



HOCKETT'S HOT SHEET

A Weekly Update on OlyCAP from Tim Hockett, Executive Director

Recent Additions to the OlyCAP Board of Directors

In recent weeks I have been pursuing a plan to build our board to its full complement of fifteen members. Community Action agencies are required by statute to have a tri-partite board comprised of one-third locally elected officials, one-third representatives from the clients served and one-third other interested parties. This structure helps insure that local needs are addressed and that balanced discussion about planning and programming occurs. The size of the board is left to the local community to determine. For our purposes, especially for certification under certain fund-raising rules in Washington State, we have decided we need a board of fifteen (15) people — so we need five from each category listed above. At the beginning of the summer our board was comprised of only eight people. I am happy to report that we have added three new members to our board. They are: Jessica Coggins, Dr. Ed Hopfner and Gary Braun.

Jessica Coggins is a mother of four from Port Townsend and is an eloquent voice for those who have to struggle to make ends meet. She is excited to serve on our board and has already been helpful in board discussions. Jessica was featured in one of our Home Fund articles last fall.

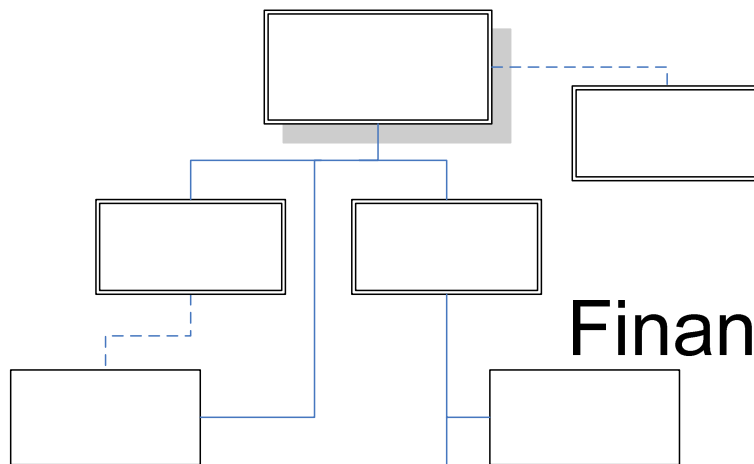
Dr. Ed Hopfner is a “retired” physician who has made his retirement anything but a quiet life observed from a porch swing. He, together with his wife Phyllis, developed the free clinic in Port Angeles formerly known as the PAARC Clinic and have been instrumental in establishing the Volunteers in Medicine Clinic. An avid supporter of the poor and uninsured, Ed has given tirelessly to the community. Ed and Phyllis were commended by Governor Gregoire for their voluntarism. Both have also been longtime supporters of OlyCAP.

Gary Braun agreed to serve on our board as a representative of the City Council of Port Angeles. Gary has been on the Council since 1992 and brings a wealth of municipal expertise to us. Gary is a gentleman and an encourager. His career was spent on the Port Angeles Fire Department from which he retired in 1985 after 26 years of service.

Our hope is to continue to add to the board until we have 15 members: 7 members representing Jefferson County and 8 members representing Clallam.

New Org Chart for the FBI

Not *that* FBI — *our* FBI. Our administrative department that deals with finance, business and information services (get it? FBI) has restructured. In an effort to serve all of us better, the fiscal and tech teams are now organized per the attached chart. Ginger Bischel, in addition to serving as my Executive Assistant, will lend a hand facilitating our budgeting and contracting processes. I want to offer my special thanks to everyone on this team for working so hard to support all of our divisions and administration. Please see attached chart on p. 2.



Finance, Business

Oct

Business policy & vision
 Financial management
 Risk management
 Bank reconciliations
 Budget processing

Director of
 Business Se
 Eileen John

Network management
 Technology and
 equipment repairs
 Phone system mgmt

IT Systems
 Administrator
 Lonny Loftin



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United Way and United Good Neighbors

Each year OlyCAP receives thousands of dollars from the larger community as it donates to United Way in Clallam County and United Good Neighbors in Jefferson County. This year we were allocated \$27,835 from United Way for various programs and \$58,050 from United Good Neighbors in support of our efforts in Jefferson County. Taken together with \$13,000 allocated to us in local government monies managed by United Way, and these funds amount to nearly \$100,000!

This is why I find it easy to support these fund drives. Each year I allow the fiscal department to deduct from my paycheck a monthly amount that is forwarded to United Way and UGN. It is tax deductible and it is simple to do.

You will soon receive a pledge card; this is a great opportunity to give. I hope you will join me in this effort. Please be as generous as you are able. Did I mention that you can actually designate your donation to either OlyCAP in general or to a favorite OlyCAP program? You certainly can. In the past, our agency's contribution has amounted to less than 2% of what we get in return. Let's bump that up a few notches!

Driving in the Dark

I am not talking about nighttime driving — I am talking about playing golf at night. Last Saturday Ken Dane, his wife Kathy, Eileen Johnston (Chief Financial Officer) and I formed a foursome to compete in Port Townsend's first time ever nighttime golf tournament at Discovery Bay Golf Club. The Sunrise Rotary Club approached us to partner with them in the event as a fundraiser. Ken Dane (Resource Developer) was the brainchild behind the golf at night idea and worked hard to make sure the event was well publicized. Ryan Anderson from American Marine Bank did a huge amount in behalf of Rotary to make the event so well organized. Not only did many teams participate, but many local businesses contributed as sponsors.

How did we do it? We used lighted golf balls, glow sticks and flash lights. Did it work? Well ... we got lost a few times (despite the moonlight) and Eileen fell into one of the sand traps, but otherwise — yes, it was great. The event raised over \$4,000 and a lot of people had fun and learned about OlyCAP as well. Special thanks to Nancy Blackmer and Eileen for their efforts at cart decorating (you should have seen the pink flamingo) and to Ken and Kathy Dane for their good-natured volunteering.



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Dinner and a Murder — to Benefit RSVP

On December 9th, an exciting murder mystery theater presentation and dinner will be held in Port Townsend (the new Commons at Fort Worden State Park) as the signature fundraising event for our own Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). *Death in Them Thar Hills* will chronicle the demise of gold miner Dusty Jones at the hands of a resident of Cactus Gulch. Join in the inter-active play, put on your crime-solving caps and discover who the culprit is! A wonderful dinner will be served along with special desserts. Tickets are \$50 per person and are going fast. Tables seating 8 are \$400 and many businesses are purchasing whole tables.

At any given time RSVP has about 600 active volunteers. Together they provide over 100,000 hours of service annually to dozens of work stations in Jefferson and Clallam Counties. Whether it's pointing you in the right direction at the County Courthouse or hospital, helping keep an eye on children at a daycare, guiding folks at a local museum, delivering meals on wheels or tutoring kids who need extra help, RSVP volunteers enable many local programs to serve our communities even better. Call Bob Logue, Program Manager of RSVP to reserve your place. He may be reached at 360-385-2571 ext. 6324. We *MUST* identify Dusty's killer!

Community Forums Being Scheduled

As an integral part of our strategic planning process, OlyCAP will host three community forums to enlist the help of any and all who would like to review our recently completed **community needs assessment**. The events will first feature a presentation on the results of our assessment and will then provide an opportunity for community members and available OlyCAP staff to provide feedback. The groups will be asked: 1) to tell us what is already happening to address the identified needs; 2) to evaluate the effectiveness of what is already being done; 3) to suggest what should be done further to address the needs; and 4) to envision what success would look like.

The forums will take place during the lunch hours on 11/6 in Port Angeles (Clallam Transit Board Room), 11/8 in Jefferson County (Tri-Area Community Center), and 11/16 in Forks (Forks Rec Center). Lunch items will be provided. Invitations and newspaper notices will be going out this week. I will facilitate the presentations and the management team will be asked to attend. Any other staff who can get away from their work stations are more than welcome.



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Using the Broad Power of OlyCAP to Help People

One of the biggest challenges we face as an agency is the breadth and scope of our services. It is not unusual for our own employees to be unaware of the programs and services we provide. Is it surprising, then, for our customers and clients not to realize that two different programs from which they receive assistance are somehow connected within OlyCAP?

A longstanding goal of our management team has been to find ways to make sure that *all* of our clients in *all* of our programs receive *all* the help we can muster. So, if someone needs food, and dental care, and a home care aide, he/she will get it all from OlyCAP. It is the surest way to stabilize people quickly and make sure that the strongest opportunity for self-sufficiency is provided to them by us.

Achieving this goal requires several things: 1) we must all realize that people often have needs beyond what our specific program provides; 2) we must be willing to look at folks from a more global perspective; and 3) we must both learn about other OlyCAP services and be ready to cooperate with other OlyCAP staff for the sake of our clients.

I wish you could all see the effectiveness of this kind of attitude when we pull together for a client. For example, a family participating in an early childhood program needed help with home repair – our Head Start people asked for an assist from the Home Improvement team – and got it. Or again, a person sought emergency assistance in the wake of a fire; she not only received emergency support from a worker in the Community Support division but got additional help from staff of the Northwest Passage Thrift Shoppe. And it gets even better when two divisions actually take on work from each other; like when the senior nutrition program provides meals for the Adult Action Center or our Head Start program.

So let's remember to put our customers first. If they need more help than our particular program provides, let's turn to our colleagues within OlyCAP and see if we can enlist even more help.

A Tool to Make it Happen -- OlyCAP's Agency Resource Guide

The phenomenon that I describe above, inter-divisional cooperation was the subject of a lengthy study by our own Integrated Services Committee last year. One of their key recommendations was to develop an *Agency Resource Guide* that would lay out, in brief, all the programs and services that we provide. The goal would be to put into the hands of any and all employees the kind of information necessary to refer our clients effectively to additional OlyCAP services. Guess what? Thanks to the hard work of a few dedicated folks (Lisa Leggio, Nancy Blackmer, Ken Dane, Gordon Tickner, Bill Plumley and Jane Erbe) the guide is ready for publication.



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Frost on the Pumpkin

Brrrrr! I woke up this morning to the reminder that winter is quickly upon us. Frost covered everything. As I went out to warm up my car, I slipped and nearly fell. So I thought it would be a good time to remind everyone about safety and our own preparedness for winter.

First, please know that we want you well and safe. Be careful when you drive during the winter; the roads in many places throughout our region stay icy all day — especially in shadowy areas. Second, in the event of snow, make sure you are aware of OlyCAP's inclement weather policy. Early Childhood services tend to follow local school district closures. Senior centers want to err on the side of caution and not encourage fragile seniors to get out into a high risk situation where someone might slip, fall and break a hip. Central offices will try to remain open but each community must deal with closures based on local conditions. Provision should be made for isolated, homebound seniors to have an extra meal or two available in the event that Meals on Wheels cannot be delivered. Similarly, those folks receiving home care services should have a little personal plan for how to deal with even more isolation if there is a heavy snow. With a bit of planning and extra care, we will make it through winter without incident.

Dr. Wicklund Honored

At an impromptu meeting in OlyCAP's Oral Health Center, a plaque was given to Dr. Lance Wicklund last week for his outstanding service to our community. Dr. Wicklund has commuted from Bainbridge Island (where he is in private practice) on Fridays for the past year to see our low-income, uninsured patients. He is also planning to staff some mobile dental clinics in more remote reaches of our service area in the near future. It is because of Dr. Wicklund and many other professionals with a heart that OlyCAP is able to take on huge community challenges like access to health care.

Home Fund Coming!

Every year the *Peninsula Daily News* runs a series of articles on OlyCAP's effectiveness in dealing with emergencies. The articles feature clients and the unique stories associated with each one. The stories are the key to a huge benevolence drive called the **Home Fund**. Last year the Home Fund raised over \$135,000 to provide assistance for people facing a personal or family emergency. Because the fund is comprised of discretionary funds, we can help folks with a wide variety of needs. It is heartwarming to read about real giving and real helping. I hope that each of you will begin following this year's stories as they appear beginning Thanksgiving Day and then each Wednesday and Sunday for the balance of the year. I also want to take a minute here to commend all of our staff and volunteers who see people in emergencies. You are the action in community action.



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United Way and UGN Internal Campaign

Well ... I got my pledge sheets for United Way and United Good Neighbors. I hope, if you haven't already, that you will fill out that form now and make a generous contribution to benefit your local community. I want to be able to report to both UW and UGN that we have dramatically increased our contributions. I want to hear them say, "Wow!"

Benefits Update

Most of you have received from Mary Jo Smith (our Human Resources Director) the sheet containing the list of **paid holidays**. One of the major benefits to OlyCAP staff is to enjoy paid time off on holidays. Those who work consistently over 30 hours per week enjoy 11 paid holidays and part-time folks (under 29 hours per week) still enjoy five paid days off. I would remind those who work over 30 hours per week and who have passed at least 13 months in the employ of OlyCAP that they have a personal holiday each year that they may take. That holiday must be scheduled with approval from a supervisor.

A team has been working on other benefits and I am happy to announce that OlyCAP will absorb the 5.8% increase on our **medical plan** without increasing the employees' share. I am also going to restore coverage of eligible staff (those who work over 30 hours per week) with **life insurance**.

Other benefit enhancements are under discussion and I will update you as decisions are made.

Hats Off to Housing Improvement Team

After a thorough review of our weatherization program, CTED has lowered their level of concern expressed in a prior report and has removed its "at risk" designation from us. While we still have a lot of work to do, I want to congratulate Dan DiGuilio, Gordon Tickner and their team in the field for bringing a number of improvements and even considerable innovation to the program. We will continue to weatherize homes and permanently lower heat bills for struggling families.

"Sit high on that horse, Pilgrim!"

Eileen Johnston and Nancy Blackmer returned safely from Austin, Texas where they attended a user's training seminar presented by CTK, the tech firm behind our online data management system: CAPilot. Nancy and Eileen have considerable expertise in CAPilot and were honing their skills and learning about enhancements coming soon. "We worked with other users to identify common needs and strategize ways to improve the system," says Johnston, "and, by the way, the BBQ was out of this world!" Johnston and Blackmer ran into an old friend; **Dan Wollam** was looking well and sends his warmest regards.



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CDBG Application Due This Week

OlyCAP is a long-term awardee of what it called the federal Community Development Block Grant, affectionately known as "CDBG.". The CDBG program aims to help states/cities/counties develop suitable living environments, decent housing and economic opportunities - principally for low/moderate-income persons. The formula grants are used for: housing rehabilitation, neighborhood revitalization, public facilities and job creation. In Washington State, community action agencies get a blend of CDBG and other funds to provide some discretionary flexibility in each county. OlyCAP has drawn upon several categories of CDBG funds to accomplish a number of things including weatherization and rehabilitation of homes. But this week we will apply for \$695,000 from CDBG to augment other resources to purchase our facilities in Port Townsend. You may know that we have already been awarded \$400,000 to be included in the State's Community Facilities Fund in the Governor's budget for 2007. We have also a commitment from USDA to help us finance part of the purchase at very low interest. Bottom line is that by next September we expect to purchase our three buildings in PT. When that is done, we will be saving nearly \$100,000 a year well into the distant future. Ken Dane and Eileen Johnston have worked hard to develop this strategy and carry out the many steps to make the CDBG application happen. The City of Port Townsend is the sponsoring municipality for the grant and they have been our staunch supporters. The application is due the 15th and we should hear back from the State in early spring.

RSVP to Thank Volunteers

One of the best things that OlyCAP does is to recruit and use volunteers to make even more community service happen. The *Retired and Senior Volunteer Program* (RSVP), under the leadership of Bob Logue, does a dandy job of coordinating 100,000 hours of service a year. That's the equivalent of 50 full-time people working every day in service to the community.

This week two luncheons will be held (one in Jefferson and one in Clallam) simply to say "Thank You" to the many folks who serve. Whether it is driving for Meals on Wheels, putting together a food box at a food bank or guiding folks through a local museum — we need and love our volunteers. So, to all who volunteer, THANK YOU SO MUCH!

And don't forget the dinner/murder mystery theater that will occur December 9th at Fort Worden. Get your tickets now and support RSVP. For reservations call Bob in the Port Townsend office.

United Way and United Good Neighbors Update

I want to extend my thanks to those of you who contributed to this year's campaigns. Together we gave in excess of \$2,200. It is never too late to make a donation.



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I Am Thankful for YOU!

A few years ago our agency had coffee cups made with our logo on one side and a statement printed on the other side that read: *"I'm the ACTION in Community Action."* At the time they were made, the cups were intended as thank you gifts to those who had completed 5 or more years with us. On the occasion of this Thanksgiving Holiday I want to tell you "Thank you," and to tell you also of my conviction that we, as an agency, are so fortunate to have such dedicated, hard-working, caring employees. I am thankful for you; and I want to affirm to each of you that you, indeed, are the "ACTION in Community Action. Your 'actions' make a huge difference in the lives of our clients.

I am thankful for Rita, Bonnie and their team as they address the many emergency, employment and energy needs of our customers. I am thankful for Janet and her team as they address the needs of vulnerable children and their families. I am thankful for Robin and her folks as they help fragile adults through Home Care, Nutrition and Adult Action. I am thankful for the housing improvement team with Dan at their helm, improving the homes of dozens of families each year. I am thankful for the staff of the thrift store and motel as they work to serve the public and, at the same time, generate revenue for OlyCAP. I am thankful for our housing and shelter staff (Steve and deforest) who help keep needy families out of the cold, and for the Oral Health Center Staff (Dr. DeMoss, Maxine and their team) who help people with dental needs. And yes, I am thankful for our community center staff and food bank staff and for RSVP (thanks Bob) and the strong team of hundreds of volunteers who extend the strength of our staff by lending extra unpaid hands.

I am thankful for our board and its leadership by Judi Morris. And I am incredibly grateful for the administration of our agency; Eileen and the fiscal staff, Mary Jo and Val in HR and the tech gurus (Lonnie and Nancy) — departments that are perpetually overtaxed. And finally, I am thankful for Ginger, my assistant and for Ken as he helps me strengthen our agency financially. I could go on and on about our front desk folks, support staff, maintenance people, specialized programs like Crossroads and JARC and the many partners who allow us to have even greater impact through collaboration.

You no doubt have family, friends, co-workers, or partners that you consider to be a wonderful part of your life. Take a minute this week to tell those on your special list "Thank you." And if you are a hugger, give 'em a hug.



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One Disaster at a Time, Please!

You may notice that this Hot Sheet is being published and distributed on a Wednesday rather than on the usual Monday. Monday I busied myself with digging a path through the snow (we got a bit over a foot at our house in Port Angeles) so that we could feed the dogs and walk out to use a borrowed 4X4 pickup truck. I didn't get much else done.

Most OlyCAP sites were closed on Monday and Tuesday, yet a number of dedicated folks continued to do what they do best – help people. The Oral Health Center saw a number of clients and the dental hygiene students continued to learn. Staff who could manage, made it in to both the Early Childhood Resource Center and also the Port Townsend office.

Robin Gibson reported to me that at least one intrepid home care aide, Pat Hutto, got her fearless husband to take her to a number of housebound folks who needed care. Similarly, Jane Simpson, Home Care Supervisor, braved the elements and traveled into Forks from Neah Bay in order to help where she could. It is a scary time when weather sidelines us. We take our jobs as community helpers very seriously. We are worrying out loud about elders who are running out of medications, about people with no power and therefore without heat, about folks risking travel on icy roadways.

I want all of us to remember two rules of thumb as we face this week's weather: 1) As the OlyCAP team, others are depending on us to help them – so we need to make extra effort to be available; but 2) as the OlyCAP team, we need to make sure we keep ourselves safe and uninjured so that we can perform our jobs when the weather allows us back. The balancing of these two responsibilities requires excellent judgment. I cannot and will not impose my 'better' judgment on you as individuals.

I will pledge to you whatever support I can provide so that you can do the job you want to do as you are able. If you want to come to work and your supervisor also needs you and can support you at your worksite, please ask for transportation assistance and we will do all we feasibly can to help you get to and from home.

As I write this, Robin has come to tell me it is snowing again. She philosophically asked: Will the snow get worse? Or will it begin to thaw and then cause floods?

I had to answer, "One disaster at a time, please!"



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52 Weeks Went By Quickly

This is Hockett's Hot Sheet Number 52, marking a year for me in this leadership role. So much has happened that it is almost too much to comprehend and absorb.

OlyCAP has come a long way in the past twelve months, but we have so much further to go. I am so happy with the team that works closest with me, both administrators and division leaders. All of you feel, in one way or another, their daily dedication.

We began the year with a quest to make the agency stronger by following a financially conservative approach involving: steps to stop recurring program deficits; wise and careful cuts in program and administration spending; a multi-pronged resource development effort; and additional financing. I am confident that all these steps will make us stronger than ever — unfortunately, the trouble was deep and the effects of these changes will not be fully felt until January or February. I am so pleased with new staff we have brought on board this year. Many of them are in leadership roles and will have an enduring, positive impact on the agency and on the community.

I am excited about the coming year. Our progress putting together financing to purchase the Port Townsend offices is excellent. That transaction (which we hope will happen this fall) will significantly reduce our overall facilities costs. The Oral Health Center is blossoming with tremendous levels of service. Our strategic plan will be developed in January, charting a new future for us. New opportunities will come to us as we strive to address the needs of our neighbors. Housing, Transportation, Child Care, Employment, Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Access to Health Care, Seniors, Teens, Education — all of these community needs will be met with the combined strength of OlyCAP and its network of partners — all in the trust that we can make this a better place to live.

Home Fund In Full Swing

Just a reminder that the *Peninsula Daily News Home Fund* is under way. Each Wednesday and Sunday the newspaper features individuals or families who have been assisted by OlyCAP using the Home Fund. Local residents donate with confidence to the fund, knowing that no money is taken for administrative or overhead costs. Last year the fund reached over \$135,000. We expect to help 1,500 households by the end of this year. Read the stories — they reflect the service of an incredible, caring community through the efforts of a very effective community action agency.

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A Little Good News!

I was meeting with administrators of the Medina Foundation in Seattle last Friday. Ken Dane joined us and we had very productive talks. We are hopeful that Medina will assist us with our capital campaign and the purchase of our Port Townsend facilities.

After Ken dropped me off at my car, my cell phone rang. It was a program officer from another foundation — the Washington Dental Service Foundation. She was calling to tell us that OlyCAP's Oral Health Center had been awarded \$95,000 for equipment and selected operations costs. Yes, I actually did a dance right there on the sidewalk!

I want to thank Ken Dane, Dr. DeMoss and Maxine Hoffman for the outstanding job they did on the application, but more importantly, for the hard work they continue to do to make this an extraordinary service to the community.

Quilt for Adult Action

The staff and volunteers of Adult Action have quilted a nice holiday quilt and are now taking bids on it to raise funds for the center. It is really a work of art. If you would like to make an auction bid on the quilt, please call Ann Ritter at Adult Action (360) 547-6801.

The center, which provides day care for adults who suffer from some form of disability, also has openings for participants. Food, fun, fellowship all await those who participate. If you have a loved one who needs this service, or know a family caring for a disabled elder, please call Adult Action. That's why we are here.



Ann Ritter, center, stands with a group of folks at Adult Action. They are holding the holiday quilt — now up for bid.





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Dinner Theater Fundraiser Big Success

Over 220 supporters of OlyCAP attended the First Annual Dinner/Murder Mystery fund raising event held at the beautiful, new Fort Worden Commons last Saturday, December 9th. Ticket holders were treated to an evening of fun, excellent food, and a stirring drama presented by an incredible troupe of local actors. After a brief welcome from me and Bob Logue, our Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Director, the stage was set with the townsfolk of Cactus Gulch commending their newly enriched friend, gold miner Dusty Jones. Amid all the compliments and accolades, however, each one revealed a motive for being upset with Dusty. Then ... you guessed it, Dusty was killed. The balance of the evening was spent enjoying a wonderful meal and visiting with all the players in an attempt to surface the clues necessary to deduce "who dun it."

Bob tells me that the event raised about \$5,000! But we also raised lots of new friends. I want to thank Bob for an excellent time and all the staff who managed to attend. I was so proud to be associated with such a quality event. Good job!

Have You Taken Note of our New PT Mailing Address?

For years we have used a post office box. We have now switched to a box right in the business park where our offices are located. Please use the following as our mailing address: **803 W. Park Ave., Port Townsend, WA 98368.**

Minimum Wage Goes Up January 1, 2007

Minimum wage will go up to \$7.93 per hour starting January 1, 2007. It is my understanding that this will be the highest of any State in the nation. Any grade level or step that currently pays less than the new minimum wage will be raised to minimum wage. I have chosen not to adjust any other grades or steps upward until we complete our compensation study.

Bald Spots

In the recent windstorm my roof lost a few shingles creating a couple of 'bald spots.' The spots were each about the size of my desk. I got the stuff to re-shingle the bald areas of the roof and as I got out my ladder, my neighbor's teen son came over to lend a hand. I was touched by his generous offer to help me. That's *community action*.



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Looking Back

At the close of a year it is hard not to reflect back on what has happened at OlyCAP in 2006. It is important for me because it completes a calendar year of my role at the helm as Executive Director and I value this position above any other that I have occupied.

My *first* impulse is to feel a sense of satisfaction. Despite our shortcomings, we accomplished so much to lift up our struggling neighbors. I wish all of you could sit on my shoulder as I interview folks for Home Fund stories. It is they who reflect our REAL purpose and REAL success. We talk about our facilities improvements, our grant awards, and our administrative or programmatic achievements (and they are numerous and significant) — yet it is for nothing without the many lives we change. As a direct outgrowth of our effectiveness, I received a very positive evaluation a few weeks ago from our Board Chair, Judi Morris. I am most grateful. But my success is directly attributable to the wonderful, hard-working OlyCAP team. YOU all get the credit for a job well done.

My *second* impulse is to feel a sense of inadequacy. We, as an agency, and I, as an individual, have shortcomings. Sometimes I feel like there is so much need and so few resources that we will collapse under the weight of just trying. I am so proud of the recent work that was completed to assess community needs, yet a close reading of that assessment tells us that we have a lot of work to do: housing, transportation, child care, employment, drug and alcohol use, access to health care (including mental health care), the needs of seniors, teens and our educational system — it seems the only thing not on the list was World Peace! It is a daunting responsibility to ask the community “Where do you hurt?” and then presume we can somehow offer to help. But help we must, and help we will!

But another big challenge is to keep our agency strong as it tackles community needs. As a manager and administrator, I have learned to be a ‘systems’ thinker; that quality propels me to want to fix entire systems within our agency — not merely symptoms of problems. Our management team has often heard me say in the wake of a problem, “Now, let’s go back and make sure this doesn’t happen again!” It is in this area that I feel we still have so far to go. Many policies and procedures need to be refined and improved so we can rise to the challenges facing us. Processes need to be revamped and sometimes revamped again so that we can continuously improve as an agency. While we gained a lot of ground in 2006, some processes still need much more work. And it seems to take so long to fix things.

Now 2007 is upon us and my sense of satisfaction and feelings of inadequacy are giving way to excitement. As we turn this page in OlyCAP’s history, join with me in a new resolve to be the best at what we do — helping people to help themselves. Wow!