff and the Edmonds stewards from Sound Salmon Solutions, who have been leading volunteer stewardship events in the community since

2015.

Work will include planting 100 trees at Yost Park, pulling invasive blackberry within the Edmonds Marsh buffer to make way for native plantings, and removing litter from Marina Beach and Brackett's Landing parks.

Minors under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult, and participants must be a minimum of 13 to work at Yost Park or the Edmonds Marsh due to environmental safety concerns.

All ages are welcome at the beach. "These city-sponsored Earth Day events not only provide a way to be part of a community effort to help restore our watersheds, protect wildlife, and reduce our carbon footprint, but are a wonderful way to appreciate the natural beauty of Edmonds and the actions each of us can take to protect our planet," said Mayor Mike Nelson.

To minimize the risk of COVID exposure, participants should bring their own tools and gloves, and must adhere to COVID safety guidelines, including wearing masks and maintaining a distance of 6 feet from others outside of their households.

Details regarding the work parties including locations, COVID precautions, and a list of items to bring to each work party, are included on Sound Salmon Solutions' events page: www.soundsalmonsolutions.org/events.

If you're not able to join a city-hosted work party on Earth Day, there are still lots of ways you can help.

Picking up litter that would otherwise wash into storm drains, planting native plants in your own yard, or committing to doing away with single-use plastics like water bottles all contribute to a more sustainable planet.

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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17				18				19				
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			59					60	61			62
63	64	65				66				67		
68						69				70		
71						72				73		

Across

- "What immortal ___ or eye could frame they fearful symmetry" William Blake
- Jam pack
- Cogged wheels
- "Shall I compare ___..."
- "I forget the words" bit
- Just clear of the bottom
- Blue shade
- Sweeping
- Frank of the Mothers of Invention
- 1987 best seller
- Finish off
- Desensitize
- Nabokov novel
- "What ___?"
- Hunted out
- Geographical abbr.
- Alpha opposite
- Good looking guy
- 2008 best seller
- Little ___
- Part of a mall
- Auto pioneer's monogram
- Descend
- A valley

Down

- URL starter
- Like the leader of the pack
- "Rad!"
- Texas border city
- Laine of jazz
- Bewitched
- Regulate
- Chinese territory in 1999
- Park feature
- Updated midflight nos.
- French surrealist
- Mr. Van Winkle
- Health resort
- Word on a Ouija board
- Icy coating
- Actress Swenson
- 2009 Best Seller
- Lubricate once more...
- Singer Turner
- "When it's ___" (old riddle answer)
- Foaming at the mouth
- Take ___ the waist (alter)
- Nickname for Conan O'Brien
- Pigeonhole
- Sniffer
- Golfer's bagful
- About to endure
- "Delicious!"
- Buzzing
- Devil
- Increase the number
- Personal statement intro
- "Working Girl" girl
- Currency exchange board abbr.
- Smelly smoke
- Severe pang
- Severs
- Prime meridian std.
- Affirm
- Hiss's cousin
- Chapter in history
- Make even deeper
- Big fish pursuer
- Negative
- Actually
- Be a player
- Safari sight
- Action figure favorite
- "It's ___ against time"
- Quote a source
- Much may follow it
- Robinson of the NBA
- Antony's friend in Egypt
- Clear
- Before to Byron
- Birdbrain

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Meet Cascadia Art Museum's Youth Advisory Committee

Edmonds' Cascadia Art Museum has announced the appointment of five youths in the community whose task is to provide insight and advice on the museum's programs.

Ann Duan: Duan is a 10th grader from Mill Creek, and she said she is thrilled to be working with Cascadia Art Museum. In her spare time, she enjoys art, music, and volunteering.

James Harrington: Harrington is a freshman at Shorewood High School in Shoreline. His favorite art mediums are pen and ink, pencil, and charcoals – though he said he's getting more into watercolor.

Annalisa King: King is a junior in high school and currently taking classes at Shoreline Community College through the Running Start program. She said she loves all areas of art and hopes to pursue an education in



Ann Duan



James Harrington



Annalisa King



Sheridan Moore



Sofia Vila Vignali

public art and global studies. In addition to creating art, Annalisa enjoys figure skating, baking, and traveling. She said she is excited to be involved in arts advocacy with the Youth Advisory Committee at Cascadia and to learn more about curating art for the public.

Sheridan Moore: Moore is passionate about art and said she loves having an opportunity to be involved with art in the community. She enjoys playing soccer as a

goalkeeper, being an actress in her school's musical, and even scuba diving.

Sofia Vila Vignali: Vignali is a junior at Shorecrest High School. She has been involved in the arts here whole life, in orchestras, as a dancer, and in musicals and plays. She said she is excited to be part of the committee to gain valuable experience in museum careers, as well as to help youth in our area to become more familiar with Northwest art.



Photo courtesy of Kate Shinn

"Bottom Dwellers," by Kat Shinn.

'Bottom Dwellers' artwork highlighted on Edmonds fence

Another "On the Fence" art installation is up – Kat Shinn's "Bottom Dwellers" at Second Avenue South and Dayton Street. Born and raised in Edmonds, one of Vashon Island artist Shinn's favorite subjects are the "B-Team" native wildlife; the species that are as important to our environment as others but do not always receive the same attention.

Growing up fishing around Whidbey Is-

land with her grandfather, they would occasionally snag a sole or a starry Flounder, but for the most part they brought in bullheads.

"Bullheads may be unattractive little guys," says Shinn in her artist statement, "but we're rather fond of them for their attitude and near invincibility."

Shinn said she also loves the spines and bug eyes of Rockfish. They are her favorite of her mother's pottery molds (Edmonds

ceramist Barb Childs).

"I also think it's incredibly fascinating that they live to be well over 100. To me, they are Puget Sound's elder guardians of the deep."

To see more: [facebook.com/FatDogArts](https://www.facebook.com/FatDogArts).



A&EBRIEFS

Edmonds Summer Fest coming in July

Urban Craft Uprising, which typically puts on more than 20 craft shows a year in the greater Seattle area, is coming back to Edmonds for a Summer Fest.

It will be held July 24.

"We decided to turn our Spring Fest into a Summer Fest so COVID is more under control," said Kristen Rask, head crafter at Urban Craft Rising and an Edmonds resident.

"We are so excited to get back to work and, if our vendors are anything like us they are too, and so grateful to finally get their small business back up and running. COVID was a huge hit for us all."

Info: <http://www.urbancraftuprising.com/>.

Dementia-Inclusive Series: 'Storytelling Across Generations'

Edmonds Center for the Arts presents "Storytelling Across Generations: A Virtual and Phone-Based Oral History Project," April 19-June 2. It's part of the Dementia-Inclusive Series.

Individuals living with memory loss and caregivers are invited to participate in this free intergenerational program, in partnership with the University of Washington Bothell and SilverKite Community Arts.

Taking place over six one-hour sessions on the phone and/or Zoom, UWB students will interview elders in an oral history project. These interviews – based on stories, memories, and personal experiences – will inspire end-of-term performances by students, to

see **A&E BRIEFS** page 9 ▶

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March 2021 Students of the Month

Edmonds eLearning Academy

Student's name: *Emma Gorman*
Mother's name: Kama Gorma
Father's name: Dai Gorman
Interests: I'm interested in travel.
Community Service: I've been a part of many school fundraisers, gift wrapping, car washes, babysitting, and summer camps.

Education Goals: I hope to find a passion outside of school.

Career Goals: I hope to find a career path after high school through experience.

Edmonds Heights K-12

Student's name: *Siraj Dabbagh*
Mother's name: Souha Hallak
Father's name: Mustapha Dabbagh
GPA: 3.6
Clubs & Activities: Explorer prep internship
Current Employment: T-Mobile internship

Educational Goals: Software engineering degree
Career Goals: Software engineer

Student Name: *Emily Doak*
Mother's name: Anna Doak
Father's name: Randy Doak
GPA: 3.9
Clubs & Activities: Ballet
Honors: Honors College at Shoreline Community College (Running Start)
Educational Goals: University of Wash-

ington
Career Goals: A science-related field
Edmonds-Woodway High

Student Name: *Mirian Ramos*
Mother's name: Teresa Ramos
Father's name: Maer Garcia
GPA: 3.3
Clubs & Activities: Tutoring club
Awards: Student of the Month

Community Service: Helping at College Place Elementary School
Current Employment: Romeo's Pizza
Educational Goals: To go to medical school

Career Goals: To work as a cardiologist or in forensic medicine
Anything else we should know? I am from El Salvador. I have been in the U.S. for almost two years. I'm a student in the ELL program at Edmonds-Woodway. My first language is Spanish. I am now in level 2. I like to go running in my free time.

Student Name: *Steele Swinton*
Mother's name: Lisa Swinton
Father's name: Oscar Swinton
GPA: 3.88
Clubs & Activities: Black Student Union, National Honors Society
Athletics: Football, Basketball, Track

Awards: First-Team All-Wesco running back
Community Service: Teach ASL to 3rd and 4th graders an hour each week
Educational Goals: To go to a four-year university

Meadowdale High

Student's name: *Quinn Bennett*
Mother's name: Julie Bennett
Father's name: Brad Bennett
GPA: 4.0
Clubs & Activities: Book Club (President), Environmental Club (President), LINK, Member of Edmonds School District Superintendent Student Advisory Board, Member of Association of Washington Student Leaders Student Voice and Advisory Council ASB

Athletics: Spirit Squad
Honors: National Honor Society
Community Service: I volunteer at Willow Creek Salmon Hatchery & Education Center.

Significant School Project: Starting the Book Club this year. It has been so amazing connecting with other readers and challenging myself through experiencing different perspectives from a diverse range of authors.

Current Employment: No official job, but I dog-walk every week.

Educational Goals: I plan to pursue a major in marketing with a minor in English at a four-year university. While I haven't gotten all of my decisions back yet, there's a high chance that I will attend the Foster School of Business at the University of Washington. My biggest goal is to take full advantage of the opportunities college will provide me with.

Career Goals: Upon entering the workforce, my dream is to secure a job that will allow me to work from anywhere in the world. To elaborate, I plan to become a digital nomad, working from my computer while being completely location-independ-

ent. Later in life I might attend graduate school to obtain a master's degree in Library Science so I can become a librarian!

Student name: *Anatolii Systuk*
Mother's name: Galyna Systuk
Father's name: Anatolii Systuk
GPA: 3.65

(No other information provided)
Anatolii Systuk

Scriber Lake High

Student name: *Elysia Prado*
Mother's name: Kori Brown

(No other information provided)
Elysia Prado

Project SEARCH

Student name: *David Hall*
Mother's name: Kim Hall
Father's name: James Hall
Clubs & Activities: I used to do the Hang Out club in high school.

Athletics: I participated in basketball and soccer in the Special Olympics.
Awards: I received the John Campo award for dedication in 2019. My senior year of high school, I was elected Homecoming Prince. I am also certified in Microsoft PowerPoint. In middle school I made it to the National Junior Honor Society.

Significant School Project: During Zoom classes for Project SEARCH, we created our own businesses.

Educational Goals: I want to go to either Edmonds College or Shoreline Community College to take classes in security operations.

Career Goals: I would like to work doing something in security.

Anything else we should know? I like to practice computer programs in different languages. I like to play video games. I like to listen to music. I like to create video game modifications. I recently started walking and it's hard but I will eventually enjoy it. I am very dedicated to my internship at Swed- ish-Edmonds Hospital in security.

VOICE Transition Program

Student's name: *Sophie Paynich*
Mother's name: Emily Paynich
Father's name: John Paynich
Clubs & Activities: Transition Club
Community Service: Not yet.
Educational Goals: Courtesy clerk

Career Goals: A party princess (Disney)
Anything else we should know? I love cats and baby dolls

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Athlete of the Week

Zach Foreman
Boys Tennis

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Athlete of the Week

Dara Jahanpanah
Boys Tennis

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Photo courtesy of Snohomish County Sheriff's Office

Aaron Johnson is a suspect in multiple vehicle thefts, burglaries, and a robbery.

Hunt on for felonious suspect who abandoned car in Edmonds

The Snohomish County Auto Theft Task Force wants your help in finding 36-year-old Aaron Johnson, a suspect in multiple vehicle thefts, burglaries, and a robbery, and whose abandoned vehicle was found on Highway 99 in Edmonds.

According to the task force:

On Dec. 11, an adult female was robbed of her vehicle outside her residence in Everett. Johnson arrived at the location in a stolen black Jeep Cherokee. Johnson approached the victim and forced her out of her car, peeling the victim's fingers off her steering wheel and dragging the victim down the road, causing substantial injuries. Johnson then stole the victim's vehicle.

On Jan. 15, Johnson burglarized a resi-

dence in unincorporated Snohomish. He arrived in the same stolen Jeep Cherokee as he did during the December robbery. Johnson was identified via surveillance footage while burglarizing the residence.

Later on Jan. 15, Johnson was again caught on surveillance burglarizing a shed in unincorporated Snohomish. Johnson is seen walking up to a shed with a pair of red bolt cutters and stealing a torch set worth about \$1,000.

Johnson is also recognized on security video committing package thefts in Snohomish County and ID thefts at Home Depot in Snohomish. He is seen driving a white Audi

see **SUSPECT** page 10 ▶

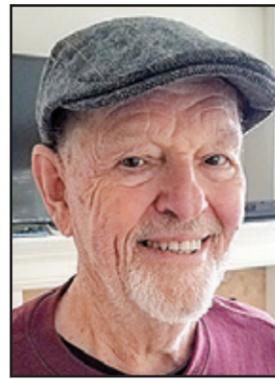
OBITUARIES MEMORIALS

David Lee Forbush: 1940-2021

David Lee Forbush passed away March 22, 2021. He was born in 1940 to Frank and Hazel Forbush in Longview, Washington. He married Katherine Eagen, his wife of over 60 happy years of marriage.

Together they raised 10 wonderful children and created a big, loving family. He was proud of each of his children and the family he had. David made the Alaska seafood business his career. He spent 40 years doing what he loved, going to Alaska every summer to manage salmon operations there and returning in the fall to plan and prepare for the next year.

In 40 years, he never missed a summer in Alaska. Da-



vid designed their retirement beach house and, upon retirement, he and Katherine moved in. Gardening and bird watching became his passions. He grew enough potatoes, corn and other vegetables to send every member of the family home with a sack of fresh produce every time you visited.

He is survived by his wife Katherine, nine children, 15 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. David was a loving husband, father and grandfather. He was a trusted friend

to many. He will be greatly missed by all.

Funeral services will be held at Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Edmonds on April 15 at 10 a.m.

▶ from **A&E BRIEFS** page 7

be shared virtually during a final celebration of all participants.

"Storytelling Across Generations" is designed for pairs of participants, including a person living with memory loss and caregiver/care partner.

The capacity is for 10 couples, each including one person living with memory loss.

Registration: bit.ly/3usM1FL.

All about pollinators

The Edmonds Floretum Garden Club presents "Pollinators & What They're Into" 11:15 a.m. Monday, April 19.

Paul Bryant is a retired engineer and entrepreneur and backyard beekeeper and former teacher, as well as Master Gardener. He has given talks on beekeeping, native bees, and plant pollination to groups of all ages and sizes.

Bryant will discuss the major groups of pollinators (there are more than just bees) and how to attract and identify them, the habitats they need, the types of plants they like, and the ways they benefit us.

This meeting is open to members and non-members.

To receive the Zoom link for the program, email edmondsfloretum@hotmail.com.

Info: edmondsfloretumgardenclub.org.

▶ from **OLSON** page 4

and have zero reservations or concerns about his readiness for the job.

As a veteran, it is always a positive for me to see military service on a resume as we do on Chief Pruitt's. He was unflappable during the public candidate open house on Monday. I watched the whole thing and did not see the horrible images. In the best-case scenario, he did not either.

Regardless, interviews are already stressful and interruptions of any kind make them more so. And if he was aware of the worst content ... that much more impressive. Incredible that he could keep his cool. To me, this is to his credit - proof that he is the kind of person who can manage the stressors and difficulties of this important job.

I wish it were an option to bring Chief Pruitt in as assistant chief. I think his heart and mind are open (I like that he liked our police motto), but I have the sense that he has been in departments with a more militant approach to law enforcement than the EPD (the spoke of power projection by being present and how the police departments and military organizations were similar).

Prior to being in a position to lead our depart-

ment, I would love for him to be immersed in our police culture for a while - a culture which I think of as being "community" or "gentlemanly" (the latter used in the most nongendered use of that word) instead of "militant."

Additionally, his knowledge of Edmonds seemed limited to our (downtown) core, which is not Edmonds in the context of this role. It would be better (for Edmonds) for him to learn our community and our police culture (that we like and that works for us) - as assistant chief rather than as chief.

The above is all of the objective stuff. And then there are the biases.

The acting chief was announced as the choice in April and withdrew from another chief selection process based on that. Passing over this loyal subject, with significantly more law enforcement experience, and the earned respect of the department he would lead, just seems like a crappy thing to do (to him and to his department and to the community he has served).

Chief Pruitt is a diverse candidate. Although the acting chief has successfully made diversity hiring a priority in the department as assistant chief, he will never himself be adding diversity to the city leadership team.

And so - all of (my observations of) the con-

siderations in a nutshell.

- Vivian

Red flags surfaced thereafter, warranting discussion and further vetting - three different councilmembers asked for that and there was plenty of time available to do it. NONE happened. In fact, a whole week before the scheduled council confirmation was intentionally erased by moving up the vote.

This process did not support good government, and at different times I have felt frustration, anger, and resentment at that (and at the people who played the major and minor roles in making it so).

Chief Pruitt was never the target of these

emotions. While he was not the right person for this position of preeminent importance and trust in our community, I wish him well and apologize for any hurts suffered.

You have offered me the opportunity to share the whole story from my perspective. Thank you for that, but I am going to decline that offer. I think most of Edmonds is ready to move on at this point; those who aren't can view the source documents firsthand rather than taking anyone else's word for it.

Here is the link to the public records at the request portal on the City Clerk's page, City of Edmonds website: www.bit.ly/39HtEVp.



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▶ from **TODD HOOVER** page 2

tomers and their families, how he personalized his mail delivery."

If a family were out of town, Hoover knew that, and delivered their mail on the day they returned. When elderly customers underwent surgery, he brought their mail to their front doors.

Hoover was so trusted that some on his route gave him garage codes so he could safely leave packages.

As he acknowledged in his speech, Hoover trained many of the mail carriers who in time became familiar faces, too.

"He always wanted to help his co-workers and the post office deliver the mail quickly and efficiently by helping on days off or with extra parcel runs," Mangum said. "Despite the long hours, often working six days a week, he balanced his passion for mail ser-

vice with being a very present father to his two daughters, attending all of our events and games, coaching our sports teams, editing our papers, and planning incredible trips for our family."

Hoover's weekend parade certainly showed that his customer will miss his friendly greetings and outstanding service.

"I think he never would have retired, as he loves the job," Mangum said.

"But he found that he loved being grandpapa to two little grandkids just a little bit more. He looks forward to long walks with the grandkids around Edmonds so he can catch up with his customers and yell encouragement across the street to the new mail carriers."

Any other plans for retirement, other than traveling and watching grandkids?

"I don't think life begins at retirement," Hoover said. "It's all here, right now."

▶ from **SUSPECT** page 9

TT that was half-painted black and bearing multiple stolen license plates.

On Feb. 12, the Edmonds Police Department recovered the abandoned stolen Audi TT from a parking lot on Highway 99. During a search of the Audi, detectives recovered Johnson's casino playing card, along with multiple documents and prescription bottles bearing his name.

They also located several pieces of clothing linking Johnson to two additional Lake Stevens Police Department cases. Inside the Audi, detectives also located all the stolen license plates that were used on the vehicle during the various crimes it was used in.

Johnson currently has a nationwide extraditable felony warrant issued by the Snohomish County Superior Court for the following crimes:

Second-degree robbery and theft of a motor vehicle;

First-degree taking a motor vehicle without permission;

First-degree taking a motor vehicle without permission;

Residential burglary; and

Second-degree burglary.

Johnson is known to frequent Emerald Queen Casino, Angel of the Winds Casino, and both Tulalip casinos. He also frequents multiple hotels along Highway 99 from Everett to Seattle and is known to stay at the casino hotels he goes to.

Johnson is 6 feet, weighs about 165 pounds, and has brown hair and green eyes. Anyone with information about Johnson's whereabouts is asked to call the Sheriff's Office Anonymous Tip Line at 425-388-3845.

Those who see Johnson should call 911.

▶ from **LETTERS** page 4

city plans and spray-painted street the narrowing is significant and likely will cause buses to have to negotiate oncoming traffic and turn into opposite lane to now access Olympic Avenue? Frankly, I was in shock when I walked up Main Street recently and observed how narrow traffic turn lane/space has been reduced by spray-paint plans on the Olympic Avenue intersection.

For a city that seems to be so concerned about cyclist traffic safety, this looks to create quite a hazardous intersection for cyclists in the future as well.

Mike McMurray
Edmonds

Transportation engineer Bertrand Haus responds: The spray paint you are referring to is

the saw-cutting limits (not the proposed curb). The saw-cutting needs to take place 3 feet from the proposed curb (to allow the installation of new curb ramps).

The proposed right turn lane will be a standard 11-foot-wide lane. In addition, the proposed turning radius will be identical to the existing one. Therefore, vehicles making right turns at that intersection will be able to safely make a right turn under the proposed conditions (similar turn that they are currently making).

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If the NEPA process is not professionally conducted in accordance with stringent standards of evaluation and evidence, the federal courts will stop the project.

Janelle Class is a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy with a degree in civil and environmental engineering, and served as an environmental engineer in the Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Janelle has extensive experience with the NEPA process, meaning that she knows how to professionally interact with various and diverse constituencies in an endeavor to build consensus that will withstand legal scrutiny.

These skills are precisely what is needed by Edmonds as we confront issues involving housing, stormwater retention and drainage, our water system, minimizing carbon emissions, bike lanes and many other complex issues affecting our quality of life.

Andrew Morgan
Edmonds

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► from **PRUITT PART 2** page 1

me ever submitting an employment application with them.

The first request was on specific dates regarding a possible employment application with my name between 2008 to 2010 because I was told by HR Director (Neill-Hoyson) and the mayor that they received information that I submitted an employment application with the city of Lake Stevens in 2009.

The city of Lake Stevens replied to my first request and stated that there were no records found with me submitting an employment application with them between 2008 and 2010.

The second public information request was referencing any employment application at any point of time with the city of Lake Stevens, with no timeline. The city of Lake Stevens replied and stated that they do not have any record of any employment application regarding my name ever, at any point of time.

Beacon: When did you hear that Mayor Nelson had rescinded your job offer on Dec. 15? *(Editor's note: Mayor Mike Nelson issued a news release at 3:39 p.m. Dec. 15 rescinding his job offer to Pruitt.)*

Pruitt: I didn't get a letter until 3:30 p.m. that day from the HR director and Mayor Nelson via email. I did not even get the courtesy of receiving a phone call from the mayor. That's when he (wrote) that the reason he withdrew the confirmation was because I failed to disclose that I applied with the city of Lake Stevens in 2009, that we're withdrawing my selection as chief of police because I left out relevant information that would have been pertinent to the (background check).

So when (the media) covered the story, it made it look like I was withdrawn because I didn't disclose the confidential information the news covered in my background investigation.

Why did (Nelson) not release this letter to the news? He had a press release several hours before the news coverage, and he could have clarified why he withdrew my selection to avoid the speculations. However, he chose not to release my letter until two days later after it was all over the news for people to assume why he withdrew my selection.

I have been honest and forthcoming about everything in my background investi-



Beacon photo by Brian Soergel

Sherman Pruitt at Gissberg Twin Lakes in Marysville: "I was, quite frankly, disappointed and disgusted at the way I was treated."

gation. I disclosed everything because I have nothing to hide.

At the beginning of this process when that whole Zoom bomb happened with the racial slurs, the KKK video, and the pornography, I tried to stay optimistic, maintain my professionalism, and stay strong. But at the same time, I'm thinking - I said this to my wife - you know, honey, I hope I'm not being used as a pawn.

Beacon: Can you explain what you mean "as a pawn"?

Pruitt: I felt that they're already going to select (Acting Police Chief) Lawless; they had three candidates, and one withdrew. And then this happens to me.

The reason I had mixed emotions when Mayor Nelson first appointed me was because I believed that the city of Edmonds were executives who were professional and respectful. The people and friends I know who live in Edmonds are very respectful and professional; I care about them. I never felt like I was being judged or looked at for

the color of my skin. They just treated me with dignity and respect.

And so when I saw the way the councilmembers acted and treated each other (during discussion of Pruitt's confirmation), and how Councilmember Vivian Olson didn't trust or respect the process - and then you have the mayor - I was embarrassed. Again, I'm looking at my perception that they were going to be professionals, that they were going to conduct themselves in a professional manner. So when I was confirmed, at the same time, I'm thinking to myself, if they're treating themselves like that, how are they going to treat me?

I found out a week later how they're going to treat me. I was, quite frankly, disappointed and disgusted at the way I was treated. I thought for sure I would hear from (Mayor Nelson) once I got confirmed, but I didn't hear anything for a whole week, and then I get his letter.

I was at a loss for words. You know, my son said it best. He said, "Dad, you don't hear anything about coverage on the news like that about hiring at any other small agencies." He said, "The reason why they're making a big deal is because you're Black." That's what it basically boils down to.

Remember that during this entire hiring process, the Black Lives Matter movement was happening throughout our nation. The moment I applied to be the next chief of

police as a person of color, their true colors came out.

"They didn't mind me applying and getting selected for the chief of police position, but they definitely did not want me to be employed with the city of Edmonds as a Black chief of police."

Sherman Pruitt

They didn't mind me applying and getting selected for the chief of police position, but they definitely did not want me to be employed with the city of Edmonds as a Black chief of police.

Beacon: You are still the police chief of the Sauk-Suiattle tribe?

Pruitt: Yes, I am. The city of Edmonds made it appear that I was not an honest and trustworthy person. And for them to do that, and question my integrity, it made me appear to be not a credible person. This is the reason why they have background investigators who are trained professionals, to do background checks, who are not biased.

Not someone as a city councilmember who's not trained, who jumps to conclusions and is implicitly biased. A third-party

see **OPENS UP** page 12 ►

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► from **LOFSTROM** page 1

The peninsula. The Walla Walla ferry. The fountain.

Edmonds businesses are grouped on a horizontal plane with, again, verisimilitude be damned. ChurchKey Pub sits on the far right, the Waterfront Center holding down the left. This freewheeling expression is overlaid with names of business owners, of phrases Loftstrom's fond of.

Among those locals are Brooke (Baker) from Chanterelle. Haifa (Alhussieni) from Cafe Louvre. (Greg) Hoff from Windermere, and Shubert Ho from Salt & Iron, among others. James Spangler, formerly of Spangler's Book Exchange is listed twice. And Tracy Felix from ARTspot, who Loftstrom said was an early supporter who provided needed encouragement, is there too.

(Editor's note: Freewheeling? Yes. I asked him where the Edmonds Beacon was, and Lofstrom promptly picked up a pen and scratched it in.)

Crowding into the scenery are textured Picasso-esque shapes, blobs, letters, and other randos you'd have to look at closely to identify.



Photo courtesy of Doug Lofstrom

Doug Lofstrom working on the details of his painting late in the process.

"All this stuff is action and color. It pops. And it makes me go 'wow.' I'll find people just standing and staring at it."

Doug Lofstrom

"All this stuff is action and color," Lofstrom said, sweeping an arm over the three panels. "It pops. And it makes me go 'wow.' I'll find people just standing and staring at it. Oh, what is it? Oh, right, it's the fountain. I'm very energetic, and I wanted it to show the energy of the city in it."

People are taking notice. "Lilly Hendershot (of the Branding Iron), upon seeing the Edmonds piece, said it would become my signature work," Lofstrom said. "Me? A signature work? I was new to painting."

A serendipitous trip to Italy

The artistic bug began nibbling on Lof-

strom during a glorious four-month trip to Europe with his wife, Carol Kinney, which included a month in Italy.

"We just loved Italy," he said. "We purchased a painting there from an artist named Massimo Cruciani, an acrylic on glass.

"We had it shipped to us. When we got home, it was like, Oh, my God, it was just gorgeous. I loved the colors. And I thought, maybe I should try to paint because I had painted once in 1969, just for fun. I did just one painting."

He told Carol he'd like to teach himself to paint. She said he could barely draw his own name.

Undeterred by the good-natured ribbing, Lofstrom laid out a plan.

"I would paint – get a load of this – I would paint 25 paintings, and then I would sell only one. So I'd always have an inventory of 25. That was the deal. Carol said, 'Oh my God, you'll never sell one. Why are you doing this?'"

He pressed on. Buying supplies. Painting on a canvas atop the washing machine. Painting on a large canvas held up by two chairs and a desk.

A fast worker, Lofstrom had 25 paintings by the end of 2016. The first one sold to a

buddy, a fellow real estate agent searching for a present for his wife. He asked a price. Lofstrom, perhaps overstating its value, put forth \$1,300. Not so fast. The buddy offered \$650. Sold.

Not bad for the first of Lofstrom's future oeuvre.

Lofstrom and Carol, no longer skeptical, slapped high fives.

"It was so fun," the budding new painter, then in his late 70s, recalled. "And then another guy showed up about a week later and bought one for \$1,000. And I thought, OK, this is good, because I've now paid for my materials."

(The first two paintings were decidedly less busy – Airstream trailers pulled by old trucks.)

Emboldened, Lofstrom approached Denise Cole at Cole Galley.

"Doug, you can't do that," Lofstrom said Cole told him. "You're untrained. I have a whole bunch of painters who are great artists who work to hang their paintings here. You cannot be charging those prices."

So Lofstrom took his art – and himself – to the street, where he sold several paintings to passers-by. One painting – crafted in front of Engel's Pub – pictured a cityscape he painted from his memory of Italy. It was 6 feet long and 4 feet high.

A guy stopped by one day and asked Lofstrom what he'd take for the painting. Lofstrom named his price: \$3,500. The guy offered \$1,600. Sold. The guy left for the bank and returned with 16 \$100 bills.

Capitalism and street bartering in action. No agent fees. "Oh my God," Lofstrom said. "This was all so phenomenal."

After more painting and a few more sales, friend and Windermere Edmonds owner Greg Hoff posed a simple question.

Why not paint what you see in Edmonds? The result is on the second floor of the Waterfront Center.

Artist website: dougloft.com

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Sudoku solution on page 5

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Deanne V. Bilsborough
Financial Advisor

You might contribute to your IRA for decades to help pay for your retirement. But if you don't need all the money, you may want to leave what's left to your children or grandchildren. However, if you want to ensure they get the most from this inheritance, you'll need to do some planning.

Here's a little background: Up until a couple of years ago, when you left the proceeds of your IRA to your beneficiaries, they could choose to "stretch" required withdrawals over a long period, based on their life expectancies. These required withdrawals were generally taxable, so this "stretch IRA" allowed your beneficiaries to greatly reduce the annual taxes due, while benefiting from longer tax-deferred growth potential. And the younger the beneficiary, the longer the life expectancy and the lower the withdrawals, so this technique would have been especially valuable for your grandchildren or even great-grandchildren.

Changes in laws affecting retirement accounts have significantly limited the stretch IRA strategy. Now, most non-spouse beneficiaries must withdraw all assets from the IRA within 10 years of the IRA owner's death. The beneficiary generally does not have to take out any money during that 10-year period, but at the end of it, the entire balance must be withdrawn – and that could result in a pretty big tax bill.

The stretch IRA strategy can still be used for surviving spouses, beneficiaries who are no more than 10 years younger than the deceased IRA owner, and beneficiaries who are chronically ill or disabled. Minor children of the original account owner are also eligible for a stretch IRA – but only until they reach the age of majority, at which time the 10-year rule applies.

So, if you want to leave your IRA to family members who don't meet any of the above exceptions, what can you do?

One possibility is a Roth IRA conversion. You could convert a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA over your lifetime, so your heirs would receive the Roth IRA. They would still be required to withdraw the assets within 10 years, but unlike with a traditional IRA, Roth IRA withdrawals are generally tax-free. These conversions are taxable, so you'll want to consult your tax professional in addition to your financial advisor, to determine if this strategy can help you achieve your legacy goals.

Another option is to purchase life insurance, which can provide a specific dollar amount to your heirs or be used to help cover additional taxes. This may be especially advantageous if you are 72 or older, in good health, and taking withdrawals – technically called required minimum distributions – from your retirement accounts, such as your traditional IRA and your 401(k). If you don't really need the money, you can use these withdrawals to pay for some or all of the insurance premiums. Life insurance can't replace an IRA as a means to save for retirement, though, so you should consult with your financial advisor to make sure you are working toward all your goals.

In any case, if you have a sizable IRA or you don't need the funds that you're required to take from your retirement accounts, you may want to start thinking about what you want to do with the money. The more thorough your legacy planning, the better your chances of meeting your legacy goals.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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background investigator was hired to do my background investigation with no biases, and I passed my background investigation.

I got questioned when I went back to face my community and my council. I got questioned, but it was a good thing that my council was so supportive and understanding and caring. They know my true character. They listened to me. I showed them documentation. I said, here's the facts, here's the truth.

For the record, I don't have any domestic violence convictions. My domestic incident was a verbal argument with my wife.

Beacon: What are you doing now? How are you handling things?

Pruitt: You know, I love serving the people. That's what I do for a living and I truly enjoy being a police officer and making a difference in people's lives. If you want to know who I am, I'm a husband who adores and loves his wife, and we've been together for about 25 years. I'm a father of five kids, and my wife and I have raised them all to be respectful and successful people. I'm a grandfather of five, four granddaughters, and one grandson. I'm a son, I'm an uncle, I'm a friend, I'm a colleague, and I'm a peer. I like to mentor young men and women to overcome adversities in life, and I enjoy coaching kids in sports.

You asked me how am I doing? I've had to overcome a lot of adversity; everyone's always doubted me and, when they do, I show that I'm a hard worker, and I can accomplish anything I set my mind to. I don't do it for accolades. I take pride in who I am and how I represent myself, my family and the organization I work for. I am respectful, professional, trustworthy, and dedicated to the community I serve. One thing I always say to my kids is that our last name is "Pruitt." So remember, "Pruitt can do it." One of my sons called me when this was all going on. He said, "If there's anybody I know that can overcome this, it's you."

So if you really want to know how I'm doing, this entire experience with the city of Edmonds has been really difficult for me. I have a gray cloud over me now and I'm constantly being judged and questioned about the news coverage. It's hard on me and my family.

I feel that people believe what they see on the news, and they don't know the true and full story. Again, I would like to clarify that I don't have any domestic violence convictions. My wife and I had a verbal argument, and it's documented as a verbal domestic violence incident.

The sad thing about this entire experience with the city of Edmonds is, I know that I would not have been treated this way if I wasn't Black. I truly hope that people are held accountable for the way I was treated.

Here we are in 2021, and people still abuse their position and authority to humiliate and discredit Black people, people of color. I am not only Black, but I am also Filipino Pacific Islander and Native American, and I am proud of who I am and what I represent.

I will forever be wounded and hurt by this experience.

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