

Photo courtesy Key Peninsula Historical Society & Museum



Old Ladies Who Love to Swim by Dawn Martin

They are the uninhibited, the not shy
and the first to arrive
clothed in their outdated
stiff polyester bathing suits,
brown and orange towels draped
around their necks.

They hobble gingerly down uneven ground
towards the glassy lake water,
bodies wounded by time,
Helen has lost a breast to cancer
Anita has had both knees replaced,
and trouble with her hip.

Into the cool dark water they dive
with unexpected grace,
seconds pass.

They emerge out of nature's pool,
hair smooth as the water drains from the tips.
Droplets of water, like diamonds,
sparkle on their skin.

As if some magical transformation
has occurred,
they glide freely through the water,
Like fairies flying through air.

The small lake, whose edges are framed
by tall evergreen trees, makes the
ladies feel like they are fourteen
again, diving in for the first time.

Giggling and following each other,
they explore the many coves and
corners the lake has to offer.
They sit for a while atop the immersed
log at the end of the lake.

When they swim it's like their
secret world opens up.
Gone are the years of worry, raising
families and old age.
Their spirits soar, like the resident
eagle circling the lake.

Truly, what a sight to behold, these
old ladies, who love to swim.

Green by Carolyn Wiley

Gravel shifts and crunches underfoot.
Birds offer their choral commentary
on our progress.
Evidence of fleeting fear or tasty morsel is
seen in four divots ripped from new grass
Too wide for deer,
Too small for bear.
Details dissolve into the deep green darkness
as we leave the sun's blinding glare
And move into the cool darkness
of the tree tunnel.
Irises widen and our brains
separate, differentiate,
And catalogue the surrounding greens.
Above, translucent big leaf maples diffuse
a high-chroma glowing light.
Dark green sword ferns guard
the woods beyond.
Old fronds hide tight coiled fiddleheads
poised to lift their rusty heads
And unfurl to reveal a core
of near-white green.
Deeper into the woods limbs and trunks
are defined by light on dark images
Standing before the deep velvety
curtain of low hanging cedar.
Ahead the road bends and pale
ivory goat's beards nod
And their pale green leaves
tremble in the breeze,
A sharp contrast to the glint of light
That dances off the rigid prickly
Christmas green of holly.
Leaving the deep shade, we note
the small lobed leaves
That obscure drooping red currant blossoms.
Nearby a single crimson star
foretells the emergence
Of the salmon berry that is hidden in its heart.
Shy clusters of white bells nod beneath
a reddish mantle of new growth
On the Evergreen Huckleberry.
Turning from new gravel onto
the less traveled path,
Our steps are muffled by last
year's thick track of leaves.
Here in silence, we pad along in shared silence,
Watching, searching, for the grayish
green of first growth digitalis
And the faded trilliums that heralded this day.
This perfect multi-green day.

This special summer section features work submitted by local writers and poets. It's generously sponsored by the "best" businesses shown below.

THE BEST OF KEY PENINSULA SUMMER

Summer on the KP

by Kendall Powers

Cool wind whips your hair backwards
 You stand there, overlooking the beauty
 Shades of blue cover the scene in front of you
 The hot rocks and sand under your feet
 As you walk into the cool, lively waters
 Little fish dart around your legs
 As you turn from the view
 To meet an ocean of evergreen trees
 The bright blue skies and everlasting sun
 That blind if you look
 You feel as if
 You could never leave
 This quiet town we call our own
 The perfect KP summer,
 With every other season
 Longing for summers yet to come.

A Perfect Summer Morning by Annan Ball

If you lay down on the soft grass of your front lawn, still slightly damp from the morning dew, the smell of warm grass, with just a hint of pine needles, would fill your nostrils. You might look up at the sky, which would be a perfect blue, occasionally dotted with white puffy clouds. Everything would be green. Bright, happy, green. The tall, majestic Douglas firs, filled with their fragrant needles, the madronas with trunks glowing a soft pinkish red. Look around, you may see an orchard, fruit just beginning to ripen burdening tree branches. The grapevine full of grapes, a few ready. If you tried one, it would burst in your mouth, sweet and slightly sour juice saturating your tongue. The bees would be buzzing around, looking for fresh flowers, hummingbirds would buzz over your head to one of the late blossoms. A few chickadees might call, and the harsh caw of a Steller's jay would reveal its location among the many trees. It would shine with a dark blue, maybe showing off to a likely mate. The call of an eagle would draw your gaze up to the sky, where you would see one circling, high above, perhaps with a companion.

All of this happens during the summer, at my home on the Key Peninsula.



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Campers revel in sunset. Photo: Richard Miller, KP News



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Filucy Bay July sunset. Photo: Richard Hildahl



THE BEST OF KEY PENINSULA SUMMER

Carnival Pond by Phyllis Henry

When the artesian well water flowing into our upper pond hits a certain depth, the water finds its way through a five-inch pipe into a lower pond. Each year newly-hatched baby mallards spend idyllic days swimming on the two ponds, carefully monitored by their attentive mama duck.

One sunny day a young duckling in the upper pond swam too near the overflow pipe, slipped over the edge, and was catapulted through the water slide inside the pipe into the lower pond. As the loudly squawking mama duck rushed to rescue her baby, the duckling's siblings in the upper pond also opted for the wild ride through the drainpipe, and in moments the mama duck was in the lower pond surrounded by her ducklings again.

While Mama Mallard scolded and chased after them, the babies escaped, waddled up the incline

between the ponds, and tumbled into the upper pond. Frantically quacking, their mama tried to drive them away from the overflow pipe, but one by one the ducklings again enjoyed the wild water ride. All afternoon the babies jumped into the pipe while Mama Mallard rushed from pond to pond, loudly scolding her babies for their dangerous escapades.

At the end of the day, when it seemed the babies had tired of their private water park game, the ducklings sought shelter under their mama's wings at the side of the pond. The next morning the family of mallards was gone, perhaps to live in a safer pond where the mother could distract her babies from carnival-type temptations and concentrate on teaching them how to survive in a tough world.

It Has Come! by Amber Lee

Summer! Oh, how fast it came!
Winter seemed like yesterday;
But it has left, and in its place
Summer has come here!
The waters it calmed, the wind it stilled,
Its glow our hearts to warm and thrill,
Its contagious joy our hearts to fill—
Summer has come here.
Neighbors laugh across the fence,
People gather at events,
The joy they feel is so immense! for
Summer has come here.
The days grow longer, shorter, nights;
The birds' grow plumage very bright;
Loud they sing, their voices light—
Summer has come here.
Let the sun dry up your tears,
Spend time with those so dear,
Fill your hearts with joy and cheer, for
Summer has come here!



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Late afternoon on Taylor Bay. Photo: Jason Comerford Photography



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Headed west for an afternoon at sea. Photo: Anna Brones, KP News



Sunday Drive by Kathy Best

We all know our local parks,
Play grounds and places to eat,
But a Sunday drive on a Summer day
Is pretty hard to beat.

There are many country roads
Where many of us will never go.
We fear that maybe we'll get lost
But what you'll miss you'll never know.

Old graveyards, homes and
abandoned barns
Are among the sights to see
And you may meet some local folks
To tell you of their history.

The gas station is in disrepair,
A school house leans towards its end.

The six-sided outhouse, old but prime,
Stands waiting just around the bend.

There sits an old vacant home
Slowing being devoured
By the invasion of scotch broom
And thick blackberry briars.

Have you seen the herds
of grazing sheep
Or buffalo chilling under trees?
How about the elephant of ivy
Which is guaranteed to please?

Nothing can match the thrill I feel
On a leisurely Summer drive
Or any season on the KP.
It makes me glad to be alive!

Kite Memories by Carolyn Wiley

A pull, a tug, a bit of slack
Tactile memories live in my hands.

A soaring, diving, spinning kite
Visual memories dance behind my eyes

Flapping paper, Humming string, snapping tail,
Musical memories play a loop through my brain.

Drifting scents of bloom, grass, and water
Slip past unnoticed on the chill fresh wind.

With feet planted in soft sun-warmed sand
I guide the kite into an endless sky

I am strong and a collector of new knowledge
Surrounded by love on a kite-perfect day



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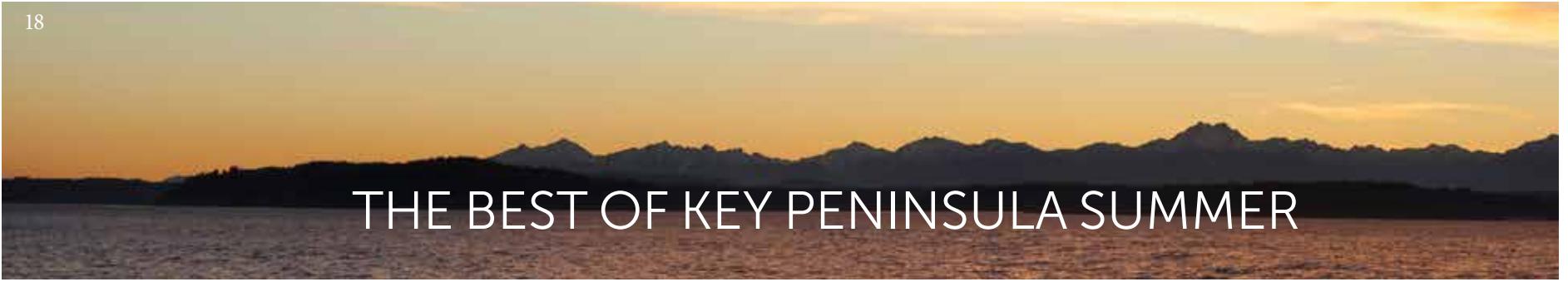
Geoduck hunters near Devil's Head. Photo: Don Tjossem, KP News



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Idyllic Stansberry Lake. Photo: Shari Anderson Siebold



THE BEST OF KEY PENINSULA SUMMER

Starry Night by Anna Brones

The Paris summer night was hot and sticky, when the air hangs heavy and breathing feels muffled. Unable to sleep, I looked to the sky, searching for solace in the world above. A few meager stars flickered tentatively, as if unsure of their own existence. How disconcerting a starless night can be, as if I had lost my bearings. I called Paris home for a few years, and this was a regular summer occurrence, just as disconcerting every time.

"Do you remember when I used to pick you up and take you outside to look at the stars?" my father recently asked. I have inklings of early star memories, with one very clear recollection of August meteor showers, but I know his shared experience of the night sky is deep in my consciousness.

In my childhood Key Peninsula home, summer nights made for vast,

dark skies that glittered. I would leave the comforts of bed and drag my sleeping bag outside. The cool night air would kiss my face as the hammock rocked back and forth, protected by my vigilant dog lying below me.

Looking up at the night sky framed by apple leaves, I would stare at the stars until I couldn't keep my eyes open, entranced by the complexity and infinity of the world above.

A few years ago I moved back here, making my way from Paris to Vaughn. There are many things to be said about that change, many differences, many joys, many difficulties. But one thing is certain: I have always felt tethered to this place.

Now, when the hammock is out and the summer night is still warm, I make sure that I lie down and look at the sky filled with stars. A great sky, full of wonder and potential.



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Mckenna Rieman swinging into summer. Photo: Richard Miller, KP News

What I Love About KP Summer by Kathie Broderson

Key Pen-in-sula,
Sum-mer—.
Warm days, Sum-mer—.
Set a diff'rent kind
Of pace—,
More time, more space.

Go to,
Pur—dy spit.
Take time to sit.
Kites are in the sky,
Fireworks in July.
People to greet, at Swa-p Meets,
Many things I spy—
Ma-y-be-, I'll buy—.

Take a picnic to,
The park—,
Gateway—, Penrose—.

But my fa-mi-ly,
All knows—.
I like—, to go—
And—
Play with the band.
Doc Roes is grand.
Gott'a laugh and see
"Tiju-ana Ta-xi."
Polkas are great.
"Take Five" but wait for
"Stars and Stripes For-e-ver—."

Watch the beautiful sun-set,
Go in, not yet.
Fond memories,
Hold on and don't forget.
It's what I love about Sum-mer,
KP—, Sum-mer—.

With a cadence inspired by the 5/4 beat of Paul Desmond's "Take Five," stanzas 1,3 and 5 are read slower, with 2 and 4 upbeat and inspirational.



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Filucy Bay Marching Band in the 2017 July Fourth Home Parade. Photo: Shawn O'Berry