The Big Picture

All clear

Gary Lewis of Monroe fine tunes the equipment he will use in the Sky Valley Amateur Radio Club field day event this Saturday and Sunday at the rest area west of Startup. He and 25 club members will transmit and receive radio signals across America and Canada. Onlookers and potential members are welcome.

-staff photo by Natalie Everett

If you're eating out some night in downtown Monroe, don't be surprised if Officer Cindy Chessie pops her head in. Chessie, who patrols the downtown sidewalks two times a night

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By Natalie Everett
STAFF WRITER

The Monroe city staff is trying to coax city council into universal garbage and recycling, with reduced rates for seniors, low income, handicapped, and people who use less garbage.

To make this flexibility possible, the staff wants the council, not the state, to set the bill.

The staff is submitting a new garbage and recycling rate structure to the city council on June 24.

Right now Monroe's garbage collection is voluntary and recycling is free. Bill's Disposal picks up about 90 percent of the city's garbage. For two years, recycling has been paid for by grant monies through the East Snohomish County Association of Recycling Cities. Those monies will be phased out over the next three years.

Starting in September all ESCARC members, including Monroe, Sultan and Gold Bar, will have to kick in 25 percent of the recycling costs.

Other cities find recycling programs are more successful when coupled with universal garbage collection, according to Monroe's ESCARC coordinator Nancy Abell. Universal collection keeps cost per household as low as possible. Making payment mandatory reduces illegal dumping, a problem in Snohomish County "that's getting worse," she said. And by altering Bill's Disposal agreement, rates could be tailored to accommodate people on limited income.

Right now, Bill's Disposal