



Annual Overdose and Fentanyl Awareness Day remembers those lost
CLARK COUNTY, C1



High school football previews kick off with Camas, Seton Catholic
SPORTS, B1

The Columbian

WEEKEND EDITION

Saturday, August 23, 2025 | Serving Clark County, Washington | www.columbian.com

Strike to delay Evergreen's school year

Classified workers' walkout pushes classes to Sept. 2

By **BRIANNA MURSCHER**
The Columbian

Evergreen Public Schools' first day of school will be a week later than planned after classified

workers voted to strike. The school year will now begin Sept. 2, according to a Friday letter from Superintendent Christine Moloney to district employees and families. Members of the Evergreen Chapter of Public School Employees of Washington SEIU Local 1948 voted this week to strike beginning Tuesday, what would

have been the first day of school. The union's contract expires Aug. 30. "The board and I realize that delaying school is a major inconvenience, but we cannot conduct school safely without the staff represented by the union, including paraeducators, bus drivers, security officers

EVERGREEN, Page A2

La Center teachers union OKs strike; no date set

By **BRIANNA MURSCHER**
The Columbian

The La Center teachers union notified the school district Thursday that members voted to strike. But the union has not yet

announced a date. The district's first day of school is Wednesday. The La Center Education Association and the district reached agreements on all proposals except salary increases,

according to a Thursday letter to the community signed by the school board and Superintendent Peter Rosenkranz. Both parties disagree

LA CENTER, Page A2

FROM THE COAST TO CLARK COUNTY

Success with shellfish

Willapa Bay oyster farmer's 'regenerative' method easy on the ecosystem



Photos by **AMANDA COWAN**/The Columbian

Antony Barran of Willapa Wild in Oysterville demonstrates the basket method of growing and harvesting oysters Aug. 12. The method protects native plants including eelgrass, which sequesters carbon.

By **SHARI PHIEL** ■ The Columbian

OYSTERVILLE — Willapa Bay oyster farmer Antony Barran is changing the way oysters are farmed. For Barran, 58, it's not just about using sustainable farming methods.

"We like to refer to it as regenerative farming, which is one step beyond sustainable," Barran said. "Regenerative farming means you're actually bringing back some of the original native ecosystem."



Antony Barran traded suits for rubber boots when he left advertising to become an oyster farmer.

Barran and his wife own and operate Willapa Wild and Oysterville Sea Farms on the edge of Willapa Bay. The oysters they grow end up in seafood cases at New Seasons Markets in Vancouver, not only because of their distinctive flavor but because of the way they're harvested.

The Barrans' operation doesn't dredge to harvest as most oyster farms do.

"They take big steel cages, and they drag them along the bottom and they pick up all the oysters and anything else that's there," Barran said. "Dredging is a very efficient harvest method, ... but it tears up the entire ecosystem."

Along with the oysters, dredging pulls up any other shellfish or marine wildlife on the bed, as well as native plant species, including eelgrass, which has double the carbon sequestration rate of trees. After the harvest, the beds are replanted with juvenile oysters, which are left to grow until the next harvest.

OYSTERS, Page A4

COMMUNITY FUNDED JOURNALISM



Antony Barran of Willapa Wild holds a Pacific oyster grown in a SEAPA oyster basket at his farm in Oysterville on Aug. 12. Barran grows oysters in the baskets and then removes them from the lines when they're ready for harvest.

"We think a Willapa Bay oyster has a truly unique flavor profile and is really possibly one of the greatest tasting oysters in the world."

Antony Barran, Willapa Bay oyster farmer

COMMUNITY FUNDED JOURNALISM

Homeless numbers up 2% over 2023

Data: 5,100 people became homeless in county in 2024

By **MIA RYDER-MARKS**
The Columbian

About 5,100 people became newly homeless last year in Clark County, according to data released Friday.

A total of 8,894 people experienced some form of homelessness in Clark County in 2024, according to the annual report from Council for the Homeless. That's a 2 percent increase over 2023, when 8,752 people were homeless.

The recently released Council for the Homeless data is different from numbers gleaned from the annual Point-in-Time count, which is conducted under guidelines from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on a single day in January.

Council for the Homeless' annual report is more comprehensive. It compiles data from 44 organizations and tracks individuals. Leaders use the detailed information to assess how well homeless services are working and plan future services.

The new report found that certain populations were harder hit by homelessness:

- About 2,500 children are homeless, and 37 percent of those are younger than the age of 5.

- The number of older adults experiencing homelessness increased, with 1,219 seniors requesting shelter in 2024, up from 624 in 2023.

- People of color account for only 25 percent of Clark County's population but 43 percent of those who were homeless in 2024.

Contrary to the widely held belief that homeless people move here from out of state, most are from Clark County. The new data in-

HOMELESS, Page A2



Espalier trees to grow fruit in small spaces

HOME & GARDEN, E1



Check out scenes from Skamania County Fair

LIFE, D1



Craig Brown: High-speed rail could serve N.W.

OPINION, A12



103°/68°

Advice **D2, E2** Classifieds **F1** Obituaries **C4-5** Television **E5-7**
Books **D4** Comics **E4, inside** Puzzles **D2, E2, E3, E5, E7, F2** Weather **B6**

WEEKEND: \$5.00

© 2025, The Columbian

