DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE TRI-CITIES • PART 1 OF 2

STANDING TALL

Julie Cooper is a domestic violence survivor who wants to use her experience to help others cope with their own physical and emotional trauma after she finishes school to become a psychologist.

Deaths of two women, allegedly at hands of boyfriends, highlight domestic violence locally

PAULA HORTON • PHHORTON@TRICITYHERALD.COM

J ulie Cooper looks in the mirror now and can't help but smile. She's a strong, competent woman who doesn't need a man to survive. It's a stark contrast to how the 40-year-old Richland woman felt four years ago after her 12-year marriage ended and she was set up on a blind date with a man who later physically abused her.

The relationship turned sour nearly immediately, but she endured the same-skinning and beating as casually as drinking. She stayed with him and got worse because "the prospect of being alone scared the crap out of me." Cooper became one of nearly 1.5 million women in the nation each year who are physically assaulted by an intimate partner.

Domestic violence is one of the most common crimes in America, and like so many others, one of the most under-reported crimes, advocates say. Victims often suffer in silence because of fear, shame and secrecy.

But the recent deaths of two young women, allegedly at the hands of their ex-boyfriends, within two weeks of each other have highlighted domestic violence in the Tri-Cities.

See STANDING • Page A6

STORY CONTINUES TOMORROW WITH A LOOK AT OBSTACLES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS FACE

COLUMBIA, SNAKE RIVERS

Big salmon, steelhead runs amaze biologists

KEVIN MCCULLEN • KMCCULLEN@TRICITYHERALD.COM

Nineteen percent of salmon and steelhead returning to the Columbia River are well above the 10-year average again this year, including a record sockeye run that's more than double the last two previous years, according to the Northwest Fisheries Science Center.

But it's still too early to call this year a "good" year in the Columbia and Snake Rivers. Biologists are concerned about continued changes in the river's habitat caused by water diversion, too much water being released from reservoirs, and effects of dams and fish passage.

Numbers of salmon and steelhead returning this year are helping to improve fish population numbers and to给您 Continuation tomorrow.

See BENEFITS • Page A2

SOCIAL SECURITY

Benefits may not kick in till age 70 if idea catches on

DAVID LIGHTMAN • DLIGHTMAN@TRICITYHERALD.COM

WASHINGTON — Young Americans might not get full Social Security retirement benefits until they reach age 70 if nonobligatory balloons that prominent lawmakers of both parties are floating become law.

No one who deeds to receive benefits in the next decade or two is likely to be affected, but there's a gentle, growing and unlikely bipartisan push to raise the retirement age for full Social Security benefits for people born from the 2030s and after.

The suggestions are being taken seriously among lawmakers when they were politically impossible because officials — and, increasingly, their constituents — are continuing to live longer.

See OIL • Page A2

GULF COAST DISASTER

Oil flows freely for chance at better fix

NEW ORLEANS — Robotic submarines working a mile underwater removed a leaking cap from the gushing Gulf oil well Friday, starting a painful trade-off: Millions more gallons of crude oil flow freely into the sea for at least two days and a new cap can't be mounted to capture all of it.

There's no guarantee for such a delicate operation almost a mile below the wrtcher's surface, officials said, and the permanent fix of plugging the well from the bottom remains a Red-Hot.
**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**From PAC A2**

“A terrible losen for those two banne,” she said, “a lesson for the whole community,” said Kelly Abken, director of Domestic Violence Services of Benton & Franklin Counties. “I’m hopeful it’s a wake-up call for the community.”

The numbers show the domestic violence incident incidence is not an isolated event.

Last year, there were 468 domestic violence offenses reported in the state — a 3 percent increase over the 454 reported in 2008, according to the Washington Association of Sheriff and Police Chiefs.

Franklin County saw a 9 percent increase when compared with 377 reported in 2008.

The top three offenses last year were simple assault (168 in Benton County and 61 in Franklin County), violations of no-contact orders (52 such in Benton and Franklin counties combined and 73 in Benton County and 36 in Franklin County).

**Three homicides this year**

No domestic violence was involved in the three Tri-Cities cases killed earlier this year, but two of the three homicides in Franklin County this year are being linked to domestic violence.

“Domestic violence is one of the three major focuses of both our workload and our emphasis,” said Franklin County Prosecutor Steve Meza.

“Domestic violence is any violence that occurs between people who have a relationship and it can come in physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, financial and psychological. Victims who are physically abused, she said. “So many perpetrators say, ‘You’re overreacting. You’re being unreasonable.’"

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Toughening sentencing OK?

In June, tougher sentencing enhancements for repeat domestic abusers went into effect after being approved by the Legislature earlier this year, but that didn’t make a difference in Copen’s mind.

The law proposed by Attorney General Bob McCasland, aimed to strengthen-criminal sanctions against domestic abusers, was a failure in that it doesn’t account for a family domestic violence history.

“The key to mandamus contri-

uations will be not being serious about domestic violence,” McCasland said. “In the old law, when an individual was convicted of domestic violence, some of the mandamus were not convicted so their sentences didn’t reflect that they had a prior criminal history.”

The law in turn also increases the sentencing range for abusers with a prior domestic violence conviction. Now

there’s more weight given to that prior conviction, putting the standard sentencing range up, McCasland said.

About 7 percent or 9 percent of domestic violence offenders will be affected by the new law, he said.

“Take, for example, a person with no prior mandatory convictions who has two misdemeanor domestic violence convictions,” McCasland said.

Before the sentencing enhancements, if that person was convicted of that degree of domestic violence within the mid-

dle of the standard sentencing range was nine years.

Now, however, the two prior mandate-

nious convictions would increase the middle range sentence to 10 and nine months.

“Now, for the first time in history, we are seriously lobbying the Legislature to pass the sentencing enhancements,” McCasland said.

“We were tired of seeing a string of repeat offenders who caused tremendous harms, repeatedly victimizing women and children,” he said.

“Victims can’t step into a world with consistent treatment as we can help all the victims in the world if we keep raising perpetrators it will never stop,” he said.

How to get help

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES OF BONTON & FRANKLIN COUNTIES: Call the 24-hour crisis line at 582-8241 or 900-648-1277 or go to dvbsbf.org

CONSEJO COUNSELOR: Call the 24-hour hotline at 540-0075 or go to consejosw.org

WASHINGTON STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: 1-800-562-6025 or go to www.wescadv.org

How to get help

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HITS HOME

Remembering victims in Tri-Cities 1998-2010

FROM PAGE A6

that meant he was required to spend

six months in jail, but was released during

the nights in jail, but was released during

the day to go to work.

“All I think that sucker should have

been there 24 hours a day,” Cooper said. “I

thought that was a little lenient.”

Nearly 100 people attended a candlelight vigil June 2 for Griselda Ocampo-Meza, 21, who was allegedly killed by her former boyfriend Gregorio Luna Luna.

Send to 800-562-6025 or go to dvsbf.org

JENSEN

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

SUNDAY, JULY 11, 2010 | TRIB TRIBUNAL

A7

JUNE 28, 1998: Lucila Baraja, 31, of Pasco, allegedly killed by her sister, Juana Baraja. Sentencing range was 14 to 23 years. Brown

July 24, 2008: Christa Garcia, 18, of Pasco, allegedly killed by her father, Hector Garcia. Sentencing range was 10 to 16 years. Brown

April 28, 2008: Ayesha Reaves, 20, of Kennewick, shot to her death by her boyfriend. Reaves

March 13, 2009: Nahoil Castillo, 38, of Pasco, killed in a fire set by his cousin’s girlfriend, Antonia Bahena. Pasco.

Sept. 13, 2000: Tana Jensen, 52, of Pasco, shot to her death by her boyfriend. Brown

Jan. 7, 2009: Lindy Grover, 39, of Richland, allegedly killed by her husband, David Grover. Sentencing range was 10 to 16 years.

Feb. 13, 2001: Janindle Crandall, 48, of Richland, allegedly killed by her brother, David Crandall, who then killed himself.

July 25, 2008: Maria Rojas-Lopez, 20, of Pasco, shot to death by her estranged husband. Cooper

Sept. 1, 2000: Salvador Farias, 35, of Basin City, shot to death by her boyfriend. Bliss


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May 8, 2010: Seany McNeely, 19, of West Richland, allegedly stabbed to death by her boyfriend. She was engaged.

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JULY 11, 2010

SUNDAY

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

REMEMBERING VICTIMS IN TRI-CITIES 1998-2010

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JULY 2, 2010

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE TRI-CITIES | PART 2 OF 2

HARD TO SEEK HELP

Colton Harris-Moore, wanted in dozens of crimes in Northwest, arrested after high-speed chase

Family photos cover sidewalks that represent women who survived by domestic violence, Kelly Aiken, director of Domestic Violence Services of Benton & Franklin Counties, takes the images to remind the agency’s help to end a place on domestic violence. Benton County’s enforcement agency reports 67 domestic violence crimes this year, while Franklin County agencies show 65.

With funding, program costs many domestic violence victims won’t get help – even if they want it

Across the country, more than 5,000 victims received help from domestic violence programs, with a nearly equal split of victims needing shelter and legal advocacy and counseling. But because of funding and program cuts, newer than 10,000 victims didn’t get the help they needed.

Aiken said the economic downturn affected victims whose needs were met and that they were looking for somewhere they could turn to for help. Having enough money to find a new place to live is just one of many challenges victims must overcome. They don’t have jobs or money saved, it’s also difficult for them to have an attorney or even necessary contact with a domestic violence advocate.

And victims usually are the ones who have spread their feet to be safe, said Kelly Aiken, director of Domestic Violence Services of Benton & Franklin Counties.

“Victims have to make all the accommodation for the perpetrators’ behavior,” she said. “Too many victims, when they are able to stay in their homes, don’t attempt to escape.

They also need to deal with feelings of shame or fear of retribution. Victims often get questions like, ‘Why did you stay so long?’ and ‘Why didn’t you ask for help earlier?’”

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SALMON

FDA nears approval of genetically engineered salmon

FDA hybrid grows twice as fast normal salmon

Aquafabre's salmon hybrid grows twice as fast as normal salmon -16 to 18 months to market size as a normal salmon - 16 to 18 months to market size as a normal salmon. Salmon hybrid grows twice as fast as normal salmon -16 to 18 months to market size as a normal salmon. Whole food advocates say.

The financial rewards could be enormous. Aquafabre is a $1 billion-a-year business, with nearly half of all fish consumed globally farmed raised.

As wild stocks decline and the food and Drug Administration approved it, the salmon would be the first transgenic animal for human food.

"It would serve to my kids," said Paul Gingerich, who worked as a geneticist at the U.S. Agriculture Department for a decade before becoming a private consultant.

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“In many cases, the person who initiates the assault is the one who should be helped, not the abuser,” Garcia said. “But what happens is, we’re not helping the person who’s in the vulnerable position. We’re just trying to help the abuser, but we’re not helping the victim.”

“The only way to get victims to cooperate is making sure they know they’re responsible for changes being forced against their abuser. The prosecutor’s office, acting as the state’s vicarious agent, has to show the victim the overriding importance of the case, the need for cooperation.”

Consejo also keeps peer support groups, which have had as few as five members at one time and as many as 25. Former clients run the groups, so they can help pull people together and build a support system for their families.

The services are free, and the agency doesn’t charge for them. The only thing it asks is that the victims cooperate because it knows that cooperation is essential for the victims to be successful.

“Victims can’t commit to testifying if they don’t have cooperation,” Low said. “We have to provide the victims with a sense of empowerment in order to get them to cooperate.”

Consejo also runs a hotline for emergency services, and the agency has a program that helps victims get their immigration status. The agency also provides legal aid to victims who want to get immigration status.

Consejo has been helping victims of domestic violence for more than 20 years, and it has been helping women and men who are victims of domestic violence. The agency has also helped victims of sexual assault, and it has helped victims of relationship violence.

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