

## Trial Begins for Vaughn Couple Murdered at Home in 2020

**Four suspects were arrested for the Ralston-Gormly murders. Two pleaded guilty; two go to trial.**

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Jury selection began May 1 in the trial of Ezra Ralston and Sean Higgins for the murders of Ted Ralston, 71, and Joanna Gormly, 73, in their Vaughn home in 2020. Testimony began May 11. The trial is expected to last until July.

The married couple were violently killed and their house later set on fire on the night of May 17, 2020, to cover the crime, according to the Pierce County Sheriff's Department. The quick reaction of neighbors who turned garden hoses on the fire was instrumental in preserving evidence of the murders, including blood stains, propane tanks and gasoline cans, according to the Key Peninsula Fire Department.

Four people were arrested: the couple's grandson Ezra Ralston, then 26, who lived with them at the time; his girlfriend, Rebecka Neubauer, 22; and Sean Higgins and Spencer Kleine, both 23.

Ezra and Neubauer were found within 24 hours of the crime at Neubauer's mother's apartment in Tacoma, where deputies spotted the elder Ralston's vehicle, which Ezra had taken. Kleine and Higgins were arrested May 30 and 31, respectively, at their homes in Roy and Fife after being implicated by Neubauer, according to the Pierce County Prosecutor's office.

All four were charged with two counts of first-degree murder and first-degree conspiracy to commit murder and were held without bail.

At the time of his arrest, Ezra reportedly told the arresting deputies, "I can explain all of the details," but later declined.

If convicted, he and Higgins both face life in prison without possibility of parole.

Neubauer avoided trial by pleading guilty to her part in the crime April 20. She was not

CONTINUED PAGE 12



A good-size crowd showed up to speak their minds before the joint Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula Land Use Advisory Councils held at the KP Civic Center. The final decision on the application rests with the Washington State Department of Ecology. *Tina McKail, KP News*

## Public Weighs in on Burley Lagoon Geoduck Farming With Concerns for Environment

**Key Peninsula residents expressed concerns about the long-term effects at multiple levels.**

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

More than 100 people gathered May 22 for the first opportunity to speak publicly about a Taylor Shellfish Co. application to convert part of its current oyster and clam bed farms in Burley Lagoon to geoduck. The joint meeting of both the Key Peninsula and Gig Harbor Land Use Advisory Councils was held at the Key Peninsula Civic Center with 42 speakers participating in-person and via Zoom.

Ty Booth, planner for Pierce County Planning and Public Works, summarized the permitting process, which



A view of Burley Lagoon during an outgoing tide as viewed from SR 302 along the Purdy Spit. *Tina McKail, KP News*

CONTINUED PAGE 3





253-884-4699

[www.keypennews.org](http://www.keypennews.org)

[www.facebook.com/KeyPenNews](https://www.facebook.com/KeyPenNews)  
PO Box 3, Vaughn WA 98394

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Lisa Bryan  
[editor@keypennews.org](mailto:editor@keypennews.org)

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Ted Olinger

STAFF CONTRIBUTORS: Nancy Carr, Ed Johnson, Eddie Macsalka, Tina McKail, Joseph Pentheroudakis, Chris Rurik, Dave Stave, Sara Thompson, Carolyn Wiley

CONTRIBUTORS: José Alaniz, Dan Clouse, Richard Gelinias, Grace Nesbit, Dan Whitmarsh

CALENDAR EDITOR: Meredith Browand  
[calendar@keypennews.org](mailto:calendar@keypennews.org)

PAGINATOR: Heather Meier

SOCIAL MEDIA: Joseph Pentheroudakis

BOOKKEEPER: Linda Grubaugh

AD SALES: Deanna Hunter  
[sales@keypennews.org](mailto:sales@keypennews.org)

DISTRIBUTION: Anna Brones, Norm Brones, Bill Dietz, Bruce Macdonald, Jay Stewart, Bob Wilkins, David Younkin

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UNDERWRITTEN WITH SUPPORT FROM:

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Fund for Nonprofit News at  
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## Homecoming

# Here's What I Think About That

LISA BRYAN  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

If I was indoctrinated into anything during my years of public school, it was the right to a long summer vacation.

I remember the countdown to the last day each school year with the glorious anticipation of freedom to play all day, eat our meals at the picnic table and stay up too late whenever we wanted. We rode our bikes around the neighborhood, played endless croquet and badminton matches in our backyards, and ran through sprinklers.

We would lie on our backs on a blanket in the middle of the field to watch the twists and turns of acrobatic swallows against a backdrop of big puffy clouds, or sit in the cool shade under giant broadleaved trees to read books of our own choosing for hours on end.

We spent nearly a month of every childhood summer with our Estonian grandparents at their summer home on Point Roberts. It's much smaller and far more remote, but not unlike the Key Peninsula. We walked miles of winding country roads and spent time nearly every day combing the beach, collecting small treasures, exploring tide pools. We always swam in a rising tide.

We harvested the early and wonderfully named "translucent" apples Estonians call "valged klaarid." We picked black and red currants, gooseberries, raspberries, blueberries and blackberries. Grandma preserved every berry we didn't eat. We dried flowers and mint leaves to make

our own tea. We ate Estonian foods like home-baked dark rye bread, potatoes, cabbage, small meatballs, lamb, salmon, smoked smelt, pickled herring, and all the other little fish.

And of course, sült (a savory chicken aspic or gelatin), a traditional appetizer that sounds gross, but I swear tastes delicious with lots of lemon juice, salt and pepper. Sandwiches were served open-faced and often included chopped hardboiled eggs or cucumber with

dill, fresh or dried, sprinkled over just about everything. We ate dessert every night made from the fruits of our labor.

The month of June, on the cusp of summer, is often slow to start on the Key Peninsula, but summer arrives like a welcome homecoming.

This month, the "summer people" begin arriving on their annual pilgrimage to a family beach house or secluded cabin tucked among the evergreens overlooking Puget Sound, the Olympics or Mount Rainier. There's something familial and joyful about running into people you share some common history and traditions with but only see over a couple of months each year.

Still, we connect. We walk. We talk. We garden. We reach for cool drinks and take the time to sit down. We take the kayaks out. We set up projectors and speakers

outside, invite some friends, bring guitars and sing along to movies like "O, Brother Where Art Thou?" "Oklahoma!" or "The Wizard of Oz." We throw birthday parties

for our dogs and invite all their canine friends. We have big community dances, colorful parades, and old-fashioned logging shows. We drum, sing and make music on Summer Solstice, and we dance until dawn.

No matter where people come from,

we have an opportunity to become neighbors for a time. Nothing feels so good as being accepted just as we are, uniquely flawed, highly fallible human beings.

Living here year-round, it's easy to lose sight of our idyllic surroundings and how fortunate we are to be here in this place and time. But maybe everyone feels that way about their hometown. It's not perfect. There's no shortage of bad actors too, and that's putting it mildly.

We thrive on support and sharing. We need to capture all the light and warmth of summer to store up the energy that helps sustain us through winter. We do better together when we give and receive.

We face an uncertain future but still cling to the notion that things will always be the same. They won't be. We are forever changing. To borrow an old phrase, "Hope is the last thing that dies." ■



## Letter from Ukraine

I have been in Ukraine all but 11 weeks since March 2022, most of it volunteering for K9 Rescue International. I've rescued and evacuated animals. Brought food to the hungry. Traveled through zones of conflict with Russian rockets and artillery overhead. It seems like home, almost, except for the fact I still can barely communicate in Ukrainian without my translator. I have a house I call home in Kharkiv. I've made friends that seem like family. A cat adopted me. I still miss my real home and will be returning to Lakebay mid-June with the cat I named Bob.

I've witnessed dramatic changes

since the war began. There are some distinct indicators that the national attitude toward the outcome of the war is positive. The McDonald's factor is one.

At the onset of the war, McDonald's closed every restaurant in Ukraine, donated all of its food to the military and, get this, continued to pay every employee their full wage as the war raged on. Now McDonald's restaurants are beginning to re-open across Ukraine. Cars wrap around several blocks for the drive through. Lines of people flow out the doors for 100 yards. Every table is full.

Car dealerships are putting cars back

in showrooms. Even in Kharkiv. Check-points are being dismantled. People are in a better state of mind. More smiling. I hope it lasts. The war is far from over, but it isn't as bleak as it once was. Warm weather helps. Watching the people plant their gardens and paint their homes and concrete fences is reassuring. There are still missile attacks. There are still civilians being killed by Russians. There still is hope that this will end soon with the Russians being defeated and expelled from within the borders of Ukraine.

Slava Ukraini! I'm coming home with Bob!

*Tom Bates, Lakebay*

## LAGOON FROM PAGE 1

began in 2014. Erin Ewald, director of regulatory affairs for Taylor, briefly reviewed the history of the Burley Lagoon aquaculture operation, and then individuals were invited to the mic to speak for up to two minutes.

About three quarters of the speakers were Burley Lagoon or Henderson Bay residents. The comments included personal observations of the changes observed over time as Taylor has become a more industrialized operation compared to the previous owner, concerns about the environmental impact of a geoduck monoculture, the effects of light, noise and gear on the quality of life for those who live on the lagoon and worries about the extensive use of plastics.

Booth said there has been a commercial shellfish farm in Burley Lagoon for more than 100 years, established decades before the county created shoreline regulations and permit requirements. Taylor has owned the operation since 2012.

Ewald said the oyster farm as it was operated in the 1950s included oyster processing on site and employed 30-40 people. Taylor currently has three to five full-time employees dedicated to the lagoon and that geoduck conversion would increase them to between five and seven.

The 25.5-acre conversion area, she said, would involve 8.5% of the total 300 acres permitted for aquaculture. Planting would be in patchwork phases using mesh tubes for the first 18 months of a 5-6 year maturation cycle. Exclusion netting over the tubes would likely be used for part of the cycle.

The conversion required an environmental impact statement. The EIS is an extensive review process, Booth said. "It studied sediments, aquatic vegetation, water quality, fish and wildlife, noise, recreation and aesthetics, as well as cumulative effects.

"As allowed by code the applicant did select a consultant and pay for the EIS," Booth said. "But as required by code it was prepared under the direction of the county and was extensively reviewed by the county before it was issued."

The EIS concluded that the conver-



Karen McDonnell was one of many Burley Lagoon residents who voiced opposition to farming geoduck in the marine estuary.

*Tina McKail, KP News*

sion would have a mild to moderate impact on the lagoon and is under appeal.

The Shoreline Management Act gives aquaculture preferential treatment as a water-dependent use, Booth said. But it also gives preference to individual homes, recreation and public access. Those competing preferences can lead to conflict. The act states that the scale of an aquaculture operation shall be in proportion to the surface area and configuration of the affected water body.

"This is the main issue at hand," Booth said. "Would the proposal, in conjunction with the existing

**"WOULD THE PROPOSAL, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE EXISTING FARM, MONOPOLIZE THE LAGOON TO THE DETRIMENT OF EVERYTHING ELSE?"**

farm, monopolize the lagoon to the detriment of everything else?"

For those who spoke, the answer to that question

was a resounding yes.

Several spoke about the impact of tens of thousands of plastic pipes per acre and the effects of planting and harvesting on eelgrass, forage fish and salmon. Others raised concerns about microplastics and their harm to wildlife and humans.

Burley Lagoon resident Laurie Kennedy said a recent king tide

brought large quantities of equipment debris ashore. Another speaker, citing climate change, worried that such incidents would become more common in the future.

John Nichols of Lakebay compared the dangers of monoculture in geoduck farming to those of the salmon and forestry industries, with resulting risks from the loss of

**"BURLEY LAGOON IS NOT VERY WIDE. WE HEAR EVERYTHING, THE VOICES, THE LIGHTS."**

both genetic- and biodiversity. Charlie Walters, also of Lakebay, shared his experience when a British Columbia oyster farm was converted to geoduck. Eelgrass disappeared, tubes littered the beach, and it was an ugly mass of white plastic, he said.

Many who have lived on the lagoon for decades said that since Taylor took over the operation has become more industrialized. Wendy Ferrell, a fifth-generation resident, harkened back to times when there were no nets or cages.

"Burley Lagoon is not very wide," said Bruce Dowdy. "We hear everything, the voices, the lights." He is concerned that there will be more noise with geoduck harvesting requiring generators and occurring throughout the year. "It feels like a trespass," said John Ferrell.

Laura Hendricks, executive director

of Coalition to Save Puget Sound, said the number of acres farmed in the lagoon has expanded under Taylor's watch — from 5 in 1998 to 50 in 2007 to 175 acres in 2011. She also raised a legal objection to the conversion. Unless geoducks had been planted in

the subtidal area before the end of 2001, she said, they could not be planted now.

"It's the public's opportunity to speak their concerns," Ewald said of the meeting. "But it was hard to listen to comments that have been summarily dismissed by regulating agencies and hearings boards on multiple occasions."

The public comments, part of the process for the required shoreline substantial development and conditional use permits, will be considered by the advisory councils when they make their recommendations to the Pierce County hearing examiner.

Public comments will be allowed at the hearing examiner meeting, which was not scheduled as of press time. The hearing examiner will also consider the appeal filed objecting to the EIS determination.

The Washington State Department of Ecology will make the final decision. ■



# The Heart of a Survivor: Blood, Courage, Triumph

A Vaughn resident recalls a traumatic attack, the road to recovery and the joy of a successful life. Be advised: This article describes a violent sexual assault. Part I of III.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

Mary McGriff looks like she may blow over in the breeze. The 5 foot-2 inch, 100-pound 60-year-old Vaughn resident walks slowly because of a bad hip. Her shoulder movement is a little stiff and her knees and ankles aren't what they use to be.

So, it's common when she's out doing errands that a well-intentioned passerby offers her a hand.

"I'll take two, if you got 'em," McGriff quickly replies as she reveals the prosthetic metal prongs that replaced both of her hands nearly 45 years ago. It's not the first or the last time she'll use that joke.

"They usually slink down in embarrassment."

McGriff appreciates the offers. It's just that she's a lot tougher than she looks.

## An artistic teen.

At 15-years-old, the former Mary Vincent always had a talent for the arts, and for a talented artist, Las Vegas in the 1970s was a place to stand out.

"My legs made me an amazing little dancer," Vincent said. She recalls the time she did a solo to open the Miss Universe Pageant broadcast in Vegas when she was 13. "But I could do pretty much anything with my hands," adding that she did the hair and makeup for her fellow performers.

But where she shone on stage, she was shunned at home. Vincent's parents were going through a divorce, and she wasn't getting the attention she felt she deserved.

In the fall of 1978, the teenager hitched a few rides to Northern California, where she thought she could be around other like-minded artists. She stayed in the Bay Area, homeless and living on the streets, until she got a little homesick. She wasn't ready to go back to her parents, but she did yearn for family. On Sept. 28, 1978, she decided to leave Berkeley and spend some time with her grandpa near Los Angeles. Hitchhiking, especially in California, was a common way to get around then, even for teenagers.

"There was a big group of people all going in the same direction, but it wasn't like we were all together," she remembered. Vincent was standing around two other guys who were also looking to get out of town.

As it was getting dark, a blue utility van pulled up alongside Vincent and her two companions.



Mary McGriff with her husband Tony at their home in Vaughn. *Tina McKail, KP News*

## "I wouldn't get in there if I was you."

The warning signs were there early. It was a big empty van with no seats in the back and the middle-aged male driver said there was only room for the female of the group.

"The guys I was with kind of pulled me aside and said, 'I wouldn't get in there if I were you.'"

Tired, desperate and anxious to get to her grandpa's house, against her better judgment the teenager got into the van.

"I should've listened to them."

The first hour was fine. The driver was on the familiar path out of the Bay Area toward Interstate 5 down to Southern California. Satisfied they were going the right way, Vincent felt safe enough to fall asleep. She woke up and noticed they were no longer on a main road. Vincent remembers driving past a fast-food place, and then there was desert. She demanded they turn around. The driver said it was an honest mistake and admitted

they were lost.

## "It was live or die time."

When the driver pulled over to the side of the road in an isolated area to urinate, Vincent saw her chance.

"I knew it was live or die time."

But with no place to hide, she'd have to make a run for it. No problem there, she was a healthy 15-year-old dancer; the driver was an older man who had little chance to keep up. She noticed her shoe was untied, so she quietly snuck out the passenger door, and bent down to the ground to get a tight fit before taking off running. And then — darkness.

Vincent doesn't acknowledge him by name and only refers to him as "my attacker." The driver — her attacker — 51-year-old Lawrence Singleton, bashed her skull with a sledgehammer. He tied her hands and violently raped her throughout the night in the back of the van while she was in and

out of consciousness.

Singleton used a butcher knife to sexually assault her, and then chopped her arms off — about four inches below her right elbow and six inches below her left. He dragged her naked, motionless, yet full-of-breath-body down a 30-foot ravine and tossed her in a cement drainage culvert. He left her there to bleed to death. No arms meant no fingerprints. Even if she was found, she couldn't be identified. The perfect crime, he thought. "Let me go to sleep. I'll deal with this tomorrow."

It was chilly in the dark September morning desert near Modesto. No one was within miles of Vincent, still motionless, concussed from the hammer to the head. Colder now that she'd lost half of her blood. Her eyes weren't open, but she wasn't dead. She was by herself, but she wasn't alone.

"I was talking to God the whole time when I was awake," she said. "Actually, I



was screaming at Him saying, ‘Hey, let me go to sleep. I’ll deal with this tomorrow.’”

That wasn’t an option, and something kept reminding her of that.

She mustered up the strength to crawl her way out of the culvert, even with four broken ribs. She didn’t feel cold, she didn’t feel pain. She didn’t feel anything, except the need to stop her attacker.

Vincent clearly remembers somehow seeing Singleton’s itinerary in his van and where he was going next. “I just kept locked in on him because he was on his way to his next victim, which was so gross to think about.”

Even as a 15-year-old, she knew she was dying. It was just a matter of time. Vincent, half-white, half-Filipino, remembered a survival tactic she learned when living in the Philippines for a short time when she was younger.

“I was told that if you’re bleeding and you don’t have anything to cauterize it, stick your wound in the dirt until the blood congeals.” She did that with what was left of her arms. After that, she doesn’t remember how she got up a 30-foot ravine. But she did. And she stood there: maimed, naked, covered in blood, and alone.

“I remember God said to just keep walking. He said, ‘I’ll get you to safety.’ And I listened.”

She listened to God. She listened for cars. She listened for any noise to guide her through the dark desert.

As she approached a main road, she can’t imagine what it must’ve looked like to drivers: headlights shining on a naked woman, covered in blood, with her mud-stumped arms lifted toward the sky. The first car she saw sped right past her, but the second car was a couple on their honeymoon who made the wrong turn.

“They were scared that whoever did this was still out there,” Vincent said. “The first thing I did was tell them they needed to get me to a cop so I could tell him where to go, how to stop him.”

“As they were wheeling me into the hospital, I grabbed a cop and told them to get paper and a pen,” she said. “I started spilling my guts.” She also was able to accurately describe Singleton to a police sketch artist. “I wanted to make damn certain they knew who he was when they saw his face. I described him like you would describe someone to a blind person.”

It worked. Less than 10 days later a neighbor recognized the sketch that led to Singleton’s arrest at his second home in Nevada.

### **“If it’s the last thing I do, I’ll finish the job.”**

Justice against Singleton was swift, but soft. Just six months after that traumatic night,



“Fire Lady” by Mary McGriff, one of the few left in her private collection.

*Tina McKail, KP News*

a jury found Singleton guilty of kidnaping, mayhem (deliberately causing a permanent, disfiguring injury), attempted murder, rape, sodomy and forced oral copulation. Despite the nature of the crimes, sentencing laws in the late 1970s weren’t what they are today. Singleton was sentenced to only 14 years in prison, the maximum allowed at the time.

The teenaged Vincent gathered the courage to testify against her attacker. When asked who did this to her, she was able to point at him with her newly fitted prosthetic arms.

“At that moment, there was no fear, just anger. I wanted to kill him,” she said. “I don’t ever want to feel that angry again. It was horrible.”

But as the pain of her injuries started to subside, the fear started to build.

Like a perfectly scripted line in a horror movie, Vincent said Singleton whispered to her on his way out of the courtroom: “If it’s the last thing I do, I’ll finish the job.”

### **No one is safe.**

Even with aspirations of dancing, since she was 4 years old all Vincent really wanted to do in life was to be a mom.

“After this I would’ve been lucky to have any kids, my insides were shredded,” she said.

Miraculously, she ended up having two boys in the 1980s.

Singleton was paroled from a San Luis Obispo prison after serving only eight of his 14-year sentence. Fearing her attacker would live up to his promise to “finish the job,” Vincent moved her family from California to the Gig Harbor area in 1987.

“I was terrified. No one is safe around him,” she said. “I had to worry about both of my sons being chopped into little pieces.”

While Singleton lived in Florida, Vincent lived in fear. She even heard that while living in Gig Harbor, Singleton was in Tacoma for work during that time. She was often uncomfortably on the move between California and the Pacific Northwest. That is, until Singleton struck again.

In February 1997, a then 69-year-old Singleton stabbed to death Roxanne Hayes, a 31-year-old prostitute, in his Florida home. Vincent came out of hiding to once again testify against Singleton on Hayes’ behalf.

“If I didn’t come forward, he could’ve been let go and I would be his next victim,” she said. “I wanted him stopped, and I was angrier at the legal system at that point.”

A year later Singleton was sentenced to be

executed for Hayes’ murder, but before that sentence was carried out, he died in jail from cancer three years later in 2001.

### **From tragedy comes change.**

The short sentence Singleton got in 1979 for such horrific crimes struck a chord nationally. Vincent and her story became symbols of resiliency and hope — the recipe for change.

Her injuries were a permanent part of her, but they didn’t define her.

Victims’ right advocates said people would listen to Vincent and any new legislation “would be passed lickety-split” with her as the face.

She became a powerful advocate for crime victims’ rights in the 1980s and ’90s, appearing on national talk shows and doing a large number of public speaking engagements across the country. She did all she could to change certain laws and get rid of dangerous loopholes that allowed early release from prison.

In 1998 she went to Washington, D.C., and testified in favor of the “No Second Chances for Murderers, Rapists, or Child Molesters Act,” which encourages states to give lengthy sentences to offenders of those crimes. She also helped pass California’s “Singleton Bill” which stops early releases of criminals who use torture in their crimes.

“I knew I could help make a change,” she said. “I felt the energy (around the need for harsher punishments for violent offenders), but it also took a lot of energy,” she said.

Don’t forgive. Don’t forget. Just let go of the hate.

It took nearly 30 years to get to a comfortable place in life, even after she learned of her attacker’s death. She said during that time she even resented the fact that her own brothers were men. “That’s how hard it was on me. I still don’t trust just any man, or any woman, for that matter.”

It wasn’t until the now Mary McGriff met her future husband 14 years ago, that she started to let her guard down. It wasn’t until then she was able to trust a man.

“The first time I met him I told him he reminded me of my third husband. He asked, ‘How many times have you been married?’ I said, ‘Twice,’” she joked. It took him a while to understand what she meant.

“I held onto such hate, anguish and sorrow for so long,” she said. “The most important thing people should do is let go of their hate. You don’t have to forgive or forget, but let go of the hate long enough to realize how good it feels when it’s all gone.”

In part two of this three-part series, Mary discusses navigating life with the prosthetic arms she helped design using common household items. Though she classifies herself as disabled, she’s learned to do more with her arms in the last 45 years that most people can do with their hands. ■



## Grace Nesbit FINDING GRACE



### A Farewell to High School

I always wanted to be in high school. The Disney Channel glorified high school life and I couldn't wait until that was me. The life of a high schooler is a roller coaster ride, there are constant ups, downs, and on occasion a loop-de-loop, and I wanted to be there.

Now I am graduating.

If I am being completely honest, I endured most of this year in disbelief. I couldn't believe this was my senior year. It started normal, but then this happened: all of the "lasts." Last swim meet, last homecoming, last football game, last Fish Bowl, my last column for this newspaper. Soon enough I will park in my designated spot for the last time, walk to my classes for the last time, and hug my favorite underclassmen for the last time, who will then soon be experiencing their own lasts.

I have lived on the Key Peninsula in my little farm house my entire life. In just a couple months everything will change.

I will be attending Washington State University in Pullman to continue my education. I will study music and writing (against the advice of my KP News editor). I would like to be a teacher of some kind. It's somewhat of a cliché to want to be a teacher, but it's the second-best answer people have to major in besides communications. After touring WSU and spending time in the music department, it felt like the right place to be. On my college checklist, my No. 1 priority was it must have a good football team. Luckily for me, the Cougs are just that.

I faced a wide array of teachers throughout my Peninsula School District career. I had some who inspired me and urged me to keep going. I had some that broke my confidence and made me lose my love for learning.

I want to be a teacher I never had.

But among the discouraging adults in my life there were so many who inspired me in so many ways. In first grade I fell in love with reading in Ms. Porter's classroom at Evergreen Elementary. My fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Ohlson, was the first to build my confidence in math. I got my first 100% that year and I was so proud of myself. Yes, I still remember that. At Key Peninsula Middle School, I fell in love with music with Ms. Kaal. And my passion for writing grew with Mrs. Richards at Peninsula. Although we had a love-hate relationship, I am forever grateful to her.

My greatest takeaway from Peninsula High

School are the relationships I made there. You may just be a building, PHS, but I met some of the people I hold dearest within your walls.

College will be different, that is guaranteed. However, I believe it will be a good different. I think the hardest part will be leaving, not just my family but my home. Home isn't a place or a building; my home is people, my best friends, my mom, and the people I have chosen to live with day-to-day.

I have been writing a column for this newspaper for over a year now. My brilliant editor Ted Olinger aptly named it "Finding Grace," because my writing here has been an exploration. I haven't found myself yet. I don't know how I will do so, or how I will know when I am truly found. The person I am today is because of everyone with whom I have crossed paths and shared the same roads. Because of you, I am already proud of who I will inevitably become, and grateful for her.

Goodbye.

*Grace Nesbit is a senior at Peninsula High School. She lives in Lakebay.*

## Dan Whitmarsh WRITING BY FAITH



### A Word to Our Graduates

These are momentous days in our household. This spring four of us are graduating — from grad school, from college, and the two youngest from Peninsula High School. I have mixed feelings about that last point as it suggests I am no longer young and hip myself. Where does the time go?

Since by some oversight I was not invited to give a speech at any graduations, I will use this space to address the young people who are donning their robes, caps and tassels, enduring interminable speeches, walking across platforms to the accolades of friends and family, and heading into the rest of their lives. The rest of you are welcome to listen in.

First, an apology is in order. The world you are inheriting is a mess, and much of it is our doing. I probably don't need to tell you this, but I want to say it anyway. While the generations before you were yelling at you to clean up your rooms, we were ignoring the far greater messes around us.

We have known about climate change and pollution for decades. We have been confronted with the horrors of racial injustice and inequity for centuries. Yet all too often we have chosen the path of power and profit over the harder work of meaningful change.

Before you were born the Columbine

massacre opened our eyes to the horrors of gun violence. That scene has repeated itself too many times throughout your youth, yet we have been unable to take even basic steps to protect you. It seems we prefer fear and self-preservation over any communal good.

We know the Covid years have been hard. We had an opportunity to step up in bold and compassionate ways but instead caved to division and denialism, forgoing the necessary work of caring well for each other and for you. The ongoing mental health crises you are experiencing is the direct result of adults choosing politics over your wellbeing. I'm sorry you pay the price for the failures of us older folks.

Thankfully, that's not the whole story. The world is messy, but it is also beautiful, a place of wonder and glory, and you share it with many inspiring people.

We are surrounded by mountains, water, forests and beaches. We have lakes to swim and hiking trails leading us deep into nature. We have grassy ballfields, world-class concert halls and restaurants with cuisine from every corner of the globe. All this is right outside our front doors.

More importantly, there are still people investing their lives in creating a better world. I have the privilege of networking with all sorts of people, from government to nonprofit to industry. I am always encouraged when I see their creativity and passion set to the task of overcoming the problems we all face.

I meet policy makers drafting legislation to build healthier communities and trail workers keeping our natural spaces accessible. I meet healthcare workers and teachers who continue to show up despite the breakdown in our systems. I meet volunteers making sure people are clothed, housed and fed. I see so much goodness, and it gives me hope.

Here is my advice. The key to a resilient life is having a purpose, something that is meaningful and larger than yourself. Find your passion, find a way to serve, and you will discover strength to sustain you through the hardest of times.

Find good people. The trajectory of your life will depend on the people you surround yourself with. Find friends who encourage you and bring out the best in you, who make you laugh and build you up. Be that friend to others. Care for others, and fill your life with people who truly, deeply, care for you. Life is hard. We all need community around us to make it worthwhile.

Finally, this: We adults have done some nifty things, like landing on the moon and inventing Dippin' Dots. But we have also created and sustained big messes that, unfortunately, will be yours to clean up. So get out there and change the world. We need you,

and I believe in you.

Congratulations to our 2023 graduates. We're proud of you and looking forward to all the ways you are going to make this a better world.

*Award-winning columnist Dan Whitmarsh is pastor at Lakebay Community Church.*

## José Alaniz WE LIVE HERE



### Against Food

As I write this I have not put food in my body for over 48 hours.

Over the last three months, I have been intermittently fasting — going up to three days with no food — and I feel great.

Here's how this happened.

In February a friend I hadn't seen in years told me he was fasting "for health reasons." Alarmed (he's about seven years older than me), I pried further, and he clarified that it was just for general health. He had read that fasting two to three days a week is good for you.

He was right, of course. I'd long known about the benefits of fasting; for over 10 years I've taught a college course on the art and culture of food. I'd read up on some of the nutritional guidelines.

So, soon after that talk, without consulting a doctor (except Doctor Internet, natch), I stopped eating pretty much cold turkey (so to speak). Humans are deeply social creatures, and sometimes you just need the "permission" of another person to light the fuse.

But for me this is not just about health.

Rightly or wrongly (mostly wrongly), I think of myself as the sort of person who does not do things unless I have several good reasons for doing them. I offer the following reasons for my fasting:

1. The feeling of discipline and control. I get to decide when to eat, not my stomach. By coincidence the Muslim holiday of Ramadan (when the faithful avoid food from sunrise to sunset) was happening as I was starting my new regimen, and that was a nice reminder that people the world over have done some version of what I'm doing since time immemorial. Having a vegan wife provides another model of self-mastery — though I should add that neither vegetarianism nor veganism, contrary to popular opinion, necessarily mean "healthy eating."

2. Time saved. I no longer have to organize my days around meals nor stress about what to stuff my face with in a few hours.



As described by Lizzie Widdicombe in a New Yorker article on Soylent (another radical alternative, which eliminates what most people consider meals): “You begin to realize how much of your day revolves around food. Meals provide punctuation to our lives: we’re constantly recovering from them, anticipating them, riding the emotional ups and downs of a good or a bad sandwich.” Not so much now.

3. Living in truth. I don’t like the idea that for most of my life I’ve just mindlessly bought into the myth that we need to eat three solid meals a day. We don’t. We’re just spoiled living in the richest, most wasteful nation in history. (This doesn’t apply to all of us, of course. We do also have real food insecurity and hunger in our land of the free.)

4. Ka-ching! Do you realize how much you can save if you don’t eat?

5. Protesting, in my small way, the U.S. food system. It is bloated with government subsidies. It is unhealthy, anchored by fat, sugar, salt, corn and chemical additives. It is profoundly unethical, creating hell on earth for billions of animals tortured, then killed for their meat. The pesticide runoff from farming alone is a huge environmental disaster, but there are many others it creates. I feel better about myself giving rich food conglomerates slightly less of my money.

6. More pretentiously: solidarity with the hunger-ridden suffering of those less fortunate, including animals.

I don’t feel right calling this a “diet.” I’m not really doing it to lose weight, though I am curious to see how many pounds I shed. So far 15. I also don’t consider this a Supersize Me-type experiment on my body, though it certainly is an experiment in the sense that I want to see where this all leads, and it certainly is my body.

Once in grad school I was co-teaching a literature class. The topic of anorexia came up in one of the readings (for what it’s worth, I had not chosen this particular reading; my co-instructor had.) One of the undergraduates in the class told me in confidence that she was anorexic, but she didn’t see it as a stigma. She thought of it as an empowering identity. Anorexia gave her a strong sense of owning and controlling her own body.

It was a troubling but also illuminating conversation. The student told me about the online communities who supported her and other anorexics to resist the “tyranny” of food. I knew that such support communities had tragically contributed to anorexics starving themselves to death in quest of corporeal perfection. I told her so, and that I hoped she would get some counseling. It might save her life.

Food is social, food is contextual, food is weaponizable. Food is illusion. Food is blind custom, inertia.

Sorry to sound so judgmental. I speak only for myself. This works for me.

I will just leave you with this: habits are made, and habits can be broken. Your mileage may vary, but it can definitely be done — maybe more easily than you think.

*José Alaniz is a professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and the Department of Cinema and Media Studies (adjunct) at UW. He lives blissfully with his wife and many animals in Longbranch.*

*Editor’s note: It is essential to check with a doctor before starting intermittent fasting, which is defined as eating food within a specific time frame. Avoiding food completely or eating very few calories over an extended period is often associated with anorexia nervosa, a complex and potentially dangerous mental health disorder.*

**Richard Gelinas**  
EMPIRICALLY YOURS



## No Nukes: Carbon-free Electricity

We pay about 6 cents per kilowatt-hour of electricity in Washington state, much less than the national median of 15 cents per kilowatt-hour. Here I’m just comparing the electricity costs, not the other charges on a typical monthly bill. Some places in the United States may never have rates like ours, because of poor decisions they made decades ago. Take the state of Georgia, for example. But first, a bit of the energy history of Washington.

Are you old enough to remember about 40 years ago when there was a push to build nuclear plants in the U.S.? It happened here, when the Washington Public Power Supply system (WPPSS: pronounced “Whoops?”) decided our state needed to build five nuclear power plants based on infantile projections of population and industrial growth. These would be financed by a public issue of bonds and paid back with sales from the plants. As construction started and the expenses started to bite, two plants were canceled and two others were stopped although they were more than half-complete. Only one plant was finished and connected to the grid.

But many bonds were sold since they had the imprimatur of being as safe as municipal bonds, plus they paid as much as 15% simple interest. The extravagant interest rate was because the bonds went to market just as the national inflation rate was surging in the early 1980s. Ultimately, the Whoops bonds resulted in the nation’s largest municipal bond default.

Power planners in Georgia were also

infected with nuclear fever. Georgia’s path to going nuclear makes me glad Whoops did not go forward.

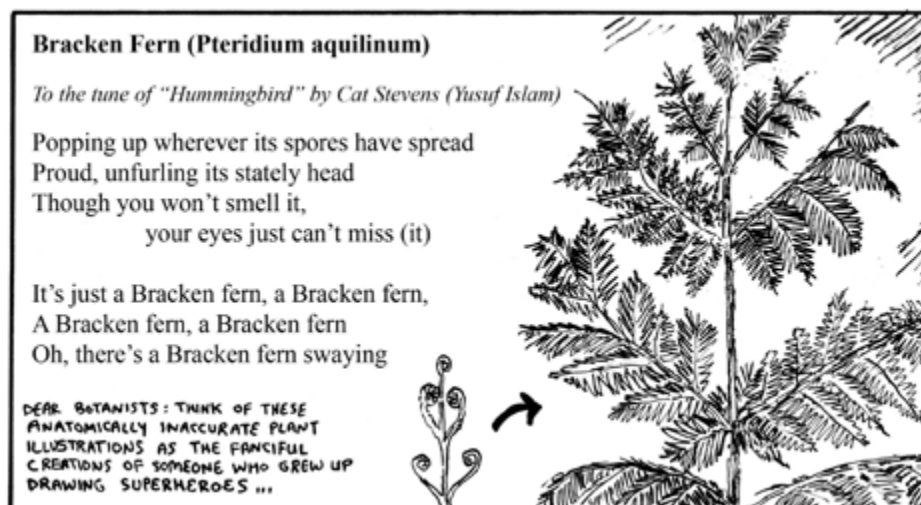
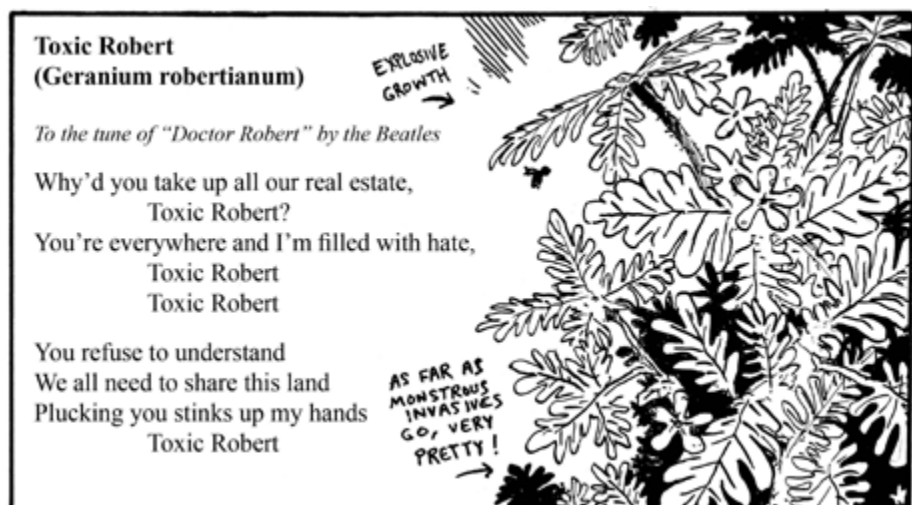
In the 1980s, Southern Company, an NYSE for-profit firm based in Georgia, persuaded Georgia Public Service Commission, a government panel chartered to regulate energy generation and protect the interests of the public, to start building nukes. So, in the late 1970s, construction of two nuclear plants began. They were finished 13 years later and cost 13 times more than originally budgeted. But Southern Company’s stock price was strong, and it proposed two additional nukes to its regulator, which were promptly approved. The new plants had a nifty new design with an estimated construction price of 14 billion dollars.

Alas, there were problems. Design problems, staffing problems, sloppy construction, insufficient documentation, and the designer of the plants (Westinghouse Electric Company) went bankrupt. But work continued, in part because Southern Company persuaded its regulator to add a monthly charge for “nuclear construction cost recovery” to the monthly bills of essentially all of the household rate payers, years before the plants were finished. They did not issue bonds, nor did they ask their stockholders to help. Southern Company and the Georgia Public Service Commission did graciously exempt the big industrial power users from the nuclear recovery surcharges.

Southern Company’s stock value continues to be strong to this day. Its officers and investors were sheltered from the cost overruns, thanks to the regular rate payers. Early this year, the first of these two plants finally started adding power to the Georgia grid, while the second may go online late this year or early next. The final cost of both plants

CONTINUED PAGE 8

## José Alaniz WE LIVE HERE: POP GOES THE SPRING





is now 34 billion dollars. We can be thankful that Whoops did not follow this path.

The state of Georgia is now the proud owner of the two most expensive nuclear power plants on Earth, generating the most expensive electricity in the poorest region of the United States. This investment could have purchased four solar power plants with the same power output (2,000 megawatts) plus a week's storage for only 8 billion dollars, or one-quarter the cost.

Yes, nuclear power is carbon-free if one ignores the CO<sub>2</sub> released during the construction, but it is breathtakingly expensive, requires constant security, and the spent fuel remains dangerously radioactive for tens of thousands of years.

The proponents of nuclear and fossil fuel-powered electricity continue to tell us that wind and solar power are intermittent, and we must therefore always build a nuke or a gas-fired generator as backups. But battery systems are already routinely added to utility-scale wind and solar systems and gravity-based storage options are an alternative to batteries.

Gravity backup is as simple as pumped hydro, where water flows on demand down from a high lake and turns a generator making electricity. Off-peak, the water is pumped back uphill.

Alternatively, the Swiss company Energy Vault stores energy by elevating 24-ton blocks of compressed dirt high into a building when power is available and lowers them to turn generators when power is needed. Energy Vault is building its first utility-scale storage plants in China and Texas. They will start lowering blocks later this year. Europe is storing wind energy by making and storing hydrogen gas. Storage is not an issue anymore.

My wife and I have solar panels on our house and garage that provide a bit over one-third of all the electricity we need each year. This includes our heating and hot water. We think of our connection to Peninsula Light Co. as our backup system, since in the winter we rely on Pen Light much more, but during the summer the panels make about five times more electricity than we use each day. Pen Light gives us a modest credit for our excess power.

I originally calculated that our solar panels would pay for themselves in eight to ten years. But the payback time is decreasing since the value of electricity increases as we move away from fossil fuels. Soon we look forward to buying an electric vehicle and charging it up with some of the power that we now sell back to Pen Light. That electricity will be particularly valuable, since as a transportation fuel it will displace gasoline that currently costs nearly \$5 a gallon. We can also replace gas-powered yard tools with

battery versions. Hopefully, we will use no fossil fuels at all. This is a key advantage to going solar: no carbon or methane emissions.

A second advantage is that renewable electricity costs much less than nuclear or fossil fuel energy. And while the costs of fossil fuels and nuclear energy continue to rise, the cost of wind and solar continue to decline each year. A third advantage to homemade electricity is that we have some control over it.

The energy we need to slow global warming should only come from renewable sources that do not release CO<sub>2</sub> into the air, like power from wind, hydroelectricity and photovoltaic panels. Not nuclear.

*Richard Gelinas, Ph.D., whose early work earned a Nobel prize, is a senior research scientist at the Institute for Systems Biology. He lives in Lakebay.*



**Dan Clouse**  
THE OTHER SIDE

## Compound It!

Riddle me this: What do iceboxes, typewriters and videotapes have in common?

Outdated technology, right?

OK, but sorry, trick question. They are also compound words: video plus tape.

English is chock-full of them. We open our mouths and hillbilly, inbox, wanderlust and Deadhead just pop out. Such compounds with no in-between spaces are matched by as many spaced-out ones. Think sweet tooth, flash drives, heavy metal and couch potatoes, along with all the hyphenated adjectives, from knuckle-dragging, high-tech, mind-boggling, and gender-bending, to off-the-wall.

New compounds created to express new realities, podcast, carbon footprint, post-truth, climate change, and goblin mode, have dominated annual Word-of-the-Year lists.

But our English compounds aren't as hunky-dory elsewhere. Just try asking a garçon for the French equivalent of "kneejerk" or your amigo for "downside" in Spanish. They can translate these compounds, no prob, just not as naturally with glued-together words.

Don't be a numskull and try this on a German Kerl, though. He'll ask you to try Englishing the 62-letter trainwreck of a word that is too long to print in these narrow columns. The single German word refers to what we need sixteen words to express: "law regarding the delegation of supervisory duties for the supervision of

cattle marking and beef labeling."

According to Mark Twain, "Some German words are so long they have a perspective. These things are not words, they are alphabetical processions."

His extended joke, "The Awful German Language," has fun with our German cousins' weakness for such alphabetical parades. A Mannheim newspaper story is translated as, "In the daybeforeyesterdayshortlyaftereleveno'clock Night, the inthistownstandingtavern called 'The Wagoner' was downburnt."

The Key Peninsula News may have its faults, but at least you'll never read a sentence like that here. Except, that is, in "The Other Side."

If you are 12 years old and speak English, you have fun repeating mega-word nonsense like supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

To play Costard in "Love's Labour's Lost," you'll have to train yourself to exhale Shakespeare's breath-defying word, honorificabilitudinitatibus without deflating into a wrinkle-skinned balloon on stage. King Lear rants in storm-lashed compound mouthfuls: "You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires / Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts / Singe my white head!"

The oldest Old English we have is Caedmon's seventh-century Christian hymn. It's full of compound words like hefaenricas (heaven's kingdom) and Wuldurfadur (Glorious Father).

Fast forward to 1932, and John Dos Passos mines the same motherlode of English vocabulary in "The Big Money," stitching together words unencumbered by commas or hyphens. "He wanted to make good in heman twofisted broncobusting pokerplaying stockjuggling America."

And then there's that witch hunt.

Our country bumpkin Elizabethan redneck ancestors, long before they were civilized enough to hold teacups with a pinkie finger sticking out, abused their neighbors with strings of insult-pearls, "You onion-eyed, toad-spotted maggot-pie," being one of the few that can be printed in a family-friendly newspaper like this.

In today's anything-goes American English, a high-tech, white-collar, blue-state, big-city, white-flight, Starbucks-iced-brown-sugar-oat milk-shaken-espresso-sipping urban hipster who's just moved out to the Key Peninsula can look down his sophisticated nose at us birdbrained, hen-pecked, lily-livered, chicken-hugging, cockeyed countryfolk. And that's cooping us up in just one corner of the barnyard.

Pretty soon though, Mr. Shut-the-Door-I'm-In will have put down roots and proudly identify horsetails, kingfishers, thimbleber-

ries, goldfinches, buttercups, licorice ferns, honeysuckles and dogwoods to the amazement of his visitors with 206, 415 and 310 phones in their pockets. Next thing you know, Johnny C. Lately will be complaining on Facebook about how city folks with their urban values are ruining the virtues of the old KP.

Myth brings us to the Byzantine complexities of the correct use of hyphens in English compound words.

Far be it from me, slapdash typo-generator and error-machine that I am, to profane the priestly rites of punctuation cults. Style manuals have head-spinning catechisms of dos and don'ts for hyphenating and not hyphenating words. The kabbalah of punctuation rules makes conspiracy theories about George Soros sound like the very models of straightforward simplicity.

Time passes, and words change. So have the rules governing the hyphenation of English compound words. In the 1990s, a Comma Queen instructed me that I must keyboard e-mail, not email. In browbeaten submission, I used e-mail for a while, but when I upgraded from the old "You've Got Mail!" account on AOL, I dropped the affectation.

It was an earth-shaking crisis in 2007 when — no, not the subprime mortgage crash and the Great Recession — the Oxford English Dictionary announced it was dropping the hyphenation of 16,000 previously hyphenated English compounds. For old-school fussbudgets, it was a Left-Behind apocalypse.

Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson stoked the flames of my great-grandparents' anxieties about all those recent Irish-American, German-American, and Italian-American immigrants. During World War I, nativists of the day used dog whistles like "A hyphenated-American is not an American at all."

Nowadays cynical rabble-rousers are telling us to worry about our Great Replacement by hordes of new un-American, hyphenated-Americans.

Newspapers, including this one, mostly followed the Associated Press Style Guide and dropped those ethnic hyphens in 2019, but with or without them, we still segregate ourselves according to the compound-word categories of contemporary identity politics: African American, Mexican American, Muslim American, Asian American, Native American, Real American.

Ironically, the punctuation mark invented in Ancient Greece as a bridge to show that two separate words belonged together is now a border wall keeping us apart.

*Dan Clouse is an award-winning columnist. He lives in Lakebay.*



## OBITUARIES



### William Irving Trandum

Creative, musical and intellectual with a deep love for family, Bill Trandum died peacefully at Evergreen Hospice in Kirkland April 24. He was 82 years old.

Mr. T was an enormous character who influenced everyone who stood in his presence.

He was a proud father, grandfather and husband now reunited with the love of his life, his wife of 56 years, Georganne Griffith Trandum, who preceded him in death May 24, 2021. He is survived by his four children: Ginger (Bob) Reitz, Heidi (Christopher) Rogers, Sanya (Scott) Jenkins, Christian (Heather) Trandum; nine grandchildren: Jensen, Stella, Anna, Emerson, Max, Finn, Addy, Mia and Foss. He was an exceptional uncle, brother and friend who was always ready with a joke, a story or a song.

Born and raised in Seattle to Irving Christian Trandum and Stella Bradshaw Trandum, Bill graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1959. He earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Washington and an MBA at Harvard Business School, and served in the U.S. Navy, retiring as a captain after 25 years. His naval career took him to Japan, Boston, San Pedro, Seattle, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania and eventually Tacoma. He was deployed to the Vietnam war and honorably performed three tours of duty on the destroyer U.S.S. Berkeley.

Bill retired from active duty in 1974, transitioned into the U.S. Navy Reserve and moved the family to the Browns Point area of north-east Tacoma, where he invested his energy and creative talent into building community. His high intellect, integrity, engaging personality and sense of humor drew him into the hearts of many and he became affectionately known as "Mr. T," especially to the teenagers whom he inspired and mentored.

His post-Navy career took him into financial management as chief financial officer and chief operation officer for several large corporations, including The News Tribune

and Pierce County Herald. He transitioned to and eventually retired from RBC Wealth Management as a financial advisor.

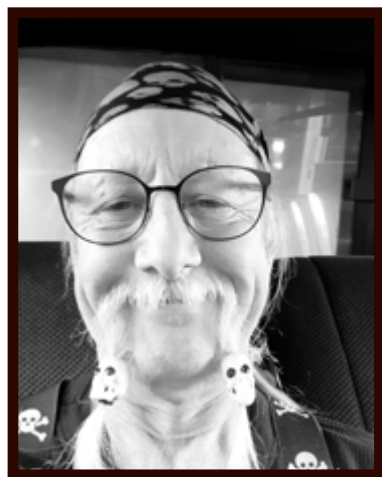
In 2001, Bill and Georganne moved to Vaughn, to live full-time at their beloved beach house. His love for wind and sea was shared to the fullest with all his kids and grandkids. He made a priority of teaching them how to sail, tie knots, water ski and enjoy playing on and around the water.

Bill was a board member on the Key Peninsula Parks Commission where he helped elevate Key Pen Parks by working to acquire land and develop several key parcels, including Gateway Park, 360 Trails, Maple Hollow and Volunteer Park. He was also a driving force behind reviving the shuttered Key Peninsula News in 2004, and a frequent contributor with his column "Winds, Tides and Weather."

Bill and Georganne sold their beloved beach house in 2017 and moved to Seattle to be closer to medical support. Bill suffered multiple forms of cancer, heart attacks, hearing loss and strokes due to Agent Orange exposure while in Vietnam. We are grateful to his long-term caregivers, Flo Baadze, Winnie Ooko and Maggie Okemwa.

He is deeply missed by all who have known and been known by him. He left a legacy of life, music, family and love. Mr. T liked saying, "Every trip a round trip!" so, welcome home to heaven Bill. You've left an imprint on the lives of all who intersected with yours. Well done, Bravo Tango.

A memorial service is planned for July 12 from 2-5 p.m. at Carnation Farm, 28901 NE Carnation Farm Road, Carnation. The family requests donations in Bill's honor go to <https://www.keypenparks.com/billtrandum.html>. Burial with military honors will be at Acacia Memorial Park in Seattle with his beloved Georgie by his side.



### Richard Lee Marshall

Richard Lee Marshall entered the world a happy baby and enjoyed an idyllic childhood filled with joy and happiness that became a large part of who he was. Born Nov. 25, 1953, in Bremerton to Melvin Russel and Mable

Laurell (Blanchard) Marshall, Richard died at his home in Wauna April 9.

He was preceded in death by both his parents. Richard is survived by his wife, Jody; sister Laurene (Marshall) McCormick; brother David Marshall; cousins Sharon, Holly and Edward; and his many loving nieces.

He had many interesting jobs in his life, as a drummer in a band, doing motorcycle repair, but ended up working many years in the field of construction and remodeling.

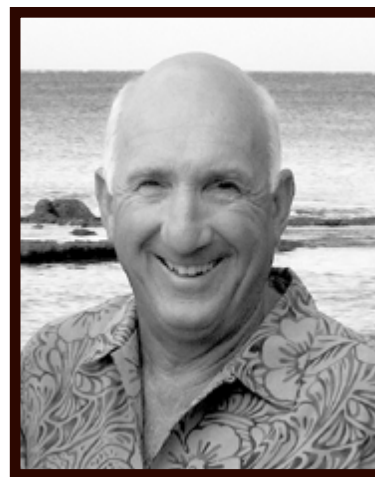
In 1989 he discovered the Seattle Seafair Pirates, which became a lifetime passion that filled some of the best years of his life. He earned his nickname, "Dead Ear Dick," early on after wearing a patch over his deaf ear. Perhaps he shot the cannon too many times.

It was the charitable work the Pirates did that drove Richard. The group raised money for Seattle Children's Hospital, read to elementary school children, participated in the Good Santa/Bad Santa program for less fortunate children, and visited many nursing homes, all while wearing full pirate garb.

Richard was also an assistant Sunday school teacher at WayPoint Church. He absolutely loved helping the children learn stories from the Bible while he learned as well. It was a very happy and enlightening time for him.

Known as "Pirate" to most of the people he knew in both Kitsap and Pierce counties, Richard was a great inspiration to many and very much loved by his friends. From his earliest friendship made at 4 years old to his latest friend he met at age 69, Richard made and retained friends most of his life no matter where or what he was doing.

Richard passed away on Easter weekend. If you were to ask him, he may have said that God had a new project for him to take on. Rest in peace forever.



### Walter Herbert Smith

Walter Herbert Smith was born Oct. 21, 1936, in Seattle, to Herbert and Ruth Smith. He died May 2 in Palm Desert, California, surrounded by his loved ones. He lived in Vaughn.

Walt attended elementary school between Arizona and California, where he was a member

of the Eagle Scouts. After graduating from Lincoln High School, he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1961 from the University of Washington where he was affiliated with the D.K.E. fraternity.

In 1962, Walt started Active Construction in Gig Harbor with one employee, one used county pickup truck, and a small bulldozer. He sold his successful company in 2005 after building a large, well-known corporation that benefited the community. He won local, state and national professional awards. His expertise in site preparation led him to develop many subdivisions in the Gig Harbor area.

Walt was committed to bettering the community through leadership and served on many local boards, often as president, including the Artondale Golf and Country Club; the Peninsula Helmsmen; Key Peninsula Parks and Recreation District; Peninsula School District; Peninsula Light Co.; Associated General Contractors; Gig Harbor Chamber of Commerce, Association of Washington Business, and the Gig Harbor Historical Society. His community service was honored with an award from the Rotary Club of Tacoma.

Walt was an active board member of the Harbor History Museum and was instrumental in securing the waterfront property and building the museum in downtown Gig Harbor.

His commitment to his family and friends was filled with good times: He gave wheelbarrow and tractor rides at the beach, took family ski trips to White Pass, ferried kids across the bay for ice cream bars, skied in his gorilla suit, golfed with the men at Lakeland Village and dressed up as Uncle Sam on the Fourth of July. He coached youth sports, handed out pop-up cards and took trips to the big island of Hawaii with his golf group. His favorite trips were rafting down the Rogue River, a safari adventure in Africa, and flying into Katmai, Alaska, to see the bears. He was a prankster and the life of the party, forever serving his POGs and Green Frogs.

Walt is survived by his wife Janice; daughter Sandy; son Kurt; stepdaughter Tracy Fisher (Greg); stepson Buzz Richards (Kelcy); grandson Kurt Jr.; step-granddaughter Brooke Fisher; step-grandsons Jeremy Richards, Chase Richards and Mason Fisher. He will be missed by his family at the beach, friends in California, and the community of Gig Harbor.

Walt wanted a fun, casual party. Please help us celebrate his life Sunday, June 25 at 3 p.m. at the Key Peninsula Civic Center, 17010 South Vaughn Road NW, Vaughn. Tailgate attire is encouraged.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Walt's name to the Peninsula Hawks Scholarship Fund at [www.phsfund.org](http://www.phsfund.org), the Harbor History Museum or Network Tacoma — people helping people. That's what life is about.



# Harmony on Horseback: Local Teen Competes for Spot on U.S. Equestrian Team

Genna Downen could be riding her way to a world vaulting championship this summer with the help of Hugo the horse.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

It seems like a circus act, but it's in a barn. It looks like gymnastics, but there's no mat. It feels like figure skating, but it's on dirt. It's kind of like dancing, but it's on a horse.

For an equestrian competition that's been going on for centuries, horse vaulting is tough to describe to those who don't know about it. But for Longbranch native Genna Downen, it was an easy sell.

Genna is one of the top junior-level vaulters in the country and is one of eight finalists competing to be part of the U.S. Equestrian Federation Junior Team. She'll find out later this month if she makes the team that's scheduled to compete in the 2023 FEI World Vaulting Championships in Sweden next month.

The home-schooled 17-year-old has been part of the Harbor View Vaulters team at Four Winds Riding Center near Gateway Park since 2015. She discovered the unique sport eight years ago when she saw a demonstration at the riding center during the Key Peninsula Farm Tour.

"She's a horse girl and a Key Pen farm kid in the most stereotypical sense," Genna's mom, Anna Downen, said. "When I saw that look in her eye (while watching the demonstration), I just knew."

Genna's pathway to horse vaulting is common. She took gymnastics as a toddler and spent four years doing ballet, tap and jazz dancing. And she always had a love of horses.

Lori Robison, co-owner of Four Winds Riding Center and coach of the Harbor View Vaulters said, "That's the perfect marriage for anyone getting into vaulting." Robison helped start the team 15 years ago.

Part sport, part performance art, vaulting is gaining popularity across rural areas in the Pacific Northwest. It takes raw strength and performers must be in top physical shape to maintain balance while executing both graceful and athletic movements.

Genna drills with her horse partner, Hugo, an 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood-Irish Draft crossbreed, twice a week. She spends the rest of the week doing off-horse strength and cross-training exercises. She also does taekwondo.

Genna uses that strength to perform mounts and dismounts, handstands, elbow stands, kneels, stands and jumps, all while the horse is cantering in a circle.

The vaulters are judged on their technique, precision and timing, but there's also a good deal of showmanship involved.

Genna's current performance has her



Sure, doing a handstand on the back of a cantering horse looks easy, but, no. *Tina McKail, KP News*



"She's a horse girl and a Key Pen farm kid in the most stereotypical sense ... When I saw that look in her eye, I just knew."

*Tina McKail, KP News*

dressed as Black Widow from the Avengers movies, and she incorporates some of her taekwondo experience into freestyle choreography set to music. Though freestyle performances differ among the vaulters, they all do the same movements in the same order for a separate compulsory event.

"There's always people (across the country) who I want to beat, but really I'm competing against myself," Genna said. "I always look back and compare my performance to how I did a week ago or a year ago."

But with all the high-flying and acrobatics taking place, it's easy to forget about the horse. Don't. The horse's performance makes up about 25% of the final score, so it's important

Genna keep a strong bond with Hugo or any other horse she partners with. To help with that, there's a person called a "lunger" who controls the horse on a long line and keeps him on a steady pace. Usually one of Genna's coaches takes on that important role.

While it looks intimidating — after all, jumping on top of a half-ton moving animal seems a little dangerous — Genna said she gained confidence in herself pretty quickly when she first started.

"Statistically speaking, of all the equestrian events, vaulting has the best safety record," Robison said, adding that vaulting horses are very well trained.

Vaulting is a big part of Genna's life, and

she hopes to continue for as long as she can. Unlike gymnastics, vaulting doesn't have an age limit. Robison encourages boys and girls, young and old, to get into it.

"Genna reached a level in a short amount of years that most kids don't," Robison said. "To be where she's at (at her age) is unusual, but she worked really hard to get here."

Newbies don't start on a horse. They get accustomed to all the moves near the ground on stationary "barrels," which resemble a mechanical bull. Even the most experienced vaulters practice on barrels when not riding.

Accolades for Genna are nothing new. (See "Local Vaulting Team Earns National Honors," May 2019.) She was the American Vaulting Association National High Point Champion in 2018, 2019 and 2021. She's also been the regional champion (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska) each year for her level since 2018. Last month she took first place at the Oak Hills Classic in Spokane and performed at The Pacific Cup in Woodside, California (results weren't available by press time).

"I really admire how much she has learned about the world and the person she's become," said her mother, Anna. "Finding (the Harbor View Vaulters) has been the absolute best." ■



# Budget Cuts: Elementary Schools Prepare for a Future With Less

All three dean of student jobs at Key Peninsula elementary schools have been eliminated. Cuts to other employees will follow.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

Declining enrollment across the Peninsula School District and a \$12 million deficit for the 2023-24 school year are to blame for eliminating five dean of student positions at area elementary schools, including all three on the Key Peninsula.

Evergreen, Vaughn and Minter Creek join Artondale and Discovery elementary as schools with fewer than 425 students that will lose deans at the start of the new school year. The dean of students is akin to an assistant principal, focusing mostly on students, including attendance and truancy issues. The remaining dean of student roles at the bigger elementary schools — all in Gig Harbor — will be restructured and reposted as deputy principals, consistent with other school districts, according to PSD.

Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education John Hellwich said in a statement to Key Peninsula News that the formula used to determine school support is aligned to school district best practices.

“These (five elementary) schools have strong systems of support in place for students and work collaboratively to ensure the needs of all students, especially our most at-risk, are met.”

Some agree with Hellwich.

“Our jobs will get harder, but we’ll do what’s best for the kids,” said Evergreen Elementary Principal Hugh Maxwell. “We can take on things like attendance issues and communicating with parents, but the challenge is filling that void for students with learning behaviors and social-emotional issues.”

PSD said it tried to keep budget cuts away from the classroom, but some district employees suggested eliminating deans at elementary schools will indirectly impact classes.

“Teachers are dependent on deans,” said one district employee who wished to remain anonymous.

Today, teachers can call on a dean to remove a disruptive student from the classroom so teachers can continue with a lesson. Moving forward, some teachers fear they will be tasked with de-escalating individual situations, taking time away from the class. School counselors also will be asked to take on more of a disciplinary role, which takes them away from running valuable small group sessions.

“That dean role is so crucial because it allows counselors to do our jobs and principals to do their jobs,” said Evergreen Elementary Counselor Bethany McDermott.

Another loss to local elementary schools are paraprofessionals who provide much needed support to teachers and staff, not to mention students. According to one employee, schools today can support around 60 high-need students throughout the day in small groups. Starting next year it will be less than half of that. District employees also mentioned that slower student assessments, delayed programs, and “problems running an effective and safe recess” could be a result of fewer paraprofessionals.

“Funding schools based on equity is fantastic in some regards,” said one district employee who preferred to remain anonymous. “But I don’t understand why 89% of the children at Voyager Elementary, who are at or above grade level, need the same amount as a KP school that only has 40% like that. We need help.”

“Elementary is where a lot of that good (social and emotional) work happens before students move on,” McDermott said. “If we can’t have those interventions, we’ve lost those opportunities and we can’t expect the students to be successful.”

Maxwell said the district needs to get creative to work around the budgeting issues. Some ideas to do that, according to staff around the district: campaign to bring parent volunteers back into the schools,

arrange for KPMS students to read to elementary students and work with the district to maximize their Title 1 funding, which helps schools at risk of failing state standards.

Maxwell also said Evergreen might have to suspend some of their more innovative plans, like STEM education and taking advantage of their new outdoor classroom, so staff can focus on work normally done by the dean.

The district also eliminated 16 positions from its office administration, including communications, transportation, a variety of coordinators, specialists and management positions. Additional staffing reductions will affect middle and high school libraries, office administration, career center and attendance specialists.

With another year or two of declining enrollment expected across the state, according to the state’s Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal, it doesn’t look like those roles will be back-filled any time soon. That means any negative effects in elementary schools next year could potentially affect middle schools down the road.

Reykdal spoke at a local Key Peninsula Democrats meeting in April, where he said, “districts will make brutally difficult choices over the next couple of years” due to declining enrollment trends. “We’re seeing families home-school in numbers we haven’t seen in the past.”

Home school enrollment across the state jumped nearly 100% year-over-year to 40,000 at the start of 2020-21 school year, according to Washington State’s Home-Based Instruction website. That number has since dropped to 29,000 this school year, still more than 40% above pre-pandemic numbers.

School funding makes up about 43% of the Washington state budget every two years, and about 85% of the district’s budget is based solely on enrollment. If the state

put a monetary value on students, each one would be worth about \$15,000 in revenue from the local, state and federal funding. So, every 100 students leaving PSD is essentially a \$1.5 million loss.

“For the short term it’ll be pretty tough,” Reykdal said, noting he believes enrollment trends will start to reverse in two years. “Levies and federal dollars can’t keep up with the current rate of inflation. Structurally, it’s hard on school districts because they don’t get to determine rates of inflation and someone else (the state legislature) determines their budgets.”

After an initial drop of 843 students after the 2019-20 school year, the district is slowly creeping back to near pre-pandemic numbers. Before the pandemic shut down schools in March 2020, PSD saw record numbers with an average of 9,239 students enrolled.

PSD middle schools have suffered the greatest decline, losing about 11% of students since the end of the 2019-20 school year.

There’s a faint light at the end of the long tunnel. As of March 2023, enrollment this school year has grown by more than 400, from 8,466 at the start of the school year to 8,869, and all grades have exceeded their 2022-23 forecasted numbers except kindergarten, which broke even. If the numbers are sustained, those 400 students would account for an additional \$4 million.

“We have larger classes than ever before and we’re continuing to grow,” Maxwell said about Evergreen.

He and other KP elementary school administrators will meet with their staffs a number of times before the end of the school year to get aligned on their new roles and responsibilities.

“My job is to make sure teachers can teach and students can learn,” Maxwell said. “We’ll all work closely, and I know we’ll somehow fill the void. It’s just going to be harder.” ■

## Penrose State Park Reopens for Day Use, Camping to Follow in August

STAFF REPORT

Penrose State Park on the west side of the Key Peninsula near Home reopened for day use only May 15 after being closed to the public Jan. 16 for extensive repairs to its septic system. The campground is

scheduled to reopen Aug. 1, according to state park Communications Consultant Meryl Lassen.

“Most trails will be available to visitors,” Lassen told KP News. “The Penrose Point trail will remain closed for the season due to shifting soils in a high bank escarpment. The new section of this trail has

been designed to prevent possible slides, and the design is under review with Pierce County.”

Portable toilets will be available while the septic work continues. Large areas of trenching, repaving and campsite repair required the park to close for public safety, she said.

The septic repair project is expected to cost about \$687,300.

Moorage is open for boaters and a vault toilet is open at the dock. Shellfish season is closed.

For more information, call the park office at 253-884-2514 or email penrose.point@parks.wa.gov. ■



# Luke Grunberg Named New KP Middle School Principal

The middle school administrator takes over after only one year as the school's assistant principal and 18 years as a teacher, dean and athletic director.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

For the first time in a long time, Key Peninsula Middle School will have a new principal at the helm.

The Peninsula School District announced in April that KPMS Assistant Principal Luke Grunberg will step into the role as principal at the start of the 2023-24 school year. Grunberg replaces Jeri Goebel, who is retiring later this month after a nearly 30-year career in education, the last 14 as the school's principal.

Grunberg only needed one year in the assistant role to prove he was the right person for the job. He spent the previous 18 years in various teacher, dean of students, assistant principal, athletic director and coaching roles in the Bremerton and North Mason school districts. He'll take over what is effectively a new building after a two-year remodel of KPMS wraps up this summer.

"This feels like the right step for me and the school," Grunberg said. "It offers some consistency for these students."

The assistant principal position at the school has been a bit of a revolving-door and the school will now be looking for its fourth in four years. Grunberg says he expects to hire his replacement by June.

Middle school principals tend to focus more on working with families, teachers and staff, while the assistant principal is more student-oriented. But Grunberg, who said he spent the last year building relationships with all parties, still plans to be student-focused.

"Families would acknowledge I'm kid-cen-



Middle school principals tend to focus more on working with families, teachers and staff, while the assistant principal is more student-oriented. But Grunberg, who said he spent the last year building relationships with all parties, still plans to be student-focused.

*Lisa Bryan, KP News*

tered," he said. "It's my priority that our kids are first, and we have to listen to the student voice. I've taken pride in being present and engaged with our students."

A change in leadership usually means a change in philosophy, and quite possibly a change in culture. Grunberg says he'll do a bit of rebranding and there will be an emphasis on instructional leadership. He wants to develop among the school's teachers and staff "accountability to our

academic, behavioral and social-emotional commitments." He also plans to do more education for staff and students around harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Grunberg, who lives in Gig Harbor, has roots in the school district. He went to Goodman Middle School and is a Gig Harbor High School graduate. He has a daughter who is finishing up fourth grade at Pioneer Elementary and a son in sixth grade at Harbor Ridge Middle School, where his

wife is a math teacher.

He is already working with his team to get the school ready for the new school year, which starts Sept. 5.

"Equity will be the foundation of all we do to ensure that all students have the opportunities they need to be successful," Grunberg said. "I've made a point to advocate for our school to get our students the same opportunities as their middle school peers throughout the district." ■

## TRIAL FROM PAGE 1

present during the murders but is thought to be a motivator behind them, as she and Ezra planned on somehow taking possession of the property after the deaths, according to over 35 pages of text messages sent between her and her accomplices.

Neubauer was sentenced to 33 years in prison.

Cell phone records revealed that when Ezra expressed hesitation about the plan in his texts with Neubauer, she would reply with encouragement, saying at one point, "You're so amazing, you got this." Texts from Ezra to Higgins and Kleine contained details about the best dates to commit the crime, the house, instructions on which stairs to use, and warnings against which doors were noisy.

Kleine, who was present during the murders

according to his phone records, accepted a plea deal in exchange for testifying against Ezra and Higgins. His sentencing is scheduled for June 2.

Ted was a retired computer security expert who once worked for the Senate Intelligence Committee and the Clinton-Gore White House transition team. He was also a frequent contributor to the Key Peninsula News and a board member and volunteer for the KP Civic Center.

Joanna helped run the Key Peninsula health clinic, was trained as a respiratory therapist, and was a longtime volunteer for the civic center. Her parents originally owned the house where she and Ted lived. The couple were married there in 1969.

Read about Ted and Joanna's lives online at [keypennews.org](http://keypennews.org) ("A Song for Ted and Joanna," July 2020). ■



Visiting Brighton Jetty in Adelaide, Australia, January 2019. *Anna Brones*





Key Peninsula History Museum Volunteer Nicole Carr tidies up the uniform rack. *Tina McKail, KP News*

## KP Historical Society Honors Local Veterans With Year-Long Exhibit

Memorial Day 2023 will last all year on the Key Peninsula thanks to KPHS and its volunteers, some of whom are veterans themselves.

CAROLYN WILEY AND TED OLINGER,  
KP NEWS

The Key Peninsula Historical Society will honor local veterans all year in 2023 with an elaborate and detailed exhibit about KP servicemen and women at its museum located in the KP Civic Center, itself a historic complex of buildings in Vaughn.

“Each year, the society has a theme for its museum, and this year’s theme is honoring the veterans of the Key Peninsula,” said KPHS volunteer Dr. William Roes. Artifacts on display come from local men and women and their ancestors who served the nation from the time of the Revolution to Afghanistan.

There are uniforms worn and decorations earned by Key Penners from World War I to the present on display, together with a sword from the Civil War on loan from the Van Slykes, a KP pioneer family, and rare examples of uniforms from the Cootiettes.

An offshoot of the Military Order of

the Cootie Auxiliary, the all-female Cootiettes provided care and entertainment for veterans beginning in World War I when lice — “cooties” — was an all too familiar problem. The white dress represented their hospital work, the red vest and tam the bloodshed of war. The uniforms on display are resplendent with pins and medals earned by the service of those who wore them.

“These uniforms are hard to come by, because the women usually wanted to be buried in them,” said KPHS volunteer Joe Dervaes, himself a retired Air Force colonel.

Also on display is a list of every veteran buried in the Vaughn Bay Cemetery, he said. “It’s over 350 names. It’s a huge representation. And that’s a real strong statement. When it was time to go, we went.”

Roes said the exhibit is not about war, but is meant to celebrate Key Penners who served their country, most of whom were in World War II.

“Local veterans of WWII served all over

in the European and Pacific theaters, on all the oceans, and one local vet spent the entire war in Brazil, surveying for the Army,” Roes said. That soldier survived a boat capsize on the rapids of an Amazon tributary, an airplane crash, and an encounter with locals who’d killed his predecessor with poison darts.

“There were also several women vets,” he said, “including Nat Knox and Judy Wilson, who both served as Army nurses during the war before returning to become local nursing icons and the founders of the first medical clinic on the Key Peninsula in 1972.”

Another local champion whose story is on display is Ruth Bramhall, who was not in the service, “but was our own ‘Rosie the Riveter’ making her contribution to the effort by building planes down in California.”

“We’d love to collect more information about veterans with local ties,” Roes said. “We’re putting together a notebook that we hope can preserve the identities and stories of those men and women who

“WE’RE PUTTING TOGETHER A NOTEBOOK THAT WE HOPE CAN PRESERVE THE IDENTITIES AND STORIES OF THOSE MEN AND WOMEN WHO WE HONOR AND REMEMBER THIS SUMMER.”

we honor and remember this summer.”

Dervaes maintains a list of local veterans but recognizes that many go unrecognized because they are reluctant to talk about their military experience. “Each war had specific after-effects upon the health of veterans,” he said.

The exhibit contains many familiar names. The individuals and their families are often the very people who have made, and are still making, significant contributions to the KP community.

The KP Historical Society museum is located at 17010 South Vaughn Road NW. It is open Tuesday and Saturday afternoons from 1 to 4 p.m., and by appointment. For more information, go to [www.keypeninsulamuseum.org](http://www.keypeninsulamuseum.org). ■



YOU KNOW IT'S GOOD AND IT SOLVES SO MANY PROBLEMS JUST DO IT

## Embrace the Compost — Your Garden Will Thank You and So Will Your Food Waste

A successful garden begins with in a big, damp, decomposing compost pile, properly nurtured, loved, raked, and with its temperature monitored.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

When we built our vegetable garden more than a decade ago, complete with raised beds and an 8-foot tall fence, it included three compost bins. We hailed from Seattle with a small yard. The only thing I grew to eat there were tomatoes, and all my yard and kitchen waste went into a big bin hauled off by the city.

I had much to learn, and I concentrated first on learning what to grow, when to plant, and how much to feed and water.

Composting was relegated to the back burner. I threw stalks and leaves from the garden into the composting bins. I read about mixing brown and green, needing to keep the pile moist, but it all felt overwhelming, and the bins pretty much just sat there untended. Given enough time — three to 10 years — just about anything will decompose, but I knew there was a better way.

Last April I received Earth Matters, the annual newsletter from Pierce County. The emphasis was on food waste, with pointers on how to avoid wasting food with good menu planning and food storage. They also offered classes on composting. I signed up.

The classes were great, but there is also nothing like local expertise, so I reached out for advice from the Key Pen Gardeners Facebook group.

Sharron Dean has lived on the Key Peninsula for 18 years but got serious about composting four years ago when her husband built her composting bins. She uses one to store leaves and the other two for composting. Adding a composting thermometer raised her composting to a new level. “I’ve decided compost is to gardening as sourdough is to baking,” she said.

By paying attention to the proportion of green to brown content, as well as volume, moisture and aeration, she can turn her yard and kitchen waste into compost in a few months.

Green content means nitrogen-rich things like grass clippings, garden trimmings, coffee grounds, fruits and vegetable trimmings from the kitchen. Brown means carbon-rich things like dried leaves, sawdust and straw.

Typical compost bin plans are 3-foot cubes, with three built side-by-side. A



Key Peninsula resident Sharron Dean shared this photo of the composting bins her husband built for their home garden. *Sharron Dean*



bin that is half full will have enough volume to heat up.

Judge the brown to green ratio by volume, with two parts brown to one part green. The process works best if everything is cut into pieces about 2-3 inches long.

“I add things to one bin, alternating green and brown items, until I feel like the pile has enough mass to really start breaking down,” Dean said. “Of course, some things have been breaking down since I started putting them in, but other things at the top are completely intact,” she said. “At that point I stop adding anything new.”

It’s important to have enough moisture, about the texture of a damp sponge. It is hard to overwater a compost bin much of the year, but keeping a lid on during the rainy winter months will keep it from getting too wet.

Aeration is critical to keeping the compost process active, and monitoring



Forget trying to guess, a compost thermometer is a worthwhile investment.

*Sharron Dean*

the temperature helps guide the process.

“I use the compost thermometer to see how hot the interior is. If I have a good mix of stuff in there, the temperature will rise quickly to 140 or 150 degrees and stay there for a week or two,” Dean said. “Then it starts to slowly decline. Once it gets back to around 80 degrees, I’ll pull a few wheelbarrow loads out just

so I can physically turn what remains in the bin. Then I’ll add back the stuff I took out, add some water if it seems dry, and let it start the process over.”

Not every pile will get to 150 degrees, but 90 to 120 will actively break things down into good compost.

The Pierce County composting system at the Purdy transfer station follows a process remarkably like Dean’s, though at an industrial scale. The ratio of brown and green is the same. They use a massive grinder to chop everything up and heavy equipment to turn, but like a good home composter they pay attention to moisture and use temperature to guide when they aerate. The Purdy compost gets to a temperature higher than most home systems reach, enough to kill seeds.

The Gig Harbor Demonstration Garden in Schmel Homestead Park, run by the Pierce County Master Gardener Program, has active compost bins. The garden is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

For more information, go to the “sustainability classroom” at <https://www.piercecountywa.gov>. ■



## NATURALIST'S NOTEBOOK

# What to Watch for This Month in the Skies, Trees and Waters

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

Venus has phases, like the moon. Our neighbor planet is putting on a show these days, high in the eastern sky, the first point of light to appear as sunset fades. On June 4 it will reach its greatest elongation from the sun, meaning its widest separation from the sun as viewed from Earth. Perfect viewing conditions.

With a telescope Venus will look like a quarter moon, with half its face illuminated. Its phases take far longer to cycle than the

moon's, thanks to a complex dance with the Earth and sun. Its crescent phase, when it is close to Earth, is seven times larger than its full phase, when it is

opposite the sun. After about nine months as the evening star, it sneaks back into its alter ego as the morning star. Many ancients believed they were different planets.

While you await Venus, see if you can catch a bat in your peripheral vision. We have at least half a dozen species, including the silver-haired bat, a tree bat that overwinters here and sometimes is found in sheds and woodpiles. Its pups are born in early summer, when the soft-bodied moths and mosquitoes it prefers are abundant.

Watch it scribble erratic figure-eights overhead, flapping like a thing on a sugar high — bats have superfast metabolisms and heart rates that push 1,000 beats per minute in flight — not as graceful as a bird but right at home in the sky, occasionally breaking off to snag one of the thousands of insects it might eat in a night.

Bats are best identified by the sounds of their echolocation clicks. Unfortunately, most of our species click outside the range of human hearing, making it hard to know which are common and which are rare, and which might be struggling.

Summer means daytime low tides. If on your tideflat ramble you stumble upon an unholy mass of finger-shaped jellyforms the color of agates, you may have found squid eggs. Normally anchored undersea, they sometimes wash ashore. They belong to the market squid, *Loligo opalescens*, which hunts in packs and breeds in large congregations. Divers have found egg clusters covering acres of seafloor. After three to five weeks, the baby squid hatch, no longer



The smallest of North American chickadees, this chestnut-backed chickadee is one of two species commonly sighted here.

*Tina McKail, KP News*

than the tip of a dull pencil, and begin the wide-roaming hunt that will see them grow, in just half a year, into a footlong adult ready to reproduce. When the squid are in, the pier at Lakebay Marina (currently closed) is a good place to shine a light into nighttime water to see the adults flash past. Jerisich Dock in Gig Harbor works too.

Another find beloved by beachcombers is the sand collar left by a moon snail. It's another mass of eggs. Underwater, moon snails cruise just beneath the sand, searching for clams to eat, on a floating pad of mucus they constantly recycle. Mucus is also the glue that holds the mix of sand and eggs together in the collar shape, which is a mold of how the female's extended body splays around its shell.

Up on land, the dawn chorus of birds grows quiet, with flirtation replaced by the need to feed hungry chicks. One bird, the chestnut-backed chickadee, never joined the chorus in the first place. Unlike our other chickadee, the black-capped chickadee, which sings with a clear and mellow two-toned whistle, the chestnut-backed chickadee has no song, only the familiar "chick-a-dee-dee" call as it goes about its

business. No one knows why it does not sing.

A West Coast specialty, the chestnut-backed chickadee favors thick coniferous forests. It nests in cavities lined with fur. Along my driveway, a pair has found a tiny hole at the top of a utility pole, probably created by a woodpecker, and when I go to get the mail I see them zipping back and forth from the madrona across the way. This spring, down the road, I found one sitting on a low strand of barbwire, picking cow hairs one by one from the barbs where they had snagged, until its beak had a pom-pom of black hair as big as its head.

Nonmigratory, chestnut-backed chickadees tend to nest in April, but they will start a late nest in June if their first nest fails or fledges quickly.

I wish I was as one with this landscape as those chickadees, who don't even need a song to earn their place in the world. More often I feel like another Northwest icon, the Steller's jay, a determined mimic of other birds. One reader reported that while it is common to hear them scream like a red-tailed hawk, a Steller's jay near his

house has taken to mimicking a bald eagle to clear out the bird feeder for its own use.

In Coast Salish stories, the cobalt jay with a black mohawk is known as Bluejay. A shifty character on par with Coyote, Bluejay comes across as half-formed, adolescent, always needing to prove himself. In many tales he resorts to trickery — a hiding place, a hidden club — to win his contests with more skilled animals.

Whenever I find Steller's on my rambles, they look like they're up to no good. They're as loose as monkeys, with all the time in the world. Just this week I came around my house and one flew up from the potted fan palm on our patio. What could a Steller's jay want with a fan palm?

Of all the things. I am collecting Steller's jay stories along with crow and raven stories. Please reach out with yours.

Lastly, June is when salal puts out new leaves. For a few brief weeks, lining the highway, a hue of baby lettuce overlays the usual stoic green. It's a small thing but it brings me joy. Touch the young salal leaves and you'll find that, like just-unfurled sword fern fronds, salal is not always stiff as waxed leather. In June it is a delicate thing. ■



# Peninsula Hawks Scholarship Fund Awards Another Record Amount to PHS Seniors

Thirty-nine years after a group of local parents decided to reward a handful of seniors with \$5,000, the scholarship fund is among the largest in the state.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

One hundred and fifty-one graduating Peninsula High School seniors received \$411,490 in scholarships at the Peninsula Hawks Scholarship Fund award ceremony May 24 held at PHS, up from 131 students and \$366,800 in 2022. Fifty-two scholarship winners were from the Key Peninsula, up from 50 last year.

The Hawks Scholarship Fund is one of the largest in the state, according to the Peninsula School District.

Any PHS senior planning to attend any type of accredited educational institution, vocational or academic, is eligible for a Hawks Scholarship. Students apply by submitting portfolios that include their academic records, community service resumes, personal statements, and letters of recommendation. Every student who successfully applies receives at least one scholarship.

Board member Deanna Russell, one of two fund treasurers, attributed the larger awards this year to new donors and more generosity, and to board President Vicky Donahoe for shepherding the program through the COVID-19 pandemic and growing the fund.

There are 90 total donors to the fund; 28 come from the KP.

"I am grateful every day for scholarships that I received as a senior in 2020," said Lakebay resident Matt Nesbit. "Not only did they completely cover two years at Olympic College, they are still helping me at Oregon State University now. I also really appreciate The Longbranch Foundation because they have allowed me to renew my initial scholarship. It really helps my family."

The Longbranch Foundation is just one of the Hawks Scholarship donors from the KP, but also invites scholarship winners to continue to apply each year they are pursuing their education.

"As we build our assets at the foundation, we have been able to increase the number of years we can assist our recipients, and the number of scholarships we give per year," said foundation board President Sheryl Low. "We have the first cohort of students who will be eligible to receive funding for all four years next year. We are proud to have increased the number of recurring scholarships this year to five (those who reapplied) and to five new graduates, who are attending with a four year degree in mind, and two trade-vocational scholarships this year."

The Hawks fund is also supported by income from the Seahawks Academic and



The Peninsula High School reader board says it all. *Ted Olinger, KP News*

## KP SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Sam Babbitt  
Olivia Beal  
Olivia Burich  
Makenzi Carter  
A.J. Casaus  
Emmett Casey  
Sara Chandler  
Skyya Christensen  
Boden Clark  
Taylor Condon  
Frankie Cross  
Mackenzie Dahl  
Amber Dalby  
Zachary Elder  
Selena Elliott  
Anais Escobar  
Ally Fredericksen  
Ashley Hall  
Grace Hansen  
Gabe Haver-Brown  
Lea Hilarski  
Madison Ice  
Jonah Jenkins  
Ashlee Jones  
Calli Jordan  
Adriana Kreil  
Paris L'Esperance  
Aiden Lester  
Deven Loska  
Jonah Lucero  
Adrian McBee  
Nathan McFarlane  
Neveah Moss  
Jonathan Mukha  
Breanna Murphy  
Grace Nesbit  
Jessica Neumann  
Abigail Oliver  
Nyla Page  
Eden Petroski  
Zachariah Reeves  
Conor Rosenberger  
Mackenzie Schuller  
Brayden Smith  
Isaac Smith  
Mia Stitt  
Mia Sykes  
David Takehara  
Annelicia Timmer  
Makenna Wedel  
Clara Whitmarsh  
Connor Wilkins

## KP SCHOLARSHIP DONORS

Absolute Auto Care  
Active Construction, Inc.  
Angel Guild of Key Peninsula  
Chaney Family  
Evergreen Elementary PTA  
Friends of Susie Jones  
Gig Harbor Eagles #2809 Auxiliary  
Gig Harbor Fishermen's Civic Club  
Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula Suicide Coalition  
Ed Johnson  
Key Center Chiropractic  
Key Center Family Dentistry  
Key Peninsula Business Association  
Key Peninsula Health Professional Center  
Key Peninsula Historical Society  
Key Peninsula Lions  
Key Peninsula Middle School PTSA  
The John and Laure Nichols Charitable Fund  
The Longbranch Foundation  
The Tax Shack, Inc.  
Hugh McMillan  
Nick Johnson Scholarship  
PHS Alumni  
Purdy Cost Less Pharmacy  
Salon 302 Hair & Spa  
Two Waters Arts Alliance  
Vaughn Elementary PTA  
Bill & Irma Wright

Vocational Education (SAVE) Thrift Store, located at 1401 Purdy Drive in an old fire station below the high school. Last year the store contributed \$65,000 to the fund, more than ever before. This year it was just over \$105,000.

"The thrift store had a phenomenal year," Russell said. "The core management team and volunteers have done a really good job streamlining how to get things through the backroom and out onto the floor. They are also working very hard to create an online presence, and more customers are showing up and coming back."

The store has a small part-time staff supplemented by volunteers, but "Debbi Brockman is the main manager at the store who has implemented many strategies to increase sales. The whole team of volun-

teers and staff have the store billowing with items," Russell said.

The staff is supplemented by PHS students whose volunteer work earns credit toward supporting their school sport or club, or a scholarship. "It's good experience for those kids to learn some business skills, some customer skills. It's a thrift store, so it's a little unique in that respect," Russell said.

Russell was born and raised in Minter, attended Evergreen and Purdy Elementary schools, and graduated from PHS. "I've been part of the scholarship program since 2009," she said. "My kids are out of college, one is married, has a baby. There are several of us with kids well beyond Peninsula High School age and we're still doing it. We need new volunteers to help carry it on; it's just such a phenomenal program and we don't

have the people to replace us, so we just keep going because somebody needs to do it. How do you not do it for these kids?"

For more on the history of the Peninsula Hawks Scholarship Fund, go to [pbs.psd401.net](http://pbs.psd401.net) ■



# Fresh Perspectives and Funding Follow 26th District Legislators Home

Believe it or not, progress was made when Republicans and Democrats decided to work together under the big dome in Olympia.

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

The 2023 Washington State legislative session welcomed in-person politics back to Olympia for the first time since 2020, when the legislature adjourned days before state-wide COVID-19 restrictions went into full effect. For Sen. Emily Randall (D-Bremerton), starting her new role as deputy majority leader demanded something of a balancing act, she said. She introduced less legislation than usual to focus on performing well in her new job — seeing caucus priorities move forward, new members being successful, and facilitating negotiations between chambers in her caucus as well as between Senate Democrats and Republicans.

“It was a really exciting session,” Randall said. “We got a lot of our big priorities across the finish line. We made huge strides in housing — almost a billion dollars between the operating and capital budget. It’s big. Really big.”

It was also a very productive session, she said. “I think a lot of us were really excited to be back and negotiating with each other in person.”

Randall said she can’t say enough about the impact of those casual hallway conversations — when you pass someone and talk through a problem or remember that you’re supposed to work on something together. It was exciting to have neighbors back on campus, visitors from districts or advocates who hadn’t been there over the last two years.

Rep. Spencer Hutchins (R-Gig Harbor), likened his first legislative session to drinking from a fire hose. “There is so much,” he said. “As people may know, the legislature is nothing like our federal Congress. We are in session for a few months out of the year, so there’s a lot of legislating that happens in a few short months.”

Hutchins said on any given day he had constituents in his office talking about education, and then he’d then run over to the housing committee and talk landlord/tenant law. Next stop — the transportation committee to talk about the state transportation budget before heading back to his office for a meeting on wildlife.

“You’re moving all over the place because the legislature covers policy in every possible area,” Hutchins said. “It was quite the education and a really fast-paced environment.”

What struck Hutchins, he said, was the quality of the people he met on both sides of the aisle. “In just this first session, I’ve developed some meaningful relationships across the whole House (of Representatives). It’s been a really valuable experience so far.”



The Legislative Building sits in the foreground at the Washington State Capitol in Olympia.  
*Washington State House of Representatives*

Hutchinson serves on the transportation committee where he was impressed by other legislators, a Republican and a Democrat, who bring in their deputies on a weekly, often daily basis, in a very inclusive and bipartisan process to build a budget. Hutchins said he was proud to be part of the bipartisan effort that engendered great respect among the people involved.

“I think it’s today’s politics,” he said. “I hate to say it, but I think it’s rare.”

Rep. Michelle Calder (R-Port Orchard) said that for the first time in a long while legislators secured transportation dollars, something she referred to as historically challenging. Calder said she, Hutchins and Randall worked well together when it came to transportation and on capital budget projects for their district.

“We got \$1.3 million for Lakebay Marina,” Calder said. “We got funding for the Port Orchard breakwater, Pen Met Parks for their athletic facility, and we also secured funding for the Admiral Theater in Bremerton.”

“In the 26th district, we tend to get more,” she said. “That’s the real benefit of being in a swing district — both Republicans and Democrats want the 26th to have funding. It works out quite nicely.”

Calder and Randall have partnered many times on capital budget investments to bring home the most for their communities, like The Mustard Seed Project and bringing more dental services to the Key Peninsula.

Randall agreed it’s most effective when there are three legislators working together and she credits having great relationships with Calder and Hutchins.

“It feels like it’s a big change, and one that I’m very happy about,” Randall said.

As someone who represents a purple district, Hutchins said he is most disappointed in how common the partisanship is in politics today.

“I have many friends on the Democratic side,” he said. “I think people want to see more bipartisanship. It’s a part of the process.”

House Republican Minority Leader Rep. Drew Spokesbary (R-Auburn) and Minority Deputy Mike Steele (R-Chelan) were elected shortly after Rep. J.T. Wilcox (R-Yelm) announced he was stepping down.

Hutchins said he has great confidence in the future of their leadership.

“They represent a generational shift in Republican leadership and that’s something Rep. Wilcox made clear in his parting words,” Hutchins said. “He thought it not unreasonable for there to be a new generation of leadership, not just new leaders but a new generation and that’s what the caucus ended up doing.”

Calder acknowledged she had her own personal issues with Rep. Wilcox, so she is looking forward to the new leadership. “When he came in, we had 48 members. We’re now at 40 and that’s a huge loss under his leadership.”

Being in a swing district, Calder said she understands the most important issues people face.

“I was not listened to at all when it came down to how important the Dobbs decision was, to women in general but especially swing districts,” she said, referring to the 2022 U.S. Supreme Court decision to allow states to restrict or protect the right to abortion after 50 years of federal protection.

“I believe I was the only single woman in the caucus so you’d think I would have been

an important voice,” Calder said. “It was incredibly frustrating not to have a group of men listen to me.”

“You know,” she said, “I think that was reflected in the (mid-term) elections.”

Randall described what she thought ended up being a hard vote for her two 26th district colleagues on data privacy for health data and individuals seeking abortion or other health services. Randall voted the same way, and said it was the right vote for their constituents.

“It was an issue they (Calder and Hutchins) took some heat from local and caucus Republicans. But it made me really proud to sit alongside them.”

“I’ve heard over and over from neighbors in our community that they don’t want big government or corporations meddling in their healthcare access,” Randall said.

As the legislature adjourned, the big piece left unresolved is most often referred to as The Blake Fix.

Two years ago, the State Supreme Court threw out the state’s drug penalty laws. The temporary Band-Aide-fix the legislature applied two years ago was set to expire at the end of June. The legislature failed to pass a new law during its regular session, from Jan. 9 to April 23, so Gov. Jay Inslee called the legislature back for a special session May 2.

Without a special session there would have been a complete decriminalization of drugs.

“It was in the House where we saw the biggest challenge because their left flank had a number of individuals strongly in favor of complete decriminalization,” Randall said.

“We were finally able to get to an agreement that I think is better policy than any of the previous versions, one centered on treatment and pushing folks into treatment, but also allows law enforcement and first responders the tools to get people who are publicly using and unsafe on the streets into either jail or treatment,” she said.

In a caucus press release, Hutchins said, “I believe we passed a bill May 16 that correctly balances accountability and compassion. It is not perfect. But it is miles ahead of what we saw on the final day of session and a huge improvement over what we have had for the past two years under the temporary Blake fix that has led to the awful scenes we now see on our streets and across the state.”

Inslee signed Senate Bill 5536 into law May 17. The new law increases penalties for possession of a controlled substance to 180 days in jail for the first two convictions, a \$1,000 fine or both.

It takes effect July 1, 2023. ■





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## Simple Brownies and Other Chocolatey Things That Are Good to You but Not for You

SARA THOMPSON

Brownies. It's hard to remember a time when the thought of biting into one didn't make my mouth water. Personally, I like mine dense and fudgy. Nuts are nice, but totally optional. My mom was not an enthusiastic cook and so I am pretty sure it was her sister, my Aunt Dorrie, who introduced me to the intense pleasure of my first bite.

When I started baking them myself, I followed a cookbook recipe that involved creaming butter and sugar, then adding melted chocolate, eggs and flour. The outcome was not always dependable. A friend in town to visit watched as I prepared a batch and she smiled kindly at me and told me there was an easier way. Simply melt the butter and chocolate, add eggs, sugar and flour all in one pot. Pour the batter into pan and bake. Less clean-up!

I never looked back. These are dense and dependable. They melt in your mouth. Over the years I have found that while I always have cocoa and butter on hand, I do not always have baking chocolate, and so I adjusted the original recipe to match what is in my pantry.

Can mistakes be made? Yes they can! A few months ago I got distracted and forgot the flour, an oversight that was quickly evident when I realized that I could not cut my brownies but had to use a spoon. I salvaged the disaster, rolling them into balls and covering them with chopped nuts. But

I definitely prefer the recipe done properly.

I've always considered chocolate to be one of the basic food groups, along with my other favorites, coffee and bread with a liberal dose of butter. Sadly, my food groups do not feature in the actual food groups that are the cornerstone of planning a healthy diet. A typical plate would be half filled with fruits and vegetables, perhaps a quarter whole grains, and another quarter protein (with legumes and seafood featured prominently) and a bit of dairy on the side.

Dark chocolate has been touted for its health benefits, in part due to antioxidants. Although some of those studies were paid for by the chocolate industry, there is evidence that about an ounce a day of dark chocolate that is at least 70% cocoa solids can improve blood flow, insulin sensitivity and mood. One of my family doctor colleagues dosed herself daily as part of her health maintenance routine. I tried to sit next to her at conferences.

Which is not to say that these brownies will make you healthier. But maybe, just maybe, they are better for you than blondies. And, if in doubt, there are other chocolate treats to try.

### Brownies

- ¾ cup butter
- ¾ cup cocoa powder
- 4 eggs at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ teaspoon salt



- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup chopped nuts (optional)
- Melt butter over low heat, stirring in cocoa. Remove from heat.
- Add eggs, mixing in one at a time, followed by vanilla and sugar.
- Stir in flour until just incorporated.
- Add nuts if desired.
- Bake in 9-by-13 inch buttered baking pan at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes

### Chocolate Crinkle Cookies

If you want something that is as good as a brownie but slightly more elegant, these are worth the extra work.

- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups brown sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 4 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- 4 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- Whisk flour, cocoa, baking powder, soda and salt in a bowl. Whisk brown

sugar, eggs, vanilla in a separate bowl.

Melt chocolate and butter in a pan over low heat and whisk into the egg mixture until combined, then fold into the dry ingredients until just incorporated. Allow to sit for 10 minutes.

Place granulated and powdered sugars into separate shallow bowls.

Taking about 2 tablespoons of dough, roll into balls. Drop and roll each ball in the granulated sugar, followed by the powdered sugar. Place on a parchment paper-lined cookie sheet.

Bake at 325 for about 12 minutes, rotating after six minutes. Cool and serve.

### Famous Chocolate Refrigerator Roll

This was a favorite from my husband's childhood. His mother was a fabulous cook but never looked down on out-of-the-box recipes. The hardest part may be finding the wafers.

- 1 package Nabisco Famous Chocolate Wafers
- 2 cups whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Beat whipping cream and vanilla into stiff peaks.
- Spread approximately 1½ teaspoon of the whipped cream on each wafer, stacking them on edge on a platter.
- Frost the stacked wafers with the remaining whipped cream and refrigerate four hours.
- Cut on the diagonal to serve. ■



# First Cycle of Septic System Inspection Program Concludes in June

The county program to protect water safety will continue on a three-year cycle. Yes, the KP will be inspecting its septic all over again soon enough.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

In 2021 homeowners on the Key Peninsula began receiving letters informing them they were required to have their septic systems inspected. The two-year process to notify all homeowners in the community will be completed at the end of June.

The environmental health code adopted by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department in 2010 and updated in 2018 required inspections for more than a decade, said Meghan Whidden, environmental health program manager for the department.

The code requires complex systems to be inspected annually, and those inspections have been carried out since 2010. Moderate risk systems are supposed to be inspected every three years, but there was no system in place to notify homeowners until recently.

“The department started notifying homeowners with less complex systems living in environmentally sensitive areas that have impaired water quality in 2020.

“Eventually we want to reach everyone, but right now we are working on areas that need it the most,” Whidden said. “The purpose is to prevent exposure to improperly treated wastewater and to help preserve the longevity of a system.”

Lake Tapps was the first community to be notified, a process that started in 2020 and took a year to complete. Whidden said that more than 90% of systems are now up to date and there have been no toxic algae blooms or closures due to high bacterial counts.

The Key Peninsula is a high priority for the inspection program because it is surrounded by a marine recovery area, with shellfish protection districts at Rocky Bay, Burley Lagoon and Filucy Bay as well as public recreational areas used for swimming and clamming.

“I know there are people who don’t want to do the inspections because they are afraid of what we might find, for instance if they have had a system for 30 years and have never had an inspection,” Whidden said.

“There is financial assistance for the inspection, pumping or repairs for qualified homeowners. And if a system needs to be replaced there are low-interest loans



At least somebody is thrilled to see “the poop truck” in action. *Tina McKail, KP News*

available through Craft3 and USDA Rural Development.”

Craft3 is a private nonprofit community development financial institution in Oregon and Washington that provides loans to businesses, homeowners and nonprofits, especially those unable to access traditional financing.

“The Craft3 people are especially helpful, and very few people are turned down,” Whidden said.

Notification letters are sent about two and a half months before the inspection is due. A reminder is sent about a month after the inspection due date, and a final letter is sent if there is no inspection. If an inspection is not completed the department places a certificate of noncompliance on the title. The property cannot be sold or refinanced until that is

resolved, which involves an inspection and payment of a rescission fee that currently is \$815.

Whidden said that most people on a city sewer system pay \$100 or more a month. A septic inspection typically costs \$200 to \$400 every three years, and a maintained system should last decades. “We do recommend that you shop around because some charge a lot more than others,” she said. “This is preventative maintenance, and it will pay good dividends. The cheapest septic system you will ever have is the one you have in the ground right now.”

Septic systems are designed to move waste from the house to a tank where solids settle to the bottom, scum rises to the top and the liquid between goes to

the drain field, Whidden said. Over time some solids will build up and need to be pumped out. If solids are not pumped — typically every 3 to 5 years — they can enter the drain field, which can cause the field to fail. A clogged filter can cause the system to back up into the home. Cracks in the tank, if identified early, can be patched so that the tank can last longer.

“Even if they aren’t happy about it, people have by and large been participating,” Whidden said. “The potential for improvement in the water quality is real. The situation on the KP is different from Lake

Tapps — the body of water is larger and there is more agriculture and wildlife — so the results may be slower than what we saw at Lake Tapps, but we should see improvement.” ■

**“I KNOW THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO DON’T WANT TO DO THE INSPECTIONS BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID OF WHAT WE MIGHT FIND.”**

**“THE PURPOSE IS TO PREVENT EXPOSURE TO IMPROPERLY TREATED WASTEWATER AND TO HELP PRESERVE THE LONGEVITY OF A SYSTEM.”**



## Reading William L. Shirer, or Why I Miss the 20th Century

Shirer began his three-volume autobiography "20th Century Journey" with "The Start" in 1976, followed by "The Nightmare Years" and "A Native's Return."

JACK DUNNE



Maybe you miss it too. Or maybe you just missed it, or missed most of it. Not that it was all lollipops and moonbeams. There was plenty of horrible stuff. But looking back, a lot of important things happened and my memory leaves me curious, and nostalgic.

It feels familiar. While I was only around for the second half of it, I have family stories and photographs that make it feel real, as if I was around for more. Is it history if I was there, or feel like "we" were? William Shirer was there for a lot of it, and his autobiography is full of being there.

He was born in 1904 in Chicago to a middle-class family to a dad with a law practice, mom at home, siblings, kind of "Leave it to Beaver" stuff but before cars. Then his dad got sick and died. Single mom has to move the kids back home to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, little Billy has to work to help out, eventually goes to a little liberal arts college to study liberal arts — you know, history, English and sociology. That was an OK thing to do, then. Works on the school paper, figures maybe journalism.

He graduates, burns all his money on a summer trip to Paris. Autumn, broke, last minute he lands a job on the city desk for the French edition of the Chicago

**SHIRER'S COLLEAGUE ED MURROW TALKS HIM INTO DOING LIVE RADIO NEWS BROADCASTS FROM BERLIN.**

Tribune. In his 20s, in 1920s Paris, he's living in a dive hotel, primitive plumbing down the hall, but he's in Paris. Cafes, food, drink and writers abound. F. Scott Fitzgerald just coming into fame, he shows up drunk and Shirer has to take him home to Zelda, who's had just about enough. Gertrude Stein, Hemingway, Dos Passos, Joyce, he gets to know them all.

The Trib sends him to Vienna as their foreign correspondent for Eastern Europe. Meets a local girl. Now it's the 1930s, he's in his 30s, oh, a revolution in India, so go spend a few months with this guy Gandhi. Great Depression, nobody stateside cares about Europe. He gets canned, the young couple figure that if they

live on the cheap they can last a year. Move to a fishing village just north of Barcelona, rent part of a villa, the larger part is being rented by Andrés Segovia, who would become one of the greatest classical guitarists of the century. The Spanish republic is failing, civil war in the streets, Franco takes charge with support from Hitler and Mussolini, who get to try out their new kind of warfare based on civilian terror. Shirer gets transferred to Berlin as the mad Nazi consolidates control, lies to Chamberlain, annexes the Sudetenland, invades Poland. He hears all the rallies from the press box, Ribbentrop, Göring, Himmler, encircling the screaming tyrant before the adoring mobs.

Shirer's colleague Ed Murrow talks him into doing live radio news broadcasts from Berlin. We weren't in the war yet, so he was not an enemy and Hitler wanted the U.S. to hear how successful Germany had become. Shirer is the first guy to do this. He gets embedded with the Nazi push to Paris and hides in a corner to witness the French capitulation, the only reporter to do so.

Toward the end of the war, his youthful European adventure turns into that often-told nightmare as he and his wife and two young daughters flee the Nazis

on a harrowing trip through Switzerland, France, Spain and Portugal, a moving dockside farewell from his buddy Ed Murrow and finally there's Lady Liberty and home.

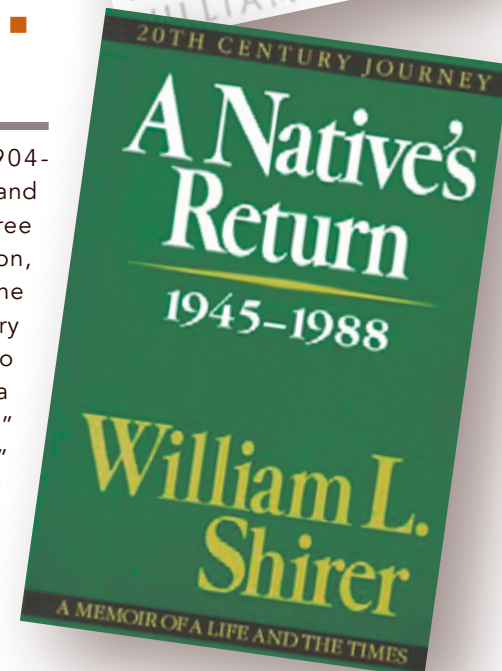
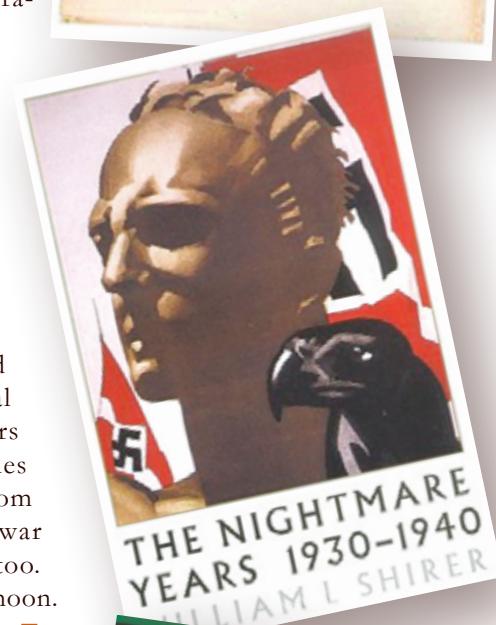
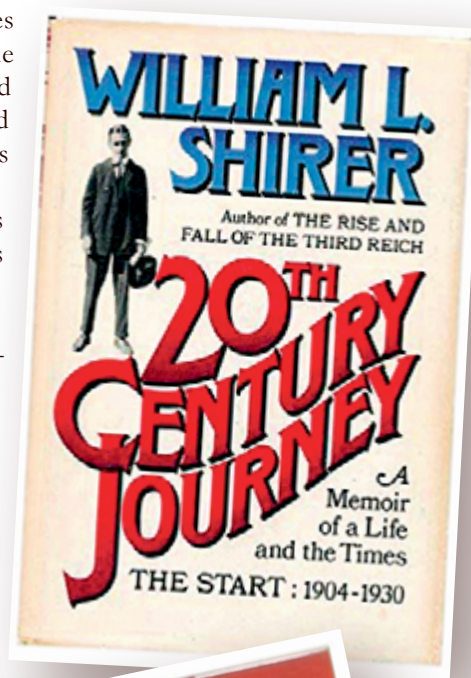
Proud to introduce his family to the safety and comfort of the good ole' U.S. of A, and he quickly finds out that CBS, along with the rest of the New York publishing world, is really not that into him. The family is down to growing their own vegetables on a small farm in Connecticut, he's making a little money on the lecture circuit, but even that starts to dry up. Come to find out that he's been blacklisted (yup, our own version of "purification" with Nixon and McCarthy ascendant) because he cosigned an amicus

brief in support of several colleagues charged with sedition. Eventually he finds enough support to research and write "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," a huge commercial success despite low expectations.

It just goes on and on. Shirer was everywhere, and he tells the stories personally, quoting often from his contemporaneous journals. It's a day-to-day saga from the beginning to the end of the century. It's a monster body of work that is completely readable. He graciously breaks the story into three books. "The Start" covers his family's roots through his glamorous Paris years, 1904-1930. "The Nightmare Years" covers the fall of democracies all over Europe and deep into WWII, 1930-1940. "A Native's Return" describes his postwar years back home in the U.S., 1945-1988.

It's a personal history and far from objective. But he was there, taking names and taking notes. I cannot imagine a more authoritative source. Much of his discussion of 1930s and '40s Germany is from personal observation, augmented by years of study of recovered Nazi files captured by U.S. forces and from testimony at the Nuremberg war crime trials. Yes, he was there too.

From horse and buggy to the moon. It was quite a ride, that century. ■



William Lawrence Shirer (1904-1993) was an American journalist and war correspondent. He wrote three novels and 17 books of nonfiction, including "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," the touchstone history of Nazi Germany (1960). He also wrote "Berlin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent, 1934-1941" (1941), "The Sinking of the Bismarck" (1962), and "Gandhi: A Memoir" (1979). Among other honors, he received both a Peabody Award for his broadcast journalism and the National Book Award for "Rise and Fall."





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- 9:01 Wright Bliss Rd NW @Olson Dr NW
- 9:02 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct NW
- 9:03 Union 76 @SR 302/4 Corners
- 9:06 SR 302 @150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 9:08 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 9:10 SR 302 @Charboneau Construction
- 9:13 Lake Kathryn Village
- 9:19 Purdy Park & Ride

### VAUGHN WEDNESDAY MORNING

- 9:50 Vaughn Elementary School
- 9:51 Wright Bliss Rd NW @Olson Dr NW
- 9:52 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct NW
- 9:54 Union 76 @SR 302/4 Corners
- 9:57 SR 302 @150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 9:58 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 10:00 SR 302 @Charboneau Construction
- 10:03 Lake Kathryn Village
- 10:09 Purdy Park & Ride

### EVERGREEN TUE/THUR MORNING

- 8:50 Evergreen Elementary School
- 8:59 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 9:00 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 9:05 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 9:06 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 9:09 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 9:13 Food Market in Key Center
- 9:15 KP Hwy N @Minterwood Dr NW
- 9:21 Lake Kathryn Village
- 9:30 Purdy Park & Ride

### EVERGREEN WEDNESDAY MORNING

- 9:50 Evergreen Elementary School
- 9:54 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 9:55 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 10:00 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 10:01 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 10:04 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 10:08 Food Market in Key Center
- 10:10 KP Hwy N @Minterwood Dr NW
- 10:16 Lake Kathryn Village
- 10:24 Purdy Park & Ride



### TUE/WED/THUR AFTERNOON

- 4:42 Purdy Park & Ride
- 4:47 Lake Kathryn Village
- 4:50 SR 302 @Windermere Realty
- 4:52 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 4:53 SR 302 @150th/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 4:55 4 Corners gas station @SR 302
- 4:57 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct
- 4:58 Wright Bliss Road @Olson Dr
- 5:00 Food Market in Key Center
- 5:04 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 5:08 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 5:10 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 5:13 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 5:14 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 5:18 Evergreen Elementary School



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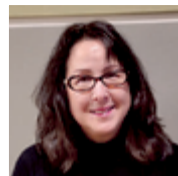
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Registered voters will be receiving ballots for the Aug. 1 primary election beginning Friday, July 14 according to the Pierce County Auditor's Office. *Ted Olinger, KP News*

## Candidates File for Local Posts in Aug. 1 Primary Election Affecting the Key Peninsula

STAFF REPORT

Nine candidates filed to run for positions in three local races for the Aug. 1 primary election affecting the Key Peninsula. The winners will move on to the general election Nov. 7.

One spot on the KP Fire District 16 board of commissioners is in contention. Cambria Queen and John Pat Kelly will face each other for position 5, now occupied by Commissioner Ben Rasmussen. Rasmussen was appointed by the board to fill a vacancy in January and will not run to retain his seat. Queen is chair of the KPFD Citizens Advisory Panel; Kelly is

the CAP secretary. Incumbent Commissioner Shawn Jensen will run unopposed for re-election to position 3.

Position 5 on the Key Pen Parks board of commissioners will also be contested: Kenneth Y. Lee will face incumbent Commissioner Kip Clinton.

Voters will decide on three positions for the Peninsula School District board of directors. Incumbent Director Chuck West will be challenged by Jack Mende for position 1. Directors Lori Glover and Natalie Wimberley are up for re-election to positions 3 and 4, respectively. No challengers filed to run against them, according to the Pierce County Elections office. ■

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

To add a listing for your event or find the latest details, visit [www.keypennews.org/calendar](http://www.keypennews.org/calendar)

**June 1-30 From Mala-Mala to Moab: A Photo Exhibit** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Photographers Gretchen Shepherd and Bob Shepherd. On exhibit at The Mustard Seed Project.

**June 1 Peninsula High School Spring Band Concert** 7 p.m., PHS Milton S. Boyd auditorium.

**June 3-4 Maritime Gig Festival** Events throughout the weekend, downtown Gig Harbor. Parade, family fun run, business booths, food vendors, concerts, car show, children's activities.

**June 2 Coffee and Connection** 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., Tom Taylor YMCA. Monthly social group in the rock wall room, all are welcome.

**June 3 Bird Walks** 8:30 a.m., rain or shine. Meet nature guide Chris Rurik at Gateway Park pavilion.

**June 3 Pierce County Master Gardener Class** 10 – 11 a.m., WSU Extension Pierce County Master Gardener Program. Gig Harbor Demonstration Garden at Sehmel Homestead Park.

**June 4 Purdy Beach Low Tide Walk** 11:30 a.m., Harbor WildWatch. Meet at the top of the boat launch, look for HWW staff and volunteers wearing blue.

**June 4 Beach Monitoring - Maple Hollow Park** 9 a.m., Harbor WildWatch. Meet in the parking area, contact Harbor WildWatch to RSVP.

**June 5 Beach Monitoring - Penrose Point State Park** 10:15 a.m., Harbor WildWatch. Discovery Pass required, contact Harbor WildWatch to RSVP.

**June 5 Bingo!** 1 – 2 p.m. at The Mustard Seed Project.

**June 6 GH Literary Society** 6 p.m., Gig Harbor History Museum. "A Sudden Light" by Garth Stein.

**June 8 Whiskey and Wiretaps: The Northwest's Rumrunning King** 6:30– 7:30 p.m., Harbor History Museum. Sponsored by Humanities Washington, featuring lawyer Steve Edmiston.

**June 10 Garden Talk: The Resilient Garden** 10 – 11 a.m., WSU Extension Pierce County Master Gardener Program. Gig Harbor Demonstration Garden at Sehmel Homestead Park.

**June 10 Gig Harbor Peninsula Civic Orchestra Spring Concert** 7 p.m., Peninsula High School Milton S. Boyd auditorium.

**June 13 TacomaProBono Legal Aid** 1 – 3 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Free civil legal help.

**June 13 Artist Reception: From Mala-Mala to Moab** 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Photographers Gretchen Shepherd and Bob Shepherd.

**June 13 Open Mic Night** 6 – 8:30 p.m., Longbranch Improvement Club. Hosted by the Longbranch Improvement Club, The Mustard Seed Project, and Two Waters Art Alliance.

**June 16 Yarn and Friends** 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., Tom Taylor YMCA. Knitting and crochet social group in the rock wall room. All are welcome.

**June 16 Baby Lounge** 12 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. A gathering for connection with other parents.

**June 17 Youth Gardening Workshop: Fairies & Gnomes** 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., Ages 5 - 11, no fee. Gig Harbor Demonstration Garden at Sehmel Homestead Park.

**June 18 Hugh McMillan "Give a Damn" Memorial Service** 1 p.m., Roy Anderson Field at Peninsula HS. Cereal, jelly, and pancake mix to be collected for Food Backpacks 4 Kids.

**June 20 Beach Monitoring - Sunrise Beach Park** 10:30 a.m., Harbor WildWatch. Meet in the parking area,

contact Harbor WildWatch to RSVP.

**June 20 Hootenanny** 2 – 4 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Folksong sing and play along.

**June 21 Cribbage Club** 2 – 4 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Everyone welcome, no experience required.

**June 23 Under the Big Top Community Resource Fair** 12 – 3 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. Free admission, everyone welcome.

**June 24 Pierce County Master Gardener Class** 10 – 11 a.m., WSU Extension Pierce County Master Gardener Program. Gig Harbor Demonstration Garden at Sehmel Homestead Park.

**June 24 Gig Harbor Garden Tour** Tickets available online or at retail outlets, including Sunnycrest Nursery in Lakebay. Tour proceeds promote literacy in Gig Harbor and on the Key Peninsula.

**June 24 Family Fun Fest and Bike Bash** 11 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sehmel Homestead Park. Family friendly festival featuring live music, food trucks, activities, and a health and safety fair.

**June 27 Earth's Rot Recyclers - Kids' STEAM Activities** 11– 11:45 a.m., Key Center Library. Presented by Pierce County Environmental Education.

**June 28 Youth Night** 6:30 p.m., Peninsula Life Church. All youth are welcome.

**June 29 Tales at the BoatShop** 10:30 a.m., Gig Harbor Boatshop. Nautical storytelling for children.

**June 29 Summer Stories for Families** 10:30 – 11 a.m., Key Center Library. For families with young children.

**June 29 KP Book Club** 11 a.m., KP Historical Society. "The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey" by Candice Millard.

**June 29 Reading Magic! With Jeff**

**Evans** 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., Gig Harbor Library. Explore the magic of reading with comedy and magic.

## WEEKLY EVENTS

**Monday Al-Anon Keys to Sanity** 5 p.m., KP fire station. Family group.

**Monday Walks with Rusty** 9 a.m., Gateway Dog Park/360 Trails. Dog Walks with Jason.

**M-W-F SAIL** 10 a.m., The Mustard Seed Project, 253-884-9814. Stay Active and Independent for Life.

**M-F REFIT/Rev+Flow Workout** Mon 7 p.m., Fri 9:30 a.m., WayPoint South, heartfitwp@gmail.com. Women's free fitness classes.

**M-F Tai Ji Quan** 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Exercise training program for improving balance and preventing falls.

**M-W SAIL** 3:30 p.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440. Flexibility and balance for those over 60.

**T-TH-SA SAIL** 8:30 a.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440. Flexibility and balance for those over 60.

**T-TH Tai Chi** 9:45 a.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

**T-W-Th REFIT/Rev+Flow Workout** Tue and Wed 5:30/6:15 p.m., Thu 9:30/10:30 a.m., WayPoint North, heartfitwp@gmail.com. Women's free fitness classes.

**T-TH Toddler Indoor Park** 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center in the gym.

**T-SA KP History Museum** 1 – 4 p.m. Open hours through November.

**Wednesday Gentle Yoga for Older Adults** 11:30 a.m., The Mustard Seed Project, 253-884-9814.



**Thursday Watercolor 101** 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Five class workshop throughout the month of June, \$75.

**Thursday Senior Bingo** 1 p.m., first and third Thursdays, KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

**Thursday Waterfront Farmers Market** 1 - 6 p.m., Skansie Brothers Park, Downtown Gig Harbor.

**Thursday KP Toastmasters** 8 a.m., WayPoint Church, 425-243-2618.

**Friday Skate Night** 6 – 9 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center, kindergarten-eighth grade.

**Saturday Eddon Boatyard Tours** 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Gig Harbor Boat Shop.

**Saturday Community Boat Restoration Program** 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Gig Harbor Boat Shop. Call 253-857-9344 to register.

**Sunday WayPoint Community Dinners** 6 p.m. Free community dinners at WayPoint North and WayPoint South churches.

**MONTHLY MEETINGS**

**26th LD Democrats** First Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Meeting locations vary, check 26d.org for monthly updates.

**Caregiver Support Group** Third Mondays, 2 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project.

**Key Peninsula Advisory Commission** Third Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m. piercecountywa.gov/5937

**KP Business Association** Luncheon, third Fridays, noon at El Sombrero. kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com

**KP Business Association** Business meeting, first Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m., All Around Gutters in Key Center. kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com

**KP Community Council** Second Wednesdays on Zoom, 6:30 p.m. keypencouncil@gmail.com

**KP Citizens Against Crime** Third Thursdays, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Key Center fire station.

**KP Civic Center Association** Board meeting, second Thursdays, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Whitmore Room, KP Civic Center, 253-884-3456.

**KP Democrats** Third Mondays, 7 p.m., Home fire station, johnpatkelly@aol.com, 253-432-4256.

**KP Emergency Prep** Third Thursdays, 7 p.m., KP Civic Center, eprep@kpciviccenter.org.

**KP Fire Regular Board Meeting** Second and fourth Tuesdays, 5 p.m. on Zoom, keypeninsulafire.org, 253-884-2222.

**KP Historical Society** First Tuesdays, 11 a.m. at museum, kphsmuseum@gmail.com.

**KP Lions Club** First and third Wednesdays, 6 p.m. Potluck at Key Center fire station, 253-525-0802, keypeninsulalions@outlook.com.

**Key Pen Parks Board of Commissioners Meeting**, second Mondays, 7 p.m., Home fire station, 253-884-9240.

**KP Veterans** First and third Mondays, 7 – 8 p.m., KP Lutheran Church, 253-884-2626.

**Lakebay Fuchsia Society** First Thursdays, 7 p.m. KP Civic Center, Whitmore Room, 253-884-2283.

**Longbranch Improvement Club** Third Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Longbranch Improvement Club, 253-200-0308 or licweb.org.

**Peninsula Emergency Preparedness Coalition** Second Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m., check pep-c.org for meeting location.

**Peninsula School District Board Meeting** Fourth Thursdays, 6 – 7:30 p.m., 253-530-1000.

**Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department** Tues & Thurs, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Key Center Corral. Call 253-432-4948 for the schedule; Air Quality, Triple P, COVID-19, General HD, Water/Wells and Healthy Housing advice.



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TOP LEFT: Fuchsia decision at the 2023 Livable Community Fair. *Tina McKail, KP News*  
 TOP RIGHT: It was all smiles at Key Pen Parks annual Mommy & Me Tea, always a hit with the ladies and held at KP Civic Center. *Tina McKail, KP News*  
 MID LEFT: PHS student Prince Charles made out big at the Peninsula Tidehawks NJROTC awards ceremony with multiple awards, including Most Improved Sophomore of the Year and the North West Youth Leadership Conference Scholarship. *Tina McKail, KP News*  
 CENTER: Just one of the cute pet rocks by artist Kathleen Best. *Tina McKail, KP News*  
 MID RIGHT: A black bear in Lakebay angling for a birdfeeder refill. *Bob Green*  
 LOWER RIGHT: Jacob, 6, found that keeping his eye on the ball is the hardest thing to do when it's your birthday. *Tina McKail, KP News*  
 BOTTOM LEFT: Pierce County 2022 Volunteer Special Achievement Award winner Mark Cockerill of Lakebay, flanked by Councilmember Robyn Denson (7-Gig Harbor) and County Executive Bruce Dammeier at the Pierce County Council meeting held at the Longbranch Improvement Club May 18. *Bryan Dominique*