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Improvements to patient care discussed in meeting

Front Page Main

BY GREG HITCHCOCK OF THE MINER 05/01/2024 06:00 AM



NEWPORT – Chief of Medical Staff Dr. Jeremy Lewis applauded the success of a new service in the Newport clinic – Express Care – during a Newport Hospital & Health Services Board of Commissioners met Thursday.

Express Care was established for non-emergent, walk-in visits, so there is no appointment required.

Newport Hospital and Health Services kicked it off last Fall, but it’s been growing ever since, Lewis said. He also said it will be good to extend Saturday hours when the hospital hires another physician assistant.

Express Care was created in response to the community’s request for urgent care services, recognizing a gap in access to urgent, non-emergent services.

“Initially, we were able to staff the services with existing providers until we hired Eric Renk,” said Jenny Smith, Director of Strategy & Community Engagement.

Renk is the primary Express Care provider at Newport Health Center and provides back-up support to the Emergency Department when requested for acuity or high-volume Emergency Department visits.

Smith said this is especially helpful since the Emergency Department is on track to exceed 10,000 patient visits this year.

“Having an Express Care service allows the District to keep emergency beds available for true medical emergencies and provide convenient walkin care to the community at Newport Health Center,” she said.

Express Care is open to anyone, regardless of insurance or if they receive primary care services with Newport Health Center.

Appropriate Express Care visits include back pain, earaches, minor burns, moderate fever, rashes, and other ailments. For more information, see www.newporthospitalandhealth.org/service/express-care.

Smith said the hospital is currently in the process of recruiting another physician assistant for this service. “Once we hire that provider, we should be able to expand hours on Saturdays,” she said.

In other news, the Patient & Family Advisory Council was approved by the board that will offer community engagement opportunities for hospitals to hear from patients.

Adults and high school students are invited to join the advisory council.

“This will provide diverse experiences and opportunities for all Pend Oreille River Valley communities,” Chief Executive Officer Merry-Ann Keane said.


According to their announcement, a volunteer patient or family advisor will be partnering with other patients and family members, health care providers, and staff to communicate patient and family concerns and help with problem solving, with the goal of improving the patient experience.


“The council will improve patient satisfaction and be a springboard for ideas. This will make for a dynamic council,” Keane said.

For more information, visit www.newporthospitalandhealth.org/pfac/.

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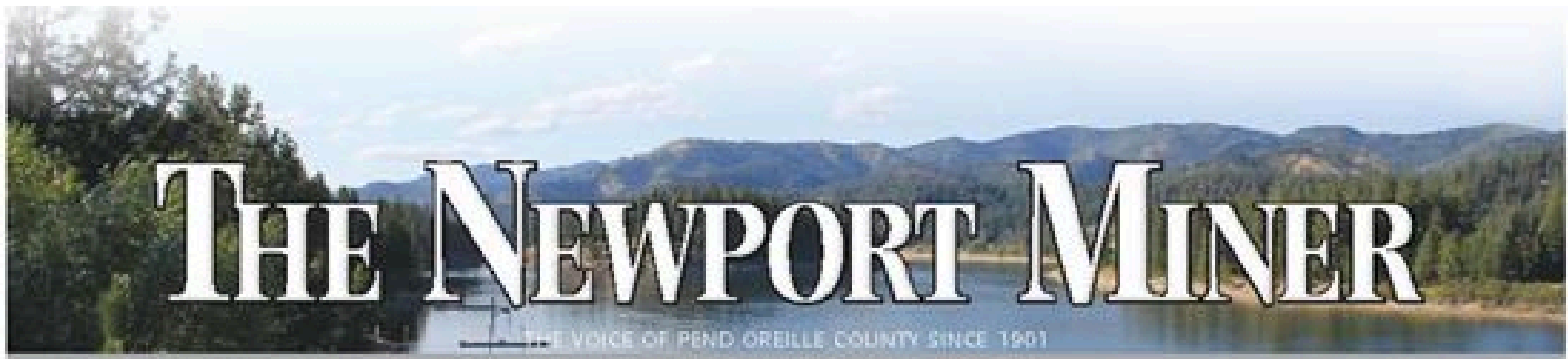




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Gentle, Smiley, Moody leading in Pend Oreille County election

BY MICHELLE NEEDVED
OF THE MINER

NEWPORT — Initial vote tallies in Pend Oreille County show that incumbent county commissioners Brian Smiley and John Gentle are leading, as is Troy Moody, who is running against incumbent Pend Oreille PUD Commissioner Joe Onley.

In other contested races, Lisa Malpass Childress is leading for Superior Court Judge in Pend Oreille County and district wide. The position is for the tri-county area of Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille County. Malpass is leading 64.32% to 35.04%, or 6,142 to 3,351.

Brian Smiley is leading for Pend Oreille County commissioner, District 3, with 64.62% of the vote, compared to 33.64% for challenger Kevin Young, or 4,555 to 2,371.

Gentle is leading for Pend Oreille County commissioner, District 1, with 62.52% to Steve Haroldson Minnich's 35.78%, or 4,452 to 2,348.

Moody is leading over Onley 59.01% to 40.3%, or 4,141 to 2,828.

For State Representative, District 7 Position 1, Andrew Engell is leading 59.31% to 39.62% over Bob Ing-Moody, or



Pend Oreille County elections workers pick up ballots at the drop box in Newport Tuesday morning, Nov. 5. The box will be emptied again at 8 p.m. Tuesday night but those ballots won't be processed that day.

13,870 to 9,265.

For Position 2, Hunter Abell is beating Rocky Dean, 16,666 to 8,063, or 67.31% to 32.565. Dean is a Democrat. Abell, Engell and Ing-Moody are all

Republicans, as are all four Pend Oreille County commissioner candidates. Judges and PUD commissioners are non-partisan.

Fire Protection District No. 4's EMS levy is failing.

It needs a 60% super majority to pass, and is receiving 51.35% of the vote, or 495-469.

Fire Protection District No. 5's lid levy lift is failing, with 45.95% in favor

and 54.05% against.

Sacheen Water and Sewer District's excess levy is passing with 65.33% of the vote in favor, or 130-69 votes. Votes will continued to

be counted for the next few days. Any ballots dropped in a drop box by 8 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 5 will be counted, as well as any ballots post marked by Nov. 5.

The slow unraveling of a quick mind

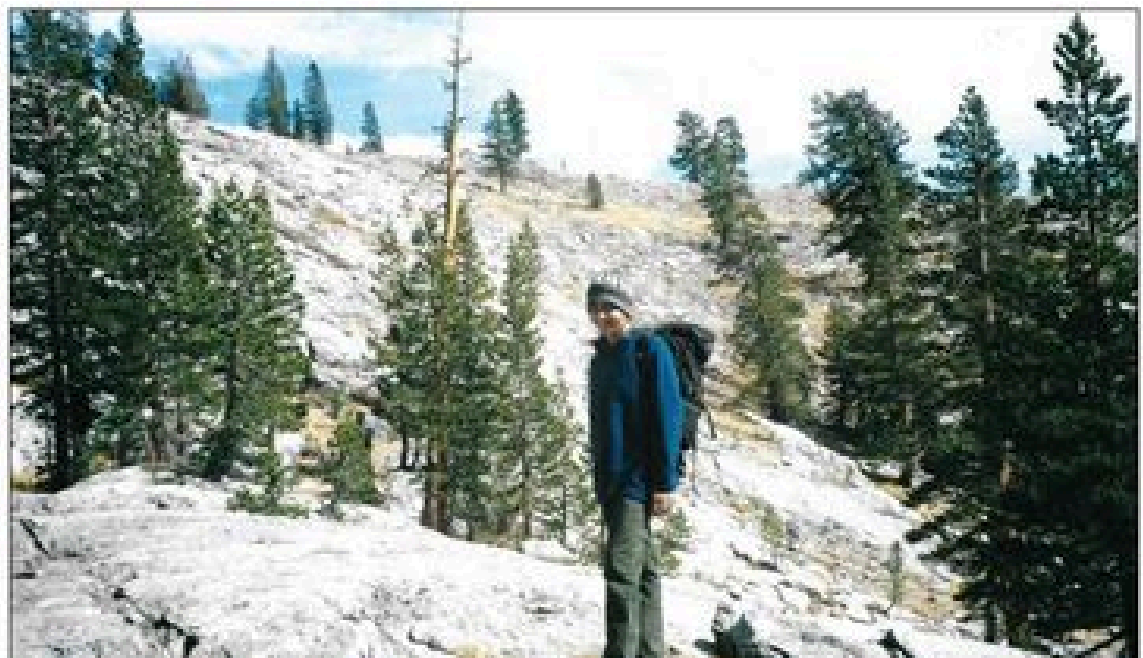
BY AMMI MIDSTOKKE
FOR THE MINER

Editor's note: This was first published in The Spokesman-Review Sunday, Nov. 2. It is reprinted here with the permission of the author.

On the night of December 30th, 2023, Eva Masin crawled out of bed, crept silently out the back door of her home, and disappeared into the freezing night. The only trace she left was the soft imprint of her bare feet in the frost of the quiet Missoula alley. They were heading toward the river.

Masin's husband, Dave Prather sits in a well-worn chair in his living room, the long hair of his organic farming days trimmed to the docility of middle-age. The bookshelves are stuffed with titles from botany manuals to Tom Robbins novels. A guitar hangs on the wall. The air smells of herbs and teas. These, along with children's art and flourishing plants, are the domestic remnants of the woman who once lived here.

The last time Prather saw his wife, it appeared she was sleeping soundly. Yet in the weeks, days, and hours prior to that, Masin, 43, who had recently been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, was struggling to mitigate



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melodic voice and gardening skills that Masin inherited, along with her father's analytical mind. She was drawn to plants and nature, studied at Evergreen in Washington, travelled to South America and Europe, and hiked most of the Northwest.

Masin pursued a career in forestry, becoming a writer and editor for the US Forest Service. Her marriage

proved, was the foundation of their idyllic family and the life they built near the Mission Mountains before moving to Missoula.

For much of that life, Masin was also one of my closest friends. Her soft chuckle was the soundtrack to many of my youthful memories. In our letters and visits over the decades, there were few hints: A reference to

cope better with stress, a propensity to feel depressed in winter.

Yet none of that explained why Masin would walk away from her home, husband, and children in the middle of a winter night.

SEE MASIN, 2A



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