

whatcom Independent

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FREE EVERY THURSDAY

Fairhaven Highland EIS scoping meeting draws large crowd



Top: The 2005 site plan for the proposed Fairhaven Highlands development, which includes 739 housing units with approximately 24 acres of preserved habitat on the 80-acre site.

Bottom: The updated 2008 site plan includes 40 acres of preserved habitat while keeping the 739 housing units. Nicole Oliver, Bellingham Planning Department communications coordinator, said both plans will be looked at during the drafting of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). If the EIS finds enhanced wetland buffers are needed, then the updated plan will be looked at as an alternative, she said.

Graphics courtesy of the Bellingham Planning Department

■ *Citizens speak out against development; draft to be published in May*

by **TOM CALLIS**

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BELLINGHAM – Approximately 250 citizens crowded into the Bellingham Municipal Court building on Wednesday, Jan. 16 for a public scoping meeting on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Fairhaven Highlands development on Chuckanut Ridge.

CHUCKANUT EIS • 5



City Council to hear UGA comments Jan. 28

■ *Pike, Weiss encourage amending request, densifying*

by **IAN TYSON**

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BELLINGHAM – At its Jan. 14 meeting, which was rife with public comment, the Bellingham City Council delayed voting on an amended Urban Fringe Subarea Plan, relating to the Urban Growth Area (UGA).

Many people showed up to comment on the changes to the UGA. The presidents of the York, Cornwall Park and Samish

UGA • 17

NEWS AT A GLANCE



Courtesy photo

Sure, klezmer, but so much more

BELLINGHAM - Bellingham's Millie and the Mentshn is one of only 20 klezmer bands worldwide who have been invited to perform at the First International Klez Fiesta in Buenos Aires, Argentina this September. But it's going to cost them \$6,000. *Check out their plans on p. 4.*

Hasty appointment criticized

BELLINGHAM - John Carter, who has been the CFO of the Port of Bellingham for the past 17 years, was appointed Bellingham's finance director and he took office on Monday, Jan. 21. John Servais, the lone citizen who spoke at the city council meeting at which Carter was appointed, was critical of the city for announcing the meeting with barely 24 hours notice, for holding the meeting in the middle of a workday, and not scheduling time for public comment. "This was not open government," he said. *Get the full story on p. 3.*

Gas gouging: the AG speaks out

BELLINGHAM - The Washington State Attorney General was in Bellingham recently to explain the preliminary results of a study on gas prices in Whatcom County. Are we being gouged? Some people think so. *Get the facts on p. 2.*

"Bangers" used to battle swans

LYNDEN/SUMAS - Since October 2006, the Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Washington has been working to prevent lead poisoning of swans by keeping the birds off Judson Lake during the migration season. This year the project ended on Jan. 19. *Find out how successful they've been in our update on pp. 10-11.*

THEY SAID WHAT?

"Since no one wants to live in our urban centers, let's build 15 more and that will fix everything!"

– See what Jack Petree is talking about on p. 9.



WHO'S PLAYIN'? P. 19

BRIEFS

— Whatcom Indy Staff

WWU recognized for Peace Corps volunteers

BELLINGHAM — Western Washington University (WWU) ranked third for the number of alumni serving as Peace Corps Volunteers among medium-sized colleges in 2007. Medium-sized colleges include those that have between 5,001 and 15,000 students. The University of Virginia topped the list followed by George Washington University. Fifty-three Western alumni currently are serving as volunteers and 732 Western alumni have served in the Peace Corps since it began in 1961. The University of Washington ranked first among large schools. WWU students seeking information about the Peace Corps can go to the International Opportunities Fair at Western from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 24 in the Viking Union Multipurpose Room. Peace Corps information will also be available at WWU's Winter Career Fair from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 14 in the Viking Union Multipurpose Room.

Call to artists

BELLINGHAM — Allied Arts of Whatcom County and the Downtown Renaissance Network are inviting artists to submit an original piece of art to be used exclusively for all of the 2008 Downtown Gallery Walk promotional materials for one year. The selected work will be featured on posters, ads and all other print promotional material for the events. This year's Downtown Gallery Walks will take place on March 28, May 2 (Children's Gallery Walk), June 13, Oct. 10 and Dec. 5. To submit an image or idea, provide at least three images on a CD, a short but detailed description of your work, and provide complete contact information. No emails will be accepted. Send your application to Allied Arts of Whatcom County, P.O. Box 2584, Bellingham, WA 98227 or drop it by the offices at 1418 Cornwall Ave. Applications are due by 5 p.m. on Feb. 25.

Local teens lobby Olympia

BELLINGHAM — Five local teens who are members of Mt. Baker Planned Parenthood's teen group, Advocates for Sexual Health Knowledge, traveled to Olympia to participate in the annual Teen Lobby Day event on Jan. 21 to talk to legislators about why reproductive health, rights and justice are important to them. The focus of the teens' lobbying efforts this year were increased funding for family planning services and changes to a law mandating that the Washington Department of Health apply for Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funds, according to a Mt. Baker Planned Parenthood press release.

49th Unparallel

by ben mann



"All this talk about G.P. is starting to feel like pier pressure."

From Bellingham to Buenos Aires

■ Klezmer band goes international

by CHRISTOPHER KEY

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Only 20 klezmer bands from throughout the world have been invited to perform at the First International Klez Fiesta in Buenos Aires, Argentina this September. Bellingham's Millie and the Mentshn is one of them.

The band is descended, in part, from What the Chelm. Four of the five members of Millie and the Mentshn play with the larger group, which has been part of the local music scene since 1993.

Millie Johnson, lead singer for the Mentshn, describes the smaller group as similar to a chamber ensemble, whereas What the Chelm is more like a big band. Millie and the Mentshn is about more than just klezmer music. It's about the history of the Jewish people. Their major concert pieces are two multimedia presentations entitled *Homeland to Heartland* and *Songs Never Silenced*.

The former covers the immigration of Jews from Lithuania to America from the late 1800s to the late 1940s. It features storytelling directly from the journals of immigrants, music from each era and slides from the "Shtetl": the sea voyage and landing in America. Those immigrants were Johnson's ancestors.

Songs Never Silenced focuses on music from before, during and after the Holocaust. The music illustrates the story.

"When the Jews dispersed to many lands, they tended to adopt parts of the local culture and this music reflects that," Johnson said.

Music from *Songs Never Silenced* is featured on their latest CD, entitled *Mentshn It*. It perfectly illustrates those musical influences with numbers ranging from a Polish dance to a tango, to the iconic Depression-era ballad, "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" That song was written by Abraham Jacob Gornetzsky and Isadore Hochberg, better



The local klezmer band Millie and the Mentshn has been invited to the First International Klez Festival in Buenos Aires, Argentina this September. The band is raising funds for its trip. Courtesy photo

known to Americans as Jay Gorney and Yip Harburg.

The instrumentation for Millie and the Mentshn isn't exactly traditional for a klezmer band, but it works beautifully, thanks, in part, to Johnson's clever arrangements. Members of the group, all classically trained, are Ken Bronstein on oboe, Phil Heaven on viola and violin, Lou Lippman on piano and Warren Palkin on drums and percussion. Millie Johnson's astonishing voice ties it all together.

Art imitates life and vice-versa, so there's a story behind

Pedro Banchik, the director of the documentary, is also the coordinator of the Klez Fiesta and a leading peace activist in a country where anti-Semitism is still strong. Eventually, he and Johnson transcended language and technological barriers and Millie and the Mentshn were on their way to Buenos Aires. Almost.

The Klez Fiesta is paying for all their expenses while in Argentina, but the band still has to pay for its own transportation. Schlepping five musicians and their instruments to South

America will cost about \$6,000 and the band is already raising funds.

First on the agenda is a double-header concert with What the Chelm at the Fairhaven Col-

lege Auditorium on March 8. There's a suggested donation of \$12 and tickets can be reserved in advance at Village Books.

Band members are also seeking help from any local businesses that might be active in that part of the world. Local sponsors would be included in Klez Fiesta promotional material and recognized at a press conference.

And, of course, everyone can pitch in by purchasing Millie and the Mentshn CDs at the concert, at Village Books and online at the band's Web site. ■WI

"I got an e-mail from this guy asking if I wanted to come to Argentina. I thought it was spam, so I deleted it."

— Millie Johnson, Millie and the Mentshn

the band's invitation to Buenos Aires.

"I got an email from this guy asking if I wanted to come to Argentina," Johnson recalled. "I thought it was spam, so I deleted it. Later, I saw that the same guy had ordered one of our CDs, so I looked him up and it turns out he's the director of a documentary film called *De Bessarabia a Entre Rios*. It's about his family's migration from that part of the world to Argentina in 1905."

Some geographical explanation is in order. Bessarabia is in Eastern Europe and has been part of Romania, the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic and is currently the Republic of Moldova. Entre Rios is a province of Argentina.

@ www.millieandthementshn.com