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East Lewis County offers a lot as detailed in reports at PBOC

BY AMBER BROWN
East County Journal

East Lewis County is a vibrant, growing and exciting place to live, work and play as attendees as the regular meeting of the Packwood Business Owners Council (PBOC) learned on Friday, July 10.

Topics ranged from a wide range of continuing and new community events, Chamber of Commerce engagements, senior services, health care topics, recreational opportunities and developments and much more.

John Holmgren, director

at Centralia College East (CCE), spoke about the annual collaboration between CCE and the Roxy Theater in Morton on the production of the musical, Camelot. The first performance is on July 31.

The Master Gardeners and Composters Clinic will be meeting at the Packwood library on Tuesday, August 11. For more details, contact the Packwood Timberland Regional Library.

Rhonda Cornwell, president of the East Lewis County Chamber of Commerce (ELCCC), spoke about two upcoming items for the ELCCC. The first is that they are

moving locations from Morton to Randle. The new location is in the old library location in the middle of downtown Randle.

"This location is more central to our reach and the space is bigger," she said. The ELCCC coverage area is from Packwood to Salkum and out to Mineral. Many have been under the belief that they are the Morton Chamber of Commerce and that is not the case.

The other event is that the ELCCC is moving forward with the SasqWatch: Beyond the Footprint event that will take place Sept. 25-27 in Packwood at

the old Mill site. Reservations for vendor sites are now available. Cornwell said that they are in communications with Verizon about bringing in additional cell phone coverage for the event.

Tracy Croshaw, president of the Packwood Schoolhouse Events Center and Museum, shared that Cruiser's Pizza has painted their building. The new color brings out the rock texture that had blended into the previous color. She also said that the Visitors Center has been working with their social media creator to promote business reels on their Facebook page.

The High Rock Lookout update came from Ron Blankenship with Search and Rescue and Croshaw. They reported that there were roughly 20 loads taken up to the lookout by helicopter and all of the broken windows had been taken down.

"We had a glass company from Tacoma, who heard about the vandalism, reach out and donate 1930's windows to the Lookout from a backstock that they had. Another family

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Capturing the moment



Buddy Rose | East County Journal

A dedication ceremony for the time capsule recently buried at Mossyrock took place following the July 4th parade on Saturday. On the left is Mayor Randall Sasser and on the right is Mossyrock Area Historical Society trustee Tom Meade. The city and the historical society were partners for the project. The time capsule, buried beneath the plaque and monument shown in the photo, is intended to be recovered and opened in 2076 during the nation's Tricentennial.

District 3 candidates talk biggest problems facing Lewis County

BY AMBER BROWN
East County Journal

Local voters were given an opportunity to learn more about candidates seeking to represent residents of East Lewis County during a forum held at the Bob Lyle Community Center last Tuesday, July 7 in Morton.

Candidates running for the position of Board of County Commissioner District 3 were invited. Incumbent Scott Brummer, candidate Zac Eckstein and candidate Michael (Mike) Hadaller were in attendance. Candidates Tim Toerber and Kyle Wheeler were absent from the forum.

Candidates were given a three-minute opening to introduce themselves.

Brummer is the current county commissioner and has served for the last 3-1/2 years. He has lived in Lewis County for 32 years, though he has worked in his professional career as a biologist for the Department of Fish and Wildlife in Lewis County for longer than that.

Eckstein has a day job in education, particularly in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education environment. While at home he assists his father in

raising chickens and produce. "I believe that District 3 is looking for an advocate," he said.

Hadaller stated that his family moved to America in 1889 from Germany and that he is the third generation in Lewis County. He comes from a family of 13 children and has been the Public Utility District (PUD) commissioner for the last four years.

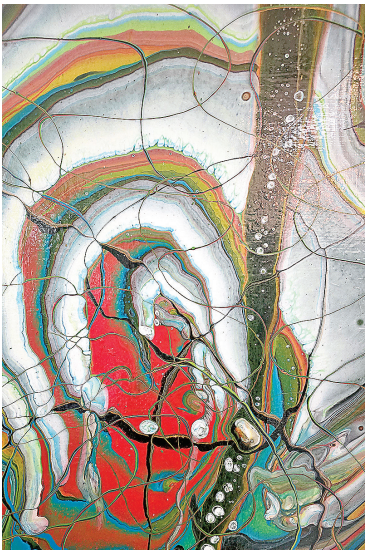
Hadaller addressed some rumors that he did not know how to read or write. "I have hearing loss," he said, explaining that when he was in the fifth grade, he had a temperature of 106 degrees that damaged his hearing. "I got moved from the back of the class to the front," he said.

When asked what the first thing that they would do upon becoming county commissioner for District 3, both Eckstein and Hadaller agreed that they would address the budget.

"The first thing I'd do is get rid of the county manager. It's \$177,000 that we don't need. We need three county commissioners that will sit there and do their job, talk to their constituents and run all the decisions of the county and have a direct talk with managers. We don't need someone to go in between us," Hadaller said.

"We need to tighten up the

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Anne Espedal courtesy photos

Left photo: Hand-painted jewelry, created by Anne Espedal. Right photo: "Bones" by Anne Espedal. "Creating a ghostly white detail requires me to thin my white paint to create the bone detail," she said.

Wellness, happiness inspire Espedal

Childhood mosaic is inspiration for current works

BY AMBER BROWN
East County Journal

Salkum resident Anne Espedal is the featured artist at the BCJ Gallery in Morton from now until the end of July. She describes her artwork as "unique and colorful" and that she hopes her art "reflects wellness and happiness."

While not a lifelong artist, Espedal gets her artistic skill from her grandfather who had immigrated from Copenhagen, Denmark and was a member of the New York City Painters Union. "I remember going into the bedroom and seeing him stand at the easel painting. I didn't like the smell of the linseed oil he used," Espedal said.



Anne Espedal

Espedal married her second husband, Glenn, 37 years ago. They had moved to Astoria, Oregon 31 years ago and Espedal worked as a fish filleter at a seafood processing plant before moving into the corporate compliance manager position. "I was working 100 hours per week," she said.

It became too much and they moved to Marysville, Washington for a time. They decided to move and found a home in Salkum about six months before the COVID-19 quarantine. She was able to first use an upstairs bedroom as an art studio and then converted the upstairs of the garage as her studio space.

She first started with water-based acrylic paintings, then

she painted tiles and now she is working on hand-painted jewelry. If she adds texture to her paintings, she uses modeling paste to get the effect that she wants.

"I paint with water-based acrylics. It is colorful abstract art. I go into a painting with a choice of colors not a specific image in mind," Espedal said. "Sometimes I get up at 2 or 3 in the morning when the inspiration strikes." When she leaves the house for her studio in the garage, her 5-year-old Frenchie goes out first to make sure it's safe to cross the grounds.

She has found that her colorful art has drawn older patrons and younger children. "I like that kids are drawn to my art. I want them to see and understand artwork," she said. She has been teaching

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JaymaLee Fleming courtesy photo

Fifth to eighth grade kids get together to bicycle around Morton.

Morton bicycle gang roams streets with a wholesome purpose

BY AMBER BROWN
East County Journal

Morton has a bicycle gang roaming the streets twice a week. However, calling them a gang is a bit of a misnomer. They are a group of kids, ages from the fifth to eighth grade, who gather together to ride around Morton and hang out together through the summer.

A better name, the 90s bicycle crew, was started by Lane Cox who decided to knock on a few of his friends' doors and ask them to come and ride with him. The group has expanded to upwards of 20 kids.

JaymaLee Fleming, who has two children riding in the group, has been acting in the capacity of social media coordinator for the kids. She wants to be clear that the children are managing the group themselves. There is no direct adult supervision.

Fleming's role is to bring awareness to the community that the children will be riding along the sidewalks and the sides of the roads, when sidewalks aren't available, and to let other parents know that there is an opportunity for their children to play outdoors this summer.

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