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LIFE, D1

Young artists join symphony for weekend show

WEEKEND, INSIDE

Couve Couture takes fashion to new lengths

SAKURA FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 10TH YEAR

Photos by STEVEN LANE/The Columbian

Portland Taiko Drum Group performs Thursday at the 10th annual Clark College Sakura Festival.

Friendship blossoms at Clark

Event fetes Vancouver's ties with sister city in Japan

By SUSAN PARRISH
Columbian staff writer

Vancouver celebrated the 10th annual Sakura Festival at Clark College under deep blue skies and pale pink cherry blossoms Thursday afternoon.

The festival celebrates the fleeting beauty of the blossoms, the preciousness of life and a lasting bond between Vancouver and its sister city, Joyo, Japan.

On Earth Day in 1990, John Kageyama, president of America Kotobuki, presented 100 shirofugen cherry trees to the city of Vancouver. They were planted on the Clark College campus to commemorate Washington's centennial and to celebrate the friendship between Vancouver and Joyo.

SAKURA, *Page A2*

The Clark College Women's Ensemble performs "Sakura Matsuri" at the 10th annual Clark College Sakura Festival on Thursday.

CLARK COLLEGE SAKURA FESTIVAL

This year's celebration recognizes several milestones:

- 10th anniversary of Clark's sakura celebration.
- 20th anniversary of the Vancouver-Joyo, Japan sister city relationship.
- 25th anniversary of John Kageyama, president of America Kotobuki, donating 100 shirofugen cherry trees to the city of Vancouver. They were planted at Clark College.

Farmland eyed for industrial land bank

Owners hope to have 600 acres near B.G. rezoned by county

By KAITLIN GILLESPIE
Columbian staff writer

Clark County is considering applying a little-used planning designation that would take 600 acres of farmland out of production and set it aside for industrial use.

The family that owns both the Lagler Dairy and Ackerland properties, which total about 600 acres on either side of Highway 503 just south of Battle Ground, hopes to see the agricultural land converted into light industrial — think warehouses and distribution centers, not smoke stacks and large-scale manufacturing.

Supporters of the effort say it could encourage industry and build jobs in Clark County. Opponents, however, fear the proposal could harm agriculture and limit the availabil-

LAND, *Page A2*

Industrial land bank

Two of Clark County's largest farms could become industrial lots in the first application of the industrial land bank.

Obama signs Medicare-payments overhaul

Bipartisan legislation permanently changes how doctors are paid

By JIM KUHNHENN

achievement by Democrats and Republicans.

The bill overhauls a 1997 law that aimed to slow Medicare's growth by limiting reimbursements to doctors. Instead, doctors threatened to leave the

House Rose Garden. The Senate passed the bill two days ago; the House approved it in March.

Obama praised Republican House Speaker John Boehner and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi for negotiating the

OPINION, A6

Ruth Marcus: Debunking myths about Hillary Clinton's candidacy

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000664

Auditor

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U.S. District Court in Tacoma. He pleaded not guilty to 10 felony counts and, a magistrate judge set trial for June 8.

The most serious charge carries up to 20 years in prison. A felony conviction would automatically force him from office, and some lawmakers spoke about the possibility of impeaching him in light of the charges alone.

In a statement, Kelley said he was disappointed by the indictment and that he would take a temporary leave of absence beginning May 1, but that he was "determined to fight back."

"For the past few years, I have been the subject of an intense investigation by the federal government about my private business practices going back more than 10 years," he said. "I am very confident that I will be able to prove my innocence."

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee called on Kelley to resign, as did Attorney General Bob Ferguson.

"This indictment today makes it clear to me that Troy Kelley cannot continue as state auditor," Inslee said in a statement.

At his court appearance, Kelley appeared calm and said "Yes, your honor," in a clear voice when U.S. Magistrate Judge J. Richard Creatura asked if he understood the charges.

With no objection from prosecutors, Creatura allowed Kelley to go free on bond. He cannot travel outside Washington without notifying federal authorities.

At a news conference after his court hearing, Kelley read aloud the statement he had distributed before and took no questions.

TED S. WARREN/Associated Press

Washington state Auditor Troy Kelley leaves the Federal Courthouse in Tacoma on Thursday after pleading not guilty to charges in a federal grand jury indictment.

"I did not break the law," he said.

He then left while his criminal attorney, Mark N. Bartlett, a former top federal prosecutor, spoke about the allegations. Bartlett and Kelley's tax attorney, Robert N. McCallum, said the indictment charged Kelley with ducking taxes he was in the process of paying.

"This is a prosecution that is flawed both in execution and in conception," Bartlett said.

Speculation has been swirling around Kelley, a Democrat elected in 2012, since last month, when federal agents searched his home and subpoenaed the auditor's office for records concerning a longtime business associate who subsequently went to work for him at the state agency.

Days after the search, Kelley wrote a $447,000 check to the U.S. Treasury Department, noting in the subject line that it would cover future tax debts, the indictment said.

Kelley's company, Post Closing Department, worked with escrow and mortgage title companies to track real estate transactions. According to the indictment, it was supposed to collect up to $150 in advance as a fee for each transaction; keep $15 to $20 for its services; pay any government fees required; and then refund whatever portion remained. Instead, Kelley kept the money, the indictment said — an amount that totaled at least $3 million from 2006 to 2008.

"Contrary to his representations, Troy X. Kelley did not refund unused portions of reconveyance fees to borrowers, but instead fraudulently retained, stole, and converted them to his own use," the indictment said.

One of the escrow companies Kelley worked with, Old Republic Title, sued him in 2009. He eventually paid more than $1 million to settle the case.

Attempted obstruction of a civil lawsuit carries a maximum sentence of up to 20 years. Possession and concealment of stolen property carries up to 10 years. Kelley is also charged with corrupt interference with internal revenue laws.

Land

From Page A1

ity of local produce.

Converting land isn't as easy as redrawing Clark County's map, however, and it could be a year before the land is rezoned, community planner Gordy Euler said.

Under a rarely used provision of the Washington state Growth Management Act — born from the efforts of Clark County legislators and land-use attorney Steve Horenstein in 1996, counties can apply to de-designate resource lands that are more than 100 acres for other purposes.

Horenstein now represents the owners of the two properties. The Ackerland property, west of Highway 503 and north of Northeast 119th Street, is 223.72 acres, while the Lagler property opposite is 378.71 acres.

Dennis Lagler, a longtime dairy farmer in Clark County and member of the Tillamook County Creamery Association, plans to take his operation to Eastern Washington, where farming is easier, Horenstein said.

"(Dairies) just don't work well here," Horenstein said.

The county council will have to sign off on the proposal, and the state will have to approve the zoning change.

No developers have expressed an interest in the lots yet, but Euler called it an, "If you build it, they will come," situation.

"We're making the land available for industrial development," Euler said.

Farm advocates, including Warren Neth of Slow Food Southwest Washington, say Clark County needs to focus on protecting agriculture and providing more incentive for farmers to stay here, not trying to convert farmland into warehouses.

Neth said the farms are among the most productive in Clark County. They're both also far larger than the average Clark County farm, which is about 39 acres, according to the 2012 Agriculture Census.

"Clark County is a rapidly urbanizing county and part of an ever-expanding metropolitan area," Neth said. "We need to develop land use tools for property owners like the Laglers and Ackerlands, which would incentivize them to pass the land onto the next generation of Clark County farmers."

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Preschoolers enrolled in the Clark College Early Childhood program present their artwork at the 10th annual Clark College Sakura Festival on Thursday.

Photos by STEVEN LANE/The Columbian

Sakura

From Page A1

Their brief, two-week blooming season coincides with graduating students preparing to embark on new adventures, said Bob Knight, president of Clark College.

"They remind us to enjoy each day to the fullest," he said.

Kageyama traveled from Japan for the event. He explained that "shiro" means white and "fugen" means virtuous.

"It was my way of giving back to your people," he said about his gift of the cherry trees. "I am very pleased you are taking good care of the sakura. I never expected the trees (to be) so beautiful and big."

"We Japanese have had an affinity for cherry blossoms for centuries," said Hiroshi Furusawa, Portland consul general.

When the mild winter and early spring caused the trees to bloom about two weeks early this year, Knight said he was worried there wouldn't be any petals left on the trees for the festival.

Clark College student Erin Yamazaki, from Fukushima, Japan, and recipient of the Dr. Kanagawa Japanese Friendship Scholarship, speaks about the devastating 2011 earthquake that displaced 70,000 people in her region.

But light pink petals still clung to the trees in the Royce E. Pollard Friendship Garden.

"We have blossoms on the trees and petals on the ground," Knight said. "It looks like pink snow."

Erin Yamazaki, 21, a student from Fukushima, Japan, was recipient of the Dr. Kanagawa Japanese Friendship Scholarship presented by the Clark College Foundation. She arrived in Vancouver in September and has been studying English and political science at Clark College.

Wearing a kimono, Yamazaki spoke of the devastating 2011 earthquake that displaced 70,000 people in her region. Many are still living in temporary housing.

"I have never experienced such a traumatic event," she said.

She also spoke of the generosity demonstrated by volunteers from America and around the world.

Her own family was not displaced by the earthquake.

In three months, Yamazaki will return home to Utsunomiya University to continue her political science studies.

"I love Vancouver as much as I love my hometown," she said.

After the cherry blossom ceremony, people gathered inside Gaiser Hall to view Japanese cultural displays and munch on sakura cookies.

Abbie Horrocks, 24, sat at a table where a shogi, a Japanese board game played with tiles, was set up.

A 2009 Clark College graduate, Horrocks studied the Japanese language and belonged to the International Club at Clark. She recently returned from living in Japan for 18 months while teaching English classes as a missionary for the Mormon church.

"I'd been interested in Japanese since I was a young child," Horrocks said. "But when I came to Clark, it clicked."

As the Portland Taiko Drum Group prepared to take the stage, sakura blossoms wafted in a gentle breeze and carpeted the ground.

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Police: 5 found dead inside Phoenix home

PHOENIX (AP) — Five adults were found dead inside a north Phoenix home after a shooting Thursday in a suspected dispute about the family's business, police said.

The names and ages of the three men and two women weren't immediately released. But police said the three men were brothers and the dead women apparently were the men's mother and a spouse of one of the brothers.

Two other women and two children managed to escape the home unharmed, according to police.

One of those women told officers that the shooting stemmed from a family dispute, police spokesman Sgt.

"Our dispatcher could hear shots fired in the background while that call was coming in," Crump said. "A caller had been able to escape the home at that point, get out and start to give us information."

Crump said the family had origins in Morocco. During an hourslong standoff before the bodies were found, police used a megaphone to try to communicate with the occupants of the home, addressing the family in Arabic.

The Arizona Republic reported that one neighbor said the family owned a transportation service.

It wasn't immediately clear how many people fired shots, but police said they weren't looking for any

Medicare

From Page A1

will be paid in the future, by providing financial incentives for physicians to bill Medicare patients for their overall care, not individual office visits.

legislative antagonist.

Obama said he planned to hold a reception for lawmakers next week to salute them for their work. He said he wanted to sign the bill

That's a different scenario than federal officials and lawmakers described earlier this week, when Senate and House leaders were fending off 11th-hour