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HeraldNet

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WEEK IN REVIEW

WEDNESDAY

- Lynnwood woman suffers serious burns while cooking
- Gold Bar man stricken by mysterious illness get...
- Edmonds councilwoman resigns, takes job in Wash...

TUESDAY



- 'We are devastated' by loss of two boys, family...
- A scramble to shave \$1.8 million from county bu...
- Arlington about to add land; buildup could follow

MONDAY



- Arlington boys couldn't be saved from fire
- Mom heeds call to serve
- College degrees available in Everett

SUNDAY



- Two boys lost in Arlington fire
- County budget: 160 jobs expected to be cut
- The force is with Toys for Tots

SATURDAY



HOME

Published: Thursday, August 21, 2008

A chicken in every yard? Why not?

By [Debra Smith](#)
Herald Columnist



Debra Smith / The Herald (click to enlarge)
Emmett Wild

I'll admit it: I have pro-chicken leanings.

Five years ago I would have dismissed backyard hens as a throwback to farm life that should probably be left there.

Since then, by chance, my job has taken me to suburban homes with backyard hens. What I've found is that a few properly cared for hens (minus the cock-a-doodle-doo rooster) are clean and quiet enough that you wouldn't know they were there laying eggs on the other side of the fence.

Chickens suffer from a PR problem. People think chickens are dirty, noisy and smelly. The truth? A few cared-for hens are cleaner and quieter than one big dog or the three neighbor cats that poop in the flower beds. Plus you get eggs.

Maybe because of those negative associations, cities in Snohomish County have vastly different regulations for chickens. In Everett, you can keep up to six hens but no rooster. Just across the border in Mukilteo, no hens are allowed at all. You also can't start a flock in Edmonds or Lynnwood. Keep in mind that the most densely developed and urban of our area cities, Seattle, allows three hens.

Can hens be smelly and dirty? You bet. So can dogs, cats, parakeets, rabbits and hamsters, when an owner keeps too many and doesn't care for them. Nearly all the city codes in the county have a provision that prohibits animals from becoming a public nuisance. Presumably, people who don't take care of their flock could be handled under these provisions.

I bring all this up because more people are interested in keeping a few backyard hens for eggs. At least that's what Joan DeVries has noticed. She works for the Washington State University's Livestock Advisor Program, which provides education for people who want to raise farm animals.

People who raise a few hens probably won't be saving money on eggs or meat, but they will know it's safe and of good quality, and that's what most people who want to raise them are concerned with, she said.

Part of her job is educating the public at venues such as the Evergreen State Fair. She's continually surprised by how removed many of us are from nature. She has met children who can't recognize a goat. It's not just the kids, either.

On the other end of the spectrum is Emmett Wild, a 4-H phenom with more blue ribbons and trophies than Michael Phelps. The 17-year-old from Lakewood raises, breeds and shows poultry. He keeps not only chickens, but rare ducks and homing pigeons. Emmett keeps nearly 100 birds, but he also lives in a rural area and his family has enough property.

Emmett said kids who would like to get into chickens should find a local breeder and start with good chicks. He breeds and promotes heritage breeds. He suggested attending the Cascade Spring Show in March at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds to talk with breeders.

His father, Ken Wild, said 4-H has provided a supportive environment and it's a good step for families interested in raising chickens. He said raising chickens helps instill responsibility. Emmett's involvement in 4-H has certainly made him knowledgeable. I quizzed him on everything from composting to breeding. He is considering a career in sustainable agriculture.

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- Gold Bar man became so sick, so fast
- Chicken pox outbreak quiets school
- 'Twilight' entrances teenage girls

FRIDAY

If you'd like more information on chickens, consider subscribing to "Backyard Poultry" magazine or reading "Keep Chickens! Tending Small Flocks in Cities, Suburbs, and Other Small Spaces" by Barbara Kilarski or "Storey's Guide to Raising Chickens" by Gail Damerow.

Two information-packed Web sites contain good information for backyard chicken keeping as well as plenty of photos of moveable coops appropriate for small yards: www.thecitychicken.com and www.backyardchickens.com.

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FRIDAY



- The Wii teaches P.E. at Arlington high school
- State's tobacco cash helps smokers kick habit
- Stillaguamish ex-leaders plead guilty to cigare...

THURSDAY



- For old ferries, it's the end of the line
- Tribal leaders accused of smoke-shop tax scam
- 'I blew her away,' girl's father told police

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Debra Smith: 425-339-3197 or dsmith@heraldnet.com. Visit her blog at www.heraldnet.com.

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2. Tulalip school is grieving once more
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4. Cancer survivor is again living the life of a teenager
5. County objects to Arlington annexation
6. Lynnwood woman suffers serious burns while cooking
7. Fatal I-405 crash under investigation
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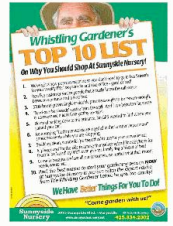
SC BUSINESS JOURNAL

- Was burglary suspect burglarized?
- Food banks facing hard times
- Council member resigns, heading to D.C.
- Edmonds closes aid car loophole
- Wildcats head to state semifinals
- Thanksgiving served with an outpouring of generosity
- King's takes third at 1A state tournament
- School closures recommended
- Raising school spirit at Shorewood

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