

Skagit Valley Herald

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APRIL 27, 2008

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THE LANDING
GRIEVING
KIDS LEARN
TO 'LET IT OUT'
SKAGIT LIVING / E1



SUNDAY



WRESTLING
S-W SOPHOMORE
WINS WESTERN
FREESTYLE TITLE
SPORTS / B1

Nonprofits facing crisis

*Food, fuel costs up
as donations decline*

By **JOSH LINTEREUR**
Staff Writer

In the seven-year history of the Skagit Hospice Foundation, the organization's leaders have never been this nervous.

The foundation's annual fundraiser — which typically raises about half of the organization's \$400,000 budget — is a month away. Already, even some of the group's most generous donors are saying they have nothing to give this year.

"They just can't do it," said Doreen DeLong, the foundation's executive director. "They are so apologetic about it. It's heartbreaking."

These are uncertain times for nonprofit groups throughout Skagit County, and even more so for the people who depend on them.

A sagging economy means that demand for shelter, food, medical care and other assistance is starting to surge, and the funds to provide these services are drying up.

See **NONPROFITS**, Page A9



Ariana Santacruz reads from the book "Where the Wild Things Are" while teaching a literacy class Wednesday night at Madison Elementary School in Mount Vernon. The program, run by the nonprofit Skagit Community Action Agency, faces federal budget cuts next year.

Matt Wallis
Skagit Valley Herald

NEWSWATCH

Other top stories

POLITICS



AP

Is electoral map favoring Dems?

► The electoral road to the White House favors Democrats this fall — either Barack Obama or Hillary Rodham Clinton — and has Republican John McCain playing defense to thwart a presidential power shift.

PAGE A3

ENVIRONMENT



AP

Sage grouse may gain listing

► The fate of basic industries across the Intermountain West soon could be at least partially tied to that of a bird about the size of a chicken. The federal government is under a judge's order to reconsider an earlier decision against listing the sage grouse as endangered.

PAGE A2

NORTHWEST

Boom time in Inland Empire

► Some people wonder why there is a border between Washington and Idaho. The communities are so intertwined in geography, economy and culture that they might as well be one state. The region is often lumped together as the Inland Northwest, or sometimes, the Inland Empire.

PAGE A8



The Minkler mansion was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988. This plaque is next to the house's main entrance.

MANSION FOR SALE



Photos by **Frank Varga** / Skagit Valley Herald

The Minkler mansion on South Main Street in Lyman combines late Victorian and neoclassical features.

The town of Lyman wants to buy historic Minkler home

By **RALPH SCHWARTZ**
Staff Writer

LYMAN — When Doris Patterson walks through her house, known in these parts as the Minkler mansion, she's flooded with memories of her father.

Patterson's father, Val Field, would play pool in the bright parlor on the first floor. Cold air would blow down the chimney of the room's coal fireplace.

In the 1960s, Field allowed neighbors to pick strawberries from his yard, charging them 10 cents to fill a coffee can.

On birthdays, he decorated a walnut tree behind the house with balloons and put some salmon on the barbecue.

"My father really loved this house," Patterson said. "If it weren't for him, who knows what this house would have looked like."

The house built by Skagit pioneer Birdsey D. Minkler came to Field in 1954 because he had married one of Minkler's granddaughters. Now

See **MANSION**, Page A6



Doris Patterson, a descendant by marriage of Birdsey D. Minkler, sits in a chair on the second-story balcony of her historic home in Lyman.



A pair of 100-year-old shoes belonging to Maude Vanderford, eldest daughter of Birdsey D. Minkler, remains in the mansion and will be placed on display if the house becomes Lyman's Town Hall.

*"I'm not angry.
I'm not mad.
I'm just
confused."*

Timothy Garon, who has been denied a spot on the University of Washington Medical Center's transplant list because he has used marijuana



Elaine Thompson / AP

Timothy Garon lies in his hospital bed Thursday in Seattle.

Medical marijuana patients face hurdles to transplants

Hospitals setting tough standards

By **GENE JOHNSON**
Associated Press Writer

SEATTLE — Timothy Garon's face and arms are hauntingly skeletal, but the fluid building up in his abdomen makes the 56-year-old musician look eight months pregnant.

His liver, ravaged by hepatitis C, is failing. Without a new one, his doctors tell him, he will be dead in days.

But Garon has been refused a spot on the transplant list, largely because he has used marijuana, even though it was legally approved for medical reasons.

"I'm not angry, I'm not mad, I'm just confused," said Garon, lying in his hospital bed a few minutes after a doctor told him the hospital transplant committee's decision Thursday.

With the scarcity of donated organs, transplant committees, like the one at the University of Washington Medical Center, use tough standards, including whether the candidate has other serious health problems or is likely to drink or do drugs.

And with cases like

See **MARIJUANA**, Page A6



Internet: goskagit.com

INSIDE: Five sections, 38 pages

Comics	TV Week	USA Weekend
D5-10	Lottery	A2 Skagit Living
E4	Movies	A5 Sports
D7	Obituaries	A8 Stocks
C1-4	Opinion	A4 Work&Tech

WEATHER: Details, A2

■ Mostly cloudy today with a chance of showers. High near 65.



Newsmakers

Read all about your friends and neighbors
Monday in People, Section C

Mansion: Project would cost \$600,000

Continued from Page A1

the Minkler mansion belongs to Patterson, who acquired it after her father's death in 1986.

Since Patterson is the step-daughter of a Minkler granddaughter, the house has been in the family ever since it was built in 1891.

Now the town of Lyman would like to purchase the house and preserve it as the most outstanding piece of historical architecture in town. In 1988, the mansion was added to the National Register of Historic Places — the only building in Lyman with that distinction.

Patterson said she wants to sell her house to the town, which in a way has already adopted it in spirit.

"I think they would do a great job in preserving it," Patterson said.

Leading the effort is Lyman Mayor Debra Heinzman. She learned of the opportunity when Patterson's real estate agent proposed the idea at a Town Council meeting in January.

"Everybody in this town wants to go inside that house just to see it," Heinzman said.

Mill owner, statesman

The man who built the mansion has been credited for building one of the first — if not the first — sawmill in the county, on Mill Creek. Minkler's story is detailed on the Skagit River Journal Web site and in documents recorded with the National Register.

Minkler staked a claim in 1877 at a spot up the Skagit River that would soon be named Birdview, after Minkler. In addition to a sawmill, he opened the only upriver post office in Birdview in 1880.

He and his family moved to Lyman in 1886, and Minkler became an early leader of that town. Historical accounts describe Lyman as a quiet reprieve from some of the nearby boomtowns.

Minkler started several successful mill operations, in Lyman and in the company town of Minkler two miles to the west. He also was a popular political figure, getting the most votes among the county's first commissioners in 1884, then winning a seat in the state's first House of Representatives in a landslide victory in 1889. He was later a state senator.

The mansion is often said to be a symbol of Minkler's success in the mill business. It certainly was an exceptional change from the crude cabin he built for his first homestead in Birdview.

"The house clearly conveys Minkler's prominent role in the development of the region and remains the finest historic residence in Lyman," the National Register documents said.

"The mansion still kind of conveys his personality," said Markéta Vorel, Lyman's town attorney and project manager for the town's acquisition effort. "It's the biggest house on the biggest lot in the center of town."

Over the years, the house has come to mean something else as well.

"It's a tribute to a bygone era of logging town prosper-



Photos by Frank Varga / Skagit Valley Herald

Many of the elements of the Minkler mansion are original, including the main staircase (left) in the entryway. The neoclassical wooden columns (right) that adorn the facade of the structure were added about 1920.

On the Web

■ To learn more about Lyman's effort to purchase the Minkler mansion, visit www.townoflyman.com.

■ For a more extensive biography of Birdsey D. Minkler, go to www.stump.ranchonline.com and click on the B.D. Minkler item, about halfway down the page. The two-part Minkler biography was written by Noel Bourasaw, who maintains the Skagit River Journal Web site (www.skagitriverjournal.com).

ity. A lot of that history is being lost or could be lost if you don't preserve structures like these," Vorel said.

She noted that the Historic Places designation does not protect the house from being altered or even leveled. The federal law establishing the National Register does not place limits on private property owners. A new owner could paint the house purple, Vorel said, or could divide the property into its four separate city lots and build three more houses.

A daunting price tag

While they believe their effort to preserve the landmark is noble, Lyman officials wonder how they're going to pay for it. The total project would cost about \$600,000 — two-thirds to acquire the property, the rest to renovate it so it can serve as Town Hall. That sum is more than twice Lyman's annual budget, which was less than \$240,000 in 2006.

When U.S. Rep Rick Larsen, D-Wash., was in Lyman last week, town officials appealed to him for help.

"It's just too much to ask a little town to take this big of a project on," Vorel told Heinzman.

Lyman missed a deadline for congressional earmarks that originate in the House of Representatives. Larsen could have helped directly with that. The congressman told Lyman officials he would help them contact Washington's U.S. senators so they can hear Lyman's pitch.

But Larsen didn't want to raise expectations.

"The appropriations environment in D.C. is really difficult now, especially with earmarks. ... It's not going to be easy," Larsen told Heinzman and Vorel.

In any case, a federal earmark wouldn't be paid to Lyman until next year at the

earliest. The same is true of state and local grants the town may apply for.

Lyman officials are focusing on a grant from the Heritage Capital Projects Fund, administered by the Washington State Historical Society. That grant wouldn't cover the full cost of a project. It would require a 2-for-1 dollar match from the town.

Lyman hopes to qualify for another set of grants by offering health services to seniors, low-income residents and others, possibly in cooperation with the Skagit County Community Action Agency. Pursuit of such health care related grants is just getting started, Vorel said.

The town attorney has also gone to the county commissioners seeking assistance.

Vorel says the mansion is important to the whole county, not just Lyman.

Commissioners are supportive of the project but are unsure of how much money they can commit.

"I think it's a wonderful idea," Commissioner Sharon Dillon said. "What better way to preserve something than to turn it into a public use."

She said the commissioners are likely to approve \$5,000 for an architect and a preservationist to advise the town on how to convert the old home into a town hall while maintaining its historical character.

Commissioners will need to take a close look at their budget before granting more funds to the project, Dillon said. They may look for ways to help that aren't financial.

The town also will seek private donors. Naming rights for the new Town Hall are available for \$50,000 — although the house itself will always be known as Minkler mansion, Vorel said.

While grant money is at least a year away, the town is on a much shorter deadline to come up with the financing to buy the house. Officials have until July 28 to close the deal. That's when a purchase and sale agreement between Patterson and the town runs out.

Minkler would approve

The Minkler mansion has retained its structural and historical integrity after standing for more than a century. After all, the sawmill magnate could presumably select from the best wood in the Skagit forests.

The original wooden staircase is still in place, apparently as solid as the day Minkler

put it there. "You walk up the stairs, and they don't even squeak," Mayor Heinzman said.

A small upstairs room that Patterson calls her sun room offers an impressive view of the river and hills that were still capped with snow in late April.

The Skagit River, perhaps, has changed more than the house. While in view of the house today, the river was reportedly three-quarters of a mile further south when Minkler built the house.

An old-fashioned wooden wall phone, complete with receiver, crank and bells, still hangs on a wall of the entryway. Upstairs is a long French bathtub presumably used by Minkler himself. He was a tall man, Patterson said, and he needed a big tub. Two pairs of turn-of-the-last-century women's shoes are shoved into a corner of an upstairs bedroom.

"I imagine they're 100 years old," Patterson said.

The name "Maude Vanderford" is inscribed in one of the shoes. Vanderford was Minkler's eldest daughter, born about 1875. When Vanderford died in 1954, Patterson's father acquired the house from her siblings, according to historical accounts.

If the town gets its wish, and the house is converted into the town hall, the shoes and the phone would continue to be on display. In this way, the mansion would provide some tangible insight into the town's history.

But the house would be functional, not really a museum. Besides the social services that could be housed there, town meetings would be held in the parlor. This would be quite a change from the atmosphere inside the cinderblock community hall that serves as an all-purpose space for city, community and church events.

Some changes would be needed to turn the old mansion into a public building. For one thing, the house needs to meet the access requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The house has already had some minor modifications.

The parlor's drafty chimney has been sealed shut, and the coal-burning fireplace has been fitted with an electric heater. The large pantry has been converted to a small, modern kitchen, and the old back porches are now a bathroom and laundry room. But the original back-porch door is still in place, complete with a deep rut created by years of dog scratches.

Patterson, who along with her husband got the building placed on the National Register, said she wanted to leave the house as unchanged as possible.

"I wanted it to stay Victorian. There's just such a warm feeling about the people that lived here, and I wanted to please them by keeping it, as much as I could, as it was."

"The Minklers, if they're looking down, I think they would be very happy that this is happening," she said.

■ Ralph Schwartz can be reached at 360-416-2138 or rschwartz@skagitvalleyherald.com.

Marijuana: Transplant centers inconsistent on how to deal with pot use

Continued from Page A1

Garon's, they also have to consider — as a dozen states now have medical marijuana laws — if using dope with a doctor's blessing should be held against a dying patient in need of a transplant.

Most transplant centers struggle with how to deal with people who have used marijuana, said Dr. Robert Sade, director of the Institute of Human Values in Health Care at the Medical University of South Carolina.

"Marijuana, unlike alcohol, has no direct effect on the liver. It is however a concern ... in that it's a potential indicator of an addictive personality," Sade said.

The Virginia-based United Network for Organ Sharing, which oversees the nation's transplant system, leaves it to individual hospitals to develop criteria for transplant candidates.

At some, people who use "illicit substances" — including medical marijuana, even in states that allow it — are automatically rejected. At others, such as the UCLA Medical Center, patients are given a chance to reapply if they stay clean for six months. Marijuana is illegal under federal law.

Garon believes he contracted hepatitis by sharing needles with "speed freaks" as a teenager. In recent years, he said, pot has been the only drug he's used. In December, he was arrested for growing marijuana.

Garon, who has been hospitalized or in hospice care for two months straight, said he turned to the university hospital after Seattle's Harborview Medical Center told him he needed six months of abstinence.

The university also denied him, but said it would reconsider if he enrolled in a 60-day drug-treatment program. This week, at the urging of Garon's lawyer, the university's transplant team reconsidered anyway, but it stuck to its decision.

Dr. Brad Roter, the Seattle physician who authorized Garon's pot use for nausea, abdominal pain and to stimulate his appetite, said he did not know it would be such a hurdle if Garon were to need a transplant.

That's typically the case, said Peggy Stewart, a clinical social worker on the liver transplant team at UCLA who has researched the issue. "There needs to be some kind of national eligibility criteria," she said.

The patients "are trusting their physician to do the right thing. The physician prescribes marijuana, they take the marijuana, and they are shocked that this is now the end result," she said.

No one tracks how many patients are denied transplants over medical marijuana use.

Pro-marijuana groups

have cited a handful of cases, including at least two patient deaths, in Oregon and California, since the mid- to late 1990s, when states began adopting medical marijuana laws.

Many doctors agree that using marijuana — smoking it, especially — is out of the question post-transplant.

The drugs patients take to help their bodies accept a new organ increase the risk of aspergillosis, a frequently fatal infection caused by a common mold found in marijuana and tobacco.

But there's little information on whether using marijuana is a problem before the transplant, said Dr. Emily Blumberg, an infectious disease specialist who works with transplant patients at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital.

Further complicating matters, Blumberg said, is that some insurers require proof of abstinence, such as drug tests, before they'll agree to pay for transplants.

Dr. Jorge Reyes, a liver transplant surgeon at the UW Medical Center, said that while medical marijuana use isn't in itself a sign of substance abuse, it must be evaluated in the context of each patient.

"The concern is that patients who have been using it will not be able to stop," Reyes said.

Dale Gieringer, state coordinator for the California chapter of NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, scoffed at that notion.

"Everyone agrees that marijuana is the least habit-forming of all the recreational drugs, including alcohol," Gieringer said. "And unlike a lot of prescription medications, it's nontoxic to the liver."

Reyes and other UW officials declined to discuss Garon's case.

But Reyes said that in addition to medical concerns, transplant committees — which often include surgeons, social workers and nutritionists — must evaluate whether patients have the support and psychiatric health to cope with a complex post-operative regimen for the rest of their lives.

Garon, the lead singer for Nearly Dan, a Steely Dan cover-band, remains charged with manufacturing weed. He insists he was following the state law, which limits patients to a "60-day supply" but doesn't define that amount.

"He's just a fantastic musician, and he's a great guy," said his girlfriend, Leisa Bueno. "I wish there was something we could do legally. ... I'm going to miss him terribly if he passes."

■ **On the Net:** **United Network for Organ Sharing,** www.unos.org
Garon performing his song "Goodbye Baby," www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJDihYn_fJA

SKAGIT COUNTY *Serving with pride*

PUBLIC WORKSHOP NOTICE

WHAT: SKAGIT RIVER COMPREHENSIVE FLOOD HAZARD MANAGEMENT PLAN (CFHMP) UPDATE WORKSHOP #3

WHEN: MONDAY, MAY 5, 2008
4:00 pm - 7:15 pm

WHERE: SKAGIT ROOM (BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S HEARING ROOM) COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING AT 1800 CONTINENTAL PLACE, MOUNT VERNON, WA

WHO: APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THE FLOOD CONTROL ZONE DISTRICT TECHNICAL COMMITTEES & OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

PURPOSE: BRING TOGETHER SKAGIT COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL ZONE DISTRICT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO:

- Hear presentations about local efforts that directly involve flood hazard reduction or that relate to such efforts;
- Improve understanding of next steps forward in this CFHMP planning process;
- Plan for the next (#4) Technical Committees workshop and future educational meetings; and
- Conduct individual Technical Committee meetings to select a Chair, Vice Chair and three Representatives from each Technical Committee to the District Advisory Committee

Contact: Please direct any questions to Tom Karsh, Special Projects Administrator at (360) 419-3373 or email: tomk@co.skagit.wa.us.

Visit our web site @ www.skagitcounty.net

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