



LOCAL KIDS GET A GOOD LAUGH at a performance of Shakespeare in the Park last year. The annual theater performances are put on free at Lake Tye Park, and are part of an affordable and abundant summer activity schedule available to families in the Sky Valley.

Three candidates face off for Monroe council seat #2.....2

Library hopes levy will keep books in the black.....4

Successful Sultan girls basketball coach comes to Monroe.....7

THE MONROE MONITOR



50¢

JUNE 30, 2009
VOL. 119, NO. 26

& Valley News

CONTINUOUSLY PUBLISHED SINCE 1899 • P.O. Box 399, 113 W. Main St., Monroe, WA 98272 • (360) 794-7116 • www.monroemonitor.com

Summertime fun heats up

Sky Valley offers lots of low-cost family activities this season

BY POLLY KEARY, EDITOR

Live theater free in the park. Low-cost sports camps for kids. Classic car shows. Parades. Picnics. Last week marked the first week of summer, and with the season comes a great deal of fun and affordable things to do around the Sky Valley. Here is a guide to things that are planned for kids, adults and families in the coming weeks, all at no cost or at reasonably low cost.

Monroe

Farmers' Markets

Monroe has two farmers' markets this year, where shoppers can buy fresh, local produce, locally baked breads, and handcrafts such as soaps and candles, as well as locally grown flowers.

Each Friday, Saturday and Sunday, a farmers' market that is new this year takes place on Lewis Street, just across the river from town. The new fair is open Friday from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

And Tuesday afternoons from 2 to 7 p.m. shoppers can come to the downtown farmers market on Main Street across from the 7-11, where there is music and activities for kids, including sidewalk chalk.

Movies Under the Moon and Shakespeare in the Park

Beginning July 24, every Friday evening will bring a free, fun family activity at Lake Tye Park on Fryelands Boulevard. Bring a picnic dinner and blankets to lay on and enjoy some quality family time at no cost.

The first two Fridays will feature live performances of Shakespeare comedies performed by Monroe theater troupe Last Leaf Productions.

Friday, July 24 at 7 p.m., the troupe will perform "The Taming of the Shrew," and the following Friday, July 31, they will perform "The Merry Wives of Windsor." Both are comedies dealing with the battle of the sexes.

The next four Fridays bring family friendly movies shown on an inflatable screen starting at 9 p.m. This year's selections include Kung Fu Panda, Raiders of the Lost Ark, High School Musical 3 and Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl.

Prior to each movie showing, a performance in tune with the theme of the movie will take place. For example, as the sky darkens before Kung Fu Panda, local martial artists will give a demonstration, and high school musicians will perform before High School Musical 3.

Skyhawks Sports Camps

Coming to Monroe again this year, through the Monroe Parks Department, is Skyhawks Sports Camp, offering kids ages 4-14 opportunities to explore a wide variety of sports. Each sports camp lasts several days and teaches kids athletic skill and teamwork, as well as how to celebrate uniqueness.

This year, the city is offering families two options; full-day sports camp or more affordable half-day camps.

Full day camps range in price from \$145 to \$215 per child for five days. Half-day camps also run five days, but only run from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. each day, and cost around \$79 to \$1.04 per child.

Camps include baseball, basketball, beginning golf, cheerleading, soccer, multi-sports including soccer, baseball and basketball, Lego engineering and tennis.

For more information, log onto www.skyhawks.com or call 1(800) 804-3509.

Night Out Against Crime

Night Out Against Crime returns to Monroe this year Tuesday, Aug. 9, at 7 p.m. at Lake Tye Park.

The event will feature police dog demonstrations, public safety awareness, bouncy houses for kids, lots of fun activities and free snacks and beverages for all.

Old Main Street Car Show

This is a new event this year, brought by the Chamber of Commerce. "Some of the members got together and thought it would be a fun event for people, with a little bit of fundraising thrown in," said Neil Watkins, Chamber of Commerce.

The Classic Car show will include as many as 200 cars and will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. all day Sunday, Aug. 16.

SEE ACTIVITIES PAGE 8

WAL-MART: Bane or Boon?

Megastore could come to Monroe; Studies, citizens divided on impact

BY POLLY KEARY, EDITOR

The future of Monroe could include a Wal-Mart. Would that be a bad thing or a boon? A source of work and a revenue generator or a source of lethal competition to already stricken businesses? Studies show that it would likely be some of both. And the community, including business and political leaders, are torn between jobs and low prices and what could be crushing competition for some small businesses.

Where it would be

The city-owned land along North Kelsey Street is divided into several parcels, two of them large.

The first is occupied by Lowe's; a shopping center is planned for the other half of that site.

The second, until recently, was occupied by Lakeside Industry's enormous gravel pile. Lakeside leased the land and mined it for gravel. The gravel excavation process came to an end last year, and the 25 acres of land is once again available.

It's that second piece of land that could become a Wal-Mart, a Target or a Costco, according to two developers who visited the city council Tuesday, June 16.

The two developers from the Sabey Corporation, a large and well established development company, approached the city council to talk about the possibility of developing the site because they believed it would be perfect for a "big box" store.

And only a few stores are still expanding enough in the current economy to make their arrival in Monroe realistic, including Target, Costco and Wal-Mart.

Costco already has a store fairly close to Monroe, one recently constructed in Woodinville.

Target is also in Woodinville. The closest Wal-Mart is in Bothell, and Wal-Mart is known for choosing rural areas for stores.

And the name of the computer file the developers opened to make a presentation was "Monroe Wal-Mart," making it seem likely that the chain is



JOBS AND LOW PRICES ARE AMONG THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS a Wal-Mart could bring to Monroe, if a developer interested in the north half of the North Kelsey project decides to try to bring one to town. But some fear that local businesses will face killing competition, and others decry increased traffic.

Wal-Mart is the largest retailer in the world, and has more people in uniform than does the United States military. It sells more in a year than Home Depot, Kroger, Target, Sears and Costco combined. It's the largest private employer in the nation. But recent studies show that Wal-Mart isn't necessarily a death sentence for other small businesses.

a strong candidate for the newly opened North Kelsey land.

What it could mean for the city

In the short run, at least, the arrival of a Wal-Mart or other big box on the north half of North Kelsey could solve a big problem for Monroe; that of how to pay off the south half.

Which is ironic, because Monroe bought the property to keep Wal-Mart out.

City officials then feared that if the city didn't buy the property from the county, Wal-Mart would. That didn't fit with the future of the city as they envisioned

it. They hoped for a more upscale identity for new development, and thus for the city.

But when the developer who planned to create that new upscale shopping center backed out, the city was left with a lot of land and no buyer.

Various ideas have been floated including selling it off in pieces, and currently a developing company from Issaquah named SeaCon is in talks with the city about buying at least part of the site.

"As far as I know, they're moving ahead," said Mayor Donnetta Walser.

Selling the north parcel could take a lot of pressure off the city to sell the rest of

the south parcel, she said.

"We never thought the north would sell before the south," she said. "We would pay off the south and that would give us more time and freedom to get the amenities we want on the south."

What it could mean for other businesses

On the face of it, competition between Wal-Mart and mom-and-pop businesses seems like the ultimate David and Goliath face-off, if David was a flea and Goliath the size of the Sears tower.

Wal-Mart is the largest retailer in the world, and has more people in uniform than does the United States military. It sells more in a year than Home Depot, Kroger, Target, Sears and Costco combined. It's the largest private employer in the nation.

But recent studies show that Wal-Mart isn't necessarily a death sentence for other small businesses.

Those businesses in direct competition with Wal-Mart, like small hardware stores, were the hardest hit, and often do go out of business. But according to recent work done by West Virginia University economics professor Russel Sobel, the actual number of

SEE WAL-MART PAGE 3

Law Offices of

KENNETH A. BERGER, P.L.L.C.

Comprehensive Legal Representation



WILLS, TRUSTS
PROBATE
ESTATE PLANNING

DIVORCE
BANKRUPTCY
CONTRACTS
COLLECTIONS

BUSINESS LAW
REAL ESTATE
INCORPORATION
CONSTRUCTION
CRIMINAL DEFENSE
(MISDEMEANORS ONLY)

(360) 794-6083

148 Woods Street
Monroe, WA 98272