

Four Candidates Announce Runs to Replace Rep. Derek Kilmer

Three Democrats and one Republican to vie for the 6th congressional district position.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

After 10 years in Congress, Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-6th) announced Nov. 9 that he would not seek re-election. Three Democrats and one Republican have announced campaigns to succeed him.

The Democrats are Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz, State Senator Emily Randall (26th-Bremerton) and Jefferson County Commissioner Kate Dean. Republican State Senator Drew MacEwen (35th-Shelton) was the most recent to throw his hat in the ring. All four met with KP News to discuss their candidacies.

Franz announced Nov. 10 that she was ending her bid for governor to run for Kilmer's seat. That announcement included an endorsement from Kilmer.

Before serving as lands commissioner, Franz worked as an environmental lawyer, was on the Bainbridge Island city council and served as director of Futurewise, an environmental advocacy group. Her top issue, she said, is housing. Other key issues include economic development, workforce training, support of veterans, childcare and healthcare. "And I am on the frontlines of the threats of climate change every day."

Her ties to the 6th congressional district go back to childhood. She lived near Portland but spent much of her time at her grandparents' ranch with 400 cattle and 13 horses a "stone's throw away" from the Tacoma Mall. She raised her three sons as a single parent in Kitsap County, moved to Seattle when they asked to attend their father's high school, and, when her youngest graduated, she moved to Grays Harbor.

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Alyssa Johnstone has big plans for the former tavern in Key Center now owned by the KP fire department. *Tina McKail, KP News*

New Planned Daycare Facility Could Help Take Heat Off KP Fire District

Alyssa Johnstone says "Availability, accessibility and reliability" make the O'Callahan's building a key spot for an early learning center. But any deal will require lots of repair, money and cooperation.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

Alyssa Johnstone drives by the old O'Callahan's restaurant building in Key Center every morning on her way to work.

For the lifelong Key Peninsula resident, it has been a reminder of some of the good times she had there in her earlier years when the building was a thriving bar and restaurant.

The mother of four looks at it a little differently these days as she goes by: less as a memory of the past and more for its potential in the future.

Johnstone, who helps run Brilliant Beginnings, an early learning center in Lakewood, is looking at the property as a potential new home for a daycare to meet the growing population on the KP.

And though it doesn't look like a spot

someone would want to drop their kids off today, she said it has all it needs to make it a special place.

Single-level building with ample square footage. Check. Commercial kitchen. Check. Bathrooms with multiple stalls. Check. Fenced-in yard space for playground. Check. Property for future expansion. Check.

"Those are the certain boxes you need to check for a daycare, and there's not a lot of buildings that check all those boxes," Johnstone said, adding that a new building meeting all those specifications would cost millions.

Transforming this long-vacant building would be a win-win for both Johnstone and its current owner, the Key Peninsula Fire District.

KPFD has been under fire since it

bought the property for double its assessed value at the end of 2021. The property was not appraised or inspected before KPFD bought it, but the Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer's tax valuation was \$473,600. KPFD paid \$950,000.

The district also purchased the Olson estate behind it, consisting of a residence and pasture, for another \$1.175 million with the intent of using the properties for a new headquarters, training facility, community rooms and a health clinic. KPFD leased the O'Callahan's building to a prospective restaurateur in 2022, but that deal ultimately fizzled out.

That deal also cost the district more money: \$2,500 plus expenses as a "good-will gesture" to the tenant to forestall any

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The Creature on Creviston: Elevating Lawn Art

Despite the mythical nature of his Bigfoot, local artist Scott Bows knows the joy it brings is undeniably real.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

While driving down Creviston Drive, an encounter with a towering long-limbed mythical monster with glowing red eyes is not such a big feat. But it sure is a Bigfoot.

Don't expect the Key Peninsula's rendition of the legendary forest figure to be elusive. No, this notoriously blurry creature was created to be very visible.

To the public, he goes by many names: Sasquatch, Wildman, and, of course, Bigfoot. To artist Scott Bows and his family, he's just plain Ol' Squatch.

The 8-foot-tall, 4-foot-wide piece of plywood has been a cherished member of the Minter Creek community since the summer of 2022. What began as a weekend whim for yard décor transformed into an evolving piece of lawn art, featuring elaborate designs for holidays and special occasions.

"It started out as just a thing for my family," Bows said. "But the more people liked it the more it inspired me to keep doing different things for it."

He won't go as far as claiming belief in Bigfoot's existence, but Scott always pictured him with an ape-like body, adorned with a bearded, bald-headed, human-like face. Each design is meticulously hand-painted with acrylic crafting paint and incorporates foam board and other 3D elements.

Though the idea is Bows' brainchild, the whole family dedicates time to making the idea better each month. The living room floor serves as the arts and crafts zone, while the kitchen table becomes his painting station. Scott and his wife Tara bounce ideas off each other, while their daughters, Harper, a sixth-grader at Key Peninsula Middle School, and Scarlett, a fourth-grader at Minter Creek Elementary, help outside with the display. It takes the Bows at least two Sundays every month to come up with new designs.

Why Sundays?

"So the school kids have something to look forward to on Monday when they're heading to school," said Tara, a secretary at Minter Creek Elementary.

Creviston is the main route to the school, less than a mile away from where Ol' Squatch roams. Almost all of the school buses and parents dropping off their kids go by this spot every weekday.

"It's so cool to see how excited the kids are when they come into the building," she said.

Scarlett said her classmates love her dad's work but admits "some kindergart-



Ol' Squatch knows he's not the reason for the season but likes dressing the part. See more photos of the big guy at keypennews.org. *Tina McKail, KP News*

ners thought (Ol' Squatch) was scary on Halloween." That's when the Bows family goes into super mode to dress up Scott's creation each week in October with a different costume, including Pennywise, Jason Voorhees and Freddie Krueger. Scarlett's favorite so far was 2022's Grinch Christmas theme, and Ol' Squatch spent most of last month dressed up in Santa Claus garb.

"That's pretty cool because people came and took their family holiday photos in front of it," Scott said, adding that he loves having people stop by and enjoy his art.

Since its inception, Ol' Squatch has been seen as a hula dancer and a peace-loving beach bum during the summer months, sporting bunny ears during the spring and a pilgrim-clad turkey hunter in the fall. Scott's personal favorite is the intricate Star Wars-themed display he does in May.

"Scott is such a great artist," Tara said. "He just keeps going and going, and it gets better and better."

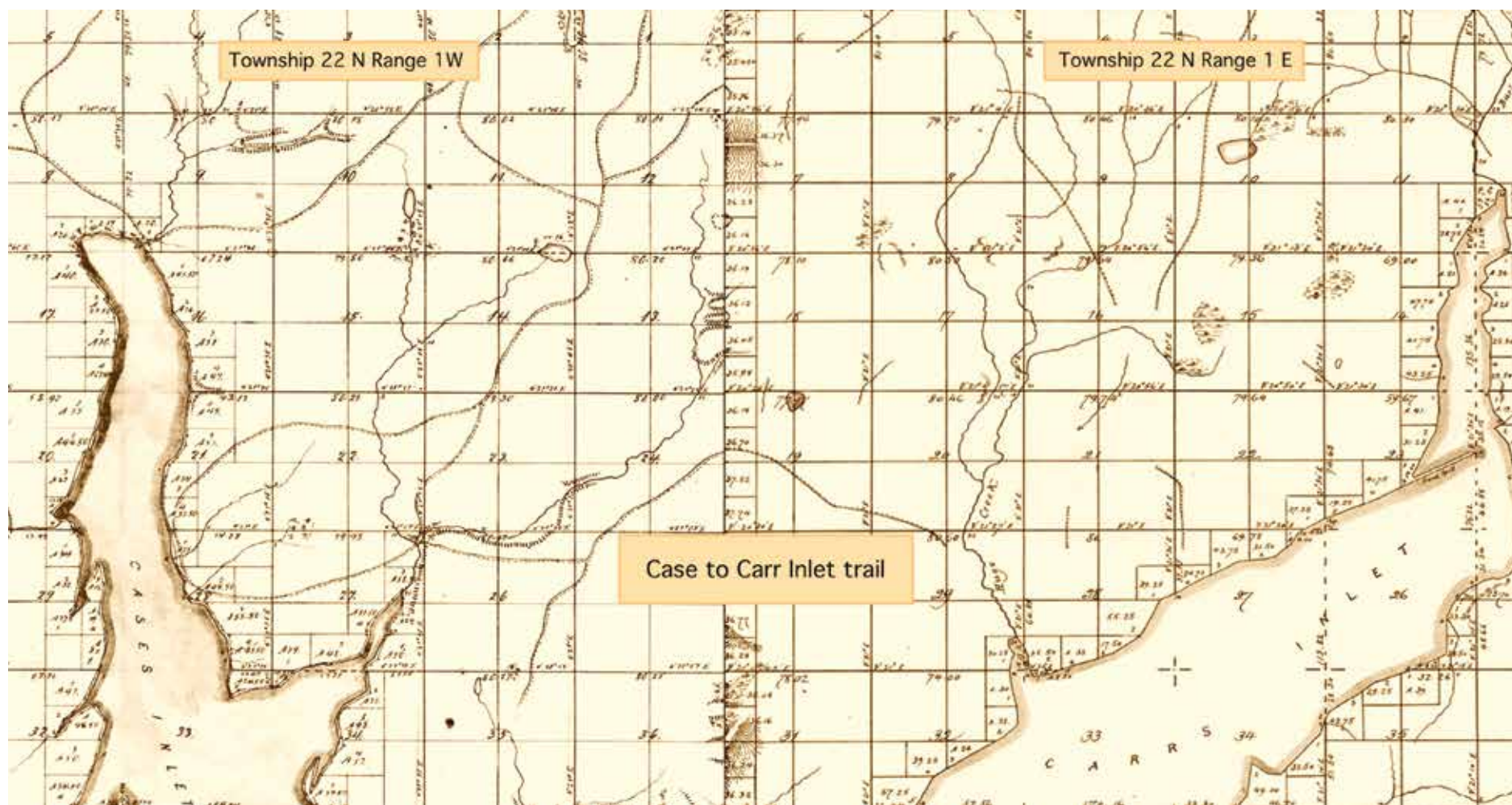
Though the Bows won't use Ol' Squatch

for political endorsements, they have used him to encourage Creviston drivers to slow down and to consider passing a recent school levy.

The family started the "Watch for Squatch" Facebook page so the community can follow along and suggest ideas, though Scott and Tara are pretty tight-lipped on upcoming displays to preserve the element of surprise. Scott is in the planning stages of designing some merchandise to sell to help offset the recurring expenses it takes to maintain a monster of this size.

Although Ol' Squatch, is not even two years old, he's due for a facelift sooner than later. The Pacific Northwest weather does a number on plywood, and Scott is looking to upgrade the material before next summer.

"The main reason I've kept this going is that people tell me that when they drive by (Ol' Squatch) puts big smiles on their faces," Scott said. "That makes me feel good knowing that I'm making people smile." ■



The maze of Indian trails across the top tier of the peninsula on the original 1856-1857 General Land Office surveys (detail). *GLO Records, Bureau of Land Management*

The Little Known Story of Elgin-Clifton Road

From trails to highways: Local native culture was preserved by surveyors sent by a nation anxious to measure and appropriate their land.

JOSEPH PENTHEROUDAKIS, KP NEWS

The earliest maps of the Key Peninsula to show geographical features in the uplands and the interior, rather than charting the contour of the coastline, were survey plats created between 1853 and 1857 for the General Land Office. The GLO was the federal agency charged with managing the nation’s public lands, including the territory in the Pacific Northwest that came under the control of the United States with the 1846 Oregon Treaty between the U.S. and Britain. Parts of the land ceded to the U.S. would become the territories and later states of Oregon and Washington.

Survey plats and the field notes of surveyors are important historical documents and have been preserved and digitized by the Bureau of Land Management, the successor agency to the GLO. While primarily intended to take stock of the land and subdivide it into a rectangular grid to facilitate its

orderly disposition and settlement, they have also preserved unexpected details that can enrich an understanding of the past and connect the past to the present.

An example of exactly that kind of unexpected detail is found in the surveys and notes for the upper third of the Key Peninsula, the area north of a line roughly between Minter Bay to the east and Rocky Bay in the west. On the survey grid that broad swath of land is identified as township 22 north, ranges 1 east and 1 west of the Willa-

mette Meridian, the north-south axis of the grid. In addition to the Key Peninsula, it includes a portion of Kitsap County as well as parts of Mason County and a large part of the Gig Harbor Peninsula. Range 1 west was surveyed by Isaac Smith and Thomas Berry in November of 1856; Berry returned in May 1857 with

William Carlton to survey range 1 east.

A striking feature of the plats includes an unusual maze of double lines, one solid and one broken, that loop around the interior, especially in range 1 west. Those lines are unlike anything seen in the plats for the rest of the peninsula to the south. Some are less than half

a mile long, others extend across the entire peninsula. They do not represent topographic contours, which were not shown on the plats, or streams, which are typically depicted with winding lines. The longest such line runs from around Victor in Case Inlet east to near the head of Minter Bay, and looking at it closely reveals its recognizable contour.

The long double line on the 1856 plat roughly matches the route of today’s State Route 302/Elgin-Clifton Road,

built by Pierce County in the early 1920s as a shortcut between Gig Harbor and Mason County. The historic community of Elgin, originally Minter, lay at the head of Minter Bay; the town of Clifton in Mason County, platted in 1888, got its present name of Belfair in 1925.

A line that appears to anticipate a road built 70 years later requires an explanation, and the answer is found in the surveyors’ field notes.

Smith and Berry in 1856, and Berry and Carlton in 1857, were following strict instructions. The “Manual of Surveying,” first published in 1850, required them to note, among many other features and data, “roads and trails, with their directions, whence and whither.” They dutifully complied with the instructions, and in so doing they preserved historic evidence of an important cultural resource: the network of historic Native trails across the peninsula that predated the arrival of settlers.

THEY PRESERVED HISTORIC EVIDENCE OF AN IMPORTANT CULTURAL RESOURCE: THE NETWORK OF HISTORIC NATIVE TRAILS ACROSS THE PENINSULA THAT PREDATED THE ARRIVAL OF SETTLERS.

**April
Godwin**
TECH TALK



Green Tech for All

Abandon all hope, ye who enter here. Humanity is being tested, and it's not looking very good for us. According to the first climate progress report card from COP28, or the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (say that three times fast), we are failing to meet our current climate goals, miserably, I might add, and to the detriment of everyone and everything on this planet.

It's almost impossible to deny what's happening. We have smashed many of the previous all-time temperature records around the world, catastrophic wildfires are increasing in frequency and intensity, devastating floods are making large swaths of our planet unlivable, glaciers are melting at a record pace, and heat waves are killing people and animals around the globe.

At this point, I have very little hope that humanity will be able to slow down climate change, much less roll back the clock. Climate change, and the tragedies that will inevitably come along with it, are looming large for all of us and for future generations. Amidst all this doom and gloom, what can we humans do?

We can adapt.

Big things are happening in green technology, and they are happening across almost every sector. We're seeing scientists, engineers and business leaders working together to develop and deploy innovations for everything from clean energy to improved farming practices, refined recycling and waste management processes.

Some of the most interesting green tech innovations have to do with salt-water desalination that's powered by solar or wind energy. These machines generate safe, affordable drinking water from the ocean through reverse osmosis, all without the use of fossil fuels.

Work is also being done around vertical farming and hydroponics. These technologies will revolutionize the way we grow food. Vertical farming is focused on space optimization by growing plants indoors and stacking them upward in columns. Growing in a climate-controlled environment means consistent production and high-quality food in limited space, even when the weather conditions outside are less than ideal.

This type of farming in urban areas has the added benefit of eliminating the need for long-distance shipping.

And then there's the electric vehicle revolution. I drive an electric car. Not only does my household benefit by saving a ton of money on fuel, but I output zero emissions while I'm running my errands. Yes, there is a lot of debate around the production process (it's not that different from other cars) and battery life (they already last longer than the manufacturers expected), but most of the data I've seen shows that the positives outweigh the negatives, especially given the current climate situation.

What about food waste? It turns out, food waste in landfills is a significant contributor to greenhouse gases, methane in particular. I don't know about you, but we've struggled with how to manage our food waste. In Tacoma, we could throw our food waste into our compost bin. That's not an option for us out here on the Key. My family considered creating a compost pile, but we didn't want to attract rodents to our property. Not to mention, we aren't super great about maintenance, and a compost pile requires maintenance.

To help us solve this challenge, we got an indoor composter, and let me tell you, this thing is magical. It dries and pulverizes most food waste. There is no smell, it's quiet, and it uses about as much electricity as one load of dishes in the dishwasher. We can use the resulting compost in our garden, or we can send it back to the company (with carbon offsets) and they will turn our food waste into chicken feed.

None of this tech is going to solve our climate problems on its own, we're going to need many more solutions to help us survive in a warming world. But when we combine the existing innovations with all the new ones that are on the horizon, I think we'll have a pretty good chance. And maybe, just maybe, at some point in the future, we'll learn our lesson.

April Godwin is an IT specialist. She lives in Lakebay.

**Mark
Michel**
RIDE ON



Sprint

I think we all believe we work hard. We've heard that if we do, we'll do well in life. A football coach of mine repeatedly

said during conditioning, "The fourth quarter is ours." He hoped to inspire us to build the stamina to outlast our opponents.

I remember spending hours on school homework trying to do well on vocabulary tests, book reports and math tests. It felt like I had to maintain the pace of a sprinter throughout my education. It makes a person question if it's worth it. It sure makes it easier to want to stop trying so hard.

One of my best friends, Gary, seemed to be content cruising through school-work. He was capable enough to get by without much effort. By the time we graduated from high school, he decided he was done with school.

He got what we considered a great job at the time. Starting wages were very appealing. He was content. That job served him well for many years. Unfortunately, there wasn't much room for advancement in the company. He watched as his friends started earning more. Those better jobs also came with better conditions: better retirement plans, better health insurance, and more time off. Many of us are now comfortably retired while Gary continues to work. Last time I talked to him he was happy and continues to work hard (though complained about it like we all do or did).

As we all know, life is a marathon, not a sprint. It's also pretty hard to be motivated by some distant reward that lies so far over the horizon, it's unimaginable. Training guidance for marathons recommends setting short goals: just to the top of the next visible rise or corner, or timing the next mile.

It's demoralizing to start a long run thinking only of how far away you are from the finish. Each step out of tens of thousands seems trivial. But completing 10 strides out of 100 is easier to swallow and feels productive. You start an inner monologue: I'm going to keep going until that tree, street sign, or hydrant. It's easier knowing what you're aiming for, and rewarding when you achieve each of those smaller goals.

It wasn't until Air Force Officer Training School that I developed my own strategy. The first six weeks were hard. We struggled at the squadron level to do anything right. We were constantly judged and corrected by some of the upperclassmen who stayed at the squadron level after just completing their first six weeks.

I noticed some of their peers had gone up to the group, or wing level, where they were away from the constant vigi-

lance taking place in the squadron. I set my sights on working hard enough to get out of the squadron for my last six weeks. It worked.

Life at group was much more casual. Comparing notes with those still in the squadron, I realized I had earned a much better lifestyle. A little more work early paid great dividends.

Years later I read some advice on careers: work hard for the first six months of any new job. Establish a trajectory with a relatively short burst of effort. That seemed reasonable (and achievable) to me.

It may seem odd, but I've learned to apply that same technique to climbing hills on a bike. By pedaling hard before the incline, and "attacking" the first 20% of a climb, the momentum helps climb the remaining 80%.

I'm not sure if it works because momentum makes the last 80% easier or it was just a sneaky way to develop a better overall work ethic. Either way, bringing the carrot a little closer encouraged me to work harder. Maybe it's just knowing there's an end in sight. There's a crest of the hill, a vacation, or retirement that makes the effort more tolerable.

Now that I've crested that summit and retired, it's easy to envision coasting down the hill for my remaining years (which I sure hope are many). But I'd like to believe retirement was just a "false summit" — that horizon on the hill that as you get there, you see the road continue to climb ahead. I'm looking forward to pushing myself to climb other hills; maybe not just to see what's on the other side, but to appreciate the things that happen with every step.

As we start 2024, I'm resolving to work hard — at least for the first couple of months.

Mark Michel is a recently retired commercial airline pilot and a Key Pen Parks commissioner. He lives in Lakebay.

**Meredith
Browand**
KEY ISSUES



Vote Your Values

As a new year breaks and the sun rises on 2024, we are faced with the reality that, once again, an election year is upon us. Whether we're ready or not, the next 10 months will be all about the upcoming elections. The presidential contest kicks off in Iowa on Jan. 15 with a Republican caucus and New

Hampshire holds its primaries for both parties on Jan. 23. Just two weeks into the new year Americans will be casting votes for whom they want to represent them in the White House.

In the state of Washington, we don't have a physical voting booth to step into when choosing which candidates we think are best. You may be at your kitchen table, sitting in a school pick-up line, or stealing a few minutes out of your work day to fill out your mail-in ballot. As you read through the Voters' Guide and look over the ballot, how do you select candidates who deserve your vote? Do you vote on a straight party line? Does name recognition matter to you? Do you choose the candidate who ran the best campaign?

I haven't missed a single election since my 18th birthday in 1995. Not a special, primary, or general election. Nearly 30 years of voting have taught me that if I want my vote to matter I must vote my values. I have to know what is most important to me and then select the candidate who is in closest alignment with those values. I know there isn't a single candidate whom I will agree with 100% of the time, but I can always choose one who represents the things that are most important to me.

I have lived my entire life as a member of a proud union household. At different points in his life, my father was a member of the United Mine Workers Association, Teamsters, and National Education Association teachers' union. My husband is a member of the Air Line Pilots Association. These labor unions have ensured job security, safe working conditions, competitive compensation, comprehensive benefits, and have represented us well during collective bargaining. My

family's life is better because of these unions, and I will always choose the candidate who best supports workers' rights. I want to vote for a candidate who protects collective bargaining rights, allows new unions to organize, and prioritizes working people.

I was raised by two public school teachers, I taught for nine years in the public school system, and my three children are currently enrolled in the Peninsula School District. Every time I get a chance to vote in any election I start by looking at the candidates' records on public schools. I have benefited from a robust and well-funded public school system, and I want the same for my own children and our community. I choose candidates who prioritize equitable school funding, support a comprehensive curriculum that reflects actual history and social issues, and champion the work of our teachers and school staff members.

In 2024, the voters in Washington's 6th congressional district will have the opportunity to choose a new representative in Washington, D.C. Representative Derek Kilmer has announced he will not seek reelection after serving in Congress since 2013. As I write this, four individuals have already announced their candidacies: State Sen. Emily Randall (D-26th), Commissioner of Public Lands Hillary Franz (D), Jefferson County Commissioner Kate Dean (D), and State Rep. Drew MacEwen (R-35th). All four bring political experience and leadership to their candidacy. But which would be the best match to your values when you cast your vote in the August primary?

A good place to start is their campaign websites and social media accounts.

Randall emphasizes "focusing on aligning education with the local economy's needs, advocating for affordable education, apprenticeship opportunities, and job training programs." Franz prioritizes "protecting reproductive freedom and women's rights, safeguarding our democracy, supporting our veterans and military families, and fighting the climate crisis bearing down on us." MacEwen announced his intent to run stating, "Inflation has taken a toll on families, infrastructure issues, education issues, and a growing threat to our national security." Dean, who proudly raised her kids in public schools, told Peninsula Daily News she couldn't imagine the race without a candidate from the Olympic Peninsula. "We're outnumbered in terms of voters but our issues matter, rural issues matter."

These four candidates all bring something different to the table and provide voters with a choice. How will you choose? I'll be aligning my vote to the values I hold dearest and those that make the biggest difference for me and my family.

Meredith Browand is a mother and activist who lives in Purdy.

Jack Dunne
FROM THE CITIOT DESK



Math

If you're still reading this, thank you. Not sure I could write a more off-putting title. I envision a somewhat less-than-engaged response. Here I want to show a little love for math. Come on with me, might be all right.

Arithmetic is most of the math we experience. There is really nothing fun about learning arithmetic for most of us. Memorizing tables and 20 homework problems just does not excite. Even arithmetic, so obviously a significant part of daily adult life, could trigger the ugly question, "Why do I have to learn this?" And the ugly answer, "Because I said so." We got so wrapped up in the numbers we missed the point of math, that there are tactics that prove things, and describe truth.

I worry that as a culture we've forgotten the arithmetic of ratios. I have no idea if it's true, but there's a story about the 1/3 pounder hamburger falling to the 1/4 pounder because customers thought 1/4 was bigger than 1/3. Seems sadly possible to me.

Which sounds bigger? 2x, 100% increase, or doubling? We're good with miles per hour, maybe price per pound, but I find lots of cases strongly argued that describe some statistic not well understood.

In political discussions especially we cherry-pick numbers to defend a bias, with little care about what that number really says because we don't carefully consider how it's defined. The pandemic was rife with numbers thrown around higgledy-piggledy, so much so that I found myself largely throwing up my hands.

Without considering the right ratio; deaths per capita (of course New York City had more deaths than Pittsburg), deaths per infection, serious illness per vaccinated patient, per patient with co-morbidities, which co-morbidities, it was easy to be confused and stressed

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José Alaniz WE LIVE HERE: THANATOPSIS, OR THE WINTER DARK IS GOOD FOR THIS



VIEWS FROM PAGE 5

and eventually call each other liars.

All those metrics are important in helping us understand what's happening around us but they don't really help us decide if it's safe to go to my aunt's funeral. So yes, our children need to learn arithmetic (and we all need to use it better). It's gonna be on the test, the real test. Not because I said so, it just is.

Calculus is where I first learned that I wasn't as smart as I wanted to be. I could hang with the principles, but putting them into practice, like on a test, was humbling, and still painful. I've read a lot more about Isaac Newton and the nearly magical insights he had that created calculus and maybe that's where my love of math began.

Though I still can't do it, calculus

describes the world we live in, that we understand in everyday experience, and makes it rigorously true. It translates how to catch a fly ball into a language that is as precise and self-consistent as arithmetic. The James Webb Telescope works. We shot that thing up there, way beyond the moon into the dark of the Earth's shadow, to a discrete spot where the gravity of Earth and sun balance just so and it will stay there. The spot even has a name: the second Lagrange point or L2. We didn't just shoot the telescope up there blindly — we talk to it, tell it what to look at and how, and it tells us what it sees. Lots of calculus has to work pretty well for that to happen, so yeah. That's amazing and true.

But around the turn of the 20th century, the math of physics changed everything, and now I am sure I do not really understand anything. I wish I could drag you

through the details but I don't understand them well enough. It's all about this "wave versus particle" description of light. Guy named Planck proved something, de Broglie showed that it was true about everything, Einstein showed that it fits with everything, Schrödinger mapped it statistically, and together they carried us into the era of quantum mechanics.

We now live in a post-Newtonian world, where calculus describes things pretty well, but only for the tiny range of space and time that we happen to live in. The very small and the very large and the very cold and the very fast worlds are not obvious in Isaac Newton's garden. The math we use to describe the quantum world is pretty deep; the folks I've met that navigate it are special people. There's an interesting discussion about whether math is invented or discovered, either way, I'm forced to

admit that time and space are beyond me. I don't really understand bricks.

The math that got us here, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, is all still true, but our view is broader and we can see limitations and now math is marching us into some strange territories. The fact that math evolves doesn't make it wrong, only that the more we learn, the more it gets refined. We build stuff all the time now using our understanding of the math of these new worlds, even though it baffles us. It's that lesson from second grade, that there really are truths, that can be proven (and disproven) and used to make stuff or to understand stuff. There are three categories of knowledge: correct, incorrect and "dunno." We can sift through all the noise bravely, with conviction and humility. It's on the test.

Jack Dunne lives gratefully in Lakebay.

Letter to the Editor

ATTEND 26TH LD REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

The Pierce County 26th Legislative District Precinct caucuses will be Saturday, Jan. 13 at 10 a.m. at Harbor Fellowship Church, 4819 Hunt Street NW, Gig Harbor, and should wrap up around noon. Any registered voter that lives in the Pierce County portion of the 26th LD (Key Peninsula or Gig Harbor) who is willing to state by signing a registration form and list of participants at precinct caucus form that he/she considers him/herself to be a Republican and has not and will not participate in the 2024 caucus or convention system of any other party is eligible to participate in the caucus. You can find your precinct number on your voter registration card or online at votewa.gov.

The purpose of a caucus is to:

1. Elect delegates and alternates to the county convention where delegates to the state convention will be elected.
2. Discuss issues pertinent to the Republican platforms for county, state, and national organizations.

Don't miss this opportunity to participate at the grassroots level of Republican politics in the state of Washington. Urban progressives have dominated Washington politics for many years to the detriment of our rural lifestyles and livelihoods. This is your opportunity to help develop a winning Republican Party strategy to help counter the Democrat stranglehold on our beautiful state.

Marc Christensen, Vaughn
Precinct Committee Officer 26-321

Obituary



Christopher Vaughn Johnson

Christopher Johnson of Sultan suffered a heart attack and died Nov. 22. He was 51 years old. Chris leaves behind his wife Shelia and two children, Kyle and Robin.

Born in Las Cruces, New Mexico, Chris moved to greater Gig Harbor when his mother remarried. He lived in the Danforth log cabin in Wauna for 13 years before helping his family build a new house near Minter Creek.

Chris attended Peninsula schools and graduated from Peninsula High School in 1990. He was employed as a sergeant at the Monroe Correctional Center. He spent his off-hours hiking and climbing mountains in the Cascades. He will be missed by all who knew him.

TRAILS FROM PAGE 3

Local archaeologist and anthropologist Lynn Larson said that, even though the Native people on the shores of Puget Sound traveled primarily by sea, they followed and adapted animal trails to send messages and to hunt, pick berries, collect firewood, gather sedge and other plant resources along wetlands for basket making, and cut down trees they would carve into canoes. Several accounts also suggest that canoe portage trails had existed between Carr and Case Inlets, for example between Vaughn and Glen Cove.

In "The Puyallup-Nisqually" (1940), her study of the abandoned cultures of south Puget Sound, anthropologist Marian Smith lists two villages in Case Inlet in the 1800s, home to the Squaxin and located at the head of the inlet near Allyn and Grapeview. On the shores at the north end of Carr Inlet Smith mentions villages at the head of Burley Lagoon, at Minter and in Glen Cove, where the S'Hotlemamish lived.

The Squaxin and the Minter people were connected by strong family ties. Jerry Meeker (1862-1955), whose father was a member of the Puyallup tribe and whose mother was from Minter, remembered that "Squaxin Indians and Minter were more related than anybody 'round here." That connection suggests that the trails, particularly the

one connecting the head of Case Inlet and Minter, were used regularly and were established enough to be noticed by the surveyors.

In the decades that passed between the years when the surveyors and their teams took the measure of the Key Peninsula and when Elgin-Clifton Road was built, the land was transformed. Arriving settlers logged and farmed it, and an entirely new web of social and economic activity came to define the country. Native villages were slowly abandoned and their people removed in a painful process only now beginning to be understood.

Settlers likely continued to use historic trails until patterns of land use and ownership followed in the early 1900s by the arrival of the automobile made them unusable or obsolete. County surveyors

NATIVE VILLAGES WERE SLOWLY ABANDONED AND THEIR PEOPLE REMOVED IN A PAINFUL PROCESS ONLY NOW BEGINNING TO BE UNDERSTOOD.

and engineers probably based their alignment of Elgin-Clifton Road and later revised it as much on those cultural factors as

they did on terrain and topography.

But the plats from the 1850s show that the Squaxin, the people of Minter and those in neighboring villages had been there first, establishing a network of trails in response to cultural needs but also terrain and topography. In an ironic and poignant twist, evidence of a key part of that culture and its connection to the present day was preserved by surveyors sent by a nation anxious to measure and appropriate their land. ■

NATURALIST'S NOTEBOOK

Nightlife — The Beach at Maple Hollow

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

It is past midnight. A full moon struggles to cut through the mist that rises from Henderson Bay. The night's work has just wrapped, and though we are stiff and half-frozen, a little jackknife clam has the naturalists I'm with in stitches.

We're at Maple Hollow Park. Twice a year, summer and winter, a team of volunteers led by Stena Troyer of Harbor WildWatch and Michael Behrens of Pacific Lutheran University visits during the lowest of the low tides to document the beach and its inhabitants. In winter, when low tides are at night, the team has permission from Key Pen Parks to hike in after hours. I have a new appreciation for the park, having passed among the twisted forms of its trees rising into the moon mist light.

The project has been running for 10 years and includes eight beaches in Gig Harbor and on the Key Peninsula. When we arrive at the beach, Behrens finds a certain bolt in a rock and

runs a tape measure down to the water line. This is our transect. He will spend the first half of the night using surveyor's equipment to measure precise



elevations along the transect, allowing him to see over time how the beach's angle and topography shift.

Meanwhile, Troyer leads the rest of us in our first survey of life along the transect. Every three meters we huddle and note each category of life we see. At the top of the beach, the list is short: unattached sea lettuce, amphipods, shell debris. As we move down the transect sand turns to cobbles, then gives way to larger rocks sunk in mud. Creatures appear and drop out: periwinkles, barnacles, limpets, red algae, shore crabs, hermit crabs, tubeworms, sand dollars, the odd chiton or gurnel.

"Any flatworms?" Troyer asks halfway down the beach. "I want a flatworm. It'll be under a rock, but they need a little more water than this."

A few meters later she sings out, "Flatworm!"

This simple presence-absence exercise warms our eyes for a more intensive survey.

At the zero-foot, minus-one-foot, plus-one-foot, and plus-five-foot tide levels, we lay out a series of quarter-meter squares and, inside each one, count every living thing. Barnacles and sea lettuce get an estimate of percent cover, but otherwise, we must tally snails into the hundreds, limpets and tubeworms in the



Welcome to Club Clam. Nature night walks reveal an otherwise hidden world. *kenic Pfost, Harbor WildWatch volunteer*

dozens, crabs that won't stay put, tiny hidden mussels, and so on, finishing by dragging our fingers through sandy areas to count sand dollars.

As we move from square to square it is impossible not to wonder why creatures cluster where they do. One square will be filled with sand dollars, the next empty of them. It reminds me of the microhabitats in forests: loose troops of fungi, rare mosses. The differences become especially clear when you compare beaches. Narrows Beach in Gig Harbor is steeper than Maple Hollow, rockier, with more anemones and chitons and no sand dollars. As we crouch and count, my eyes open to factors that might affect seashore life. What about beach orientation? Geology? Wave shock? Current?

Then, of course, doing this work over decades will reveal how things change over time.

When we finally finish with the squares, the tide is as low as it will go. A volunteer finds a bay pipefish in the shallows. Moon snails are everywhere.

"Time for the hypothermia dance?" asks Troyer.

Behrens laughs and says the water is warmer than the air. He takes a close look at a moon snail on land. "That has cold invertebrate look," he says. The edges of its mantle are curled up, almost stiff.

This kind of cold will greatly slow clams, snails, and sea stars, he explains, but it will not harm them. It was a much different story when he rushed to the tide flats after the heat dome in 2021 when low tides were mid-afternoon. Heat cooks these creatures alive.

The tragedy tonight is that Troyer has left the peanut butter cups in the car. We go on. Kelp crabs stalk the night. Krangon shrimp glow in a black light. Troyer explains that the beauty of gathering data in this way is that as soon as something strange happens, she can expand the protocol to include it. Case in point: sea star wasting syndrome. As we wander she measures each sea star we come across. Tonight there is no evidence of the disease. Some species of sea stars have begun to rebound while others remain absent. Troyer has a record. This has been a promising year for sea stars.

Later, Behrens speculates that these long-term whole-beach surveys might prove potent in a few ways. First, they will show how animal communities react to a major change, an oil spill or as is happening at a survey site on Fox Island, the removal of a crumbling seawall.

Second, the work helps the team tune in when a certain organism's life changes. Like oysters. In 2015, when the well-documented "blob" warmed Pacific Northwest waters, the cultivated Pacific oyster had, as Behrens calls

it, a stunning recruitment event. A species chosen for farming because the water here is too cold for it to reproduce in the wild suddenly reproduced like mad. Pacific oysters littered every beach. For several years, on nights like these, Behrens and his volunteers measured oysters. A scientific paper based on the record he has assembled is forthcoming. It shows that subsequent years had smaller recruitment pulses.

The cadence of these surveys means that naturalists are on our beaches, paying attention, at least twice a year. That is no minor thing.

We are in the shallows telling stories, swallowed up by mist, when a shape pops out of the sand and swims madly away from our boots. Maybe jets is a better word. It is a clam, a narrow jackknife clam, yet it moves like a squid, shooting its siphon forward on one side and then its foot on the other and somehow propelling itself with what must be jets of water from within its shell.

"I had no idea they could do that," Troyer says.

The clam drifts for a moment. Then it reaches out its milky foot and grabs the sand so that its shell spins and straightens. After standing for a moment, with a few quick strokes it pulls itself back underground, completely out of sight.

Amazed, these seasoned naturalists are left to wonder. ■

KP Community Council Planning To Rebuild Its Future

Newly elected leaders hope to work closely with other nonprofits and serve as an information resource and catalyst for change and improvement.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

The Key Peninsula Community Council elected new officers and welcomed two new members at its November meeting. The new leadership team plans to make the council a central resource for the community for information and referrals to services.

A recent \$35,000 grant from Pierce County to the council will help. The council will be reimbursed for allowable expenses including utilities, outreach, consultation regarding the website and social media, and some needed improvements at its office in the Key Center Corral.

“We are a hub,” said Kathy Lyons, the new council president. Lyons recently served as vice president and has been on the council for four years and also spearheads the Key Peninsula Beautification Project. “We want to be more inclusive, available to the community as an information resource center.”

Lisa Monnerjahn is the council’s new vice president and acting secretary and leads volunteer coordination.

“We have a lot of nonprofits here with a lot of overlap,” said Mary Moffett, the council acting treasurer. “Our uniqueness is that we are here with a physical spot for

county resources.” Moffett joined the board in 2023 and currently volunteers at the office desk once a week.

“We want to move from being an amorphous blob to being a concrete goal-oriented community service organization,” said Susan Mendenhall. She is not a board member, but volunteers each Friday at the Key Center office.

The council has had an office in the Key Center Corral since 2017 and is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Its main source of income comes from rent paid by the agencies and organizations using it to provide outreach and services there, including the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, Safe Streets, Key Free Clinic and the Key Peninsula Partnership for a Healthy Community. A volunteer staffs the front desk except for Thursdays, when Pierce County Council Member Robyn Denson for the 7th district, or her assistant John Jolibois, hold their regular hours.

The council was established in 2004 under the leadership of Jeff Harris and Dennis Taylor to serve as a voice for the community. The goals were to facilitate interactions between agencies, nonprofits, businesses and individuals; to serve as a liaison to county, state, and federal government; to act as a

resource for the community; and to assist in fundraising and volunteer recruitment on behalf of other community organizations.

It was designed to be representative with 14 directors from each of the four Key Peninsula census tracts. Initially directors were selected by an election process, but the cost of outreach was high and voter turnout was low. In 2015 its bylaws were updated and directors were invited to apply for appointment by the board to two-year terms.

The most recent update of the bylaws eliminated the requirement for board members to represent specific census tracts. “We all live here,” Lyons said. “It didn’t make sense to have divisions.”

“We want to work with all the nonprofits and not be siloed,” Lyons said. As part of that effort, the board invited local organizations to the annual meeting Dec. 14 to share a vision for working together.

Over the years the council has served as a nonprofit sponsor for several organizations including KP School Bus Connects (ended in 2022), and the KP Partnership and the Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula Suicide Prevention Coalition (both now independent nonprofits). It serves as the fiscal sponsor for the KP Farm Tour and for the recent

feasibility study for a pathway between Key Center and the Red Barn.

According to Monnerjahn, the council determines what projects to focus on based on suggestions that come up during meetings and having someone to steer the project. Recent and current projects include the Broadband Project, the Beautification Project, Key Pen It Clean, and the Scarecrow Contest. It cosponsors the candidate forum each election cycle along with Key Peninsula News and the Key Peninsula Civic Center.

The council is recruiting both volunteers and board members. Board members are asked to commit to two years of service, attend monthly meetings, and be a part of a standing committee or to volunteer at the office. “Bring your skills, be a team player, and have a passion for the community,” Lyons said.

“Volunteering is a great way to get to know the community,” Moffett said. “We would welcome newcomers.”

For more information, visit <https://kpconnects.org/>, email keypencouncil@gmail.com, or call 253-432-4948.

The schedule for Health Department services is available online at <https://www.tpchd.org/i-want-to/key-peninsula-office/>. ■

KP Free Medical Clinic Casts Wide Safety Net For Those in Need

With insurance premiums on the rise this year, Key Free Clinic is open to anyone struggling to pay for health care or who needs help navigating the system.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

For many people on the Key Peninsula, healthcare costs can end up taking a good chunk out of their household budget.

This year, statewide insurance premiums have increased by 8.94%, according to the state Office of the Insurance Commissioner. Even those with employer-provided health insurance are taking a hit, with plans like Kaiser Health Plan of Washington and Premera Blue Cross going up as high as 17.81% and 12.2%, respectively. Families may find themselves spending at least \$5,100 annually on insurance premiums, while individual coverage averages around \$1,150.

Relief is available for those who need it.

The nonprofit Key Free Clinic aims to fill the healthcare safety net gap for those struggling to access or afford medical assistance. This assistance extends to those with private insurance who find it challenging to meet deductibles or copays, according to Anne Nesbit, the clinic’s executive director since 2015.

“There really is a need for this in our community, and we want to ease some of the stress associated with maintaining good health,” she said. Patients come from as far as Bremerton and Tacoma.

“Our mission is to provide support for those who lack access to medical care,” Nesbit said. “We’re community-based and our volunteers are people from our community who want to help and give back,” Nesbit said.

The volunteer staff include two M.D.s, two advanced registered nurse practitioners, two nurses, and office staff.

Services focus on nonemergency medical issues, low-cost or no-cost specialist referrals and medical prescriptions. Nesbitt said the goal is to get every patient enrolled in something more permanent, like Medicaid (Apple Health) or other Washington Healthplanfinder plans, and connect them to other resources. The clinic partners with Purdy Cost Less for prescription services and works with St. Anthony Hospital in Gig Harbor for things like X-rays and lab work.

“We don’t want to be someone’s primary care provider, but in reality, that’s what some of our clientele need,” she said.

Approaching its 11th anniversary, the Key Free Clinic is slowly getting its legs back under it after being closed down for three years, mostly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The clinic saw three to five patients per session before the pandemic. Since reopening last June, the clinic has seen just one or two each evening, but consistently enough to justify increasing its service to two evenings a month.

Appointments are on a first-come, first-served basis, and the clinic is open from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the first and third Thursdays each month, including Jan. 4 and 18 this month. Those needing to see a member of the medical staff should plan on being there before 5:30 pm to reserve a spot.

Uncertain funding and some administrative woes forced Key Free Clinic organizers to scale back services during the pandemic and find a new home. Last summer the clinic opened up a makeshift examination

room at the Key Peninsula Community Council offices at the KC Corral, located at 9013 Key Peninsula Highway NW. The clinic is funded by Pierce County grants and private donations to pay for rent, meds, and insurance.

Transportation to and from medical appointments, inside and outside the KP, remains an issue. Many of the same people who have a tough time affording health care have trouble finding arrangements to even get free medical assistance.

“We rely on patients using family and friends,” said longtime Key Free Clinic board member Chuck West. “We have a few volunteers who help bring people up from the neighborhoods down in Longbranch.”

The Key Free Clinic relies on its volunteers to keep the doors open. Nesbitt said they are always looking to expand services to include vision and dental care in the future if they can find some providers to volunteer.

Get more information about the clinic on the Key Free Clinic Facebook page. ■

Food Backpacks 4 Kids Plans to Expand Its Vision to Growing Food

VICKI BIGGS, KP NEWS

The 10 women and two men who make up the staff and board of Food Backpacks 4 Kids have a vision for the Key Peninsula: to provide nutritious food for every child and adult in need.

Called Food 4 All, the project's goal is to enable any interested person to learn about growing, cooking, storing and preserving food.

BP4K began at Evergreen Elementary School in 2009 when staff learned that some students were receiving their only meals of the day at school, meaning that on weekends there was no assurance they would get anything at all. They filled backpacks with food that could be taken home to provide some basic nutrition for hungry children.

Their work grew into a peninsula-wide effort and eventually a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in 2010. The program now fills 600 backpacks every month. In 2021, FB4K opened a permanent food pantry in Key Center that is open Wednesday through Friday from noon to 6 p.m.

FB4K receives 60% of its funding from local donors. The federal Emergency Food Assistance Program provides some funding, with smaller amounts coming from various county programs.

"I just updated our yearly filing with the State of Washington, and 92% of our expenditures went to our customers, with 8% covering our overhead," said Executive Director Zaida Woodworth.

She proposed the Food 4 All program to the FB4K board at the beginning of 2023. After hearing from many people using the food pantry and the backpack program, it became apparent that the work needed to expand.

"The need for food assistance programs in Pierce County and beyond has consistently risen since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic," Woodworth said. "Need is outpacing assistance programs and will continue to do so."

Four hundred families use the food pantry each month. Customers are looking for quality fruits and vegetables, and want to learn how to cook whatever is available. For example, Woodworth said many people do not know what to do with dry beans, an inexpensive food rich in protein.

"The overarching goal of Food 4 All is to build sustainability on multiple fronts," she said. "By building a food hub that invites community participation, we are creating space for people to be involved,



Now undergoing rehabilitation, Creviston Valley Farm may become one of the most promising farms on the KP. *Tina McKail, KP News*

valued, and a part of something that benefits them directly."

Food 4 All will also benefit local farmers. "We are launching our participation in the Washington State Department of Agriculture Farm 2 Food Pantry program, which will allow local farms to get paid for the produce they provide to FB4K," Woodworth said. "This program marks the beginning of the FB4K acting as a catalyst for residents on the Key Peninsula to grow their own food and sell their produce to us."

Some of the participants are Wildwood Hollow Farms, Creviston Valley Farm, and Key Peninsula Produce Express.

Sid Skievaski, of Creviston Valley Farm, is one of the partners of Food 4 All. A chance meeting at a local restaurant brought him into the orbit of these "dynamic women having a board meeting," he said. That lively conversation began the relationship that is carrying the Food 4 All vision forward to the next stage of development.

Skievaski is rehabilitating the family farm that has seen some years of neglect. His mother, Lalaine Wong, was enthusiastic about the farm being part of the community.

"It has been my goal to get the place up and running," he said. "There is no reason not to have it providing fruits and veggies for everyone." Planning and planting are

in the works for the early part of the new year. Repairs to the greenhouses are the priority. Microgreens planted in the early part of the year will be the first crop.

Food 4 All will also be opening a commercial community kitchen soon, according to Woodworth. A kitchen will allow nutrient-dense meals to be prepared and delivered to people who do not have kitchen facilities. Currently, the pantry is providing meals for two homeless teens and one disabled person and is delivering groceries to some clients who are unable to get to the pantry.

The licensed cooking facility would host cooking classes and teach people about food preservation of such items as soups and canned fruits and would be available for rental to businesses.

Volunteers are eager to begin assisting with the program.

Brenda Dahl is one of them. She and her family began using the FB4K program a few years ago during tough times. She continued to use the food pantry from time to time and became a volunteer.

"The staff are wonderful and try to make people feel welcome; they are treated like old friends," she said, adding that some customers experienced stigma for using a food bank. "These are hard times right now for people on fixed incomes."

Dahl is excited about the program to

teach cooking skills. "Many people prefer convenience foods because they do not know how to cook from scratch," she said. There are young parents in the community who would like to be more proactive but do not have the skills.

In a recent survey, some parents expressed the desire to be responsible for the food going to their homes, instead of having children bringing it in a backpack. The adults are grateful but do not want their children to feel burdened with the responsibility of providing for the family. The Food 4 All concept would allow parents and families to take part in growing food and learning how to economically make use of it.

The vision of Food 4 All is a contrast to the current model of most food banks. Promoting and presenting interactive teaching, meeting people where they are, has brought the FB4K program to the forefront of the nonprofit field. It was named Nonprofit of the Year by the Gig Harbor Chamber of Commerce in 2023. The goal of making food available to every person in need, reducing barriers to accessing food, and emphasizing nutrition and high-quality foods sets it apart. Creating locally sustainable systems of growing, selling, and distributing food not dependent solely on government programs and budgets is its paramount goal, according to Woodworth. ■

KP Artist Tweed Meyer Transforms Herself, Once Again

The painter has been a fixture of Key Peninsula civic life for decades, but now she has turned inward to go forward.

VICKI BIGGS, KP NEWS

Two unwelcome guests live in Tweed Meyer's house: grief and loss. They have been her constant companions for nearly two years.

On January 5, 2022, Tweed's mother, Norma, died there at age 92. Sixteen days later Tweed's 42-year-old daughter, Willow, passed away unexpectedly from an undiagnosed cardiac disease on the morning of Norma's memorial service.

Tweed is a well-known artist on the Key Peninsula and beyond. Her most visible works for peninsula residents are the murals at the Key Center Corral and Minter Creek Elementary School. Her large, vibrant landscape and still-life paintings adorn many homes, businesses and school hallways on the KP. She has had exhibitions at the Sydney Gallery in Port Orchard, and in galleries in Friday Harbor and Lake Quinault, and participated in the Centrum Jazz Festival in Port Townsend for five years as a live-action painter. She still regularly attends events and music venues to sketch and paint the moment, and frequently donates her paintings to local nonprofits such as The Mustard Seed Project and the KP Civic Center.

Tweed grew up on Wollochet Bay, though many of her early years were spent in the family cabin in the Hoh River forest. It was an ideal childhood, with parents who encouraged exploration, experience and expression.

She raised three children, became a pastry chef, tried firefighting school, organic gardening, and graduated from the Northwest College of Art and Design in Poulsbo in 1995.

"I did not have a husband, I had the community," Tweed said. "It's all about meeting our humanness. I've always admitted my humanness."

Tweed spent most of her recent years living and working alongside her mother, Norma, also an artist. "We would spend all winter talking about Monet. We loved the Impressionists; they were the ones going out in nature."

En plein air painting, literally "painting outdoors," is her love, and she was once often seen with her paints and easel set up alongside a bay, a vista, or a stand of trees, capturing a scene from a roadside outlook.

She said an important part of her early adult years was spent living in the Hoh region, absorbing raw nature firsthand. "I wanted to find out about life . . . in deep experiences with



Tweed Meyer works on an oil painting inspired by the colors of autumn. *Tina McKail, KP News*

nature." Her portraits of giant, unmanageable trees and roving landscapes are expressions of that immersion in the natural world.

"I'm a poet, writer, a cook, and artist and gardener. I can see myself in all these things. Anyone who sees my art knows 'It's a Tweed,'" she said.

But now Tweed has entered a more difficult process in life, learning to recover and reconcile two major losses. This after she also suffered the death of her son, Justin, at age 21, some years ago.

In typical Tweed fashion, she is open about her struggles. "Now is the time for wisdom, not strength."

And the focus of her current work reflects that sentiment. She's not going out much these days.

"Painting for me now is such a pleasure. Learning oil painting takes a lifetime. It's flowing in me now because I am not struggling."

Her trademark wild, dreamlike and sometimes enormous expressions of nature (one painting is 16 feet tall) have given way to an expression of the changes that bereavement has brought. Looking inward, making peace with loss, and working to reconcile transformation of



Adding details with a palette knife.

Tina McKail, KP News

her inner landscape has brought her to the discovery of smaller and brighter works.

"I'm not doing landscape now, just simple things, there's an immediacy to it," she said of her new paintings of fruits and flowers, colorful with the recognizable Tweed glow, but simply done.

"There is an immediacy to this grief," she said. "I've been hit. I can speak my truth (and) find a way out that contains worth and meaning. Art is my saving grace."

Tweed has another avenue in her healing process, one that involves her daughter Willow:

In March 2014, Tweed and Willow went to the Tacoma library to make a recording about Tweed's life, with Willow as interviewer for the national nonprofit StoryCorps, a sprawling effort to preserve and share the stories of Americans from all walks of life. Tweed listens to this recording often. She takes comfort and inspiration from Willow's voice and laughter. As a result, Tweed is in the planning stages of making a documentary, using the interview as a foundation for a script.

The work of processing grief and loss takes many paths, not always in a linear way. People come to terms with bereavement over time, and become reconciled to loss. It is a process that cannot be hurried or prescribed. Once past the initial trauma of loss, many people find comfort in grief groups, journaling, or physical exertion, for example.

Tweed is aware of her gift for extraordinary transparency, and her porous transactions between pain and pleasure. She balances her openness with times of withdrawal. "I trust myself that I know what I'm doing," she said. "Allow in subconscious thoughts and allow things to come out."

Tweed's Key Peninsula studio is open by appointment by scheduling via "Tweed's Art" on Facebook. ■

DAYCARE FROM PAGE 1

potential claim after the district terminated the lease at the end of 2022, and \$20,000 the then-property manager allegedly paid itself improperly for signing the tenant. The district sued the former property manager, Randy Boss of Harborside Management LLC, in April to reclaim that money. The district confirmed but would not comment on the status of the lawsuit for this report.

Johnstone approached the fire department in September about leasing the building, but after learning of the additional expenses to fix it she would have to invest, she decided buying was a more viable option.

"It's not in a great state," she said of the building. The district has already spent more than \$20,000 on repairs since it was bought in 2021 and said it will take another \$50,000 to fix the roof and septic system. She said KPFD, in particular Chief Nick Swinhart, has been very open about the known issues with the building and has shared results from their recent feasibility

studies.

The two sides have not agreed on a purchase price, but that may come as early as this month.

"I hope to get through the negotiations pretty quickly," said Johnson, who is also exploring grants, investors and other financial assistance to buy the property. "There's pressure for (KPFD) to get this location off the books, but I want this to be a partnership during the process. I want to make sure it's a good deal for them and it's a good deal for me, so it ends up being a good deal for the community."

"Community" is very important to Johnstone. Her family is KP through and through. She grew up off of Creviston and graduated from Peninsula High School in 2010. Her husband, Skyler, is a Longbranch native and two of their four kids, ranging from 11 weeks to 11 years old, attend Evergreen Elementary. She plans to hire local during the remodeling process and work with the community so the very visible and accessible space in front of the building can be used on the weekends to support

things like farmers markets and food truck gatherings. Johnstone hopes tired parents swing by the coffee shops nearby after dropping off their kids and grab some items for dinner at the grocery store across the street before picking them up.

But Johnstone knows getting into a building is just half the battle. Once remodeling begins she will start the process to get her early learning program license through the state Department of Children, Youth & Families, which takes at least 90 days. She hopes to finish construction no later than July.

Johnstone is up for the challenge. If all goes according to plan, the new daycare will be up and running for the fall 2024 school year. "The amount of work this will take will not make me shy away from doing something I love and want to do," she said.

About 70 children five and under will be able to use the early learning center, and she mentioned that about 40% of the families who live in the area qualify for DCYF subsidies to help pay for childcare. John-

stone is shooting for about six classrooms to support infants, toddlers and waddlers, preschool and pre-kindergarten students. She expects her daycare to create about 15 new jobs in the area.

Johnstone said students will have a structured curriculum based on milestones and will work on gross motor skills for infants, and social and emotional skills for the infants. "My goal is to have all of the students kindergarten-ready for Evergreen, Minter Creek and Vaughn teachers."

Johnstone is excited to bring her four years of experience leading daycares, including the last three with one a similar size to what she wants to create, to Key Center and eventually be a staple in the community.

"When I drive by this building and its location — I'm in love with it," she said. "This is a career that feeds my soul, and the more I can get the community behind me the better this will be for the Key Peninsula."

Johnstone's plan is supposed to be presented to the fire commission at one of its board meetings this month. ■

CANDIDATES FROM PAGE 1

"Your life shrinks or expands according to how much courage you show," Franz said about running. "If you live in fear or hesitation your ability to create change doesn't happen."

Randall announced her candidacy Nov. 16. "Deciding to potentially leave a job I have been so privileged to do, that I like almost every day, was a big decision," she said. "I want to go to make Washington, D.C., work for us, to work across the aisle, to work with colleagues across the state and from other states, with other backgrounds to make sure we are doing the best for all our fellow Americans."

Randall was raised in Port Orchard and both of her parents went to high school there. She was the first in her family to attend college. She worked as a community organizer prior to running for state senate in 2018. She serves as majority whip and is on the higher education, workforce development, transportation, and health and long-term care committees.

"I have run hard races before, so I know a little bit of what I am in for," she said. "I am an optimist at heart. I believe in our country and our ability as individuals to enact positive change together. I believe our voices really matter and if we go into the fray driven by our values and our love for each other we can make a positive impact."



Dean



Franz



MacEwen



Randall

Randall married her partner of 18 years this spring. "She wrote in her vows that she would support me in all my future campaigns," Randall said. "She wasn't expecting one so soon, but she was part of the team that decided this was the right thing to do."

Dean declared her candidacy Dec. 5. "I think this district is such an extraordinary place," she said. "Our district has some of the most important natural resources and shorelines and ecosystems in the world and they are being impacted by the growth along the I-5 corridor. I am concerned about the affordability and livability of our region because of those impacts."

Dean has lived in Jefferson County for 25 years, where she farmed and co-founded Finnriver Cidery and Mount Townsend Creamery. She was regional director of the North Olympic Development Council before being elected as one of three Jefferson County commissioners in 2016 and ran unopposed in 2020. She also serves on the Washington State

Board of Health and the Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council.

She sees investments in infrastructure for housing, transportation, and the challenges to the environment as key issues.

"Campaigning is an enormous amount of work especially across such a large and diverse district," Dean said. "Just three days into the campaign I could see I will lose control over my schedule and my life. The other frustrating thing about campaigning at a federal level is how much money is required. I have always been a grassroots politician. I want to get big money out of politics, but the reality is that to have a voice in our system you have to raise a lot of money."

MacEwen announced his run Dec. 8. "An open seat at this level doesn't happen often," he said. "It is only the second time in a generation."

He has served at the state level for 11 years: five terms in the state house and now in the Senate, representing Mason and parts of Thurston and Kitsap County.

"I want the opportunity to represent

the larger portion of the Olympic Peninsula," he said. "To be a voice for those who have been left behind — the blue-collar workers, the timber industry, the shellfish industry. We are always fighting on the regulatory front. I want to be a voice of reason."

MacEwen moved to the Pacific Northwest during his time in the Navy in the 1990s and then to Union where he ran a small investment business. "Those things have helped me understand the needs of the district and hear the thoughts and concerns of the constituents," he said.

"We need to increase our military infrastructure with the threats we face today," MacEwen said. "We need to do better on the economic front. Ultimately, we need to look at how we can make the federal government function better. It's been a long time since we passed a true budget at the federal level, much less a balanced budget. I have served on appropriations at the state level and serving there has given me a view as to how we can budget and work across the aisle."

Since the district was established in 1933, the 6th congressional district seat has been in Republican hands only once — from 1947 to 1964. Norm Dicks served for 36 years before retiring and Kilmer replaced him in 2013. Kilmer won with 60% of the vote in 2022, and Joe Biden won the 2020 presidential race there with 57% of the vote. ■



**Call for nominees:
KP Citizen of the Year**

The Key Peninsula Lions Club will hold its 37th annual **Key Peninsula Citizen of the Year Award** banquet at the KP Civic Center March 23, 2024 beginning at 6 p.m.

The long-standing ceremony, created by the late Hugh McMillan, celebrates the achievements of local heroes who give back to our community.

The club is currently seeking nominees for the 2023 year who exemplify the club's motto of "We Serve." "Anyone who resides or is employed on the Key Peninsula, and you feel has gone above and beyond to serve our community, is eligible (for the award)," said Hal Wolverton, KP Lions Club vice president. The event was designed to celebrate volunteer activities, but is not limited to just volunteers.

The winner is chosen by Lions Club members voting by secret ballot. All nominees must be submitted to the Lions Club by February 1. Please scan the link below to submit the Nominee form electronically or download the form and mail to: P.O. Box 63, Vaughn, WA 98394.



Join our KP Relatives Raising Kids support group

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Meetings will be the 3rd Thursday of each month from 6 to 8 pm at KP Community Services in Home.

If you would like to join or find out more, please contact Lori at: childcare@kphealthycommunity.org

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Tuesday & Thursday, 10 a.m. to noon.

Onsite septic	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday
COVID-19 & other health resources	1 st Thursday
Triple P positive parenting program	2 nd Tuesday
Spanish-speaking outreach	2 nd Thursday
Water & wells	3 rd Thursday
Air quality	4 th Tuesday
Healthy housing & lead prevention	4 th Thursday
General	5 th Tuesday & Thursday

More info at tpchd.org/kp



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A New Year's Day Dinner to Invite Health, Wealth and Luck

ANN-MARIE UGLES

The new year brings to many a promise of a new chapter, a turning of the page. Maybe a glimmer of hope for a better you and a prosperous new year for your family.

My family has always blended these desires for achievement into a yearly tradition, rooted in my father's southern upbringing and my mother's flair for culinary extravagance.

The tradition is simple: Have your most lavish meal on New Year's Eve, ending the year on top. Then start the year on the bottom with your poorest meal, ensuring there was no place to go but up. After an evening of rich foods, there is something comforting about a simple bowl of black-eyed peas with potluck gravy and a side of collard greens.

With my parents long passed, continuing this tradition brings a sense of identity and a way of keeping memories alive, leaving them a metaphorical seat at the table.

Besides keeping up traditions, beans have also been there to feed us in a time of need. During a particularly rough finan-

cial time, we depended on a 100-pound sack of red beans. The burlap sack was compromised with a tear and could not be shipped for export. My husband, a longshoreman, covered the hole with duct tape and brought it home. Dried beans can last forever and these red beans provided many nutritional meals for years on end.

Beans are inexpensive, healthy and easy to make. A trifecta of goodness that should be embraced throughout the year.

Black-eyed peas are a legume popular in southern states. To make beans like a Southerner, rinse your beans, put them in a large pot, and cover with water to soak overnight. The next morning, drain off the water and add fresh water to cover a couple of inches above the beans. Add a ham hock, a chopped onion, and diced red and green bell peppers. Finally, add salt and pepper and red pepper flakes. Cover with a lid at an angle to let out steam. Slow cook all day until the beans are tender. Add more water if needed. Take out the ham hock bone, shred and return meat to the pot. Adjust salt and



pepper and add a few dashes of Tabasco for a kick.

Another family favorite is slow-baked black beans. I do this for a large crowd, so I like to use a large foil pan. Double everything: 2 pounds of beans, 2 ham hocks, 2 onions, 2 red peppers, 2 green peppers, and 12 cups of water. Add 8 cloves of minced garlic, a handful of fresh chopped parsley, 1/4 cup ground cumin, red pepper flakes and salt and pepper to taste. Bake for 10 hours in a 275-degree oven.

If you like a corn muffin on the side, here is a favorite hack. Buy a Jiffy cornbread mix and a yellow cake mix. Mix them both together with their required ingredients. Liven it up with thinly sliced jalapeño or a small can of green chilies, a cup of fresh corn kernels, or some cheddar cheese. Pour the mix into a greased muffin tin and bake in a 350-degree preheated oven for 15 minutes or until a toothpick


comes out clean.

If you have leftover beans, try your hand at making a vegan burger. Mix together 1 cup of beans, 1/2 cup of cooked quinoa, 1/2 cup brown rice, and 1/3 cup caramelized onions. Add herbs like basil, cilantro and parsley. Throw in spices like garlic powder, onion powder, red pepper flakes, paprika and salt and pepper. Make patties and bake in a 350-degree oven for 10 minutes. Flip patties and broil for 5 minutes on the top rack. Serve with your favorite toppings.

Bean dip is also great for leftovers. Sauté 1/2 cup of onion in a tablespoon of oil. When translucent, add 2 cloves minced garlic. Add 1/2 cup of diced canned tomatoes, 1/3 cup of salsa, 1 cup of cooked black beans, and 1 teaspoon each of cumin and chili powder. Heat until thick, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and mash the beans if you like. Add 1/3 cup of shredded Monterey jack cheese, 1/4 cup of fresh cilantro and a tablespoon of fresh lime juice. Stir until the cheese melts. For chips, cut up tortillas and heat in a 350-degree oven for 10 minutes. ■

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- **Raised nearly \$9,000 so far in the annual Celebrate Campaign**
- **Provided 18 scholarships for graduates of Peninsula High School totaling \$18,500**
- **Dispersed \$9,000 in grant for students at Evergreen and KP Middle School**
- **Dispersed \$2,000 in Grants for community organizations like KP News and the KP Civic Center**
- **Continue to assist the Longbranch Improvement Club through grants for the Marina, Clubhouse, Trails and Garden as requested**

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Traveling Through Space, Time and Life ‘On a Sunbeam’ by Tillie Walden

JOSÉ ALANIZ

The scene took place last Spring. Four middle-aged male humanities professors were sitting together in a pub in Vancouver, BC, sipping beer, sharing their impressions of a just-concluded conference. This was a Comics Studies shindig, so here and there they also touched on such matters as the superhero artist Jack Kirby and Swamp Thing.

Then the oldest and most sage among them, stroking his goatee, opened a new line of inquiry. “What’s the best graphic novel of the last 10 years?” he asked.

When my turn came to speak (for I was one of the four), I confidently said, “‘On a Sunbeam’ by Tillie Walden.” Everybody nodded, agreeing.

Despite our unanimity, though, there was a bit of an irony — a paradox, even — in this choice. Walden did not make her celebrated 2018 young adult space opera/melodrama for any of us at that table. Not only that, she consciously excluded people like me and my colleagues (straight males) from her 535-page cosmos-spanning opus.

As Walden herself puts it on her website: “My initial goal with ‘Sunbeam’ was to create a version of outer space that I would want to live in. So of course that includes tons of queer people, no men (did you notice?), trees, old buildings and endless constellations.”

That’s a pretty good summation of the novel’s contents, rendered in Walden’s elegant art, which combines linework somehow both minimalist and lush with a three-color scheme of remarkable subtlety. It’s beautiful. As for the title, it comes from a Belle and Sebastian song, “Asleep on a Sunbeam.”

The plot proceeds along two timelines. In the present (i.e., the far future), her young protagonist Mia joins the crew of the Aktis, a fish-shaped spaceship that plies the stars, restoring ancient architectural sites on various planets and asteroids. The crew consists entirely of women (of all races and gender identities) and the “mechanical genius” Elliot, who is nonbinary, neurodivergent, and nonspeaking.

In the second timeline, set five years earlier, Mia falls in love with another girl, Grace, at a spacy boarding school. This love plot unfolds against a milieu equal parts “Star Wars” and Hogwarts, where kids dress in uniforms, learn life lessons, and bond both in and out of class. (Tim Burton’s Netflix series “Wednesday”



pulls off a similar formula.)

The lovers’ affair ends sadly: Grace returns to the Staircase, her dauntingly remote and barren home world in a part of the galaxy beyond the bounds of civilization. We come to learn that the lovelorn Mia has joined the Aktis in a bid to reach the Staircase and rescue Grace from her “captivity” — though her grasp of the situation may be flawed.

But “On a Sunbeam’s” chief virtue — what made me nominate it for best graphic novel of the last decade — is Walden’s resolutely positive, nigh utopian, vision of queerness. The abyss of space has never seemed friendlier. This is no “Alien” (“in space, no one can hear you scream”), no “2001: A Space Odyssey” with monoliths and terrifyingly mysterious extraterrestrials. It’s not even “Star Trek” off to “where no one has gone before.” It’s simply a place where you cruise in your fish ship, from one job to the next, communing with your chosen queer family. I feel awkward even applying the “utopia” label, any label. Walden’s characters just live their lives, help each other, work it out, whatever it might be. Loyalty is a given. Love is a given. All conflict comes from outside.

I was enthralled with the givenness, the normality of all this. Here was a universe created by younger people (Walden is still only 27), for younger people living in a world that Gen X me frankly couldn’t have imagined at their age. Sure, I had gay friends whom I loved and still love today, but their lives were never as universally accepted, as carefree, as matter-of-factly validated as those of the characters in “On a Sunbeam.”

That I am not Walden’s demographic and presumed audience, and yet was still so taken in by this graphic glorious novel, is a testament to her enormous talent as a cartoonist. As Stephanie Burt wrote in her New Yorker review: “Walden can make one pen stroke on one character’s face equal two pages of dialogue.”

That said, “On a Sunbeam” is not perfect. Is there a hint of ageism in this all-young people all-the-time work? I also did find the resolution

a bit rushed and pat; it’s always hard to stick the landing. And I do tend to like my material darker, more tragic. That’s not the vibe Walden is on. While not Pollyanna, her notion of life is dazzlingly hopeful; problems can be worked out as long as we all band together, support each other, love each other, draw on each other’s multifarious gifts.

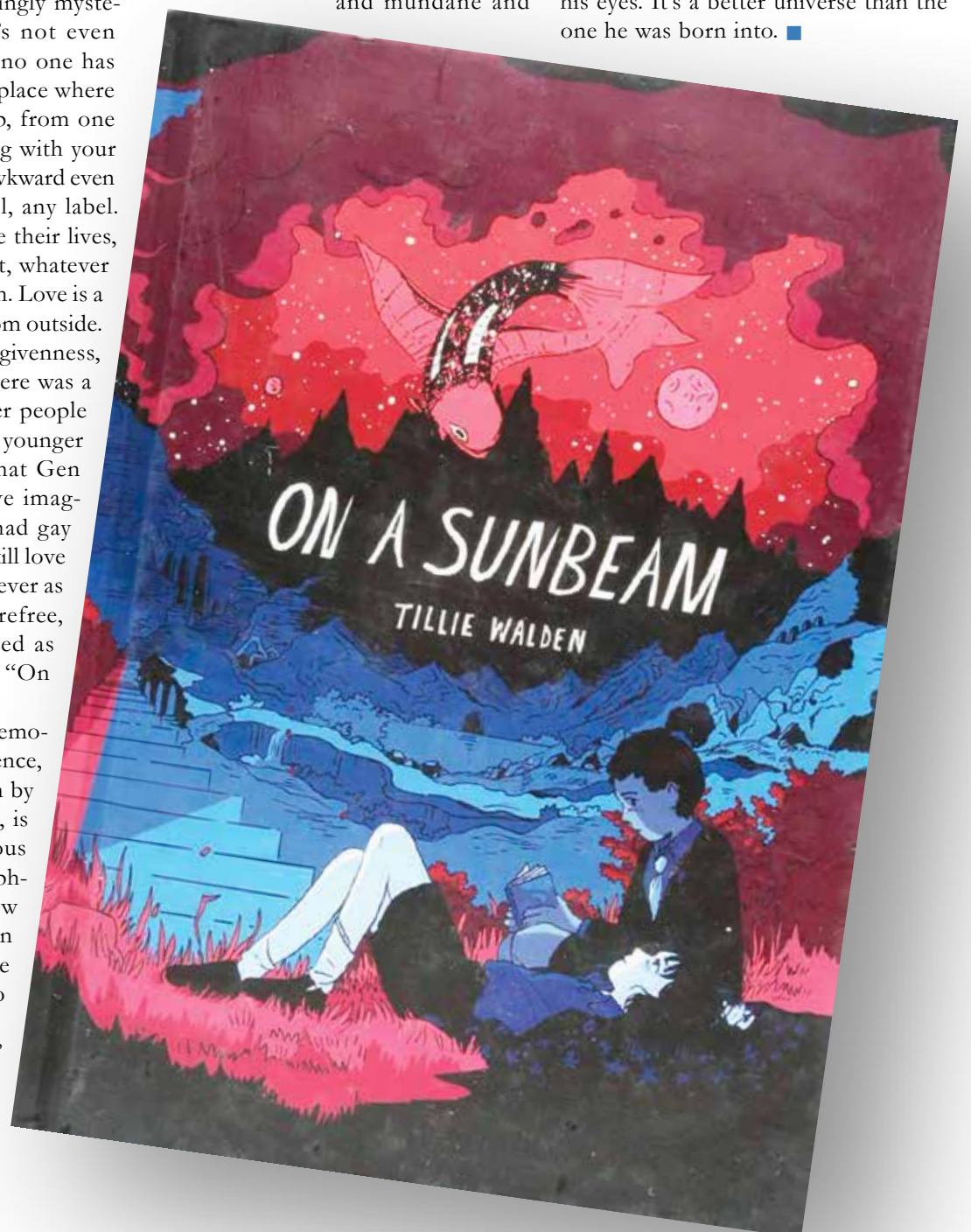
This is something I’ve observed among some of my students at the University of Washington. They can’t conceive of a world where we don’t all already live on a spectrum (mental, sexual), where our identities are not all intersectional, where queerness is not just the way things are.

The world is theirs now; over time it will grow increasingly more so. And thank goodness. Walden’s vision is the leading edge of a new egalitarian era of interpersonal relations, as exciting and mundane and

Tillie Walden’s award-winning graphic memoir, “Spinning,” about her career as an ice skater, was published in 2017 and banned shortly thereafter in some school districts. Walden said at the same time “it’s surreal” to have people read a book about her life and deem it inappropriate content. Partly in response to these book bans, she made her 2018 sci-fi graphic novel “On a Sunbeam” available online for free here: <https://www.onasunbeam.com>.

everyday as riding your fish starship to another planet with your dearest, closest friends.

Even if I literally couldn’t see myself in this novel, this middle-aged married straight cisgender male is happy to see such a vision coming together before his eyes. It’s a better universe than the one he was born into. ■



PRINT AND ONLINE CALENDARS ARE UNDERWRITTEN BY A GRANT FROM THE ANGEL GUILD

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

To add a listing for your event or find the latest details, visit www.keypennews.org/calendar

Jan 1 Polar Bear Plunge 10 a.m., YMCA Camp Seymour. Register online at the Camp Seymour website.

Jan 2 REFIT World Wide Workout 6 p.m., Waypoint North. Free workout class with childcare provided.

Jan 2 Gig Harbor Literary Society 6 p.m., Harbor History Museum. "All You Can Ever Know" by Nicole Chung.

Jan 3 KP Readers: An Hour of Coffee and Conversation 10:30 a.m., Key Center Library. "Sea of Tranquility" by Emily St. John Mandel.

Jan 3 Cribbage Club 2 – 4 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Everyone is welcome, no experience required.

Jan 4 Public Affairs Forum – Mary Robnett 8 – 9 a.m., Gig Harbor Chamber of Commerce. Guest Mary Robnett, Pierce County Prosecutor, located at Gig Harbor Court.

Jan 4 Key Free Clinic 4:30 – 7 p.m. (check in from 4:30 – 5 p.m.) KPC Office in the KP Corral. No appointment necessary.

Jan 5 Washington Old Time Fiddlers Association 3:30 – 6 p.m., Crandall Center. All fiddlers, banjos, mandolins, guitars, and string basses are welcome to play.

Jan 6 Bird Walks 8:30 a.m., rain or shine. Meet nature guide Chris Rurik at Gateway Park pavilion.

Jan 6 Dementia Home Care Seminar Noon, Gig Harbor Library. Author Tracy Cram Perkins, "Dementia Home Care: How to Prepare Before, During and After."

Jan 6 Gig Harbor Art Walk 1 – 3 p.m., Downtown Gig Harbor. Celebrating creativity in the harbor. Ebttide Gallery, Gallery Row and Waters Edge Gallery.

Jan 6 Pier Into the Night 5 p.m., Gig Harbor Maritime Pier. Harbor WildWatch, Underwater divers livestream what they

encounter below the surface.

Jan 9 TacomaProBono Legal Aid 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Key Peninsula Community Services; 1 – 3 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Free civil legal help.

Jan 11 MultiCare WIC Program 12 – 4 p.m., Key Center Library. The WIC Clinic helps pregnant people, new and breastfeeding moms, and children under 5.

Jan 13 Pierce County 26th LD Precinct Caucuses 10 a.m. Harbor Fellowship Church, 4819 Hunt St. NW, Gig Harbor. PierceGOP@PierceGOP.org 253-722-5353.

Jan 15 MLK Day Commemoration 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., Washington State History Museum. Theater performances to honor the life of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Jan 16 Hootenanny 2 – 4 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Folksong sing and play along.

Jan 16 "Cantrip" Concert 6 – 8 p.m., Gig Harbor BoatShop, 21+ welcome. Tickets available at the BoatShop's website.

Jan 17 Cribbage Club 2 – 4 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Everyone is welcome, no experience required.

Jan 18 Key Free Clinic 4:30 – 7 p.m. (check in from 4:30 – 5:00 p.m.) KPC Office in the KP Corral. No appointment necessary.

Jan 19 Baby Lounge Noon, Key Peninsula Civic Center. A gathering for connection with other parents.

Jan 19 TGIF 5:30 p.m., Longbranch Improvement Club. For members and guests, BYOB.

Jan 20 Open Mic Café 2 – 5:30 p.m., Crandall Center. All ages welcome: performers need to be at least in middle school. Beer, wine and snacks available.

Jan 20 Friends of the Library Membership Meeting 1 – 2:30 p.m., Key Center Library. Membership meeting and election of board members.

Jan 23 Maker Fun – Drop-in Art and Science for Kids 3:30 – 5 p.m., Key Center Library. Drop-in art and science for kids.

Jan 25 Tales at the BoatShop 10:30 a.m., Gig Harbor BoatShop. Nautical storytelling for children.

Jan 25 KP Book Club 11 a.m., KP Historical Society. "Notre Dame: A Short History of the Meaning of Cathedrals" and/or "Pillars of the Earth" by Ken Follett.

Jan 25 KPMS Beginning Band Concert 7 p.m., Key Peninsula Middle School.

WEEKLY EVENTS

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

Monday Yoga at the Civic Center 7 – 8 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. Scheduled classes online at the civic center website.

Monday REFIT Workout 7 p.m., WayPoint South, heartfitwp@gmail.com. Women's free fitness classes.

M-W Yoga at the Civic Center 9:30 – 10:30 a.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. Scheduled classes online at the civic center website.

M-W SAIL 4 p.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440. Flexibility and balance for those over 60.

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

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.

Tuesday Pickleball and Board Games 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Longbranch Improvement Club. Open to the public, coffee and games in the foyer.

Tuesday Women's Bible Study 12:30 p.m., WayPoint North Church. Precept Bible study on Daniel every Tuesday through June 11.

Tuesday Baby Story Time 10:15 – 11 a.m., Key Center Library. For families with young children.

Tuesday Friends of the Key Center Library Book Donations 1 – 3 p.m., Key Center Library.

T-W REFIT Workout Tue 6 p.m., Wed 5:30 p.m., WayPoint North, heartfitwp@gmail.com. Women's free fitness classes.

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

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

Wednesday No Tears Tech Help 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Not available Jan 3. Key Center Library. Call the library to book an appointment, 253-548-3309.

Wednesday Gentle Yoga for Older Adults 11:15 a.m., The Mustard Seed Project, 253-884-9814.

Wednesday Chair Yoga 1 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project, 253-884-9814.

Thursday County Council District 7 Constituent Office Hours 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., Council Member Robyn Denson and her staff. Contact 253-798-6654 for information.

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

Thursday KP Toastmasters 8 a.m., WayPoint Church, 253-514-2836.

Thursday Family Story Time 10:30 – 11 a.m., Key Center Library. For families

with young children.

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

Saturday Amateur Radio Club of Burley 9 – 11 a.m., located behind Burley Post Office at 14831 Burley Ave SE. <http://w7jq.org>

Saturday Community Boat Restoration Program 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Gig Harbor BoatShop. 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.

Friends of the Key Center Library Board Meeting Third Fridays, 10:30 a.m., Brones Room of the Key Center Library.

Key Peninsula Advisory Commission Fourth Thursdays, 5:30 p.m. piercescountywa.gov/5937.

Key Peninsula Beekeepers First Thursdays, 7 p.m. Home fire station.

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

KP Business Association Business meeting. Jan. 9, 6:30 p.m. January meeting location is The Red Barn Youth Center. kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com.

KP Community Council Second Thursdays at Key Center Fire Station, 6:30 p.m. and Zoom on request at 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 Monday, 7 p.m., Home fire station, johnpatkelly@aol.com, 253-432-4256.

KP Emergency Prep Third Thursday, 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 Free Clinic First and third Thursdays, 4:30 – 7 p.m. (check in from 4:30 – 5 p.m.). KPC Office in the Corral.

Key Pen Parks Board of Commissioners Meeting, Second Monday, 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.

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, 6 p.m., check pep-c.org for meeting location.

Peninsula School District Board Meeting Third and fifth Tuesdays in January, 6 p.m. Swiftwater Elementary School.

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: Mr. and Mrs. Claus off in their sleigh to visit local neighborhoods, courtesy of KPF. *Anne Nesbit*

TOP RIGHT: Local sculptor Mardie Rees with Sister Anne McNamara, her muse and model for the sculpture "Saint Anne" commissioned by St. Anne Hospital in Burien. Rees said she was humbled to receive first-place honors from the Portrait Society of America for her Saint Anne masterpiece (See "Wauna Artist Mardie Rees Unveils Bronze Sculpture," Dec. 2023). *Scott Rees*

MID LEFT: Hero Ace Hardware celebrated its official grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Dec. 9 at Lake Kathryn Village. *Tina McKail, KP News*

CENTER: An elf named Lynn found plenty of trash to pick up along Creviston Road NW. *Ed Johnson, KP News*

BOTTOM LEFT: Harbor Wild Watch volunteers collect data at low tide near Maple Hallow on Carr Inlet.

Stena Troyer, Harbor WildWatch

BOTTOM RIGHT: A joyful Hanna Sicotte, age 2, loves her stuffed animal toys at the annual Longbranch Improvement Club's Kids 'n Christmas event. *Tina McKail, KP News*

