

TODAY'S WEATHER

WAFLING: A chance of showers, with sunbreaks later. High: 54. Low: 38. Details, B6



IN THE NEWS

Drivers beware: It might be a bit tricky

This morning's commute around Tacoma could get messy as drivers get used to traffic revisions from the Nalley Valley Viaduct project. Major changes went into effect over the weekend that may cause delays for drivers on Interstates 5 and state Route 16.

- The Sprague Avenue exit on SR 16 is closed and will remain closed until the project's end in 2011.
- Westbound traffic on SR 16 is detoured onto a temporary roadway.
- The recently reconfigured southbound onramp from Interstate 705 to I-5 is adding congestion on I-705 and state Route 7.

The Washington State Department of Transportation advises drivers to prepare for the changes – and take an alternate route if possible.

"While these revisions will be in effect for the next year, we expect traffic flow to stabilize within the first month as drivers use alternate routes and become more familiar with the changes," said Kevin Dayton, WSDOT region administrator. "This will be difficult for some motorists, but the better they plan ahead and reassess their routes, the less traffic they'll have to contend with."

How to stop a runaway car

In the midst of all the Toyota controversy, a California Highway Patrol officer advised drivers to use both regular and emergency brakes to stop a runaway car. A local driving instructor takes issue with that advice.

SEE TRAFFIC Q&A, PAGE A3.

One the one hand, and on the other

She's young, but she's doesn't know how to send a text message. She doesn't eat meat, but she carries a leather purse. She applauds those who bike to get around, but she drives everywhere. She's a bundle of contradictions.

SEE KARI VAN BAALEN'S COLUMN, PAGE A9.

It's like nature's soap opera

Hailstorms and crop-eating jackals in Zimbabwe. Well-fed whooping cranes in Texas. Shrinking birds elsewhere, possibly due to climate change. Ugly cyclones, sandstorms and earthquakes. It's just another typical week of mayhem on ol' Planet Earth.

SEE EARTHWEEK, PAGE A8.

Many, many thanks for so many shoes

The boots on the ground on the Tideflats are bound for Haiti, in honor of Molly Hightower's memory.

SEE KATHLEEN MERRYMAN'S COLUMN, PAGE A3.

Trying to re-energize D.C. on immigration

Frustrated by the lack of attention to immigration overhaul, tens of thousands travel to a rally at the National Mall.

SEE NATION & WORLD, PAGE A5.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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ZAGS GOING HOME

SPORTS, B1



UW TO FACE WEST VIRGINIA

SPORTS, B1

HOUSE OKS HEALTH CARE

219-212: Democrats OK historic measure

BY DAVID ESPO
 The Associated Press

WASHINGTON – Summoned to success by President Barack Obama, the Democratic-controlled Congress approved historic legislation Sunday night extending health care to tens of millions of uninsured Americans and cracking down on insurance company abuses, a climactic chapter in the century-long quest for near universal coverage.

Widely viewed as dead two months ago, the Senate-passed bill cleared the House on a 219-212 vote. Republicans were unanimous in opposition, joined by 34 dissident Democrats.

Obama watched the vote in the White

House's Roosevelt Room with Vice President Joe Biden and dozens of aides. When the long sought 216th vote came in – the number needed for passage – the room burst into applause.

"We proved that we are still a people capable of doing big things," the president said a short while later in televised remarks. "We proved that this government – a government of the people and by the people – still works for the people."

A second, smaller measure – making changes in the first – cleared the House shortly before midnight and was sent to the Senate, where Democratic leaders said they had the votes necessary to pass it quickly. The House vote was 220-211.

Far beyond the political ramifications – a concern the president repeatedly insisted he

Please see HEALTH, back page

State gets White House promise on Medicare

BY LES BLUMENTHAL
 Staff writer

WASHINGTON – The health care bill approved Sunday by the House of Representatives lays the groundwork to overhaul a Medicare reimbursement formula that has punished Washington state.

The bill also provides \$800 million over two years to doctors and hospitals in Washington and other states until changes are made.

Rewriting the formula has been a top priority of the Washington congressional delegation, but in the end the effort was stymied by complicated budget rules. Instead,

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Now, everyone knows



JANET JENSEN/Staff photographer

Outside her home in University Place, Dorothy Olsen dons the aviator glasses she wore as a member of the Women Airforce Service Pilots service during World War II. Below, Olsen hangs out with service members during the war.

WASP: Local women among those recognized for piloting planes during World War II

BY SCOTT FONTAINE
 Staff writer

The military asked Dorothy Olsen to fly fighter planes. It called upon Mary Jean Sturdevant to fly training aircraft.

They had to pay their way to their military bases. They had to pay bus fare home. They weren't given military rank, nor did they receive veteran status for decades.

They were women doing a man's job – or so went the attitudes in the 1940s – so all the records of the Women Airforce Service Pilots remained classified for 35 years.

"No one seemed to know who we were, what we did," said Sturdevant, now 88 and living in Spanaway.

But more than six decades after the end of the program, the WASPs were honored March 10 in Washington, D.C., amid great fanfare. Each received the Congressional Gold Medal, the top honor awarded to a civilian.

"It was beautiful," said Olsen, 93, of University Place. "It seemed everyone knew us and what we were there for. I almost got hugged to death."

The experiences of the WASPs, who flew stateside missions to free up men to fly in the Pacific and European theaters, first came to the public eye in 1977. President Jimmy Carter signed legislation that year granting them full military status for their



Olsen family photo

service, and each member received the World War II Victory Medal in 1984.

Olsen and Sturdevant were among 11 Washingtonians who attended this month's celebration at the Capitol. They met with

Please see WASP, back page

School district tries to find ways to improve math performance

TACOMA: Committee to present report next month on what to do to meet new state standards

BY DEBBIE CAFAZZO
 Staff writer

Jennifer Boutell's daughter Daphne was cruising along successfully in math. Until this year.

That's when the third-grader at Grant Center for the Expressive Arts in Tacoma encountered a new textbook that uses a different teaching approach from her earlier years.

"She has been very frustrated and describes her math experience this year as 'pointless and stupid,'" Boutell wrote in an e-mail to a Tacoma Public Schools administrator. "In trying to help her with her math homework, I have come to a somewhat similar opinion, although I'd probably put it a bit more nicely."

Concerns over math instruction in public education are hardly new. Debate has long raged over which approach is best: so-called inquiry-based math, which guides kids to discover math concepts in hopes of cementing solid understanding, or more back-to-basics direct instruction on how to do calculations.

Many educators urge a blending of the two methods.

On a quest for what works best, Rosanne Fulton, Tacoma's assistant superintendent, launched a district-wide review of math teaching last fall.

A committee of 30 Tacoma administrators and teachers took a look at math curriculum, with a focus on what's being taught from kindergarten through eighth grade. Fulton said high schools already have a solid program in algebra and geometry.

The Tacoma School Board will hear what Ful-

Please see MATH, back page

MATH SCORES

Older students score lower than younger ones on state math tests. In Tacoma, the trend holds – and the scores were even lower. The chart below shows the percent of students who met math standards in 2008-09.

	Third grade	Sixth grade	10th grade
State	66.3%	50.9%	45.4%
Tacoma	55.5%	38.9%	30.9%

