

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES

Gonzaga is likely to be the overall No. 1 seed heading into the men's NCAA Tournament. We break down four big reasons why the Bulldogs could cut down the nets in New Orleans. **SPORTS, 1**



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Spokane, Washington

WAR IN UKRAINE

Spokesman-Review reporter Eli Francovich traveled to Eastern Europe this week to cover a Spokane doctor's efforts to assist Ukrainians suffering as a result of the invasion by Russia. The trip was paid for largely by Spokesman-Review readers who have donated to the Community Journalism Fund and through the newspaper's Northwest Passages event series. To help support this trip and similar newsroom efforts, contributions can be made at spokesman.com/thanks.

Local doctor joins flood of refugees

Kyle Varner heads for Poland after hospital in Lviv tells him his volunteer services are no longer needed

By Eli Francovich
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

LVIV, UKRAINE – An alarm blared, the eerie whine piercing the early morning quiet and waking Kyle Varner.

The noise was unfamiliar to the Spokane doctor who was sleeping on the floor of a hotel in Lviv, Ukraine. Here in Lviv, though, the alarm has become a regularity since Russia invaded in late February. For the most part, locals ignore the sirens, although bomb shelters unused for

decades throughout the city have reopened.

Still, it was an unnerving experience for Varner. Groggy, he put on his shoes, strategically placed the night before, and stumbled into the hallway. No one else exited their rooms and, after a moment of wondering where exactly to go, the alarm ended, Varner returned to his makeshift bed and snagged a few more hours of sleep.

It was the appropriate ending to a frustrating and confusing 24 hours for Varner, a physician at

Providence Holy Family Hospital who'd arrived in Ukraine Thursday night after driving from Poland. He'd come loaded with supplies from Spokane and with a letter of invitation from a military hospital asking for help. They'd told him local media would be there to document his arrival and set the example for other foreign doctors looking to help soldiers and civilians injured in the fighting.

However, things change

See **DOCTOR, 6**



ELI FRANCOVICH/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Kyle Varner buys gas on Wednesday in Lviv, Ukraine, before driving to the Polish border.

RURAL AREAS FEELING REAL ESTATE BOOM

It's not just the big cities seeing sticker shock in the housing market

By Shawn Vestal
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Retiree Anthony Maggi put his Republic home on the market five years ago and got no takers.

Now, as the home-selling season of spring approaches, he's trying again, with one big difference: The list price for his four-bedroom, 2,200-square-foot home has more than doubled.

"When we put it on the market in 2017, we put it at \$89,000," Maggi said. "It's now on the market at \$199,900."

Meanwhile, Realtor Cynda Bragg just closed a deal for a couple selling their home in the woods northwest of town for \$224,000, almost three times what it sold for in April 2020.

Bragg said the sellers – who did not want to be interviewed – had initially listed the home at \$195,000, before receiving some advice from someone from the West Side.

"This is too cheap," Bragg said they were told. "You can get more for this."

See **BOOM, 8**



COLIN MULVANY/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Anthony Maggi is selling his home in Republic. Like other homes in the rural county, his is listed at a much higher price than it would have been just a couple of years ago. Ferry County saw some of the steepest price hikes in the state last year at 33%.

Who has the power in Usk?

Many remain in the dark around town's future as crypto capital of the U.S.

By Thomas Clouse
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Nearly a year after a bankruptcy trustee told a federal judge that Allrise Capital represented the best chance for about 140 workers to get their jobs back at a paper mill in Usk, the California-based company that owns it hasn't produced a single roll of newsprint.

Rather than refitting the factory to make cardboard and rehiring the workers as advertised, the venture capitalists instead crave as much cheap

electricity as they can get for a different kind of venture.

Allrise Capital Inc., and its CEO, Ruslan Zinurov, have partnered with a major Chinese tech company, Bitmain, to convert the town of about 1,200 people into what they foresee will be the cryptocurrency mining capital of the nation.

"This is an American company called Allrise that has partnered with a Chinese company, the biggest name in bitcoin mining, and they are trying to invest

See **CRYPTO, 6**



SHUTTERSTOCK



DID YOU FORGET TO SPRING FORWARD?

Daylight Saving Time started today. Did you remember to set your clocks one hour ahead?

CITY, COUNTY SHARE STIMULUS PLANS

Area leaders outline ideas on how to spend the \$208 million in funding. **NW, 1**

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