



Doug Ramsay file photo

Snohomish Senior Center member Karen Gahm of Snohomish sends the ball across the net as she was playing a game of pickleball at the Snohomish Boys and Girls Club in Snohomish in June 2022. The senior center along with the Snohomish Pickleball Club presented an exhibition of the sports during a day of fun activities.

Pickleball

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spokeswoman Shari Ireton said in an email that workers are putting the finishing touches on the courts, fields and restrooms. She didn't provide a date on when the park will re-open.

Pickleball was invented in 1968 on Bainbridge Island, according to USAPickleball.com. Most commonly played as a doubles sport, it's played with a paddle that is larger than a ping pong paddle but smaller than a tennis racket. It's a well-paced combination of table tennis, tennis and badminton.

"It's a great social sport and

not as hard on the body as tennis," said Rick Bowmar, also known as "Pickleball Rick," who is a Marysville resident and ambassador for USA Pickleball. He described the sport as playing ping pong but imagining being on the table.

Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in the country with 36.5 million players, which ranks behind running and bicycling, said Brandon Mackie, the co-founder of Pickleheads, which is a pickleball court finding website and app.

It's also now the state's official sport thanks to legislation passed in 2022 and sponsored by state Sen. John Lovick.

"Pickleball is a ton of fun. The biggest thing going for it is how easy it is to learn," Mackie said adding pickleball is "a lot more than a sport. It's a sense of community."

Bowmar echoed Mackie's sentiments adding people enjoy pickleball because the court is small and there's a lot of fun and social interaction.

"It really helps a lot of people who were inactive become active again," Bowmar said.

The YMCA of Snohomish County offers pickleball at most of its locations.

"It's all the rage," said the Mukilteo Y's director Cynthia Kelly.

At the Mukilteo Y, between 20 and 50 people are play

every day, Kelly said. Groups are playing two hours a day on three courts during the summer and then will playing four hours a day when kids return to school.

She said pickleball offers less impact on the body because players are hitting a wiffleball-like ball. Players also benefit from the suspended wood that comprises the floor of the basketball courts and, during the summer months, air conditioning.

Kelly noted that players are sweating and exhausted after they complete a session of pickleball. "They absolutely love it," she said.

Clinic

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partnering clinic. For low-income people, it funds treatments in the name of public health.

Lewis said the plan is to waive clinic testing fees for those who can't pay.

The department is also brainstorming setting up mobile clinic services to reach people who have trouble getting to health services. The in-house clinic will

open as soon as October. It hasn't offered these services in more than 10 years due to shrinking budgets.

"We're staffing up, we have a position open for a nurse practitioner," Lewis said in a mid-July interview.

State legislators gave \$975,000 in the latest state budget to kickstart its clinic. They were prodded by a late 2022 workgroup report on controlling rising STD rates statewide.

Last year, Snohomish County saw 94 cases of syphi-

lis. In 2021, it saw 2,309 cases of chlamydia and 797 cases of gonorrhea.

Chlamydia is easily treatable. Gonorrhea, nicknamed the clap, is treatable, too.

Syphilis is the more alarming bacterial infection, and that's doubled from 45 cases in 2019 to 94 last year.

Syphilis has been heavily disproportionate among men who have sex with men.

But women who have sex with men aren't in the clear: Health officials are seeing more women who have sex

with men getting syphilis.

It's intertwined to cases of mothers passing syphilis down to their newborn babies. The county saw two cases of newborns with syphilis last year, and has one confirmed case this year, Lewis said. 2022 broke a streak of five years with no such cases.

Three-fourths of those who had congenital syphilis had none or inadequate prenatal care, says the 2022 state report calling to control the rise of STDs. Almost one-third of those were mothers who use drugs. In many of the overall cases, they found out after getting tested while

in jail. The results can be awful and profound: Babies can have serious health consequences such as intellectual disabilities, blindness and deafness.

Nationwide, the trendline of congenital syphilis has been increasing since 2015.

Obituary

Phyllis "Sallie" Johnson Lawler

Phyllis "Sallie" Johnson Lawler died at her home in Port Ludlow, July 28, 2023 at the age of 96.

She was born in Minot, North Dakota and was the last survivor of ten children. Her family moved to Washington at an early age and eventually settled in Snohomish. After graduating Snohomish High School with her future husband, she attended WSU until they returned to the family farm to raise their family. Life on the farm was filled with love and the smells that came from her kitchen. She was also an avid seamstress and quilter, making quilts well into her nineties

After a number of years at home, she began work for the Snohomish School District where she worked as the payroll officer until her retirement. In 1991, they sold the farm and moved to Port Ludlow where they built their dream home on the water.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Ward Lawler. She is survived by children Jan (Greg) Jackson, Cathy (Rick) McGuire, Mary (Al) Muench, Jim (Elaine) Lawler and John (Georgi) Lawler, thirteen grandchildren and twenty-five great grandchildren.



A funeral service is scheduled for September 9, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Port Townsend. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the American Cancer Society or the American Heart Association.

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