CIRCULATES IN THE HEART OF THE SCENIC COLUMBIA GORGE

The Skamania County Pioneer

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Ron Black courtesy photo | Skamania County Pioneer

A Silver Star SAR ELT team uses specialized equipment to find the simulated aircraft's Electronic Locator Transmitter beacon during a training exercise on Saturday, June 13.

Tri-County SAR teams conduct joint training exercise to enhance response readiness

By Ron Black
Special to The Pioneer

Search and Rescue volunteers from across Southwest Washington came together Saturday, June 13, for a large-scale joint training exercise designed to strengthen regional emergency response capabilities and improve coordination during complex incidents.

The Tri-County+ Mock Mission brought together 125 volunteers from Silver Star SAR, Skamania County Sheriff's Office SAR, Clark County Sheriff's Office SAR, Cowlitz County SAR, Volcano Rescue Team and Refuge Point First Responder Field Support.

Specialty resources included ground search teams, K9 teams, drone operators, mounted units, technical rope rescuers, e-moto bike searchers, communications specialists, aviation locator beacon teams, medical personnel and logistical support staff. Working within a realistic incident command structure, volunteers trained side-by-side in a simulated aircraft crash scenario requiring a rapid response, coordinated search, rescue, medical care and patient transport in day and night-

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Domestic violence is an epidemic

By Lisa Alexander
Special to The Pioneer

For many, Washington state is defined by its bustling tech hubs, coastal urban centers and lush landscapes. However, outside the urbanized Interstate-5 corridor, a quieter but far more sinister crisis is unfolding. In rural and isolated counties across the state, domestic violence (DV) is not just a prevalent issue, it is an epidemic.

Survivors living in these remote areas face a perfect storm of geographic isolation, lack of community resources and entrenched cultural norms that make escaping abuse far more complex than it is in urban areas.

Rural disparity: A deeper, deadlier threat

Data highlights a stark divide in domestic violence experiences based on geography. Studies indicate that women in small rural and isolated areas report intimate partner violence at higher rates (up to 22.9 percent) than those in urban populations (about 15.5 percent). Furthermore, these studies note that rural women experience significantly higher frequency and severity of physical abuse.

Tragically, this escalation manifests in intimate partner homicides. Rates of domestic violence-related fatalities – including homicides and abuser suicides – are disproportionately higher in rural and isolated communities, and are closely tied to factors such as poverty, isolation and gun availability.

The unique impacts and barriers for rural survivors

Escaping an abusive partner requires immense courage, but for rural survivors, the logistical barriers can feel insurmountable:

- **Geographic isolation:** Rural domestic violence programs often serve massive geographic areas. A survivor may live three times further away from the nearest advocacy center or shelter compared to an urban counterpart, with over a quarter of rural women living more than 40 miles from the closest program.

Lack of transportation: In rural counties, public transit is often nonexistent or highly limited. Fleeing without a personal vehicle, or relying on an abuser for transportation, effectively traps a survivor at home.

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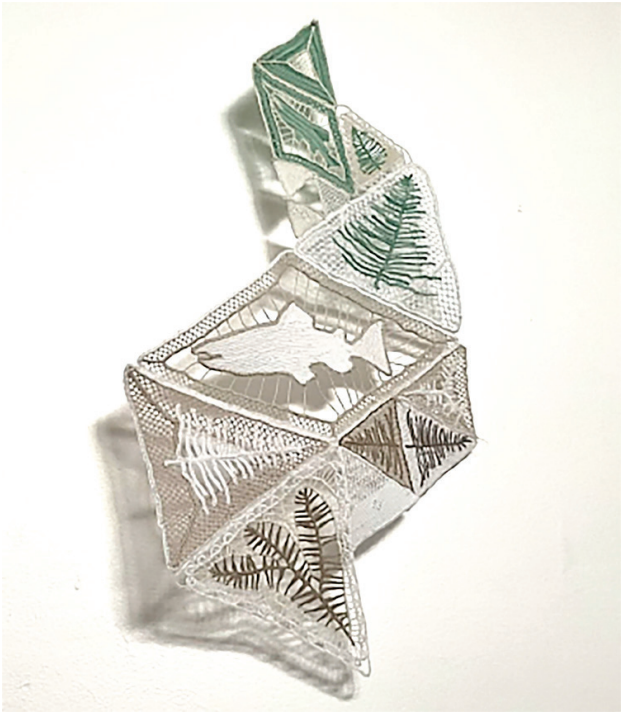
Lacing communities together at the Columbia Gorge Museum

The Columbia Gorge Museum recently announced its partnership with Australian lace artist Maggie Hensel-Brown in creating a large-scale, international community event in which they invite everyone to participate, no experience needed, just a desire to dive into the heritage artform of needle lace.

The Museum has evidence of handmade lace in its collections. While they have ample information about the makers of other objects, the stories of lacemakers are lost. This project hopes to engage community members in dialogues about their lace-making ancestors and keep this artistic technique relevant.

The project is taught via video and downloadable instructions created by Hensel-Brown exclusively for the Columbia Gorge Museum. The videos are accessible through the Museum's website or a quick YouTube search and will walk a viewer through the steps to make a lace triangle to contribute to the final large-scale installation. Simply go online to www.columbiagorgemuseum.org and hit the LACE PROJECT tab or on YouTube, search for Maggie Hensel-Brown or the Columbia Gorge Museum.



Columbia Gorge Museum courtesy photo | Skamania County Pioneer

Community lace makers are being asked by staff at the Columbia Gorge Museum to craft lace triangles that will later be joined together to make a large, community-crafted project to be displayed at the museum.

Also on the website are dates for free, in-person instruction at the libraries and museums, lectures, demonstrations and "sew together with the artist" events. Some events are at partner locations at Ft. Vancouver Regional libraries, The Dalles/Wasco County Library, the Hood River County Library, the History Museum of Hood River County and the Columbia Gorge Museum. Anyone may pick up a free kit or look around your home for the supplies you already have. Also contact the Portland Lace Society and the Lacemakers of Puget Sound.

Everyone is invited to

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News Briefs

County burn ban expands due to current conditions

Effective Tuesday, June 16, all small debris burn permits are no longer valid throughout the West End of Skamania County. Combined with the existing burn ban already in effect in the East End of the County, this action places all of Skamania County under a small debris burn ban.

In West County only, recreational fires that meet the Skamania County Minimum Fire Pit Standards will continue to be allowed on lands regulated by Skamania County. However, these fires remain subject to immediate closure as fire danger conditions worsen throughout the season.

Recreational fires on State and Federal lands are not regulated by Skamania County. Please call before you burn: 1-800-323-BURN or visit burnportal.dnr.wa.gov for State lands burning information and www.fs.usda.gov/main/giffordpinchot/fire for Federal lands burning information.

Please be sure recreational fires are completely extinguished before leaving them unattended. Making smart, informed decisions and burning responsibly is the best way to prevent wildfires.

Source: Skamania County Community Development Department

Chamber to host member services overview

The Skamania County Chamber of Commerce is hosting a membership services overview session, 3 p.m., Tuesday, June 30, at the chamber office, 167 NW Second St., Stevenson.

This will be a practical session for all members to learn how to use chamber tools, services and promotion opportunities more effectively.

Learn how to promote your business through the chamber, understand newsletter and calendar submissions, keep up with deadlines and make the most of your member benefits.

Snacks and beverages will be provided.

Top register go online to skamaniacountychamberofcommerce.growthzoneapp.com/ap/r/d7376ba214a14b-7f881304917e15298d

Source: Skamania County Chamber of Commerce

AMERICA 250

America250 celebration

Celebrate America 250 at the Stevenson Farmers Market 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, July 4, Public reading of the Declaration of Independence, festive and patriotic music, apple pie giveaways, all your favorite market vendors and more located at 140 SW Cascade Ave., in Stevenson.

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This day in history

1717	1st Masonic Grand Lodge formed in London.
1812	Napoleon's Grande Armée invades Russia.
1993	Unabomber mail bomb injures Yale professor
1997	U.S. Air Force report dismisses claims of an alien spacecraft crash in Roswell, NW.