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Lynden Tribune

Hats off at Lynden



Lynden Tribune | TYLER MITCHELL

The Lynden PRCA Rodeo kicked off its two-day run on Friday at the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds. For more event pictures, turn to page A9 of this week's Tribune.

Carlson investigation turns up mixed results

Allegations include unprofessionalism and 'threatening' leadership style

Mark Reimers
Tribune reporter

LYNDEN -- Two investigations into school administrators in the Lynden School District have been released in summary form, showing mixed results.

The investigation by Auburn attorney Chris Burton was commissioned by the Lynden School Board and was conducted in June and July.

The board action flowed out of the Alston-Kline consultants' Veritas Project report, which was released in April and was critical of the district on communication and interpersonal issues.

In the two documents released to the Lynden Tribune through a public-records request, charges are outlined against Lynden schools Superintendent Dennis Carlson and Doug Adelstein, direc-

tor of human resources and grant monies for the school district.

The report on Dr. Carlson cites seven allegations, including instances of unprofessional communication, failure to evaluate certified teachers, threatening administrative staff, falsifying district information on award applications, and failure to conduct investigations into three complaints made within the school district.

The Burton investigation, based on interviews with 18 individuals, generally finds a degree of confirmation of each of the seven allegations against Carlson. In his report, Burton frequently states that "more likely than not," the actions of Carlson resulted in at least a perception by others of intimidation and unprofessionalism.

For instance, under Allegation 4: "Dr. Carlson, more likely than not, demonstrated poor judgment when he reviewed emails, despite his stated intent of protecting employee safety, during a (Veritas Project) process where staff trust and confidence in his stewardship was directly in question."

In Allegation 6, Burton discusses the claim that Carlson threatened the Administrative Council,

See INVESTIGATION on A2

School district's payment for legal services: \$49,992

Amount is revised down, clarified by school board

Calvin Bratt
Tribune editor

LYNDEN -- The Lynden School District has paid about \$50,000 so far -- not \$66,912 as reported in an Aug. 13 Tribune article -- for an investigation into administrators' conduct plus "related legal fees."

Data from district business manager Wilma Charleston clarifies the amounts, after school board members had challenged their accuracy.

The district received a bill of \$13,291 for the investigative work of Auburn attorney Chris Burton, Charleston said. Burton looked into confidentiality and communication concerns that arose out of the Alston-Kline consultants' report of last spring.

However, the district also received \$5,000 from

its insurer, Canfield & Associates, to help pay for the Burton bill, reducing the net amount to \$8,291, Charleston said.

"Related legal fees" have been paid to a separate Seattle law firm, K&L Gates, in the amount of \$41,631.13, the business manager said. What's been paid in August covers invoices received through June 30, Charleston said.

Those payments relate to legal consultations with K&L Gates that began even before the Alston-Kline report was released last April, said school board president Larry Korthuis.

"There were a lot of things to look at," Korthuis said. "It's a lot of money that's been spent over a long time."

Both the Lynden Tribune and Bellingham Herald have made public-records requests of the Lynden School District relating to the Alston-

See DISTRICT on A2

Local man featured in popular TV series

'Deadliest Catch' captures fishermen in Bering Sea

David Lewis
Tribune reporter

DUTCH HARBOR, Alaska -- The Discovery Channel program "Deadliest Catch" has created an entirely new phenomenon: the celebrity crab fisherman. The show is both extremely popular, with the finale of the fourth season drawing over three and a half million viewers, and also incredibly compelling in its portrayal of the reality of doing this dangerous job in the harshest of environments: the Bering Sea.

Finding himself right in the midst of this phenomenon is Travis Lofland, a 1992 graduate of Lynden High School.

Lofland, since leaving Lynden, has gained a decade of experience as a



Travis Lofland

commercial fisherman of cod, salmon, halibut, squid and crab. Now, since rejoining the crew of the Wizard, a Seattle-based 155-foot crab fishing boat that fishes out of Dutch Harbor, Alaska, and for the first time joining the cast of Discovery's "Deadliest Catch," he plans to fish solely for crab in the foreseeable future.

See CATCH on A9

First day of school



Lynden Tribune | MARK REIMERS

First grade teacher Sharon Bouma leads her new class toward the Lynden Christian High School stands for convocation on the first day of class Tuesday. The Lynden Christian grade school begins its 99th year of operation this fall. Today is the first day of classes in the Lynden and Nooksack Valley school districts.

New Sumas border station nearly ready

Dedication set tentatively for Oct. 10

Calvin Bratt
Tribune editor

SUMAS -- It's basically down to the landscaping, security systems and fur-

nishings for the new U.S. Border Patrol station at Sumas.

The 20,000-square-foot building at 9648 Garrison Rd., which will replace an undersized station at Lynden, has been under construction since June 2007. It's due to become operational within the next two months.

See BORDER on A8

The Lynden Tribune offices will be closed on Monday in celebration of Labor Day. All deadlines are Friday.

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Rock balancing an art for local worker

Shane Hart perfects skills at Bellingham's Boulevard Park

Tim Newcomb
Tribune assistant editor

LYNDEN -- Shane Hart is creating beauty from the mundane.

Hart, who works at Lynden's Flora Inc., has become well-known in Whatcom County for his Upala (rock) Yoga -- the art of balanced stone sculptures.

He has taken his meticulous craft to Boulevard Park in Bellingham, where he can be seen stoically balancing, with precarious precision, stones of all sizes in gravity-defying manners.

What started as a hobby has quickly turned into a way to connect to nature and inspire others.

Hart, who moved to Whatcom County from San Diego over five years ago with his wife, Jennifer, and three children, started toying with rock balancing be-



Shane Hart uses patience to find the perfect balance while creating rock sculptures.

fore moving north.

He takes principles from yoga -- concentration and meditation -- and converts that practice into an art where he can also use creativity. Patience and precision are key, the concentration

is necessary and the pressure is growing.

The created sculptures draw audiences when he spends Saturdays showcasing his intricate work at Boulevard Park.

Simple practice, similar to

what Hart saw in San Diego, has grown in complication. His love of magic and illusions as a child help foster his desire to create the "wow" factor in these sculptures.

His art took off locally when he was with his family playing at Boulevard Park. "I started putting up stones and a crowd started forming," he said. "People were enthusiastic and supportive. The more I started doing it as performance, the more the overwhelming support of the community."

"I started interacting with the community and giving back to life," he added. "Some people (at the park) just needed something inspiring and beautiful and they can lose themselves in (the art)."

His art is featured in the most recent edition of Yoga Journal, one of the top-selling health and fitness magazines in the nation.

With that publicity, Hart said, he feels the pressure to perform for those who come to watch. "It is a self-imposed pressure to perform," he said. "It is my issue and I need to clear those variables (from his mind)."

When Hart does performances at Boulevard, he brings stones from home just to ensure he can get a few sculptures up for his faithful fans. He also brings with him ideas and challenges



Lynden Tribune Courtesy Photo | RACHEL BAYNE, www.baynephotography.com
Shane Hart's sculptures catch attention at Boulevard Park.

-- some large and some simple -- that he attempts in the open-weather environment.

As he gets better, he searches for smaller and smaller contact points between the stones.

He equated getting the rocks to balance to finding footholds as a rock climber, or simply being aware of the power of weight.

In a simple three-stack formation, he doesn't need too powerful a base, which can either be itself balanced on a bed of rock or simply on flat ground. Often the second stone is offset from the first, weighting one side to keep the base from tipping. The third stone is usually the "wow" piece, as Hart finds a rock and tips it on end in a striking pose.

He said the key is locating cracks and crevices in the stones and then being patient and steady enough to coax them to "lock" in place.

Taller sculptures require a more solid base.

Before he starts a project, he tries to locate a variety of rocks in size, texture and color. "I am looking for a variety of stones with different attributes," he said.

He also wants to create complementing sculptures, so the entire day's work -- which is then taken down at the end of the day if the wind doesn't beat him to it -- flows together.

Depending on how technical the sculpture, Hart will spend anywhere from five to 60 minutes on each piece.

He tries to relax -- shaking doesn't help the balancing -- and enjoy the experience. "By just letting the experience unfold, that's where the magic happens," he said.

He loves the beauty and inspiration he can bring to those

who watch him and he wants to bring that same happiness and inspiration back to his family at the end of a long day balancing.

He said the surprisingly encouraging response from the community was "huge" in prodding him to hold more public performances and work to enlist installations -- his most recent was at the Bellingham Public Market downtown.

To supplement his Saturdays at Boulevard, he would like to be able to do more "living installations" at local galleries.

His installation of roughly 10 sculptures at the Bellingham Public Market kept him "on call," in case pieces came down. While half of his pieces fell at some point, some did last the roughly two months.

He said future installations could work in controlled environments -- rocks expand and contract with temperatures. Options include doing an installation and letting it fall over time or even just installing sculptures for an event.

And he loves how his sculptures can't be obtained. People are always coming to him asking to purchase a sculpture, without realizing it is not transportable and could fall at any moment.

"Our culture is about obtaining and owning," he said. "I can't take these to your house and guarantee they will make it. You need to enjoy it right here and right now and that is as much ownership as you have. Stuff doesn't have to be obtained to enjoy it."

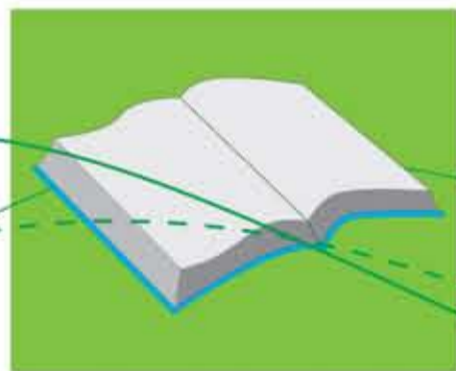
To check out more of Hart, visit stonetostone.com. Check out his calendar for his next Boulevard Park performance.

E-mail Tim Newcomb at tim@lyndentribune.com.



Lynden Tribune Courtesy Photo | RACHEL BAYNE, www.baynephotography.com

Shane Hart uses the natural beauty at Boulevard Park in Bellingham to showcase his sculptures.



Here's to 50 years of sparking great minds.

We applaud Bellingham Technical College on its 50th anniversary. BTC is dedicated to its students' success and is also a valuable resource to the community. That's why BP Cherry Point is proud to donate \$75,000 to BTC to establish an endowed scholarship in Process Technology. We value being part of this community and are proud to help educate and prepare new students for another 50 years of success.

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