

# Kitsap Sun

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RECREATION

## 'Something ... everybody can use'

Jonathan Buesch, treasurer of the Illahee Preserve Stewardship Committee and an East Bremerton Rotarian, stands inside the shelter being built inside the 572-acre forested park.

### Illahhee Preserve getting \$35K shelter

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EAST BREMERTON - For the first time, visitors to the more than 500-acre Illahee Preserve will soon have a place to take cover. Stewards at the county heritage park are wrapping up work on a \$35,000 log cabin shelter, which will greet visitors entering its more than five miles of trails via its parking lot on Almira Drive. "This is something that anybody and everybody can use," said Jon Buesch, treasurer of the Illahee Forest Preserve organization. "I can't think of some-

one who won't be able to find a way to enjoy it." The shelter is the latest in a number of improvements made at the preserve in the past decade, thanks in no small part to a partnership with the East Bremerton Rotary club. Parking, trail maintenance and stormwater systems have been upgraded. A 32-year member of Rotary, Buesch helped spearhead efforts to clean it up following years as a

See SHELTER, Page 4A



PHOTOS BY LARRY STEAGALL / KITSAP SUN  
David Church, of Bremerton, stretches before beginning a trail run in the Illahee Preserve on Monday. Under construction behind Church is the new shelter being built at the preserve, with help from the East Bremerton Rotary club.

## City settles suit with cyclist over crash

### Woman injured on Port Orchard road

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PORT ORCHARD - The city of Port Orchard settled a lawsuit for \$55,000 brought by a woman who was seriously injured in 2009 when she crashed her bicycle while riding down the steep, uneven slopes of Sidney Avenue.

It marks the end of a lawsuit that survived dismissal and may become central to lawsuits involving bicycle crashes outside Kitsap County, as it was cited recently in a high-profile claim against the city of Seattle and Sound Transit for a May 2016 fatal bicycle crash.

Pamela K. O'Neill, 56, sustained a punctured lung and a broken collarbone in the July 17, 2009, midday wreck on the steep, uneven road that leads from the county courthouse to Bay Street. She and her attorney, Anthony Otto of Port Orchard, argued the crash was caused by defects in the steep roadway, which is made up of sections of concrete which have shifted, leaving exposed cracks.

As she descended the hill toward Bay Street at about 3 p.m., O'Neill had moved to the side of the road to allow motor traffic to pass her, according to her account of the wreck. She was thrown over the handlebars of her older model Cannondale hybrid bicycle after her front tire dropped into a groove between the concrete slabs and she tumbled down the incline. She was wearing a helmet.

Otto contended that city records showed there had been no substantive repair of the road since the '60s, and it appeared to have been last paved in the '40s.

"But for the poor repair of this roadway, this crash would not have happened," Otto wrote in the 2012 complaint to the city.

Otto said he and O'Neill were satisfied with the resolution of the case, which was finalized last Tuesday.

"I would still like them to fix that darn part of the road," Otto said.

However, Mayor Rob Putansuu said the city has no immediate plans to do anything to the roadway, saying it is a very steep section of road and regrading it would be expensive, if not also impractical given the city's limited resources.

"I see commuters and all kinds of people using that road, but you need to be careful, and there are signs to that effect," Putansuu said.

Patrick McMahon, the city's attorney in the case, said the agreement contains no admission of liability for the city.

A jury trial had been scheduled for August and McMahon said he was preparing. However, considering the initial complaint included a request for \$164,000 and given the risk of going to trial, McMahon said the wise move was to settle.

"Our position all along was she was going to have a difficult time proving the streets are what caused her fall," McMahon said.

See CYCLIST, Page 4A

EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

## Poulsbo teacher wins national volunteer award

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POULSBO - From the top of Hurricane Ridge, on a clear night, you can see the universe.

And John Goar will be happy to tell you about it.

Goar, a science teacher at North Kitsap High School, is the recipient of a National Park Service award for leading "night sky tours" and other volunteer work in Olympic National Park.

"It kind of was unexpected, I mean I'm



Goar

honored to represent the volunteers all over America," Goar said. "To be singled out, it's really quite an honor."

Goar leads hikes to the top of Hurricane Ridge, where on a clear night — using a telescope Goar and his class crafted as part of a project at Kingston Middle School — attendees can view the Milky Way, Andromeda Galaxy, and other "dark sky objects."

In eight years since the program

started, Goar has led more than 6,500 people on tours. He also runs an astronomy club at North Kitsap High.

Goar moved to Kitsap in 1999 to teach at Kingston Middle School. To help prepare for a section on astronomy, he sought out the Olympic Astronomical Society and quickly became hooked.

After being turned away as a volunteer at Bryce Canyon Park in Utah, he decided to start his own night sky program. While not a designated "dark sky park," Olympic National Park is still 95 percent wilderness and offered an excellent op-

### Night sky tours

For information about the night sky tours led by John Goar at Hurricane Ridge, visit [www.olympictelescope.com](http://www.olympictelescope.com)

portunity for star-gazing.

"He's enthusiastic, he's sort of unquenchable that way," said Janice Burger, a park ranger and Goar's supervisor at Hurricane Ridge. Burger nominated Goar for the award.

See TEACHER, Page 4A

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**10A**

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