



Women's prison hosts holiday event in Belfair
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CANDY CANE ARTWORK



Journal photo by Shawna Whelan

CHOICE High School junior Carrie Hansen paints a candy cane on the face of Caleb Newton, 6, on Dec. 13 at the **CHOICE** winter carnival. For more photos of the event, see pages B-16 and B-17.

Council race draws at least 14

All 4 positions draw at least 3 candidates

By GORDON WEEKS
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The four open seats on what will become the seven-member Shelton City Council have drawn at least 14 candidates.

That's the number that was available as the *Journal* went to press Wednesday morning, hours before the three-day filing period ended at the Mason County Auditor's Office.

All four open positions attracted at least four three candidates for the Feb. 13 primary. The top two vote-getters in each race will face off on the April 24 ballot.

The four positions opened up when Shelton voters passed a resolution Nov. 7 to change the city government from a three-person commission — the last one in the state — to a seven-member city council.

see **COUNCIL**, page A-21

Community Lifeline: Providing shelter from the cold

By GORDON WEEKS
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For the past decade, James Taylor has spent his days on the streets of downtown Shelton. He seeks food at The Saints' Pantry food bank and clothing at the Sunrise Outreach clothing bank.

Taylor occasionally drums up some odd jobs, digging ditches or doing yard work. Some nights he's camped in the woods outside town; some nights he sleeps on a friend's couch.

Then comes November. "It gets cold and it rains all the time," said Taylor, 43. "You're continually wet and cold."

The dampness permeates everything. "In December, you're sleeping in a tent full of mold," he said.

For 13 years, Chris Groome has also spent his days on Shelton's streets. He makes some of the same stops: The Saints' Pantry, the free meals that Community Lifeline offers at the former Parish Hall. A Shelton resident since age 5, Groome said crystal meth abuse put him on the streets.

"We need a place we can come to every night no matter what the temperature is," said Groome, 33. "You get out there, it's 46 degrees and raining, you're cold."

On a rainy night on Monday, with temperatures expected to drop to 38 degrees, Taylor and Groome were among the 26 people who spent the night at the Community Lifeline cold-weather shelter at 218 N. Third St. in Shelton. The men and women



Journal photo by Gordon Weeks

James Taylor has lived on the streets of Shelton for 10 years. On Monday, he was one of 26 people who spent the night at Community Lifeline's cold-weather shelter at 218 N. Third St.

ranged in age from 19 into their 70s.

In October, a hearings examiner ruled that Community Lifeline can open the shelter to people on any night from Nov. 1 through April 30, and not just when the wind-chill factor drops to 35 degrees or below during that period.

It's been open every night since Nov. 1, and will be so until at least Feb. 1. After that, funding will dictate when the

doors open.

An average of 27 people have stayed each night in the past six weeks, said Community Lifeline executive director Barbra Weza. Only once have all 35 beds been full, on a frigid day last week when temperatures dropped into the 20s, she said.

see **SHELTER**, page A-29

County passes \$59.6M budget

By MICHAEL HEINBACH
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It appeared that few were satisfied with the final result after the Board of Mason County Commissioners passed a 2018 county budget Tuesday morning following a public hearing in commission chambers in downtown Shelton.

Despite the concerns voiced by four administrators of the Mason County Sheriff's Office, Commissioner Randy Neatherlin's accusations of

see **BUDGET**, page A-24

INSIDE TODAY

Jail contract talk pushes back city budget discussion
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Shelton superintendent weighs in on proposed HS
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North Kitsap takes on North Mason boys hoops
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Journal photos by Gordon Weeks

Chris Groome, a Shelton resident since age 5, said his crystal meth use put him on the streets of Shelton the past 13 years.

Shelter: Foundation provides \$50,000 donation

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The average age of patrons is about 55 years old, but the shelter employees and volunteers are seeing more people in the 40-to-70-year age range, Weza said. Some are seniors who have been priced out of their homes, she said.

"That's huge," she said "You can't have a 70-year-old on the streets."

At the community meals and showers at the shelter, patrons are encouraged to stay the night.

After dinner, guests can sign in early and help with tasks, including busing and wiping tables, vacuuming, taking out the garbage and cleaning restrooms. Everyone else is allowed in at 8 p.m. They must be out the door by 8 the next morning.

THE PATRONS

Lyn DeVore said she always volunteers to clean.

"I want to repay for the roof over our heads, and the food I eat," said DeVore, 60. "That's important to me."

DeVore spent Monday night at the shelter. During the day, she tries to stay warm at Safeway and the Shelton Timberland Library.

DeVore said she spent her first night at the shelter in February. She said she fled a California sheriff who was responsible for the death of her son, and returned to Shelton, where she had lived from 2000 to 2008.

DeVore said she had never been homeless before. "It terrified me."

But, "The people who are here are kind and compassionate. ... It's like a family," she said.

Also, "It's a roof over your head," she said. "You're warm. You're fed."

Taylor said he's spent about half his nights since Nov. 1 at the shelter. The Seattle native said a job remodeling Alderbrook Resort in 2004 brought him to Mason County. His girlfriend died seven years ago.

"It was one hardship after another, and it went down the tubes," he said.

Taylor added, "It's hard to get back in the swing of things when you're living on the streets."

The men sleep downstairs.

"Some wake up in the night screaming," Taylor said. "Some talk to themselves. It makes it tough to get sleep."

Groome said the worst part about staying at the shelter is thievery — someone stole his ciga-



Lyn DeVore said she has never been homeless before February, when she spent her first night at Community Lifeline's cold-weather shelter. "It terrified me," she said.

rettes.

"The best is having one place to be able to sleep, where it's warm and safe," he said.

THE STAFF

Community Lifeline has a staff of 10 men and women.

Volunteer Kevin Voss was on duty Monday night. He checked in guests between 8 and 10 p.m. The only exceptions after that hour are people brought in by police, he said.

Everyone gets the chance to shower. There is no TV to watch, but guests play cards. The lights go out at 10 p.m.

On Monday night, lifelong Shelton resident Rodney Thurnan was patrolling the grounds. The 12-year military veteran, who had two tours of duty in Iraq, was hired six weeks ago.

Thurnan said he makes hourly walk-throughs, and makes sure the women are upstairs, the men downstairs.

"It's like night duty," he said.

THE GRANT

This week, Community Lifeline received a \$50,000 donation from the Simpson Family Foundation for renovations and preservation of the building, which is on the historic register.

The donation will enable the shelter to expand the number of beds for women from eight to 20, Weza said. Showers will be added.

"They've been longtime supporters," Weza said of the foundation.

Community Lifeline needs donations of money to help soaring utility bills. The water and garbage use has doubled since the shelter has been open nightly.

Community Lifeline can also use donations of toilet paper, paper towels, 13-gallon and 55-gallon garbage bags, light snacks such as individual cheese and crackers or peanut butter and crackers, coffee, hot chocolate, and Sunday breakfast food. People coming in wet and cold can use sweatshirts and sweatpants of all sizes.

For more information, call 360-462-4439.