



Sultan and Gold Bar team up to clean up graffiti..... **6**



Monroe Mayoral candidates discuss skills, issues.... **3**



Monroe students, teachers ease transition for Hispanic students **4**

OCT. 13, 2009

VOL. 119, NO. 41

50¢



6 89076 96089 2

Continuously published since 1899

P.O. BOX 399, 113 West Main Street, Monroe, WA 98272, (360) 794-7116, monroemonitor.com

THE MONROE MONITOR & Valley News



Sultan woman killed in hit-and-run

BY POLLY KEARY, EDITOR

Paula Sterns, long-time homeless Sultan resident, was killed in a hit-and-run, and police are seeking information that could lead to the arrest of the driver.

At about 8:30 p.m. Friday night, Sultan police were called to the 311th Avenue bridge, which crosses the Skykomish River just at the south edge of Sultan.

Officers found Sterns there by the side of the road. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

The vehicle that struck her was gone.

Two men who had been with her, including her husband "Sterno," saw the collision and described what happened.

They said a non-descript vehicle was heading south on the bridge, struck the woman and kept going.

They were unable to provide a good description of the vehicle. Police believe it probably has front end damage, likely on the passenger side.

Anyone with information is asked to call Detective Joe Coffin at (425) 388-5436.

PAULA STERNS, of Sultan, was struck and killed by a vehicle on the 311th Avenue bridge in Sultan on Friday. Police are seeking the driver.

PHOTO BY POLLY KEARY

Police seek help in case of missing Monroe man

BY POLLY KEARY, EDITOR

Brock Holmes, 23, of Monroe, is missing.

He disappeared after leaving a party at about midnight Wednesday night. He said was going to walk home, but he never arrived.

The party was at the 24000 block of Florence Acres Road. Holmes' house is in the 28100 block of Old Owen Road near Sultan, about three to four miles away.

He should have made it in two hours or less.

But he never arrived.

Police say there is no sign of foul play in the case. Holmes was likely intoxicated when he left and officials are concerned he

might have injured himself on his way home.

His mother, Lori Bowling of Monroe, with whom he lives, is worried someone might have hurt Holmes.

Holmes worked at a Chevron on U.S. 2. He had fallen in with a bad crowd several years ago, but had returned to Monroe in May and was putting his life back together, his mother told the Everett Herald.

She and friends have been posting flyers around the neighborhood.

Holmes is described as a white male, 5 feet 8 inches tall and 178 pounds. He has red hair and blue eyes.



BROCK HOLMES, 23, of Monroe, was last seen leaving a party on Florence Acres Road Wednesday night. He was walking toward his house on Old Owen Road, but never arrived.

Anyone with information about this is asked to call the Sheriff's tip line at 425-388-3845.

Fall Farm Tour coming to Fern Bluff Road This Saturday

BY POLLY KEARY, EDITOR

Ride a hay wagon through a field full of cows. Swing from a rope into a bouncy hay mow in a giant barn. Taste locally grown vegetables. Watch a woman spin and knit yarn from wool taken directly from a sheep. Take the kids through a corn maze.

Saturday, Oct. 17, people will have a chance to do all that and more in a tour of three farms, all within a few minutes of each other on Fern Bluff Road.

It's the third annual Fall Farm Tour, and this year it's meant to be easier to access for people who'd like a chance to experience farm life at the height of the harvest season.

In previous tours, many farms were included, and were spread out all over the map. But some families had a hard time doing the tour because of the logistics of getting kids

STOCKING'S GARDEN AND NURSERY has been a source of fresh vegetables for the Sky Valley for years. Saturday, tour the farm and learn how to make soup from all those veggies, plus visit two other farms along Fern Bluff Road, during the Sky Valley's Third Annual Fall Farm Tour.

PHOTO BY DAN ARMSTRONG



in and out of the car numerous times, and because of the drive time involved.

We're totally changing the format," said Debbie Copple of the Sky Valley Chamber of Commerce. "Instead of being spread all over the area, we're narrowing it down to three farms, all on Fern Bluff Road."

The first stop along the farm tour is the Rivers End Ranch, where cattle farmers Jerry and Stacy Labish will host tours.

"He's going to hook his tractor to the hay wagon and ride through the bumpy fields where all

the cattle are standing," said Copple. "He has a great hay loft; you can swing on a rope and land on the hay. It's an old-fashioned cattle farm on one hand, but it's state of the art, very organic, chemical-free."

There will be roping demonstrations, historical displays courtesy of the Sultan Historical Society and story times sponsored by the Sno-Isle library.

The second stop will be at Groeneveld Dairy Farm. Here, dairy farmers Chris and Anna Groeneveld invite the public to tour their third

generation working dairy farm.

"There's a little maternity ward going on there, and if we're lucky, there might be babies," said Copple. "They are going to have FFA and 4H kids out there showing off their animals and letting kids get up close and personal. They will talk about what it's like to raise an animal and how kids could do it if they wanted to. Most of the students they have out there are city kids. The Groenevelts are very involved in youth education. It's a great program."

SEE FARM TOUR PAGE 8

Monroe Council shoots down \$9.6 million offer for land at North Kelsey

Tuesday, in spite of pleas from some city employees who turned up specifically to ask the council to sell and avoid a debt crisis, the council decided that it was more important to keep Walmart out of the city than to keep the city out of the red.

BY POLLY KEARY, EDITOR

"This might be the most important vote of your lives," said Monroe Mayor Donnetta Walser as she sensed the council was about to vote down a proposal to sell a large piece of land to a Seattle developer.

A vote to sell meant the city would be nearly debt free. But the council voted 'no'.

With that, the Monroe City Council Tuesday shot down a land deal that could have gotten Monroe mostly out of debt but also could have brought a Walmart to the city.

Seattle's Sabey Corporation, a large and well-regarded development company, wrote a letter of intent to the city Sept. 29, offering \$9,600,000 for 24.37 acres of land on the site occupied until recently by the

Lakeside Industries gravel pile behind Galaxy Theater.

In earlier council meetings, representatives of the company said they wanted the land for a big box store, which was quite likely to be Walmart, although there were other possibilities.

The money could have forestalled a looming budget crisis for the City of Monroe.

The city still owes for the property on the other side of North Kelsey, which it bought from the county for \$16.1 million; ironically, also to keep Walmart out, as the company was believed to be exploring the option to come to town.

The city sold part of that land to Lowe's but the developer who was supposed to buy the other half backed out, leaving the city to pay off the

remaining \$11 million as the economy tanked.

The money set aside from the earnest money abandoned by the developer and from the sale of the Lowe's parcel is almost gone.

Once it runs out, the city will be paying for the land out of the already badly-strapped general fund. Unless the Lakeside site, which the city owns free and clear, can be sold.

"I remember four years ago very clearly the outcry of this community to avoid the potential arrival of the big box that is likely on the table now," said council member Mitch Ruth. "The previous council agreed to enter in \$16 million debt because of it."

"I don't support having a Walmart as a potential tenant or landowner in the North

Kelsey area," said council member Geoffrey Thomas. One of the reasons I bought the property was we were pressured by the concern that Walmart might buy at North Kelsey. We had members of the Chamber of Commerce, all sorts of folks, talking about why we should buy the property."

SEE NORTH KELSEY PAGE 5

MONROE CITY COUNCILMAN DAVID KENNEDY listens as council members argue against a motion he made with fellow council member Margie Rodriguez to allow the city to sign a letter of intent with a large developer, a first step toward a land deal that could have gotten the city nearly debt-free, but could also have brought a Walmart to town.

PHOTO BY DAN ARMSTRONG



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