

AREA NEWS

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SUBMIT STORY IDEAS
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MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY



Roger Werth / The Daily News

AmeriCorps volunteers Kelsey Hanson, right, Jill Sitton and Gary Gray load cleaning supplies after a day of work at the Woodland Community Service Center. Volunteers heeded the call of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to help others during a national day of service.

Bringing the dream to Woodland

By Tony Lystra
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Dozens of volunteers scoured and scrubbed a Woodland food and clothing bank Monday to commemorate the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

Throughout the day volunteers cleaned the Woodland Community Service Center, which serves between 900 and 1,000 families each week. They stacked boxes, wiped down walls, mopped floors organized shelves.

The AmeriCorps project was part of a national "day of service" to celebrate Martin

"We wanted to make an impact on a small, local community, and we did."

— Sarah Clark, AmeriCorps volunteer

Luther King Jr. Day. Schools, churches, charities and businesses took on similar projects across the U.S. to mark the holiday, organizers said.

Sarah Clark, a 23-year-old AmeriCorps volunteer from Woodland, said local volunteers were particularly inspired by one King

quote: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

"We wanted to make an impact on a small, local community, and we did," Clark said.

In all, she said, 32 AmeriCorps workers and 14 other volunteers from the community participated.

"They cleaned every square inch of this place," said Tereasa Wentworth, the center's assistant director.

And it needed it, she said. Throughout the year, the center's volunteers are so busy handling food and clothing that there's little time for cleaning, she said.

Shots fired at train in Kelso ; no injuries

Witness reported seeing laser targeting device, muzzle flash

By Tony Lystra
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A man with a rifle shot at a moving Burlington Northern Santa Fe train in Kelso on Sunday night, police said.

Kelso police Sgt. Damon Blain said it was unclear whether the train was hit. No one was injured.

An employee at the BNSF switching yard at 3001 Talley Way, Kelso, called police around 11:25 p.m. Sunday, saying she saw the man leaning over the hood of a pickup with a rifle. The employee said she saw what appeared to be a red-laser target beam from the rifle's scope and that she saw a muzzle flash.

The unidentified rifleman

was gone by the time police arrived, Blain said. He was last seen driving a light-colored pickup, possibly a 1996 or 1997 Ford four-wheel-drive crew cab with a lift kit, westbound on Tennant Way.

Blain described the shooter as a white male wearing a "hunter-orange" sweatshirt. The witness was unable to provide more de-

tail, he said.

It was unclear whether the shooter was alone, Blain said. A dispatch report said the southbound train was pulling tanker cars, but it was unclear what cargo they were carrying.

People have shot at trains passing through the area before, but it hasn't happened for several years, Blain said.

Tips about the shooting can be provided anonymously to Crime Stoppers at 360-577-1206.

Sunnyside mother is living her worst nightmare

Washington woman fears her teen daughter, missing for a year, is trapped in sex trafficking

By Ross Courtney
THE YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

SUNNYSIDE, Wash. — Neatly stored in a closet of her one-bedroom apartment, Maria Mojica keeps school supplies, clothing and crafts ready and waiting for her daughter Jessica Estrada.

"They've been there for a year. On Jan. 13, 2011, the teenager cried after getting a mysterious phone call, pushed past Mojica and hopped a fence into missing-child reports and her mother's darkest fears.

Mojica admits she doesn't know for sure, but she suspects Jessica, now 14, is caught up in the sinister world of teen prostitution. A history of dating older gang members, sightings with men near Yakima motels, social media pictures in which she looks pregnant — all inconclusive clues of her daughter's life.

"It's like I'm missing half of my heart," she said.



Ross Courtney / Yakima Herald-Republic

Maria Mojica teases up Jan. 12 as she shows a visitor how she stores the shoes, clothes and school supplies of her daughter, Jessica Estrada.

Sunnyside police call the girl a runaway and have no concrete evidence otherwise.

"At this point, anything is possible," said Chris Sparks, the Sunnyside police officer leading the search.

But if Mojica's fears are true, Jessica is part of a sad tale that state officials, police, child welfare officials and society at large are just beginning to grasp — children are bought and traded for sex, and they can't get

out. Making things worse, the welfare and justice system in many ways categorizes them as criminals.

"They're victims, first and foremost," said Suzi Carpino, a sex trafficking case manager for Sunnyside's Promise, a nonprofit youth organization trying to help Mojica and families like hers.

Advocates, such as Carpino, say a new awareness is taking hold, but there's a long way to go.

Congress is now debating whether to reauthorize the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, a 2000 law that made human trafficking a federal crime.

Part of the delay has been difficulty quantifying the problem.

The federal government calls human trafficking a \$32 billion global industry, tied with arms dealing for second behind the drug trade. It includes forced or coerced labor, as well as anywhere from 100,000 to 300,000 children at risk of sexual exploitation in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, but anti-trafficking advocates are known to criticize even those figures as either over- or under-estimated.

No statistics have been compiled for Washington, though a 2008 city of Seattle Human Services report estimated that between 300 to 500 children in King County were involved with prostitution, based on records from juvenile court and social service cases.

New resources for victims have opened, including a long-term residential recovery home in Seattle.

State laws that took effect in 2008 increased penalties for pimps and johns, and this year lawmakers

Memorial fund set for Rainier logger

A memorial fund has been established for Michael G. Earlywine, a lifelong Rainier resident who died in a Jan. 6 logging accident. Donations can be made at the Rainier Branch of Bank of America.

A memorial gathering and potluck for Earlywine, 44, will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Rainier Eagles. Earlywine is survived by his wife, Brandy, two daughters and a son.

Tsunami debris advisory meetings postponed

Pacific County emergency management officials have postponed three public presentations about marine debris from the March tsunami in Japan.

A press release issued Monday did not disclose why the meetings were postponed.

A revised meeting schedule will be published as soon as new meeting dates are set, according to the press release.

The meetings were to discuss possible hazards posed by the tsunami debris as it is carried by currents and winds across the Pacific Ocean to the Northwest Coast. Although small, light objects are expected to wash ashore soon, experts forecast that the major landfall of the debris is still a year off.

Meetings had been slated for tonight in Seaview, Wednesday in Ocean Park and Thursday in Tokeland.

— The Daily News

Ceremony will honor La Center basketball player

A La Center boy who died last week after collapsing during basketball practice will be honored before his team's season opener Thursday, school district officials said.

Cody Sherrill died Jan. 9 at Randall Children's Hospital at Legacy Emanuel in Portland, six days after he suffered sudden cardiac arrest at the end of La Center Middle School's first practice of the season. Sherrill was 14.

The La Center Middle School basketball team will honor Sherrill during a ceremony at 4:30 p.m. Thursday. The team will play Hoodstock Middle School immediately afterward.

A memorial service for Sherrill is scheduled for 1 p.m. Saturday at Ridgefield Nazarene Church, 747 Pioneer St.

— The Vancouver Columbian

State's lawmakers want to ban underage sex ads

OLYMPIA — Washington state lawmakers are introducing legislation that would require classified advertising companies to attempt to verify the age of escort listings in sex-related postings.

The bill was one of a dozen introduced Monday in the Senate seeking to curb sex trafficking.

Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, D-Seattle, said she hopes the bill would compel online clearinghouse Backpage.com to require proof of age for those depicted in escort advertisements on its site. The Seattle Police Department has linked 22 cases of child prostitution to girls who were advertised as escorts on Backpage.com, a subsidiary of Village Voice Media, which also owns Seattle Weekly.

Village Voice Media attorney Steve Suskin said the bill would violate federal law, which enforces website operators aren't liable for the speech of unaffiliated parties.

— The Associated Press

Nightmare / B2

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