

The Taylor Bay Beach Club Plans a New Sewage Treatment Plant

After five years of planning, the \$11 million project nears realization – if the money can be found.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

What does a small rural waterfront community do when its half-century-old wastewater treatment plant is aging out? Members of the Taylor Bay Beach Club know from experience — take a deep breath and prepare to spend the next five years working with multiple agencies and consultants to assess the system, evaluate alternatives, and find millions of dollars in funding.

In January, TBBC received a \$1 million grant from the Washington State Department of Health to continue the necessary planning and permitting that will move them closer to a new treatment plant.

“You like when you hit that silver handle that it goes down the hole and you don’t have to think about it,” Doug Snyder, president of the Taylor Bay Beach Club homeowners association said. He has been involved in the renewal project for the last two years.

“Our goal is to put out the cleanest water into Puget Sound that we can,” he said. “There is a lot of red tape, but we are shovel-ready, and we will be proud once it is built.”

The modest TBBC community was established in the 1960s. The population fluctuates, with about 80 lots occupied by 150 residents in the winter months and 110 lots with 270 residents in the summer. It has its own water system: a single well with an 80,000-gallon tank. Every home connects to its sewer system and treatment plant, which was completed in 1971.

In 2018, the Washington State Department of Ecology notified TBBC that

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Greyson Reichelderfer reveals one of several chest tube scars he has after his accident. *Ted Olinger, KP News*

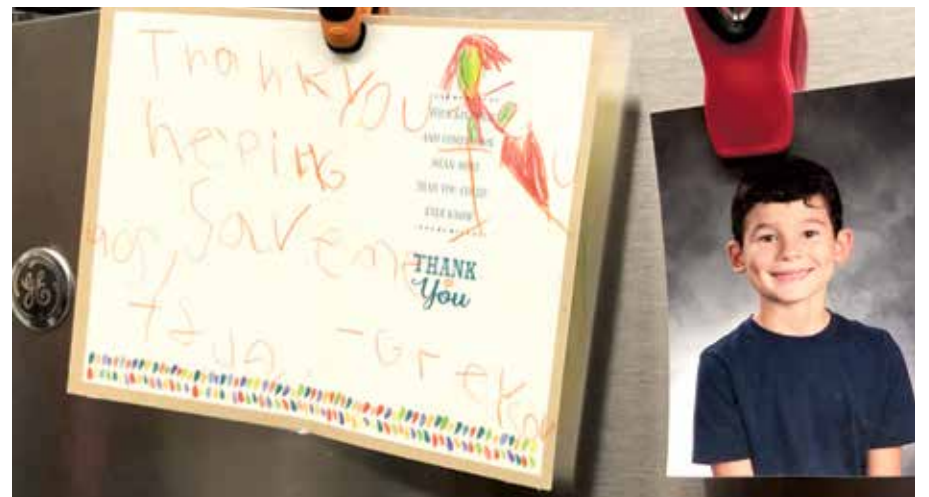
Key Peninsula Fire Department Saves Life of Palmer Lake Boy, 7

He just wanted to play one more video game before going to bed. He wound up fighting for his life in ICU.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Greyson Reichelderfer of Palmer Lake, 7, just wanted to play one more video game before going to bed Dec. 6. He wound up in ICU at Mary Bridge Hospital fighting for his life, a fight he won because of his dad, Paul, and the quick thinking of Key Peninsula firefighters.

“It was about 8:30,” Paul said. “I was in the back of the house, and he came in. He was very excited because he’d just won first place at Fortnite. I took a picture of him, and he said could I play one more round before bed and literally within a minute he



Greyson’s thank you note and photo are the only things on the fridge at the Home fire station. *Ted Olinger, KP News*

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253-884-4699

www.keypennews.org

www.facebook.com/KeyPenNews
PO Box 3, Vaughn WA 98394

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Lisa Bryan
editor@keypennews.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Ted Olinger

STAFF CONTRIBUTORS: Vicki Biggs,
Nancy Carr, Eddie Macsalka,
Tina McKail, Joseph Pentheroudakis,
Chris Rurik, Sara Thompson,
Carolyn Wiley

CONTRIBUTORS: José Alaniz,
Anna Brones, Kamryn Minch

CALENDAR/WEB EDITOR:
Meredith Browand
calendar@keypennews.org

DESIGN EDITOR: Heather Meier

OPERATIONS MANAGER:
Stefanie Warren

SOCIAL MEDIA: Joseph Pentheroudakis

BOOKKEEPER: Linda Grubaugh

AD DESIGN: Tim Heitzman

AD SALES: Deanna Hunter
sales@keypennews.org

DISTRIBUTION: Norm Brones, Bill Dietz,
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LOVE MEDICINE

Here's What I Think About That

LISA BRYAN,
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Perfectly timed, Valentine's Day approaches and my heart is full of love and gratitude for the fact that we are here together making our way through this life we share.

There is much in the world that is so unsettling and it's so easy to fall into despair, particularly if you find yourself on a steady diet of national news. It's as hard to get away from as junk food. I know because I've tried.

Long river rafting trips through wilderness areas gave me the clearest sense of what life could be like without the distractions of that other world interrupting. Floating around that first bend downriver, civilization falls away with hardly a second thought. It's been a long time since I've been on the river but I hold it in my mind's eye and cling to the awareness there is more than the daily grind.

The national scene whips us around hard and fast. Politics and time have proven there is no better way to get our attention than making us feel threatened and righteously indignant.

Sometimes it feels good to get mad. It's far more liberating than sadness. There's a powerful rush of energy that comes with it. Like any addictive substance, we need more to feel like we're truly living. But anger is far more self-destructive than any fleeting sense of power it delivers.

Maybe you find yourself thinking things like, "They can't do that. They've gone too far. They are morally bankrupt. They want to tell me how to live my life."

Step back. Move away from the edge. Love and hate are powerfully inspiring emotions.

Hey, it feels good to be righteous, no doubt. Presidential election years tend to fuel corrosive animosity to the point that anyone we perceive as "other" somehow threatens our personal moral compass.

Recently I started practicing loving kindness meditation, some call it metta, as a way to break out of the pattern of righteous anger I noticed myself struggling with on a near daily basis.

Like all things worth doing, it takes practice. It's new to me but I felt some relief rather quickly. The basic idea is to wish, or pray if you will, for goodness to come to yourself and others. Nothing fancy, but things like: May you be safe. May you be healthy. May you be free from suffering. May you live your life with ease. May you be filled with loving-kindness. May you be at peace.

It's pretty easy to wish these things for people we dearly love. It helped me initially to focus on my husband and son for whom my love



is boundless. I tried to carry that same intensity of giving as I wished for my family for others I know. As time goes

on, coupled with lots of practice, I will find my way toward feeling compassion for people I dislike. I admit it is hard for me to imagine at this point wishing peace to someone I loathe. But I believe by practicing loving kindness and developing those muscles with intention, it will become easier to do it genuinely. I'm a long way from that now but feel better by taking the first steps.

The inspiration for practicing loving kindness came to me from this news-

paper. When I'm lost in a sea of global despair, I rein myself and focus on what is in my life here and now.

Key Peninsula News is a thing of beauty and if we could export anything to help the rest of the world it would be to share how we keep local news alive and well here.

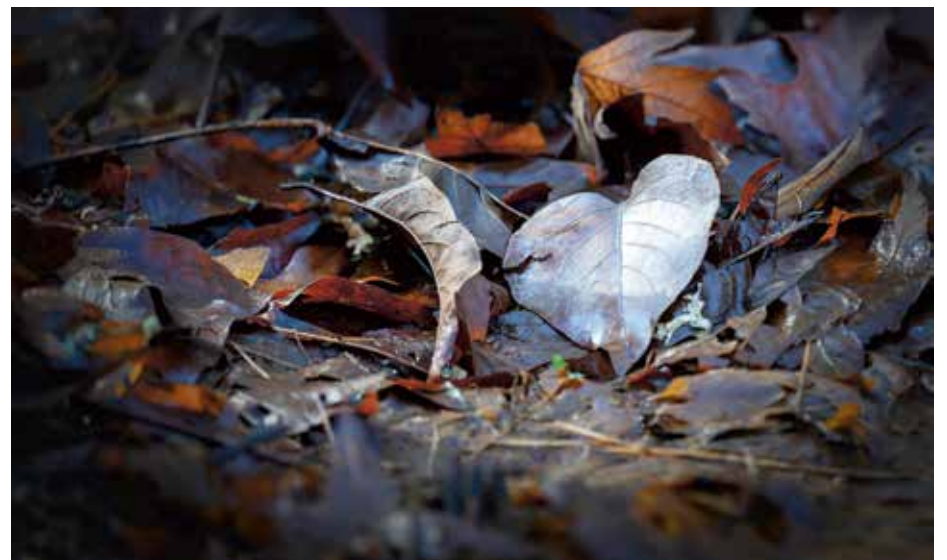
This newspaper is a labor of love that we believe helps nourish our community with trustworthy, reliable reporting that allows the reader to decide what

to think based on accurate information.

Elsewhere local newspapers are disappearing or merely faux fractions of their former selves. Yet KP News has grown much stronger in the last seven years. As has been the model from day one, everyone who lives on the KP gets a copy delivered free of charge. That model can only be successful with teamwork.

We just wrapped up 2023, our biggest, best and record-breaking year by every metric. We printed more ads, more pages, more color, more stories. We brought home more awards — 25 in 2023. We surpassed our own fundraising goals again this year because of the generous contributors listed on page 3 and business owners on page 15 who support this newspaper with their advertising.

We're feeling the love here, and it's powerful medicine. Thank you. ■



Be on the lookout for love. *Tina McKail, KP News*



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Please let us know if we have inadvertently missed your name.

LEFT: Mechanic Buster Denny (left) and an unidentified employee at Len's Service in Wauna in the 1950s. *Lonning family*RIGHT: Collins Service & Grocery, Minter, 1940s. *Key Peninsula Historical Society*

Service Stations of the Key Peninsula

They kept the engines of progress and the wheels of commerce lubricated, fueled and moving on the peninsula. Literally.

JOSEPH PENTHEROUDAKIS, KP NEWS

It was the age of the automobile — a machine, as it was called, that demanded frequent feeding and care. One by one auto repair shops and gas stations sprouted along county roads, family businesses that often included stores to sell groceries and the rest of life's essentials.

Change was in the air. In 1919 ferry service began between Tacoma and Gig Harbor, bringing motorists closer to the peninsula's secluded bays, picturesque farms and jaw-dropping views. That year Edith Delano credited the ferry for her hotel's best season in a long while.

In 1921, Pierce County replaced the creaky, temperamental swing bridge at Purdy with a motorist-friendly fixed wooden span. The following year construction began on the hard-surfaced Gig Harbor-Longbranch Highway, a project that would transform the peninsula when it was completed a few years later.

By 1924 drivers could buy gasoline at several locations on the peninsula. An ad for Standard Oil's Red Crown Gasoline in the Tacoma Daily Ledger in June 1924 named over 100 "dealers" in the Tacoma area, including seven on the peninsula: Harry Curl, Longbranch Mercantile, and Samuel S. Watkinson in Longbranch; A.C. Sorenson and Home Warehouse Co. in Home; Henry S. Reed & Son in Lakebay; and Lyman E. Freeborn in Vaughn.

And starting about that time they could also get their cars or trucks cared for at

local garages run by young entrepreneurs who had taken to the new technology like fish to water.

The 1920s

Curl's Hiway Garage was the first, opening its doors around 1923 in Longbranch on the new highway across from the baseball field, now the Longbranch Improvement Club parking area. In May 1924 the Peninsula Gateway wrote that "Harry Curl, Jr., has a new garage on his father's ranch ... and he is doing a very good business."

Harry Curl sold the business to Jo and Al Dorfner in 1946. The garage closed in the 1970s. The building still stands and is now a self-storage locker facility.

Then in 1925, an ad in the Tacoma News Tribune introduced the Vaughn Bay Garage, "Service Station and General Repairs, John Wolniewicz, Prop(rietor)". Wolniewicz had arrived in Vaughn with his family in 1923 from Chinook, Montana. In Vaughn, he met Gordon Kingsbury, who built a garage and rented it to him on Kingsbury's property on Bayview Road.

Around 1945 Wolniewicz moved the garage to a much better location at the familiar four-way junction where Olson Drive and Hall, South Vaughn and Wright-Bliss Roads NW meet in Vaughn. Postmaster Lyman Freeborn followed suit, moving his store and the post office from the building near the old Vaughn Library hall to that location as well. Freeborn may have even helped spruce the place up; in April 1946 the Peninsula Gateway reported that Vaughn Bay Garage received a new coat of paint. "Spring must really be here!" the article proclaimed.

The garage closed sometime in the 1950s or early 1960s. The store and post office operated until the building burned down in 1967.

The 1930s

Three service stations opened in the 1930s: Teddie's Garage in Lakebay, the service station in Key Center, and Collins Service & Grocery in Minter.

Ted Kinzner opened Teddie's Garage and store sometime in the 1930s. The new highway to Longbranch had gone right through the middle of Kinzner's parents' property, about two miles south of Home, so a roadside service station and store made good business sense.

Kinzner's Garage in Lakebay in 1987, about two decades after it closed. *Jenny Balman*

The Key Peninsula's historic service stations will be featured in The Road Show, the 2024 exhibit at the Key Peninsula Historical Society & Museum celebrating the peninsula's highways and byways. The show opens Feb. 24.



LEFT: Ralph Collins (right) with a driver for the Davidson Logging Co., 1940s. *Key Peninsula Historical Society*
 RIGHT: Wally Tillman's garage in Home ca. 1947. The site is a Shell station today. *Key Peninsula Historical Society*

The garage, known simply as Kinzner's, operated until 1969 when the Kinzners sold the property. The building still stands; a lone 1950s Gasboy pump, now gone, stands guard in a 1987 photo.

Collins' Service & Grocery at the intersection of the Minter-Kitsap Road (today 118th Avenue NW) and the KP highway opened in 1932; the Collins property had also been bisected by the highway. Brothers Ralph and Tom Collins took over from their father James sometime in the late 1930s.

Collins' closed when Ralph died in 1988; Tom had died in 1970. By the time it closed, the business had been operating continuously for a record 56 years; many locals still remember the ice cream they bought at the grocery as kids. The building is now occupied by Ravensara Espresso, 3 Clouds Bakery, and Serenity Salon and Consignment.

As early as 1932 there was a service station in Key Center as well. In announcing the new business district in March 1932, the Tacoma Daily Ledger mentioned a service station operated by I. James, who also managed the drug store and the coffee shop. Opposite the service station was a car park run by Elmer Olson. Olson's land was on the north side of today's 92nd Street NW, so the service station was on the south side.

In 1940 Edward Gabrielson, who owned a service station in Purdy, built a service station in Key Center with a "fully-equipped repair shop," according to the Peninsula Gateway. That may very well have been what later became the Key Center Shell station and Peninsula Service at the northwest corner of the intersection. The service station changed hands several times over the decades. Its last owner was Medric Schwenka; it closed shortly after Schwenka was elected fire

chief in 1977. By 1982 the building was occupied by an auto parts store; it has been a smoke shop since 2005.

The 1940s

Len's Service, a garage and store owned and operated by Lennart B. Lonning in Wauna at the corner of the highway and present-day 94th Avenue NW, was built in 1943. Lonning sold the station in 1969 to Ken Bunce of Port Orchard; the business closed around 1980.

Today the service station is a mini-mart.

The last station to open on the peninsula before 1950 was Tillman's Chevron in Home, and it is the one with the longest history.

In 1944 Wallace (Wally) Tillman and

his wife Virginia returned to Home after several years near Union in Mason County where Wallace worked as a truck driver for a logging company. Wallace was born in Home Colony in 1910; he and Virginia had strong ties to the community. As he told a friend when he was still working in Mason County, the distance "could not prevent them from spending most of their weekends with relatives and friends" in Home.

By 1944 Tillman and his wife had returned to Home, and in 1947 built a service station on the corner of the highway and B Street near the bridge. The station opened later that spring, perhaps with the help of Tillman's brother Alton (Al), an accomplished mechanic.

A catastrophic fire in April 1973 caused by a truck falling off the lift in the service bay reduced the building to ashes; all that was left was one corner of wood, the Bremerton Sun reported. Terry Rabbage, who had been operating the station since 1969, barely survived. Chevron replaced the station, and soon after the fire Tillman retired and sold the business to Rabbage.

The station changed hands three more times since the fire. And although it no longer includes a garage, the corner of B Street and the highway is still home to a gas station today, over 75 years since Wally Tillman opened his service station in 1947. ■



John Wolniewicz's Vaughn Bay Garage in the 1950s. *Key Peninsula Historical Society*



Len B. Lonning at Len's Service in Wauna, 1950s. *Lonning family*

Ted Olinger

ANOTHER LAST WORD



About That Awkward Holiday Dinner

I was fortunate to grow up in a household where the food wasn't always good but there was always plenty of it. The elders routinely held court at our annual gatherings to brag about their culinary triumphs and political insights as the less esteemed among us nodded through pretended bites of ghastly dishes while feeding our long-suffering dogs under the holiday table.

How much of my dad's monstrous "Christmas Tradition Succotash" did those brave animals consume while I listened to why we should have never abandoned Vietnam, or Richard Nixon for that matter?

Then came the inevitable dreaded order, "Have more 'Tradition.'" I would discretely glance at the nearest dog, already listing like a sinking ship. "No, thank you."

"Then go help the other girls."

That curt dismissal meant servitude in our large kitchen brimming with large personalities, mostly distant female cousins checking their hair and aging aunts arguing about fruitcake, meringue, or Jimmy Carter.

One event that inspired only respect was the soufflé prepared each year by a friend of the family whose appearance at our table always left a mark. She was often married though never for long and had no children. She would, however, not hesitate to interrupt conversations about offspring of any kind by producing from her wallet photos of loaves of bread she had baked and to which she was still much attached.

She would engage me in conversation far above my pay grade regarding books, movies, or art history, a special passion of hers, as she whipped a dozen egg whites in her own large copper bowl while I washed dishes. "Everyone is coming from somewhere, there is no single perspective," she would say, moving with ease from Brunelleschi to Shigenobu to Bresson, praising the wealth of diversity in human experience to argue against a single way of seeing the world and the illusion of universal truth.

"But that's not the case here," she would assert, referring to soufflé.

There was only one way, one truth, and there were no "lies" you could tell a soufflé that would not fail to betray its integrity or your own.

For the less fortunate or more philistine among us, the soufflé is an 18th-century-era egg dish baked in a deep and steep ceramic

ramekin until it doubles in size from the steam generated within. The name means "to breathe" or "to puff," which is what egg whites will do once properly folded into a savory or sweet base in the untrammelled heat of your oven, delivering a taste and texture otherwise unobtainable if you are pure of heart.

A slow, smooth roux with yolks, cooled as you transform it into a bechamel. Egg whites whipped in a copper bowl if you've got one, a pinch of cream of tartar in less noble metal. And that bowl, like your hands, like your soul, must be exceptionally clean: No protein in the whites — not even a hint of yolk, oil, grease, or anything else — or you will fail.

As with love, she said, don't stop too soon or go too far.

She had mastered the soufflé in the way one might master something simple-sounding like making rice or mashed potatoes, meaning it was a keystone — a foundational skill upon which to build greater things.

That could be a handful of local herbs and foreign cheese, some bitter fruit or creamy shellfish, or her devastating blend of sweet corn and Mexican chocolate laced with the singular Old World orange liqueur Grand Marnier (after the bottle had made a circuit around the kitchen aunts and cousins, of course).

By this time of the evening there was always some argument raging in the dining room fueled by wines and rationales of diminishing quality. But regardless of any defilement of Nixon's legacy or praise for Reagan's rising star, all was silence when the soufflé arrived. We watched in mournful awe as the golden crown rising twice the height of its ramekin slowly deflated before our eyes while its bewitching aroma filled the room, and we dutifully passed our plates around an otherwise divided table.

I tried making soufflé for years but after enough soggy mess and scorched bakeware, I decided it wasn't for me. Almost everyone who once sat at that table had long since gone to their final reward and perhaps this effort should too, I thought.

But after inheriting a steamer trunk full of antique china and silverware from those aging aunts and distant cousins, I understood there was another table to manage.

My wife and I lately hosted old friends and young for a gathering that rapidly became a Holiday Exchange of Anxieties where all manner of outrage, disillusionment and paranoia were revealed in a welcoming atmosphere fueled by Champagne served in antique crystal coupes.

I observed that there was, in my view, a strong binary component to the discussion that tended to undermine some positions

while fortifying others without advancing the greater cause.

"The 'greater cause?' And what is that?" I was asked.

"The one universal truth," I said. "It's in the oven right now."

Even the egg-haters among us held their spoons at attention when that perfect golden crown came to the table, double the height of its vessel, wrapped within the invisible veils of Mexican chocolate and Grand Marnier.

"Let us not stop too soon nor go too far," I pontificated, referring to the varied fallacies that had infected the atmosphere of our talk. "We cannot lie to the soufflé."

The dessert plates before us had been passed down through generations but for some reason we ate right out of the steaming ramekin, sharing an old dish from an old table.

Ted Olinger lives in Vaughn.

Vicki Biggs

SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE



The Power of Yes

I have cultivated a new mindset in the past months, and it has carried me through a year of difficult personal decisions. Which new path to choose in my retired life? What was my future going to look like? How would I fill my time? I had some tiny panic attacks. Some of the decisions were expected, others were not. As the saying goes, "The only constant is change."

Sometime in the middle of 2023, I decided an answer to my dilemma would be to say "Yes" to everything. I would say yes to any opportunity for a new experience, a new friendship, a new area of service. I said yes to being an artist's model, yes to a trip to Hawaii, yes to volunteering at the Angel Guild, yes to camping with a gal friend, yes to a new dog, yes to writing more for the Key Peninsula News, yes to house sitting. You get the picture.

I wish I could say that this philosophy was my own creation, but it is not. There are many books, authors and podcasts discussing the advantages of saying yes.

The entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson is a proponent of saying yes. "If someone offers you an amazing opportunity to do something and you're not sure you can do it, say yes. Then learn how to do it later."

In an article in Psychology Today, Alice Boyes, Ph.D. wrote, "Five Reasons to be a Yes Parent." Encouraging creativity, encouraging confidence in asking for what children want, saying yes, can help them cope with a "No" answer, gives children the confidence not to be sneaky if they are not always expecting a

no answer, and helps parents to be spontaneous and direct.

Saying yes to self-care is another win. Self-care has been clinically proven to reduce anxiety, stress, and feelings of depression. Giving ourselves permission to rest our bodies and revive our spirits improves overall health and keeps us out of the doctor's office. Say yes to moving your body more, eating a healthy diet, allowing yourself enough sleep. Self-care can help you "adapt to changes, build strong relationships, and recover from setbacks," according to the website Mental Health First Aid.

Avoid FOSY, the Fear of Saying Yes. In a survey of 2000 British from OnePoll, psychologist Emma Kenny found that "FOSY is a common phenomenon, linked to the emotions we experience when faced with opportunities that push us outside our comfort zone. When there is a chance we might be judged or we have preconceived ideas that we are not good at something, our instinctive reaction is to say no, even if it's something we want to do. When we take on new experiences, we grow in courage and develop personal resilience, which increases our confidence and self-esteem, making life feel altogether more rewarding."

Saying yes boosts creativity, according to Clay Drink, Ph.D., in Psychology Today. "If you are trying to come up with lots of options, if you're brainstorming or working on a creative project, saying 'yes' can help keep things moving and allow you to generate more ideas."

Saying yes can help build rapport with others. John Gottman's research shows that couples who say yes to a partner's suggestions or proposals are more successful and have more longevity than couples who say no to efforts at connecting.

Rebutting this philosophy, some believe the "just say yes" plan is not a good one. Overcommitment and burnout are real dangers. Spreading yourself too thin, inattention, a relapse in health issues, overextension, no time to rest or spend time with loved ones are real possibilities. Setting appropriate boundaries is a serious issue for some people, and saying yes to everything may be self-destructive for some. The ability to say no is a valuable skill providing protection for the vulnerable.

How has the decision to say yes as often as possible worked for me? I say it's been a resounding success. I have made new friends and connections. I have helped more people. I have allowed myself some new adventures, like taking my dog to a "nose work" class, where a whole new world opened up for both me and Miss Claire. My life is richer for saying yes, and I plan to continue.

Vicki Biggs is a retired social worker. She lives in Home.

Anna Brones

FRESH TAKE



In the Garden of KP Delights

On the first day of the year, I stood in front of an outdoor fire and discussed the topic of delight. The flames flickered in the late morning, warming salt-streaked skin fresh from a cold plunge. A delight, to be sure.

Delight has been on the tip of my tongue these past months, something brighter to grasp at during darker days. A practice of paying attention, of observing, of existing.

If delight is on your radar too, it might be thanks to the American poet Ross Gay, author of “The Book of Delights: Essays.” The book is a compilation of a yearlong project, in which Gay gave himself a list of guidelines: write a delight every day for a year, write them by hand, and draft them quickly. Delight does not want to be edited or overanalyzed.

Delights are those moments when you feel a joyful spark. It’s not conceptual, in fact, the more tangible the better: the luxury in a nap, the sound of someone’s voice, spotting a dandelion growing from a crack in the concrete, the shape of a cloud, peeling an orange, the first taste of morning coffee.

That practice has inspired many to take on their own version, whether that’s documenting or simply observing those moments of delight. The real beauty of delight: once you start finding them, noticing them, heeding them, sharing them, delights seem to take on a life of their own, multiplying and multiplying.

A few weeks before I stood in front of that outdoor fire, I had been at the Key Center Library. I was looking through the shelves to see what popped out at me. I’m never in “need” of another book to add to my reading list, but sometimes you just want to see what will appear. Like window shopping, but for ideas.

I’m not sure why, but Gay’s name surfaced. Thoughts are often like that, appearing from seemingly nowhere but somehow rooted in the complex constellations we are constantly building and shaping in our minds. Not seeing his name in the sections where I had been looking, I walked over to the counter to ask if they had any of his books. On the shelves of the Key Center branch, no, but I could put them on order.

There was the “Book of Delights: Essays” and “Inciting Joy: Essays,” both of which I had already read but figured would be worth returning to in the depths of winter, and to my — yes, delight — a new one too: “The Book of (More) Delights: Essays.” I put all three on order and pedaled down a few days later when they arrived. Another delight: the speed and efficiency of getting books at a rural, community library.

If Gay’s musings are worth two published collections (and bestselling at that), then I think we have good proof that, even in the slowest, most mundane moments, there is something to delight upon in the everyday. We just have to pay attention. Here are some of mine:

- Winter shadows on a wall.
- The cut of the cold on bare cheeks.
- Sitting at Madrona post-bike ride, inevitably running into someone I know.
- The Lucky Day shelf at the library.
- Dropping mail off at the post office and having a conversation with the postal

staff.

- The sparkle of saltwater turned into frost on a beach rock.
- The first appearance of green trillium leaves working to push their way out of the ground.

What’s really in a delight is an element of the unexpected, the unplanned, the surprise. We don’t spend much of our lives this way. Everything is scheduled, controlled, managed. Anything we can do to distance ourselves from the one inevitable human truth: that, in fact, everything is entirely beyond our control, a life shaped by a consistent path of unknowns and unexpected(s).

We’ve gotten used to carving out reliability, and in a world of abundance — in a world where an algorithm already knows what we might be interested in — there’s something powerful in the discovery of something entirely by chance, or at least an old school analog recommendation from a friend. The serendipity of a book title mentioned in conversation, a new song that you hear on the radio, a podcast someone sends your way.

Waiting to pick a family member up from a doctor’s appointment in Gig Harbor recently, I went to the library to wait. I walked around perusing the shelves. Again, not because I needed yet another book, but because I wanted to see what would appear, what would present itself. What would serendipitously put its way in my path?

I picked up a book titled “Hame,” mostly because of the cover: water, a ferry, an island. In italics in the bottom corner: (hem, S. hjem) n. Scottish for “home.”

Hame. Home. Languages, like thought constellations, are full of links. “Ham” in Old English, means dwelling place. In my other language, Swedish, it’s “hem,” derived

from the Old Norse “heimr,” meaning “residence, world.” Also, the reason why -ham anchors many a city and town name: it’s the indicator of a village, a collection of people, a place to settle, dwell, to be at home.

And maybe that’s what the ultimate delight is: something — a taste, a sound, a fire, a smell, a swim, a conversation, a book, a view — that reminds you that you are home.

Anna Brones is a writer and artist who lives in Vaughn.

Carolyn Wiley

DEVIL’S HEAD DIARY



On Becoming A Crotchety Old Bidy

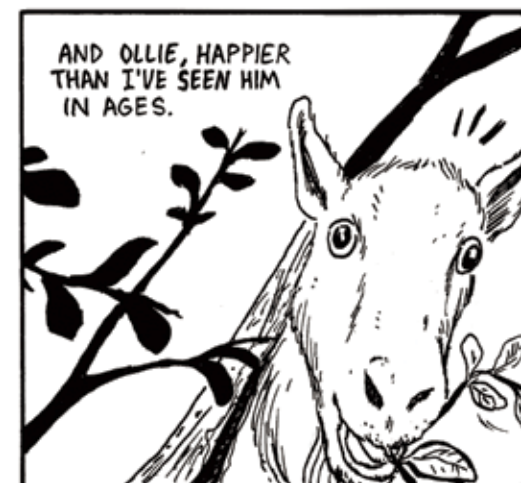
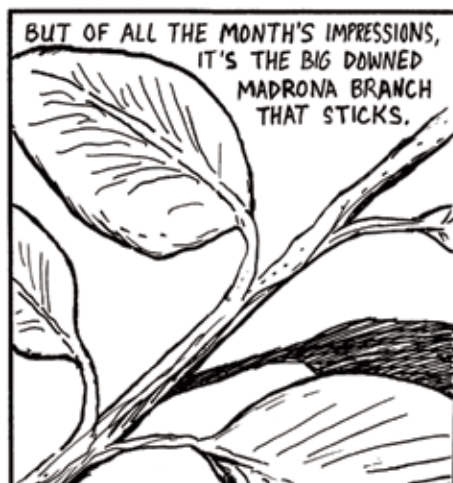
Although I do not possess the courage to make formal New Year’s resolutions, I am on the annual lookout for character flaws in myself (and others) and have already identified several. Basically, my goal is to live a snit-free life, cut out the whining, and suck it up if things aren’t done my way.

I really don’t want to be an idle, critical, bored, bullying old lady who believes the universe should do her bidding.

Recently I spent some time with a professional Crotchety Old Bidy with years of practice in controlling conversations, critiquing social interactions, directing activities and ruling like the dowager queen in the realm of manners, taste and protocol. This experience renewed my awareness of my own tendencies.

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José Alaniz WE LIVE HERE: MADRONA GOAT



Lord, save me from the snide putdown. Help me realize that other opinions need not be discounted, no matter how inane, infantile and absurd. Fortunately, I have almost mastered the skill of thinking in cartoon balloons. It gives me a chance to read what is about to come out of my mouth and edit any knee-jerk comments before blurting them out. Talking over someone else is not a conversation, it's instruction and that is no longer my role. What I have to say and what I have to share is probably not the most important idea ever to come down the pike, nor even the most interesting one.

Nevertheless, at times I find myself afflicted with a generosity of spirit that leads me to share ad nauseam.

In a recent meeting, I realized that I was standing at the very threshold of "Crotchety Old Biddyhood." I knew this phase of life was approaching. I've been around the block, multiple times, and have worked diligently to ensure that I have made all possible mistakes inherent in nonprofit event planning. So, I am always ready to bequeath my hard-earned wisdom to anyone who shows the

slightest interest.

Burdened with the onerous weight of Institutional Memory, my ire was ignited by the flaming criticisms tossed about by a cadre of newcomers seeking to improve efficiency and economy and bypass some tedious protocols.

Need I explain that health and liquor permits are the lifeblood of nonprofit fundraising?

It is pretty simple. Basically, it's OK to cut corners and poison one's own members, but government food monitors frown on poisoning the paying public. My experience dealt with an inherited situation and created a rigid follower of those pesky health and liquor regs. Memories of the time, effort, energy and expense to jump through the hoops and restore permit privileges were fraught with fret and worry.

Fortunately, this time, my smart-aleck response was captured in a cartoon balloon, and I sucked it up before anybody read either my thoughts or the expression on my face. I recovered enough to couch my comments in less crotchety-old-biddy terms. The day was saved and courtesy reigned.

Unfortunately, that small victory was short-lived. Crotchety Old Biddy took over.

Our landline had been out for several days. When I finally sat down to report it to the behemoth that holds the lines of communication, there was no local phone number to be found. So, I resorted to online messaging. I had trouble finding the "report outage" button, but after a cup and a half of coffee, I succeeded.

Hooray, I thought. I was actually in communication with the entity that facilitates verbal communication. Multiple exchanges took place, contact information from me was entered and re-entered, and the outage was reported. I am a penny-pincher and had questions regarding the lack of service credit on our next bill. We were just entering the final phase, successful scheduling of restoration services when my screen froze, and the internet connection died.

After a few minutes of watching the spinning icon, I was back online too late to continue my chat. I was debating the futility of a restart when an email notice containing a report of The Chat arrived. The last entry was, "You have not responded in 2 minutes..."

Moments later I received a request to fill out a level-of-satisfaction survey.

Crotchety Old Biddy took over. Time was devoted to completing the survey. Sadly, a cartoon balloon was not available, the internet connection held, and SEND was ever so convenient.

In retrospect, the only thing that really rots my socks is that the unknown, impersonal person who tried to help me may suffer blowback from my stinging evaluation. However, I lack the charitable resolve to avail myself of the opportunity to return to the chat room or to request another survey opportunity.

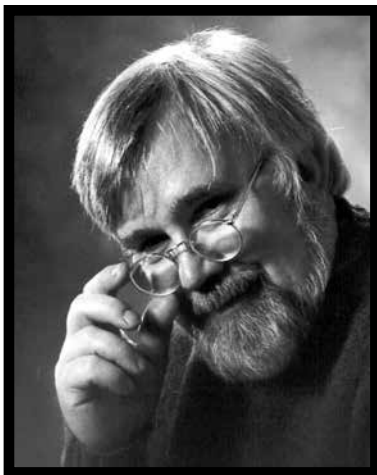
I once aspired to become a "Cute Little Old Lady" in my dotage. Not very likely, because I was (at that time) too tall and too bawdy, and now I am far too opinionated. Not sure when it happened, but I must admit that I have actually become that iconic "Crotchety Old Biddy."

So when you see me coming, be on the lookout for a cartoon bubble.

"Stand back — I am always primed for critique."

Carolyn Wiley lives quietly, for the most part, in Longbranch.

Obituary



Harrold Ray Forch

Harrold Ray Forch of Longbranch passed away Jan. 2. He was born September 1937 in Paducah, Texas, to the Rev. Adam and Louise Forch. He was the second-born son of four, the eldest Adam, Jr., and younger brothers Ramon Lee and Karl.

Harrold loved animals and enjoyed many pets throughout his life. One pet was a pigeon named "Crawford" that Harrold rescued and tamed. Crawford rode on his shoulder and often got into trouble with the townsfolk who would say, "There goes that darn preacher's kid's bird." Harrold's latest pet was a little black puppy named "Gussie" who adored Harrold and stayed by his side constantly.

Besides animals, Harrold loved photography. As his skills grew, he dreamed of

becoming a photojournalist. He began college after high school graduation but ran out of money. Harrold worked as a machinist for Asarco for 22 years. However, he never gave up his dream, and after Asarco closed, Harrold returned to college and graduated as a professional photographer. Later, Harrold worked for the shipyard until his retirement.

Harrold married Sherri Schafer in 1961 and welcomed son Harrold Ray, Jr. (Hal) in 1964 and daughter Susannah in 1972. Soon after, Harrold and Sherri divorced.

In 1977, Harrold met and married Grace Elaine Gjerstad and the new family of seven began their life together. The family moved out to the Key Peninsula to a little house in the woods in Longbranch, still the family home today.

Harrold was preceded in death by his brothers and his stepson, Kurtis Gjerstad. He is survived by his wife, Grace Elaine; stepdaughter Kristin (Dean) Miller of Port Orchard; son Hal (Donna) Forch of Arizona; stepson Kevin (Kathrine) Gjerstad of Norway; daughter Susannah (Brett) Rosener of Minnesota; 15 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Harrold accepted Jesus as a young boy and was a member of Lakebay Community Church for 41 years. One of his great joys was playing Santa at the church on Christmas Eve. Harrold is now home with his Lord.

A memorial service will be held at Lakebay

Community Church at a later date.



James L. Reynolds

Jim Reynolds died Dec. 18 at the age of 69, four months after receiving a diagnosis of Stage IV pancreatic cancer. He fought hard but there was no winning this battle. Jim's wife, Maureen Reilly, was with him when he passed away at home.

Jim was born in San Diego, the son of an American naval officer and his English wife. He lived in the Great Lakes region but spent most of his childhood and teens in West Seattle. He spent many years in the ship repair industry and switched to construction a decade ago. His last position was with Nisqually Construction Services as a construction inspector at SeaTac Airport.

Jim loved his family dearly and it gave him great pleasure and comfort to spend Sundays surrounded by them during his final illness. There are no adequate words to thank all the people who supported us, in so many ways, these last months. The Mustard Seed Project, Nisqually Construction Services, the Port of Seattle, Jim's family, Maureen's family, friends near and far, and the KP community in general made this terrible experience as bearable as it could be.

Grateful thanks go to Drs. Vincent Picozzi, Mark Beiter and Luke Seaburg, and their teams at Virginia Mason for their expert and compassionate care, and to CHI Franciscan Hospice Services for easing Jim's transition into the next chapter.

Jim's parents Lester and Vera preceded him in death as did his sister, Ellie, and niece, Denise. He is survived by his sister, Sue Carlson; brothers Bob (Diana) and Will (Julie) Reynolds; cousin Gary (Kathy) Etchells; son Nolan (Keri) Reynolds; nephews Steve (Cathy) and Bruce Carlson, Patrick (Michelle) and Nick Reynolds; nieces Cathy (Bruce) Stein and Stacy Hild; great-nephew Carter (Jessica) Carlson; great-niece Katie (Justin) Friant and her two sons Preston and Emmett.

A memorial gathering will be held at The Mustard Seed Project Feb. 10 from 1 to 4 p.m. Donations can be made to The Mustard Seed Project of Key Peninsula in lieu of flowers or other tributes.

Tim Kezele: Key Peninsula Native Earns a Gig Harbor Rotary Star

The lifelong KP resident was recognized for his service to the community by the Rotary Club of Gig Harbor North.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

Who becomes a charter member of the Key Peninsula Historical Society at the age of 14? Joins the Key Peninsula Civic Center board at 20 and goes on to serve as board president three times? Has the foresight to plant shade trees at Volunteer Park 30 years ago? Prunes a stressed tree in the middle of Key Center to bring it to Christmas-tree-ready glory, and then strings the lights? Hosts a historical tour bus ride to support fundraising for a local nonprofit?

That would be Tim Kezele, lifelong Key Peninsula resident and volunteer, who will be honored Feb. 2 as a Rotary Star. The dinner celebration, now in its 12th year and hosted by the three local Rotary clubs, recognizes non-Rotarians who exemplify their motto of service above self.

Kezele was nominated by the Rotary Club of Gig Harbor North. The Morning Club nominated Rick Bennett and the Midday Club nominated Wallace and Cammie Watts. A \$1,000 contribution will be made to the Rotary Foundation in each nominee's name, making them Paul Harris Fellows. Money raised at the dinner will be divided among the nominees and donated to the charity of their choice. Kezele designated the Key Peninsula Civic Center Association.

"Community engagement has always been a part of it all," Kezele said. "It's a feel-good thing whether it's the person next door or the larger community."

Kezele grew up on the Key Peninsula. His father, a Tacoma policeman, closed the deal on their Fil Lucy Bay house the day after he was born.

The family moved to Tacoma when he was 5 but first spent that summer in a travel trailer at the newly opened Penrose State Park. He and his brother played on the beach and in the woods. "A family with five kids ran the concession stand," he said. "It was great."

He spent every weekend and summer at the family's 7.5 acres on Joe's Bay. Kezele said he remembered the Sunday of the purchase. His dad had \$14 in his pocket, paid \$2 for the Narrows toll, made a \$12 down payment with a promissory note written in pencil, and went to the



Tim Kezele captured in the act of good deed doing at the KP Civic Center.

Tina McKail, KP News

"HERE PEOPLE PITCH IN. PEOPLE HELP EACH OTHER."

bank the next day. When he was 14, the family returned to live there full-time.

Kezele started earning money doing yard work. He biked to and from Joe's Bay to jobs on Fil Lucy Bay, often stopping at the Lakebay Marina for a milkshake along the way.

He joined the fledgling Key Penin-

sula Historical Society after reading an announcement in the Peninsula Gateway. At 14 he was more than a generation younger than anyone else in the room. "I'm the last surviving charter member," he said.

Kezele bounced around a bit after graduating from Peninsula High School. A note on the bulletin board at the Longbranch Marina led to a job as caretaker for the Faraway Estate on Fil Lucy Bay, owned then by Bill Parker of Parker

Pens. He was also the building custodian for the Longbranch Improvement Club.

After attending a Pioneer Days event at the civic center his brother suggested he join the board. Kezele did just that, leading to his longstanding involvement, serving as president three times, working with the fledgling parks department — he served one term as a Key Peninsula Metropolitan Parks commissioner — and continuing as a member of its executive committee.

Kezele said the civic center was purchased from the Peninsula School District in 1956 with \$9,600 raised at a spaghetti dinner. "And now look," he said. "The Children's Home Society used to be the boys' locker room. The museum is there. The regular activities like skate night, the toddler indoor park, and yoga."

In the late '70s and early '80s, Kezele worked at the Tides Tavern and loved the sense of community there. "We had so much fun."

Kezele went to Clover Park Technical

AT 14, HE WAS MORE THAN A GENERATION YOUNGER THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE ROOM. "I'M THE LAST SURVIVING CHARTER MEMBER," HE SAID.

College to study landscape management and horticulture. "That school I liked," he said, contrasting it with his high school experience. He started his own landscaping business.

He married his first wife in 1984 and they moved to Jackson Lake — it was the cut-off for commuting distance to her job in Tacoma. He worked for the Rhododendron Species Foundation and many individuals. He spent 18 years at the University of Puget Sound and was head of grounds maintenance when he left in 2003.

He divorced, remarried, and returned to self-employment but focused on the pruning work that he loves. He and his wife PJ still live on Jackson Lake.

Kezele, who calls himself a member of the aches and pains club, semi-retired a few years ago, is the proud grandfather of two, and can't quite turn down requests for pruning. He loves the "Get it done" spirit of the Key Peninsula. "In Gig Harbor, people rip out their checkbook," he said. "Here people pitch in. People help each other." ■



The humpback whale known to local whale watchers as "Malachite," passes the derelict barge in Henderson Bay. *Tina McKail, KP News*

An Eyesore from the Seashore: The Purdy Spit Barge

How Doug McRae's commercial shellfish dreams went adrift while his trusty workhorse barge got left behind.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

During a partly cloudy sunset, the black silhouette of the four-foot helm standing against the bright orange sky looks picturesque. On a grey winter day, the light blue hull beautifully blends in with the rolling fog. As the sun comes up over Gig Harbor in the summertime, the glare makes it disappear into the bay. But when the water is calm on a clear day, one can finally get a good look at it in its true form.

The converted oyster barge has become the unofficial, unintentional and unwanted welcome sign to those entering the Key Peninsula while crossing the Purdy Spit.

Complaints about the barge moored off the spit have been made a handful of times to the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Ecology, and the Pierce County Parks and Recreation Department since 2015. As derelict as it may seem, beneath its weatherworn exterior is a silent witness to a short and tumultuous period of the area's fishing history.

The 22-foot vessel was once a powerful workhorse. In its heyday, it was an A-frame workboat with a winch used for setting 10,000-pound fishing net anchors in the northern part of Puget Sound. Later, with its wide platform, it was perfect for hauling harvested wild shellfish or ferrying around aquaculture equipment. Today it's a forgotten memory — a relic of a business deal gone bad.

It was 2000, and Doug McRae and his Washington Shellfish, Inc. commercial geoduck business was going through an acquisition phase. If the company wasn't

buying land, it was looking to lease it.

"I had great dreams and high hopes for the business," said McRae, who recently retired from a nearly 50-year diving career and now lives in Ketchikan, Alaska. "Aquaculture is the future of the world's food supply. People just don't know how much food is below the substrate underwater."

Geoducks may look about as gross as their name sounds, but their flavor makes them a delicacy in the international marketplace where today, according to DNR, top-quality clams can fetch up to \$125 a pound. And since thousands can grow in a very small amount of space and each one averages nearly three pounds, it is a lucrative and competitive business.

The geoduck aquaculture business happens on tidelands all around Puget Sound, but McRae favored Carr Inlet, specifically Henderson Bay near the Purdy Spit. He saw that nearly 50 acres of prime tideland along the spit owned by Pierce County Parks and Recreation was going unused while just over the road in Burley Lagoon, the Yamashita family and their Western Oyster business was making a killing in the shellfish industry. The tidelands on both sides of the spit are authorized for commercial shellfish aquaculture under the Bush & Callow Act of 1895.

McRae thought there was no harm in seeing if the county would lease him the land, so he reached out to former Parks and Recreation Director Jan Walcott. After the department determined the value of the land, an attorney wrote up the lease and faxed it to McRae. The terms seemed too good to be true: \$2,500 for five years plus \$360 annually, renewable

for up to 25 years. He signed the lease before anyone could change their mind. In January 2001, after getting all the appropriate signatures — or so Pierce County Parks thought — the lease became valid.

"This property was going to attach a rocket ship to us," he said of his business. McRae's dreams were quickly coming true.

He used his barge to haul out his patented underwater seed planting machine where a staff of more than 50 people planted a half-million PVC tubes, each containing a baby geoduck. The tubes protect the geoducks from crabs and other predators until they are big enough to dig into the substrate. In less than two years, Washington Shellfish turned a \$2,500 lease into \$2.5 million of gross income.

It was that immediate monetary success that McRae said encouraged three South Sound Native American tribes to get the ear of newly-elected Pierce County Executive John Ladenburg in late 2001.

Ladenburg questioned the validity of the lease since neither he nor his predecessor ever signed it. He issued a cease and desist order keeping McRae and his crew from all beaches, boat ramps and parking areas around the spit. In a 2003 KP News story, Ladenburg went as far as saying McRae was trespassing, even though both parties thought their contract was valid. All remaining tubes, with close to \$1 million worth of geoducks inside, were removed and destroyed.

Ladenburg, now a personal injury attorney in Tacoma, stood firm that it was his decision alone to reverse the supposed deal. "I never talked to any of the tribes," he told KP News. "It was simple; then and now the

county should not be leasing county property to commercial enterprises."

In 2003, after a lengthy and pricey court battle, a judge agreed with Ladenburg and ruled that the county employees who signed the lease had no right to do so. Though his boat stayed afloat, McRae's dreams for Washington Shellfish started to sink.

"That killed us," McRae told KP News in January. "(Pierce County) chopped our legs out from underneath us and put us out of business."

For the next 10 years, McRae continued to use his vessel to pursue commercial fishing ventures and personal diving adventures around the south Puget Sound. But for McRae, once a shellfisherman, always a shellfisherman. Although he was getting older and knew his diving days were numbered, he still had a zest for making money and still knew of a place where he could make it — the Purdy Spit. In 2013, he dipped his feet back into the geoduck game, this time buying land instead of borrowing it.

"What better place for an old man to spend his summers," he said. McRae bought 10 acres of tidelands about 60 feet offshore, split up by an imaginary lane extending from the Purdy boat launch. As fate would have it, his new property shared a common border with the leased property he lost 10 years earlier.

McRae knew what he was doing. The property was already littered with mature geoducks he planted a decade ago. But to turn this property into profit, he had to get it ready. And along came his barge, complete with equip-

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Following Salmon Under the New Minter Creek Bridge

The years of intermittent construction and traffic delays on State Route 302 near 118th were worth it. At least for the fish.

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

“This is crazy,” Amy Amos keeps saying as we wade up Little Minter Creek, stepping over logs and bundles of willow branches until we are directly under the Key Peninsula Highway, where the creek bed is half missing.

I’m thinking the same thing but for a different reason. I’ve been in this spot hundreds of times, thousands: taking the corners fast with my eyes on the rumble strip, a pickup hot on my tail. And here I am now surrounded by salmon carcasses, eagles, ravens, riffles and pools. Highway noise plays second fiddle to the sound of water jumping through tangled wood.

I’ve come to see what lies beneath the highway project that had us all snarled up like ivy for the past three summers.

We started under the new bridge, where the main stem of Minter Creek flows from north to south. Amos is the project engineer. She has been working for the Washington State Department of Transportation for 30 years. While she describes the bridge footings,

its span, the short summer window for in-creek work, I am drawn through recently planted native vegetation and spawned-out salmon bodies and decaying road trash to the water’s edge.

Sunlight glints. Here and there a boulder. Round river rock in tans, grays, and blues, stretching under a shimmering blanket of clear water. Upstream a clay bank under big leaning firs; downstream a jumble of logs. Minter Creek sings, calls out: I want to follow it beyond where it vanishes, to know its way of traversing the peninsula. Water, moving. Eagles rise into tree limbs with gobs of salmon.

Amos says it takes a creek three years to find its balance after a project like this. To her, this looks like it is well on its way. It’s when we turn up Little Minter that things get wacky.

The highway, from its intersection with 118th to the bridge, follows Little Minter’s original shallow gully. It once crossed a wooden trestle bridge. “It was on these funky little Jenga block foundations,” Amos says, “and we ran into those when we were excavating to put the bridge abutments in.” What followed the wooden trestle was hardly a bridge at all: the state infilled Little Minter’s gully and kept right on filling over Minter Creek too, leaving it a double barrel culvert. Little Minter was



The main stem of Minter Creek, looking north from under the new SR 302 bridge. *Chris Rurik, KP News*

shoved into a permanent detour that crosses under the highway once near 118th, meanders, crosses under again, meanders again, and dumps into the main stem just north of the bridge. WSDOT found its original bed while excavating old fill.

So the recent project wasn’t just the bridge, it was replacing pipes in two locations with spacious underpasses for Little Minter.

All of this was mandated by the 2013 culvert injunction, which required the state to free its fish-bearing waters from road blockages. The Minter Creek project was designed in 2018 and began in 2019. According to Amos, 2018 may as well be the Jurassic in terms of creek restoration design. That to me is a testament to just how much is being learned in real time about river dynamics during this epic state-wide effort. After Covid-induced delays, at the 11th hour state and tribal biologists stepped in to require the addition of large dead wood, boulders, and other natural elements to give the reborn Minter Creek more complexity.

Dead wood in particular has become a science unto itself. “That’s what you want to see for habitat,” says Amos, pointing to a 40-foot log that is half in and half out of the water. Behind it is a deep pool and fine sediment, around it an arc of faster water. “Differential,” she says.

Dead wood does far more, as described in a recent book by river biologist Ellen Wohl. I’ve been carrying it around for months — I

finished it long ago; I just can’t get over casually flaunting a book called “Dead Wood.” Big logs catch bits of other wood and sediment, rapidly building riverside habitats that, fueled by the slow release of nutrients in the wood, support lush growth. Anchoring the creek, which wants to wander, such hard points are less likely to blow out in floods. They also concentrate creek invertebrates. Paired with the sheltered pools they create, they are perfect fish habitat.

Are fish here? When state biologists swept the project area clean of fish, moving them just downstream, they found hundreds. One defishing in Little Minter caught and moved 34 resident cutthroat, 171 steelhead, 177 coho salmon, 63 juvenile chinook salmon, 121 sculpin, 40 sunfish, 17 lamprey and 73 crayfish.

That’s not what is crazy to Amos, who has seen salmon return within a year to every culvert project she has engineered. As we wade up Little Minter to the second underpass, the creek is pitted with tangled branches, pools at odd angles, stranded coir logs and willow fascines. Leaves are plastered knee-high in the salmonberry tangles. A few weeks ago fell the biggest 24-hour rainfall in the last three years. Almost four inches.

The high water stripped at least two feet of rock and sand from the creek bed in the underpass. Shaking her head, Amos inspects the damage, the way the creek is finding its level.

The new method of river restoration uses bundles of buried slash, native plants, quick-rooting willow fascines, river rock, and big logs to sculpt a creek and fast-track it toward the flexibility that is inherent in nature and was ignored by the armored slopes of past engineering.

The irony, says Amos, is that there is not a drop of water in this stretch of Little Minter during the summer work window. Now I find a salmon tail sticking out of a mud deposit. The rest of the fish is buried.

For the third straight year, Amos’s team will have to return and shore things up. The essential challenge in this place is how two ways of being can coexist. The bridge and roadbed must stand fixed and strong against every semi-truck, wandering creek, and earthquake, while the creek must ebb, swell, jump, move and rearrange itself if it is to preserve the secret to the life it sustains.

Later, I return to Little Minter alone. The brush-pickers shack at the highway pullout may be gone, but I’m thinking Little Minter is the quintessential Key Peninsula creek: easy to discount, suddenly unruly, more complicated than you think. And crammed with life. Flipping river rocks I find countless damselfly larvae. Also a battery. Just upstream, heron tracks cross deer tracks on a sand bar. Which is another advantage of opening these creek underpasses. It’s not only salmon that need safe passage past roads. ■



Four of the six responders were (l-r) Jeff Gordon, Tim Davis, Lt. Paul Pavolka, and Keith Brogan. *Ted Olinger, KP News*

LIFESAVING FROM PAGE 1

was screaming ‘Dad!’”

Paul ran into the living room. Greyson was on his left side, near a large metallic coffee table. Through tears he said he’d been lying on the couch, kind of moving around and holding the game controller over his head with both hands. He slid off and his neck hit the table leg or corner because he didn’t want to let go of the controller.

“I was lying down like this,” Greyson said, recreating the accident. “I thought I was going to fall down right here where you could actually break your neck.”

Paul said, “The only thing that I saw was a hairline scratch, like a cat scratch, just enough to make a white line,” at the base of his neck. “I didn’t really see anything wrong, but I could tell in his voice, and I could see fear in him. Something was obviously very wrong.”

He carried his son next door to where his ex-partner lives and told her to call 911.

B Shift was on that night. A KPPFD medic unit was dispatched from the Longbranch station, and a fire engine came from Home. It’s standard practice to send two units to medical calls, according to Public Information Officer Anne Nesbit.

“Our medic units are a team of two,” she said. “An engine responds on every call for EMS support since there are some calls that require more than two people to assist and you don’t want to stand around and wait for them to get there.”

This was that kind of call.

Lt. Paul Pavolka, a firefighter/paramedic with 16 years at KPPFD, was the lead medic in the ambulance with FF/EMT Tim Davis, a 20-year veteran, and the driver.

“The first thing that went through my head was, ‘Oh, kid fell, hurt shoulder. Kids are like rubber, they cry and bounce back,’” Pavolka said. “We thought we’d probably just put him in a sling and mom and dad can take him to the hospital. Routine call.”

The engine beat them to the scene, staffed by FF/EMT Andrew Pittman, who has one year with KPPFD but six in the fire service; Brady Blue, FF/EMT, a former local volun-



teer now on the job for two years; and FF/EMT Keith Brogan with three years.

“We show up, the kid’s crying on the floor, acting appropriately, so, good,” Davis said. “The engine crew was already there, working on the kid, getting information, trying to figure out the whole story. So Paul and I are just kind of standing there letting those guys do their thing. But some of the guys that we have are pretty new, so I jumped in to give my two cents, look the kid over. Dislocated shoulder maybe? But it was weird that he was laying on the side that was injured.”

Pavolka said, “The EMTs are your eyes, your ears and your hands,” allowing the paramedic to stand back and take in the whole scene, supervise, and make a plan. His was to transport Greyson to Mary Bridge Hospital in Tacoma because this was more serious than he expected. It was a big decision because it would mean taking a medic unit off the Key Peninsula for a minimum of 90 minutes, but Mary Bridge is the best choice for treating children.

“We got him packed up, put him in the rig, start hooking up to the monitors,” Davis said. “And he was still crying, acting appropriately; dad came inside the ambulance trying to console his son. Paul got on the phone with Mary Bridge.” Pavolka was talking to an ER nurse about dosage for a sedative, routine practice with a child patient.

“I was talking with dad and the kid sat up and turned blue, just like that,” Davis said.

“I said, ‘Paul, he’s not breathing,’ lay him down, try to open his airway, but he’s fighting. I think that’s when Keith grabbed the I-gel

(emergency airway) and I said, We gotta go.” Davis kept Pittman, told Blue to take charge of the engine, pulled dad into the passenger seat, and started driving.

“This hadn’t been very long, six or seven minutes since we got on the scene,” Pavolka said. “His face was swelling, his eyes were swollen, his neck — he looked like a body-builder in his chest, all the way down to his knees, right in front of me, he was just getting bigger.”

As he moved to the passenger seat, his dad saw it all happen.

“It was like the kid in Willy Wonka, I didn’t know that could happen to a person,” Paul said. “It was so strange, I felt like I was blacking out. The guy driving calmed me down.”

Pavolka thought it might be an allergic reaction. “I asked his dad numerous times, is he allergic to anything? No, no, no, nothing. But something different was happening right in front of us. His oxygen saturation was going down, his heart rate was going up, his blood pressure was going down. We were going in the wrong direction.

“I yelled at Tim, ‘We need another medic.’” B Shift is commanded by Battalion Chief Bill Sawaya, who’s been with KPPFD for 29 years and a BC for 10.

“Sitting here in the station, listening to the call, I’m monitoring time and arrivals and who is where,” Sawaya said. “I hear Tim get on the radio to request Medic 44 (at Wauna) to make a rendezvous. This is very rare, so that told me things were serious. Medic 44 asked where they would meet and the words that I heard were ‘I don’t care, just drive south.’

Firefighter and paramedic Jeff Gordon with the type of 14 gauge needle he used to “dart” Greyson’s chest to relieve pressure on his lungs. “I grabbed the kid and started looking for landmarks (for the darts), ribs, clavicle. He was so swollen I couldn’t tell where to go. So I went down the side between his ribs ... He was so small ... I went right in, got a little bit of air, not very much.”

Ted Olinger, KP News

“I’ve listened to Tim on the radio for 20 years and I have never heard him sound like that. Tim was, Tim was, ...”

“Tim was scared,” (Tim) Davis said.

“We all were,” Pavolka said.

Medic 44 intercepted 49 somewhere near The Red Barn Youth Center in the middle of the KP Highway. FF/PM Jeff Gordon jumped out, crossed the road and jumped into 49.

As soon as the door shut, Pavolka yelled to Davis: “Diesel!”

That’s code for “I don’t care what the ride is like, go,” Pavolka said. “Tim is one of our best if not the best driver we have. He can drive fast without throwing us around in the back, and there were four of us back there plus a patient we’re trying to keep alive.”

Davis said, “These guys are doing their thing and I’m trying to keep dad calm, saying, ‘Hey, he’s in good hands, everything’s going to be good,’ and it’s 9 o’clock at night and it’s dark, and driving on the KP Highway is dangerous at noon, just trying to drive 33 miles to Tacoma, trying to watch for dogs, deer and drunks, and nobody pulls over for you. I had six people’s lives. I had to get there. I’ve done it a million times, but that one was stressful.”

Gordon, who has 15 years in the fire service and two with KPPFD, said “I had the advantage of not being there for the emotional side of it at the beginning. So I got in, Andy is across from me doing vitals, Keith is on airway, breathing with the kid on the bag, Paul is telling me the story.”

Pavolka said, “I tell Jeff, ‘It’s gotta be air. I think we’ve got to dart his chest.’ I’ve done tons of chest darts. But I’ve never seen anything



"I was lying down like this. I thought I was going to fall down right here where you could actually break your neck." *Ted Olinger, KP News*

like this before, and never done one on a kid."

"It was subcutaneous emphysema," Gordon said. "We've all seen it but usually it's smaller; the skin feels like Rice Krispies, like bubble wrap because every time he breathed air was going under the skin and muscles, not into the lungs; that is why he was changing color, there was no air exchange in the lungs." It's the kind of thing one would expect only after a major trauma to the chest, like in a car crash.

"I grabbed the kid and started looking for landmarks (for the darts), ribs, clavicle. He was so swollen I couldn't tell where to go. So I went down the side between his ribs, said, 'Give me a 14 gauge' (something like a hollow crochet needle). He was so small. You're not trying to get into the lungs, you're trying to get the air out of the space around the lungs to relieve pressure on them. I went right in, got a little bit of air, not very much. Paul got back on the phone with Mary Bridge."

Pavolka told the ER doctor, "We're going to have a trauma code before we get to the hospital. His oxygen saturation was down in the 70s, heart rate in the 60s, everything going down, I thought we were a couple minutes from doing CPR."

The odds of surviving CPR are not good: just 5-10% survive if it's performed outside a hospital.

"That's where we're at," Pavolka said. "This kid is dying; I could hear the doc on the phone matching my voice, my tone, he could tell. I said get the trauma team ready."



Greyson and family with his first responders on Christmas Day. *Mackenzie Gordon*

Then Gordon got a second dart into Greyson's other side. "More air came out and he started to level out."

"We were right there when we were going to start chest compressions and we stopped it right there, right at the line," Pavolka said.

"We didn't fix him, but he wasn't getting any worse," Gordon said.

Paul, Greyson's dad, said there must have been 50 people waiting for them at Mary Bridge. Gordon said it was difficult to move through the halls. The ER doctors took charge, immediately inserting multiple chest tubes into

Greyson, disgorging large bubbles of air and blood. They X-rayed him and put him on a ventilator, knocking out his two top front teeth.

The senior doctor told the KP crew Greyson had a tear in his trachea and a bruised carotid artery from hitting the table. It didn't take much but was enough to start the chain of events. "We're going to talk about this later," the doctor said, "because none of us have ever seen anything like this. You did everything right."

"When we got back to the unit, we all just sat down in the back," Pavolka said. "Do you

want coffee? Yeah, no, wait, what? We were all kind of shaking"

"I looked at my watch and couldn't tell what time it was," Gordon said.

"I couldn't drive back," Davis said.

"My job kicked in when everybody got back to the station," Sawaya said. "Guys were visibly shaken up by the whole thing and one guy broke down. They've all got kids."

"People die every day but when it comes to children, they haven't had a life yet, they need more," Davis said.

Sawaya said, "Statistically with tracheal tears, 80% of patients that have it don't make it to the ER. The kid had everything going for him though because all of these guys were fully engaged, from placing the airway, to driving, to recognizing the subcue and changing the needle preference. The ER staff need to be recognized too; they were cued up, they had the benefit of getting the heads-up call, but they're still fully engaged in the moment too.

"I'm pretty proud of everybody on this one."

Two weeks later, B Shift was working on Christmas Day. The crew's families spent the day with them at the Home station having an extended dinner between calls, playing pickleball, and watching football.

Greyson and his dad stopped by.

He showed Gordon the scars where the chest tubes were inserted. "That right there is where the actual tube was," he said. "But that needle you put in hurt."

He told Brogan, "I remember when you guys came in and you gave me a balloon to breathe in to calm down. And you came to the hospital, and everyone was crying."

Brogan had visited Greyson and his parents in ICU the day after the accident, while Greyson was in an induced coma. "I gave him a hug, and hugged the parents, and there were some tears. I don't usually do that, but I needed to process this."

Brogan later led a refresher course for all KPFID personnel on the use of the I-gel emergency airway based on his experience on the call, since it is relatively new to the service.

Greyson's dad Paul said, "For those guys to come in and be so reliably proficient and professional, I'm just so thankful for that. They made choices that really mattered."

"It was about four days of 'We're not out of the woods yet,' but there was nothing that could have gone better," he said. "Every bit of luck was in his corner. Beating the statistic of making it to the hospital, being at the very end, and making a miraculous recovery, and all the staff. I am so happy my son's here."

Greyson missed a few days of school but is back in his second-grade class at Evergreen Elementary. His classmates gave him a bunch of homemade cards that decorated his house, together with his two front teeth, which were displayed on the family Christmas tree. ■

The Key Peninsula Business Association Makes Local Strides

The KPBA is off to a strong start for 2024, expanding its membership and mission to promote the Key Peninsula.

VICKI BIGGS, KP NEWS

The four-woman executive board of the Key Peninsula Business Association is guiding the KPBA with a fresh outlook into 2024 and beyond.

Board members include Kendra Zartman president and production manager for My Haunted Forest at Grand Farms, and Rena Blalock, vice president, represents Cost Less Pharmacy. Realtor Ashley Ford from Keller West-Sound serves as secretary and Laurie Ellis of Ellis Accounting is the treasurer. They aim to promote a direction for the association that includes innovative thinking and is inclusive in practice.

“We want meetings to be enjoyable for all and a place to talk about issues; also, to present ideas on how to support each other and gain exposure,” Zartman said. “Not only for our nonprofits but all the variety of business. We want to create a positive atmosphere where people feel free to participate and promote.”

Zartman became a KPBA member about two years ago to promote the Haunted Forest. She soon volunteered to take the secretary position that opened when Stephanie Brooks stepped down. “I love the KPBA,” Zartman said. “I have met a ton of wonderful people. Selfishly, it worked out for me.”

In a departure from the past, the KPBA now holds its monthly meetings on a rotating basis, with a different business hosting each month, in the evening. Business owners who are working during the day can attend, where members get to know other businesses and a collegial atmosphere prevails. January’s meeting brought out more than 20 members.

The KPBA also continues to meet on the third Friday of the month at El Sombrero in Key Center for lunch. Speakers are invited, often officials from Pierce County. U.S. Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-6th) has attended on several occasions.

Zartman’s objectives include increasing membership — currently, there are 85 — and “to be at as many community events as possible to get exposure for local businesses,” she said.

She sees challenges as well.

“I don’t think people know how many local businesses are out there,” she said. KPBA will attend any event with a tent, table, swag, and business cards. “We all have to volunteer to man the tent.



The leadership team for KPBA 2024: (from top left) Ashley Ford, Laurie Ellis, Rena Blalock (seated left) and President Kendra Zartman. *Tina McKail, KP News*

In-person contact is more effective for talking about business. People don’t know about the KPBA, and people don’t know what’s available on the KP.”

Joyce Tovey, a longtime realtor on the Key Peninsula, provided some perspective on the inception and growth of the KPBA.

She attended Gig Harbor Chamber of Commerce meetings when she was launching her business in 1981 and thought that the Key Peninsula could benefit from a similar group. The KPBA started meeting “around 1985,” she said. “We met at Lulu’s Homeport in the bar.

There was a table of maybe 10 people. We were trying to do things that would bring the KP together.”

“The KP is different,” she said. “We operate on who we know. Establishing relationships is the main thing.”

Ellie Lechner launched her new business in Key Center, Serve, and attended her first meeting of the KPBA in January. Serve specializes in protein drinks, along with other menu items like Dude’s Doughnuts from Port Orchard.

“We like to do business with a personal touch,” she said. She enjoyed the opportunity to introduce herself and her busi-

ness to the other members and looked forward to hosting one of the meetings.

Meeting attendance is not an option for some business owners, but they continue to support the association.

For example, Aaron Gerer and Dan Lutz, longtime residents of the KP and owners of Home Excavating and Dozing, have renewed their membership each year, but don’t go to meetings. “It is just so much work trying to stay in business,” Gerer said. “Higher interest rates and increasing costs of goods have an effect on business. This is balanced somewhat by the population growth on the KP. I know we get business from the KPBA brochures.”

Chuck Ellis is the 2023 outgoing president of the KPBA and owner of Goin’ Postal in Key Center. He has been an active member since 2014 and recalled that the organization operated more as a social club in the past. During those earlier years, the KPBA did not have an effective website, and the brochure was only updated every five or six years. He said the association is much more beneficial for members now. “The task is complicated; everyone has different needs.”

Ellis was instrumental in revamping the organization’s website, along with Eric Morland, owner of Glen Cove Auto Repair. The website is up to date now except for listing the incoming board members for 2024. Those interested can sign up for membership on the website.

Ellis also stressed KPBA’s participation in local events. For example, the KPBA sponsored the annual tree lighting at the Key Center Corral in December. It also supported the Farm Tour, Logging Show, KP Art Walk, and Ace Hardware grand opening ribbon-cutting.

January’s meeting allowed members to suggest ideas that included listing committee names and participants on the website, and an increased presence on social media.

“We want more participation in meetings, allowing energies to expand,” Zartman said. “We want input and ideas for more exposure for all who want it. We are looking for positives.”

The association has committees to address membership, scholarships, road cleanup, its annual dinner, the lunch speakers committee, and marketing.

KPBA has a Facebook page and can also be reached at www.kpba.org. ■



The population of the peaceful beachside community rises throughout summer.

Tina McKail, KP News

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although the outflow from their system met general requirements set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Act, it did not meet the stricter standard of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program. The system was out of compliance and responsible for the closure of a nearby geoduck fishery managed by the state and local tribes.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources funded a feasibility study to evaluate the existing system and to recommend alternatives to upgrade or replace it.

The report concluded that the system was working better than might be expected, but after 50 years it had reached the end of its expected lifespan. Having homeowners install their own onsite septic systems was not possible given the small size of the lots, nor was collecting and hauling waste. The system should be replaced.

It turns out that replacing a treatment plant on a site close to a shore where shellfish can be harvested is not a simple affair.

There were issues to address. Where could the facility be located? How should the sewage be treated? Where would the treated effluent go? Were there risks to flora and fauna? Would it add to the risk of landslides? How much would the project cost? How could it be financed?

TBBC hired Gray and Osborne, a Seattle-based engineering company, to manage the project.

The new plant will be located slightly farther away from the shoreline to meet Pierce County requirements. It will use a membrane bioreactor to treat the wastewater and an ultraviolet disinfection

system. Over 1,000 feet of concrete collection lines will be replaced.

Gray and Osborne explored piping the treated effluent to a large offsite septic system, but no appropriate land was available. The pipe from the treatment plant will still go to Taylor Bay but will end farther and deeper than the current system to ensure a healthy ecosystem for shellfish. Technology will allow the system to be monitored offsite; currently, there is a manager onsite five days a week.

An environmental report confirmed the plan complied with the National Environmental Policy Act requirements. Those requirements include considering the impact on geological hazards, wildlife, air and water quality, noise and appearance.

Members of TBBC agreed to limit the size of the community to ensure that use won't exceed system capacity.

They hope to get funding soon from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, a combination of a grant and a 40-year low-interest loan to cover the now \$11 million price tag.

Although the project is a high priority — there is a need, the project is ready, and the community has already been working with the USDA for several years — funding is not guaranteed.

“The biggest question at this time is whether Congress will appropriate a large enough budget this year for USDA RD to fund all their projects,” said Peter Burgoon, senior project manager of Gray and Osborne. TBBC is working on contingencies if full funding does not come in one package.

But if all goes according to plan the new treatment plant will be completed in 2026. ■

KEY PENINSULA NEWS

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Longbranch Forest Farm is Taking Root Despite Opposition

Seattle siblings strive to blend sustainability and innovation in a new agritourism venture bringing more visitors to the Key Peninsula.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

If you ever picked a pumpkin at a place like Turnbull Farm, cut down your own Christmas tree at Longbranch Tree Farm, survived the scares at My Haunted Forest, or farm-hopped during the Key Peninsula Farm Tour, you've experienced the charm of agritourism firsthand. These unique or seasonal experiences are a way for small farms to bring in a little extra cash aside from normal farming operations.

Inspired by their family's rich farming heritage in Punjab, India, and Canada, and motivated by supply chain and food security concerns during the height of the pandemic, a pair of Seattle-based siblings are looking to bring a relatively new type of farming technique and form of agritourism to the KP: forest farming.

Back in 2021, sister and brother duo Karishma and Kunal Sharma bought a 10-acre property near 60th Street SW and Key Peninsula Highway in Longbranch to create the aptly named Forest Farm, an educational farming experience bridging the gap between Longbranch's rural roots and urban curiosity.

Agritourism, according to Pierce County code, refers to "agriculturally based operations or activities that bring visitors to an active farm or ranch." Opponents of this new farm believe the Forest Farm is not an active farm — or even a farm at all.

Michelle Kircher, a spokesperson for Pierce County, said that though the code mentions the word active, it "does not distinguish the length of time that the farm has been in operation as a term of meeting agritourism requirements."

"The intent of agritourism was basically to save farmland," said Shane Hostetler, who has lived and farmed on the Key Peninsula since the 1960s. "It was supposed to help preserve (existing) farms, not make new ones. (The Forest Farm) property has never been a farm, it's never going to be a farm."

The Forest Farm property is heavily wooded with alders and big-leaf maple trees. It is more forest than the more conventional open field farmland layout; hence the name.

For Karishma, that's the whole point. "This type of farm is going to be one of the first of its kind in the area and will show how we can sustainably grow food in the forest," she said.

The biggest gripe is against the proposed building of six boutique cabins for overnight visitors. By offering lodging on the Forest Farm, Karishma hopes to bring a new wave of tourism to the area, increase their length of stay, and give a boost to the local economy. She said the more time visitors stay, the more time they can "learn innovative and sustain-



Siblings Kunal and Karishma Sharma have dreams to bring a new wave of tourism that showcases forest farming management and helps support the local economy.

Tina McKail, KP News

able farming practices to bring home with them." Besides vacation rentals, there is no other overnight lodging in the area.

To Longbranch resident Vicki Shelton, the proposed agritourism project sounds like a nightmare and she predicts the owners will have constant issues with nonpaying visitors. "If built, they present a potential opportunity for a homeless community invading the property or taking on the cabins as their own temporary residences.

"Many of us have had issues with break-ins and burglaries in the area," she said.

Skeptics like Hostetler worry the Sharmas are just exploiting agritourism regulations to get approval for the cabins, and then ditch the farming aspect.

"It's lodging camouflaged as agritourism," Hostetler said. "We should be promoting economically viable farming, not economically viable tourism."

Karishma said letting the farming side of the business fail wouldn't be in their best interest. "We're putting a lot of time, money and effort into this project." She mentioned that they would be allowed to build up to 20 "guest rooms" with a conditional use permit, but space for the educational farming experience is too crucial to their business plan.

Kircher said this project is one of many being evaluated as part of the county's agritourism development regulations and the Pierce County Agriculture Advisory Commission is actively involved. More discussions are expected this year, including possible code amendments, she said.

Despite the opposition, the Sharma siblings are committed to their vision and have spent the last two years navigating the Pierce County permitting process with the support of architect and civil engineering firms, and regularly have a wetland biologist and a botanist on site.

They also hired a local agroforestry operations manager, Matt Morford, who is on the property two days a week. Karishma has recently visited similar farms around Washington and in India and Hawaii.

Before the team can start building the cabins, which will take up the central part of the property, they must be able to sustain at least 2 acres of crops on the land. Karishma tasked Morford to get creative in using the property for diverse agricultural elements like Pacific Northwest wildflower pastures, berry patches, log-grown shitake mushrooms and other marketable mushroom species, ginseng, an area for lettuce and various root vegetables, and various composting sites. Leeks and ramps will be planted close to the wetland areas to the west of the property, and some of the maple trees sprinkled throughout the property could be tapped for maple syrup.

They plan to salvage all the native plants during development through a program offered by the Pierce Conservation District, and responsibly remove invasive species. Morford is already in early discussions to partner with a Western Washington plant-based fertilizer company to use material from the property, like evergreen huckleberry, in its line of products.

Neither Karishma nor Kunal have plans to live on the property but make it a habit to get down to Longbranch a few times a week. Hostetler, who has never met the Sharmas, said he would change his tune if one of the two lived on the land.

"If they wanted to build a nice little house on their property and start up a farm, that's a different story. More power to them. But that's not happening," said Hostetler. "If they want to live in Seattle and pretend to be a farmer and expect me as a taxpayer to subsidize it, then I don't want to be part of it."

Kircher said a start-up farm like the Forest Farm would not qualify for tax reductions until it has generated and documented revenue for three of the past five years and would not get any immediate tax benefits other than "certain sales tax exemptions that all farms are eligible to receive."

Along with developing the property, Karishma, Kunal and Morford plan to spend the next year getting to know the community and talking with fellow farmers. Karishma spoke with a few members of the Longbranch Improvement Club early on but admits she needs to spend more time hearing from her neighbors. "My family comes from a rural community and I know how outsiders often get looked at. Building with community input is important to us." ■

The Pickleball Craze Comes to the Key Peninsula

The Longbranch Improvement Club opened pickleball courts a year ago. The KP Civic Center joined the craze in January.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

In the fall of 2022, members of the Longbranch Improvement Club put a bug in Kelly Hettinger's ear. They wanted to play pickleball. Easy to learn and designed to be played by old and young alike, it's the fastest-growing sport in the country.

"Why not?" Hettinger, the club's volunteer coordinator, said.

That November the club opened for players every Tuesday with two pickleball courts, each court outlined with blue painter's tape that was pulled up for events.

Hettinger attended every session for the first two or three months, making sure newcomers got oriented, that players knew the basics, and that everyone got a chance to play. Now, Hettinger said, the program practically runs itself. Someone coordinates schedules for a month at a time and volunteers monitor play in two-hour shifts.

After six months the LIC decided to use vinyl tape to demarcate the courts, so they don't need to retape after every rental. Orange nets keep stray balls from sailing into the bathrooms.

Hettinger brought in someone to teach two classes on pickleball basics and safety. "Scoring is pretty simple," she said. "The main problem is players remembering who served last and what the score was."

"I don't think we've had an injury-free week yet," Hettinger said. "But injuries have been pretty minor, and we added ice packs to our equipment box." Players sign a waiver before they can play.

"You don't dive for a point!" said Dan Hunter, one pickleball regular.

Hettinger estimated that about 25 to 40 players come each week. Some stay all day and others play for a few hours. Some go home for lunch and return in the afternoon. Most are retirees, but younger players participate as well, especially toward the end of the day.

"I've heard people say they've lived here 50 years and are getting to know people they never met before," Hettinger said.

"I wasn't especially interested in playing," Tom Nosenzo said. "But I started volunteering in April. Now I play more than I volunteer. I've grown to love it. It's not about winning but being part of the community."

Sharron Dean comes two or three times a month. "It's good exercise and it's fun so it doesn't feel like exercise," she said. "You get to know people — their individual style, strengths, weak-



Longbranch resident Phil DiGirolamo and his wife Michele Gorman enjoy all the pickleball action available close to home.

Tina McKail, KP News

nesses, and trash talk."

Phil Digirolamo started last fall with no previous experience. "I love it," he said. "Your age or gender doesn't matter. The small court is an equalizer. The social part is really fun — we've gotten to know a whole subset of the peninsula we would never have met otherwise."

Pickleball is expanding its reach on the Key Peninsula. In January the Key Peninsula Civic Center opened two courts on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to noon, coordinating the day with the LIC.

The game was invented on Bainbridge Island at the summer home of Joel Pritchard, a politician who served as a state representative and senator, then as a U.S. congressman and lieutenant governor before his death in 1997. In the summer of 1965, restive children greeted him and a friend when they returned from a golf game.

When they couldn't find a shuttlecock for badminton, they got creative.

They lowered the net, experimented with paddles and a whiffle ball, invented rules, and found a game that worked for young and old. Three years later they trademarked the name and formed a company to manufacture paddles and kits.

By 1990 the game was being played in all 50 states. It was declared the official Washington State game in 2022.

But pickleball is not without its controversies.

Tennis courts have been drawn and quartered. The noise of the paddle smacking the hard ball has led to bitter complaints and lawsuits by neighbors. The two competing leagues, Major League Pickleball and the Professional Pickleball Association, merged in September, avoiding clashes about who could participate in the thousands of tournaments held every year.

The sport has had an economic impact that goes beyond tournament play and equipment sales.

A shopping mall in Connecticut credited pickleball with reinvigorating business when they converted a closed Saks Fifth Avenue store into the largest indoor pickleball facility in the country, with 28 courts. Within six months, Macon, Georgia, had outdone the shopping mall when the city opened a 32-court facility.

"It's been our ambition to make pickleball to Macon what golf is to Augusta, and have this be the premier pickleball location, at least in the southeast of the United States, if not the country," said John Roberts, manager of the facility.

There is a rumor of a tournament this year at the LIC, which Hettinger declined to confirm or deny.

The LIC courts are open on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The civic center courts are available on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to noon. The official pickleball organization, USA Pickleball, has information including game basics and tips on their website at usapickleball.org. ■

Muilenburgs Prepare For Final Game as a Seahawks Trio

The Seahawks have their final home game of the season Feb.1 against crosstown rival Gig Harbor in a last Fish Basket for the family.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

The Peninsula Seahawks boys basketball team was down 24-16 with 2:22 left in the first half against Central Kitsap Jan. 12. Seahawks second-year head coach Sean Muilenburg needed to light a fire under his team, and he knew exactly who could spark it.

“Cole!” he called out from the Seahawks bench. “Are you ready?”

A simple head nod response from Cole cued the coach to yell the word “Tap” to his team.

“Cole” is Cole Muilenburg, a senior swingman who just so happens to be the coach’s oldest son. And “Tap” is a play where Cole sneaks behind his opponents on the weak side and grabs an anticipated alley-oop pass for a dunk. When it works, it injects much-needed energy into the team and its fans.

Though the play did not work this time around, Sean designed it specifically for Cole for two reasons: As his coach, he knows his player can pull it off when it does work; as his dad, he knows his son can shake it off when it doesn’t.

It’s the advantage of growing up in the same house as your coach.

“Nobody knows me like he does,” Cole said.

Despite coming back from a 17-point deficit in the fourth quarter, the Seahawks lost to Central Kitsap, 59-56, their fourth straight loss, making it an even tougher journey for the team to finish above .500.

It’s been that kind of season for Peninsula. Sean and Cole already anticipated spending this year reloading its roster, but a series of pre-season injuries to key players prompted Sean to add another Muilenburg to the varsity squad — his youngest son, Aiden. Sean originally wanted Aiden, a freshman, to spend this year developing his game with the JV team.

“I was a little nervous,” Aiden said about playing against bigger and faster guys. “But I just went in and tried to do what I do.”

Cole, donning a green and white jersey for the last time this year, was thrilled when he learned he’d get to spend his senior season playing ball with his kid brother. “I love playing with him. I’ve watched him his whole life and he works so hard. He deserves this.”

As the season wraps up later this month, Sean is still processing just how they all got here. “I didn’t have any aspirations to coach them in high school,” he said. “I just



Proud coach and father Sean Muilenburg with his sons, Aiden (left) and Cole.

Veronica Foley Photography

wanted to be a dad and sit in the stands.”

It was Cole (9.3 points per game; 6.7 rebounds per game; 2.1 blocks per game as of Jan. 16) and Aiden (3.0 ppg, 2.2 rpg and 1.0 bpg) who conned him into applying for the job when it opened up in early 2022.

To the boys, it made perfect sense: a blend of the love they have for their family and the love they have for the game. Cole and Aiden are three years apart but have been close their whole lives.

Cole even bypasses his friends some weekends to make sure he and Aiden can go to the movies together. If they are not seeing something scary, they will let their 11-year-old sister Alexis, who is on the Seahawks Select basketball team, tag along.

“Everyone who hangs around me knows (Aiden) will likely be with me,” Cole said. “If we get a chance to spend time with family, we’ll always do that.”

Sean, who works for a sleep diagnostics company away from the court, knows he carries the burden of the dual responsibility of being both dad and coach. “These

are teenagers growing into men. They are a part of building something here, and I want them to know it’s not all about wins and losses, it’s about the experiences they share.”

Though the towering trio (Sean is 6 foot, 8 inches; Cole is 6 foot, 6 inches; Aiden is 6 foot, 4 inches) have always been connected by basketball, the two younger Muilenburgs are making their bones on the football field. Cole is a two-time All-South Sound Conference tight end and defensive end for the Seahawks football team, but a severe leg injury that shortened his junior season also slowed all the momentum he was gaining with Division I college recruiters.

“The phone stopped ringing,” Sean said about his son’s injury that also caused him to miss last basketball season. “It’s tough for a 17-year-old boy to grasp that all of the sudden he isn’t ‘the man.’ But I think that he’ll be a better college player now because he had to work even harder for it.”

Cole is now weighing offers to play

collegiately at smaller schools like Eastern Oregon, Culver-Stockton, Linfield and Whitworth, but recently got his first Division I offer from Valparaiso in Indiana. He said he’ll make a decision by June.

Aiden also saw some varsity time on the football field at linebacker and wide receiver last season. He’ll be spending the next three years honing his crafts on the field and on the court. Aiden already has the height but is working out four days a week and pounding down tuna fish and PB&Js to add some bulk to his thin frame.

“This year was special for us,” Sean said about himself and his wife, Stephanie. “We get to see them both out there competing together (in football and basketball) at a very high level.”

Whether on the hardwood or the gridiron, the Muilenburg sons are taking in all the advice and knowledge they can from their dad, who is no stranger to playing sports at the next level.

Sean was a standpoint prep basketball player at Redmond High School where he helped his team to a third-place finish at state in the early 1990s. His court skills led him to play ball at Olympic College in Bremerton and eventually Central Washington. He later played professionally overseas in Portugal, New Zealand, Malaysia and China, and was part of semi-professional teams like the Seattle Mountaineers and Everett Explosion.

“It’s amazing — it’s so helpful that he has all this experience,” Cole said. “He already knows the stresses that come with being an athlete.”

The Seahawks have their final home game of the season Feb.1 against crosstown rival Gig Harbor. The Muilenburgs are facing the realization that it is likely their last game together in the PHS gym. It will be the toughest on Cole; it is the last time he will get to play with his younger brother and the last game he’ll play for the guy in his life whom he has called coach as much as he has called dad.

“I don’t really want to think about it yet. To say it’s going to be my last game with my dad is crazy.”

The end of the season means more family time, more fishing together, more trips to the family cabin on Whidbey Island, and more visits to Galaxy Theater together. As for Sean, he plans on coaching the Seahawks at least through Aiden’s senior season. That is, unless Alexis, who will be a freshman at that time, cons him into helping coach her basketball teams. ■

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KP Community Donates Nearly \$30K Through Key IGA's 'Round Up'

July and December brought in the most money for local charities in 2023. Just a few cents from most customers adds up fast.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

A few nickels here and a couple of quarters there added up for local charities on the Key Peninsula.

For less than a dollar, a grocery run to Key IGA this year could help feed neighbors in need, promote awareness about the art community, help beautify the community or even make improvements to the Key Peninsula Civic Center.

This is the first year Key IGA, formerly Food Market before being bought and renamed in early 2023, has done the Round Up at the Register program, raising just over \$29,000. The program encourages customers to round up their total at checkout to the nearest dollar, so each contribution can be anywhere between a penny and 99 cents. It's one of the easier – and more affordable – ways to help support nonprofits year-round.

"It's tough out there right now," said Kip Bonds, the longtime store manager under its old and new owners. "There's a lot of people struggling and (this) helps a lot."

The amount collected for the program typically mirrors the store's foot traffic. Customer visits peak in the summer and in December, so it is no surprise the store's two most generous months brought in \$4,605 in December for the KP Community Services and \$4,320 for the Longbranch Improvement Club in July.

Willow Eaton, executive director of KP Community Services, said, "Our small but mighty community has once again shown its generous spirit; we couldn't be more grateful." She said the funds will help her organization launch new initiatives like expanding its meal delivery program, starting a homelessness diversion program and improving its outreach efforts.

Bonds said the nonprofits he partners with are ecstatic with the results so far, and he shares in their excitement when he checks daily donation amounts.

"You never know how much it'll be," he said. "Sometimes it's \$30, or sometimes it's \$300." The store averaged \$3,500 a month in round up donations last year.

Food Backpacks 4 Kids was the August recipient of \$3,456, which helped the organization get the school year started right, according to FB4K Director of Communications Michelle Johnson. FB4K provides 150 backpacks of nutritious food for hungry students across the Peninsula School District.



Key IGA Manager Kip Bonds presents a check to Key Peninsula Community Services Volunteer Coordinator Teresa Conness from month-long Round-Up campaign for KPCS.
Tina McKail, KP News

Currently, the Key IGA relies on its cashiers asking customers if they want to round up their total, but the store hopes to have the question pop up on their credit card keypads sometime this year.

Bonds said 100% of the donations go right to the nonprofit within a week after the month ends. The store hosts a small check presentation the first week of every month to recognize the previous month's recipient.

The check to the nonprofit says Key IGA on it, but Bonds is quick to point out that the total amount is entirely from the KP community. Key IGA and its owner do not receive any tax benefits from these donations.

This year through the round up program Key IGA customers can support the Friends of Key Center Library (January), Angels Among Us Humanitarian (February), KP Beautification Project (March), KP Fire Department Lady of the Ashes Auxiliary (April), KP Civic Center Association (May), Bischoff Food Bank (June), Longbranch Cemetery Foundation (July), Gig Harbor Land Conservation Fund (August), Key Peninsula News (September), Two Waters Arts Alliance (October), KP Beekeepers Association (November) and KP Little League (December). ■



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Gotta Collect Them All: Cultivating Seeds to Meet Your Gardening Needs

Prepare yourself and your seeds for the official unofficial start of garden season (April 21 here in the Puget Sound region).

KAMRYN MINCH

Not long ago, in a one-window studio apartment under a carport, I made my first attempt at sowing seeds. The building faced east and if our neighbor's car was gone in the morning, the area beside our door and under the window received a burst of morning sun that lasted an hour before disappearing behind the second floor. Inspired by an onion that started sprouting in our closet, I decided that if an onion was choosing life in the dim artificial light of what was essentially a cave, then maybe there was a chance some purposely planted herbs could be happy with what little natural light was available outside our door.

I filled some pots with soil and propped them up on a plastic tote I was attempting to make compost in. Then I plunged some Dollar Store cilantro seeds into the medium, watered, and waited. Weeks went by and nothing happened. Fearing the area was beginning to look like a graveyard for the ghosts of neglected houseplants, I scrapped the experiment and determined that our little cave under the carport was not an ideal location for a garden.

As we near the official unofficial start of garden season, which for the professionally impatient green thumbs is between 8 to 12 weeks before the average last frost date (April 21 here in the Puget Sound region), I find myself reflecting on my relationship with seeds and the practice of seed starting. Watching seeds sprout is, after all, what made me fall in love with gardening. But knowing what I know now about who I am as a gardener, I'm a little relieved I didn't have any success under that carport. I would have surely been a nuisance.

The lessons to be derived from gardening are endless, but self-control has by far been the most difficult to internalize. Especially when it comes to my seed habit. By this time last year, I had already placed a multitude of orders with my favorite seed companies, sometimes twice on the same day from the same website. After submitting my initial order, I would remember I forgot something else I saw and wanted, like a white marigold, but then I would decide I also needed every other type of marigold I had never grown before. You know just in case they disappear off the face of the planet and I'm never able to find them again. Surely someone should have been



Seed starting setup. Full spectrum lights on the left, shop lights on the right. *Kamryn Minch*



supervising me.

Seeds are my grown-up version of Pokémon; I've gotta collect them all! Which wouldn't be such a problem if they didn't have expiration dates. It's all fun and games until you realize the "survival kit" you've been curating will have gone stale by the apocalypse. I am, until further notice, on seed-striction.

But to continue the Pokémon analogy (for millennial readers), seeds are kind of like Pokémon in that they evolve and become more powerful with proper training.

There are many training methods, but the program I've developed so far has been successful in sprouting and nursing the usual staples, like tomatoes, onions, kale, lettuce, basil, and marigolds. I won't say it's worked for everything I've tried to start. I assume that's because we all have karmic relationships with everything we grow and like all relationships, a few of them can be complicated.

For example, I've had a lot of people

tell me they can't get celery to sprout no matter what they do. I personally have never had a problem with sprouting celery and consider us pretty good friends. But for some reason, spinach, no matter when or where I try to plant it, hates my guts. I also regard the seeds of most flowers to be my mortal enemies.

There are three key pillars to my training program. They are temperature, moisture and light. I keep the ambient temperatures of my seed starting area above 65 (70 is ideal) and only use a heat mat for peppers. Moisture levels are maintained by using humidity domes, though these must be removed after the seeds sprout or else the seedlings get moldy and cannot be saved. After the dome is off, pots and trays get watered from the bottom to prevent algae and gnats.

Finally, the lights. This is the most important part of the program. My seedlings get an ample amount of light while they are indoors. The lights stay on for 16 hours a day. I use some full spectrum lights for heat-loving plants like tomatoes and peppers, but the rest of my seedlings grow under shop lights that have a lumen value of 4,000 (which means the light is strong enough to trigger photo-

synthesis) and a kelvin rating of 6,000 (this means the color temperature of the bulb is emitting blue light, which is needed for vegetative growth).

The grow lights need to be at least 18 inches above seedlings to prevent burning the leaves, but the shop lights aren't as strong and should only be a few inches above the seed trays. Keeping them close helps to prevent the seedlings from getting "leggy," which is what happens if the light source is too weak or too far away. Bad lighting causes seedlings to stretch out to find the light, resulting in long, flimsy stems. And those rarely evolve to win any battles against the elements. Good lights grow strong garden contenders.

Unfortunately, once the seeds have sprouted, they cannot dematerialize and fit inside a small, handheld ball. Try as I might to collect them all, I cannot keep them all. Seedlings competing for space can turn out as weak as seedlings searching for light. Thinning them is necessary. Choosing which sprouts to sacrifice is often arbitrary, so I usually just go with whichever ones are giving me weird vibes. There's no room for bad karma in my garden. ■

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State House Investigation Spurs Second Probe as Rep. Michelle Caldier Appeals the First

The investigation concluded Caldier's behaviors constitute a violation of the policies of the House of Representatives.

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

The Washington State House of Representatives released the report of its investigation into complaints of demeaning, intimidating and bullying behavior by Rep. Michelle Caldier (R-26th) toward legislative staff — behavior strictly prohibited by House policies to maintain a respectful workplace.

Caldier said she received the report Dec. 16 and met with her attorney that weekend to work on appealing an investigation she considered unfair and typical of “how members are treated when they speak up.”

“She (Caldier) has a track record of casting aside responsibility in favor of blame,” wrote Sheryl Willert, an expert in employment law, in the 87-page report delivered to The House of Representatives.

The House contracted Willert in mid-December 2022 to investigate an incident between Caldier and a person the report called Individual No. 1 that occurred in the women’s restroom at the Spokane Airport following a meeting of the House Republican Caucus Nov. 18, 2022.

As Caldier was freshening her makeup at the mirror, she was approached by Individual No. 1 who greeted her. At first, Caldier, who is legally blind, said she didn’t recognize who was speaking. Once she learned whose voice it was, she reportedly said, “You are a horrible person, and we are done.”

Unknown to both parties at the time, there was a witness in the stall.

Caldier told KP News she didn’t see the need for an investigation. “If what I did was wrong, I would have totally admitted it, taken the punishment, and been done with it.” After interviewing over a dozen current and former legislative staff members, and three sessions with Caldier and her attorney over several months, Willert concluded:

“Rep. Caldier’s interactions with House of Representative staff members, both partisan and nonpartisan ... demonstrates a pattern of behavior in which she lashes out at people, makes public statements that have the impact of demeaning and embarrassing individuals, and is generally disrespectful.”

Throughout the interview process, Willert reported that Caldier complained that she had been the subject of discriminatory conduct because the caucus and the Office of the Chief Clerk had failed to accommodate her disability. Caldier told her she found the conduct so egregious that she at one point retained Disability Rights Advocates.

Caldier is legally blind, as she shared in an interview with KP News (“Rep. Michelle Caldier Reveals Sight Impairment and Introduces Bill to Help Others,” KP News Feb. 2023).

Willert wrote that based on the information available there was no denial of reasonable accommodations.

Caldier received the report shortly before the press Friday, Dec. 15. Over the weekend she worked with her attorney to draft a response she then emailed to the press.

“There were no rules as to what we could or couldn’t do,” she said. “I felt given the context that it occurred after I left the caucus, and it was leadership’s top three people — that’s a very different thing — that I told the caucus attorney she was a terrible person.”

Caldier told KP News she emailed the House ethics and the chief clerk that a reporter wanted clarification on whether it was allowable to name individuals in the report or just state their position, and was advised by Chief Clerk Bernard Dean “that it could be interpreted as retaliatory if you provided that to the press.”

“I said, ‘Well, I’ve already sent it to the press.’”

At that point, Caldier said she was told, “In that case, we’re launching a second investigation on you.”

A former legislative assistant reached out to Caldier after reading the news. Caldier said she told him he was Individual No. 4 in the report. He was never interviewed and has made a sworn statement to that effect.

Caldier’s appeal will be reviewed by the House Executive Rules Committee with members from both parties to determine what, if any, disciplinary actions will be taken. The second investigation is underway. ■

EYESORE FROM PAGE 10

ment to do water testing and other experiments before going through the arduous permitting process.

But things just didn’t turn out the way McRae expected. “Washington State is the anti-place to do business.”

For two years bureaucratic hurdles over permits, or lack thereof, and poaching woes led McRae in 2015 to once again throw in the towel. He was so jaded by this point that he removed the engine from his barge and stopped renewing its registration.

“I just say it’s a floating dock now,” he said about the barge now moored to a cement buoy under the water. “I know it’s ugly and people don’t like to look at it, but it’s on my property.”

McRae’s barge — or floating dock — hasn’t moved since 2015, creating its own lore among locals. He’s still pondering what

to do with it. He will sell it if someone is interested in buying it. Or maybe he will bring it up to Ketchikan, a fishing haven, where he moved in 2021. Or maybe he will just leave it moored, as the value of his property continues to increase.

His 10 acres are unique. What is underneath the water is valuable to him, but the surface of the water could be valuable to others. If one small oyster barge seems bothersome, imagine 10 acres of floating homes.

“If (government entities) aren’t going to let me harvest that area, maybe I’ll just build some houses on it,” McRae said.

McRae’s property is considered an airspace condominium, which means something different on land than it does on water. In theory, a developer could use the “airspace” above the water to build a floating home anchored to the owned land below. Not many properties near the KP are classified as airspace condominiums, but it is common

in areas like Lake Union in Seattle.

“That’s the direction I’m heading right now,” he said. “The population is increasing and there’s a shortage of housing. A waterfront view like that would be incredible.”

That is not to say McRae’s wants and wishes would mesh well with the Pierce County Shoreline Code, which prohibits a residence over water where one does not currently legally exist. He would have to muster up the strength for one more bureaucratic battle to convince the Pierce County Council and the Department of Ecology to change the code and then have the state legislature approve it.

Though that may be the only way for the Key Peninsula to finally get rid of that barge.

The Key Peninsula News published a four-part series between October 2014 and January 2015 about the history and economics of geoduck farming on the Key Peninsula. Read those stories in the KP News archives at keypennews.org. ■

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Feb 1 Crafternoon: Heart Art 2 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Yarn door hangers and heart canvas paintings. Call to reserve a spot, 253-884-9814.

Feb 2 Washington Old Time Fiddlers Association 3:30 – 6 p.m., Crandall Center. All fiddlers, banjos, mandolins, guitars, and string basses are welcome to play.

Feb 2 Gig Harbor Rotary Clubs' Star Award Event 5:30 – 8:30 p.m., Canterwood Golf Club. Tickets available online at the GH Rotary Clubs' websites.

Feb 3 Beginning Beekeeping Class 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Key Peninsula Beekeepers. Key Center fire station, all ages welcome. Register online at keypeninsulabeekeepers.com.

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

Feb 3 Intro to Bookbinding - Make a Handmade Journal 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Serve Nutrition. Suitable for ages 12+, 253-649-5918.

Feb 3 Pier Into the Night 5 p.m., Gig Harbor Maritime Pier. Harbor WildWatch, Underwater divers livestream what they encounter below the surface.

Feb 3 Old Fashioned Crab Feed 4 – 8 p.m., Greater Gig Harbor Foundation. All-you-can-eat crab at the Gig Harbor Eagles Club. Tickets available online at www.gghf.info/crabfeast.

Feb 5 Robyn Denson Town Hall 6 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. Overview of the new county budget and initiatives that affect residents of the Key Peninsula.

Feb 6 Gig Harbor Literary Society 6 p.m., Harbor History Museum. "Weather Girl" by Rachel Lynn Solomon.

Feb 7 KP Readers: An Hour of Coffee and Conversation 10:30 a.m., Key Center Library. "The White Cascade" by Gary Grist.

Feb 7 Veterans Assistance 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Key Peninsula Community Services, 253-884-4440.

Feb 7 Peninsula Community Health

Services Mobile Clinic 1 p.m., Key Peninsula Community Services, 253-884-4440.

Feb 8 MultiCare WIC Program 12 – 4 p.m., Key Center Library. The WIC Clinic helps pregnant people, new and breastfeeding moms, and children under 5.

Feb 8 Pierce County Social Services 11 a.m., Key Peninsula Community Services, 253-884-4440.

Feb 9 Letter Writing Program 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., Key Center Library. A gathering to write encouraging missives. Register online at the library website.

Feb 10 Ladies Rejoice! 10 a.m., WayPoint South. Bring a dish to share, childcare provided. Speaker, worship and fellowship.

Feb 10 Valentine's Luncheon 10 a.m., Key Pen Parks. Whitmore Room at Key Peninsula Civic Center. Register online at parks website.

Feb 13 TacomaProBono Legal Aid 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Key Peninsula Community Services. 1 – 3 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Free civil legal help.

Feb 13 Open Mic Café 6:30 – 9:30 p.m., Longbranch Improvement Club. All ages welcome, performers need to be at least middle school age. Gnosh food truck on site.

Feb 14 Cocktails and Fishtales - Valentine's Salish Sea Special 5:30 p.m., Ocean5. Presented by Harbor WildWatch, Speaker: HWW Education Director Rachel Easton.

Feb 16 Peninsula Community Health Services Medicare Help 11:30 a.m., Key Peninsula Community Services, 253-884-4440.

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

Feb 17 Dementia Home Care Seminar 12 p.m., Key Center Library. Author Tracy Cram Perkins, "Dementia Home Care: How to Prepare Before, During and After."

Feb 17 "It's Summer Somewhere" 7 p.m., KP Civic Center. Featuring the music of The

Bedheads, tickets available online at the civic center website.

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

Feb 20 Maker Fun - Drop in Art and Science for Kids 3:30 – 5 p.m., Key Center Library. Come get creative!

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

Feb 22 KP Book Club 11 a.m., KP Historical Society & Museum. "The Song of the Cell" by Siddhartha Mukherjee.

Feb 22 Winter Movie Night 6 p.m., Key Pen Parks. Evergreen Elementary School gymnasium.

Feb 23 TGIF 5:30 p.m., Longbranch Improvement Club. For members and guests. BYOB.

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

WEEKLY EVENTS

Monday AI-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. Schedule 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. Schedule 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.

T-SA KP Historical Society & Museum 1 – 4 p.m. Opens Feb. 24 through November. keypeninsulamuseum.org

Wednesday Cards and Games 9:30 a.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

Wednesday No Tears Tech Help 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Not available Feb. 7. 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., Councilmember Robyn Denson and her staff. Contact 253-798-6654 for information.

Thursday Senior Bingo 12:30 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 Movie Screening 12:30 p.m., second and fourth Fridays, KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

Friday Skate Night 6 – 9 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center, kindergarten-eighth grade. No Skate Night Feb. 23.

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

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.

Brunch and Bingo First Mondays, Brunch 11:30 a.m., Bingo 1 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project; \$5 brunch, \$1 suggested donation to bingo game.

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. Feb. 6 at 6:30 p.m. February meeting location – The Mustard Seed Project. kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com

KP Community Council Second Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Key Center fire station, keypencouncil@gmail.com. Zoom link available on Key Peninsula Council Facebook page.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key Free Clinic First and third Thursdays, 4:30 – 7 p.m. (check-in from 4:30 – 5 p.m.). KPC Office in the Key Center Corral.

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

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

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

Medicare Assistance Second Tuesdays., 12 – 2 p.m. KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

Peninsula Emergency Preparedness Coalition Second Wednesdays, 6 p.m. Check pep-c.org for meeting location.

Peninsula School District Board Meeting Second and fourth Tuesdays in February, 6 p.m. Swiftwater Elementary School.

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department Tues and 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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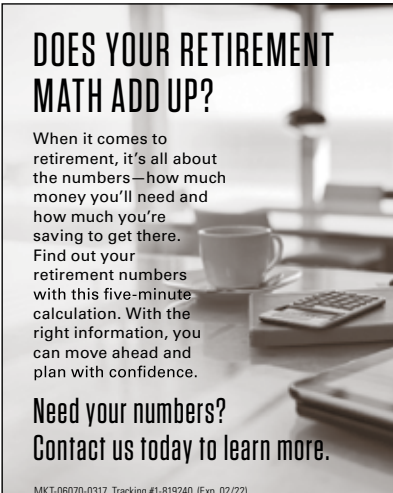
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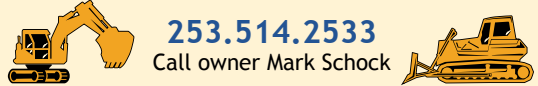
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TOP LEFT: A moment of blue sky in Longbranch between storms. *Tina McKail, KP News*

TOP RIGHT: A frozen patch of salt water at the head of Von Geldern Cove. *Steve West*

MIDDLE: An otter pup untroubled by cold weather. *Tina McKail, KP News*

MID RIGHT: Pembroke Welsh Corgi mama Queenie, with two-day-old pups, BB King (left) and Lucille (right).

George Horvay

BOTTOM: Sunset on Case Inlet.

Tina McKail, KP News

