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Local

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Second Pierce County child dies of the flu

BY STACIA GLENN stg@newstribune.com

Another child has died in Pierce County from flu-related complications, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department announced Thursday.

The child was between the ages of 10 and 15 and had no underlying health conditions. This is the second child and ninth person in the county to die of influenza during the 2019-2020 season.

The first flu-related death in Pierce County occurred in November and was a man in his 80s. The second victim was a child younger than 5 who died in late December.

The flu season typically extends through April. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache and fatigue. Children younger than 5 are at highest risk to develop flu-related complications, officials said. The virus is spread when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk.

Felons would regain their right to vote faster under bill

BY JAMES DREW jed@newstribune.com

A bill that would make about 9,000 felons eligible to vote is moving ahead in the Washington state Legislature, as Democratic senators vote to expand democracy by removing a barrier they say is rooted in systemic racism.

Senate bill 6228 would make felons automatically eligible to vote once they are released from state prisons. Under current law, they are eligible once they have completed community custody — formerly known as probation — and that can take several years.

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The very essence of community custody is to get people back on the right track, to reintegrate them into society and to reduce the chances of re-offending, said the bill's sponsor, state Sen. Patty Kuderer, a Bellevue Democrat. "Restoring the right to vote and the right

to participate in our democracy is an important tool for that reintegration process."

Stressing that her bill addresses a "major equality and social justice issue," Kuderer said black and Native Americans are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. As a result, they are "disproportionately stripped of their voting rights, diminishing their representation," she said.

A Senate committee on Friday approved the bill, putting it one step closer to a vote by the Democratic-controlled Senate. If it becomes law, the measure would take effect in 2021.

Senate GOP Leader Mark Schooner, of Richfield, is opposed to the bill, saying it removes an incentive for felons to fulfill obligations under community custody such as making restitution to crime victims. The bill states that sanctions for violating community custody requirements or failure to fulfill obligations under community custody such as making restitution to crime victims. The bill states that sanctions for violating community custody requirements or failure to fulfill obligations under community custody such as making restitution to crime victims.

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SEE BILL, 4A



Oakland High's tired, uninviting common area still has the same floor from its former use as an elementary school gymnasium. Principal John Jones hopes it will be among the renovations made in a face-lift if a \$535 million Tacoma School District bond passes in February. "This school is in really tough shape," said Jones. "It's antiquated."

Schools want \$535M bond for Oakland High renovations

BY ALIISON NEEDHAM alan@newstribune.com

Oakland High School in Tacoma is 100 years old, and it shows. Inside the building, the ceiling is darkened with leaks. Plumbing and electrical issues are not uncommon. There's no central air and no way to regulate temperature. Classrooms feel dingy and dark, lacking windows. Even for a high school

with only 162 students, the building seems small. "It was built as an elementary school, and so everything was built for elementary students," explained Lady Salamandra Panu, a sophomore at Oakland High School. A new future could be in store for the school. Located at 5319 S. Adams St., Oakland is one of eight schools listed for replacement as part of a Tacoma Public Schools' proposed bond measure on Feb. 11 special election ballot. Students and staff says

it has the potential to change the atmosphere of Oakland for the better. "At \$535 million, the Tacoma Public Schools general obligations bond proposes eight school replacements or renovations, in addition to safety and facility enhancements in schools district-wide. That ranges from HVAC replacements and ADA improvements to new security cameras and secure entrances with restricted access. The schools modified for

Proposed school replacements or renovations

- Bryant Montessori
- Downing Elementary
- Facett Elementary
- Hunt Middle School
- Lowell Elementary School
- Oakland High School
- Skyline Elementary
- Skyline Elementary

Will your school see any facility or security upgrades if the bond passes? Check out the map at tacoma.schools.org/voter/2020. replacement average 69 years in age. Oakland is the oldest, built in 1912. In the bond, TPS proposes a "historic modernization" for Oakland —

BY STACIA GLENN stg@newstribune.com

It's been two decades since Teekah Lewis went missing from a Tacoma bowling alley, but police have a new lead in the case.

On Thursday, cold case detective Theresa Lewis, believes her daughter is still alive and holds a candlelight vigil every year to honor Teekah on 1

specific man who was at the New Frontier Bowling Alley when 2-year-old Teekah disappeared Jan. 23, 1999. "He's described as white, 30 to 40 years old, with only brown hair, a mustache and pockmarks on his face."

"There was a person with a unique feature — pockmarks — described as being near Teekah or following Teekah around the time she disappeared,"

said Tacoma cold case detective Steve Reppelle. Reppelle was reviewing the case when he came across the description and realized the man had never been identified. "We're exhausting all possible leads."

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COMMENTARY

New SEA name for Sea-Tac Airport no big deal for Tacoma



BY MARY DISMICK mdismick@newstribune.com

Hot take alert: I don't care. Just don't. Not in the slightest, and you really shouldn't either. That's my big, grumpy Tacoma opinion on the "rebranding" kerfuffle that enveloped that airport roughly halfway between here and Seattle this week. Whatever we're calling it now.

As my colleague Debbie Cockfield reported Wednesday, there's a high-profile rebranding effort. After who knows how many meetings with consultants and probably some "townhalls" in the "digital

corporate branding space," a campaign has been launched to rebrand Sea-Tac Airport as simply "SEA." There's a slick new website (because of course), and a belief that the name change — and probably name importantly a host of experienced-related improvements — will make "SEA" a new era of customer-centered travel, according to the official news release. Technically, it's still Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, at least according to the small print. So what's the big deal? There isn't one. That's my point.

Oh, it's only it twice that easy. Predictably, the mudslingers really haven't stopped some here in Small Print Town from foisting embold or slighted. As the rebrand planning process was underway — again, whatever that entails — local officials and business booster types expressed fear that Tacoma would get left out. Whether they'll say it publicly or not, it's hard to imagine all of them love what the lengthy exercise came up with, and the free T-shirts probably haven't even arrived in the mail yet. Once the prominent new "SEA" logo was unveiled, Well, it didn't take a flight tutor to foresee an incoming torrent of righteous indignation from the south. Now, from your average, long-maligned Tacoman, I get it — at least a little. You can only get kicked so many times before becoming a growling dog, or at least a dog that sometimes gets on Twitter to howl off some steam. We've earned it, and then some. But when it comes to our more official section, I say

let's collectively aim for something more dignified and direct. SEA can have its branding, and those who know no better can ignore the small print and call the airport that from now until eternity. We can't need SEA's validation, and we certainly don't need to grovel and beg for respect from the Port of Seattle or the city's calls home. Don't want "TAC" in the name? Didn't that well? Think it will confuse travelers? Fine. Whatever. Wait until those travelers learn they're basically in Burien. OK, OK, admittedly, I'm walking a fine line here. There's not caring about an airport's rebranding, and then there's not caring so much you write a column about it — which just might be worthy of

some self-examination (beyond other time). Maybe I'm indifferent, like Taylor Swift when she sings a song about being indifferent, which is clearly something else, and probably doesn't count. Fair enough. But still. But still, I say, as Tacoma, we're really going to plead for respect? How many times are we going to bust out our second-fiddle act and play furiously for attention? How many times are we going to do this, when it fits right into the familiar narrative of us doing precisely this — which basically amounts to Tacoma desperately reminding everyone of its perceived place in a make-believe regional hierarchy. Let's just stop, for once, and be Tacoma. It's good enough.

Sure, we're a work in progress, just like anywhere else. Attracting travelers, talented people and new businesses is and will continue to be important. I'm not suggesting otherwise. But when it comes to living in Seattle's shadow? We only have to see it that way if we choose to, and I am we finally stop. Thankfully, there is good news to be had, even for those who will feel stung by the injustice of a callous, corporate rebranding. First, travelers are still going to travel, and Tacoma is still going to be here for them to discover upon arrival. Airport branding matters little, and I'll gladly take my chances. If Tacoma's not for them, so be it. Even more important? Let's remember no one actually likes going to the airport. So whatever it's called, we definitely have that going for us. Mary Dismick: 253-597-8657, @marydismick