

CAMPUS ALERT

Sadly, new awareness must be SOP

This week, on the one-year anniversary of the killings at Virginia Tech, attention has been focused not only on the Blacksburg, Va., campus but also on schools and colleges across the country.

New systems and campus awareness at Clark College and Washington State University Vancouver, as elsewhere, are sadly but necessarily, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) now, just like fire prevention.

As reported in Wednesday's *Columbian*, one year after 32 were slain in Virginia, much has been done and is still being done on the local campuses to head off or minimize such a senseless and tragic act here. That's welcome news — sad, but welcome.

Administrators, faculty, counselors and security personnel at both campuses have been essentially in preparation and prevention mode for 12 months. Philip Sheehan, the interim vice president for administrative services at Clark, ticked off the steps taken by that school,

but cautioned that "multiple communication pathways" are being established.

Without intending to make a pun, Sheehan warned, "To say any one of these methodologies is bulletproof is a little tough."

One system still being established at Clark will be mass alerts via campus e-mail addresses. Another is via speaker phones and still another is the "FlashAlert" service, initially intended to spread the word of cancellations due to bad weather. Those who register for the service are sent text messages. But as of this week, only 746 at Clark had registered for that service.

WSUV's multiple efforts include its text-messaging service, for which 2,400 have registered, and public address alerts in some buildings, among systems.

Perhaps more welcome at both schools, though, is a greater emphasis on mental-health outreach efforts, in hopes of heading off such tragedies in the first place.