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INSIDE:

Kids chase down a tastv treat. **A10**

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Oak Harbor Cinemas Manager Sherry Sloyke prepares a film, Jack Reacher, that will be shown. The North Whidbey theater will be the last movie house on Whidbey Island to use film. The theater will transition to digital in January.

Going digital

Whidbey theaters adapting to new film requirements

By NATHAN WHALEN

2012 won't be the end of the world, but it is the end of film at Whidbey movie theaters.

Whidbey movie theater operators are spending tens of thousands of dollars to replace their venerable film projectors with digital equipment in order to meet requirements set by the industry.

Theater operators are scrambling to make the upgrades because distributors will soon stop dispersing traditional 35 mm film. Instead of movie theater staff threading projectors, they will have to access a hard drive on a computer to start

Oak Harbor Cinemas appears to be the last theater on Whidbey Island to thread a projector before a showing. The Blue Fox Drive-In north of Coupeville purchased its digital equipment and will have it installed before it reopens in early January, and The Clyde Theatre in Langley purchased and installed its new projector last year.

The Oak Harbor Cinema, which has three movie theaters at its Barlow Street location, is scheduled to make the transition sometime in January, and staff are concerned as film will become tougher to find.

"It will be really difficult to get film," said Sherry Sloyke, manager at Oak Harbor Cinemas. "We are trying our best to get them.'

The small movie house is owned by a chain that operates theaters in Bremerton, Bainbridge Island and Ocean Shores. Sloyke said the company was upgrading

SEE MOVIES, A8

County approves curbside recycling

By JUSTIN BURNETT

A five-year discussion about curbside recycling for Island Disposal customers came to an end this week.

On Thursday, the Island County Commissioners agreed in a 2-0 vote to move forward with the program, which will apply to everyone who subscribes to trash service in rural parts of Whidbey Island.

Board members expressed concerns about well-tread issues, ranging from the mandatory elements of the program and the exclusion of glass to the quoted \$11.60 per month cost, but ultimately decided that curbside recycling's time had come.

"Doing the right thing is not always the most convenient or the least expensive, but I believe that in the long run ... (the benefits) far outweigh the cost to this community at large," Commissioner Helen Price Johnson said.

"I think it's time to put our foot forward and I'm willing to pay for it," Commissioner Angie Homola said.

Commissioner Kellv Emerson was in attendance but abstained on the basis that the majority of her district is on Camano Island where residents already have curbside service through another hauler.

The vote followed a public hearing that was attended by about 25 people.

The crowd appeared equally mixed with supporters and critics and people took turns at the microphone expressing their opinions.

SEE PASSED, A8

Oak Harbor takes a stab at gun regulation

By JESSIE STENSLAND

Staff reporter

Oak Harbor City Council took a stand in favor of gun control Tuesday, risking a lawsuit from a gun-rights group.

The issue came to light when the Second Amendment Foundation sent a letter to the city attorney in October, pointing out that several sections of city code violate state law by prohibiting the carrying and display of firearms in city parks and the marina.

Grant Weed, the city attor-

ney, advised the council this week to amend the code to remove the prohibitions. He said the city isn't allowed to have gun-control rules that are stricter than state or federal law.

The issue came forward at a difficult time, with the horrific school shooting in

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MOVIE

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its theaters one at a time.

The Blue Fox Drive-In has been holding a fundraiser for months to try and raise the approximately \$80,000 cost for the new projector.

Darrell Bratt, owner of the Blue Fox Drive-In, said the community has been very supportive and the fundraiser contributed around 80 percent of the cost.

He took out a loan to pay the remainder.

He is still raising money through T-shirt and sweatshirt sales.

The Blue Fox Drive-In is closed for several weeks through December.

He said the projector will be installed Jan. 8 in time for the re-opening scheduled for Jan. 11.

The Clyde Theatre, which operates in Langley, switched to a digital system one year ago.

Owner Blake Willeford said he wanted to get the conversion out of the way early so he wouldn't have problems finding equipment or electricians to install it.

He said the digital technology has made his duties as a projectionist easier and he can spend more time serving customers.

The customers seem to be enjoying the quality of the showings too.

There's no such thing as scratched film anymore," Willeford said.

He noted that he hoped he would eventually save money on shipping costs because the hard drive is lighter than the film canisters; however, the distributor has been over-nighting digital films that has proven more costly.

With the transition to digital, the movie theaters are left with old projectors that have been operating reliably for decades but have become obsolete.

Bratt said he isn't sure what he is going to do with his old equipment yet.

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Many of the naysayers said they were avid recyclers but didn't like various aspects of the program.

One of the more common gripes, and one of the primary reasons a nearly identical program pitched in 2007 did not move forward, was that Island Disposal is requiring it be mandatory for all of its customers.

Jennifer Lesko said she is a regular recycler but the every-other-week service will cost her an extra \$140 a year - the final cost has yet to be determined — and that's money she can't afford.

To get out of paying the fee, she said she will likely cancel her service and selfhaul.

"It makes me feel poorer than I am that I actually have to do this," Lesko said.

Similarly, Island Recycling owner David Campbell said he was not against the idea of a curbside program.

In fact, he called himself a recycling "whacko" who's been doing it religiously for 40 years.

Like Lesko, he said his customers commonly complain that they will quit their garbage service and selfhaul because they don't want to pay the extra fee, especially when glass will not be accepted.

He and several others, such as Central Whidbey resident Bill Bradkin, expressed skepticism about recycling statistics and the expected results of an implemented curbside service.

Yet, there were many others at the meeting who testified passionately in favor of the program.

Coupeville resident Gary Piazzon, an outspoken advocate for the environment. talked about the United States role in global warming and the need to take action.

"If we can reduce our carbon dioxide emissions ... we're going to do a great deal for our future and our kids' futures," Piazzon said.

Coupeville resident Cathy d'Almeida said this was the first place she'd lived in 20 years that didn't offer curbside recycling, a fact she said was "appalling."

She was not alone. Several others called it "shocking" and "embarrassing."

But many more said the time for discussing the issue and trying to find a perfect program had come to an

"It's time we stop kicking this can down the road," said Bob Walters, a Langley resident. "We've been doing this for years."

Ken Kovalenko, district manager for Waste Connections, parent company of Island Disposal, also addressed the crowd.

He pointed out that while his firm is the franchised hauler for Whidbey Island, they are a private business and a curbside service is something of a financial gamble.

"I know I'll lose customers, but I'm willing to take that risk because I believe it's the right thing to do," Kovalenko said.

He also debunked a claim that the company will have to run "loose" or un-compacted loads of recyclables to offisland facilities.

Kovalenko said the recvclables Island Disposal does handle now are bailed at a facility just South of Coupeville.

After hearing more than

an hour of public testimony, the board moved forward with little discussion.

Both Homola and Price Johnson acknowledged the shortcomings of the program but were resolute in moving forward.

Homola said she'd been taught long ago that when "you soil your nest, you clean it," and while she will be out of a job by the end of the month, she is ready to pay more each month to do her part in reducing carbon emissions.

"I'm willing to do that because I think it's that important," Homola said.

Price Johnson said she wrestled with the decision but ultimately believed the curbside program is in the best interest of Island County and its residents.

She ended with a quote from a constituent.

"There is nothing more conservative than conserving resources," she said. "It's a clear winner economically and environmentally.

The board's decision requires Island Disposal to launch the service within one year.

The hauler will submit a proposal to state regulators and a final cost will then be determined.

Kovalenko could not provide a start date but did say he hopes to roll out the program before Christmas of

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