

# KEY PENINSULA NEWS

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

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Martin Luther King Jr. Day observed ~ Jan. 21

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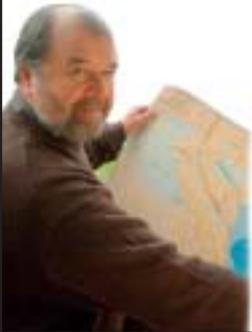


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## Stranded on the Key: Project hopes to fill some gaps in lack of transportation

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

Recently, Lori Colbo experienced what many local residents would when her car broke down: She had to scramble to find transportation for work, and on the first day made nearly a dozen calls before finding a friend to drive her.

Fortunately, on several other days she

could take Pierce Transit's Bus-Plus service from her Vaughn home to Purdy, where she transferred to a bus to Gig Harbor. That took her about two to three hours (including 45-minute waiting, in the cold, at the Purdy transfer point) — but that wasn't Colbo's biggest challenge.

(See HOPE, Page 26)



Photo by Karina Whitmarsh

These local volunteers are undergoing training for a soon-to-be-launched program that will help low-income seniors have reliable transportation for core needs. More photos at www.keypennews.com

## When it takes a village...

Key Peninsula residents instrumental in hospital's arrival

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

On Dec. 14, the St. Anthony hospital marked a major construction milestone — the completion of its "skeletal" structure, marked by a traditional "topping out" ceremony. Several dozen health-care, community and business leaders watched as the crane hoisted the final steel beam, weighing nearly 1,700 pounds, more than 75 feet in the air, before the ironworkers secured it in its place.

While construction is proceeding

(See HOSPITAL, Page 28)



Photo by Mindi LaRose

L-R: St. Anthony project superintendent Tim Larson with KP residents, Franciscan VP Laure Nichols, George Russell and Theresa Walters, just a few days before the hospital marked a major construction milestone.

## Commission rules against FD-16 captain

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

A Key Peninsula fire captain has been fined by the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (PDC), following a complaint letter regarding his actions related to the levy effort of 2006.

In that year, in his off-duty hours, Fire

District 16 Capt. Mike Riegle was chairman of a citizen-based committee advocating passage of the fire district levy. Acting in that capacity as a private citizen, he erroneously made a decision to mail a brochure to Key Peninsula residents that had been designed for the district and passed on by the fire commission.

Wally Miller, a private consultant doing freelance public relations work for multiple fire districts, had contracted with FD-16 to create a brochure, and was at the same time talking with the KP citizen levy committee. The offending

(See FIRE, Page 29)

## BRIEFS

news

## Internet safety class

A program on Internet Safety, appropriate for parents, teenagers, educators, law enforcement and community members working with youth, will be presented by Gig Harbor Police Department. A presentation will be combined with integrated Internet examples. Universal safety rules will be covered to help decrease the chance anyone will become a victim of any crime. The workshop is presented by GHPD Community Service Officer Lynn Mock in partnership with the school district at Key Peninsula Middle School on Jan. 17, 6:30-8 p.m.

Other programs presented under the series will include Safe School Preparedness (February) and "Cops and Docs" (April), both hosted at KPMS as well as Gig Harbor High School.

## Local teens win contest

Several local students won awards in Pierce County Library System's second annual Manga Art Contest. In all, 128 students submitted 159 works of art and 16 won prizes. The drawings were based on manga, popular Japanese comics and cartoons. Local winners from Peninsula High School include: Emily Baldado, 10th grade (Best Original Character, first place), Ashley Torres, 11th grade, and Heather Boardman, 11th grade. View the winning entries at [www.piercecountylibrary.org/kids-teens/teens](http://www.piercecountylibrary.org/kids-teens/teens).

## Youth Choir to Perform at Carnegie Hall NYC

Twice each week, youth from the Kitsap and Gig Harbor areas gather at the Cappella Music Center to rehearse in preparation for a June tour to New York City, where the final concert will take place in Carnegie Hall. These singers, grades 6-12, represent the cream of the crop from their area schools, coming from as far south as the Key Peninsula and as far north as Poulsbo. In addition to the rehearsals and final performance at Carnegie Hall, the nine-day tour will include four Broadway shows, two days at museums, visits to Ground Zero, the Statue of Liberty, Empire State Building, and Rockefeller Center.

Auditions for singers interested in participating in the New York City tour will be held through Jan. 15. For details, call (360)895-3200 or visit [www.cappellochoirs.org](http://www.cappellochoirs.org).

## Peninsula spared by storm

By Rick Sorrels  
Special to KP News

Western Washington was hit hard by heavy rains and high winds in early December, with several counties declared under federal disaster. While Kitsap, Mason and King counties experienced various problems, most of Pierce County and the Key Peninsula in particular were spared the worst of nature's wrath.

The worst damage found on the KP is in the 16800 block of Powerline Road (144th St NW), where a large quantity of decades-old fill across a ravine collapsed, isolating seven occupied homes. Tacoma Power, the owner of the road, has obtained a \$150,000 estimate for repairs. A generous neighboring property owner was allowing the stranded residents temporary access through his property. Access for heavy vehicles like fire, ambulance, and fuel oil delivery remained impossible as of mid-December.

Dennis Dudley, one of the isolated Powerline Road residents, used a four-wheeler to drive through a narrow road from his home. He said, "I've lived here since about 1980 (and) this rain is the worst that I've seen. The power company (Tacoma Power) is responsible to maintain the road to access their lines and poles, but I've never seen them do any maintenance. The only road repairs that have been done were done by us that live here. The rain was just too much for the patchwork repairs, and it all finally just gave way."

Hillside slippage along State Route 302 just north of the Victor fire station blocked highway use until the mudslide could be cleared by Washington State Department of Transportation crews.



Photo by Vic Renz

Officials with Tacoma Power responded to the Powerline Road washout to examine the damage.

The road survived without any apparent damage, but, according to Guy Allen, the operations chief for Fire District 16, "The mudflow entering the residential garage across the street pushed two boats clear out the back door of the garage."

Barbara and Marvin Rowland at Sunny Key Farm lost about 14 animals during the storm period, but they don't believe the wind or rain was at fault. "They may have been poisoned from chemicals, like the road de-icers used when it snowed," Barbara Rowland said. "It will be (awhile) before the lab results come back."

The local animal hospitals, Rocky Bay Equine and Minter Veterinarian Hospital, both said they had no storm related animal problem.

The media spokesman for Peninsula Light Co. reported following the weekend storm, "There were no significant outages. All work was done during regular duty shifts, and completed by early Monday afternoon."

No storm-related instances were reported to the local sheriff's office. "The weather hit us so lightly that we didn't even open the FD-16 command post," Allen said. "The only storm-related instances we had were one where we had to place some sandbags to divert some ground water from entering a garage, and another where neglected maintenance at Lake Minterwood allowed an overflow pipe to become plugged, overflowing toward a house, where we also placed sandbags."

## KEY PENINSULA NEWS

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2. The objective of Key Peninsula News is to support and create community by reporting news and features and providing a forum for local information. News and editorial coverage focuses on the Key Peninsula and immediately adjacent areas within Fire District 16.

### OUR GRATEFUL THANKS TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTE TO THE KEY PENINSULA NEWS!

The opinions expressed herein are the opinions of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publishers or staff. All letters to the editor must be signed and include a daytime phone number for verification. No anonymous letters will be published. Submissions are used on a space available basis and may be edited if used. THE KEY PENINSULA NEWS reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and content. Mail letters to: P.O. Box 3, Vaughn, WA 98394, or email to [news@keypennews.com](mailto:news@keypennews.com)

# Coalition examines environmental issues

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

On Jan. 10, the one-year-old Pierce County Coalition for Environmental Health Priorities begins a new series of public meetings to identify major environmental concerns. Launched in December 2006, the organization is a Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department and federal Environmental Protection Agency CARE Project, zeroing in on toxic risk reduction. February marks the end of an EPA \$100,000 grant, and the beginning of crucial work in developing action plans designed to take the organization to the next level, which entails bringing substantial monetary resources (up to \$300,000 over three years) to Pierce County communities.

Coalition membership includes citizen participants, who provide community input to organizers as well as receive information from guest speakers they can then share with others. Meeting attendance is not mandatory, and the public is welcome.

## More information

During a year of monthly meetings alternating between Gig Harbor and Key Peninsula, coalition meetings have covered a broad range of topics, ranging from community food systems to groundwater health. Minutes and information about environmental topics under discussion are available at [www.tpchd.org/ehpriorities](http://www.tpchd.org/ehpriorities).

The coalition will begin selecting priority issues at a meeting on Jan. 10, from 6 to 8 p.m., at the Key Center Library at 8905 Key Peninsula Highway. For information, contact Marianne Seifert at 798-3823 or [mseifert@tpchd.org](mailto:mseifert@tpchd.org).

At a December 2007 meeting, EPA project officer Davis Zhen said "toxic risk" can be expanded to include such issues as water quality. Coalition spokeswoman Marianne Seifert of TPCHD later told the KP News pollution of marine and fresh waters in Pierce County communities, especially in Gig

Harbor/Key Peninsula, consistently placed in the top priorities in citizen surveys. It also placed top in frustration for citizen participants who witnessed study after study, with no remedial action to follow.

"The coalition is about bringing people together to target resources," she said. "Local health department programs are driven by regulation; (we) are about actually getting some things done (to impact environmental health)."

Seifert's goals for the coalition, the creation of which she initiated, are lofty. She hopes priorities arising out of the 2008 citizen meetings will result in their adoption by other environmental groups: Citizens for a Healthy Bay, Puget Sound Partnership, etc. She is working to make the organization as community-driven as possible, constantly evaluating and refining the process. "It's like going upstream," she said. "How do we create a world we want to live in, instead of being reactive when problems arise?"

## Local League of Women Voters unit holds meeting

Public financing of election campaigns was the subject of the regular December monthly Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor Unit meeting of the Pierce County League of Women Voters. The upcoming Washington state 2008 legislative session and the league's position on public financing was discussed. Members plan to contact legislators in support of proposed legislation on public financing of campaigns.

The league is a nonpartisan organization working to increase understanding of public policy issues on local, state, and national levels through education and advocacy. Community units each meet monthly to discuss issues; participation is open to both women and men. The Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor Unit adopted the relocation of State Route 302 as a topic under the league's transportation position; several unit members have been attending the Department of Transportation public meetings.

The Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor Unit discusses planning for the 2008 program Jan. 19, 10 a.m. to noon in the Gig Harbor Volunteer Center on Judson Street.

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# EDITORIAL

## Three wishes for 2008

In some cultures, New Year's Eve is a time to make wishes. So let us ponder some wishful thinking this year instead of the usual resolution-making. Here are our top three wishes as the Key Peninsula heads into a new, hopefully prosperous, new year:

We wish for 2008 to be the year when our taxpayer money is spent wisely. First, how about the county folks coming to us and saying, "KP residents, all these years you've paid your share of taxes into our coffers and the services you got were minimal compared to other taxpayers; it's about time you, too, got your money's worth!" Second, we hope to see a wiser state government, which actually uses the SR-302 study this time for something useful. Perhaps, for building a new highway. Last time millions of dollars were spent to examine 302, the study was shelved for nearly a decade in some archive, waiting to be resurrected — and when it was, it turns out the study was too old to be taken seriously. We wish for a little better planning this time, and more prudent spending of our dollars (if you're not going to do anything with this study, how about canceling it and giving us a refund?)

We wish our local realtors, who tell us the KP market is the next hot thing, would convince at least some customers to consider other areas. It shouldn't be hard to show prospective buyers they don't want to live here: Invite them to visit around 5 p.m. on a weekday, when the Purdy exit backup stretches to Gig Harbor. If they keep going on the roundabout and exit at Burnham, they'll find other rural living choices. Not that we don't want to share our still-quiet Key Peninsula with others, we just want to enjoy the rural peace a little longer. Besides, we barely have enough pizzerias and espresso stands per capita the way it is.

Speaking of food, our final wish is for Key Pen to have more opportunities for family entertainment in '08. Several new traditions were founded last year (including a harvest fest and an international fest), but we need more places to go, things to do. The recent opening of El Sombrero in Key Center added one more place where family or friends can congregate (gracias!), and we wish for more restaurants to follow suit — as well as for the successful return of community traditions, and the birth of other ideas.

# The Lions Club almost has it right

In the recent past I have been attending the Lions Club's Citizen of the Year Award annual dinner. And though I believe all the recognized nominees and the winning recipients (over the years) have been very worthy, I believe the Lions Club has missed the big picture. They have focused only on the people who make up the Key Peninsula community rather than the Key Peninsula community itself.

I have lived and worked in many regions of the country, both urban and rural, and in several places in Washington. We say the Key Peninsula community is unique, and it really is. What makes the Key Peninsula community so unique is how local residents work together and bring themselves together to assist each other. Yes, we don't help all the people all the time, but I have seen that we help almost all the people most of the time.

We have many generous people who volunteer their time, skills, and money; along with many organizations such as the Angel Guild, the Mustard Seed

## JUD MORRIS FROM THE WATER'S EDGE



Project, Key Peninsula Lutheran (which stepped up during last year's big windstorm) and other churches, community organizations (i.e. Key Peninsula Civic Center, Key Peninsula Community Council, and Longbranch Improvement Club), service clubs, Scouts/Campfire, law enforcement agencies, health and social services agencies, KPBA and firefighters association (which together sponsor Santa's visits on the Key Peninsula). I am sure you can think of many other examples.

Yes, we do have a community with rich, poor, and people in-between. We don't always all agree (i.e. on topics like commercial aquaculture). We have newcomers and old timers. Sure, we don't all socialize with each other all the time, but we certainly do it at the

Livable Community Fair, the Salmon Bake, and the KP Community Fair, among other places. And yes, we have some residents who live on the Key Peninsula to avoid involvement with law enforcement. But I have never seen anyone turned away from having a need met because of their "lifestyle."

So what should the Lions Club do about it? I propose that this year, the Lions Club consider not only awarding a Citizen of the Year Award to a very worthy person who has made a positive difference for the residents of the Key Peninsula, but also present a Community of the Year Award to the Key Peninsula community. Accepting on behalf of the Key Peninsula community could be the Key Peninsula Historical Society, where the award could be displayed. It could then be used as a traveling exhibit to our community's schools, thus providing an incentive to local students and encouraging good citizenship and volunteerism with all our children and their families.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Meaningful process starts

The Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula Community Health Collaborative Summit held at Miracle Ranch on Nov. 2 and 3 was, in many ways, a "first" for our communities. It was a first health and fitness collaborative between the Key Peninsula and Gig Harbor. It produced the first "strategic plan" addressing health, fitness and nutrition in our community. It was a first "pilot project" in the ongoing community improvement process of Healthy Communities of Pierce County.

Something meaningful has begun.

Everyone who participated in the summit agreed the event generated tremendous energy and enthusiasm, which, I believe, comes from a sense of shared purpose and meaning when addressing an issue of great importance. That issue is our inexorable decline in health, fitness and nutrition. The summit was process-driven to yield solutions to address overcoming obstacles to health, fitness and nutrition. Each participant left

with a commitment to a short-term action plan as a "doable" part of the larger strategic plan. Progress toward that commitment will be reviewed and measured at a follow-up meeting planned in March.

*Sumner L. Schoenike, MD  
President, Pierce County Medical Society*

### Veteran touched by high school writer

As an invited speaker at the Key Peninsula Middle School, I understood that I was a substitute for the featured speaker who was due back from Iraq and whose ship didn't come in on time. I am a Vietnam veteran and could only share my own experiences in war. While I felt that my own story was not adequate for the students, they seemed to appreciate what I had to say.

I waited to read what would be said in the next Key Peninsula News. When it came today, I was at first disappointed to find nothing about our patriotic day at the middle school and then I reread the column "Veterans deserve our respect" by Samantha Baimas (a Peninsula High student) and I was suddenly lifted up. That a high school sophomore could find the words I could not find to say about my

own experiences in war to the middle school, touched me deeply.

Samantha Baimas, I thank you. On behalf of all of America's veterans, I thank you. If we meet some day, it will be my honor.

*R. A. Dixon, Lakebay*

### Successful fundraiser

Just a quick public note of thanks: What a community this Key Peninsula is, donating toward the Joseph Lindhartsen Benefit Dinner. Thanks to: Pepsi from Bremerton Beverage and Kip and Jim at the Key Center Peninsula Market; Debbie at Soundview Graphics for the clogger shirts, all the cloggers and Watona for the "word of encouragement" on the shirt. Thanks for setup, cleanup and all the work: Morlang girls (Mary, Denise, Felicia), Juan, Jharod, Pat, Peter, Jasmine, Kristi, Nancy, Linda, Heidi, Heidi's brother, Dr. Dave Kristen, Betty, Debra, Rich, Burt, Susie, Dan the carving man, Kyle's Katering, Steve Smith (and band members) & Lisa Larson for all the music, and to all who donated items. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. The Lindhartsen family looks wonderful in their Oldsmobile van.

*Claudia Jones & Sheryl Mirenta, Key Center*

# A plea to roadside dumpers and brain-dead drivers

I'm not sure what it is about December that makes people crazy, but last month I observed two human behaviors increase on the KP: Roadside Dumpers and Brain-Dead Drivers (hey, that sounds like a country highway truckin' song!).

One thing that's bad everywhere is litter, even here on the KP. Cans, bottles, wrappers, bags, boxes, tarps, clothes, tissues, unidentifiable-metal/plastic-things, cigarette butts/boxes. Heck, you name it, and some car-drivin' primate who ain't firin' on all cylinders will toss it out the window. I mean, you can see empty plastic jugs of clothing detergent on the side of the road! How does that happen? You really have to go out of your way to use the jug of detergent washing clothes, load it up into your vehicle, drive away, and then at some point randomly lob it out the window. Do us all a favor — recycle it, and save yourself some driving time.

"Roadside Dumpers" are the folks who aren't satisfied flicking their cigarette butts out at a traffic light, or tossing their fast-food bag into a drainage ditch. They fill up their whole truck, car, or trailer with items that most human

**KEVIN REED**  
HERE'S SOMETHING



beings put out for trash collection or take to the dump, sneaking around in the middle of the night, and then heaving their waste on the side of the road in volume. I studied the last two I saw south of Home in December. "Roadside Dumpsite One" consisted of plastic planters, a tire and rim, an aerosol can, a nearly full bottle of water (?), three large pieces of metal machinery with little wheels, several old life jackets, an oil filter, a sizable metal tank, some articles of clothing, and a round, blue plastic drum-thing. "Roadside Dumpsite Two" consisted of a trailer bumper with three perfectly good reflectors on it, a full white plastic trash bag at each end of the bumper, and two 12-inch televisions at the center, lined up symmetrically.

I can't imagine that Roadside Dumpers read newspapers, but if they do, and you are one, please take your

trash to the dump.

While I don't understand the mentality of the Roadside Dumper, I most certainly cannot get inside the head of the Brain-Dead Driver. I'm not talking about somebody who drives too slow, or doesn't use a signal, or pulls out and cuts you off so he or she can drive 20 yards and then make a right. We all have our off-days on the road. I'm talking about any driver who passes other drivers across a double yellow line. The KP Highway is notoriously dangerous and I'm beginning to think a big part of it is Brain-Dead Drivers passing across the double yellow line. I personally watched three of these in December, so I'm sure it's happening all the time. All three were male drivers, but each was special in the latitude and degree of his self-centered stupidity.

The first was going up a winding hill, on a double-lined road with blind curves, and having a car full of dolts pass me on the blind curve across the double line. I don't drive slow, either. The second one I saw was while driving up the KP Highway at 4:30 a.m. behind a long line of cars in the morning commute. We were moving along just above the speed

limit when a socially bewildered poverty-of-intellect victim (aka "idiot") starts passing everyone, one at a time, in passing zones and over double yellow lines alike (including around curves) all the way up the peninsula. He passed me and got up another couple cars, but by the time we were on State Route 16, I passed him, so he risked our lives for naught. The third blockhead almost killed me. I was heading south out of Key Center, over that little rise after the speed limit goes up, to see a small car — in my lane—thundering toward me so fast, the car was shaking as it passed another vehicle across the double line. I could actually see the kid's face as he shot back into his lane, perhaps a full car length in front of me.

Obviously Brain-Dead Drivers are far too behind schedule to be reading newspapers. But if they do, and you are one — please allow your neurons to fire long enough to think about someone besides yourself. Think a little longer and imagine your vehicle plowing head-on into someone and killing them, and then imagine the scene with small kids in the car. Wherever you're going, it ain't that important.

# Media coverage of teen trip staged

By Nicole Halvorsen  
Special to KP News

How would you feel if the news was staging and scripting everything you saw? That's exactly where my story begins.

It was the morning of Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2007, when I arrived at my school,

Key Peninsula Middle School, with my mom, for a field trip to JA Finance Park (a Junior Achievement program). I would be traveling with half the eighth grade students, and some seventh grade students in the eighth-grade advanced math class that day. We had been preparing for this field trip for several weeks and I was fairly excited.

At about 8:20 a.m., we loaded the buses and left for the 45-minute bus ride to JA



Photo by Mindi LaRose

Key Peninsula Middle School students walk around JA Finance Park picking up information from different businesses in order to complete their budget worksheet.

Finance Park in Auburn. We entered the building with pride, knowing we were representing our school. Once inside, we sat down and received brief instructions from the staff, and then we got started.

About one hour after we got there, a Q13 television news crew showed up to do a news story or advertisement-type clip. I am not sure which. At first, I thought, "Great, the news is here." Then I realized the whole thing was staged and scripted. I could hardly believe it. The news crew took some kids aside and asked them how their day was going at JA Finance Park. I was sitting close by and overheard what was taking place. The news crew told the students what to say. They wrote it on a piece of paper, in case the kids forgot what to say. Basically, they were telling the kids to say their day had been perfect. So, instead of the kids saying how they really felt, they said what the news people told them to say. Regardless of if they were doing a news story or advertisement, I believe that it is completely unethical. People should have the right to express how they really feel, whether it be good or bad.

Here are my thoughts on how the true experience was. My mom and I both agree that going to JA Finance Park was a great learning experience, but it could use better instruction and organization. For instance, when my group sat down at our designated section, we had no idea what to do next. There wasn't an adult to supervise and give us instructions. In addition, once we got to each station, we felt lost, because we weren't sure what to do again. My mom, as a volunteer, wasn't sure exactly what to do either. She had to figure it out on her own, as did I. Once we had a grasp on what to do, about two-thirds of the way through the program, we had a good time and learned a lot. Would I recommend this place to anyone? I would — if they made a few improvements and adjustments.

*Nicole Halvorsen is an eighth-grade student at KPMS.*

## WSDOT study marches on



Photo by Chris Fitzgerald

Residents write down their comments and speak with WSDOT staff at a Dec. 6 State Route 302 open house at the KP Civic Center. The goal of the event was to share with residents the results of the newest SR-302 corridor initial component study. Displays included a series of maps showing more than 10 alternate route solutions for the beleaguered highway, extending from the Purdy Spit to the Mason County line at Rocky Bay. To read more about the open house event, visit [www.keypennews.com](http://www.keypennews.com) for an online-exclusive story.



This map shows the salmon passage route past Taylor Bay park.

Courtesy  
KPMFD

# Metro Parks nets salmon recovery funding

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

KP Metro Parks Executive Director Scott Gallacher was notified Dec. 14 the park district had been awarded a grant for \$500,000 from the State of Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) for the purchase of 32 upland acres on Taylor Bay. Key Pen Parks and Trust for Public Land collaborated on the grant application and process. "The SCFB grant is a significant

accomplishment for Key Pen Parks, as it accomplishes two of the district's goals of acquiring land and providing public access to water," Gallacher said.

Traditional funding by the SRFB is targeted toward salmon and trout listed under the Endangered Species Act. In the Puget Sound area, these include Puget Sound Chinook, Hood Canal summer chum, Puget sound steelhead, and bull trout. The 5-mile distance proximity of Taylor Bay to the Nisqually River and migrating salmon runs provided an ideal basis for the grant request by funding habitat protection and restoration projects. It also supports related programs and activities that produce sustainable and measurable benefits for fish and their habitat.

Key Pen Parks and Trust for Public Land are working on acquiring two other waterfront parcels at Taylor Bay through the Pierce County Conservation Futures Program. Altogether, the three parcels total about 39 acres of intact shoreline and uplands property; prime habitat for juvenile salmon. Taylor Bay is ranked No. 10 out of 20 in the countywide project list.

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# Taylor Shellfish Farms shares thoughts on aquaculture

## A Q&A with Bill Taylor

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

The KP News has followed the rise in geoduck farming applications and the opposition they generate for the last 18 months. Opponents have successfully stalled all Pierce County permits, charging geoduck aquaculture with habitat and environmental destruction. While many voices pro and con have been heard on the subject, Taylor Shellfish Farms, the primary leasehold-administrator for both private and state aquaculture, has remained silent. In early December, Bill Taylor, now running the privately held family companies along with his brother, Paul, and brother-in-law, Jeff Pearson, sat down for an interview with the KP News to share some thoughts about his family's 117-year-old enterprise.

TSF has roots in the Shelton area going back four generations. Taylor Town on Highway 101 is a commercially developed parcel once owned by an uncle who envi-



Photo courtesy TSF

Taylor Shellfish Farm family owners (left to right) Paul Taylor, father Justin, brother Bill, and brother-in-law Jeff Pearson, on a boat off the coast of Canada inspecting an aquaculture operation.

sioned the time when a major highway would replace the sleepy country road. Taylor's headquarters are located just off the road from there, on a complex that began decades ago in one-half of an aunt's house and has since expanded to include a recently built multimillion-dollar processing facility.

Taylor's business mix includes a 15-year-old aquaculture facility/hatchery in Mexico, and a hatchery opened in an aquaculture business park on the coast of Kona in Hawaii in 1993. Early in 2000, Taylor expanded again with a pearl farm in Fiji. The company has a sales outlet for aquaculture products in Hong Kong, and exports both fresh and frozen shellfish worldwide. Its most lucrative U.S. geoduck markets are in Asian communities in California and New York; even so, 50 percent of the geoduck crop is shipped live overseas. Locally, geoduck can be found at Seattle farmers' markets. (Current wholesale prices average \$11.50 per pound.)

**KP News:** Claims have been made that Taylor is just out for money. Knowing what you know now, would you still farm geoduck?

**Bill Taylor:** Yes, as a business we want to make money. We also believe our success lies in diversity – working with a broad range of species. We always consider the marketplace and are fairly well-known for other products, such as oysters and clams.

**KPN:** Is geoduck growing that easy and lucrative?

**BT:** It fits into the aquaculture mix; I wouldn't say it's our most profitable species. Growing seed is not easy. We wish we could plant more geoduck. They are more sensitive than other shellfish and are in the hatchery for the first two months of life. Problems in the last few years have been (marine) bacteria, which can affect shellfish larvae.

**KPN:** What is causing the bacteria? Are ocean "dead zones" affecting coastal operations, such as the Mexico facility?

**BT:** We don't know the bacterial source. The effect on coastal hatcheries is unknown, but it is a major limitation. Potential upwelling from dead zones exists all the time. Does it affect immediate stocks? I'm very sure it does; it's probably why geoducks live so long – progeny. We deal in death; it's a real constraint.

**KPN:** Do you consider yourself an environmentalist?

**BT:** Absolutely. We had a quick lesson in pollution in the 1920s, when a Shelton pulp mill bought all the tidelands and pumped pollutants into the bay. Back then, it was an issue of jobs, not environment. The Olympia oyster was wiped out, impacting South Puget Sound. The mill has been gone since 1959. We continue to work in land-use planning, septic, and stormwater issues at all levels. We are very committed to the communities we live in and our clean environment. That's how we stay in business.

**KPN:** How do you respond to oppo-

nents' call to halt new farms until more science is available?

**BT:** The science will never be all done — agriculture and food production change. We'd still be hunter/gatherers without change.

**KPN:** How do you view the risk of geoduck-only crops?

**BT:** Business always has some level of risk. Shellfish in general are low risk; this is not a nuke plant, puts no feed into water. Generally, aquaculture produces no negative effect. We've adapted since we've begun farming geoducks. For instance, we found if geoducks are crowded, their growth is stunted. Current planting methods increase the survival rate. We'd be ecstatic if we didn't need the tubes, and are trying to find other alternatives. Aquaculture is like having a waterfront garden — it all depends on the perspective of neighbors.

**KPN:** What do you say to allegations that Taylor Shellfish Farms is intrusive and ignores visual and environmental concerns?

**BT:** With geoduck, we are seldom on site. I think a lot of this issue involves people moving into rural areas who really want a suburban environment. The farmers and timber industry are in conflict with that. I grew up in a rural area where people grew up on natural resource-based jobs — this is a rural area and rural things should happen. We are on a culture collision.

**KPN:** Is every state and private tideland a potential geoduck farm?

**BT:** No. Just because a tideland has sand beaches doesn't mean geoduck will grow. We work with the department of health on water quality and pollution issues. The Northwest has changed so much in 30 years; so many of our shorelines are being developed, bringing in more pollution. We're losing what Puget Sound looked like. Without water quality, our business does not exist; these are health issues on a national level.

**KPN:** Do you see a compromise succeeding between industry and opponents as geoduck farming currently exists?

**BT:** The current problems will be resolved in the courts; this is not new for us. In July 2007, we successfully concluded an 18-year court case with the tribes over shellfish rights. I don't have a clear vision of what will happen in the next two years. We are not going to go away. We'll advocate for our priorities from a high road.

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# BRIEFS

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## KP Sportsmen's Club holiday drive a success

Key Peninsula Sportsmen's Club members put together a food drive to assist two peninsula families. The families selected have children attending Evergreen and Vaughn elementary schools. Donations by club members and other contributors included over 90 canned food items, more than 70 packaged products, and two \$50 gift cards. Peninsula Markets donated a large ham for each family, and Albertson's donated large turkeys. Other contributors included staff members and patients from The Olalla Guest Lodge and Gig Harbor Counseling. Cash donations were used to purchase gift cards for each of the children.

## Parks district holds logo contest

Key Pen Parks is holding a contest to design a logo for the park district. The contest is open to youth, adults, amateurs and professional artists and graphic designers. The tagline of the parks district is "Key Pen Parks — the key to your next adventure."

Rules:

Key Pen Parks will award prizes for 1st and 2nd place in the amounts of \$200 for first and \$100 for second. No entry fee.

Enter as many times as you wish, but each entry requires an accompanying signed entry form. Designs may include the Key Pen Parks or no name at all.

All entries become the property of Key Pen Parks will retain all rights to usage. Entries will not be returned.

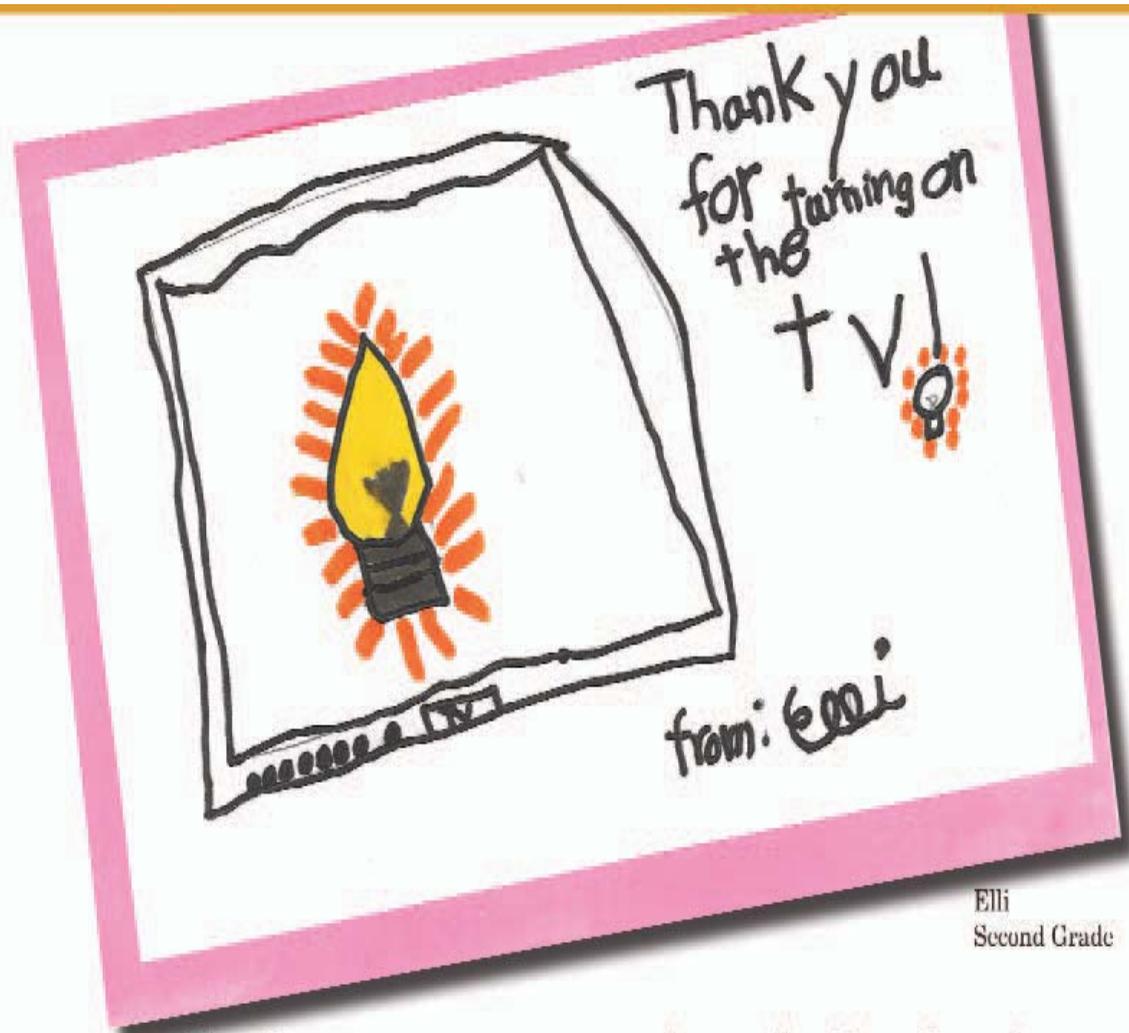
Design must be an original concept and must be the work of artist submitting the entry.

All entries must be drawn or computer generated (no paintings or photography) on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper. Black and white, or no more than four colors.

The selected design(s) will be used on Key Pen Parks correspondence, signage, web sites and printed material.

The contest will run until February 15, 2008 with a logo selection expected to by March 15, 2008.

For information, entry form and additional rules please contact the Key Pen Parks office at 253-884-9240 or visit our Website [www.keypeninsulaparks.com](http://www.keypeninsulaparks.com). The contest will run until Feb. 15.



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# A message from the superintendent: Please participate in strategic planning

**A**s a member of the Peninsula School District community, you are invited to take part in helping plan the future of PSD. Strategic planning is now underway, and the Board of Directors will use input received from staff, parents, community members, civic and business leaders, and service and booster organizations to develop objectives, goals and action plans for the next three- to five years.



*Last month the National Board Certified Teachers focus group assembled at the Education Services Center.*

Many, many members of our community have already participated over the past few months in one of 67 scheduled focus groups. We are trying to cast the net of inclusion widely, so that everyone who wants to take part will be included, and everyone who wants to be heard, will be heard.

The last strategic plan was developed in 2000 and reviewed to assess progress. The new plan should be completed by April 2008.

The timeline for this planning is fortuitous; it will allow us to weave the budget and levy needs with the goals and actions set out by the board using community input.

**How can you take part in helping develop this comprehensive Strategic Plan?** View the January calendar in the side bar or call 253.530.1001 to learn of dates and times of future focus groups

and public forums.

We want to listen to what you have to say. We are encouraging input and are determined to deliver on what we hear. Your ideas and help in identifying critical issues and defining our educational program are vital in this process.

We need your help... because we know you care!

## JANUARY 2008

Strategic Planning calendar of community and parent focus groups

- 8 Daycare Groups, 6:30 p.m. at Purdy Elementary  
Facilitators: Terry Bouck and Sarah Drinkwater
- 9 Peninsula High School Parents, 7:00 p.m.  
Facilitators: Shannon Wiggs and Karen Sexsmith
- 11 Rotary, 7:00 a.m.  
Facilitators: Terry Bouck and Chuck Cuzzetto
- 14 Evergreen Elementary Parents, 3:45 p.m.  
Facilitators: Sarah Drinkwater and Karen Sexsmith
- 15 Noon Rotary at Anthony's Restaurant  
Facilitators: Terry Bouck and Shannon Wiggs
- 16 Artondale Elementary Parents, 6:30 p.m.  
Facilitators: Shannon Wiggs and Karen Sexsmith
- Harbor Ridge Middle School Parents, 7:00 p.m.  
Facilitators: Chuck Cuzzetto and Claudia Thompson
- 29 Community Forum, 6:00 p.m. at Goodman Middle School
- 30 Community Forum, 6:00 p.m. at Key Peninsula Middle School

## Benefits of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning serves a variety of purposes in organizations, including to:

1. Clearly define the purpose of the organization and to establish realistic goals and objectives consistent with that mission in a defined time frame within the organization's capacity for implementation.
2. Communicate those goals and objectives to the organization's constituents.
3. Develop a sense of ownership of the plan.
4. Ensure the most effective use is made of the organization's resources by focusing the resources on the key priorities.
5. Provide a base from which progress can be measured and establish a mechanism for informed change when needed.

6. Bring together of everyone's best and most reasoned efforts have important value in building a consensus about where an organization is going.

Other reasons include that strategic planning:

7. Provides clearer focus of organization, producing more efficiency and effectiveness
8. Bridges staff and board of directors
9. Builds strong teams in the board and the staff
10. Provides the glue that keeps the board together
11. Produces great satisfaction among planners around a common vision
12. Increases productivity from increased efficiency and effectiveness
13. Solves major problems

—By Carter McNamara, Authenticity Consulting, LLC

### What we're asking

We're asking focus groups to identify critical issues facing PSD during the next three to five years beginning with:

- Student Achievement
- Accountability
- Facilities
- Safety
- Financial Management
- Technology
- Qualified Staff
- Community Collaborations
- Communications
- Other Issues

# New county waste management plan presented

By Danna Webster, KP News

A supplemental report to the county's Waste Management Plan was introduced at a public meeting hosted by Pierce County at the Key Peninsula Lutheran church Nov. 27. "Stepping Up to the Challenges" is the title of the plan in which the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) ranks 37 proposed policies for achieving goals for its 20-year vision for improvement.

At the meeting, Senior Planner Sally Sharrard presented goals, timelines and a summary of the plan. "My hopes, of course, is that the entire county moves ahead to achieve a 75 percent recycling and diversion rate. The council has already approved some new positions for our Solid Waste Division that will help to implement this supplement and its policies and vision," Sharrard wrote to KP News in an email. She is working on the final revisions of the plan and preparing it for the adoption process with the Pierce County Council and the Planning Commission.

Sharrard noted three concerns were most pertinent for the Key Peninsula.



Photo by Danna Webster

Pierce County Senior Planner Sally Sharrard presents Stepping Up to the Challenges, a supplement to the county's solid waste management plan, during a public meeting at the KP Lutheran Church in late November.

First is a consideration of the costs to the residents when any new recycling collection program is designed. Second is that support be continued for the Pierce

## Adventures in recycling

It's that time of year – out with the old and in with the new... but what to do with unwantedables?

**Appliances:** Purdy transfer station accepts them Freon-free at garbage rates; AA Better Trash & Junk also takes some: 584-5865

**Batteries:** Alkaline batteries (AA,AAA,C,D, 9-volt) that are not rechargeable can go in the trash. Some rechargeable batteries (watches, digital cameras, cell and cordless phones, laptops, camcorders, etc.) can be recycled; see [www.rbr.org](http://www.rbr.org).

**Electronics:** Pierce County and Tacoma are part of a system that helps owners safely recycle electronic products for a small fee. See [www.takeitbacknetwork.org](http://www.takeitbacknetwork.org). Some computer manufacturers also offer recycling of their products.

**Chemical containers:** Those holding pesticides, solvents, oil-based paint are not recyclable, or hazardous. These empty containers, along with dried latex paint cans, can go in the garbage.

**Hazardous waste:** For disposal of aerosols, automotive/marine products, flammable liquids, etc., call the Hazardous Waste Line 800-287-6429 or see [www.pierce-countywa.org/hhw](http://www.pierce-countywa.org/hhw).

County Responds program to manage the problems of illegal dumping and junk vehicle removal — with particular interest in litter cleanup efforts for private property. The third concern is that the Key and Purdy transfer stations services be expanded to include other materials. In addition, "there was strong concern about the impact of the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's proposed burn ban and what alternatives will be available for those with land-clearing debris," she wrote.

Beginning in 2008, with a waste audit and survey of current practices, the goal of the plan is to determine how much more of the county's waste could be recovered through recycling programs. The waste audit will continue gathering information about disposal needs, business participation in recycling and collection services, and environmental education from 2008 to 2012. Management of construction and demolition debris will be the 2009 focus and organic waste and residential recycling will be considered in

2010, when the solid waste plan will also be reviewed and updated.

The supplemental plan makes no recommendation for new capital projects, but long-term capital planning needs will be documented in the 2010 review. Currently, a six-year Capital Facilities Plan with seven projects valued at about \$3.5 million is ready for adoption by the Pierce County Planning Commission and county council. Four of the proposals affect the Purdy Transfer Station: A hazardous waste collection facility, a remodel and expansion of staff quarters, and an extension of the concrete composting slabs are recommended for 2008. In 2009 (or later), replacement of the existing scales at the Purdy Transfer Station is proposed. Another proposal affects the Key Center Transfer Station. In 2008 (or later), a partnership would be created with the parks district to use the western portion of the property for outdoor recreation programs.

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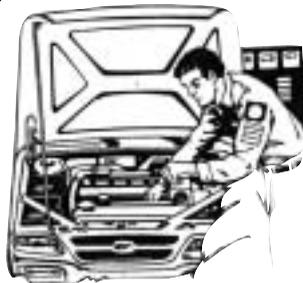
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# KP county shop plans move forward

By Irene Torres, KP News

In mid-December, the Pierce County Council passed a resolution to exchange surplus county-owned property located in Gig Harbor, known as the "Peacock Hill property," for property owned by John Morrison on the Key Peninsula.

Subject to future budget approval by the council, plans for the KP property include a "road maintenance service for the Key and Gig Harbor Peninsulas and possibly in the future the Pierce County Sheriff's Peninsula Detachment," according to Toby Rickman, deputy director of Pierce County Public Works and Utilities.

The area, known as the Spadoni brothers property, is accessed from the unpaved portion of 144th St. Northwest off State Route 302. The property address is 11307 SR 302 NW.

The county anticipates the sale of the Peacock Hill property will generate \$1.5 million in 2008. This funding will be used to start the project and to procure preliminary design plans, secure permitting and conduct traffic mitigation

studies.

The Peacock Hill property is a single 40-acre parcel, appraised at \$2 million. The Spadoni brothers property is three parcels totaling 17.94 acres, and is appraised at \$448,000. The difference in appraised value \$(1.52 million) will be given to the county for cash from the purchaser, and used to begin the new West County Maintenance Facility (WCMF).

No detailed estimates of the total expense of the KP construction project will be available until the preliminary design work and scoping is completed; however, the capital facilities plan for 2009 has a \$5 million allocation for construction.

Rickman said, "The residents of the Key Peninsula will benefit from improved response times for road-related emergencies. The taxpayers gain a new road maintenance facility with a 50-year life span, replacing an outdated facility that is hampered by access challenges on Purdy Drive .... The new facility provides for increases in efficiencies for road maintenance services and

may provide road improvements to 144th St NW and SR-302." The facility will also include a new headquarters for Pierce County Sheriff's Department Peninsula Detachment, which currently shares the same facility as the Purdy Road Shop.

The Purdy Road Shop (located near the offices of Peninsula Light Co.) was built in 1965 and is "in need of substantial remodeling and retrofitting to meet current road maintenance needs, in addition to having access challenges. Rickman said, "The current growth projections indicate the new WCMF location (Spadoni property site) is strategically located to address the projected growth in the Key Peninsula area for the foreseeable future. The WCMF will be funded fully by the sale of Public Works properties that have become obsolete for historic use. The remainder of the funding will come from the sale of the county's Elk Plain Road Shop properties. At press time, the property exchange and acquisition was expected to be completed by Dec. 31. The design process will begin in 2008.



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# Civic Center plan includes new building

By Danna Webster, KP News

The Key Peninsula Civic Center Association has developed a plan for a new building that would allow for expanded services. A facility master plan, prepared by the architectural firm Snodgrass and Freeman Associates, was presented at the KPCCA annual meeting on Dec. 13.

Architect Dave Freeman has a long association with the Civic Center, having served two and a half times as president. "This plan touches on the history of the building, the current condition, and most of the prime tenants," Freeman said during his presentation. During the three months of writing the report, he concluded there were better ways for the building to serve the community and the tenants. He suggested that "remodeling is a wasted effort."

Freeman said that a master plan needs to be revised every one to two years but it is his intention that the Civic Center board "take this study and figure out how to use it in giving support." "Use it as a mechanism to really grow this facility today. I believe in it and what can be done," he said. "I'm available over the next months and year to do what is necessary to get this going and doing what must be done." The master plan was funded by a \$20,000 grant from Pierce County, via Councilman Terry Lee.

President Ben Thompson, who was reelected as president for 2008, said, "The next step is to develop a financing plan to complete what's in the (master) plan. There is money in the community. People are willing and able to provide to a worthwhile cause." The board did not discuss a timeline for when the next step may be taken beyond the approval of the plan.

## KPCCA elections

The annual KPCCA meeting included officer elections. The Civic Center board consists of about 30 members who are residents of the Key Peninsula. Two new board members were elected, Greg Hanson and Peggy Gablehouse. The executive committee members for 2008 are Ben Thompson, president; Loyd Miller, first vice president; Bruce MacDonald, second vice president; Ed Taylor, treasurer; Sharon Miller, secretary; with Peggy Gablehouse, and Mark Roberts as members at-large.

The master plan states that a new working framework for efficient use by the tenants requires a new building. The new building would house KPCCA, Key Peninsula News (which is owned by KPCCA), WIC (Women, Infants and Children) and the Children's Home Society. Moving those tenants would increase the space available for the Key Peninsula Historical Society Museum. A low-cost remodel of the spaces in the museum annex "could result in a greatly expanded museum with exhibit space worthy of their prized collection," the report reads.

Recommendations for the new annex building is that it be two stories and located on the north side of the center, in the paved parking lot. The report recommends internal modifications such as moving the stairway and increasing the useable space on the mezzanine. It also recommends exploring the idea of becoming an emergency shelter. The estimated project costs are a little over \$1 million.

## Peninsula Spay/Neuter Project marks milestone

Without balloons, fanfare or a door prize, when Frodo (pictured here) crossed through the doorway of Minter Veterinary Hospital on Key Peninsula in late October, he became Peninsula Spay/Neuter Project's client No. 10,000. PSNP, a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives through prevention, has facilitated more than 10,000 spay and neuter surgeries since its inception six year ago. This accomplishment was achieved with an all-volunteer staff and partner veterinary clinics. The majority of PSNP's clients are caregivers of feral cats and low-income families receiving public assistance. Last year, PSNP announced the formation of Coalition: HUMANe, a group of local animal welfare agencies dedicated to opening a freestanding spay/neuter clinic in Pierce County. The opening of the clinic in early 2008 will assist all in the count-down to zero of the number of homeless pets in Pierce County, the organization said. *Photo courtesy PSNP*



## 2008 budgets approved

It's budget time for Pierce County area jurisdictions. Below are the approved 2008 budgets, compiled from budget documents:

	2007	2008	change
City of Tacoma	\$1,293,778,155	\$1,304,776,229	up 1%
Pierce County	868,931,228	863,155,082	—
Peninsula School District	99,832,302	100,623,961	—
City of Gig Harbor	35,678,225	70,003,490	up 96%
Pierce County Library	26,312,408	27,630,796	—
FD-5, Gig Harbor	13,698,803	15,680,899	up 14%
FD-16, Key Pen	5,156,600	4,464,932	down 13%
Gig Harbor Metro Parks	2,745,066	2,733,733	—
Key Pen Metro Parks	159,928	767,136	up 380%

Slowing economy dropped revenues for Pierce County. Gig Harbor is planning extensive infrastructure improvements funded by grants, loans, and expected revenue from GH North development and sales tax. Library system is stable due to lid lift levy passed in 2006. Lid lift levy for FD-5 passed in 2007. FD-16 revenues dropped due to failed lid lift levies. KP parks board passed a levy that didn't require public vote.

— By Rick Sorrels, Special to KP News

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# Vaughn Elementary achieves championship fitness

By Danna Webster, KP News



Photo by Rodika Tollefson

Vaughn Elementary Presidential Award recipients (some of whom are now sixth-graders at KPMS) receive audience applause after accepting their certificates. Superintendent Terry Bouck was present for the occasion, congratulating each student individually as PE teacher Marc Ross handed out the awards with the help of Principal Mike Benoit.

running speed, strength and flexibility. Based on their performance, they are awarded one of three levels of achieve-

ment: Participation, National, or Presidential. Earning the Presidential Award requires the student to excel in five out of five events.

The sit-up requirements for an 8-year-old boy are a good example of the different performance standards. Less than 31 sit-ups per minute ranks the boy in "Participation," 31-39 improves his rank to "National" and for a "Presidential" performance standard, he must achieve 40 or more sit-ups per minute.

Many students have excelled in the endurance, speed and strength skills, where adrenaline boosts and strong effort pay dividends. But the one event that causes the greatest downfall for most students is flexibility. An example of this type of test is the "V-sit." With

feet apart, heels and knees touching the ground, they must place their hands flat on the ground and reach past their heels. For an 8-year-old girl to earn a "Presidential" award in flexibility, she must reach 4 inches past her heels.

Good flexibility scores usually require homework. It takes practice and discipline to improve flexibility and once or twice a week in PE is not going to gain it. "Flexibility killed everybody," Ross says. "You can't fool Mother Nature. An adrenaline rush works for excel sports, you can run a little faster; but in flexibility either you can stretch to a certain point or you can't. You have to practice. It takes time management, discipline, setting goals and working at home."

Parents have gotten involved with the program in more ways than homework. The Vaughn PTA has set up special lunch hour activities on Monday and Friday to encourage students in their physical fitness efforts. Parent volunteers supervise a Run and Walk lunch time. Score cards are kept for each student and prizes are awarded as bench marks are achieved. Students who are 6 and 7 must be able to walk and run a quarter mile for the test in March while 9- and 10-year-olds must run a mile. The PTA awards students as they accumulate mileage with prizes: T-shirts for 40 miles and a hooded shirt when they've gone the distance of 100 miles.

This year a Gig Harbor pediatrician, Dr. Thomas Herron, supported the physical fitness effort of Vaughn and all Peninsula elementary schools with a money donation for prizes.

Ross appreciates the recognition the kids have received as a result of their Presidential Awards. He feels that people don't hear enough about the many great programs going on at Minter, Evergreen and Vaughn elementary schools. He thinks the kids deserve recognition for their success.

"The kids have really, really worked hard," he says and adds that he makes it clear to students they should not be satisfied if they are not performing at their best and they should aim above "Participation."

He tells them they must work every day to improve something about their performance. As they practice for the tests, he tells them, "If you walk away and gave it your best, be satisfied; if you know you can improve, then you work on that."

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# Youth seek projects

By Cameron McMillan  
Special to KP News

The Key Peninsula Youth Council continues to be active in local community service projects. A most recent example was their November food drive. Fifteen members of the Key Peninsula Youth Council spent a Saturday in November purchasing food and preparing 11 holiday food baskets, which were donated to the Peninsula Food Bank prior to Thanksgiving. "This whole project was spearheaded by youth council member Tracey Wilber," said Terry Fandel, youth council adviser. Eighteen of the 19 KPYC student members attended the food basket meeting, in addition to some parents and Fandel.

The KPYC was created three years ago. Its purpose is to help improve the lives of kids and teens living on the Key Peninsula. Its members are "a team that is fully committed to responsibly leading and positively impacting the community through changes and improvements," co-founder Barb Trotter said.

This group includes dedicated students

from seventh through 12th grades from Peninsula High School and Key Peninsula Middle School. Other recent KPYC projects include assisting at the Citizen of the Year banquet, conducting a roadside litter cleanup near Vaughn, and meeting in Olympia with elected officials to discuss issues of concern to local youths. KPYC members are actively looking for other projects, especially community service projects, and fundraising opportunities to expand their activities.

The youth council helps teach local kids how to become involved in their community, how to budget and use money wisely, and provides a way for them to accumulate service hours needed for school graduation. Many of the members are in need of additional service hours for graduation; local organizations and agencies with projects are encouraged to contact the group through Fandel at fandel@psd401.net.

*Cameron McMillan is a member of KP Youth Council and an eighth-grade student at KP Middle School*



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# KP teachers become nationally certified

Ten teachers who serve Key Peninsula students were among 20 Peninsula School District who became National Board Certified Teachers this year, based on the certification process they undertook last school year. This is the highest achievement a U.S. teacher can attain. Below, the teachers share what they liked about their participation in the program.

## EVERGREEN ELEMENTARY

### Therese Souers

National Board Certification was one of the most intense processes I have ever been through. The support I received from the Peninsula School District, my principal and my family was critical to my success. I am not a person who takes failure lightly and failing to achieve certification in my first year was difficult for me. I am glad I continued on in the process and completed it this time around. Probably the most powerful thing I take away from this experience is the practice of reflection. This reflection serves to strengthen my teaching which directly impacts student learning.



SOUERS

## MINTER CREEK

### Jeff Stafki

Completing the National Board Certification process provided me an opportunity to focus on teaching and learning in greater depth. As a result, I am a much more reflective educator, focusing not only on what I teach, but why it is important and how best to reach all my students. More than ever, I help my students set attainable goals and assist them in taking ownership of their learning.



STAFKI

## VAUGHN ELEMENTARY

### Carianne Ferencik

Participation in the National Board process has been a difficult but rewarding experience. Reflecting on the effectiveness of instructional strategies and clearly articulating why we teach the way we do is a very valuable and growth promoting practice. Above all else, I learned that with the

support of family, friends and co-workers you can achieve anything you set your mind to. I would strongly recommend that all teachers participate in this process.



FERENCIK

### Beth Harrison

Going through this process means having a clear understanding of what makes an effective teacher. It's taking a good, hard, honest look at your teaching; knowing exactly why you do what you do — and then explaining why. I don't think you ever really finish the process — you may meet the standards, but you're always looking for ways to do a better job, help the kids more.



HARRISON

## KEY PENINSULA MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Mary Waterbly

I feel honored and humbled to have achieved this accomplishment. The National Board certification process is a rigorous and reflective program which allows teachers to examine their teaching. It is the most enriching professional development experience that I have encountered. We met monthly in our small group, and I feel fortunate to have had the support of an awesome professional group of teachers.



WATERBLY

### Victoria Schauer

I would personally like to thank the Peninsula School District for their over-

whelming support of this endeavor. They provided us with equipment, time and professional mentoring to guide us through this challenging and rewarding journey. I would also like to thank my cohort group for their encouragement and honesty as we worked together to meet this goal. Lastly, I would like to thank my administrators, fellow teachers and students.



SCHAUER

### Phyllis Isbell

The certification process was an incredibly difficult process to complete. We put ourselves under our own microscope, which means we intently examined our skills, our methods, and the effectiveness of our teaching. The district provided us with cohort teams that, for me, gave me the motivation and support to keep working and complete the test. The test was to document the proof of my effectiveness as a teacher and the process improved my classroom teaching. After 33 years of teaching, I am more clearly aware of what I do and why I do the strategies in my classroom.



ISELL

## PENINSULA HIGH SCHOOL

### Mary Lyssand

So often, we teach in a vacuum without a lot of feedback whether positive or negative. The process gave me an opportunity to showcase the things I feel I do well as a teacher. The best reward was getting the validation from a national review board. It gave me renewed enthusiasm and energy for all the things I do in class. I feel it will enable me to do a better job helping students reach their potential."



LYSSAND

### Mike Blair

Gaining the certification confirms that what I have been doing in the classroom

for the last 28 years is effective. More than that, I pursued the certificate because it presented a challenge. Everyday I ask students to think, to push their limits and prove to me that they have learned something. It was time for me to do the same.



BLAIR

### Colleen Blauvelt

(I received) my NB Certification in Early Childhood through Young Adult / School Counseling. I have always believed that I was a good school counselor and worked hard for my students and parents. Now I feel this was validated and I can say with conviction that I am an accomplished school counselor.



BLAUVELT



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# COMMUNITY WORKS

Submit calendar items to [news@keypennews.com](mailto:news@keypennews.com) • Deadline 17th of the month

## Jan. 2 – Sign-up for story time

Sign-ups for Family Story Time at the Key Center Library begin Jan. 2. Kids and their parents will listen to picture books, sing songs, learn finger plays and nursery rhymes, and participate in movement games in a group setting. Surrounded by language, learning and love, children will explore pre-reader skills and build a foundation for success in future reading.

Story time will begin on Wednesday, Jan. 23 at 11 a.m. and continue through Feb. 20; 884-2242

## Jan. 3 – Writers Workshop

The Lakebay Writers Group will meet in the Brones Room at the Key Center Library from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. The workshop will meet every Thursday. Writers and poets are welcome. Stop by and give them a “test drive.” Details: Carl, 884-9671

## Jan. 4, 11, 17 & 25 – Mustard Seed meetings

The Mustard Seed Project invites all to join in the work of building an elder-friendly Key Peninsula. The following meetings are at the Key Center Library.

Key Senior Information Center Volunteer Meeting - Friday, Jan. 4, 10 a.m. See the ad for more information.

Transportation and Mobility for Elders Community Task Group - Friday, Jan. 11, 10 a.m. Apply to be a volunteer driver by calling 884-9814. Fill out and return a transportation survey soon.

Elder Health and Wellness Services Group - Thursday, Jan. 17, 10 a.m.

Housing Options for Aging in Place - Friday, Jan. 25, 10 a.m.

Edie, 884-1205 or email [ediemorgan@themustardseedproject.org](mailto:ediemorgan@themustardseedproject.org)

## Jan. 8 – Outdoor burning workshops

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency is proposing a rule change that would ban land-clearing burning throughout King, Pierce and Snohomish counties beginning July 1, 2008, followed by a ban on residential burning beginning July 1, 2010. A public hearing will be held Feb. 28 at the Seattle Public Library's

Microsoft Auditorium, 1000 Fourth Ave., beginning at 9:15 a.m. The proposed rule and other documents are available at [www.pscleanair.org/actions/outdoor-fires/rule\\_change.aspx](http://www.pscleanair.org/actions/outdoor-fires/rule_change.aspx).

Comments will also be accepted at a KP workshop. In addition to accepting comments on the proposed rule change, the agency will partner with health and solid waste representatives to discuss the health effects of and alternatives to outdoor burning. The workshop will be open for people to stop by any time between 6:30 and 8 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 8, Key Peninsula Church, 4213 Lackey Road, Lakebay

## Jan. 9 – Dangerous dogs presentation

The Pierce County Auditor's Office will hold a public meeting on input from the community on legislative, enforcement and administrative strategies regarding dangerous dogs, during the KP Community Council meeting.

Wednesday, Jan. 9, 7 p.m., KC Library

## Jan. 9 & 12 – KP Little League registration

Registration for boys and girls ages 5 to 18 for baseball and fast pitch programs will be held at the Key Center Fire Station from 6 – 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 9. A second registration time is set for Saturday, Jan. 12 at Volunteer Park concessions from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Details: Scott, [kp11president2006@yahoo.com](mailto:kp11president2006@yahoo.com)

## Jan. 11 – Toddler class begins

An eight-week class for toddlers (18-36 months) and their parents will be held on Fridays from 9:30-11 a.m. at Vaughn Elementary. The cost is \$76; scholarships available. This is a fun class and new families are welcome. Register by calling 253-680-7500 or online at

[www.bates.ctc.edu/homefamily](http://www.bates.ctc.edu/homefamily).

Details: Lynn, 253-680-7511 or [lfaherty@bates.ctc.edu](mailto:lfaherty@bates.ctc.edu)

## Jan. 12 – Winter woodland walk

A free nature walk will be held to look

at and learn to identify a variety of shrubs and trees at Penrose Point Park. Participants will also be looking for signs of wildlife along the trails. Meet at the bulletin board in the big parking lot. The first 20 to register will be taken.

Saturday, Jan. 12, 1-3 p.m. Penrose Point SP, pre-register by calling Dan, 884-2514

## Jan. 12 – FunFlakes at the library

Whether it's snowing outdoors or not, there will be plenty of snowflakes in the library! Kids 6 and older will learn how to fold and cut authentic six-sided snowflakes, no two alike. Younger siblings are welcome to come and color pre-made snowflakes. Snow stories and a winter snack will also be part of the fun. No registration required.

Saturday, Jan. 12, 1:30 p.m., Key Center Library; 884-2242

## Jan. 16 – Toastmaster Club begins

The first Toastmasters Club on the Key Peninsula is now meeting. Good leaders are good communicators and one can improve communication and leadership skills by joining Toastmasters. Free sandwiches, tea and coffee will be served on Jan. 16, or folks can bring their own.

Wednesdays, noon - 1 p.m. Key Center Library; Frank, 884-2283 or [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)

## Jan. 18 – Disco night

The Civic Center introduces themes for its Friday Night Skates. Jan. 18 will feature a '70s Disco theme, Feb. 15 Valentine's, and March 14 St. Patrick's. Last Friday of every month is “school spirit” night. Skate Nights are every Friday, 6-7 p.m. for elementary students and 7-9 p.m. for middle school. (Elementary age skaters may stay for entire night).

## Jan. 18 – Help elect the next U.S. President

Learn how to participate in the democratic process known as the caucus, the very beginning of electing a president. Representatives from the Democratic and Republican parties, Jerry Abbott and Becky

Krantz, will describe the overall purpose, procedures, and dialog that will be involved. Come join with your neighbors and the community to prepare for the actual caucus, which will be held Feb. 9. Presidential candidates and platform issues will be discussed. Participate or observe. Sponsored by the Key Peacemakers.

Friday, Jan. 18, 7 p.m. Key Center Library; Dory, 884-9299, [dorym56@yahoo.com](mailto:dorym56@yahoo.com)

## Jan. 25 – Spaghetti feed and pie auction

Lakebay Christian Assembly Youth Group is hosting the 2nd Annual “All You Can Eat Spaghetti Feed and Pie Auction.” Proceeds will benefit the annual trip to the youth conference in Portland of “Soul'd Out Ministries,” Lakebay Christian Assembly youth group.

Friday, Jan. 25, 7 p.m. Longbranch Improvement Club, \$6 adult and \$4 kids/senior; Justin Carr, 884-4655 or [justinandfaith@centurytel.net](mailto:justinandfaith@centurytel.net)

## Jan. 26 – Intertidal exploration

What are those intertidal creatures doing in the winter? Ranger Dan Christian will find some of the upper beach critters and put them in a touch tank for participants to observe. Brave the weather and bring the kids to see some wildlife that doesn't go to sleep for the winter. No registration necessary. Meet at the bulletin board in the big parking lot near the lawn.

Saturday, Jan. 26, 2-3:30 p.m. Penrose Point SP; Dan, 884-2514

## Jan. 26 – Youth basketball clinic starts

Key Pen Parks will offer Youth Basketball Skills Clinics from Jan. 26 to Mar. 1 at the Civic Center. Clinics will be co-ed and offered on Saturdays as follows: second grade, 9-9:50 a.m.; first grade, 10-10:50 a.m.; kindergarten, 11-11:50 a.m.; pre-kindergarten, 12-12:50 p.m. The program focus is on basketball skills development: dribbling, passing, and shooting. Adult involvement is

(See **EVENTS**, Page 17)

# OBITUARY

## Eugene James Wilson

Eugene "Gene" Wilson died on Nov. 16, 2007, at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle at the age of 70. Wilson was born Feb. 6, 1937, in Bayne, Wash., to Clyde and Florence Wilson, third of seven children.

He lived his entire life in the Puget Sound area, and worked at Kenworth as an assembly-line painter, for several commercial auto body shops, then as a heavy equipment operator and member of the International Union of Operating Engineers. He retired at age 52 to start Wilson's Bulldozing in Kent, and moved the business to Lakebay in the mid-1990s. Wilson was well-known and respected for his specialization in manufactured home setup and site-work. He enjoyed many recreational activities: boating, crabbing, fishing, mountain activities, motorcycles, his dogs, carpentry; he loved his work, family, and friends.

Wilson is survived by his wife of 30 years, Susan; sons Steve, Dave, Jeff (Kandi) and daughter Karin (Lance) Cordner, all of Lakebay; sons Kevin Weiss of Kennewick, Ken Weiss of Gig Harbor, and Tim Wilson of Portland, Ore.; brother Larry Wilson and sisters Marion "Midge" Bible, Alice Wilson, and Gloria Wilson. He had 13 grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. Wilson was preceded in death by his brother, Robert, and sister, Shirley Schumacher. A memorial was held at Haven of Rest in Gig Harbor Dec. 1. Donations may be made in Wilson's name to the St. Joseph Dialysis Center in Gig Harbor or the Key Peninsula Fire District 16.

(From **EVENTS**, Page 16)

required during the weekly clinics. Scaled down equipment, specialized drills and games will be used. Cost is \$39 and includes a basketball and shirt. Register: Scott, 884-9240

## Jan. 27 – Fundraiser for Delores

Close to Home Espresso invites all to its second annual fundraiser, which will benefit Delores Leigh, who taught at Evergreen Elementary for 27 years and teaches at Lakebay Church. Delores is a

# OFF THE KEY

## Jan. 8 – Art show opens

The Peninsula Art League Members' Art Show will be on display in Gig Harbor at Kimball Espresso Gallery. The show will be juried by John McCuistion, Art Department chair of University of Puget Sound. The artists' reception and awards will take place on Sun. Jan. 13, 2-4 p.m.

Jan. 8 to Feb. 3, Kimball Espresso Gallery, 6950 Kimball Drive, Gig Harbor. Rhene, 209-1355 or peninsulaartleague.com

## Jan. 9 – Elderhostel program presented

At the general meeting of the Gig Harbor Women's Club, Kathy Antonson

will present an Elderhostel program. Elderhostel is a nonprofit travel group that presents exciting and interesting trips, at a remarkable value, for all 55 and over. There will be a lunch after the program at Harbor Monsoon.

Wednesday, Jan. 9, 11 a.m. Peninsula Library, GH. RSVP to Marcia, 857-5324

## Jan. 27 – Free winter concert

The Peninsula Youth Orchestra will perform its annual free Winter Concert, with four orchestras (beginners to advanced) to perform.

Sunday, Jan. 27, 3 p.m. Harbor Covenant Church, 5601 Gustafson Dr, Gig Harbor; Paula, 534-5384 or info@harborpyo.org

## GET INVOLVED Volunteer listings

**Key Pen Parks** is seeking individuals who wish to be part of a committee to discuss future playground equipment at Home Park. Interested individuals should contact the Key Pen Parks office at 884-9240. The first committee meeting will be Wednesday, Jan. 23, 7-8 p.m. at the Home Fire Station.

**The Key Peninsula News** needs a volunteer graphic designer to design and paginate a photography book that will be used to raise operating funds. The project will start around February and last until May. Call 884-4699 or email news@keypennews.com for details.

## Young writer honored by veterans

Key Peninsula Veterans Institute's Christmas Party on Dec. 15 had a special guest in attendance, Samantha Baimas with her family and friends. Cy Young made a personal presentation to Baimas of a plaque and American flag from all the veterans. Baimas wrote a "point of view" guest editorial in December issue of the KP News titled "Veterans deserve our respect." The KPVI members said they are grateful for a young woman who chose to make positive statements for the military service people and families, who have sacrificed greatly in these recent years of war.

In the photo, Samantha Baimas (third from left) with family and friends.

*Photo courtesy Patsy Tiegs*



part-time barista at Close to Home Espresso and recently had major heart surgery and is recuperating at home. Join Delores' friends for a special day with special drinks and pastries to help a longtime contributor to our community. All earned funds will go to Delores to help with medical expenses.

Sunday, Jan. 27, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Close to Home Espresso, Key Center

## Jan. 30 – KPFRC meeting

The Key Peninsula Family Resource Center will hold its quarterly Community Advisory, with the agenda to include

"News From Over the Back Fence, Family Successes" and "Making a Difference." All interested folks are welcome.

Wednesday, Jan. 30, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Whitmore Room, Key Peninsula Civic Center; must RSVP by Jan. 25, 884-5433

## Jan. 31 – Winter Poetry Night

The KP Writers' Guild presents Winter Beat Night with stories, poems, songs and drums. The drums of Dale Loy and Friends bring local writers to the stage to read their work.

Thursday, Jan. 31, 6:30-8 p.m.,

O'Callahan's in Key Center.

## January – Register for adult basketball

Key Pen Parks is accepting team registrations for adult 3-on-3 basketball league. Teams will play a 10-game season plus a tournament. Games will be played on Sunday afternoon and evenings. Games will be played at the Key Peninsula Civic Center. Cost is \$275/team. Minimum of four teams and a maximum of 12 teams. Visit [www.keypeninsulaparks.com](http://www.keypeninsulaparks.com), call 884-9240 or email info@keypeninsulaparks.com.

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Peaceful, well maintained home, on 1.24 acre, det garage and carport; master bath w/soak tub, wood-stove, bay window, kitchen eating area and formal dining room. Cinda Baldwin 253/884-1754 #27209460


**PALMER LAKE \$68,500**

.62 ac lot, 2 tax parcels combined. 1/2 block from quiet, peaceful, private Palmer Lake. Tall trees and the end of a cul-d-sac, make a private setting for your new home. Water/power/phone in street. Community lake w/beach access, play area, swimming, fishing, canoeing. Laura Mosley 253/377-6025 #27211077


**TACOMA \$127,500**

Location, close to Tacoma Mall and other business. Rambler w/private backyard. RV on end of street, no thru traffic, RV parking also. Dallas Amidon 253/606-0972 #27189015


**LAKE HOLIDAY \$225,000**

Charming 3 BD cottage amid the tall trees in a Lake Community. This place has it all, fireplace in LR, kit w/din area, front and back decks, 2 car att garage. Lake access to fishing, swimming, canoeing! Also, golf course, tennis courts and playfields. Laura Mosley 253/377-6025 #27206460


**TAYLOR BAY \$254,900**

On Puget Sound, private saltwater community of Taylor Bay w/access to beach and boat ramp! New rambler w/quality craftsmanship, upgrades throughout, porcelain tile in kit and entry, covered cedar porch w/recessed lighting, deck off back and att 2 car gar. Dottie Mazza 253/225-0530 #27163984


**LAKEBAY HOME WITH ACREAGE \$349,995**

Spacious home, beautiful wooded setting, over 9 acres. where you can stroll wooded paths to your pond! Home has 3 bd, large kitchen w/island and hot tub spa for your enjoyment! Two 2-car garages with shop space for all your projects! Liz Gefre 253/884-1265 #27183791.


**SHORT DISTANCE FROM GIG HARBOR \$464,000**

New, premier quality home, in cul-de-sac. Vaulted ceilings, kit w/eating bar, granite counters, stainless appliances. Master bd w/private deck & jetted soaking tub. One acre w/partial fenced yd, 3 car garage/RV parking. \$10,000 Buyer Bonus/\$1500 Buyers Choice! Dallas Amidon 253/606-0972 #27157443


**LONGBRANCH ESTATE \$599,000**

Quality home w/beautiful views of Puget Sound/Mt. Rainier, in a magical setting of 7.5 acres! Spacious w/wall of windows, hardwood floors, atrium fam rm and private porch. Rural paradise w/sprawling lawn, lovely island pond and forested nature trails. AJ Million 253/884-9537 #27204959


**PALMER LAKE \$193,000**

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# New support group helps with drug addictions

By Danna Webster, KP News

A family support group for chemically addicted individuals, their spouses and children meets Wednesday evenings at the Burley Bible Church. On Jan. 20, this group, called Recovery Victorious, will hold an open house providing information, resources and guests speakers for families impacted by alcohol and drug addiction.

Recovery Victorious is a chapter of a

nationwide organization, Alcoholics Victorious, which was established in 1948. The group was founded with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous and offers a faith-based recovery program. Lakebay resident Robert Grimes founded the local chapter about a year ago. The group works with the whole family.

"Our focus is the family," Grimes says. "We offer help for people and get them into treatment. It is not just about the chemically addicted individual."

Grimes' experience with chemical addiction is personal. Over 30 years ago, he was homeless and used drugs. "I used to be a street person and was drug addicted in the '70s," he says. "I've got 23 years of recovery. I'm trying to be part of the solution rather than the problem. All I do is faith-based recovery groups."

Drug abuse on the Key Peninsula is a serious concern for Grimes. "I've seen the severe methamphetamine problem on the Peninsula," he says. Pierce County has the highest methamphetamine production in the state, according to Grimes, who reports that the number of meth labs busted in Washington in 2006 was 850 — with 350 of them in Pierce County.

Recovery Victorious networks with other agencies and organizations. The group works with probation and police departments to fulfill the court-ordered meeting requirements for convicted drug offenders; it also works cooperatively with Tacoma Rescue Mission, CARE (Chemical Abuse Resource and Education) and Safe Streets, all of which will be present at the January open house with resource tables. The open house will

## Open House

Recovery Victorious Open House is Sunday, Jan. 20, 5 p.m., at Burley Bible Church located at 14687 Olympic Drive SE, in Burley. Rescue Mission Treatment Center weekly meetings are Wednesdays, 6:30-8 p.m. For information about the open house, weekly meetings, support donations and transportation, call Robert Grimes at 884-1883.

feature guest speakers, including Ken Butler and Bryan Uebelacker. Butler is the chaplain for the Bremerton Police Department and Uebelacker is the former director of Rescue Mission Treatment Center in Tacoma. The treatment at the Rescue Mission Center was an 11-month program helping people to get back into society, providing job training and counseling.

After the open house, Recovery Victorious will continue its weekly Wednesday night meetings. This summer, the group will provide a resource booth at the major events of the Key Peninsula.



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*"Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there...."* Will Rogers



# FD-16 STATS

## Key Peninsula Fire Department rescue calls

### Nov. 3

A woman with a seafood allergy used the emergency phone at the Key Center fire station, complaining of hives and shortness of breath after eating lobster. She was stabilized and transported to a Tacoma hospital for further treatment.

### Nov. 7

Firefighters and paramedics assisted Pierce County sheriff's deputies when a suspect they were pursuing, captured by a K-9 unit, sustained lacerations and an arm injury. The medic unit transported the patient to a Tacoma hospital with a police escort.

### Nov. 11

Firefighters responded to six separate fire alarm activations, caused by a malfunctioning detector at the Key Peninsula Middle School. School officials responded to monitor the buildings.

### Nov. 14

Firefighters responded to an automatic residential fire alarm activation in the 15500 block of 134th Street KPN. They arrived to find a home under construction and a worker unable to reset the alarm after dust caused it to activate.

### Nov. 16

Paramedics responded to a gunshot wound to the head on 92nd St KPN. The elderly patient was found breathing but unresponsive. He was transported to the Vaughn Elementary field, where an Airlift NW medic helicopter picked up the patient for transport to a Seattle trauma center.

### Nov. 27

Paramedics transported a driver from a jeep who lost control on the ice, went off

## November total calls: 159

Medical aid: 107  
Fires: 22  
Burn complaints: 10  
Vehicle crashes: 10  
Weather related: 6  
Other: 4  
Mutual aid from Gig Harbor: 10

the roadway and landed on its side down an embankment on Wright-Bliss road. The patient was taken to a Tacoma trauma center.

### Nov. 29

An elderly male patient fell down several stairs at his Lakebay home and suffered a head injury. Paramedics stabilized him at the scene and transported to Key Peninsula Middle School to meet Airlift NW for transport to a Seattle trauma center.

### Dec. 1

A Lakebay woman was assisting a friend cutting firewood when she accidentally touched the chain on the saw and suffered a near-amputation of her thumb. She received initial patient care from Key Peninsula firefighters and was transported by Gig Harbor Medic One to a Tacoma hospital.

### Dec. 3

Firefighters responded to two separate homes being impacted by the heavy rain and localized flooding. One home suffered erosion around the foundation due to a plugged up culvert. Firefighters diverted the water with sandbags and unplugged the culvert. The other home suffered runoff into a garage and firefighters used sandbags to divert the water.

### Dec. 9

Paramedics responded to a report of a woman ill at a Vaughn area residence. They



Photo by Karen Hale

A Lakebay woman suffered minor injuries in a two-car, rear-end collision on Dec. 8 State Route 302 near the Windermere office.

arrived to find the elderly patient lying on the ground in the woods near her home. She said she fell about six hours earlier and had spent the early morning hours in 30-degree temperatures. She was treated for hypothermia and rushed to a Tacoma hospital.

### Dec. 15

A teenage male sustained several minor dog bites to his leg while he was being taken into custody by the Pierce County Sheriff's deputies. He lost his argument with

the police K-9 after he reportedly broke into the Peninsula Market in Key Center during the wee hours of the morning.

### Dec. 16

Firefighters and paramedics responded to a two-car head-on collision in the 8400 block of Key Peninsula Hwy, just south of Key Center. Firefighters used the "Jaws of Life" to remove both drivers from their vehicles and then transported them to a Tacoma hospital.

## Longbranch Improvement Club

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To benefit Emergency Food Network and KPCS Food Bank, co-sponsored by Longbranch Community Church

**Childrens Easter Egg Hunt** March  
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**Antiques Road Show** April  
with Key Peninsula Historical Society

**Beyond the Borders Concert** August  
with Two Waters Arts Alliance,  
underwritten by the Angel Guild

**Trunk or Treat** October  
with Evergreen Elementary PTA

**Kids and Christmas** December  
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THE BLUES @ 8PM

JANUARY 11th LOOSE GRAVEL  
BLUES & ROCK/ROLL @ 8PM

JANUARY 12th PACIFIC BREEZE  
OLD ROCK & ROLL @ 8PM

JANUARY 18th DONN ALLARD & RENEGADE TRAIN  
ALL COUNTRY @ 8PM

JANUARY 25th BILLY FARMER & THE RAMBLERS  
ROCK-N-ROLL @ 8PM

JANUARY 26th PACIFIC BREEZE  
OLD ROCK & ROLL @ 8PM

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# Two-generation KP family opens Gig Harbor coffee shop

By Jeanette Brown  
Special to the KP News

Coffee has definitely become a "family affair" at the Renckly-Nelson household. Robin Nelson and her husband, Jake, recently became co-owners of the most recent upscale Gig Harbor franchise of the Forza Coffee Co. together with Robin's parents, Bob and Cindy Renckly. The two couples even live on the same street in Wauna; the Nelsons both are lifelong residents of the Key Peninsula.

While enrolled in the paralegal program at Tacoma Community College, Robin honed her skills as a barista at a Bertolino Bros. Coffee Bar in Tacoma for six years. For the past year there, she was a manager — and now she will enjoy her role as manager of the family business, overseeing the day-to-day operations full time.

"I am very supportive of Robin's position as manager of our new Forza Coffee Co. location," Jake Nelson said. His experience in equipment maintenance has already come in handy while construction was under way at the Gig Harbor store, which is located on Olympic Drive in the same complex as Harbor Greens.

Cindy Renckly, who home-schooled all four of her children, has a background in accounting and will help with office and bookkeeping tasks. Bob Renckly, a senior systems programmer and software developer for Intel, plans to keep his day job, as does Jake, who works for the city of Gig Harbor. Bob expects his role to include "processes, procedures and ambiance."

"We have hired about 10 baristas to staff our Gig Harbor store, and the Forza Coffee Co. and Dillano Roasters has a great training program," he said. "In addition, both companies have a policy of partnering and giving back to the community. Our baristas use semi-automatic espresso machines for better quality control during the brewing process."

Baristas train for five days, two of which are spent at the corporate-owned store located in Tacoma on Pearl Street. The baristas then finish up with three days of training at Dillanos Coffee Roasters in Sumner, the company's exclusive roaster of choice. In fact, Dillanos has grown to become the largest handcrafted micro-roaster of specialty coffee in the Northwest and supplies a special signature blend unique to the Forza Coffee Co., which specializes in a true Italian ambiance espresso café experience.

Customers take a special delight in the dark, rich wood interior and Italian porcelain tiled floors that can be found in every one of the charming and enjoyable locations.

All stores offer comfortable leather sofas and chairs placed near a warm fireplace, where customers can sit and enjoy espresso and other specialty coffee drinks, teas, soft drinks or smoothies with their friends and family. Fresh pastries, sandwiches, salads and whole bean coffee are also on the menu, and every store is equipped with wireless Internet service.

"The Gig Harbor store does not have a drive-thru, but (our) Port Orchard location will," said Robin, who will also manage that store, which will be located near the intersection of Sedgwick and Sidney. "We are looking forward to opening our second franchise location during the first half of 2008."

Brad Carpenter, a former detective who retired from the Gig Harbor Police Department in the spring of 2000, is one of the co-founders of the Forza Coffee Co., and thinks "the Rencklys are great people." The inspiration for the company came "from the Italian shops and the appreciation for the way they live... stopping in small espresso bars to connect with their friends and community," Carpenter said.

The Forza franchise has experienced tremendous growth since its inception. "Our growth is a little crazy right now; from three shops two years ago, seven last Christmas and 21 this year (2007)," he said. This translates into a 300 percent growth rate over the last year.

"We have an additional 25 shops in the works in six other states and Canada," Carpenter said. In the spring he will be traveling to Milan, Italy, to set up a barista exchange, and some of the Forza baristas



Photo by Jeanette Brown

Jake and Robin Nelson with her parents and co-owners, Cindy and Bob Renckly, at a Tacoma Forza Coffee, where they were undergoing training in mid-December prior to opening their own shop in Gig Harbor.

will have the opportunity to work in Italian espresso bars.

"The word Forza signifies strength in Italian, and one of the reasons the family selected the Forza Coffee Co. is because Forza strives to establish themselves as partners in the community, making each relationship a strong one," Bob Renckly said.

In Italy, the local espresso shops define their communities. "Forza intends to fulfill their commitment to the community by partnering first with schools and churches, in order to strengthen our communities," Renckly said. "Our family feels that the Lord is leading us in this new endeavor and partnership with the Forza Coffee Co."

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# Local inventors hope to help others

By Sharon Hicks, KP News

Chris Caulkins and Chere Conner are among the Key Peninsula's newest inventors. Although they appear to be a quiet, laid-back couple, they are actively dedicated to human interest and working on safety aids to help others.

Their invention, recently patented, is called the Cane Keeper. After a 1999 car accident, Caulkins had to use a cane. Tired of having it fall every time it was set down, he wanted to do something about it. While he and Conner were playing with a Huskies football team's rooting horn, the idea and shape came to them.

"If you believe in something, you can achieve it," Caulkins says.

They toyed with the idea for eight months; it then took another four years to develop, patent and produce it. The shape was altered to add 10 pounds of weight for balance. Before sending the prototype to an engineer, the dimensions had to be preset. When told the design was too big, the couple had to come up with two smaller ones to convince the engineer their dimensions were correct. Voila, the Cane Keeper became a reality. (Locally, the device is sold at CostLess in Wauna, and the Olympic Pharmacy in Gig Harbor).

This little human aid is usable anywhere and is easily transportable, weighing just over a pound. It is designed to hold a cane upright without tipping over and is a great accessory for anyone using a cane. Caulkins and Conner do a lot of research for other ideas. Several are on the back burner and one is currently in the works, all for helping others with disabilities. "A lot of time, money and effort go into planning and designing," Caulkins says.

Caulkins is a Washington native, and



Photo by Karina Whitmarsh

Chris Caulkins and Chere Conner with their current invention, the Cane Keeper, and their extensive mineral collection in the background.

for the past 11 years has worked as a registered nurse for Western State University. He is also a personal trainer for people with disabilities. He is devoted to his work six days a week. Prior to becoming a nurse, he worked on experimental aircraft for the U.S. Department of Defense.

Conner is from Connecticut and is a Washington resident of 14 years. The couple has lived on the peninsula for nine years. Her passion was costume designing, and in 1998 she sewed costumes for seven of the Seafair pirates. Her other passion was working as a jeweler, designing and creating exotic pieces out of silver and gold. Today, she has a shop in their home and considers jewelry-making a hobby due to arthritis in her hands. Their family includes an orange cat, who was born with seven toes

and greets anyone coming to the door, as well as two affectionate dogs.

Collecting minerals and rocks from all over the world and United States has

been a cherished hobby for Caulkins for the past 18 years. A long, glass case displays minerals from malachite and quartz, to azurite and calcite. A most unusual one is okinite, also called rabbit's foot, as the crystal is soft and fuzzy, whereas the piece of ulexite looks like a fairytale white castle.

Every flat surface in the dining room and den is occupied by one of their gem collections. A pedestal displays a gigantic, polished sphere taken from a piece of petrified wood; on the floor next to it lies an untouched (except for the surface) piece of petrified wood about 18 by 12 inches.

Conner is now the user of the Cane Keeper, as she frequently needs the added assistance of a cane. The two believe strongly in their first invention and are eager for it to be an aid to others.

The long-range goal for Caulkins and Conner is to help others as well as continue developing their dream inventions. A few have been sold but they are aware that it sometimes takes several years for something new to be publicly discovered.



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EXPIRES 01/31/08

# BRIEFS

business

## Variety store opens

Mike Ross, who has held "variety sales" on the Key Peninsula in the past, has opened a store at a permanent location. Ross' Variety Store opened in the building that formerly housed Jane Dough Pizza off KP Highway and 134th Street (also known once as Macon's Bacon).

Although vandals broke into the store and the next-door smoke shop three days before Ross' store Dec. 17 opening, Ross told the KP News he will not let that stop him from opening the business.

## New menu coming to ex-Beach House

There was activity and traffic in front of the former Beach House in Purdy in mid-December. Workmen were busy with remodeling projects and new owners, Jim and Natasha Jones, were preparing the restaurant to house a

national franchise known as Wings Pizza N Things Inc. The franchise menu features jumbo buffalo wing entrées starting with five pieces for \$3.99 up to 300 pieces for \$138.99 in a variety of choices, pizza options, hamburgers, french fries and homemade fried pies.

In an email to KP News, company Sales and Marketing Director Dan Rudder wrote, "...Our new location (will be) opening soon in the Gig Harbor... area. We are very excited for this store and its location."



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# Two Waters ARTS ALLIANCE

## EVENT CALENDAR

Family Art Day - Make fun memories at our collage workshop. Free event	<b>Jan 27th • 12 - 2 PM</b> <b>KP Library</b>
Tears of Joy "Little One-Inch" Puppet Theatre	<b>Feb 2nd • 4 PM</b> <b>KPCC</b>
6th Annual Spring Fling - a gala event celebrating the arts of the Key Penin- sula. Non-members \$15	<b>Mar 15th • 7-10 PM</b> <b>KPCC</b>
2nd Annual Beyond Borders - an after- noon of international food and music	<b>Aug 15th</b> <b>LIC</b>

## Little One-Inch Puppet Theatre



TWAA and the Angel Guild are proud to co-sponsor the February 2nd Tears of Joy "Little One-Inch" Puppet Theatre. Little One-Inch is a traditional Japanese Banraku puppet drama that tells the story of a tiny boy who sets off to find his fortune. His parents give him a needle to use as a sword, a wooden bowl to use as a boat, and a chopstick to use as an oar. In his adventures he becomes the playmate of a princess and defeats a great ogre in battle. Come see Little One-Inch for an afternoon of cultural delight and wonderment. Suggested \$5 family donation at the door.

## Call to Artists for Spring Fling Artwork

TWAA announces a call to artists for Spring Fling artwork. Any artist may submit up to 2 pieces of art for inclusion in show. Inclusion in the show depends on number of entries, quality of work and space availability. Call Margo Macdonald for more details 884-2955.

## Volunteer Opportunities

We are always looking for a few good volunteers! Want to donate a few hours and be part of the community? Give us a call. We are recruiting for event set up crews and committee volunteers. Interested? Give Denise a call 884-9498.



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### November HOME SALES

Gig Harbor and Key Peninsula

	Sold Nov 2006	Sold Nov 2007	For Sale as of 12/17/2007
	79 Homes	44 Homes	780 for Sale
Highest	\$1,600,000	\$1,030,000	\$4,800,000
Lowest	\$132,000	\$145,000	\$85,000
Median	\$357,500	\$359,250	\$500,000

\$750,000



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# Postal history on the Key Peninsula

By Colleen Slater, KP News

*Editor's note: This is part 1 of a 2-part article.*

Sending and receiving mail in the early part of our Key Peninsula history depended on delivery by boats, or a resident heading to Tacoma or Steilacoom to pick it up. The establishment of pioneer post offices assured somewhat more regular mail delivery. Postmasters or neighbors met the boats and delivered the mail.

Many storekeepers became postmasters, although some kept the office in their own homes. Early pioneer post offices often occupied a corner in the postmaster's residence, although some on the Key Peninsula didn't fit that mold.

Lake Bay was the first post office on the peninsula in November 1882, with Henry Tiedeman as first postmaster. Tiedeman, as did some in other communities, rowed to Steilacoom to deliver and collect mail — when it was convenient for him. Carl Lorenz received a four-year contract to carry mail on the "Sophia," and helped set up the Lake Bay post office. The name was changed to Lakebay 12 years later.

Albert Sorenson, with horse and buggy, carried the first rural route mail for Lakebay in 1909. His 22-mile route increased by 4 miles the next year, and to 72 miles by 1960, long after Sorenson resigned. He moved up to a Model A Ford before he retired.

The next post office began in the George Minter home at the mouth of Huge Creek. The mail boat from Steilacoom stopped at the dock Minter constructed. A schoolmaster, William Kernoodle, became postmaster for two years, and applied for a name change to Elgin. Postmaster Cora Smythe ran the Elgin post office for nearly 23 years until it closed in 1936. A historic marker highlighting the Minter/Smythe house sits across the road.

Horace Knapp, an early logger in Purdy, added the Purdy post office to his raft anchored in Burley Lagoon in 1886. The raft also boasted a cookhouse and bunks for the loggers. Nine years later, the Purdy mail went to Springfield.

Alice Hunt made frequent trips to Tacoma on the boat and returned with the Vaughn mail in her market basket. She was appointed postmaster Feb. 29,

1888, and retained that position for nearly a year, when Alfred Van Slyke was appointed, and put the post office in his store. Van Slyke's daughter, Nellie, helped her father in his store, and on low-tide days when the boat had to stay outside the bay, she rowed out beyond the sandspit to meet it and exchange incoming with outgoing mail.

Bird Finch Van Slyke, son of Alfred, made history as the first child born in Vaughn — "in the back room of the post office," according to family history.

A logging camp bunkhouse, moved behind the service station at Vaughn by John Wolniewicz, became the post office for 14 years during Bertha Mills' time as postmaster. Before that, the storekeeper became the postmaster, or the postmaster assisted the storekeeper. Mills' father, Emil Lonning, was Glencove postmaster for eight years, and her sister, Irma Nordquist, covered Lakebay for nine years.

Delano, the shortest-lived post office on the peninsula, was in the hotel of the resort operated by Capt. George Delano and his wife, Edith. The post office opened in June of 1890 and closed in July of the following year.

The Wauna post office began as Springfield, named by George McCormick and James and Deborah Wickersham. By the time Mary Frances White became postmaster, there were 14 Springfield post offices in the state, so some were asked to change their names. White selected Wauna, a Native American word meaning mighty waters. The postmaster position stayed in the White family for three generations.



## Back in time

In 1925, representatives of various business and social clubs from Tacoma traveled to the home of Edwin D. Nichols on Cramer Road as part of a tour to view the future Highway 302. Pierce and Mason County commissioners organized the group, which also enjoyed a corn roast at Nichols' farm before heading home. The farm is just below the Key Peninsula Highway at Key Center. *Photo courtesy KP Historical Society*

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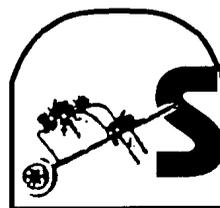
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# Longbranch home to oil guru

## Rich Hildahl has small town ideals, worldwide experiences

By Kristen Pierce, KP News

Through the results embodied in his career, former Longbranch Improvement Club president Rich Hildahl touches the lives and wallets of every individual who drives a car, powers a speedboat, heats a home with oil, and more. He is an energy transportation specialist, an independent consultant for oil companies worldwide.

A Washington native, Hildahl was born and raised in Spokane. He attended Pacific Lutheran University and University of Oregon, where he met his future wife, Connie. He started his career in Steilacoom in the early 1970s. While living in Steilacoom, the Hildahls became avid boaters. During a sail, they discovered Filucy Bay and fell in love with its beautiful views, shores, and rural ambiance. Off in the distance that day, Connie spotted a sale sign on the shore of a cove. The sign was advertising a new contemporary home. They admired the bold structure so much, they took a couple of snapshots.

Hildahl was hired by one of the nation's largest international accounting firms, Ernst and Ernst, known as Ernst and Young today. He excelled in the company's consulting services division, and was eventually moved to the firm's San Francisco headquarters. When oil was discovered in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, Hildahl became an exclusive consultant with British Petroleum, facilitating the oil company's accounts with the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS). He participated in the development of energy transportation solutions for the Prudhoe Bay operation, and began work on the commercial and regulatory side of TAPS as an independent consultant for Alaska pipeline oil companies nationwide.

Energy transportation networks are vital to cost-efficient and environmentally safe delivery of oil to and from markets worldwide. When the World Bank in Washington, D.C., became aware of abundant oil resources in Russia, Hildahl acted as ambassador for

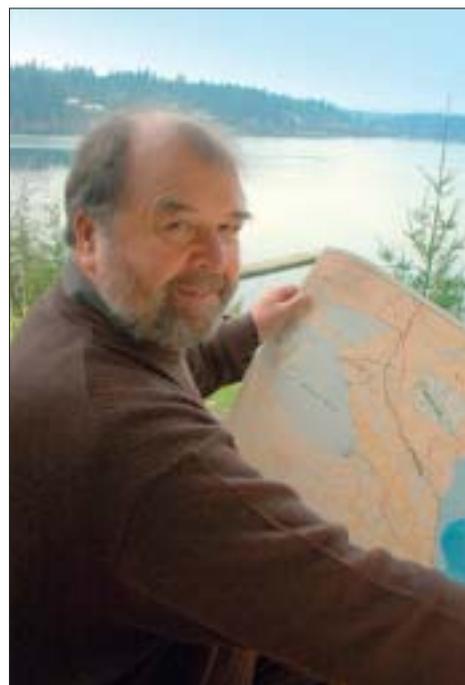


Photo by Karina Whitmarsh

Rich Hildahl at his Filucy Bay home with a map of Russia, where he has served as an ambassador for World Bank.

pressing the Caspian Sea and Middle East regions.

Currently Hildahl is working on a project to develop expand crude supplies in Canada for delivery to U.S. markets, including Washington state. Although the oil is developed from tar sands and heavy oil (which is harder to refine and separate for multiple uses), it is in high demand. According to Hildahl, Canada has an abundance of oil with a supply capacity of over 260 years' duration at current production levels.

"I have spent my whole career studying this subject. It is heartbreaking to watch our policy-makers choose to not take advantage of our own natural resources," Hildahl says. "We are pursuing policies that will destroy commercial fishing and farming, have serious impact on recreational boating, commuting to and from work, and negatively impacting our small communities due to the significantly higher prices in our region."

He offers, for example, restrictions in Alaska's Arctic Natural Wildlife Refuge, and the lack of public knowledge of benefits to the environment and wildlife from the pipelines. According to Hildahl, wind power in Washington is a seasonal energy source, and he thinks solar power is an "oxymoron."

"It is a self-inflicted wound by our policy-makers," he says. "The energy prices are too high and will only continue to rise."

Thirty years later, the Hildahls returned to Longbranch. Amazingly, by chance, a family friend told them about a unique home for sale in Longbranch on the waterfront designed by well-known local architect Jim Olson. To their absolute astonishment, they drove up to the same home they had admired and photographed three decades earlier from their sailboat.

When home in Longbranch, Hildahl stays busy. Two of his three children were married this past September, only weeks apart. "That was a very busy month for us," he says. He and his wife continue to volunteer at the Longbranch Improvement Club, helping raise funds for scholarships.

"We all know each other here," he says. "This is a special place with beautiful natural attributes. It is an interesting and diverse community. I've received so much more than I've given."

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that financial institution. His job was to assist with ideas and recommendations for laws and regulations as the country then known as Soviet Union began developing its energy transportation networks.

This assignment (ultimately a 15-year association with the World Bank) was the beginning of a 30-year career in the supply and secure transport of oil. Hildahl went on to serve energy transport efforts in the Middle East and China. He has acquired significant understanding of the political mechanisms, foreign policies, economic and controversial environmental issues

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(From HOPE, Page 1)

With a retail schedule, she had no public transportation choices if she worked weekends or late evenings.

"My biggest frustration was on the weekends," she says. "I think it's a big mistake (not to have service) because there are a lot of people who have to work on weekends."

Pierce Transit's Bus-Plus service has been operational on the Key Peninsula since September 2003, and started out as a pilot project by the agency as a way to provide more cost-efficient service in rural communities. The service operates between Purdy and Home on a "loop" every two to three hours, with some regular stops and some "off-route" ones where the bus only picks up riders who call in advance. "It's not the most convenient program, but it moves 50 people a day," says Jean Archer, senior planner with Pierce Transit. "It is the best resource (for an area like the KP) based on available dollars."

The agency is looking to modify the program by closing several "off-route" stops next year. But there are no plans for expanding the hours of service. Instead, the agency is in discussions with Key Pen's Mustard Seed Project to provide a community van through the transit's van share program. For \$370 a month plus 33 cents per mile, the community van will be available to Mustard Seed 24 hours a day, though service can only be provided within a 50-mile radius. The van will be equipped with a wheelchair lift. The volunteer drivers will be screened and trained by Pierce Transit, and Mustard Seed will have the option to charge a fare.

Eddie Morgan, founder and director of The Mustard Seed Project, said the van will be funded via a one-year seed grant from the Angel Guild. "All of the mechanics of the program are still being determined," she says. "It will be on a route and schedule."

The Mustard Seed Project is focused on building an elder-friendly community on the Key Peninsula. Thus, the services of the van will be geared toward eligible seniors (at least in the early stages). "We aren't going to be the answer to everyone's last-minute needs," Morgan says. "I hope at some point (in the future) we can be more responsive."

The van is not the only project the nonprofit organization has in the works. A transportation committee, chaired by John Nederlee, has been meeting for over a year to discuss the lack of transportation on the KP. As a result, the



Photo by Karina Whitmarsh

Elsie Vezzani, one of the volunteer drivers during training.

committee decided to create a survey to better understand the local population's needs. "The survey went beyond seniors because transportation has been a communitywide issue for a long time," Morgan says. "It's time to get real, hard information so we know what the needs are, or at least as perceived by the community."

In addition to the community van, the implementation of one other program isn't waiting for survey results. In partnership with Catholic Community Services, The Mustard Seed will start a "volunteer driver" program early this year, also initially focused on low-income seniors. Six volunteer drivers have already been recruited, screened, and are receiving training. "We're poised (to get started) and just have to find out what the client base will be, after the survey," says Nederlee, who is also one of the volunteer drivers.

Unlike the community van, which will operate on routes, this will be a door-to-

## Transportation details

The Mustard Seed Project encourages all KP residents to fill out its transportation survey, regardless of their age or needs. The survey is available this month as an insert in the Key Peninsula News. For additional copies, contact Edie Morgan at 884-1205.

Details on the new local transportation projects, the community van pool and personal volunteer driving service, will be available as the two programs are closer to implementation — which is expected early this year. Sign-ups will be available at that time through the organization's Key Senior Information Line.

door service, geared to take people to essential places. The drivers will wait for their riders; they will have the option of requesting gas reimbursement based on miles. Riders will need to sign up for a date in advance, and qualify based on their age, income and driving ability.

"This is designed to serve those most in need of transportation. It is not available to all segments of the general public," Nederlee says. "We are considering transportation programs which

will be much more comprehensive."

The Mustard Seed has also been involved in regionwide discussions through the Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition, which has been in existence since 1999. The coalition is looking at ways of increasing mobility and access for people who cannot drive due to their age, disability, or income. "We're trying to find out who's falling through the cracks, and how to find funding to fill the gap," says Faith Trindle, a consultant who is coordinating the coalition. So far, the coalition has focused on the south-east areas of the county, and Trindle says the Key Peninsula is not unique as far as rural areas go, but still more challenging because how spread out it is. She says the coalition is starting discussions on what other ways the peninsula area can be served, but for now it comes down to local leadership.

"There's a real opportunity for the community to rally," she says. "...Figure out what the problem is, and transportation experts can try to figure out a system, but it will have to rely on community funds or individuals like volunteers. If the community is tight-knit, there is a really opportunity to do it."



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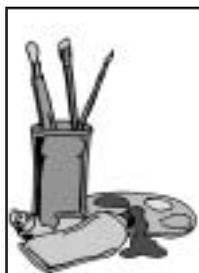
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# Key Pen artist Pat Meras has worldwide acclaim

By Jerry Libstaff  
Special to KP News

Pat Meras is a highly regarded Key Peninsula artist whose work is marketed and collected around the globe. She has been deeply involved in art for as long as she can remember. After receiving a bachelor's degree in applied art from Montana State University and studies in Italy and Holland, Meras' path led to Washington. Ten years ago, she and her husband found property and built their home on Horseshoe Lake.

Meras has a rich background in multiple genres. She has worked in several drawing mediums, as well as oil pastel, collage, watercolor, etching and embossing. "For many years my focus was on drawing, from a live model and



The Genuine  
ARTicle



Photo by Jerry Libstaff

Pat Meras in her Key Pen studio.

then various printmaking techniques," she says.

As her work evolved, she focused on painting; however, she found the brush strokes of watercolors seemed to dissolve on paper. "Although watercolor is a beautiful media, I wanted to capture and retain the strokes," she explains.

## More information

Pat Meras' work is displayed at the Harbor Gallery in Gig Harbor and online at [www.womenpainters.com](http://www.womenpainters.com) or at [www.artaisance.com](http://www.artaisance.com), and Larson Juhl Frame Co. markets open edition prints of her pastel paintings.

Meras began work with pastels. "I found pastel to be a wonderful link between painting and drawing. Pastel is pure pigment. The color stays true over the years. Pastels are produced in varying denseness. You start with hard, darker colors then add the softer, lighter textures to form the light," she says.

Light is the focus in her landscapes. She says she is intrigued about the way light "elevates a commonplace landscape to an extraordinary one." She loves painting in the Northwest because "the light here is very subdued — it's all beautiful." Meras has photographed and sketched across the United States and other countries, capturing the images she works within her studio. "The sunlight in Hawaii, Mexico or Greece is far more distinct. It adds contrast to the work," she says.

Meras' landscapes are filled with mystery and poetry. They are lyrical with color that is remarkable for its strength and purity. The subtle light illuminates different parts of the scene and defines the transparency of the piece. She says, "My intent is simply to convey an emotional and intuitive response to the mystery and serenity of the landscape in light and shadow."

Meras has recently transitioned from

primarily "studio work" to "plein air" painting. The "on-site" pieces are smaller than her traditional paintings. She says, "You have to work small, fast and without much detail, as there's a window of about two hours to capture a scene before the light changes dramatically. If you attempt to paint a landscape with conflicting light, it can become unsettled and disturbing."

Meras is leaning more toward impressionism with breathtaking results. In the interim, she still enjoys drawing from live models each week. "Drawing from the figure is a good exercise which encourages me to use freer, looser strokes, the benefits of which flow over to the underdrawing of my pastel paintings," she says. But it's her pastels that have reached a worldwide market and were featured in *The Pastel* journal and *Pastel Artist International* magazine. Limited editions and fine art reproductions of her pastel paintings are produced and distributed globally by Grand Image of Seattle. Fine art reproductions have also been produced and distributed worldwide by Winn Devon Art Group of Seattle. Her reproductions have been featured at Art Expo, ABC Atlanta, other worldwide trade shows and in trade publications such as *Decor Magazine*. She is also included in an ad campaign with Larson Juhl Frame Co.

Meras' landscapes draw the observer into a feeling of serenity. The scenes develop a relation with a special moment in time. They evoke memories past and feelings of comfort that relate intimately to each individual.

*Jerry Libstaff is a writer who lives in Vaughn.*

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(From **HOSPITAL**, Page 1)

slightly ahead of schedule, a group of local area leaders is working on a \$10 million campaign that will help pay for a cancer care center and other amenities. The group has secured nearly \$5 million through leadership gifts, and expects to launch a public campaign within a month. Public meetings and private presentations are also planned for the Key Peninsula.

Four Key Peninsula residents have been instrumental in the success of the hospital project, and the KP News is sharing their stories.

Laure Nichols, a third-generation Key Pen resident, is the Franciscan Health Systems senior vice president for planning and business development. She has worked for the organization for about 25 years, and has been at the helm of the Gig Harbor hospital development and approval process. When she started at Franciscan in the '80s, the nonprofit had only one hospital (St. Joseph Medical Center). In addition to St. Anthony hospital, Nichols was at the helm of two hospital acquisitions and opening of six outpatient facilities.

"I've been blessed to be involved with facilities," Nichols says. "I've been very excited about the fact we've seen a lot of growth in the system."

Although public announcements about the new hospital plans were not made until 2003, Nichols and other FHS leaders began exploring the idea in 2000, undergoing a "serious study" of the entire Kitsap Peninsula. They found a dire need for 24-hours emergency services, and spent two years researching their options. "We came to the conclusion we needed to work toward a hospital," she says. "...I've been on the Peninsula long enough — I've seen many accidents and I know how difficult it's been for my friends and family to get the needed services."

She says the past seven years have been a rollercoaster "in terms of the emotion of the project" due to several hurdles (after the hospital was approved by the state) and it's gratifying for her to see it become a reality.

Nichols acknowledges the Gig Harbor project has a special emotional attachment for her. She grew up visiting her grandparents on the Key Pen every summer. She now lives in their farmhouse with her husband and her daughter, and has fond memories of local family celebrations with her parents, uncles, aunts and cousins. One of those family members was her mother's younger sister, Jane Russell. "I had a very special relationship with my aunt. We



Photo by Rodika Tollefson

Construction workers help move the final steel beam to the crane during the "topping out" ceremony in December. The nearly 1,700-pound beam was signed by business, civic and Franciscan leaders who attended the event. See more photos at [www.keypennews.com](http://www.keypennews.com).

were next-door neighbors for 20 years and had many things in common," Nichols says.

Russell died of cancer in May 2002. She was a well-loved philanthropist and chair of the St. Joseph Medical Center board of trustees. Her husband, business leader George Russell, pledged \$1.5 million to the St. Anthony capital campaign via the George F. Russell Jr. Fund at The Russell Family Foundation. The leadership gift will help create a state-of-the-art outpatient oncology facility, which will be named the Jane Thompson Russell Cancer Care Center. The Russell Family Foundation was created with part of the proceeds from the sale of the couple's business in 1999, called at the time Frank Russell Co. The foundation, based in Gig Harbor, supports education and environmental causes.

"Jane Russell had a unique gift for being able to quietly help and strengthen people, even those she did not know very well. This cancer center will allow that legacy to continue," George Russell wrote in an email to the KP News. "Many people helped Jane and me five years ago during her fight with cancer, and this is something I can do to return the favor." He said supporting the cancer center is especially important to him because it will serve the local community. "My hope is that the generations of my children and grandchildren will have much better prevention and detection against cancer, and much better chances for recovery if the fight for health becomes necessary," he wrote.

The second-largest campaign gift, in the amount of \$1 million, came from a Key Pen summer resident. Mary Ann Walters' donation was in memory of her

late husband, Gene Walters, who also died of cancer. The majority of the funds will go toward the ER department, which will be called the Gene and Mary Ann Walters Center for Emergency Services. The rest will be used for an endowment to fund complementary therapies for cancer patients, water features and gardens on the campus, as well as artwork by Northwest artists for the facility.

The total goal of the campaign is \$10 million, and several other large gifts have been secured. Walters' daughter-in-law, Theresa Walters, is on the capital campaign committee and is a former member of the Board of Trustees. Walters is also Nichols' longtime best friend. She said once the public outreach efforts begin, her job will be to educate local residents about the hospital and what the community can do to help.

"People are really excited about the hospital. I think they know it will improve the community and it's something we need," she says.

Walters, who was on the YMCA leadership campaign and previously headed the Pt. Defiance Flower Show, has longtime community involvement on the Key Pen. She helped found the Parent-Teacher Association at Key Peninsula Middle School and has volunteered for many years for the Flavor of Fall, a traditional fundraiser of the KP Civic Center. She was on the board of the Key Peninsula Health Center, back in the days when Dr. William Roes had just been hired and the clinic was across the street from the health center, where now is a beauty shop. (Dr. Roes eventually moved out of the health center his own building up the hill).

Walters says Nichols' dedication to the project has been an inspiration to her.

## Topping out celebration

The topping out ceremony is a tradition that originated with ironworkers in Europe several hundred years ago. The last St. Anthony steel beam, more than 28 feet long and weighing nearly 1,700 pounds, carried an American flag on one side and an evergreen tree on the other as it was lifted to its final place. The evergreen tree is the symbol of safety and prosperity — to date, there have been no major injuries during construction.

The structure has required 3,000 steel beams and about 1,350 tons of reinforcing steel. It was designed to some of the most stringent seismic codes, and the seismic structural system includes a central concrete elevator core that has walls 36-inch-thick in places and is anchored to the ground by 6-foot-thick concrete mat footing.

The \$150 million, 217,000-square-foot hospital is expected to open in early 2009. Construction also started in December on an 85,000-square-foot medical office building, which will be connected to the hospital by a sky bridge, and will house the cancer center as well as a wide variety of outpatient services.

"She cares so much about our community and the convenient access to excellent health care for KP residents as well as Gig Harbor and Port Orchard," she says.

Nichols, in turn, credits the many people who stepped forward to make the hospital a reality — from state lawmakers and Gig Harbor's mayor, who worked on solutions after city approvals delayed the project, to people like Walters and others on the capital campaign who are volunteering their time to bring in extra funds. "It's a wonderful feeling, to see what can happen when people collaborate," she says.

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(From FIRE, Page 1)

brochure, created by Miller, was initially intended to be sent to residents from the fire district. Prior to final commissioner approval, however, the decision was made to have the PDC look the brochure over for potential conflict. When it appeared there was some question from the PDC regarding brochure illustrations, FD-16 commissioners decided to forego publication.

Miller retained the rights to information he created, collected a \$4,000 consulting fee from the district, and offered the brochure to the citizens committee for its use. By the time the offer was made, according to Rieggle, only a few days would remain for campaigning after the brochure was printed. Eager to have something advocating passage of the levy in the hands of voters, the committee decided to use the publication. Rieggle said he relied on Miller's knowledge of PDC and fire district protocol. "Miller told me it wasn't a document of the fire department," Rieggle told the KP News in



RIEGGLE

an interview. "He said he produced the flyer and retains the rights to his data."

According to PDC documents, "In his complaint to the PDC, KPF D Commissioner (Allen) Yanity stated that the mailing was a campaign advertisement designed to encourage a 'yes' vote for the lid left levies of KPF D. The mailing included the return address of the KPF D and the statement, 'An Important Message From Your Fire District.' The mailing also included the KPF D logo and the KPF D's identification patch. The only change Mr. Rieggle made to the KPF D election information he obtained was the statement, 'No public funds were used to prepare or distribute this brochure.'" Yanity's position was that a product paid for by the district was being used for private purposes by district personnel, which amounted to theft.

At issue is inclusion of the KPF D return address and district logo, which led voters to assume the brochure came from the district. "I did not see the final product," Rieggle said. "Yet, as the chair of the levy committee, I'm ultimately responsible for making sure that things are on the up and up. I have to accept the blame."

The final order of the PDC, dated Dec. 11, 2007, found Rieggle responsible for reimbursing the fire district for Miller's

\$4,000 fee; he was also assessed a \$500 civil penalty, \$250 of which was suspended. Ironically, according to FD-16 Chief Tom Lique, had Rieggle not been a fire district employee, he could have used the brochure as it was offered without penalty. It is his affiliation with the district that created the conflict.

"I'm hard-pressed to believe Mike's intent was to cheat the fire department out of the money," Lique said. "I don't believe he is 'damaged goods.' Nobody (in the district) has stepped up and said Mike talked to them, so I'm assuming he didn't."

In an emailed statement to the KP News regarding the PDC decision, Yanity wrote, "I have received many phone calls from citizens saying Mike should be fired for his misuse of district property... I would prefer to see other punishment... I believe Mike R should be reduced in rank at a minimum. I am not satisfied with the PDC decision... not this simple of a case and others (the KP Firefighters Association and many individuals) were involved and should have been charged. Mike took the fall and I believe the other two (commissioners) will reward him for his efforts... If the union continues on the present path, I don't see anything bright in the future of the (fire district)."

Rieggle is a 16-year professional firefighter with KPF D, and was a volunteer firefighter with the district before that. He has the support of both the Key Peninsula Firefighters' Association and Firefighters Local 3152. These organizations will be voluntarily reimbursing the \$4,000 to the district; Rieggle will take care of the civil penalty. "It makes me feel good that our firefighter organizations are standing behind me," he said. "I apologize to the community. I did not intend to violate the law; it can be a pretty fine line. I brought discredit to my organization, and I feel I've embarrassed the district. I love this organization — we need more people, more services for the growing community. That's all we were out to do."

Disposition of this case comes during the drive for signatures on a recall petition asking voters to remove Yanity from his commissioner's post. Rieggle is aware that his signature-gathering efforts may look like retribution. "It's not," he said. "One firefighter cannot have a commissioner recalled; (I want it on the ballot) to let voters decide. I have nothing against Commissioner Yanity, except how he is attempting to affect change." Rieggle said he is not in any leadership position in the recall effort, and is collecting signatures on his own time.



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## Tears of Joy puppet show theater comes to KPCC

TWAA and the Angel Guild are co-sponsoring the 2008 Tears of Joy Puppet Theatre performance on the Key Pen. The play, "Little One-Inch," will be staged on Saturday, Feb. 2, at 4 p.m. at the Key Peninsula Civic Center.

Key Peninsula residents will experience traditional Japanese Banraku puppet drama that combines Samisen music and puppetry techniques. Many people consider Banraku puppet drama

to be equal with live-stage theatre performances.

The play's musical score incorporates traditional Samisen music (pronounced shami-sen) produced by three string banjo-like instruments with modern musical influences. Visible Banraku puppetry performers dress in black and manipulate oversized puppets. The story is brought to life by the performers, who use different tones of

voice to distinguish between male and female characters, young from old and good from bad.

"Little One-Inch" tells the story of a tiny boy, no bigger than a person's thumb, who sets off to find his fortune. His parents give him a needle to use as a sword, a wooden bowl to use as a boat, and a chopstick to use as an oar. In his adventures, he becomes the playmate of a princess and defeats a great ogre in

battle. This is one of Japan's most-loved children's stories, and is a true expression of Japanese character and customs.

The Tears of Joy adaptation of "Little One-Inch" was written by Leo Lominz, a 16-year-old student from Beaverton, Ore.

Cost is \$5 suggested family donation at the door. For information, contact TWAA events chair Mark Runions at 884-4807.

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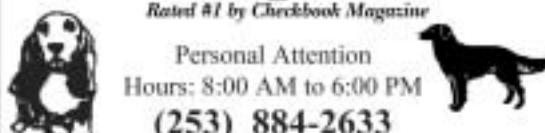
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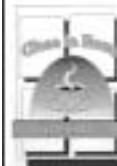
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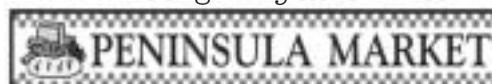
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# Out & About

To see more Out & About photos, visit our Website at [www.keypennews.com](http://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!



*Photo by Mindi LaRose*

Local artist and Lakebay resident Donn Allard paints the windows of Peninsula Market in Key Center for the holidays. Allard, known for his famous white hat, is also the guitar player for the band Renegade Train, which frequently plays at O'Callahan's.



Above, Tara Froode, one of the organizers of the Key Center tree lighting, helps a handful of children (including her own kids) to sing carols before Santa came to the annual celebration. *Photo by Danna Webster*



Right, Hola, amigos! A couple of days before its Dec. 17 official opening, El Sombrero, the newest face in Key Center, is ready for diners— Mexican hat, wood carved booths, and all. *Photo by Danna Webster*



Julie Boardman, chair of the Skate Night Committee for the Civic Center, receives a gift of appreciation at the KPCCA's annual meeting in December. *Photo by Danna Webster*



At Key Peninsula's Volunteer Park, Gary Helt, far left, promoter of the second annual Turkey Trot mixed adult softball game, poses with Sins, Rod, and Custom team of Vancouver, Wash., after the last game of the season. *Photo by Hugh McMillan*



Left, A festive crowd enjoys "Eyewitness News: Christmas," a play enacted by Vaughn Community Church youth at the Key Peninsula Civic Center in December during a dessert theater presentation. *Photo by Rodika Tollefson*