

DEMON DRAFT PICK
Former DHS star Carver
Willis to play for 49ers 7A

'OLYMPICS OF BEER'
Ska's True Blonde
brings home the gold 3A

THE Durango HERALD

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ANTI-MASK INITIATIVE

Durango asks court to weigh in

City cites uncertainty, possible consequences if ordinance passes

BY CHRISTIAN BURNEY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

The city of Durango has requested a declaratory judgment from 6th Judicial District Court on whether an ordinance prohibiting active-duty law enforcement officers from concealing their identities can go to the ballot.

Facing tight deadlines to organize an election as required by the city charter, Durango City Council also directed the city manager to begin preparing for an election in case the court declares one is legal.

City Attorney Mark Morgan said the council is in a "quagmire." The legality of sending the ordinance to the ballot is unclear, but the charter requires an election within 90 days of certification, which occurred earlier this month. If the ordinance becomes law, it may be unenforceable under the Supremacy Clause, and the Trump administration could withhold federal funding.

The ordinance was proposed by the No Secret Police citizens initiative, which delivered more than 1,700 signatures in support to the city last month.

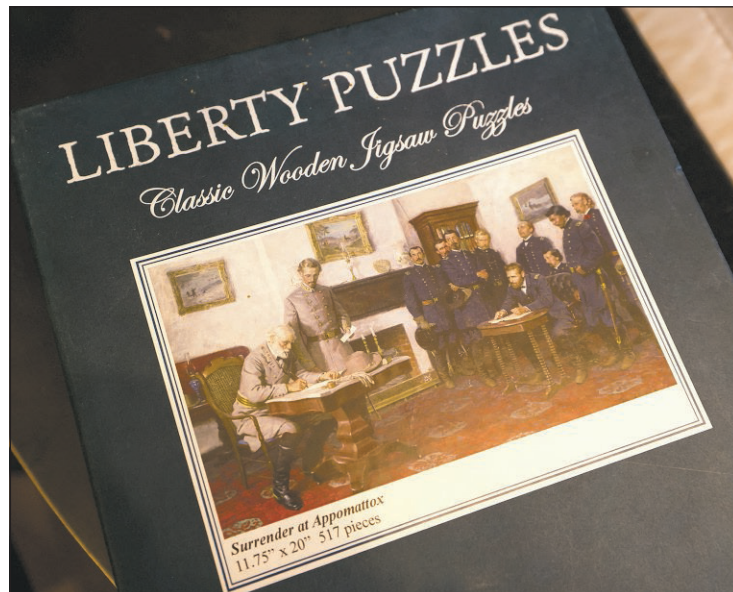
Under the city charter, City Council appeared to have just two options available to it once the petitions were certified earlier this month: adopt the ordinance as written or let voters decide in an election.

Now that the city is seeking judicial clarity about whether the ordinance can legally go to the ballot, whatever ruling a district judge makes could set a precedent for similar citizen initiatives in Durango and across the state.

Morgan said at a City Council meeting on Tuesday that state statute dictates citizen initiatives can pursue "legislative" ordinances but not "administrative" ordinances.

He said neither his office nor

See ANTI-MASK, 14A



Life, LIBERTY and PUZZLES

Durango hobbyists spend hours admiring, sharing wooden brainteasers



JERRY MCBRIDE/The Durango Herald photos

ABOVE: Kate Potemkin, left, and Yuri Potemkin assemble a wooden Liberty Puzzle at their home in Durango. The specialty puzzles have a cult following, with friends and acquaintances exchanging them within their networks. TOP: Liberty Puzzles are "works of art," Christina Landeryou said.

BY JESSICA BOWMAN
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Obsessive. Addictive. Maybe even a little dangerous.

Once Christina Landeryou starts, she can't stop. The puzzle has to be finished.

"If I start Saturday morning, I'll probably not do anything else until Sunday afternoon," she said.

Even if her back starts to ache from leaning over the table she'll keep going.

"It's probably the most concentrated time we have where everybody in the family isn't looking at their phone."

KATE POTEKIN
PUZZLE HOBBYIST

"That's the price you pay for having a Liberty puzzle obsession," she said. She's not the only Durango

resident obsessed with the wooden puzzles. Around town, small groups coordinate which ones to buy, passing them from

hand-to-hand to avoid repeats. Names are written inside the boxes. Completed puzzles travel from living room to living room, sometimes for years.

"It's an affliction," said Yuri Potemkin, another puzzle fan.

But this isn't about just any puzzle. The obsession centers on a specific kind: Liberty Puzzles.

The Boulder-based company makes intricate wooden puzzles with pieces engineered to interlock in unexpected ways

See PUZZLES, 14A

Shooting suspect aired grievances against Trump in writing

Man accused of attack at gala referred to himself as 'Friendly Federal Assassin'

BY ERIC TUCKER, ALANNA DURKIN RICHER AND MICHAEL BALSAMO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The man accused of opening fire at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner railed against Trump administration policies and referred to himself as a "Friendly Federal Assassin" in writings sent to family members minutes before the attack that authorities increasingly be-

lieve was politically motivated, according to a law enforcement official familiar with the investigation.

The writings, sent shortly before shots were fired Saturday night at the Washington Hilton, made repeated references to President Donald Trump without naming him directly and alluded to grievances over a range of administration actions and recent events, including U.S. strikes on drug smuggling boats in the eastern Pacific, the official said Sunday.

The official was not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Investigators are treating the writings, along with a trail of social media posts and inter-



ALEX BRANDON/Associated Press

Members of the U.S. Secret Service counter assault team stand on the stage after a shooting incident outside the ballroom during the White House Correspondents Dinner, Saturday in Washington.

views with family members, as some of the clearest evidence yet of the suspect's mindset and

possible motives. Authorities also uncovered what the official described as nu-

merous anti-Trump social media posts linked to the suspect, Cole Tomas Allen, a 31-year-old California man accused of trying to breach a security checkpoint at the dinner while armed with multiple weapons.

Suspect's brother reached out to Connecticut police

Allen's brother contacted police in New London, Connecticut, after receiving the writings, according to the official. In a statement, the New London Police Department said it was contacted at 10:49 p.m., about two hours after the shooting, by an individual who wanted to share information related to it. The police department said it then immediately

See SHOOTING, 14A

City, Region, State | 3A
Dear Abby | 13A
Opinion | 4A

Public Meetings | 2A
Puzzles & Funnies | 9A
Sports | 7A

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Today: A slight chance of snow showers, then a chance of thunderstorms. High 60 | Low 27. More weather | 13A

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