

Fall City NEIGHBORS

Volume 27, Issue 2
February 2024



The unpredictable swings in our February weather create challenges for the school district, King County Roads, local farmers, and for all of us who need to get to work. As we try to stay warm and dry we look to the relief of spring and plans for the coming year. In this month's issue we take a look at winter gardening tasks, the plans to fix the water quality problems in the Plum Creek neighborhood, why people used to drive backwards up Falls Hill Road, and so much more.

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February Highlights



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You are invited to donate to Fall City Neighbors to help us cover expenses of the coming year. Please make your check to "FCCA/Fall City Newsletter," and mail to: Fall City Neighbors Newsletter, P.O. Box 1064, Fall City, WA 98024.

EDITOR'S NOTE

It's been a tough, stressful month on the farm with the cold weather, wind, rain, and ice. But, like all of us hearty "rural folk" we persevere. Whether we work outdoors, in a cozy office, or out of the spare room in our house, we bundle up and face the adversity with dreams of spring and a hot coffee at our side. For gardeners and veggie farmers it is time to cuddle up with the new seed catalogs and begin planting those starts. For parents, signing up for summer camps and baseball teams has already begun. While the kids are hoping for just one more snow day.

February is kind of a quiet month around Fall City, but the planning for the spring town clean up, Fall City Day, the Graduates Parade, The Apple Festival and more is underway and all are looking for those who have made a New Year's resolution to become more involved in their community. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our little town. There is no better way to find unity and understanding among all of us, than to work for a common goal from which we all benefit, and we all can enjoy. So, while you ponder your future curled up by the fire, consider what you can do to help your community and what a wonderful example of kindness it is to pass along to our kids.

Stay warm!

—JIM HUTCHINS, editor

Fall City Neighbors, since 1998: Helping to build a caring and connected community of neighbors.

Fall City Neighbors is a monthly publication of the Fall City Community Association (www.fallcity.org) and is supported by local sponsors and donors. It is distributed free of charge to the community, available at the Fall City Library, Fall City Post Office (green box in front), Farmhouse Market, The Hauglie Building, the Raging River Cafe, and Aroma Coffee.

SUBMISSIONS: We encourage submissions, story suggestions and comments from our community. We are always looking for writers, reporters,

artists, photographers and idea people interested in volunteering for this publication.

STORY IDEAS, ARTICLES, SUGGESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR TO SUBMIT/REQUEST A BUSINESS PROFILE: James Hutchins, Editor, e-mail: editor@fallcity.org or mail to Fall City Neighbors, P.O. Box 1064, Fall City, WA 98024.

TO SPONSOR: Contact Janet Kautz, kautzjl@gmail.com. Ad sizes: 3.5" x 2"—\$90/qtr or \$360/yr; 3.5" x 4"—\$180/qtr or \$720/yr; 7" x 4"—\$360/qtr or \$1,440/yr.

Deadline for submissions is the TENTH of each month.

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Read Neighbors online at fallcity.org/newsletters.html. Also follow us on social media.



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Sno-Valley Senior Center: Carrie Harris
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Community News and Notes

FALL CITY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Highlights of the January 2024 Meeting



PRESIDENT'S REPORT. *Rachel Shepard.* Rachel thanked the community for their patience as the new website is launched. A 2024 member survey will be sent soon asking in what areas the FCCA should invest, what's top of mind, etc.; results will be presented at the February meeting. The 2023 financial statement has been received and the 2024 budget will be sent to members prior to the February meeting with discussion and approval at the meeting. She encouraged community members to learn more, join or renew their membership (a "steal" at \$30.00), or at www.fallcity.org. Agenda ideas are welcomed at fcc@fallcity.org. Rachel highlighted the following volunteer opportunities:

- Town photographer (a student would be great)
- Help transfer information from the old website to the new, updated website (great for students)
- Participate in the town clean-up in April
- Volunteer for Fall City Day 2024 in June
- Participate in the Community Center feasibility study

PARTNER UPDATES

FALL CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY. *Rick Divers, President,* fallcityhistorical.org. Rick offered thanks to the group's generous donors; proceeds from the holiday market sales and donations are used to fund the Historical Society's operations.

Fall City Historical Society has a large collection of documents, artifacts, etc. but does not have a museum or other place to share it with the public. A pop-up museum will be available in the Fall City Library from February 17th to March 1st, during regular library hours. Featured will be the Model Garage (an original local establishment – started nearly 100 years ago). The display will also provide information about and display hunting, fishing and logging artifacts. If you would like to lend an artifact for the pop-up museum, contact the Historical Society. Plan to visit the pop-up museum in February!

Recently the Valley Record highlighted the 125th anniversary of the Fall City Cemetery. The Historical Society adopted the Cemetery as a pet project and in the last couple of years cleaned the headstones of the 17 Civil War Veterans buried there and have nearly completed cleaning 58 World War I Veterans headstones. The Society plans to start cleaning World War II headstones this year and invites your participation. They recently applied for grant funding from the Historical Cemetery Capital Grant program to support the purchase of "D2" (the safe limestone cleaning compound they use) as well as a new entrance sign for the Cemetery.

Besides the pop-up museum, plan to attend the 3rd Annual Cemetery Wine Walk. Society members provide historical presentations at key gravesites, along with a presentation by a local Civil War expert. The Historical Society produces a brochure about the Cemetery that can be found in the kiosk as you enter the Cemetery. Look for the group's articles in the Neighbors Newsletter, contact them to help clean headstones and/or sign up for their monthly newsletter on their website.

FALL CITY METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT (FCMPD). *Kirk Harris, Commissioner.* The Park District was formed in 2009 and is governed by five commissioners who are elected to 6-year terms. FCMPD has no employees or programs but does own a piece of land (see Bernard Memorial Park below). Much of their work is in coordination with King County and other groups; five committees facilitate the efforts of the FCMPD:

- Community Outreach: coordinating with Snoqualmie River Task Force and Mountains to Sound Greenway, leading the Fall City Day Run, and managing the cherry tree holiday lights.
- Fall City Park (a King County facility): coordinating with the county and others on restoration efforts, community access and the equestrian arena.
- Homestead Field (a King County public open space area east of the roundabout on 202): coordinating restoration efforts, community access; also coordinating flood control for the former Fall City Campground and the former Piano Ranch near the end of 324th.
- Bernard Memorial Park (a FCMPD facility gifted to Friends of Fall City Parks and purchased by the FCMPD): coordinating with King County and Fall City Septic Assoc. for easement and park restoration.
- Trail Connections: focus on improving bike and walking safety with funding via various grants; West Side Trail, a shared-use path along SR 202 from Fall City Library to Chief Kanim with construction to start this summer; Snoqualmie Valley Trail connection to Fall City Park; and other trail connections.

FALL CITY SEPTIC ASSOCIATION. *Jeff Wilson, King County Project Manager.* Construction bids for the project will be accepted through January 9th, so a more detailed

(Continued on p. 12)



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7:00-8:30pm
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FALL CITY WATER DISTRICT STRUGGLES WITH PLUM CREEK WATER QUALITY

by Lyn Watts

It made no sense then and still doesn't now. One day last year, Plum Creek neighborhood's water was clean and clear. Yet almost overnight, household water taps started dispensing iron-tainted water that smelled and tasted bad plus stained clothes a decidedly unstylish brown.

Something had radically changed in the underground aquifer tapped by the neighborhood's 115-foot-deep well, serving 21 homes in the large-lot neighborhood just downstream of Snoqualmie Falls. "It could have been an earthquake, it could have been changes in the underground water flow," said Fall City Water District's Dustin Possert. "We had no idea. Whatever the cause, we had a real problem."

The district spent months evaluating what could have gone wrong with the community's well, storage tanks and distribution lines. Crews flushed out the storage tank, they evaluated and cleaned the well and well casing multiple times and flushed the neighborhood water lines. Nothing worked. The iron taint always returned. It wasn't unsafe, but certainly was disagreeable and untenable.

Kirk Harris, a resident of the community, said some residents had worse water than others, for some reason. "We're close to the reservoir, and oftentimes our water wasn't bad. Yet below and farther away it was worse. It didn't make a lot of sense."

After months of investigation and failed attempted fixes, the district chose a solution. It would install a new water treatment system serving the entire neighborhood. The problem with that solution was that it would take months to design and build the treatment system, get needed permits, and then install it. That would mean living with bad water for months.

One interim suggestion was that the district build an intertie to another water system, but unfortunately there is not one close to Plum Creek. Like its two fellow satellite systems Spring Hill and Rutherford Estates, they are closed systems, each with its own well, tanks and distribution

system. If something goes wrong with water quality in any of those systems, there is no close water main to tap for fresh water.

So the district added another feature to the solution. It rented a water tanker truck for \$3,315 a month, and each week is filling that truck at the district headquarters in Fall City and hauling that water to Plum Creek's storage tanks. To keep up with demand takes 14 round trips each week, or 112,000 total gallons in December, which is costly, time consuming and unavoidable.

All up, the cost of hauling water and paying for a new treatment system will be about \$300,000. That amount almost exactly equals the cost of planned-for capital improvements for the water district for 2024. To fix the Plum Creek situation, almost no other planned construction projects will happen this year district wide, including a new water-storage tank high up on Mitchell Hill.

"That really hurts because we need to continuously upgrade our distribution system and storage," said Mr. Possert. "Losing a year certainly isn't preferable, but it appears right now to be unavoidable."

Meanwhile, residents of Plum Creek are largely pleased with the solution package the district will provide, though some have said the process of developing and implementing a fix seems to go too slow. Residents, however, particularly appreciate the district sending regular email informing neighbors of each step in defining the water-quality problem and developing a solution, Harris said. "Keeping the community aware of what's going on, with a common email, is so important. Just like any time there's a problem, opening a line of communication is an important first step."





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CLIMATE AND GARDEN CORNER

by *Susan Miller*

Master Gardener / Master Pruner

EARLY SPRING GARDEN TIPS & IDAHO CLIMATE LESSONS

Thinking about your plants in February? Perhaps we are hardwired to come alive when they do. Daffodil bulbs have already nosed up now around the barn. I recall the buckets of old manure mulch I filled that are covered and stashed nearby. My seed catalogues are here, but with steep temperature drops ahead, I'll put off leaf raking until it is time.

"When do you think about climate change while you're in the garden?" I asked at a recent gardeners' gathering. Some were ready to answer; others needed the question to percolate. The responses came as questions: How much more mulch? How deep is a deep watering and where and when should I do it? Do I need more natives? Any fresh lists of or advice on drought-tolerant plants? Shouldn't we fire-wise our house while trees are still damp? Advice on such concerns are in the works and coming up.

From now on, we need more mulch because the ground is drying out in summer (hard to believe, I know!), and the soil needs more help to keep as moist as possible. So have lots of mulch to spread and do deep watering at 1-1½" once or twice weekly on your lawn even when it's climate dry. Optionally, use less-water-demanding grass seed being sold by Pro Time Lawn Seed in Portland (ptlawnseed.com) and start planting native plants recommended by the Washington Native Plant Society (wnps.org). Nurseries that sell drought-tolerant plants usually group them together and tag them accordingly.

Later in February: Prune your roses, Weeping Japanese Maples and some dwarf conifers. After these plants bloom, prune phlox, asters, mums, sedums, beebalm, Joe-Pye Weed, Monkshood, and Sneezeweed plants. Remove a third to a half of the plant's top growth.

In February, direct plant your veggie starts into 6-10" wide planting beds. The PNW's hardiest seeds are spinach, peas, greens, onions, potatoes, Swiss chard, beets, and carrots.

Swanson's Nursery in Seattle (swansonnursery.com) offers an early spring plant sale in February/March and on Thursdays plants are discounted 10% for those 65+.

To attract (even more) birds and help them through the cold, put fat-filled, black, oily sunflower seeds into your feeder.

I like to report large picture stories about American climate change. I am a non-scientist, without original research, so I seek out well-respected sources to raise awareness of what is happening, and in this case, a neighboring state.

The *NYT* recently had an article titled "How America's Diet is Feeding the Ground Water Crisis." Compared to the 1980's, Americans now eat twice as much cheese, most of it on pizzas. In order to supply Idaho's huge cheese factories, it has become the nation's largest alfalfa grower and now has about 700,000 dairy cattle, more than any other state save California and Wisconsin.

The climate challenge is that alfalfa is a particularly water-intensive crop and is produced on almost 6 million acres of irrigated land in some of the driest parts of the West. The cattle inhabit harsh, barren high desert in Southern Idaho, with only 10" of rain annually. Yet, because Idaho permits draining its deep aquifers, wide cattle yards and bright green alfalfa fields abound. California dairymen squeezed by urban sprawl, costs and regulation have moved to the state for cheap, open land, plentiful water, and few rules. Unfortunately, the Idaho aquifers refill very slowly and are being drawn down. (See also: "America is Using Up Groundwater As If There's No Tomorrow." *New York Times*)

Jonathan Foley, Ph.D and CEO of Project Drawdown, a leading source for climate solutions and a mainstay of the 2020 Soil, Food, and Climate Change Workshop in Fall City, had some great observations at the end of 2023. To paraphrase, he said, the technical aspects of climate change, like reducing greenhouse gases (oil/ methane/coal), are being worked on successfully – too slowly, but successfully. What is still growing without good climate control is food selection and disposal, agriculture, and deforestation.

Developing solutions in these areas is our local challenge and our saving grace

~ Susan

susanamiller@hotmail.com



Learn more about your park district!

Visit our website at www.fallcityparks.org

Public meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month
Please check agenda on our website for time and format of meeting



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Fall City, WA 98024

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SOLD PRICE
\$1,595,000



One-level home in Heathercrest, sold after 6 days on the market!

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FALL CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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www.fallcityhistorical.org



WE'RE POPPING UP!



Thanks to the cooperation of the Fall City Library, the Fall City Historical Society will transform their meeting room into a **Pop-up Museum** in February. It's our big chance to get history out of its boxes and available to the public. Come on down to see exhibits on the Model Garage, Fishing, Logging, and maybe a surprise or two!

We'll have hands-on activities and chances to talk with the people who made it all happen. The museum will be open Monday, February 17th through Friday, March 1, from 12 noon till closing on days the library is open.

Check our facebook page for the schedule of events!

The Mystery of the Falls Pull-outs

Ever wonder why there are two pull-outs on the right side of the "Falls Hill Road" on the way to Snoqualmie? Gene Stevens heard this explanation from Dennis Fury recently. There was a little gas station on the far end of the Spring Glen straight stretch. It had a sign the said, "Last chance gas before steep hill." Before cars had fuel pumps, Model T Fords had their gas tanks under the seat and therefore behind the up front engine. When you went up hill, the bottom of the tank was lower than the engine, leaving gravity to starve the engine of fuel. If you had a full tank, the gas level was higher than the engine intake and it was smooth sailing. The other option was to go up the hill **backwards** putting the tank higher than the engine.

We have another story about this from Al Kerwin. The movie theatre was in Meadowbrook, so on Saturday night, high-schoolers would load the car with kids and take up a collection to put as much gas in the tank as they could afford. They would go as far as they could up the hill going forward, then when the tank got too low, they would pull off at the pull-out and turn around then do the rest of the way in reverse. Coming home was easy because it was all downhill.

And we think our kids do goofy things!



Support for our work from King County Heritage 4Culture is gratefully acknowledged.

February Sno-Valley Senior Center Events

COVID & FLU VACCINES

Wednesday, February 7, 10a.m.-12:30 p.m. Need the flu OR Covid vaccine? We are offering free vaccines. Bring your insurance card, if applicable. **FREE.**

IS A CLINICAL TRIAL RIGHT FOR YOU?

Friday, February 16, 11 a.m. Curious about making a difference through clinical research? NW Clinical Research Center will discuss how you can contribute to groundbreaking medical science and potentially improve health outcomes.

SOUND BATH GROUP SESSION

Wednesday, February 7, 1 p.m. Join Sound Practitioner, Stacey Freeman as she leads you through a relaxing sound bath. You will lie down comfortably, close your eyes and allow the sound vibrations to wash over you. The perfect way to relax, unwind and refresh, bringing new energy and clarity to your mind, body and spirit. \$20 for members \$25 for non-members.

AFTERNOON TEA

Tuesday, February 13, 2 p.m. New to the area? Want to learn about our programs and services? Join us for tea and

chat with current volunteers, members, and staff to answer your questions, and learn where you'll find new friends, fun events, and more. **FREE.**

LET'S TRAVEL PRESENTATION

Tuesday, February 20, 11 a.m. Are you ready to get excited about travel in 2024? Liz Bell is presenting information on three land tours: Majestic Canadian Rockies, Cape Cod and the Islands and San Antonio Holidays. Come and learn the day-to-day outline of these itineraries. There will be time for any questions after. **FREE.**

SNO-VALLEY SINGERS | VALENTINE'S LUNCH

Wednesday, February 14, 12 p.m. Come and enjoy our own SNO-VALLEY SINGERS along with your special Valentine's Day lunch.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY LUNCH

Friday, February 16, 12 p.m. Come & celebrate your birthday with us. See if your table can win Jeopardy and a prize. Please call 425-333-4152 to make your reservation.



For more information or to register for SVSC classes and events go to snovalleysenior.org or call 425-333-4152

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Dates

1st & 3rd Wednesday of every month

Time

12 - 1:30 P.M. & 6:30 - 7:30 P.M.

Location

Fall City United Methodist Church
 4326 337th Place SE
 fallcityfoodpantry.org

Like us on Facebook!

NEXT FOOD PANTRY DATES

February 7 and February 21

FALL CITY COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

A FESTIVE WRAP-UP OF 2023

As we roll into February, we didn't want to miss giving a shoutout to all the incredible volunteer efforts we witnessed over the holidays!

THESE VOLUNTEERS filled 76 stockings (actually large grocery bags) full of small toys, books, art supplies and treats for children of Food Pantry clients, ages infant to 18. Most people who donated so generously to this project learned about it on Nextdoor or Facebook.



MANY THANKS to stocking organizer extraordinaire Katie Anthony!

COMMUNITY MEMBERS answered the call for homemade holiday cookies for our clients - donating more than 72 dozen cookies!



Volunteers assembled the cookies on festive plates and included chocolates, fudge, truffles, candy canes and other sweets. Each plate was wrapped with cellophane, topped with a festive red bow and handed out right before Christmas!

WE ARE GRATEFUL

to our Fall City Firefighters, who drove through local neighborhoods in a brightly decorated firetruck in December, handing out gifts for children and families while collecting donations for the Food Pantry.



FEBRUARY 2024 FALL CITY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

(Not-for-profit organizations, schools, and elected/appointed government groups may submit calendar items to editor@fallcity.org. Deadline is 10th of the month before the event)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

7:00-8:30 p.m. *Fall City Community Association Meeting.* Fall City Firehouse Community Room on Facebook: @Fall City, WA.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. *CarePoint Healthcare Clinic.* **FREE** primary healthcare regardless of one’s ability to pay. Every Wednesday and Saturday. Appointments 425-478-6627. Walk-ins welcome. Learn more at: carepointonline.org.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 9

3:00 p.m. *Lunar New Year Papier-Mâché, Part I.* Welcome in the year of the dragon with this fun group event. Join us for a Lunar New Year story and sculpting of a dancing dragon. Return on February 12 to do the painting. All materials supplied. No registration required. **FREE.**

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 12

3:00 p.m. *Lunar New Year Papier-Mâché, Part II.* Join us for

Lunar New Year storytelling, dancing, and painting of your papier mâché dragon created the week before. All materials supplied. No registration required. **FREE.**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17 – MARCH 1

12:00 p.m. - Closing. *Historical Society Pop-Up Museum.* The Fall City Library meeting room will be transformed into a pop-up museum featuring exhibits on the Model Garage, fishing, logging, and a surprise or two!

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. *Seed Starting Workshop: Fall City Community Garden.* We supply seeds, soil, some containers, and lots of help and info. Bring your own small containers and seeds if you like too. You can take home some cool tolerant early season veggies, herbs, and flowers planted and waiting to germinate with a bit of your warmth and water. Event will be held inside the Fall City Masonic Lodge. Check our Instagram page ([@fallcitylearning](https://www.instagram.com/fallcitylearning)) or email us to get notified directly to your inbox: info@letusgarden.org.

FCCA HIGHLIGHTS (cont’d from page 3)

update will be available at the February meeting. All grant contracts have now been finalized and signed.

FALL CITY LIBRARY. *Mary Comstock.* Due to full staffing and therefore more capacity for programming, including

programming with Fall City Arts, there has been a significant increase library traffic and check-outs. Programming includes Family Story Time, Book Group, Teen Hangout, Tutor Hours, etc., as well as a variety of one-time classes for children and adults.

FALL CITY SUSTAINABLE GROWTH (FCSG). *Mike Suelzle, President.* Mike thanked the community for their continued financial support; the appeal case will hopefully be heard by King County Superior Court in April. FCSG is planning a fundraising brunch with a silent auction for this spring.

KING COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL SERVICES. *John Taylor, Director.* John shared the importance of the County’s relationship with Fall City Metropolitan Park District and thanked them for their continued efforts and successes. Local Services’ Fall City office hours: The first Tuesday of the month from 3:00 – 5:00pm at the Fall City Library.

The “Alan Painter Grants” (formerly “Community Engagement Grants”) up to \$5,000 are available for events, capital items, etc. Applications are due at the end of January.

Councilmember Sarah Perry King County, District 3



Stay in touch and visit our website today!



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NEXT FCCA MEETING:

Tuesday, February 5, 2024, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
via Zoom, Facebook Live, and phone.