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SEE PAGE 24



NOVEMBER 2006

KEY PENINSULA NEWS

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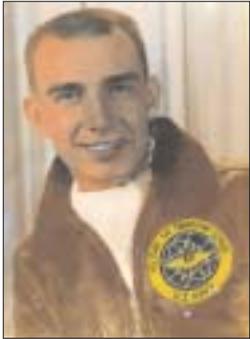
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'adopts'
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page 23



Photo by Mindi LaRose

Jack Morgan watches as the old Wauna post office comes down. His mother worked in the post office store in the 1970s and '80s. He has lived across the street from the old building since 1961. He says about the demolition, "We're glad to see it down."

Old Wauna post office ... gone

By Lori Losee, KP News

Another piece of history gone. That is the sentiment shared by Tim Kezele after the demolition of the historic Wauna post office on Oct. 16.

The building was gone in less than an hour, leaving no sign it ever existed.

"It (the building absence) takes the character away from this area," said Kezele, a member of the Friends of Wauna Post Office, a small group of Key Pen residents who fought for more than two years to save the

(See **WAUNA**, Page 30)

Geoduck controversy continues unabated

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

Deep-water harvested by commercial divers since before statehood, hunted and dug recreationally at extreme low tide by local seafood enthusiasts, geoduck (pronounced "gooey-duck") are the largest of the clam species, and native to inland waters of the Pacific Northwest northward to Canada. A distinctively unattractive clam, its siphon overflows its shell; the many decades of its natural lifespan are lived several feet down in tidal mud. About 10 years ago, when commercial shellfish growers discovered lucrative markets for geoduck in Asia, this homely clam, and both the public and private tidelands where it is found, became the equivalent of a present-day Gold Rush.

Commercial geoduck farms either
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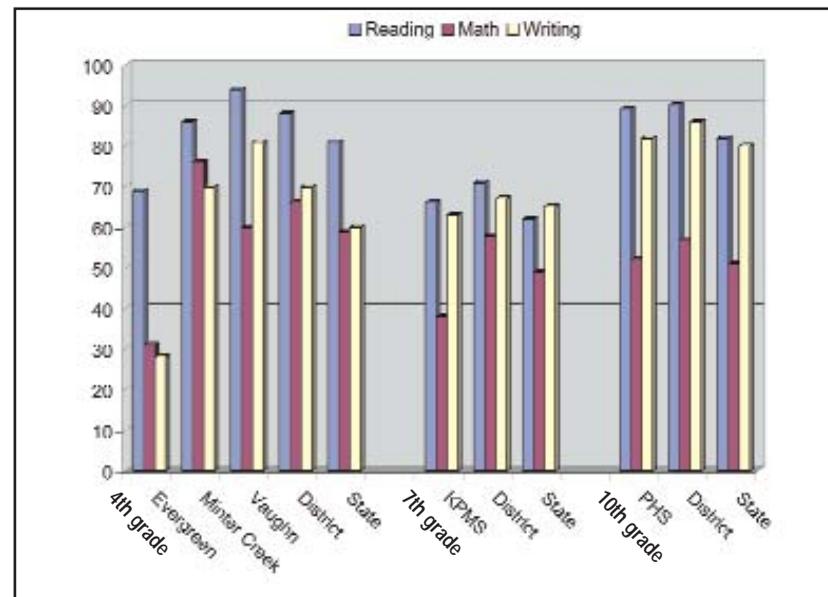
KP schools show WASL scores improvement

By Lori Losee, KP News

Key Peninsula schools last year made major strides in the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, and staff and district officials are looking at ways to assist schools to improve even more.

"We were probably a little disappointed in this year's scores (for the whole school district), but I am proud of the progress that we have made and the trend the last four or five years showing a steady upward growth," Peninsula School District Superintendent Terry Bouck said.

(See **WASL**, Page 16)



A sample of local schools' 2005 WASL scores.

KPCS bookkeeping audit shows improvement

By Lori Losee, KP News

A September checkup of the books of the Key Peninsula Community Services is proving that the hard work of both interim director and the board of directors is paying off, according to KPCS Interim Director Linda Hubbard.

Hubbard said everything looks good, they are headed in the right direction, and the recent audit is proof. She declined to give specific details on the audit.

"I feel a lot better after hearing the results," she said. "This audit is a way to monitor ourselves, and to get outside help from our CPA and for them to provide us suggestions how we can improve."

The audit, Hubbard said, proved to be another step in the right direction of the KPCS bookkeeping after it was discovered last spring the books were not in order under the previous Executive Director Luke Snyder.

Due to the budgetary problems, Pierce County Councilmember Terry Lee put a hold of \$27,500 in monies dedicated to the KPCS until a complete audit was

Volunteers, donations needed

Key Peninsula Community Services Interim Director Linda Hubbard said volunteers and donations are needed for the annual holiday basket distribution to low-income families.

Nonperishable foods are needed along with turkeys, eggs, margarine and other staple foods associated with holiday meals.

A signup list for the holiday baskets will be available at the end of November for families who qualify. Families who think they qualify or would like to learn about the qualifications should contact KPCS at 884-4440.

finished and the proper steps were taken to get the books back in order.

That is when the KPCS Board of Directors took action and put in their bylaws preventative measures to avoid this situation in the future, Hubbard said.

"There is no possibility of it happening again," Hubbard said.

Another audit will be completed at the end of the year.



Photo by Hugh McMillan

Longtime Key Peninsula Community Services/Food Bank supporter and former board member Earle Saxer checks some of the stock in the organization's still-under-renovation food storage area in mid-October.

New Key Peninsula parks commissioner appointed

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

Everyone in the room chuckled when, shortly after being invited to be seated in the vacated chair of the Key Peninsula Metro Park District Board, newly-elected commissioner and retired insurance business-owner Elmer Anderson said, "I feel like I just enlisted."



ANDERSON

Anderson won the commissioners' vote over three other candidates vying for the position, all of whom were asked about their interest and experience in funding and grant acquisition. The other candidates interviewed at the Oct. 9 board meeting were Bruce Nicholson, Rick Sorrels and Dean Draeger.

Among other questions asked of candidates were their positions on taxation and commissioner compensation. President Paula DeMoss laid the board's most difficult dilemma right on the table: "We have parks we want to fund, and we want to acquire more parks. To do that we need

taxes. It's a hard-sell to this community."

She and the other commissioners invited the three other candidates to remain involved with the park board, and to lend their expertise and assistance to the board's efforts. Commissioner Caril Ridley reminded them that two additional board positions will become available next fall.

When DeMoss called the meeting to order after the election, the first item of new business was formation of a

committee to work on grants. A short discussion around a recent Boeing grant given to the Gig Harbor Metro Park District prompted DeMoss to remind the board, "We cannot compare us to Gig Harbor. At their (initial) elections, they opted for taxes at the beginning, and we did not. The Key Peninsula has a different economic structure."

Ridley agreed to chair another effort to prepare a comprehensive park plan,

necessary for applying for and obtaining funding. Bruce Nicholson, also a business owner, offered to assist. He expressed frustration at the lengthy process described. "I feel the windows of opportunity are closing on you," he said. "It (the comprehensive plan) needs to be done now."

Nicholson was invited to attend the next board study session, where the commissioners will continue to refine a community survey form for citizen input.

KEY PENINSULA NEWS

To subscribe, please write, call or fax:
Key Peninsula News
 17010 S. Vaughn Rd.
 P.O. Box 3, Vaughn, WA 98394
 Phone (253) 884-4699
 Fax: (253) 884-4053
 Email news@keypennews.com

Executive editor: Rodika Tollefson
News editor: Lori Losee
Assistant editor: Chris Fitzgerald
Ad sales: Karen Hale, Charleen Day
Staff writers and contributors: Linda Anderson, William C. Dietz, Hugh McMillan, Kristen Pierce, Colleen Slater, Frank Slater, Irene Torres, Mindi LaRose, Connie Renz,

Kristie Byrd
Production: September Hyde, Windelena Lindsay
Distribution: Phil Bauer
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Survey identifies needs for elderly on Key Peninsula

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

Transportation, senior programs and palliative (end of life, hospice) care are among the top priorities identified by Key Peninsula senior residents. A survey on "aging in place" priorities has been distributed and collected by a small group of local residents who envision creating an elder-friendly community on the Key Pen.

Edie Morgan, who has spearheaded what she calls "The Mustard Seed Project," with the help of a steering committee that includes Dr. William Roes and Rochelle Doan, said the survey concludes the first phase of the project. The next step is to create task groups that will look at the identified priorities (see side bar).

"The goals will be to identify existing services and programs, centralize up-to-date information, identify gaps in needed services and programs, explore ways to meet the needs that exist," Morgan said. "We want to assure that a broad continuum of services and programs are available and affordable,

so that those who choose to 'age in place' on the Key Peninsula will be able to do just that."

More than 200 surveys were collected, which Morgan says is a good sample considering that 2000 U.S. Census figures showed 1,500 Key Peninsula residents were age 65 and older. As part of the first phase, a "Council of Elders" was convened, comprised of 11 residents ages 71 to 87 who served as a focus group for the survey and will be an advisory group to The Mustard Seed Project.

Morgan shared the survey and an update on the project at a community forum held at the Key Center library in October. Doan, who worked with a similar effort to create an elder-friendly community on Bainbridge Island, said at the forum that the identified needs such as transportation reflect the responses to a similar survey that had been done on Bainbridge.

"The (survey results) information is consistent with other studies being done around the country," Morgan said. "The survey process has also involved

Elder Needs Assessment survey preliminary results

The top 10 priorities for the combined age groups (based on 236 total surveys):

- Local transportation services (197)
- Senior programs (190)
- Palliative care (184)
- Senior centers (170)
- Information and referral (170)
- Home health services (169)
- Support groups (165)
- Skilled nursing facility (159)
- Adult day program (157)
- Home repair services (155)

The results were also broken down further based on three age categories: through age 64, 65-plus, and 71-87, with transportation being the No. 1 priority in all four tallies.

The task groups will focus on four categories: senior information and referral, transportation and mobility services for elders, elder health and wellness related services, and housing options for aging in place. Anyone interested in being part of a task group is encouraged to contact Edie Morgan at 884-3920 or email drumsocialworker@yahoo.com.

conversation with a number of local elders, which has provided further insight into the current realities of aging in this community."

Several government and private agencies have expressed an interest in the survey results, which may help bring additional services, she said.

The goal of the task groups will now be to discuss what services are available, whether they are effective locally, and how more services could be brought in. Morgan is in discussions with local nonprofit groups to find a home for the project so donations and grants can be pursued.

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EDITORIAL

Community character is the a question

In November, a group of local residents will decide what the Key Peninsula's commercial face will look like. Should there be stringent design guidelines on new buildings, or should commercial development be as it may?

On one hand, tight restrictions can produce a good-looking center such as Gig Harbor North, where Target and Home Depot have been held up as national examples of how developers can build chain stores that fit with the community's character. But, big businesses are not in a hurry to drop anchor here — instead, strict guidelines could deter new “mom and pop” stores that are the bloodline of local economy. On the other hand, we could have a Key Center times 10 — a place not attractive enough for tourists to stop and shop, and sometimes even ignored by locals.

Whichever side of this fence you're sitting on — make sure to attend the last series of the planning board meetings, so the small group doesn't have to decide by itself.

Electronics recycling is an individual responsibility

By Sheryl Mirenta, Special to KP News

Earlier this year, a new electronics-recycling law went into effect in the state of Washington, requiring a new way for the disposal of computers, monitors and televisions. The law will require manufacturers to offer free recycling of these items by January 2009.

To put the cost of recycling electronics on the supplier is wrong. We have so many laws in this state telling us what to do. When you buy a car, does the manufacturer provide disposal of this item when it has expired? No!

But do we see them along the side of the road, dumped on open land, or in the wilderness? Why? Because, when those who own these items in the end of their use find themselves with a high disposal cost, they get desperate, and they dump them. This is wrong. The cost of disposal of anything is up to the end user.

I have seen many computers dumped in ditches and alongside the road. As a person in this business, I feel a responsibility to stop and pick them up and dispose of them properly. But it should not be my responsibility. I am only one person.



We seem to have found ourselves in a system of a “throw away world.”

Everything is only meant to last “so long” and then it dies. So it seems to me that this has become a moral issue. I don't have all the answers, but one thing that seems to creep into my mind is that we all must be responsible. People must know that if they plan to use something, they must be prepared to dispose of it when done. Whether that means finding a site that takes it, or requiring manufacturers to provide disposal methods, it doesn't really matter.

People don't take the time to find the answers (some of which are right under their noses) to what they need when it comes to this issue.

So I ask this... How much money is spent each year to educate the public on the ills of drugs and alcohol, and purchase of new cars, homes, vacations, and the like? How much money is spent on advertising anything?

Do you have a point of view on a topic of local interest? Share it with us. Email it to news@keypennews.com.

We live in America. Everyone is out to earn the most. Get the best, at the cheapest price. It seems to me that everyone wants the most, but does not want to pay for it, or take care of it, or be responsible for it. “Just give it all to me for free.” Wake up, America. We are the mighty and we are the free, but we will soon lose it all until we each step up to the plate and say, “That is my responsibility and I will take care of it, and do what is right!” We have lost that, it seems.

What is right? Who is responsible? Who will dispose of my computer for me? Surely, not me? It should be the responsibility of the maker of this item that I just must have. Right? Think again. We want to be the adults, but without any of the responsibilities of adulthood.

We need to stop looking to others to answer our questions, and find the answers ourselves. Explore, research and do what must be done.

Sheryl Mirenta owns KC Computer Repair in Key Center.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Geoduck farming presents environmental problems

The September geoducks story did not assess the environmental problems. Eagles get trapped in nets that cover the geoduck aquaculture planting areas. Nets in this intertidal area create a real hazard to hungry shorebirds.

In order to meet the overseas demand for this new delicacy, local companies are experimenting with planting and harvesting geoducks. With very little regulations, not much science, we can only complain about the pollution and be concerned with trapped birds.

The Shoreline Management Act calls for both aquaculture and public use of beaches. We need to assess the environmental impacts of current practices

before new permits are issued.

Zoning regulations are key to both sustainable aquaculture and environmental protection. We separate junkyards and industrial sites from homes and schools with zoning regulations. In the same way, Audubon believes that we can find a place and model for geoduck farming that serves everyone — homeowners, beachcombers, farmers, and wildlife.

*Kirk Kirkland
Tacoma*

Geoducks not the real culprits

Granted, the tubes and netting used for geoduck farming are unsightly, but the fact there are many homes sprawling across the shoreline is even more unsightly. And, given the fact that those tubes are actually producing a “natural resource” that is susceptible to the pollution those home are producing (i.e. nitrogen from septic systems,

chemicals from automobiles, lawns, etc, etc), it's pretty clear who are the real violators of not only Key Peninsula's shorelines, but Puget Sound's, too!

*Mike Elston
Vaughn*

Save Penrose Park

Penrose State Park is a 152-acre marine and camping park with two miles of salt-water frontage on Mayo Cove and Carr Inlet. The park has 2.5 miles of hiking trails, overnight camping, and boat moorage. Activities include clamming, crabbing, diving, fishing, bird watching, swimming, boating and wild life viewing.

The park's wildlife includes seals, otter, salmon, shellfish, ducks, eagles, geese, herons, osprey, deer and bear. Penrose is truly a treasure to all. The commercial geoduck farm operation under Pierce County permit SD-15-06 a few hundred yards from the park's main viewing area has the potential to destroy our community treasure. On March 28, 2006, Hon.

Judge William McPhee upheld a cease and desist order to stop a commercial geoduck farm in Pierce County because it violated the heart of the Shoreline Management Act and several Pierce County codes. Primarily: (1) to protect and manage private and public shorelines of the state; (2) protect public rights of navigation, land, vegetation and wildlife.

Clearly, Penrose is a sensitive vegetation and wildlife habitat. Mayo Cove is small and has a delicate eco system. Will Pierce County approve geoduck commercial farming Application SD-15-06 in defiance of the Pierce County Superior Court ruling? If they do, it will trigger expenditures of our hard-earned tax dollars in legal fees. To see the complete court ruling visit: http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=wa&vol=2006_app/324717MAJ&invol=4

For more information about Mayo Cove geoduck farming visit www.nogeoduckfarm.com.

*Richard Kuntz
Lakebay*

Public records and meetings: Rules and Access

By Rick Sorrels, Special to KP News

“Closed meetings and secret decisions by government officials are abhorrent to our democratic system, but the bureaucrats keep trying to do it anyway. Citizen involvement is important to a free and transparent government.” These were the recurring messages at a recent community forum.

Who is entitled access to public records and meetings? What is the law and what violations are common? These issues were addressed at an Open Government Forum sponsored earlier this year by the News Tribune, the Washington Coalition for Open Government, and the Society of Professional Journalists. Panel members included Washington State Auditor Brian Sonntag, Special Assistant to the Attorney General Greg Overstreet, state Rep. Toby Nixon, attorney Michele Earl-Hubbard, and TNT reporters Sean Robinson and Hunter George.

Public records

The Public Disclosure Act (PDA) was

adopted in 1972 as a direct enactment of the citizens of Washington state as Initiative 276. It was codified as RCW Chapter 42.17.

It says, “The people of this state do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies that serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they maintain control over the instruments that they have created (RCW 42.17.251).”

According to Hubbard, “The PDA applies to all state and local records. A public record includes any writing, recording, computer record, and even notes containing information relating to the conduct of government or subsidiaries, regardless of physical form or characteristics. Agencies are required to make all public records available for inspection or copying, unless the record falls within a specific exemption contained in a statute.”

Overstreet explained that “the list of exemptions started out very short, but

the Legislature kept creating more and more exemptions. There are at least 300 exemptions now. Nobody knows for sure how many exist. Denial of public records requests have become a real problem again.”

“Washington received an overall grade of C-plus in a 50-state study on access to public records,” added Hubbard.

Nixon said he is “actively working in the Legislature to fix the problem.”

“The attorney general has the authority to review an agency’s denial of a records release, and we invoke the legal process as appropriate,” Overstreet said.

The reporters shared their “horror stories,” while Sonntag encouraged the public to contact his office with encountered problems.

Public meetings

Washington’s first open meetings act was adopted in 1953. A broader act, the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) was enacted in 1971, and codified as RCW Chapter 42.30.

RCW 42.30.030 states, “All meetings of the governing body of a public agency shall be open and public and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting of the governing body of a public agency.”

A “meeting” is any occasion at which “action” is taken” according to RCW 41.30.020. “Action” is defined as the “transaction of official business” and includes discussion, consideration, public testimony, review, evaluation, and other deliberation, as well as “final action” (RCW 42.30.020(3)).

The courts have found that even discussion of issues outside of regularly scheduled meetings by email are violations of the OPMA.

Failure to give proper public notice of meetings can result in monetary sanctions against the public officials personally, and may result in grounds for recall (removal from office). “Final decisions” made in secret (without proper public notice) are considered null and void, according to RCW 42.30.060.

“We frequently find OPMA violations with inadequate notice of meetings, with proscribed deliberations taking place outside of the meetings, and with the failure to make all considered evidence available to the public,” Hubbard said.

The requirements of PDA and OPMA apply to all government agencies and sub-components, including local agencies such as Pierce County Council, Planning Commission, Key Peninsula Comprehensive Planning Board, Fire District 16 Board of Commissioners, KP Metropolitan Park District Board of Commissioners, the library board, the school board, etc.

Private organizations

The Public Disclosure Act (PDA) and Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) apply only to public records and meetings. They do not apply to records and meetings of private organizations.

Private organizations include partnerships (general, limited, or LLC), corporations (profit and nonprofit), cooperative associations (a specialized corporation), condominium associations (a specialized corporation), and homeowners associations (either partnership or corporation).

State statutes provide strict controls over all of these organizations. A common theme runs through all of the statutes: Owners and shareholders of the business organization are entitled to notice of meetings and the right to inspect and copy any and all records. For those who are not an owner or shareholder, the organization itself decides if it wants to grant or deny information or access to meetings. Significant judgments have been awarded if rights are wrongfully denied.

Questions are resolved by consulting the pertinent portions of the RCW: Partnerships in RCW Title 25, Non-Profit Corporations in RCW Title 24, Profit Corporations in RCW Title 23B, Co-ops in RCW Chapter 23.86, Condo Associations in RCW Chapter 64.34, Homeowners Associations in RCW Chapter 64.38.



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Recycling on the rise after new program implementation

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

According to "Earth Matters," the newsletter published by Pierce County Public Works and Utilities' Environmental Services, those big, square recycling bins residents who subscribe to garbage services have been using for almost a year are making a difference at area landfills.

Steve Womback of the county's solid waste division said in an interview that in this first year alone, 37,000 tons of recyclable materials have been kept out of landfills and are now returning into the market as new products.

Prior to changing to the one-cart program, recycling had faced a downward trend countywide; the three-bin-plus-bag system was just too bunglesome for busy households, officials said. According to county statistics, after one full year of the new program, residents are recycling 70 percent more materials overall, paper recycling is up 82 percent, and container recycling (which includes aluminum, plastics, steel and glass) has increased 27 percent.

The new system, like the garbage pickup service itself, is voluntary in Pierce County. Residents who opt for garbage pickup

automatically sign up for recycling, although they are not required to recycle. The motivation to participate in recycling comes into play through a small rate deduction (\$1 per month) and a rebate system (based on values of recyclables) built into the program, regulated by the state Utilities and Transportation Commission.

According to Womback, county costs to provide the service amounts to \$4.75 per participating household per month, including rent on the carts, route pickup and preliminary resorting of recyclables. Garbage haulers are required to return 70 percent of recycle earnings back to the customers, based on a retroactive annual audit conducted by the UTC every fall. This is why, on statements from the local provider, American Disposal Co., participants see a line that reads "value of recyclables" beside a figure that is deducted from the amount owed. The annual audit is coming up in November, so the value will be slightly different on upcoming statements; the amount is determined by the value of recyclables to the secondary market to which the provider sells.

Glass is consistently sold at a loss, and easily contaminates other recycled

resources, which keeps it out of the curbside recycle program, the county says. Drop-off recycling centers, not subsidized by the curbside program, accept glass (and also sell it at a loss), but make up the difference in the value of recyclable newspapers and magazines. By sorting according to color for glass, and kind for paper, users of drop-off recycling centers help keep these facilities self-supporting and open.

Womback credits his staff for their care in listening to public concerns and desires to learn more about how to both recycle and become "greener" at home. Cheryl Mizener, an office assistant in the solid waste division, has had difficulty keeping up with the demand for worm composting classes, a relatively new offering by the department, and held primarily at customer request. She says the last time they were offered, she received about 95 calls to register (classes seat 30 people); so far, as a result the recent newsletter, she has fielded more than 400 calls for the classes. Of those, she said, about 50 percent consistently sign up. The three-hour class is free without materials, and costs \$30 for those who'd like a bin and red worm "starters" included. The county would like to know if participants are actually using their new skills, bins and worms, and plans to begin surveying former students from the first year.

Classes are booked through February 2007, and Mizener "keeps adding more classes as the calls keep coming in." She

notes their worm supplier, The Worms' Wrangler, has told her he cannot harvest the critters fast enough for the demand. According to "Barry the Wrangler," "there is a worm shortage nationwide," and this is a good thing, Mizener says.

Womback and his staff are so pleased at customer response, they are looking to begin a similar class on generalized composting of leaves and gardening refuse. Homeowners have become so accustomed to recycling these kinds of debris that county facilities for yard waste recycling, designed to accommodate 29 tons, routinely accept 56 tons. Most of this is processed into "PREP" (Pierce County recycled products) and wholesaled to landscapers and other commercial customers. "It's pure organic," Womback says, "and most likely what people see around newly planted trees in parks, developments, and around new buildings."

He says that although the 2007 permanent burn ban does not apply to the Key Peninsula, his division is interested in assisting people to find ways other than burning to dispose of yard waste, land-clearing debris and remodeling/construction refuse. Taking usable but unwanted or outgrown items to a landfill is also not an option the solid waste division encourages. The agency wants people to think of other disposal resources, like second-hand stores, donation-based groups, and a resource the county has created, a Website where individuals can sell or offer goods for reuse: www.2good2toss.com.

Pierce County Library System has new Website

The Pierce County Library System's Website address changed in October to www.piercecountylibrary.org. The organization made the change to offer a more meaningful and direct address, officials said.

The library system will continue to

maintain its old Website address of www.pcl.lib.wa.us and route Internet users to the new address.

Also in October, the library launched a redeveloped site for easier customer use and better access to more helpful information about library services. The new look, feel, and layout of information on the site came from months of gathering input from library customers,

according to officials.

County approves transportation plan

More than 100 residents who attended the Pierce County Council's in-district meeting in October at Puyallup's Woodland Elementary School saw the council approve a 20-year transportation

plan that will spend nearly \$488 million to make improvements to local roads and intersections.

The plan enacts traffic impact fees that new commercial, residential and industrial development in unincorporated Pierce County will pay beginning Jan. 1. The impact fees will pay for 39 percent of the cost of the spending plan — amounting to \$189 million, according to the county.

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Levy failure eliminates planned firefighter additions

By Lori Losee, KP News

On Election Day in September, Key Peninsula Fire Chief Tom Lique wasn't surprised by the outcome of the two proposals given to the voters for their approval. Only one, the EMS reauthorization lid lift levy, was approved by a slight margin. Voters rejected the fire district's lid lift proposal.

Lique said when a fire district has one

fire commissioner who opposes the levies, it sends a mixed message and confuses the voters. "Voters chose between one or the other lid lifts and went with the cheaper one," he said.

Proposition 1 asked voters to reauthorize the fire district's ability to levy for collection beginning in 2007 the regular property tax at the rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The proposition failed, with 2,127 (53 percent)

voting no, compared to 1,854 (47 percent) who voted for the proposition.

The failure of the measure means a loss of more than \$1 million in funding for the district. The proposition also means the elimination of six new firefighter jobs the district was planning to add, had the ballot measure been approved. In all, Lique said he had hoped to bring in a total of 10 new firefighters, which would have meant more staffing at the Home and Wauna fire stations.

Without the approval of the lid lift levy, the fire district in 2007 will only be able to call for an additional 1 percent (\$19,610) revenue collection from taxpayers. Due to a new countywide assessment of valuation, the district expected the value to have been approximately \$1.9 billion. According to Lique, the assessed valuation increased more than expected, to more than \$2 billion. The difference in the assessed valuation means the district would have collected \$3.1 million, an increase of more than \$300,000 than expected.

The good news for the district is that for the regular levy, the new construc-

tion value was higher than predicted, which means the district will receive an additional \$75,805 in revenue. If Proposition 1 would have passed, the district could not have received any additional revenue for new construction or state assessed property values.

In 2007, the fire district will be able to collect a total of about \$2 million for regular taxes.

In Proposition 2, voters were asked to reauthorize the existing EMS property tax levy rate of 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value to be collected in 2007. Voters approved the measure with 2,011 (51 percent) compared to 1,956 (49 percent) who voted down the measure.

Because of the measure, the district will be able to collect about \$1 million in tax revenue for the EMS levy in 2007, which is an increase in revenue of \$388,256.

Lique said he is unsure if and when they would place Proposition 1 back on the ballot.

"I just don't know, we have some work to do internally before going back to the voters to ask for the community's support," he said.

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KP Lions continue retaining wall project at Volunteer Park

By Hugh McMillan, KP News

Several months ago, Nicholas Robison, at the suggestion of his grandfather, George Robison, then president of the Key Peninsula Lions Club, chose as his Eagle Scout project the creation of a bleachers-like concrete stone retaining wall at the upper ball field in KP's Volunteer Park. The wall is along the park's entry roadway, where the soil is almost entirely sand. Over the years, younger kids, frequently siblings of slightly older kids who were on the ball fields for Little League play, have played in that sand. Though wholly disinterested in baseball, the wee ones imaginatively dug up and built castles and other wonders with the sand. Thus, the roadway was gradually imperiled.

Enter the Lions-and-Scouts-inspired roadway rescuers.

Nicholas Robison gathered up his dad, Ed, several scouts from his troop, and, of course, grandpa George, and set to work. Having completed the initial project, everyone involved decided to continue it and build the retainer wall/bleacher



Photo by Hugh McMillan

In the foreground, George Robison, immediate past president of the Key Peninsula Lions Club, works along with his grandson, Eagle Scout candidate Nicholas Robison, and his fellow Boy Scouts Aaron Pearce and Parker Nelson on Nicholas' Eagle Scout project, creation of a bleachers-like concrete stone retaining wall at the upper ball field in KP's Volunteer Park.

seats all along the east perimeter of the field. This is a very big and expensive operation for volunteers, according to

George Robison.

On learning of the activity, John Parker, owner-operator of Freight Taxi and an ardent supporter and sponsor of the KP Little League, contributed \$1,500 to help move the project along. This made possible the latest endeavor.

As of Saturday, Oct. 14, the diligent team had completed what it calls "phase two" of the project, which extended the original effort along, curving around from the third base line fenced-in team dugout and around home plate. Plans are in the works to resume construction as soon as more funding for the materials can be acquired to extend the work around and past the first base line dugout.

Robison said, "The volunteer rate would be \$17 per hour and is quite meaningful to the park district."

Scott Gallacher, executive director of the KP Metropolitan Park District, and the KPMPD board have expressed their gratitude to the Scouts and Lions for this ongoing enhancement of the park. Kurt Self, president of the KP Little League, told the Lions Club at a mid-October club meeting, "Little League supporters

are delighted with the new 'bleachers.'" Robison explained, "The first phase, consisting of 500 blocks weighing 60 pounds each, was completed as an emergency project to protect the park's entrance driveway from being undermined by erosion. For the current phase, 720 of the 60 pound blocks were placed to continue protection for the driveway and shore up the embankment behind the backstop, taking 70 man-hours for the job over seven days. The contribution from John Parker to the Lions Club paid for 600 of the blocks."

It was planned that at the end of October another 720 blocks would arrive so that the deteriorating bank can be restored to protect tree roots and provide a place to sit while watching ball games. Plans have been made to seek funds to purchase enough blocks to enable the volunteer workers to provide this protection and "bleacher" seating all the way to the northern-most reach of the upper fields.

Anyone wishing to contribute to or work on this project is encouraged to contact George Robison at 853-2721.

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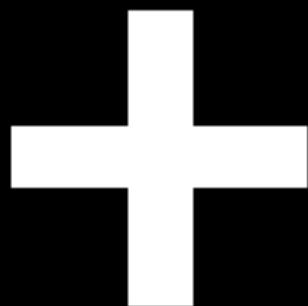
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New park efforts delayed

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

Acquisition efforts to own 360 acres for a park in the north end of the peninsula are stalled as a result of increased land values, the discovery of gravel beds, and the state Department of Natural Resources' failure to provide a completion timeline on a subsequent new appraisal, according to KPMPD Executive Director Scott Gallacher. DNR is charged with maximizing funding from state lands for the construction of schools in the state. The first appraisal of the land came in at \$9 million; DNR thought that was too much, so the agency rejected it and ordered another appraisal to be done in-house by a staff appraiser.

That individual became curious about an adjacent gravel business, and indicated testing should be conducted on the 360-acre parcel for gravel. Core samples were drilled in late September. A report is not yet available, and could impact the final value significantly. In the case of this acreage, Gallacher said, "It's a difficult piece of property for

them to manage. They can always put it out to auction — it's not now, but it could be."

Offsetting increased value, and initially looking like an asset, is the fact that a portion of the 360 fronts State Route 302, a major roadway with potential for a variance for a commercial storefront. Any developer hoping to "cash-in" on this virtually untouched ground would have to build an access road that would cross a stream.

In the current climate of critical areas ordinances and wetlands restrictions at county, state and federal levels, DNR's 80/20 rule for the ratio of timber resource value to land value may prove to be in KPMPD's interest. Gallacher does not envision resolution of this issue and a clear plan of acquisition before the end of 2006. He says the commissioners are now taking a "wait and see" approach during the election season. Once they know who the state legislative elected officials are, they could begin efforts to lobby funding for the project.

Last part of community plan

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

The Key Peninsula Community Planning Board is approaching the end of its discussions. Only one element of the plan remains to be drafted, community character, which includes building design for commercial areas and sign code.

"It (the plan) can make a real difference in how the community looks," said Pierce County Senior Planner Mike Krueger, who is overseeing the board's work.

Building design standards can help an area become more attractive both to tourists and businesses, and provide a unified look. However, they could potentially entail more expensive investment from new businesses looking to build or renovate, which is a concern for some local residents who feel that may deter small businesses from opening on the Key Peninsula.

"Some people want to see mandatory design standards but others don't want to impact new development by making things more expensive," Krueger said. "We let the citizens decide how they want their community to look."

One example of how design standards could work is Gig Harbor North. Target, Home Depot and, soon, Costco, all had to undergo extensive design review to comply with the city of Gig Harbor's standards, and consequently those chain stores look unique to the area. Developers, however, have complained for years that the city's strict guidelines and review process are some of the toughest in the region. Closer to home, another example is the Bridgeway Market, which underwent an exterior remodeling in the last couple of years. Because the remodel project exceeded a certain amount (based on the building's assessed value), it had to follow certain design guidelines outlined in the Gig Harbor Community Plan.

"Design standards, if they are reasonable

The next meetings for the Key Peninsula Community Planning Board are scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 1 and 15. The board is working on policy development for the Community Character Element of the Key Peninsula Community Plan regarding commercial design standards. Members of the general public are encouraged to attend the meetings, held at 7 p.m. at the Key Center Library. For details, see www.piercecountywa.org/landuse.

and implemented well, can make a huge difference in terms of viability in the long term," Krueger said. All the other community plans in Pierce County include design standards, but they vary in how specific the requirements are, he said.

To help create the draft plan, the county will either commission an architectural firm to come up with design schematics or bring in an architect to talk about options. Krueger said the county had been in discussions with one firm but as of mid-October no contract was signed. He told the community planning board at its October meeting that he didn't want to spend too much money on a design charrette because some people don't want to impose stringent standards, and he wasn't certain the county and the firm would come to mutually agreeable terms.

The community character element will be discussed starting in November and include an overview of the historic landmark program in Home. The plan is slated to be finished by the end of the year. Public hearings will be held before the draft moves to the planning commission and then to the county council. Krueger estimates the plan to be adopted in early spring, after which time a land use advisory commission will be set up. The group will serve as an advisory body on local land-use cases.

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Community council elects new officers

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

The Key Peninsula Community Council selected new leadership and discussed accomplishments at its annual meeting held in October. Barb Trotter was elected the new council president, Russ Humberd as vice president, Arlene Williams as secretary and Jim Calhoun as treasurer.

This year's achievements reported by the council directors at the meeting included continuing work on the Youth Council and community forums that addressed topics such as logging and emergency preparedness.

One of the aspects several directors would like to see change is public visibility and community participation. The annual meeting was attended by a bare minimum of registered council members to constitute a quorum, and low community participation has been prevalent on the council's committees. The council hopes to increase public awareness regarding the difference between Pierce County voter registra-

tion and KP Community Council registration, which are separate and unrelated. Strengthening the relationship with the county, and finalizing the development of a Website were among other expressed priorities.

"I think we are right at the edge now of taking the next step, which is become more visible in the community," Trotter said.

The council will sponsor another community forum in November. The forum will focus on blight, and include presenters from various departments of Pierce County examining health and land use issues associated with blight, discuss the topic of nuisance vehicles, and the types of assistance available to property owners.

"Our objective is to provide information to people on what is permissible and what is not," outgoing President Jeff Harris said at the meeting.

The community forum will be held Nov. 16 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Key Peninsula Lutheran Church's McColley Hall.

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Show & Tell



Photos by Mindi LaRose

Above, The PAA seventh and eighth grader girls soccer team, the Blazers, stretch and get ready for practice. The girls practice once a week at Minter Creek Elementary.



Above, Key Peninsula Middle School's Spirit Day "I Can't Believe You Wore That To School" had students saying just that! Left to right: Michael Sly, Monica Koch, Kelsie Nettlbeck, Ashley Gibson and Shelby Olson. Left, Peninsula High School's marching band, conducted by Key Pen's Paula DeMoss, practices for a concert that same night with the help of volunteer parent Terry Smith. DeMoss, a PHS graduate, said PHS hasn't had a marching band since she was in high school herself.

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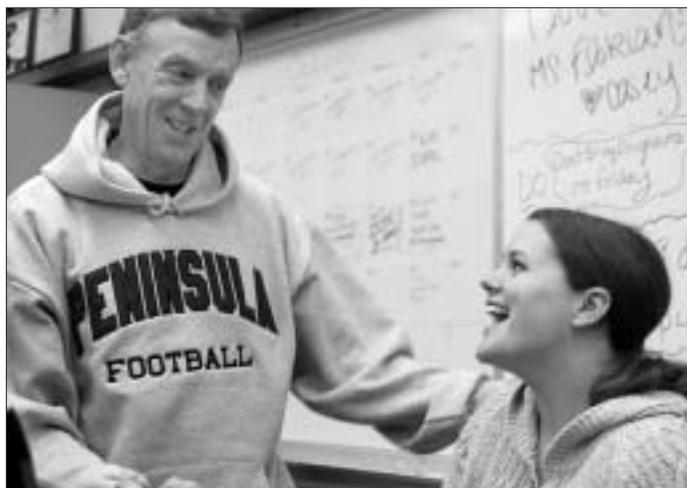
Interim PHS principal focuses on attendance, improving education

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

Peninsula High School opened its doors this school year with a new principal at the helm.

Interim Principal Grant Hosford "retired" a few years ago after spending 38 years in education. He planned to work on his golf game, but soon a former colleague suggested he look into the School Improvement (SI) program through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The grant program positively supports area schools in complying with education mandates, and required a three-year commitment. Hosford liked the concept, and after attending training, was assigned to a school in Mt. Vernon.

Five weeks into his assignment, he was called by then Peninsula School District Superintendent Jim Coolican, who requested his assistance in opening the 2005-06 school year at Peninsula High, since the school's principal was on medical leave and two assistant principals had minimal experience between them. Committed to SI, he declined. Ironically, the principal at Mt. Vernon had a son attending PHS, and suggested Hosford



Grant Hosford congratulates PHS choir director Melanie Florian for a great concert the night before.

Photo by Mindi LaRose

juggle both positions, which he did for five weeks before returning to Mt. Vernon. Then in November, Coolican called again and asked him to be the PHS principal for 2006-07, with the understanding that the incoming superintendent would choose his own principal the following year.

Hosford says the staff and student body at the school are "a terrific group."

"I have the opportunity to use the SI learning here. I hope in May 2007 people look back at a successful year," he said. In November, he will meet with

Superintendent Terry Bouck to set goals for PHS this academic year, and still anticipates he'll return to Mt. Vernon next fall, with two years left on his SI commitment. He never would have guessed he'd be in such demand after retirement. "Life is an interesting process," he said, "and fortunately a really rewarding one."

Customer service is paramount for Hosford, and students are his priority. "We need to keep students safe; they are my main customers, the only reason I have a

job," he said. He focuses on improving education, on keeping kids on campus — and out of the surrounding woods. He's concerned about drug use and truancy that result when students wander, and believes attendance is directly related with how well students learn.

Hosford combines humor with his straightforward message. He doesn't like being bossed, and attempts to treat students, staff, parents, and visitors with the respect he expects to receive. A Hosford schoolwide broadcast announcement that brought a chuckle to both students and parents was funny and serious. "There are no classes held in the woods," he said during the announcement. "So stay on campus."

Marilyn Wilson, executive assistant for the superintendent, told Hosford of a conversation she had with a PHS student working a part-time job. Curious about what students were saying, she asked how he liked the new principal. He said Hosford was focused on keeping students on campus, and was working on the drug problem. Relaying this story, Hosford said, "It's hard work, and (that student tells me) I'm headed in the right direction."

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KPMS astronomy class mingles with NASA's Col. Hall

By Hugh McMillan, KP News

In early October, members of Key Peninsula Middle School's class on astronomy and aerospace, under the tutelage of award-winning teacher Karen Borders, learned the essentials of flight and what it takes to become a pilot and, ultimately, an astronaut, from NASA's Col. Warren Hall.

Hall flew in from Ames Research Center out of Moffett Field, Calif. He was a Navy fighter pilot, NASA test pilot, and an author of 73 technical reports, earning three international awards for technical excellence. He talked with the eighth grade students about his flying career and how he came to be a test pilot.

"The aerospace students were especially privileged to work with Col. Hall, a NASA test pilot and published author," Borders said.

Student Nikki Rossberg said about the astronomy class, "I'm here because Mrs. Borders is an awesome teacher... I knew nothing about astronomy and space. Now I know it is great."



Photo by Hugh McMillan

NASA's Col. Warren Hall during the October presentation in the school library.

Eighth-grader Drake Henderson said, "I am planning to become a scientist and this class is helping me understand science better. I've learned a lot about

flight that I could not have learned in any other class."

KPMS aerospace students study the history of flight, explore the mechanics

The Key Peninsula Middle School had its official NASA kick-off ceremony at the end of October. For details, read the December issue of the Key Peninsula News.

of flight, investigate aerospace careers, are involved with NASA experiments, and much more. Several of the students say they hope to have a career in aerospace.

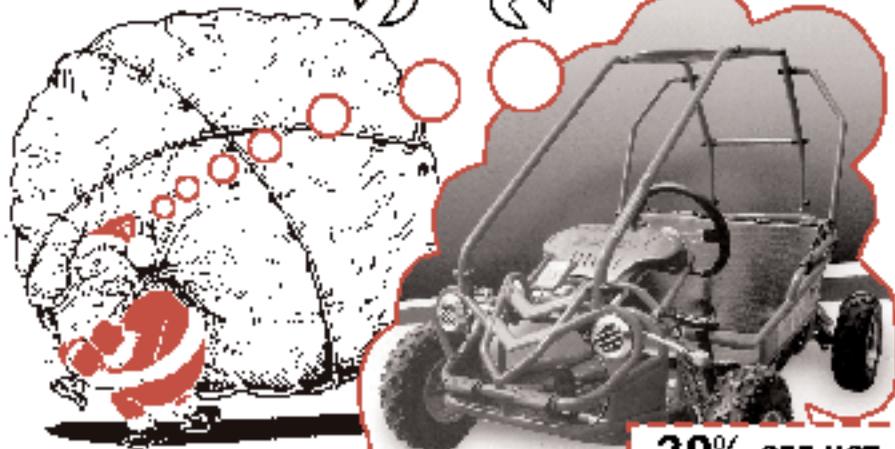
"I love this class. Learning about space and flight is fun," said Marcus Henderson. "I want to be an aeronautical engineer and this will really help me and open a lot of doors."

"I want to become a person who works with telescopes and looks at the universe and many other things," Elizabeth Price said. "I want to get a good scholarship in college. That way I can get a good job."

KPMS is the first NASA Explorer School in Washington state. Earlier this year, Borders was named the 2005 Teacher of the Year by the Air Force Association's McChord Chapter.

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Bands jam at PHS



Peninsula High School held a "Battle of the Bands" contest on Oct. 2. Bands from Gig Harbor and Peninsula high schools shared two stages, where they performed in front of an eager audience. It was best to please the crowd, since they were the judges. At the end of the show, teens wrote down who they thought was the best and the votes were counted. According to drummer Mike Dault from the band "Burn These Broken Wings" (BTBW), the winner received money. "BTBW has been together for about eight to nine months," Dault said. "At the show, we just played what we felt like playing." The band got about an hour to practice before it was time to settle down and wait for the show to begin. "It was amazing and probably was the best \$3 I have ever spent, easily," said Taylor Hoefle, a freshman at PHS. "...Out of all the bands I saw, BTBW is the best local band, period." *Photos (on right) and story by Kristie Byrd. Top photo by Kristen Pierce.*



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"You have to know where you're headed in order to figure out how to get there" (Richard Kurta)

(From WASL, Page 1)

Bouck added that this one-year dip allows the district to step back and analyze the scores, and that is where the district's Director of Research and Assessment Amy Nelson comes in.

Elementary schools

Evergreen Elementary third-graders scored the highest of all three KP schools in reading and math. Vaughn Elementary saw improvement across the board, with scores higher than state and district averages in fourth-grade reading and writing as well as fifth-grade reading. Minter Creek's fourth graders also scored higher than the state average in reading, writing and math while fifth-graders' reading and math scores surpassed state averages.

This was the first time statewide that third-graders and fifth-graders were given the exam, which consisted of a reading and math section.

At the fifth grade level, this was only the third year for the science WASL section.

"(Science) is relatively new and we are getting our teachers trained on a different way to approach this portion of the WASL because it differs from the district's (science) curriculum," Nelson said.

Even before Evergreen Elementary School Principal Jacque Crisman received her school's WASL scores, she knew what the scores were going to be within 5 percent, thanks to the monthly assessments the school does.

"We noticed that there was a dip in our schools scores and we will look at specifically how to help our students next year in those areas," she said. "With that said, growth does not always happen in a straight line.

"What we also noticed (is) that if we look at a trend line over time ... our school continues to improve. We are proud of our students and teachers. We recognize how hard they work and appreciate their efforts."

Nelson said because Evergreen has such a low testing population, scores fluctuate from year to year and are sometimes hard to analyze.

"It is hard to define trends," she said. "But the great thing at Evergreen is that rather than focusing on the overall school's scores, they focus on students who didn't meet standards."

Crisman said each year the school staff looks at the previous year's scores for individual students. Staff then create plans and addresses deficits.

"For students that we targeted, we saw

growth," she said. "We are very proud of our students who we worked extra hard with to make individual growth."

This school year, Evergreen has four goals; math, reading, writing and climate. "One goal we are focusing specifically on is math," Crisman said. "As a school we have planned time for our teachers to really focus on math instruction and best practices. We are also looking at our shortcomings on the WASL and addressing those areas."

Key Peninsula Middle School

After seeing a huge increase in scores in 2005, Key Peninsula Middle School's seventh-graders showed the most improvement in reading scores, which were higher than the state's scores.

KPMS Principal Sharon Shaffer sees her school's WASL scores on an upward trend.

"We have continued to show growth in student achievement over time," she said. "We like to view the results over a period of time, so that we can track our trends."

Nelson said that because the school saw such a huge bump last year in math, school and district officials expected scores to dip.

Shaffer added that with the recent adoption of SpringBoard in school's literacy blocks, she expects the upward trend to continue in the area of reading.

"A strong student achievement focus for us at KPMS is in math," she said. "While we have made significant growth, we still have plenty of work to do.

"Across the state, student achievement in math has been a challenge. That is true for us here at KPMS as well. We take seriously the challenge of continuous and positive gains in achievement for all of our students."

"At KPMS, they have done an excellent job," Superintendent Bouck said. "The staff continues to raise the bar and find ways of intervention with struggling students."

Bouck said as a way to reward the hard work of the staff, the district is providing additional assistance to the school to help review and analyze test data and compile the results of a survey of staff, students and parents. Funding is being provided by voter-approved Initiative 728. The assistance will also be used to help teachers and the staff for extra planning time and to collaborate as teams to focus on areas of improvement.

Peninsula High School

Nelson said one area where the district expected to see a bump in scores was the math section for 10th-graders.

"We did see an increase, but not the 10 percent bump we expected, like we saw in reading and writing," she said. "Our (math scores) continue to go up with our math aligned curriculum, but we will just have to dig a little deeper into the results."

Nelson said one reason why there was such an increase in scores at the 10th grade level at both the district and state levels was because students saw the WASL as a graduation requirement and not as an optional test.

At Peninsula High School, as at all other public high schools across the state, last year's WASL held high stakes for the first time for 10th graders. Last year's 10th graders will be the first class for whom passing the WASL is a high school graduation requirement.

The school's 10th-grade scores were higher than state scores in reading, math, writing and science (42 percent). The school's science score was also higher than the district's score.

Nelson said that at PHS, 44.5 percent of 10th-graders who took the test last spring met standard in all three graduation requirement areas (reading, writing and mathematics). By comparison, at Gig Harbor High School, 57.8 percent of the 10th-graders met standard in all three areas.

Nelson cautioned, however, that those numbers are not exact because of three reasons: Special education students who took an alternative method were not part of these total numbers, and PHS had several students who took these alternative lower level assessments; ninth-graders who elect to take the test early are not included in these numbers; and students who retook the assessment in August are not included

in these numbers.

Tenth-grade students are allowed to take up to five retakes at the district's expense. The first of these retakes was offered in August, and scores are expected in the next few weeks. Students only have to retake the sections in which they fail.

If students fail the WASL after the second time, they have three alternatives to the WASL, including using their math SAT score, be a part of a GPA cohort group, or build a portfolio of their work that best represents the standards in the math, reading and writing sections.

Overall, all five Key Pen schools including Peninsula High showed growth over the past year in at least one section of the WASL.

"The best news is that this district has done a wonderful job of improvement," Bouck said. "We've always focused on continuous improvement and focus on struggling students and find ways of intervention to assist students to succeed.

"The WASL isn't everything. In this district, we look at a lot of things including the whole child and what we can do to maximize their talents."

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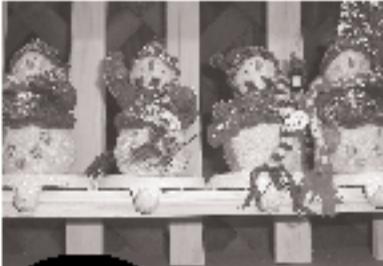
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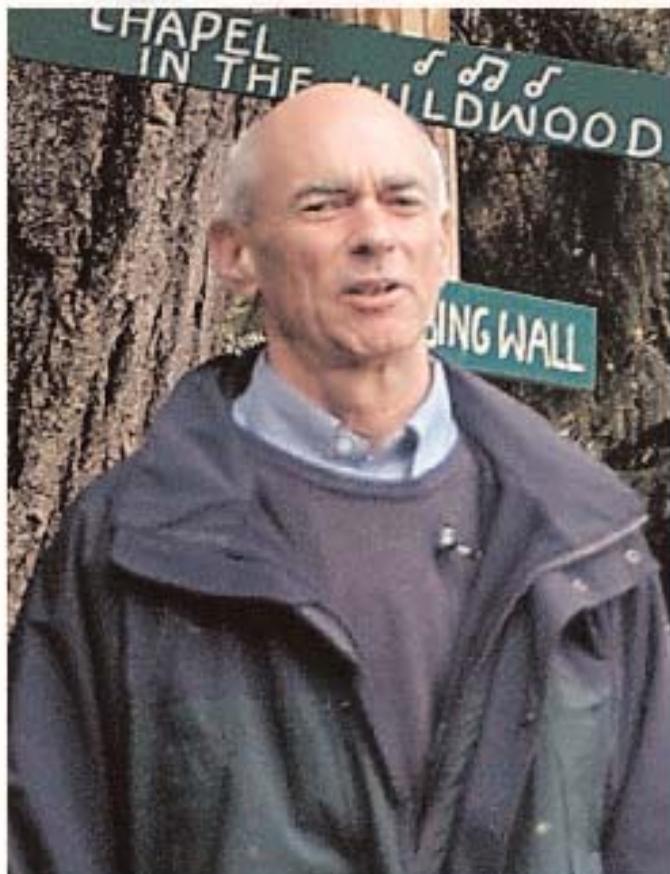
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KP to get two new cell towers

Key Peninsula will soon be the recipient of two new cell towers, after two conditional-use permits were granted by Pierce County. Pierce County Associate Planner Trish Byers said the first permit was granted on Nov. 17, 2005, at 10716 State Route 302 for a 150-foot Nextel tower. A visitor in October to the Farm, the property adjacent to the permit location and owned by the same family, said the tower was already visible on the site.

More recently, on Aug. 22 of this year, a permit was issued for a Sprint tower at 17704 Rouse Road. A Sprint/Nextel spokesperson confirmed the two cell towers but declined to give further details.

Final Emergency Preparedness forum Nov. 1

Last year's Key Peninsula Community Council members' meeting identified emergency preparedness as an area of interest to many Key Peninsula residents. The council organized a series of four informational forums for the community on disaster preparedness, which were free and open to the public.

The final forum will be on Wednesday, Nov. 1, at Evergreen Elementary School at 7 p.m.

Free coffee, cookies, drawings provided by local businesses, and stuff for the kids is included in these events.

The presentations by Chuck West, KP fireman, Laverna Williams from the American Red Cross, and Community Council member David Figuracion are informative, and include various handouts. PC-Net and Peninsula Light also have information booths set up.

The Red Cross held team-training sessions in early October. Neighborhood teams are organized and trained to have specific leaders with assignments in the event of a disaster.

The groups have put in a lot of effort to bring awareness to the local community, but turnout has been light. With so little apparent interest, representatives from these organizations wondered how many people will really be prepared when a real disaster does hit.

The Nov. 1 forum will open at 6 p.m. For more information, call 884-0577.

COMMUNITY WORKS

Submit calendar items to news@keypennews.com • Deadline 17th of the month

KPVI helps Evergreen reading program



Photo courtesy KPVI

Members of the Key Peninsula Veterans Institute recently voted to contribute \$300 to Evergreen Elementary School's reading program. The money will be used to purchase books that are given to students to keep. The books are age-suitable. Part of the reading program, held on Oct. 24, was "Book Reading Night," where students and parents gathered at the school to hear special members of the community read to them in small groups. The reading program is made possible through a grant to the school as well as support from local groups KPVI and the Angel Guild. Pictured in the photo, KPVI President Roxyanne Wooldridge presents a \$300 check to the school's Principal Jacque Crisman.

Nov. 1 – Grief Support Group

A new grief support group will meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. Nov. 1 & 15, 7 p.m., Key Center Fire Station 2; 884-2054

Nov. 2 – Lakebay Fuchsia Society meeting

The speaker will be Pat Arndt, who will be teaching innovative ways to recycle plastic materials when starting or propagating new plants. You can grow them in your own little greenhouses.

Thursday, Nov. 2, 7 p.m., Key Center Library; Ginnie 884-9744

Nov. 2 – Grief Support Group

A new grief support group will meet every Thursday morning. Nov. 2, 10 a.m., Fire Station 5 (SR-302 & Wright-Bliss Rd); 884-2054

Nov. 3 – Spaghetti feed and pie auction

The Lakebay Christian Assembly is hosting a community "All-You-Can-Eat-And-More" spaghetti feed and pie auction. The cost is \$6/adult \$4/children (12 and under). The purpose is to

raise money for the youth group shop that is currently being converted from a garage to a two-story youth group room in Palmer Lake. Once finished, this building will be a safe place for youth to come, hang out, play games and learn about God.

Friday, Nov. 3, 6 p.m., Lakebay Christian Assembly on McEwan Road in Lakebay; Faith 884-4655

Nov 4. – Peace rally

The Key Peacemakers will host a peace rally on the north side of the Purdy Bridge, adjacent to the business parking lot. Parking may be limited. Please bring a peaceful intent, signs, thermoses, and snacks to share.

Saturday, Nov. 4, noon, Purdy spit; 884-9299

Nov. 5 – Watercolor workshop

Tired of muddy colors in your watercolor paintings? Explore color mixing and painting problem solving in a one-day workshop with Carolyn Scott Arnold. A little prior watercolor experience helpful but is not necessary. Fee is \$30 per person plus a materials fee of \$10. (Beginning classes are also available.)

Sunday, Nov. 5, 1-4 p.m., Key

Peninsula Civic Center, VFW room

Nov. 7 – Key Center Library meeting

The Friends of the Key Center Library thank all who voted yes for the library lid lift. Everyone is welcome to come to the next Key Center Library board meeting. Ideas or suggestions for the Friends or board are always welcomed.

Tuesday, Nov. 7, 7 p.m., Key Center Library; Margaret 884-5426

Nov. 8 - Habitat for Humanity free breakfast

The Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula Chapter works in cooperation with the Tacoma/Pierce County Affiliate of Habitat for Humanity. The local chapter is starting its sixth home on the Key Peninsula this fall in the Palmer Lake development. To find out more about Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula Habitat, learn how to participate, share your skills and talents with others, or make a donation, attend the free breakfast.

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 7:30-8:30 a.m., Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church in Gig Harbor; RSVP required; 253-857-5463 or DJolympicSun@wmconnect.com.

Nov. 8 – Bay Shore Garden Club meeting

The Bay Shore Garden Club will meet on Wednesday, Nov. 8, 1 p.m., at the Longbranch Fire Station; Sylvia 884-2487.

Nov. 9 – League of Women Voters Unit meeting

The League welcomes anyone, both women and men, interested in participating in the Gig Harbor—Key Pen Unit to join the monthly meeting and participate in the topic discussion. The evening topic will be Growth Management in the State of Washington - Success and Challenges. Plans will be discussed for beginning this League unit's new study of the issue of traffic congestion on State Route 302 and land access on and off the Gig Harbor and Key Peninsulas.

Thursday, Nov. 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Gig Harbor Visitor and Volunteer Center, 3125 Judson St., Gig Harbor (across Judson from the Post Office), for information about study materials call Liz Lathrop at 851-2210.

Nov. 9 – Civic Center events

The Key Peninsula Civic Center Association board would like to thank all community members who helped support the Halloween Party in October.

The Friday Night Skates will be split into separate sessions determined by school level beginning Friday, Dec. 1. The elementary (K-5 grades) skater session will be from 6 to 7 p.m. The junior high (6-8 grades) session will be from 7 to 9 p.m.

The Sunday evening basketball schedule is youngsters and parents 6 to 7 p.m. and adults only 7 to 9 p.m. Kids aged 17 and under are free; the cost for adults is \$2 each.

The election of Civic Center officers and board members will be held on the second Thursday of November.

Thursday, Nov. 9, 7 p.m., Civic Center; 884-3456

Nov. 9 – Native Plants discussion

Friends of the Key Center Library presents a program called "Native Plants: How to know and use them." An experienced, knowledgeable speaker from the Washington Native Plant Society will show slides and answer questions. Everyone is welcome, and school-age young people will enjoy this program. This is one of the many programs presented for the Key Peninsula community by the Friends.

Thursday, Nov. 9, 7 p.m., Key Center Library; Mary 884-4690

Nov. 11– LCC holiday bazaar

The Longbranch Community Church, one of the last remaining pioneer churches in Western Washington, will hold a holiday bazaar. Items included will be Christmas trims, handcrafted and white elephant gifts, books, plants and a

quilt raffle. Refreshments will be available.

Nov. 11, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Longbranch Community Church (located on Key Peninsula Hwy S, past Home, ¼ mile north of the Longbranch Marina); Doris 884-4421

Nov. 16 – KP Senior Society holiday dinner

The Key Peninsula Senior Society will have a Thanksgiving dinner with turkey and trimmings at its regular Thursday noon gathering. Members and guests will fill in the menu with potluck additions. Every Thursday at noon the Senior Society holds potluck and card games for all seniors, with bingo on the first Thursday of the month.

Thursday, Nov. 16, noon, Key Peninsula Civic Center, Whitmore room; 884-5052 or 884-4981

Nov. 17 – Peacemakers film

The Key Peacemakers will show the film "Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers," which uncovers the connections between private corporations making money in Iraq and the decision makers who allow them to do so and also what happens to everyday Americans when corporations go to war.

Friday, Nov. 17, 7 p.m., Key Center Library; 884-9299

Nov. 24-25 – SAVE booth at Winterfest

SAVE Thrift Store will have a booth, which will feature Christmas, collectible and vintage items and clothing, at Peninsula High School's Winterfest arts and crafts fair. Meanwhile, a separate half-price sale on all items will be going on at the main store. Thanksgiving weekend may be the perfect opportunity to get acquainted with SAVE. Proceeds from sales at the store benefit the scholarship and activity programs at Peninsula High. SAVE is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. year-round.

Winterfest is Thursday-Friday, Nov. 24 & 25, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., 14201 Purdy Drive (just below the high school in Purdy); 857-2800

Dec. 1 – Victorian Christmas concert

John Doan presents "A Victorian Christmas Concert," an old-fashioned family Christmas celebration, with Emmy-nominated musicologist and performer. Included are historical vintage instruments, a multimedia concert, children's arts and crafts activities.

Friday, Dec. 1, 7 p.m., McColley Hall at Key Peninsula Lutheran Church; 884-3312 or www.johndoan.com

Dec. 3 – Key Center Tree Lighting

Doc Roes and the Hometown Band, the Key Singers and other groups will be entertaining at the annual tree lighting ceremony at the KC Corral in Key Center. Everybody is welcome. Refreshments will be served, including hot apple cider. Santa will arrive.

Sunday, Dec. 3, 4 p.m., KC Corral, Key Center

Dec. 27-29, Winter Break Basketball Camp

The Key Peninsula Metro Park District will offer a winter break basketball camp. Participants will learn techniques of passing, dribbling, shooting, rebounding, defense, and team play while participating in this high-energy camp. Cost is \$24 per child; the camp hours will be 9-11:30 a.m. for grades 1-4, 12:30-3 p.m. for grades 5-7.

Wednesday-Friday, Dec. 27-29, Key Peninsula Civic Center; 884-9240

December – Basketball Skills Clinic registration

The Key Peninsula Metro Park District will be offering Youth Basketball Skills Clinics starting in January. The coed clinics will be for ages K-2. Program focus is upon basketball skills development (dribbling, passing, and shooting). Adult involvement is required during the weekly clinics.

Scaled down equipment, specialized drills and games will be used to ensure success for all participants. Cost is \$ 35 per participant and includes basketball and shirt; for schedules and registration call 884-9240.

Saturday Mornings – Writers' Guild

A peer group of local writers meets to share their work and write together every Saturday morning. All ages welcome and it's free. Saturdays, 9 – 11 a.m., Key Center Library; Carolyn Scott Arnold, carolyns_finearts@hotmail.com or 884-7771

Mondays – TOPS 1019

TOPS is a support group that supports folks in weight-loss efforts. Almost every member of TOPS 1019 has lost weight, including the nine members who joined since August. Former members have rejoined after realizing they need the group's support. The group stresses fun and information, good eating, and exercise habits. Currently there are men, women, and preteens in the chapter.

Mondays, 6 p.m., Fire Station 5 (Wright-Bliss & Hwy 302); Frankie, 884-4102

Get Involved Volunteer listings

- **The KP Historical Society and Museum** is looking for volunteer docents. Docents often have time to read the books, look at the photo albums, and appreciate the local history on display. Call 884-3702.

- **Habitat for Humanity's** Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula chapter is looking for volunteers to help build homes and more. Register online at www.tpc-habitat.org. Go to "volunteers" and then go to "registration."

- **Key Peninsula News** has an ongoing recruitment for volunteer staff writers. Staff writers are assigned one or more articles per month, based on availability. Meet a great group of other dedicated volunteers, learn more about the community, and have fun! Writers who can only contribute occasionally instead of a monthly basis are also welcome; some training provided. Call 884-4699 or email news@keypennews.com.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Barbara Bence

At a farmer's market held at Volunteer Park in 1998, Barbara Bence was introduced to the newly organized Key Singers choral group by a guitar player she stopped to chat with that afternoon. She has been a member ever since, sometimes singing soprano solos. She is the publicity



BENCE

person for the group, creating posters, making displays for events, and keeping the Singers' scrapbook. Bence is "always willing to get things done, and is a great gal to have in our group of dedicated singers," says Director Marianne McColley.

An accomplished oil painter, Bence also enjoys crochet, puzzles, and open-mic night at O'Callahan's, where her son-in-law plays guitar and sings.

She meets with other Key Singers weekly for rehearsals that include musical venues ranging from show tunes to spirituals, classical fugues to country Western ballads. An upcoming concert will be at the traditional Key Center tree lighting on Dec. 3. The group currently has around 20 members, sometimes as many as 31; folks drift in and out, with new members always welcome.

"I just wish everybody could have the opportunity to join a group that has as much fun as we do," she says.

Bence is the oldest of 15 children and originally hails from Arkansas, by way of a stint in the Army in Texas, where she met her future husband, whose home

"I just wish everybody could have the opportunity to join a group that has as much fun as we do."

-Barbara Bence

state was Washington. She has lived on the Key Peninsula for 37 years, and looks forward to participating in Key Singers' concerts for a long time to come. She says McColley and piano-accompanist Ann Craven do a fine job giving all voice-range sections opportunities to lead during performances. The Singers have several concerts in the offing, both on and off the peninsula, and it's a sure bet Bence will be both sharing her voice, and lending her artistic talent to the publicity beforehand.

— Chris Fitzgerald

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Fire commissioner may be in violation

By Rick Sorrels, Special to KP News

At the Oct. 24 Fire District 16 Board of Commissioners meeting, Commissioner Al Yanity announced his intention to perform an act that FD-16 attorney Joe Quinn had just advised him “would violate the Open Public Meeting Act (OPMA),” and would subject Yanity personally to a “potential monetary fine and being recalled from office.”

Yanity's position was, “Let them file charges, we'll deal with it in the courts.”

The problem started on Oct. 16, when Yanity attended the first meeting of FD-16's “Future Planning Committee,” chaired by Commissioner Rick Stout. Yanity said he has strong feelings for the issues related to the future direction and plans for the department and “planned to attend every one of these important committee meetings.”

Committee participants cautioned Yanity that “the attendance of two of the three fire commissioners at a committee meeting would be a violation of OPMA.” Yanity announced that he would still attend. No violation actually occurred on Oct. 16, due to Stout being called away for

an emergency before the meeting started.

Following the committee meeting, legal opinions were obtained from attorney Joe Quinn, the district's legal counsel. Quinn issued two letters, both of which confirmed that “a violation of OPMA would occur if two commissioners attended the committee meeting, if public notice is not given or if minutes are not taken.”

At the Oct. 24 meeting, Quinn said, “OPMA is liberally construed, and I always caution a conservative approach to potential violations of OPMA, which can result in fines of \$100 per instance against any commissioner involved, and grounds for recall (removal) from office.”

Yanity responded, “I've obtained a different legal opinion and still plan to attend all of the Future Planning Committee meetings.”

Stout said, “If Yanity attends the next committee meeting scheduled for Nov. 8, then I'll only have two options: cancel the meeting, which I don't want to do because the issues are so important, or hold the meeting, which would be a violation of the law.” The meetings are open to the public. (See a related story on page 5.)

Habitat meeting for potential families

Families who may be interested in applying for a Habitat for Humanity home are invited to an orientation meeting Nov. 9 at 2 p.m. at the Key Peninsula Lutheran Church. Habitat partners up with low-income families, who invest sweat-equity and buy the homes with zero interest.

Paralytic Shellfish Poison causes beach closures

Paralytic Shellfish Poison (PSP),

commonly called “red tide,” has been detected at levels of concern in shellfish samples collected from Horsehead Bay, according to Pierce County officials. As a result, the Washington State Department of Health has closed the east side of Carr Inlet from Allen Point south to Green Point, including Raft Island and Horsehead Bay, to the recreational harvest of shellfish.

PSP poisoning can be life-threatening and is caused by eating shellfish containing a toxin that is not destroyed by cooking or freezing. For details, visit <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm>.

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Nov. 24th	Billy Farmer	No Cover



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New Communication Tool Keeps Parents Informed

Parents of Peninsula School District students can stay involved with their children's education by using a new online tool that helps them keep track of student progress. The Web-based program, called Parent Connect, allows parents to have access to the students' grades, attendance as well as assignments. "It's as close to 'real-time' as we can get," says PSD Director of Technical Support Bob Hobbitts. "It's a Web-based communication tool that allows parents to check on progress from their computer at any time."

The technology is used at all PSD middle and high schools, and the program is integrated with the teachers' electronic grading system. The program was piloted during the last school year, and was fully deployed in March 2006. Since March, the number of families registered to use Parent Connect has grown from 950 to more than 3,200.

"It's a great communication tool for parents and teachers to be connected, and use technology as a way of making that connection," Hobbitts says. The program was the result of the work

of a communication committee that included school administrators, teachers

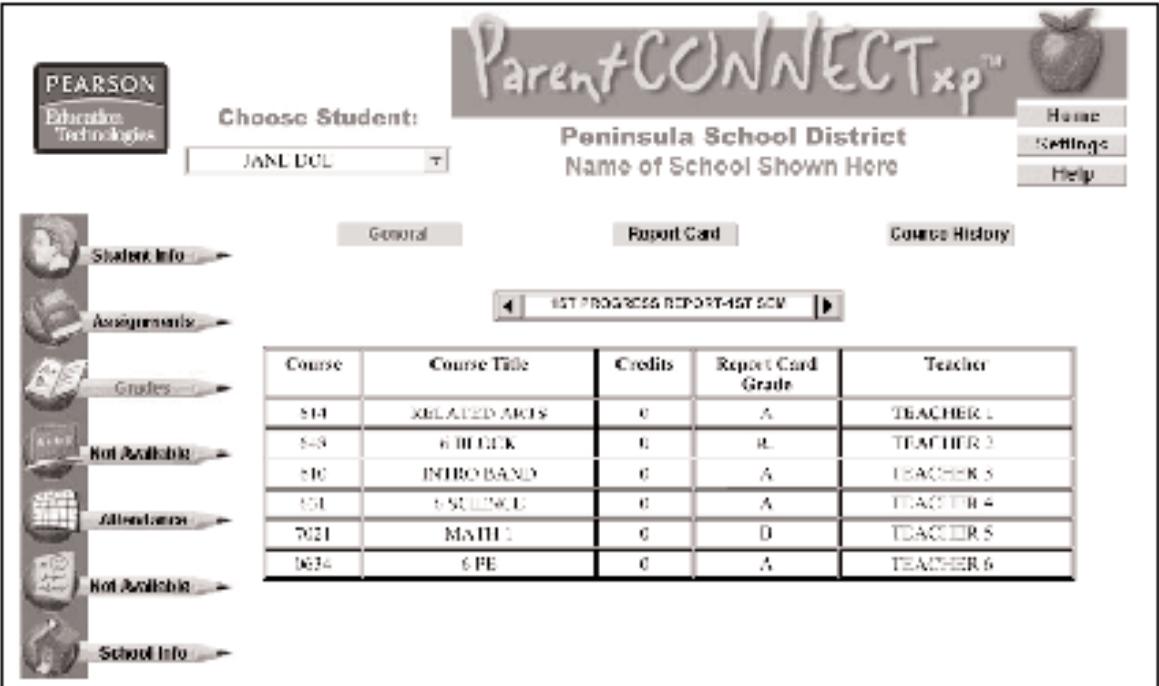
Parents who would like to sign up for Parent Connect can log on to <http://pcxp.psd401.net> to request access. A user ID and password will be available at the child's school within seven days, and photo identification is required to pick it up.

and parents. "Parents can have access at work, home, and even while traveling out of the country, which makes this tool invaluable," says PSD Assistant

Superintendent Shannon Wiggs, who spearheaded the committee. "Even those without Internet access at home can take advantage of it via the Pierce County library system."

One of the school district's goals has been to take advantage of technology to improve communication between teachers and parents.

"A lot of people use the Internet as the first line of research, for shopping and banking," Hobbitts says. "The next logical step is to go online to see how your student is doing. It's a seamless way to connect with the classroom."



When parents log in to their Parent Connect account, they can see the student's progress, attendance, assignments, and other information.

Did You Know...

The primary focus of the Instructional Technology Department is the integration of technology into the learning environment. The Technical Support Department is responsible for the support, acquisition, deployment and management of information technology resources and services.

At A Glance...

A Safe Learning Environment for All Students and Staff is the number one goal of the Peninsula School District. It is through the achievement of this goal that all of the other goals are possible. Recently, there have been several instances of violence at schools around the country that have been in the news. All schools in the Peninsula School

District schedule fire drills, earthquake drills and lockdown drills regularly throughout the year. Each year, procedures for these drills are reviewed and revised as necessary. We will continue this practice and will pay special attention to what is learned from recent events so that we are providing students with a safe environment where their focus can be on learning.

November Events

- 8 School Board Regular Meeting 6:30 p.m. District Office
- 10 No School
- 23-24 No School



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Tuesday 5:00-7:00 p.m.
Americana

Wednesday 5:00-7:00 p.m.
Blues with Simon

Thursday 5:00-7:00 p.m.
Books & Friends

Friday 5:00-7:00 p.m.
The Walnut

Monday 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
The King of Rock

Tuesday 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Blues Crossroads

Wednesday 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Kelly's Heroes World Reggae

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Jazz

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Visit KGHP at www.psd401.net for more programming.

Get a gander of a goose at Brookside Veterinary Hospital

By Kristen Pierce, KP News

What do you get when you cross a herd (of goats) with a flock (of geese)? A "flerd." At least that is what Lisa Woods, Key Peninsula resident for 17 years, local veterinarian, and owner of the Brookside Veterinary Hospital, calls the odd trio that lives on her property.

One day in the end of March, a goose, now named Gander, mysteriously appeared in the parking lot of the animal hospital. Woods assumed the bird was injured and had been left there by someone. She and her caring staff meticulously inspected the goose and found nothing wrong with it. Relieved, but puzzled by the sudden presence, they decided to let it visit for a while until they came up with a solution.

"We felt bad for the goose. We figured

it had lost its mate and was lonely," Woods said.

She and her staff didn't think it would stick around too long. But after a short time, Gander made itself at home. At first it flew over to Woods' neighboring property and befriended her horses. Everything seemed fine, until one day, when the animals were horsing around and Gander got stepped on, which injured one of its toes. Of course, Woods came to rescue and mended the foot. After that episode, Gander decided to relocate over to the other side of the property and take up residence with the smaller, safer animals: the goats.

Woods has two rescued goats, one male and one female. According to Woods, Gander has taken a special liking to the female goat, Buckle, (named by Woods' son). Ralphie, the male, is friendly with Gander also.



Photo by Kristen Pierce

Gander the goose, Buckle and Ralphie.

Buckle and Gander walk together, rest together, and eat together. Gander has also been seen grooming Buckle.

Gander left its sanctuary this past May. Everyone figured the bird was off trying to join a new flock or look for its mate (since they only mate once for life). No one expected the goose to come back. But, to everyone's surprise, Gander returned a week later. Woods admits they all really missed the bird while it was gone.

"He's become a huge part of our family (which she refers to as a group of misfits). She adds, "We wish he could find some friends, but at the same time, we'd hate to see him leave us."

Gander has not wandered off too far since the brief trek back out into the world that week in May. However, the goose does make small trips now, off to neighboring homes. Walt Berg and his wife, Arlene, live down the street from the veterinary hospital. Gander has visited the couple on several occasions. It was Walt Berg who thought Gander was a newsworthy creature.

"This struck me as a heck of a human interest story, to see that darn goose hanging around those two goats, over-seeing everything," he says. "You'll have to make an appointment though, to catch him when he's in."

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KPFD legend, Jim Blundell, celebrates his 80th birthday

By Hugh McMillan, KP News

On October's first Saturday, sunshine shone on retired school teacher/Key Peninsula Fire Department volunteer captain, Jim Blundell, on the occasion of his 80th birthday. He had no idea a crowd, including firefighters and fire equipment, had gathered at the Jackson Lake KP Sportsmen's Club to honor him. "Caught him completely by surprise," said friend Dorothy Parrott, who'd lured him in to the affair through a back door to keep him unaware of the many friends gathered inside.

His daughter, Leeann Curtis, who flew in from her home in Alaska to add to the surprise, said, "He is a wonderful dad. I remember him playing Frisbee and flying kites with us. And I remember him taking me to a Dodgers baseball game when I was about 10, maybe. He spent a lot of time helping me with my math homework, too."

She added, "He sometimes is not a man of many words, but he is always there for you, dependable and strong." The fire department knows this. After his retirement from KPFD as a volunteer

captain, he immediately signed up to answer the department's phones several hours each week.

Blundell taught one year in Nespelem on the Colville Indian Reservation in Easter Washington, then went back into the Navy Reserves for a year during the Korean War. "This enabled me to go back to Pullman (Washington State University) to get my master's degree in education," he said. "During this time I met Pat in a dance hall in Tacoma and decided she was the one. She said yes about the time I graduated and was hired to teach school in Las Vegas."

After teaching for three years in Las Vegas, they moved to Pomona, Calif., where they remained until 1970, when they moved back to the Peninsula.

"(I) finally got back in the Navy yard and wound up teaching apprentice ship fitters for over 12 years," he said. Blundell joined the fire department around 1973, and finished as captain at the Key Center station. After Pat died, he mentored students at Vaughn Elementary for three years.

He is still answering the phones at KPFD's headquarters station.



Photo by Hugh McMillan

On October's first Saturday, at the Jackson Lake Key Peninsula Sportsmen's Club, retired school teacher/Key Peninsula Fire Department volunteer captain Jim Blundell, was the recipient of a total surprise 80th birthday party. Here, he enjoys a meal with (counterclockwise) daughter Gail Blundell, Dorothy Parrott, Helen Burgess, Jim Curtis, Leeann Curtis who is Jim's daughter, and his granddaughter, Tracy Curtis.

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FROM PIONEER STOCK

RUSS SCHILLINGER, VICTOR LOGGER AND FARMER

By Colleen Slater, KP News

Russell (Russ) Schillinger lives on the land where he was born in 1930, soon after his parents, William and Frances, moved from Edgewood, Wash. The elder Schillingers met and married in North Dakota and headed west to Washington in the early 1920s. They arrived in Victor with children Helen, Bob and Ron.

William (Bill) planted berries and grapes on his acreage at Victor, overlooking North Bay. The property had originally belonged to the Stock family, and the Schillingers' grapes were sold to Stock's winery. Frances also picked grapes with other women on Harstine Island for wineries located there.

The boys helped build the barn and other farm buildings, created a trout pond, and learned to plow. Russ was 14 when Bob Davidson of Vaughn hired him to plow. Davidson picked him up after school, and Russ either rode home with a Davidson worker who lived in Victor, or hitch-hiked.

The Schillingers turned to dairy farming in the early '40s. The boys delivered raw milk to local stores and to people along the way, in Victor, Allyn, and Vaughn.

When milk required pasteurization, Russ took the milk to Key Center, where local dairymen dropped off their 10-gallon cans for Darigold.

Bill switched from dairy to beef cattle in 1953. Russ' daughter, Karen, and husband, Tom Johnson, who live in the remodeled farmhouse, still have a few head.

By 1968, the Schillingers added



Photo courtesy Russ Schillinger
Russ Schillinger, ca. 1953.

Christmas trees to their farm to help pay higher taxes.

Russ started first grade at the one-room school near the bay in Victor. In 1942, when local schools combined, he rode the bus to Vaughn. He was part of the first graduating class of Peninsula High School, where he was student body president, received an "inspirational award," and lettered in all three sports — football, basketball, and baseball.

Russ and his brothers played hardball on a team comprised of Victor, Vaughn, Allyn and Belfair players. They took the championship one year. He said it was Hank Niemann's home run that won the final game. Hank pitched right handed, but batted left-handed, and hit



Victor school, 1-8 grades: Standing, left to right, Don Dahl, Russ Schillinger, Audrey Hanson, Doris Hager, teacher Miss Ahre, Ron Schillinger, Ed Edwards, Keith Archer. Sitting, KenEster, Tom Archer, Ken Archer, Jim Dahl, Dale Hager.

Photo courtesy of
Russ Schillinger

Pioneer stock wanted

If you are or know someone who is a second, third, or fourth generation person living on the Key Peninsula, please let us know so we can feature this person in our Pioneer Stock series. Email news@keypennews.com, call 884-4699 or write to KP News, PO Box 3, Vaughn WA 98394.

the pitched knuckleball clear out of the field.

After graduation, Russ joined the Naval Air Reserve, but didn't have active duty until 1953, when he was stationed in Hawaii, and where he married Patti in 1954.

Russ met Patti when he was helping deliver milk. She was about 10, visiting an older sister in Belfair. Russ was a few years older.

Russ logged and did construction work, starting with Harmon Van Slyke and Wes Davidson, but branching out on his own before long.

In 1980, he was thinning Department of Natural Resources forests and chipping nonmerchantable timber for

paper mills. Within a few years, he formed Schillinger Enterprises, Inc., to cover his logging, construction work, and Christmas tree farming. Russ was president, Patti secretary, and now son-in-law Tom is president.

Russ and Bob Dressel, self-proclaimed timber industry "junk dealers," started a chipping mill in Belfair. They gathered or bought all the "ugly" logs nobody else wanted, and turned them into high-quality chips for paper mills. The paper mills couldn't get enough chips in the early '80s, so the Schillinger-Dressel North Mason Fiber Co. did well at recycling wood waste.

They designed a hydraulic stump splitter on an excavator, and Russ says they were too busy to patent it. Within six or eight years, all the big companies had them.

Russ officially retired in 1995, including having served 30 years as a volunteer fireman in Victor's District 5 Station. He and Patti golf as much as they can, at nearby Lakeland Village, or points farther south.

The couple enjoys their 30-year-old hillside home, the view of the bay, and bald eagles that cruise by.

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IN KEY CENTER ON OLSON ROAD 253-884-3421

Kenya nonprofit group founder shares story

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

As a young child, Fred Outa had no hope, no future. An orphan in the village of Kapiyo, Kenya, he was one of many kids who shared a similar fate: Taken in by extended family or other village members, he was given nothing but a place to live, and instead of going to school had to tend to chores.

"Orphans don't get food in those (strangers') homes, what they get is a roof to live there — but no love, not much," Outa told a small gathering of people in October at the Lakebay Community Church. "It was tough, even for me, to bear that... It's so painful, because you (the orphan) are a black sheep in that community."

A couple of decades later, Outa is helping turn around the lives of other orphans in his native village. He founded a nonprofit called the Valley African Center, where a pre-school was built for orphan children with the help of American volunteers, and other projects are in the works.

"I have built a network with a number

of individuals who are involved with what I do in Kenya," Outa said in an interview.

Father and son Mark and Shane Plummer, both Key Pen residents, are among supporters who are helping Outa's vision come to life. The pair recently returned from Kapiyo, where they worked on a sanitation project with a U.S. team (see the September issue of the KP News). Mark Plummer hosted Outa at his home in October. The trip was Outa's first to Washington state, but he tries to visit the United States every year to stay connected with his network of supporters and keep the momentum going. With an American college education, thanks to an American missionary family, he has been bringing sustainable farming projects to his village. One of those projects brings profit to the community by growing rice, an industry that has been mismanaged by a corrupt government.

"Fred in Kenya is seen as a threat by the politicians," Plummer said. "He's been threatened by his life."

The trips by the mission groups have made a huge impact on his people, Outa said. In Kenya, there is no sanitation or

"Before the community didn't have clean water; now they have it."

— Fred Outa

healthy drinking water; people usually drink rainwater or water from muddy lakes. "Before the community didn't have clean water; now they have it," he said. "This will reduce illnesses and the amount of money used fighting them."

Mark and Shane Plummer said they hope to return to Kapiyo in February to finish the septic system project and do other work. Mark's friend, Port Orchard resident Don Burlingame, who first got the Plummers involved and was part of this year's group, also went on a trip once, and since then decided to become involved long-term.

"It's addictive," Outa said. "Once you taste it (the need and helping out), you'll want to come every year. The motivation is helping the people of Africa, who are so poor."



Photo by Rodika Tollefson

Fred Outa, center, at a community presentation on the Key Pen in October.

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Owner of missing cat holds out hope of return

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

When Sampson missed breakfast last June 15, Christine Zmijewski immediately knew something wasn't right. She had shared her home with the 13-year-old neutered male gold and gray tabby for many years, and had this mostly-indoor kitty's habits firmly intermingled with her own daily routine. She set out on a walk around her Minterwood home to find him that overcast morning, and even now, convinced he was stolen, she waits in hope for his return all these months later.

Zmijewski posted "lost cat" signs around the neighborhood and at area businesses. Some were removed within a day of posting, and others were vandalized, with the cat's photo burned. She received late-night "warped and twisted extortion" phone calls from individuals whom she described as young males attempting to deepen their voices to sound older. They said they had her cat and demanded she meet them at a specific location with specific sums of money or she "would never see her cat

again." Then laughter at the other end of the phone and the mean-spirited callers hung up, only to call again on another evening. Zmijewski sought assistance through the sheriff's office, but when two officers came to take her report, she was told by one that if she put up flyers with her phone number, she should expect those kinds of calls.

In desperation to find her cat, who had immediate veterinary needs, she called Harry Oakes, Jr. He is the owner of Longview-based International K-9 Search and Rescue, and has the distinction of having his search dog, Valerie, in the Guinness Book of World Records, according to Zmijewski, for having the most "found victim" successes. In an ironic twist, Valerie, a border collie cross who has been at her job with Oakes for more than 12 years, was herself either lost or abandoned and rescued by him at a shelter.

After she preliminarily scent-searched Zmijewski's house and identified the lost cat's scent, Oakes gave Valerie the "find Sam" command. She searched the yard, and then went directly out the front

door and down the owner's cul de sac in a straight line, then back again, stopping on the street in front of a neighbor's walkway. The route seemed odd to Oakes and Zmijewski; cats are curious creatures, and not inclined to go anywhere in a straight line when there is exploring to be had.

Ultimately, the scent stopped there; Oakes indicated that Valerie had not picked up a "death" scent, something that both relieved and saddened Zmijewski. She had been prepared to find her beloved cat's body and have closure. The neighbor did not have her cat; through her long search, Zmijewski has learned of other Minterwood residents whose pets have also gone missing, never to be found.

"The whole family has been affected by Sam's loss," Zmijewski says. "Even our other cat is depressed." She believes someone either has Sam or knows his whereabouts, and she wants him back. "This is his home," she says. "Please just take him to an area vet and ask them to call me. Please."

Another neighbor, who is a board

member of the Minterwood Homeowners' Association, also had a cat go missing. "I know the search and rescue person told Zmijewski to say her cat was stolen," she said. "But that just puts people on the defensive, so if someone does have him, she will never get him back." She believes a more likely scenario is that lost felines are chased into the woods by off-leash neighborhood dogs roaming free, where raccoons can then prey upon them.

Free-ranging dogs are an issue for many communities on the Key Peninsula; Minterwood has chosen to address the challenge through use of the Pierce County Animal Control Infraction Affidavit. Use of the form provides a "log" of off-leash activity, which can be forwarded to that office, prompting a phone call to the dog's owner. The next step is a visit and a violation by animal control. When notice of annual dues went out to community homeowners in summer, this affidavit information was provided; and residents will receive a reminder in the association's upcoming newsletter.



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Peninsula resident experienced an infamous day in history

By Linda L. Anderson, KP News

Longtime Longbranch resident Vernon Merrill has had a long career of serving his country in many interesting capacities. A Longbranch resident for more than 25 years, he left his birthplace of Parkersburg, West Va., to attend Georgetown University and then Harvard. Later, he served as an officer in the U.S. Navy, in the Foreign Service in several Middle East countries, and ended his career managing an iron ore mine in Liberia for six years. During his illustrious career, Merrill participated in many events that have changed the course of world history.

He was recruited by the war department while at Harvard and assigned to pre-World War II duties out of the country. On one such assignment Merrill witnessed an act of war in the Caribbean on a day when another event became an important part of American history.

Merrill was sent to the island of Trinidad to work. He became friends with a man from the Army and a pair of sisters who were stationed there with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. One morning, the four friends planned to visit the Point Galera Lighthouse station at Toco, on the northeast tip of the island. Built in 1897, this lighthouse has guided many a passing ship and borne witness to the evolution of technology and the secrets of war. Some of these events are recorded in history, while others remain shrouded in the cover of international secrecy, or silenced for all time at the bottom of the sea.

One such event came on a Sunday that has lived in infamy in American history. Morning dawned a clear and typical Caribbean day on the island of Trinidad that day. The four friends prepared to embark on an enjoyable excursion across the island. The leisurely drive from Port au Spain took nearly four hours. The roads wound through the farmlands of the island, first heading south away from the mountain range and then turning northeast toward the coast. Many of the roads were narrow and unpaved. The friends enjoyed the scenery and local color of the villages and towns along the route. They arrived at Toco at about 11 a.m., with a clear and sunny day to enjoy a spectacular view from the lighthouse. Climbing the spiral steps to the obser-



Photo courtesy Merrill family

Vernon Merrill enjoys retirement after a long and eventful career.

vation deck, they were treated to the magnificent view across the place where the Atlantic meets the Caribbean to the island of Tobago. Entering their view as well were two merchant ships en route from Dutch Guyana (Suriname) to the United States with their cargo of bauxite, which was turned into aluminum and used in the making of products from airplanes to frying pans. In the other direction, they could look west along the lovely beach and off into the ocean, knowing that it was the route to Venezuela.

Suddenly, they heard a loud booming sound. The tourists turned their attention back toward Tobago as a second explosion was heard. Their eyes were met by the horrific plumes of smoke and the two merchant ships sinking quickly

beneath the surface. The ships had been hit by torpedoes from German U-boats on a mission to prevent the cargo of bauxite from reaching U.S. ports.

This was not the first attack by German U-boats in 1941. Many merchant ships had fallen prey to enemy torpedoes seeking to stop the flow of raw materials to American factories. It was not uncommon for reports of sunken ships to be delayed and later recorded on the wrong dates.

Descending the steps of the lighthouse, the friends were still stunned by what they had seen. As they headed for their vehicle, Merrill glanced toward the beach. Many people were enjoying the weather, the beach and the warm waters of the Caribbean. If they had been aware of what had just taken place around the bend of the island, it did not show as they continued to play. His attention was drawn to the water and the flailing arms of a young girl. "Hey, that girl is in trouble," he declared, already moving quickly toward the beach. "Why isn't someone helping her?"

Merrill left a trail of his clothing across the sand as he ran toward the waves. As he drew closer, he could see that the girl of about 12 years of age was frantically fighting the undertow that threatened to carry her out to sea. He dove into the waves and was soon near enough to begin giving her instructions. "Stop fighting and float," he yelled. "We're going to swim across the current. Swim with me." The frightened and nearly exhausted girl began to relax and follow the instructions. Together they swam and floated across the current, until it carried them some distance and eventually in toward the beach.

When the girl was safely in the arms of her family, the American hero and his friends returned to their vehicle and headed back toward Port au Spain to report the sinking of the ships to the authorities. However, their news was not

to be met with the same enthusiasm with which it was delivered.

Animated by what they had experienced, they returned to their residence to learn that far more had happened. In the parlor of the rooming house, Merrill found 18 British residents huddled around his radio (which they had retrieved from his room). The four were quite eager to share the news of what they had seen off Toco that day, but were met with a more dramatic report from the Brits: "You think that was something. Pearl Harbor has been destroyed by Japanese bombs." It was Dec. 7, 1941.

Thousands of people died that historic day in 1941, and in the days that followed. However, one young girl had her life delivered from the waves by one of those unsung heroes with whom our country is so blessed. Merrill gave unselfishly to his country and mankind, wept for his lost friends and continued the work that had to be done.

Merrill, now 90, retired with his wife to the Key Peninsula 25 years ago. A longtime member of the Longbranch Improvement Club and a generous supporter of local scholarship and charity funds, he enjoys boating, fishing and sharing his fascinating adventures around the globe.

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KP residents offer new Fast-N-Fit athletic training

By Kristen Pierce, KP News

Lakebay native Evan Burk and his wife, Debra, have recently started a new business in Gig Harbor called Fast-N-Fit Training. The business is geared toward baseball training, but offers a rigorous workout program in other areas as well. The couple has teamed up with Jon Fuller, former catcher for the Cincinnati Reds, to open the Gig Harbor Baseball and Sports Academy in the North Harbor Business Park, where they provide their services.

Evan Burk is a certified N.E.S.T.A. (National Endurance Sports Training) instructor, S.A.Q. (Speed Agility Quickness) trainer and a Little League coach on the Key Peninsula. Debra Burk has been active in yoga and aerobic exercise since 1982. She is also working on obtaining her aerobic certification, and is vice president of the Key Peninsula Little League. Their 16-year-old son, Chris, is a big contributor to the business, leading the drills, conducting demonstrations and keeping the younger students focused. Chris is a sophomore at Peninsula High School, plays basketball and baseball, and is a member of the Narrows Baseball Club.

During a typical session, Debra leads the warm-up, which incorporates the anaerobic program, focusing on the core stations targeting the middle and lower body. She uses a large Swiss ball and medicine ball to do a series of abdominal and lower back exercises.

Meanwhile, Evan oversees the N.E.S.T.A. training, which includes instruction and drills using polymeric, isometrics, speed, agility, balance training and sport specific conditioning.

When Evan and Debra Burk are not



Photo by Kristen Pierce

Evan Burk during a session with students at the Gig Harbor Baseball and Sports Academy.

teaching at the Fast-N-Fit, they are busy with their full-time jobs. Evan, a sales engineer with CenturyTel for more than 13 years, designs voice and data network systems. Debra owns a business called Debbie's Office Aide, which provides bookkeeping and technical editing services. Although both have full-time jobs and keep very busy, they enjoy what they do at the Gig Harbor Baseball and Sports Academy.

"We've tried to create an anaerobic program geared toward improving speed and agility for young athletes," Evan said. "It's a high-energy, advanced training, and hopefully through proper conditioning, it may help in preventing injury while playing sports."

One of Evan's future goals is to

provide a high level of training for school-age athletes to better prepare for their college careers.

"I want to create a place where kids can go to improve their abilities health, physical, and mental abilities. Somewhere they can increase their speed and agility by incorporating sports-specific training," he said. "We've even trained some Gig Harbor High School cheerleaders," Debra added. "We can help them with their agility and jumping skills."

Though much of the clientele is Little League age and up, the academy is open to the public and anyone is welcome to come and train. Members also include the Narrows Baseball Club players, PAA and various school teams.

Beach House changes name, format

The "Beach House at Purdy" restaurant closed doors in mid-October to undergo a major remodel and name change. The new restaurant, called the Margarita Beach Café, will have a more casual atmosphere. The change will include a new menu, new interiors and landscaping, an expanded outdoor beach area, outdoor bar and cooking area, and eventually, a Cabana.

"The Beach House had a fantastic run, but we wanted to try a concept that we can expand beyond Gig Harbor," said chef Steve Naccarato, who opened the restaurant with his brother Gordon more than four years ago.

"We are already looking for the second location for a Margarita Beach Cafe, somewhere between Olympia and Seattle, preferably on the water," said Joe Hardwick, partner and CFO.

The menu will include "vacation food," Naccarato said. The bar will feature tequilas, signature margaritas, exotic rums, plus frozen daiquiris, Mexican and draft beers as well as food.

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OBITUARY

Vivian A. Macumber died Oct. 8. She was born in Harlan, Iowa, on Sept. 10, 1908. She was preceded in death by her husband, Robert, and her son, Bob. She is survived by her son Bill and daughter-in-law Helen, daughter Ann and her husband Dave of California, and Bob's widow Becky. She left a legacy of 31 grand- to great-great-grandchildren.

Macumber lived most of her life in Iowa. She graduated from college at a very young age with a teaching degree. Robert and Vivian farmed while they raised their family. When Bill was a teenager, Robert and Vivian started their teaching careers. Vivian taught English, Latin, Spanish and American literature.

One of Vivian's students, Wilma Hansen, has lovingly kept in touch with her on every holiday for 45 years. Wilma wrote, "Vivian was the best gift I ever received. She left me with lots of wonderful (and funny) memories!"

A celebration of Vivian Macumber's life will be held at 2:30 p.m. on Nov. 12, 2006, at the Longbranch Community Church.

(From WAUNA, Page 1)

historic building. "There are not too many old buildings (commercial) left around here. It's sad."

Located on the Purdy Sand Spit, the building was owned by the Pierce County Parks and Recreation Department. The county had expressed its desire to give the park to the Key Peninsula Metro Parks District. The metro parks board has said previously it would not be interested in the property as long as the building remained standing.

Kezele said it was the FWPO who got the ball rolling and even had the support of the Key Peninsula Business Association and Pierce County Councilmember Terry Lee.

"We had a pretty good momentum," he said.

Kezele said neighbors wanted to see it demolished because the building was an eyesore and a hazard. The last straw for the post office and the group was a public meeting in September 2005. After that meeting, the group gave up.

The FWPO group had an engineer inspect the building. The engineer found the building still had structural

integrity.

"We had Terry Lee behind us and with some dollars and materials to fix it up," Kezele said.

The building, also known as the Goldman/White store, was on the county's historic register. According to Kezele, it has been a landmark for the Key Pen for a long time. Last spring, the county was successful in removing the building from the registry and securing the paperwork for the demolition.

Kezele, who also served as the presi-

dent of the KP Historical Society, was given permission by the county parks superintendent to remove any items from the post office. He removed two hot water tanks, several storefront windows and doors.

"Someday, if we ever have room (in the museum), we might use the items for an exhibit," he said.

Nancy Lind, who spearheaded the Friends of Wauna Post Office group, was out of the country and could not be reached for comment prior to press time.

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We've Added a New Agent to our Office

Locally, we welcomed Janna Manson to Windermere / Key Realty in August. Janna is a long time resident of the Key Peninsula and formally was your Vaughn area postal delivery person.

What you need to know about your recent tax assessments

A word of caution about taxes. We continue to get inquiries about the new tax assessments which came out this year. In many cases, there has been a 40% increase in the assessed value of your property – an assessment for 2007 taxes.

Many people want to protest the increase, but we are urging caution because assessed values are based on market value and our market has experienced huge increases in the past few years. Before you protest, ask one of our experienced agents to give you Comparable Market Analysis (CMA) to see what the actual sale price of your home could be. It may be even higher than the country assessment and that would be considered by the county if you protest.



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Communities In Schools of Peninsula is seeking a part-time Program Director. Responsible for management of school site projects and coordinating community programs and services. Minimum qualifications include: BA in Education, Social Work, Communication Arts, or in a closely related field of study and three years of experience with program development and management, and/or direct experience working with children or youth and their families. 20-30 hours a week. Compensation D.O.Q. Fax cover letter and resume to 253-884-5734.

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Out & About

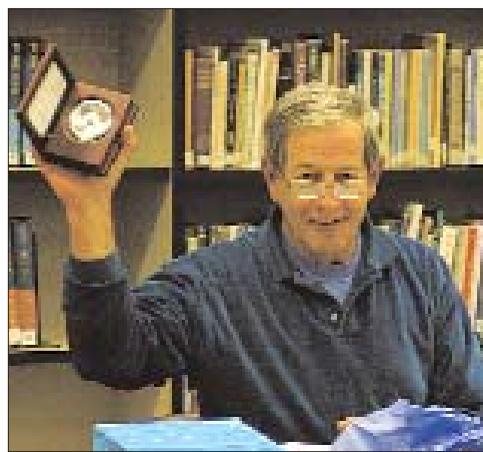


At the 13th annual Peninsula High School Boosters' Dinner and Auction in October at the Canterwood Golf and Country Club, a very happy Ken Keiter flashes the winning certificate after his one of only 10 keys sold for \$20 each opened the lock box, granting him its prize of 50,000 airline miles on Alaska or Delta Airlines or their partners. Co-chairs of the event, Jane Ostericher, Margie Franzheim and Mindi LaRose, said the successful fund-raiser cleared \$35,000, all of which will support student activities for the coming year. *Photo by Hugh McMillan*



Above, Key Pen firefighters "give burns a boot" during a fund-raising drive in October. The rain didn't deter the firefighters nor the drivers who stopped to make contributions.

Photo by Chris Fitzgerald



Right, At its October meeting, directors of the Key Peninsula Community Council awarded a commemorative plaque to outgoing President Jeff Harris for his work in founding the organization and for serving as its president since it came into being. *Photo by Hugh McMillan*



Legislative District 26 candidates for all the open seats during a forum held in October at Goodman Middle School. *Photo by Hugh McMillan*



Phyllis Kappus of Vaughn plays Lady Grace Manley-Prowe in a dress rehearsal of Encore! Theater's production of "Something's Afoot." The play, which opened in October, will have performances through Nov. 12 on Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. The hilarious show is a satirical poke at Agatha Christie murder mysteries and at the musical styles of the past. Call 858-2282 to reserve tickets. *Photo by Hugh McMillan*



Lakebay residents Alexandra Emens and her younger sister, Celia, chase the ball at their soccer game on an October Sunday. The girls play for the Lightning Bugs, a micro coed team that is part of the Harbor Soccer Club.

Photo courtesy Jamie Perron

CORRECTION

In the October edition of Out & About, a photo depicting the youth football team Bulldogs had an incorrectly attributed photo credit. The photo was taken by Wendy Chenoweth. We regret the error.

To see more Out & About photos, visit our Website at www.keypennews.com and follow the Photo Gallery link. See more of your neighbors out and about, Key Peninsula scenes and happenings. The online gallery features only Website exclusive photos!

