



RB Penny has career day as Seahawks beat Eagles

SPORTS, 1B

Kitsap Sun

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After twister, there's no place like home



John Mueller is all smiles as he carries a stack of couch cushions to his newly rebuilt home on Tiburon Court in Port Orchard on Saturday. The Muellers' home was destroyed during the Dec. 18, 2018, tornado, which ripped the entire roof off of the home. MEEGAN M. REID / KITSAP SUN

Family moves back into tornado-blasted house

Chris Henry
Kitsap Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

PORT ORCHARD — Beth Mueller learned that the roof had been blown off her home when a neighbor texted her a picture on the TV news.

“It was just insane,” she said. “To see it completely mangled, it was just heart-breaking.”

The image of “the red house with no roof” went viral, becoming an icon for the freak tornado that struck Port Orchard on Dec. 18, 2018. The tornado plowed a 1.4-mile path of wreckage and caused a total of \$1.81 million in damage to homes and businesses. No people were seriously injured or killed.

The tornado’s power, EF-2 on a scale of zero to 5, was such that corners of the Mueller’s home were torqued. Remains of the roof were never found.

Exactly 11 months to the day, on Nov. 18, the Muellers passed inspection on their rebuilt home. They moved in Sat-

urday.

“It’s not moving day. It’s coming home day,” Beth’s husband, John Mueller, said.

And, yes, the new house is painted red.

Saving what they could

Beth Mueller and her ex-husband bought the house on Tiburon Court in 2003. “It’s literally the only home my kids have known,” she said.

John and Beth married in 2015, blending a family of his two girls — Hannah and Jasmin — and her two kids — Amber and Nick. Jasmin Mueller, now 17, and Nick Watson, now 18, were the only two still living at home last fall, both attending South Kitsap High School.

The tornado hit just as school was letting out, so Beth, at work in Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, knew they hadn’t been at the house during the storm. She and John, also a PSNS employee, took a back route home to avoid “insane” traffic on the main roads.

Their first thought was for the pets. The neighborhood was blocked off,

but firefighters allowed them to walk in. John, with help from two firefighters, located the Muellers’ two dogs, Cinder, a chocolate lab, and Merida, a corgi mix, safe in their kennels in the downstairs den.

Hannah’s dog Lyla also was at the house that day and had found refuge under a fallen china hutch. Nick’s elderly cat Summer was hiding unscathed under Nick’s bed. Even Jasmin’s rabbit Gandalf the Grey made it through although covered in shreds of insulation.

John Mueller and the firefighters evacuated the menagerie to where Beth waited anxiously. “So I have the rabbit in my jacket, the cat in a carrier and a dog in one hand,” John said. “All our animals survived, which was beautiful.”

John believes his Army infantry training kicked in that day. “In the infantry, you are mission-centered,” he said. “You take all the emotions out and you do what needs to be done.”

The next day, they had just a short window of time to salvage what they

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Plan may exempt live music

Christian Vosler
Kitsap Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

BREMERTON — The owner of a popular Bremerton bar and music venue that has been the target of noise complaints is taking his fight to court, while circulating a petition that aims to exempt live music in certain areas from the city’s noise ordinance.

Brother Don’s Bar & Grill on Kitsap Way has been ticketed for noise violations six times in the last two years, stemming from the bar’s frequent live music sets. Two neighbors who live nearby have called the police repeatedly to complain that the music is too loud and keeps their families awake at night.

Gordon Rinke, the bar’s longtime owner, is fighting to have the citations dismissed in court. Simultaneously, the bar is pushing forward with an initiative that would exempt live music originating from non-residential zones from the “public disturbance” section of Bremerton’s noise ordinance.

The group needs about 1,800 signatures, verified by the Kitsap County auditor, to send the initiative to Bremerton’s city council for approval. The council can choose to either adopt the amendment or not. If it doesn’t, the initiative will appear on a ballot for voters to decide.

“Our thought was that that would help (the city council) to reach a decision,” Rinke’s attorney, Bill Broughton, said.

Bremerton municipal code lays out maximum decibel levels for noise

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Unspent Quincy Square money to help abate lead paint

Austen Macalus
Kitsap Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

Earlier this month, the city of Bremerton had to decide what to do with \$120,000 in unspent federal grant money.

The funding was originally slated to go the Quincy Square project, the city’s plan to remake Fourth Street into a walkable public plaza.

However, there wasn’t a plan to spend the funding before a federal deadline this November, meaning city officials had to come up with another way to use the money — fast — or risk running afoul of federal rules.

So where did that money end up going?

The Bremerton City Council approved reallocating the funding to YW-

CA’s ALIVE Shelter, which will use the additional funds to abate a possible lead paint and asbestos problem inside its shelter for domestic violence victims and their children.

Bremerton initially received a \$300,000 Community Development Block Grant last year to develop Quincy Square. But the city has only spent \$14,000 of that money so far, leaving a sizable chunk of money that needed to be spent.

Bremerton Mayor Greg Wheeler initially proposed putting the funding toward the Kitsap Rescue Mission’s overnight homeless shelter to help pay for a sprinkler system.

But that plan fell through after city staff warned the Kitsap Rescue Mission’s faith-based hiring practices con-

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Architectural renderings for a public square on Fourth Street in downtown Bremerton. City leaders hope to name it for Quincy Jones. CITY OF BREMERTON

USA TODAY

Hong Kong elections: Voters turn out in large numbers to support pro-democracy candidates. **3A**

Inside

Vandals taking aim at monuments across United States. **2A**

Weather

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