

## NORTHWEST

FRIDAY, January 4, 2019

## COUNTY DITCHES BALKY JAILING ALGORITHM

## Opts for simpler evaluation tool

By Chad Sokol  
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Spokane County is adopting a new computer algorithm designed to help judges decide which defendants should remain in jail, abandoning a more costly, custom-developed program that was hampered by technical and logistical problems.

The Spokane Assessment for Evaluation of Risk, known as the SAFER tool, was touted as a cornerstone of local efforts to reduce jail overcrowding and eliminate racial disparities in the justice system.

Developed with help from a criminologist at Washington State University, the tool examined some 30 factors – such as criminal

records, drug addiction and employment history – to produce a score indicating the likelihood a defendant would miss a court date or commit a new crime if released before trial.

But because of staff turnover, software glitches and the challenge of syncing the tool with state court data, the program never worked as intended. After nearly three years of testing and tinkering, officials have scrapped the SAFER tool in a favor of a simpler, off-the-shelf

program called the Public Safety Assessment, or PSA, which will require less raw information.

Maggie Yates, who recently stepped in as Spokane County's criminal justice administrator, said officials agreed they could not spend more time and resources developing the SAFER tool. The PSA is more "streamlined," she said, and will finally enable the county to standardize how it evaluates defendants.

Although the size of the jail

population has not budged despite several years of grant-funded reform efforts, Yates said the new assessment tool could help the county stop incarcerating low-risk defendants only because they can't afford to post bail.

## What went wrong

In early 2016, shortly before Spokane County was awarded a \$1.75 million grant from the MacArthur

See **ALGORITHM, 4**

## Taking next step in learning

## Developmentally disabled program opens at WSU

By Maddy Haro  
and Braden Johnson  
FOR THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

PULLMAN – Evan Henniger always felt drawn to Washington State University.

His parents never thought college would be a possibility. Evan, 20, was diagnosed with Down syndrome shortly after his birth, and the prospect of venturing away from home on his own seemed unlikely.

That changed last year when WSU launched a special education program for college-age students with educational or developmental disabilities. The Hennigers' wish for Evan suddenly came true.

"You could have knocked us over with a feather," Lisa Henniger said. "That has been our dream since the day Evan was born, and we've been lowering our expectations to what we thought was reality (for Evan) to go to college, and then we found out that this program could start up. It was truly a dream come true."

Evan recently finished his first semester at the university, taking classes and working at an internship on campus. With the help of his cousin – a graduate student at WSU – Evan has become more independent than his parents could have imagined.

In just a few months, the Responsibility Opportunities Advocacy and Respect (ROAR) program has opened a multitude of opportunities for Evan and three other students in its inaugural class. The two-year program, which is operated by the College of Education, provides life skills and health education for students, who can also audit college courses and work in internships on campus. Participants or their families pay tuition and fees but are eligible for financial aid.

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TAYLOR CODOMO/MURROW NEWS SERVICE

Evan Henniger was admitted to WSU when the university launched its **Responsibility, Opportunity, Advocacy and Respect (ROAR)** program, a special education program for students with educational or developmental disabilities.

## Man who killed cabbie gets 40 years

## Defendant tries to leave courtroom; bailiff stops him

By Jonathan Glover  
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Shortly before Jacob Coleman was sentenced to 40 years to life for the murder of a Spokane cab driver, he tried to run out of a courtroom after shouting, "40 years, let's do this."

Coleman, 21, of Puyallup, Washington, pleaded guilty in November to stabbing and killing 22-year-old Gagandeep Singh as the two sat in Singh's cab in Kootenai, Idaho.

On Thursday, Bonner County District Court Judge Barbara Buchanan sentenced him to 40 years minimum in prison, with a maximum of a life sentence, according to KHQ, which also reported Coleman's outburst. Because Coleman pleaded guilty, prosecutors took the death penalty off the table.

Several members of Singh's family testified during the hourslong hearing, including his mother and brother, Baljit Singh, before Coleman stood and addressed the court, KHQ reported. The defendant apologized to the family, before asking "what do you guys want from me?" to which the family said life in prison.

In response, he shouted for the judge to give him 40 years as he slammed the microphone down and moved toward the door, according to KHQ. A bailiff stopped him before he could leave and put him into handcuffs.

Coleman, who was 19 at the time, flew from Seattle to Spokane in August 2017, apparently to start a new semester at Gonzaga University. However, upon visiting the school where he was not enrolled as a student nor assigned campus housing, he told law enforcement he became homicidal.

He then hailed a cab at the Spokane International Airport, and told Singh to drive him to a fictitious friend's house in eastern Bonner County. When it became clear Coleman didn't have a destination, Bonner County Sheriff's deputies said Coleman stabbed Singh as they sat parked at Spokane Street and East Railroad Avenue in Kootenai.

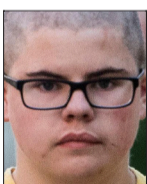
When deputies arrived to find Singh, who was pronounced dead at the scene, Coleman was sitting in the cab. He was arrested without incident.

## Freeman shooting suspect's hearing delayed

By Jonathan Glover  
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Caleb Sharpe turns 18 in October. But in July – 22 months after the then 15-year-old sophomore allegedly opened fire at Freeman High School – a court will decide whether he should be tried for murder as a juvenile or adult.

The final delay in the prolonged court proceeding was granted in



Sharpe

December after prosecutors asked for more time as they await one last evaluation by Dr. Richard Adler, a defense-hired forensic psychiatrist. Superior Court

Judge Michael Price allowed the request, but according to a Dec. 12 filing, ordered that "this will be

the last continuance granted by the court."

The holdup was just one of many. In the months since the Sept. 13, 2017, shooting that killed fellow classmate Sam Strahan and left three girls injured, the declination hearing has been pushed back several times, most recently in October of last year. Sharpe, 17, faces one count of first-degree murder, three counts of attempt-

ed murder and 51 counts of second-degree assault relating to the other students in the hallway in danger of being shot.

Prosecutors originally argued that private defense attorney Bevan Maxey had not been timely in providing discovery reports by Adler after an evaluation was completed in April. However, af-

See **FREEMAN, 4**

## JIM KERSHNER'S 100 YEARS AGO TODAY

Spokane's commissioner of public safety John H. Tilsley laid out the case against H.M. Delaney – and now it was up to the county prosecutor to make a decision about charges.

Tilsley's typewritten report contained these points:

- Delaney tried hard to win over Rosie Kempf, but she was already engaged to U.S. Navy sailor Karl Reiniger. She refused to take Delaney seriously, and had plans to marry Reiniger on

Jan. 2.

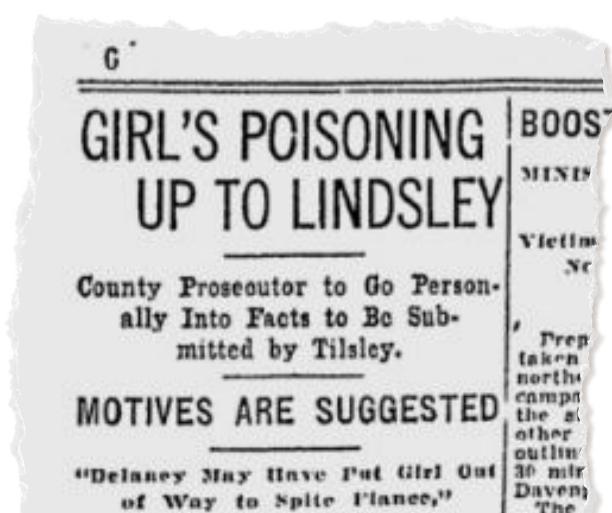
- Delaney forged a letter with her signature, intended to "make the dead girl's family believe that she cared for him."

- Delaney purchased a box of candy and gave it to Kempf. It was believed to be laced with strychnine.

- Delaney threw the box into the wood stove after her death. Later, he produced another box of candy, uncontaminated, which he claimed was the original box.

- A man fitting Delaney's description tried to purchase a stomach pump after her death, but before her autopsy. Delaney, who had training as an undertaker, may have intended to pump her stomach and remove the evidence of poisoning.

Tilsley said Delaney knew that her sailor fiance was coming to Spokane for the wedding, and "it is our theory that rather than see the sailor win, Delaney put the girl out of the way."





## NORTHWEST

## IN BRIEF

## Shooting follows fight over rent

An argument over rent payments spiraled into violence that left one man hospitalized Wednesday with a gunshot wound to the chest.

The suspected shooter, Joshua L. Henderson, is jailed in lieu of \$100,000 bond following an appearance Thursday in Spokane County Superior Court.

The victim, Brian Gilliam, is in satisfactory condition at Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center.

Spokane police went to 6605 N. Standard St. after receiving reports of gunfire. Henderson, who had been sleeping on the residence's sofa for three weeks, is accused of shooting Gilliam, the uncle of a resident at the house, during a disagreement about rent, according to court documents.

Gilliam pushed or punched Henderson during the fight and Henderson responded by shooting him in the chest with a 9 mm pistol, according to court documents. Gilliam told police that Henderson also kicked him in the face multiple times after he was shot and fell to the ground.

Henderson was outside the house when police arrived. Officers arrested him and found a gun on the ground nearby.

## Warming fire damages house

A suspected transient started a fire in an abandoned house Thursday in west Spokane, according to a fire official. No one was injured.

The fire started at about 4 p.m. in the two-story house, at 3407 W. Government Way, Spokane Fire Battalion Chief Darin Neiwert said. The entire house sustained smoke damage.

It's the second time the house has caught fire from a warming fire from transients in the past couple of years, Neiwert said.

"It looks like they were living in there for quite some time," he said.

The property is owned by Roen Properties LLC, which bought it in 2009, according to county records.

## Bond reduced for suspect in killing

A man suspected of shooting and killing his grandfather in December appeared in Spokane County Superior Court on Thursday and received a reduction in his bond.

Superior Court Judge Shelley Szambelan reduced Trystn Higgins' bond from \$500,000 to \$100,000, noting that Higgins has no job or source of income.

Trystn Higgins, 24, allegedly killed Gerald Higgins at the elder Higgins' residence north of Chattaroy on Dec. 6, before fleeing in his grandfather's car with stolen credit cards and jewelry. Police arrested him in downtown Spokane. Trystn Higgins has serious mental health issues, according to his defense attorney.

From staff reports

# WSU football standout, ALS advocate Gleason officially earns highest civilian honor from Congress

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — President Donald Trump signed legislation Thursday awarding former New Orleans Saints and Washington State football player Steve Gleason the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor awarded by Congress.

The 41-year-old Gleason has ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's



Gleason

disease, and Congress sought to honor him for his work as an advocate for people with the paralyzing neuromuscular disease.

Gleason is the first NFL player to receive a Congressional Gold Medal.

He became famous for blocking

a punt in 2006 on the night the Superdome reopened after Hurricane Katrina. He retired from the NFL in 2008 and was diagnosed with ALS in 2011.

He has since spearheaded efforts through the Team Gleason foundation to develop and provide technology to help ALS patients live longer, more fulfilling lives. Those include devices that track eye movements to help pa-

ralyzed people type words that can be transformed into speech. Gleason has used the technology to communicate, post messages on social media, address lawmakers from around the world and give motivational speeches to athletes.

Congress last year approved the Gleason Act, which provided funding to help ALS patients get such devices.

# 2 more Puget Sound orcas appear fatally ill

By Lynda V. Mapes

SEATTLE TIMES

Two more orcas are ailing and probably will be dead by summer, according to the region's expert on the demographics of the critically endangered southern residents.

Ken Balcomb, founding director of the Center for Whale Research, said photos taken of J17 on New Year's Eve showed the 42-year-old female has so-called peanut head, a misshapen head and neck caused by starvation. In addition, K25, a 27-year-old male, is also failing from lack of sufficient food. He lost his mother, K13, in 2017 and is not successfully foraging on his own.

"I am confident we are going to lose them sometime before summer," Balcomb said.

Drone photography this past summer showed K25 to be noticeably thinner, and photos taken of him again in this winter show no improvement, Balcomb said.

Several whales were documented to be pregnant in September, but so far there has been no sign of any babies. The southern residents have not had a successful pregnancy in three years.

The troubling news comes on top of a grim year in 2018 for the southern residents, the J, K and L pods of fish-eating orcas that frequent the Salish Sea, which includes Puget Sound and the transboundary waters of the United States and Canada, as well as the West Coast of the United States.

The southern resident population is at a 35-year low after three deaths this past year in four months. There are only 74 left.

"I am going to stop counting at 70," Balcomb said. "What is the point?"

Losing J17 would be a blow to the southern residents because she is a female still of reproducing age, said Deborah Giles, research scientist for University of Washington Center for Conservation Biology and research director for nonprofit Wild Orca.

Giles said she was not surprised to hear about K25. The social dynamics of the southern residents, in which older females help their pod, and especially their sons by sharing food, is both a blessing and a curse if that female dies, Giles said.

"These large, adult, hungry males benefit by the females in their family," Giles said. "There probably is still family foraging going on, but not like he had when his mom was alive."

As for J17, "that is the worst of those two, the thought of losing her, she is such an important



CENTER FOR WHALE RESEARCH

Orca J17 rolls on her side, showing the dramatic constriction in the shape of her neck, which should be a smooth line. The condition, known as peanut head, is a sign of starvation in killer whales.

member for the southern resident community," Giles said.

J17 is the mother of J35, or Tahlequah, who moved people around the world when in 2018 she carried her dead calf that lived for only one half-hour on her head for more than 1,000 miles over the course of 17 days.

The family already has been through a lot.

"We have no idea what that grandmother went through, watching her daughter carry around that baby as long as she did," Giles said. "What would that have been like. To watch your daughter go through that grief and not have much you can do about it."

The same family in 2016 also lost J54, a 1-year-old whale the whole family tried to support, especially his sister, J46, feeding him, and lifting the baby whale up with their teeth every time he started to sink. "The other whales were trying to support him," Balcomb said. "He had tooth rakes all over his body, but it wasn't malicious. He was sinking."

It is hard to confront a new year with two whales already failing, Giles said. "It is this anticipatory grief. I am worried. And I am afraid."

Drone photography taken in September showed the southern residents went into the winter thinner than they were when the whales arrived in the San Juan Is-

lands last summer. They also are thinner than the northern residents, which have been steadily growing in population for the past 40 years in their home waters primarily in northern B.C. and southeast Alaska, where they have access to more fish and cleaner and quieter water. The northern residents gave birth to 10 new calves last year.

The southern residents look particularly thin next to the seal-eating transient, or Bigg's, killer whales.

"They are like marshmallows," Balcomb said.

The coming year is not looking any easier for the southern residents in terms of their food supply. The whales mostly eat chinook salmon.

Ocean conditions and poor river migration, with warm water and low flows, have hurt chinook salmon returns in the past several years. Even Columbia River fall chinook, a bright spot by comparison in the region, came back to the river in such low numbers last summer that a rare emergency fishing closure was enacted on the river from the mouth all the way to Pasco.

Only 186,862 fall chinook made it back below Bonneville dam in 2018, 65 percent below the 10-year average. Returns over Bonneville of jacks, or immature chinook, which can be a reliable predictor of this year's return, were down to

61 percent below the 10-year average.

Columbia River chinook are important to the whales because they are among the biggest, fattiest fish of all. The whales also target chinook returning to rivers in Puget Sound and, in the summer, to the Fraser River. Those runs have been declining as well.

The whales' behavior is changing as their food sources dwindle. They are arriving later in the San Juan Islands because the Fraser River chinook runs they seek in those waters have so declined. The southern residents also are no longer often seen in large groups, in a pattern of feeding, then socializing, then resting before going on to a new spot.

"They do not have enough fish to feed them. They are spread out all over. We never see them like it was 30, 40 years ago when they would travel and find fish, then be playful, then rest, then travel again, that was the pattern," Balcomb said.

"You don't see them resting any more. They have to work all the time, every day."

He said proposals put forward for the whales in the governor's \$1.1 billion budget for orca recovery, including a temporary ban on whale watching of the southern residents, don't go far enough.

"We need bold action," Balcomb said. "Natural rivers and more chinook salmon."

## WSU

Continued from 1

### From casual conversation to a new program

Brenda Barrio, the program's interim director and an assistant professor with the College of Education, had long wanted to develop a special education program on campus.

The majority of students with intellectual disabilities often struggle to adapt to society after leaving the K-12 system, Barrio said. Only 14 percent of individuals with intellectual disabilities are employed in the U.S., she said.

"Most of them are not able to obtain jobs because there are not enough opportunities, or because they do not have the skills or training to do so," Barrio said.

Other four-year universities across the country already had created similar programs. Barrio believed WSU possessed the existing infrastructure to mold a suitable curriculum.

"With Pullman being so small, and the university being so big, and having so many opportunities for internships, we thought that this was the perfect place to do something like this," Barrio said.

Because the university was cutting budgets in many programs, Barrio looked to donors. It took more than a year and a half of fundraising coupled with university promotions to gather enough funding to launch the program.

Eventually, ROAR was accredited as a federally approved Comprehensive Transition Program aimed at providing students with intellectual disabilities access to either classes on campus, housing or internships. From there, Barrio got the go-

ahead from WSU.

Barrio said the two main goals of the ROAR program are to allow students to continue their education while living independently and working toward a career.

For Evan and the three other students enrolled, this includes going to class, living together in designated apartment units and possibly participating in internships.

Barrio wants to expand ROAR's enrollment to 10 students for the fall semester.

"This has honestly been one of the coolest things that I've ever done in my life," she said.

### Family connection helps ease transition

The Henninger family had similar feelings.

Evan's family has 15 aunts and uncles, eight cousins, three grandparents, two older sisters and a mom who attended WSU. In many ways, Evan is just the next in a line of WSU students.

For Mike and Lisa Henninger, of Bellingham, the prospect of sending their son across the state was daunting. Now, months later, they say the program has allowed Evan to become more independent and confident.

"The other day, he said they had a leak in the toilet, so he called maintenance," Lisa said. "My other kids would have called me first to figure out what to do. But Evan, he figured it out on his own."

Shortly after Evan received his acceptance letter, his cousin, Jayson Gibb, was accepted into a sports management master's program at WSU's College of Education. The two share a close bond. At the center of their relationship is a passion for WSU sports.

"Throughout the family, I could not think of a bigger Cougars fan than Evan,"

said Gibb, a graduate assistant strength and conditioning coach for WSU Athletics. "It doesn't matter what sport was going on, Evan was always updating and checking in, making sure there was a TV around or a radio on that we could definitely listen in to."

At the beginning of the semester, a professor reached out to Gibb, asking if he knew of any internships within the athletic department. A student in the ROAR program was interested, the professor said. Sure enough, it was Evan.

From there, Evan worked with the WSU soccer team in various roles. He assisted the equipment manager in setting up pregame warm-ups, observed team workouts with the strength and conditioning coaches, and met players and coaching staff.

The coolest part of the experience for Gibb was seeing faculty members advocate for Evan.

"They were going out of their way to help Evan find an internship," Gibb said. "They wanted to see him get an internship within athletics, and they knew I was a graduate assistant within athletics. This opportunity just shows how community-based Washington State truly is."

Gibb has seen Evan's level of independence grow dramatically. At the start of the semester, Evan frequently messaged Gibb with questions. Now, those phone calls and text messages have steadily decreased.

"He's cooking for himself," Gibb said. "Evan can eat a bunch, but he's kind of understanding (how to balance). I tell him, 'OK, maybe let's have soda once a week.' I always check in with him, kind of have a little joke going with that. But he's learning to become very independent."

On a Friday in late November, Evan

went to Bohler Gym to visit the athletic offices and talk with a reporter about his experiences with ROAR. He had no idea that Gibb was going to join in on the interview.

As Gibb walked in the door, Evan's face lit up with a smile and he yelled, "Jayson!" Evan smiled as the two swapped stories about their families, reunions and shared memories.

One of Evan's favorite spots on campus is Gibb Pool, named after his great uncle. Evan, who swam in the 2017 Special Olympics, takes a weekly swimming class. Jayson noted that Evan is a "heck of a swimmer."

This semester, Evan took one sports management class — it does not count for academic credit — and two mandatory ROAR program classes in life skills and health.

Evan is looking forward to taking another round of classes next semester through the ROAR program. He expects to finish the program in May 2020. When he does, he will receive a certificate provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

At the same time, Jayson will earn his master's degree in sports management education. The cousins will add two links to a long line of WSU heritage when they graduate together.

Gibb said ROAR brought him and Evan, and their entire families, closer together. Gibb and the Henningers intend to stay involved with the program after Evan graduates.

"To be able to have both aspects and what I've seen them do in the events I've been at for these kids and families, it's something I want to continue to support throughout the years," Gibb said. "It's something I truly believe in and I want more kids to have this opportunity."