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THE VOICE OF THE KEY PENINSULA

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Construction Begins at Evergreen Elementary School

The official groundbreaking ceremony was livestreamed on Facebook.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

A small but excited group gathered June 5 as Peninsula School District Superintendent Art Jarvis, Principal Hugh Maxwell and the five school board members put feet to shovels to break ground for the new Evergreen Elementary School. Pandemic restrictions significantly limited the number who could watch in person, but the district livestreamed the groundbreaking on its Facebook page.

“A building doesn’t make a school. It is the people,” Maxwell said. “But adding this building to an already amazing school is going to make things even more incredible.”

“I am so thrilled with our new Evergreen Elementary School,” Jarvis said. “One year away, a beautiful school, and a wonderful fit for this community. Promises kept.”

Absher Construction, a Puyallup-based company, was awarded the \$24,851,000 bid. The new school is scheduled to open in fall 2021.

“We are delighted Absher took an interest in Peninsula School District,” said Project Manager Jeff Greene of Greene-Gasaway Architects, which designed the new school. “They have a great reputation and strong management. We are happy to be working

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PSD gets to work on the first new elementary school on the Key Peninsula in a generation.

Photo: Peninsula School District, Larry Steagall

A Song for Ted and Joanna

He was the ‘smartest guy in the room,’ but she was ‘in the band.’

TED OLINGER AND
LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

Editor’s note: We memorialize the lives of our friends and colleagues Ted Ralston and Joanna Gormly, who were part of our newspaper and civic center family.

Firefighters discovered the bodies of Ted Ralston, 71, and Joanna Gormly, 73, in the basement of their burning home on Vaughn Bay the evening of May 17. They also discovered evidence the two had been murdered and that accelerants were used to start the fire and cover the crime.

Pierce County detectives arrested a third resident of the home, Ezra Ralston, 26, the couple’s grandson, early the next morning and charged him with two counts of first-degree aggravated murder. Three others were arrested in the following days: his girlfriend, Rebecka Neubauer, 22, and Sean Higgins and Spencer Kleine, both 23, were also charged with the murders.

All four pleaded not guilty and were held without bail.

According to the Pierce County prosecutor’s office, the crimes were allegedly part of an attempt to somehow gain ownership of the Vaughn property that Joanna’s parents bought in 1966.

The grandson lived with the couple off and on starting in 2015. He struggled with his mental health, and the couple told friends they thought moving him from Texas, where he lived, to the family home, where he had enjoyed many summers growing up, could help him.

Ted and Joanna were married on the lawn between the beach and that house in 1969, when her parents lived there. They renewed their vows on the same spot 30 years later and celebrated their 50th anniversary in August 2019.

Ted grew up in North Seattle. Joanna was born in New Jersey, but the family moved around the country for her dad’s work and she graduated from Issaquah High School. The couple met as undergraduates at the University of Washington where



Ted Ralston and Joanna Gormly dressed up for “Hollywood Nights,” an evening of fundraising at the KP Civic Center in October 2018. Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News

they lived in a shared home called Russian House with two dozen other students, an immersive education setting facilitated by native-born Russians who managed the premises and coached the residents on language and culture.

After their son, Alex, was born, the young family moved to the English countryside in Great Milton where Ted studied Byzantine history and Russian language at Oxford University on a Fulbright scholarship. He later returned to UW to pursue a Ph.D. in history, completing his research but not his dissertation. Both he and Joanna were fluent in Russian and spoke some French, and Joanna, who had a degree in foreign language studies, was learning Swedish at the time of her death.

“From ages 1 through 4 of my life we lived in England,” Alex said. “We came back, lived briefly in Seattle and then moved to the East Coast, where we lived in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia.” But Alex spent part of every summer on the beach at Vaughn Bay.

“When we first met them they were living in, I believe, Bowie, Maryland, in ’75, but they came out here all the time to visit Jan and Dick (Gormly, Joanna’s parents),” said Norm Brones of Vaughn. “Ted worked on the Magnuson campaign in 1974 here in Washington. Joanna also worked on that campaign; she was politically active early on, but then stayed home with Alex.”

After working for Sen. Warren Magnuson, Ted became a congressional aide for both Senators Patrick Leahy and Daniel Inouye. “He worked on the Church Committee,” Brones said. “That was the CIA investigation committee, and that’s why everybody around here assumes he was in the CIA, which to the best knowledge of any of his lifelong friends, nobody can confirm.”

Or deny.

The U.S. Senate Church Committee, named for its chair, Sen. Frank Church, was convened in 1975 to investigate abuses by the CIA, FBI, IRS and the National Security Agency (NSA) during the Watergate and Vietnam War protest era. Ted worked on the committee as a congressional aide for over six years.

“In sixth grade, my dad left politics and we moved back here where I went to Key Peninsula Middle School for part of sixth grade, seventh and eighth,” Alex said. “I have friends still that I’ve kept in contact with over all these years.” Alex and his family now live outside Austin, Texas.

Ted’s knowledge of history and experience with national security issues evolved into arms-control treaty monitoring and studying Soviet strategy and politics. He researched and taught these subjects at Stanford University for two years as a member of the Center for Strategic and International Security.

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KEY PENINSULA NEWS

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Here's What I Think About That

LISA BRYAN,
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, KP NEWS

The coronavirus pandemic put the brakes on customary municipal fireworks shows, but no doubt the skies above the Key Peninsula will light up July Fourth as usual with private displays to celebrate with all the customary pops, booms and bangs.

The dazzling displays that have come to represent Independence Day, marking the signing of the Declaration of Independence, may feel diminished this year as our nation wrestles with a past and a present we can no longer deny.

In April, a dear friend embarked on a coronavirus-inspired mission to clean and sort through decades of accumulated stuff. He came upon a cardboard filing box covered with dust. Combing through the assortment of old papers, he found the speech he wrote in preparation for the day he would become a naturalized citizen of the United States of America.

"What do I love about this country? Freedom, equality and hope."

Freedom for him meant the opportunity to live authentically, as well as to respect the courage and hard work of others trying to do the same. He wrote that "becoming a citizen is the ultimate proof of what equality means. As new citizens, we will be accepted as full citizens by the people and society as a whole."

He made his speech in front of the judge and other immigrants about to become U.S. citizens that day, with the hope that being true to themselves would be good — not only for them and their families and friends — but for our country. He shared his hope that this country and the whole world may always be guided by the bright star of equality.

A few years ago, I was with a small group of friends talking about immigration policy when it dawned on us that four of the five of our mothers were naturalized citizens.

My mother came to the U.S. through Ellis Island as a young girl with her parents after spending years as refugees in Sweden after World War II. We were raised on stories of their brave escape from Estonia, how they fled as their home was swallowed up by the communist Soviet Union.

Once in America, my grandmother worked long hours as a seamstress and

later as a tailor to support my grandfather, who earned a degree in theology and became a Methodist minister. They worked hard, and saved enough money to send my mother to the University of Puget Sound.

That conversation with friends made a real impression on me then. I am reminded of it now for very different reasons: Our experience as relative newcomers to America

is testimony to the unrecognized entitlement of being born white.

The American Dream hasn't been anything like that for Black people who have lived in this country since before it was born.

How many generations will it take for Black people and other racial minorities in this country to be treated like Americans?

It's obvious now that reality affects every person in this country. It feels like a line has been crossed.

And it's not the only one.

The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department passed a resolution June 17 asking residents to protect each other by wearing face coverings in outdoor and indoor public areas, especially when they cannot maintain a physical distance of six feet from others.

The resolution is not a mandate to wear masks.

Few of us like being told what to do. But when there is something in it for us, most of us can put feelings aside to work together to do what's right for our community.

Many forces benefit from pitting us against one another. But when we join together for our common good, difficult goals are achievable.

Protecting each other with the least expensive option, such as wearing a bandana or mask when shopping, has made a huge difference in halting the spread of disease. It also builds confidence in people who remain at high risk. Ensuring our neighbors feel safe and comfortable eating, shopping and enjoying public spaces strengthens our community and our local businesses.

The number of confirmed COVID-19

cases west of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, including Key Peninsula, rose slightly in June but remains well below infection rates in comparison to other communities in Pierce County.

As a rural community our greatest challenge is not winning the war against COVID-19 — a feat currently beyond our capacity — but working together to hold the line against it.

Total eradication at this stage of the

pandemic is impossible without a safe treatments and an effective vaccine. We're not going to win the war against COVID-19 anytime soon by the looks of it, but I refuse to believe we are incapable of putting ideological and political differences aside in favor of rallying together for our common good.

I was raised to believe this was what America was all about. Doing the right thing. Standing together. Holding the line.



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this summer

With generous
underwriting from the
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our new website will
deliver the news to your
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with dazzling speed and
fresh, bright style. Look
for it soon at
keypennews.org

TED AND JOANNA FROM PAGE 1

In 1983 he was tapped by retired Admiral Robert R. Inman, former chief of the NSA and deputy director of the CIA, to join the Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corporation in Austin. MCC was a consortium of some of the biggest names in computers, electronics and military contractors at the time focused on closing a gap in technology development compared to other countries.

Ted went on to found two start-up companies specializing in software design and system security. He was hired by IBM in 1999 to work on what became the Tivoli Security Division in 2000.

The couple also helped a Russian family adjust to life in the U.S. when they met in 1991.

“Ted and Joanna were my best American friends, we feel like they are part of our family, they did so much for us,” said Tatyana Koshevaya, who is now a social worker. “They were heroes for me. Joanna helped me get my first job and helped us bring my brother to this country. They were with us in our hard time.”

The two families spent quality time together. “They liked Russian food and we cooked for them, while Ted played guitar and Joanna would sing Russian songs,” Koshevaya said. “Our English improved as did their Russian. They were my first and greatest mentors in this country.”

Ted and Joanna moved “20 times” for Ted’s work, Joanna once said, but they came to the Key Peninsula to live full-time next to her parents in 2001.

“They bought that house to be there with Janet and Dick and do more for them. She was close to her parents,” said Britta Brones, who is married to Norm.

“This is why so few people (out here) knew him, until the last six or seven years,” Norm said. “Ted literally made more than one trip around the world each year. He started and went one direction and hit Singapore, Australia, India, and multiple places in Europe.”

Joanna meanwhile remained politically active throughout her life. She volunteered for numerous campaigns, from presidential down to local races and causes. She took



Wedding day on Vaughn Bay, August 1969.

Photo: private collection

over from her father doing the books for Key Medical Center, became president of the board of directors, and was an early supporter of a new tenant, The Mustard Seed Project.

“Her enthusiasm for the work was reassuring at that stage,” said Edie Morgan, the Mustard Seed Project’s founder and executive director at the time. “She was always a most gracious, warm person.”

After Joanna’s parents passed away within three weeks of each other in 2015, she and Ted bought and moved into their house in 2017.

“They made a really active choice to stay in buying that house,” said Anna Brones, Norm and Britta’s daughter. Ted and Joanna had spoken often of living abroad, of traveling, of finding a city to live in, she said. “But they thought, ‘So, we’re home now.’ Maybe there’s something in having roots in a place and then rediscovering them.”

“She really liked living in Vaughn,” said Joanna’s brother, Ken Gormly, 63, of Fox Island. “Living in the family home really made her happy. She started doing more things around the house, improving the landscaping, I spent quite a bit of time with them there.” Ken grew up in the house and attended Vaughn Elementary, Harbor Ridge (then called Goodman) Middle School, and graduated from Peninsula High School.

“They were involved in the civic center, the Lions’ Club, Rotary, the health center and both of them were very active in the 26th Legislative District Democrats,” Alex said. Ted also contributed articles to the KP News (see Peninsula Views in this edition) and was part of the distribution team.

Ted retired in 2013. “That’s when we

started getting them into the community,” Norm said. “I pulled him along to come do things at the civic center and we started going to Blend when it first opened. Then he was ‘voluntold’ to get on the civic center board. We cleaned and maintained the tennis courts every year; that was important to him.”

“Ted was probably the best tennis coach I ever had,” said Quinn Ralston, 20, Alex’s son. He coaches at the prestigious John Newcomb Tennis Ranch in Texas. “Whenever I came out here, we’d drive down to the civic center courts and hit for an hour or so. Even with two metal hips he was still playing. He wanted me to teach him a two-handed backhand, because he was going to need shoulder surgery and that wouldn’t allow him to hit a one-handed backhand anymore.”

“I really enjoyed playing tennis with him,” said Luc Revel, Norm and Britta’s son-in-law. “It’s so rare to meet someone with such breadth, between sports and culture, it was really incredible. I feel like everyone has a similar story; he could always connect with something, no matter what

you were interested in, like a Swiss army knife of knowledge. He had the right tool for you, no matter what you were interested in.”

“Joanna was in charge of the catalog for Flavors of Fall, doing cut and paste by hand,” Britta said, referring to the biannual fundraising auction of the KP Civic Center. “She took it so seriously, that she should be involved. From that time on she was having a renaissance.”

Part of that renaissance, for both Joanna and Ted, was performing at the Blend Wine Shop in Key Center nearly every Friday night in recent years. What started with one or two guitarists grew into a large ad hoc band called The Mind Blenders, organized in part by Blend owner Don Swensen and musician Clark Snyder.

“It’s always been a community thing, so admittance isn’t dependent on your skill,” Snyder said. “Ted was an original, he was there before me. For the last three years, every week Ted was over at All Star Music, taking guitar lessons to get better for Friday night.”

After the band started playing regularly, Joanna wanted to join.

“She had an idea that not only did she want to sing, she wanted to perform, and once she got a taste of that, she was just in high gear — she was on it. She really wanted to learn. Don and I were mentoring her, but Ted was really supportive,” Snyder said.

“Ted was probably the smartest person in whatever room he was in, but he didn’t have to be. Some people need to be a know-it-all, and he didn’t. Joanna didn’t take away anything he had. He shared and supported,” he said.

Joanna wrote a song she wanted to perform for Ted as a surprise at their 50th wedding anniversary, which they celebrated at Blend in August 2019. She rehearsed it for three weeks.

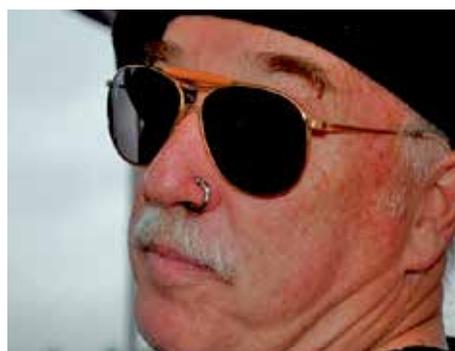
“I loved her voice. I saw where it came from,” Snyder said. “It was just her spirit, that was the thing, that’s all I heard, and her willingness to keep going.”

The band helped create the music for her song, but Joanna wrote the lyrics and worked hard to refine it, Snyder said. “She wanted to usher in that anniversary not only as a singer, not only as a performer, but as a writer and as a member of the band. And she would say, ‘OK you guys, let’s take it from the top.’ We all understood. There was just something in the way she said it, like, ‘I’m in the band now, so now I can use this phrase. I earned it.’”

Her song ends with the lines:

Maybe I’ve only misunderstood
Could be something’s coming, could
be it’s good
Won’t be so easy moving somewhere
Look over my shoulder, and you’ll
be there.

Visiting Brighton Jetty in Adelaide, Australia, January 2019. Photo: Anna Brones



Dr. Art Jarvis
GUEST COLUMNIST



To the Community

We in the Peninsula School District join the rest of our nation in sad recognition that many children and families are in pain right now, but especially our Black children and Black parents. As educators, we cannot live our lives in isolation or be immune to the protests. Our work must include a look at our own policies and practices to ensure we are part of the solution and not contributing to the pain. When we meet, we must talk about our own organizations and look inward.

As a school district serving 9,000 young people, and the largest employer in the area, we acknowledge that clashes in the streets have vividly exposed the daily hurt and trauma that some of our students, families and staff suffer because of the color of their skin. The murder of George Floyd, like so many others, has ignited protests from coast to coast in America.

To all, I first offer my heart in sympathy. Unfortunately, as a school system, we are unable to gather with our students to talk at this crucial time. Instead, we offer ourselves, our teachers and our counselors as resources to families. For our Black students and Black families, we know you are deeply affected by this and we offer our assistance and our commitment to helping find answers. I urge others to do the same.

What can you do? There are no bystanders, and I urge all to look for ways to move us from violence to solutions.

A major charge looms for us in the school business. Like many of those who are old enough to remember the 1960s anti-war protests, Civil Rights Movement, Watts riots and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., this 2020 violence feels even stronger. I reflect on words echoed over the last century, “Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

As educators, our responsibility is here now. The answer may not be as complex as it might sound — in our business we must teach. In today’s world of immediate access to information, it has become evident that one of the most important things we do is help students learn to think and evaluate what they see, hear and read. Learning standards are clear that students must be discerning if they are to become contributing citizens. Similarly, to be good citizens,

students must know how to contribute to their own well-being and that of others.

We are working to have our website access the wealth of pertinent writings that are emerging for students and anyone interested in the huge questions surrounding racial violence. At a minimum, we urge you to keep checking our website psd401.net for these excellent materials as we continue to grow our library.

Our schools are places for young people to grow and learn, including how to address questions of decency and justice. The violence, anger, death and crime are not passing incidents with little consequence. It is an element of our society that will undoubtedly affect our young people for the rest of their lives.

As we close this school year and anticipate the next, the world of civic awareness and responsibility must be a major focus. To all, we dedicate ourselves to offer a safe place called school. To those for whom school is not yet a safe place, we dedicate ourselves to that aspiration. Our children deserve it.

Dr. Art Jarvis is the interim Superintendent of the Peninsula School District.

Ted Ralston
A TED TALKS



An Ode to Volunteering

First printed in the August 2019 edition of the KP News.

Volunteering for civic organizations on the Key Peninsula is often associated with rearranging furniture, separating the recyclables and raising enormous amounts of money from the community just to give it back to them in a new and improved format. There are many unknown joys and unsuspected challenges in this noble pursuit.

I encountered a variety of each when I volunteered to sell fireworks at the Key Peninsula Civic Center stand in Key Center in July. Running the stand was the easy part; guarding it overnight was not.

Having buttoned up the stand for the night, I was just pouring a slosh of fine single malt scotch into my crystal glass and preparing a Cohiba for a leisurely smoke when suddenly four roaring pickup trucks materialized. Each disgorged demonic occupants usually associated with All-Hallows Eve, i.e., trick-or-treaters; in this case, middle-aged pranksters pretending to be “civic-minded volunteers” who were there

to help me “protect” Key Center through the long watches of the night.

Their first demand was to find them seating. But this turned out to be no problem, since some had thoughtfully arrived with their own ice chests full of beer that we arranged around a brimstone-laced firepit with built-in cupholders. Next, they wanted their own crystal glasses. I provided plastic travel mugs out of my camper, though I was also compelled to produce another four cigars.

With the refreshments taken care of, we turned to the real business behind their rather sudden manifestation. The five of us proceeded to enjoy a late-night to early-morning confab, which (it turned out) was the only objective of these so-called volunteers, sitting in solidarity to guard Key Center from whatever might come.

As it was my first year as a fireworks seller, I was unaware that the fireworks stand doubled overnight as a venue for erudite literary and artistic criticism, along the lines of Dorothy Parker’s “Vicious Circle” Algonquin Hotel Round Table.

Ergo, the first discussion challenge: “What’s your favorite opening scene from the movies?” posed by one with a noted affinity for obscure and esoteric cinema. The gauntlet having been thrown, a battle of increasingly more tendentious and nebulous analysis raged as to the fundamental overarching thematic content of various extraordinary films — most of which most of us had never seen.

As the single malt gave way to a fine bourbon, gradually the subject switched to the more ethereal and cosmological, such as “Is that a bat or an owl?” and “Why are those planets moving so fast?” and “How come the scotch is gone?” A significant amount of time was spent looking at constellation maps on our smart phones in a vain attempt to work out why Saturn and Jupiter seemed to be so obviously in the wrong positions, and whether Mars was actually red. However, none of us could see our phone screens clearly by this point, so we agreed that Jupiter and Saturn were indeed planets in the sky, and left the complexion of Mars to a future debate.

The final challenge of the night was to lower our voices, as the patrons of the nearby eateries could neither hear nor appreciate the deterioration of overnight traffic behavior in Key Center as more and more gigantic diesel pickup trucks and tiny foreign two-doors barreled through at high speed with each passing hour. We pondered the utility of speed

bumps (with and without spikes), roundabouts, engine-destroying EMP emitters, and a permanent detachment of Washington State Patrol cruisers, but came to no conclusion.

Whatever lawless activity may or may not ordinarily menace Key Center after hours, the only crimes committed that night were those of misjudgment perpetrated and endured by me and my fellow volunteers, but of course it was all and only for the benefit of the community.

The next day was the Fourth of July and we sold the rest of the fireworks.

Ted Olinger
ANOTHER LAST WORD



Journal of the Plague Year III

I was already in southern Turkey on my way to Syria when the Gulf War began in earnest in January 1991.

I’d been unsuccessfully reporting on life in Eastern Europe behind the newly fallen Iron Curtain since the previous September. And there was this girl I liked in what was then Yugoslavia, and her family who liked me in spite of or perhaps because of an impenetrable language barrier. But when the time came none of that mattered. I wanted glory.

Of course, had I remained where I was I would have been fortunate to survive the glory that followed. Less than a year later, Yugoslavia tore herself apart in an inter-necine bloodbath not seen in Europe for 50 years. I kept in touch with the family, but not for long.

The closer I got to the Middle East, moving from trains to buses to shared rides, the more I tried to keep a low profile. It was winter and I had a big coat with a big collar and I wore a knit hat I could pull down to my eyes.

So many people were already on the move, and this was just the beginning of what was to come.

I was standing in line for a visa in a freezing lobby more crowded than the average Westerner could imagine. Everyone talked at high volume in a variety of languages and we leaned against each other in a manner most would consider intolerable, for most of a day. The way they stood, the way they spoke, and the distress of their children, all told their stories.

You can’t hide in a crowd like that.

This big guy behind me in line started barking at me. I didn't know what he was saying. But the old ladies in front of me, they looked back at him, and then at me, and said nothing.

If the old ladies aren't on your side, it's not good.

Then he gets out of line and pushes forward.

He's pointing at me and bellowing at the crowd. He's about 20 and bigger and stronger than me, but I can see he's somewhat impaired and wants to make a show of something. I try a couple of my phrase book languages until we get traction in French, of all things, since the region had been under the control of France for decades after the first World War.

Qu'est-ce que c'est? I ask him what his deal is. Ta guerre! He's angry about the war. So am I. What? Yeah, I love your country, you think I like winter here — I'm a reporter. You write? Yeah, a writer. Oh, OK, let's get a drink, man, yes, yes, we should talk, let's talk. Yeah, we should, but it's on you, right? Yes, yes, I was rude, but I saw you and it's like, what, they want us from both ends, you know? N'est-ce pas? Yeah, yeah, I know, I know. Je comprends.

We stood together talking like that until he got a visa to do construction. Being a nobody tourist in wartime, I was refused entry.

"Come on, come home, meet my family, and we'll have some raki. You like raki? We'll drink raki," the guy said.

It sounds bizarre, I know, that a half-drunk 20-year-old in Turkey would invite a strange Westerner home to meet the family after a public confrontation. But in that part of the world and at that moment in history — before 9/11, before Afghanistan, before Iraq, before ISIS — it was normal. The stress had gotten to the guy and he lost it in public and he knew it. His invitation was an apology. Refusing it would have been an insult. By accepting, I allowed him to regain his dignity, which is a real thing in the East. He was grateful, and a gracious host.

He lived with his parents, which was not unusual. I met his younger sister, Meryem, who was just a teenager then and grew up to become a biochemist. Unlike her family, she spoke proficient English as well as French, and sized me up immediately. Thirty years later we remain friends, along with her children and ex-husband.

We have talked more in the past three months than we have in years. About the pandemic. The civil war. Her work in Syria that began with tracing chemical weapons. Then to tracking diseases. Then sheltering refugees against the wishes of

her government.

But now she asks me about my country.

"Oh, Meryem," I say.

"Je comprends," she says.

Ted Olinger lives in Vaughn.

Vicki Husted Biggs A SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE



Coping With Stress and Trauma

There are 18 pounds of coffee in my refrigerator right now. Somehow, it helps me feel safe. I am aware this makes no sense. But for me, coffee is a source of comfort, and the only correct way to start the day. That beautifully brewed cup of coffee is the balm for my anxieties. Hoarding coffee is one way I am coping with life right now.

Anxieties abound in 2020. Shall we briefly recap? COVID-19, the national political scene, murder hornets, economic depression, massive loss of life, isolation, fear, racial tensions, days and nights of rage and riot, and shortages of food and toilet paper. There have been milestones in our lives that have gone without celebration or ritual; births, deaths, weddings, graduations.

This is not a list of irritations that can be soaked away in a bubble bath. These are major events affecting everyone. The accumulation of recent changes in our lives feel chaotic, disruptive and traumatic, possibly affecting physical, mental and emotional health.

Peering down, deeper into the well of our lives, we see all the things that have been hurled down, one atop another — just this year. There are a few things that we can know about this jumble. These are the types of events that can shatter our sense of security and safety, create feelings of helplessness, and encourage us to perceive our world as a fearful place.

We should not minimize the ability of these events to produce upsetting emotions, memories or anxiety that will not go away. People can become angry, numb, disconnected and unable to trust others. Some are fortunate enough to be thoroughly insulated from any ill effects of these times. Most are not. Ongoing, soul-grinding stress requires patience and compassion to restore our mental and emotional health.

Everyone has what is known as a "window of tolerance" where we can comfortably operate. Some of us have large windows, enabling us to deal with problems, tensions and trauma to a greater degree than others. Some have small windows of tolerance, with

little room to maneuver when difficulties arise. It might be said that if you are inside your window, you are operating effectively. If by some means you are thrown out of your window, you may be dealing with the experience by fight, flight or freezing — our innate responses to danger or stress. Having some insight into the size of our personal windows can help us cope with stress. We can help ourselves get back inside our windows.

People respond to abnormal events with normal reactions. Emotional and psychological symptoms can be shock, denial, disbelief, confusion, difficulty focusing, anger, irritability, mood swings, anxiety and fear, guilt, shame, withdrawal, sadness, hopelessness, numbness, disconnectedness. Physical symptoms of psychological trauma can be insomnia, nightmares, fatigue, startle reflexes, racing heart rate, edginess and agitation, muscle tension, aches and pain.

In taking stock of ourselves and individual situations, there are some things we can keep in mind to help sort out all the things that have been tossed down the well. First, it is important to just get through these times. Be compassionate with yourself and with others. Mind the windows.

To cope with hyperarousal or fear, or disruption of your body's natural equilibrium, exercise and movement can help repair your nervous system. Try using rhythmic movement that engages your whole body, like dancing or walking or shooting hoops.

Do not isolate yourself; keep up your social connections as much as possible. Try to express and experience negative emotions. Allow yourself to recognize and accept suffering instead of avoiding it.

Keep a log of your coping methods. This is called self-monitoring. A log can help you determine if your coping skills are helping you or making things worse. Are you sleeping much more than usual, or drinking more alcohol than usual, or not eating enough?

Dr. Sheela Raja, a clinical psychologist and associate professor at the College of Dentistry in Chicago, Illinois who lectures widely on post-traumatic stress and trauma has said this about the times we are living in: "If you are struggling, don't feel defeated by the psychobabble. In the near future, very few people will be emerging as fitter, calmer, wiser individuals. Many Americans will be struggling, but most of us will be able to return to some kind of baseline functioning with some time."

She also said, "The narrative of continual self-improvement can be harmful. We live in a culture where we are trained to run away from negative emotions. Often, we want to

'skip to the end,' where a person emerges victorious and strong. Unfortunately, our mental health doesn't work that way."

Hoarding coffee is a strange method of self-soothing, I'll admit. As far as I can tell, it's harmless yet effective. The liberal use of humor is also a great coping skill. A belly laugh aimed down the old well everyday can work wonders. At the close of this writing, I am sipping a cup of coffee and watching one of my favorite old comedies.

Vicki Husted Biggs is a longtime social worker. She lives in Home.

Joseph Pentheroudakis ON THE WING



The Old Man and the Sea Lion

I can count on the fingers of one hand the times the universe has surprised me with bits of unexpected joy these last few months. Don't get me wrong; there are plenty of things I do every day that make me smile and dispel the bleakness of the times. But I also expect the universe to do its part every once in a while, to give me some unsolicited candy out of the blue, for no particular reason. I'm easy to please; it wouldn't even have to work that hard.

For the most part, though, the friendly, playful side of the universe seems to have gone AWOL. Instead it's all angst, grief and uncertainty all the time on all available frequencies and wavelengths.

I want to fight the good fight as much as the next person, but as the years and decades pile on I'm finding I could use some help, a latter day deus ex machina that would swoop in unannounced from time to time and to blow the gloom away. The days when I could handle it all on my own, the universe be damned, are long gone.

So if there ever was a time for some good old-fashioned escapism, this is it. For me these days escapism is spelled k-a-y-a-k, so on a clear day last month I loaded up the boat on the truck, drove down to the beach, and was soon paddling from Herron Island north to Dutcher Cove.

Spring migration on the water had been wrapping up. The surf scoters, buffleheads and mergansers had already moved on, but there were still a few straggler loons here and there, as always maintaining their distance from one another. Gulls, cormorants and pigeon guillemots were out as well, looking their very best. My mind's lens slowly began to swivel away from my own baggage to all the activity in the water.

CONTINUED PAGE 6

A FOURTH OF JULY MESSAGE
from THE LONGBRANCH IMPROVEMENT CLUB
and THE LONGBRANCH FOUNDATION



Freedom and independence are rooted in the community, in relationships between neighbors, friends and strangers. The democracy of everyday life is the bedrock of American life.

One of the hallmarks of a durable democracy is seen in actions made for the good of all. We've seen it demonstrated again and again as we've coped with the coronavirus pandemic. Caring and giving from all stations of life in all forms of service — clerks and delivery drivers, volunteer cooks and caregivers, teachers and staff, sheriffs, firefighters, medical and emergency teams plus countless other local heroes to celebrate.

Let's join together this Fourth and salute their generosity and shared devotion to our Key Peninsula community.



The Longbranch
Improvement Club
BETTERING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1921

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PENTHEROUDAKIS FROM PAGE 5

That was a welcome shift, and it meant that the escapism plan was working. I could feel the smile on my face. Check.

I paddled north for about an hour, by now bathed in endorphin-induced bliss, then turned around and headed back south. Not far from Herron Island I noticed a large flock of gulls circling over the water some distance to my right; an unusually large flock of cormorants had also gathered around the same spot. Cormorants are silent, but the gulls were squealing their lungs out with excitement.

Obviously lunch was being served, and there was clearly enough herring for everyone.

Then I heard a commotion on my left. I turned to look; about 50 feet away and swimming toward me were half a dozen sea lions, splashing and bobbing in and out of the water. I'd seen sea lions from the kayak in the past, but I always made sure I kept my distance. A couple of times one of their scouts had swum out toward me to check me out while the rest of them snorted, barked, porpoised and dived in the distance — gyring and gymbling in the wabe, one might say. A lovely sight and, like the Jabberwock, better enjoyed from a safe distance.

This group, however, was headed straight at me, making a beeline to the lunch buffet on the other side of the kayak.

They were on a mission, and I was in the way.

It was too late to paddle out of the situation; I didn't want to draw attention to myself. But part of me also wanted a closer look, so I didn't move. As they approached, however, they all dived, and I breathed a quick sigh of relief seasoned, however, by a pinch of disappointment.

Then suddenly, when I thought the moment had passed, I look over and one of them has poked his head up and is staring at me, about 15 feet away, getting closer, and when he's about an arm's length from the boat he suddenly dives, his enormous curved back quickly gliding into the water, almost brushing against the kayak, and then before disappearing under the boat he slaps the water with his flippers with a loud splash, sending up an enormous spray that got me completely drenched.

I laughed and cussed and laughed again; I could almost taste the adrenaline.

The universe had come through. I could take it from there.

Joseph Pentheroudakis is an artist, naturalist and avid birder who writes from Herron Island.

Letters to the Editor

On Equality and Privilege

Black people and Black communities are under attack both directly and indirectly on a daily basis. The very structure of our society hampers the ability of our Black communities to thrive, inflicting financial wounds, undermining voting rights, providing sub-par healthcare, education and food access, and committing outright murder as evidenced, yet again, by what happened to George Floyd.

The arc of the moral universe may be long, but it's taking way too much time to bend toward justice. We, as individuals, as a community, as a nation, need to grab this moment in time. We need to grab this arc and not just bend it, but pull on it with all our might to create justice and equality.

For me, checking privilege means remembering that I didn't need an amendment to vote. It was a certain unalienable right. Because that's the default setting for those in power in America. Freedom, money, voting — these things didn't require constitutional amendments for me to receive. To understand lack of privilege, one has to change the mindset from entitlement to empathy. One has to remember that the Constitution contains amendments for Black people and for women and for people with disabilities because these rights are not inherent if you are Black, female, have a disability, or are LGBTQ.

Change is messy and it hurts. Sometimes it means you have to get angry, stand up for what is just, and kneel for what is not.

Thaddeus Dickson, Lakebay

Living While Black in Longbranch

I moved to Longbranch in 2007. A couple days after moving in, I walked down the street toward the southernmost point of Key Peninsula. There was a white man washing his gray 4x4 truck on lifts. He was wearing a camouflage hat, stitched with a confederate flag, with a fish hook on the bill. When I said hello, he gave me an unfriendly look (microaggression) and slowly said "Howdy." A few months later the neighbor to the north, an adolescent white girl, angrily yelled the n-word at me at the top of her lungs.

I thought I left this kind of ignorance and racism behind in Seattle just to find it was in my neighborhood.

Before I married, I would get bored on the KP, so I would try and find things to do locally. On more than a few occasions, I would go to a bar in Key Center to have a cocktail and socialize. As the uncomfort-

able people later acclimated to my presence, they would come over to converse. When their liquid courage set in, they would call me the n-word, so I would abruptly leave.

Because I come from a large family of educators, I stayed positive and thought of ways to find astute folk, so I later joined the KP Community Council. I also helped with the KP Youth Council. We would take the youth to Olympia to speak to the legislators from the 26th district. One time, we had a celebration at a restaurant north of the Purdy Spit, heading toward Port Orchard. When we were at the eatery, someone used a racial slur towards me. I had to deescalate the youth from retaliating out of loyalty toward me.

I have learned as an educated Black man to disregard imbecility, otherwise I will perpetuate what society already thinks of me. All of the implicitly biased experiences came from adults who I believe were transferring their trauma onto me. In contrast, the children are exceptionally culturally competent towards me.

Rion Tisino, MSW, Longbranch

KP Churches Speak Out

We believe each person carries the divine image of our creator.

We believe the words of the Psalmist who wrote, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne."

We believe God's kingdom includes people from every tribe, tongue and nation; every color of skin, every ethnicity, rich and poor, male and female.

We recognize that, too often, our world is marked by injustice and the sin of racism. We confess that too many times the Church has remained silent while minority brothers and sisters have suffered violence and oppression. Sometimes the Church has actively participated in supporting and upholding racist systems. For these, we repent.

We, the ministers of our Key Peninsula churches, hear the cries of those demanding justice, those lamenting loss, those asking for fair and equal treatment in our country and our world. We decry the people who persist in using racist language and practice against men and women loved by our God. We join with those lamenting the lives of Ahmaud Arbury, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and so many more.

While we stand against those who co-opt righteous protest in an attempt to incite violence, looting and anarchy, we remain committed to hearing the cry of people praying for deliverance from centuries of pain. We commit to leading the Church away from racist beliefs, thoughts, words and deeds.

As the leaders of the Church in this community, we speak with one voice. We call upon all of God's people on the Key Peninsula to confront the sin of racism, hear the cry of those being oppressed, humble yourselves in prayer, be known for love, seek change and healing, and work for peace.

To our brothers and sisters of color, we see you. We hear you. We stand with you.

John Day, Chris Henderson, Ed Longbranch, Doug Paterson, Tim Stobbe, Dan Whitmarsh, Key Peninsula Ministerial Association

Madness in Seattle

We have descended into madness. Riots, looting, arson, destruction and assault along with the occupation of part of a great city as if invaded by a foreign army.

No one viewed the video of what happened in Minneapolis and wasn't horrified and outraged. The officer responsible was fired and charged with murder. Those officers who stood by also face charges. They will all face trial.

This situation in Seattle is beyond unacceptable. Seattle's mayor characterizes it as a patriotic block party: I call it an occupation by anarchists. I submit her opinion would differ if it was her neighborhood, home or business impacted.

I posit — what happens if these people seek to occupy a portion of the KP? What if this was Key Center or Lake Kathryn boarded up and covered with graffiti?

There is a call to abolish the police. Madness! It's easy for a misguided person to advocate abolishing police when they live under the blanket of security provided by the police. I honor and respect the noble people wearing that badge.

Race relations are at the forefront of the conversation. Let's have those hard discussions via the lens of Dr. King in terms of the content of one's character. When riots, thievery, arson and assault are acceptable, I submit there is no character for a conversation. When there is disagreement within a race conversation and the default insult of "racist" is easily used, we're at an impasse.

Our country is at stake. It's time to defend it.

Todd S. Young Ph.D., RRT, Longbranch

Vote Yes For Our Community

Please vote "yes" for the Maintenance and Operations Fire Levy Aug. 4. This is a four-year continuation of the existing levy for the same fixed amount of \$800,000. Because it is renewing the existing levy, there will be no impact on our property tax; if anything, the amount of our tax going toward the levy will decrease as the popu-

lation base of the Key Peninsula increases.

Without dollars raised by this levy, the services of the KP fire department will be seriously compromised. Maintenance on equipment and facilities will suffer. Staff reductions are likely, which can negatively impact emergency response times. Community outreach programs will be altered or discontinued as well.

To ensure our fire department continues to provide us with the present level of superb service we have come to expect and rely on, passing this levy is critical. Support our fire department heroes. Thank you for your "yes" vote.

Win Rumsey, Lakebay

Making Happy Memories

I just want you to know how much we enjoy reading the Key Peninsula News every month. As a matter of fact, my two teens love reading it and they look forward to getting it in the mail — which makes me happy to see them reading the local news instead of looking at their cell phones. They also love to see their classmates in it and people they know from school.

It brings back happy memories when I was a child, when we would get the paper delivered to our house. We would sit around the table in the mornings and pass the

paper around until everyone got to read it. Thank you for bringing back those happy memories and for doing a great job on the Key Peninsula News.

Selene Mcbee, Gig Harbor

Kudos on June edition

I am continually impressed with the content of the Key Peninsula News. You serve a great combination of informative news and thought-provoking features that surely stimulate community dialogue far beyond publication date. Your newspaper has a social conscience.

David Gauger, President, Gauger Media Service, Raymond, Wash.



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OBITUARIES



Ritajeon Koehl

Born Oct. 26, 1953 to Fergus and Rita Brown in San Francisco, California, Ritajeon Koehl died at home April 3 following a fierce battle against pancreatic cancer.

Rita was an adventurous and avid lover of the outdoors. She moved from San Jose, California, to Gig Harbor in 1977 where she built a home for herself and her first son, Eric. She also built community wherever she went, befriending many with her charm and kindness.

In 1988, Rita married Eldon Paul Koehl and raised a family on the Key Peninsula. She could always be found outside tending her blueberry bushes or going on walks with neighborhood friends. She was involved in many causes but the 4-H Club, Vaughn Church, WayPoint Church and Quilting for the Homeless were the most prominent.

She worked various jobs over the years from gas station attendant to school bus driver, as cook in the Peninsula School District, and eventually retired from Costco as a food demonstrator. She was known for always lending a helping hand to those in need.

Rita is survived by her husband, their two children and a grandchild. She was preceded in death by her parents and son Eric and joins them in heaven.

A memorial service is postponed until gathering in large groups is allowed. Rita was buried in Vaughn Cemetery. GPS coordinates are 47.347170 - 122.785653.

Anyone interested in attending the memorial service are encouraged to email ritasmemorial@gmail.com or write to Eldon Koehl, P.O. Box 902, Vaughn WA 98394.



Mitchell Ray Kiser

Mitch's journey began March 19, 1954 in Tacoma, where he was born to parents Ray and Eulene Kiser. He died May 26 at age 66 after his cancer finally won.

Raised alongside his sister, Mitch spent his childhood in El Sobrante, California. He returned with his family to the Tacoma area where he began building a life of his own.

He met his bride of 36 years, Brenda, and together they found their place on the Key Peninsula where they raised two amazing children, Travis and Shannon. During that time, he was honored with the title "Pops" and shared his heart with so many of his other "kids."

Mitch was part of a small family business until the day he retired. From there he became a part of the community where he created lasting friendships and, most importantly, became "Papa" to grandchildren Jemma and James.

Mitch had many talents and skills, but welding and tinkering were his favorites. He took pride in his home and his creations can be seen all around the yard. His laugh was always genuine, his kindness and generosity were extreme, and his beer was always cold.

Preceded in death by his father, Mitch leaves behind his mother, sister, wife, children, grandchildren and a plethora of extended family and friends to mourn his loss.

A gathering in his honor will be held at a later date.



Joanna Lanissa Gormly
and
Theodore James Ralston

Joanna Gormly was born in New Jersey, March 18, 1947, to Richard and Janet Gormly. Ted Ralston was born August 24, 1948 in Seattle, the only child of Sam and Joy Ralston. Ted and Joanna died tragically May 17, together, at their home in Vaughn.

The couple met while attending the University of Washington. They married August 5, 1969 at the bride's family home on the waterfront of Vaughn Bay, where they made their own home in the final years of their lives.

Their education and travel for work and pleasure gave them a broad worldview. Both were voracious readers and well informed on current affairs, which they enjoyed discussing. They appreciated fine food and drink but rarely turned down Dick's cheeseburgers and fries. Though not true raconteurs, both could hold a table with thoughts and ideas. They enjoyed making music. They were true and loyal friends. They were devoted to family.

Joanna was quiet, gentle, intelligent and modest. She often read into the early morning hours and was a late riser. She was empathetic and understanding, had a wonderful sense of humor and a charming laugh. Joanna loved a good cup of tea, gardening and walks along the beach. She was a fine example of still waters running deep.

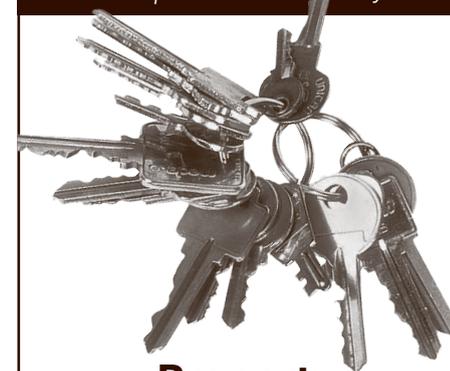
Ted liked to debate — almost anything. He was athletically competitive, an excel-

lent bowler, tennis player and cyclist who participated in the Seattle to Portland bike ride three times. Ted was fascinated by sports theory and was a devoted fan who insisted on watching events in real time, never missing the Tour de France or tennis at Wimbledon regardless of what time zone he was in. At the same time, he loved the spectacle of professional wrestling with its epic battles of hero versus villain.

Ted and Joanna are survived by their son, Alex and his family; and by Joanna's brother Ken Gormly and his family. A small memorial gathering was held in May at the family plot in Vaughn Cemetery. Alex read an Irish blessing suggested by his wife, which he also later found among his parents' belongings:

May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face
May the rain fall softly on your fields
And until we meet again
May you keep safe
In the gentle loving arms of God

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TWAA volunteers assemble kits to keep kids engaged this summer. Photo: Ryan Fischbauch, KP News

Two Waters Arts Alliance Provides Art to Young and Old

Kids hungry for arts and crafts find everything to make art projects at home.

KRISA BRUEMMER, KP NEWS

When Gov. Jay Inslee mandated school closures, Two Waters Arts Alliance started brainstorming ways to help local kids and families. In May, TWAA launched a collaboration with Food Backpacks 4 Kids, providing fun and easy Creativity Kits alongside student meal pick-ups.

“The number one goal of the organization when it was founded was to help kids learn better through art,” TWAA President Delia McGinnis said. “So, my board got together and we said, ‘What can we do to at least provide arts education for the kids?’”

Sharla Schuller, TWAA Elementary Arts Coordinator and Evergreen Elementary after-hours art program teacher, came up with the idea to distribute art projects in partnership with FB4K.

“I really missed the kids and I missed doing those projects, so I was looking around for things we could do in our community,” Schuller said.

The first Creativity Kits contained 2-inch

terra cotta pots, an oblong rock, green and white paint, cut sponges for painting, googly eyes and instructions for how to paint a cactus. Other kits have included a paper weaving project and a dream-catcher kit with bangle bracelets, yarn, instructions and the history behind dream-catchers.

“The parents have really loved it,” McGinnis said.

“We would love to see the finished projects,” Schuller said, who also handles TWAA’s social media and marketing. “We’d love to see photos.”

Volunteers put together the art kits in an assembly line while following social distancing guidelines.

“They’re small lunch bags, but it’s 100 bags. It’s nice to be at the Mustard Seed (Project) to put them together because we can spread out,” said McGinnis.

“We’re considering bumping up to 150 because I think there are additional people we can give kits to. There are different bus routes at Evergreen and we might be able to send out to the kids that can’t come to the actual school,” Schuller said.

TWAA has also created a resource page on their website with educational art projects, including highlighted weekly projects that can be done with supplies most families have around the house.

“I am really blessed and grateful to have such an amazing board who have really stepped up to do this, but we need more volunteers to help us,” McGinnis said. “I just really want to get as many kids involved and get stuff out to as many kids as possible. We’re trying to think outside the box and we’re dabbling in many things.”

Two Waters Art Coordinator for Key Peninsula Middle School, Stephanie Flintoff, recently started working with her art students via Zoom.

“We’re going to start doing art together via the internet,” Flintoff said. “I really started missing the kids in the art class and what they bring to me personally, because it’s a time when I get to be artistic and experiment with colors or whatever we’re doing in class, and it’s just fun.”

Flintoff’s group, which plans to continue meeting virtually through the summer, is currently working on designs for decorative banners that will be printed on vinyl and hung in Key Center.

“Our focus is more on the kids in our community, but we also want to have

art programs for adults,” Schuller said. “We’re hoping to reach out and do more with that as time goes on.”

The organization has been throwing around the idea of having local artists create pieces of art on plywood depicting scenes of life on the KP to display around town, an idea inspired by murals painted on boarded up buildings in Seattle.

“We’ve got a couple of artists who said they might be interested in doing that, but we need more,” McGinnis said. “I have a lot of friends who are artists but some of them just feel so uninspired during all of this. We’re not having the Art Walk this year and things are kind of tough.”

McGinnis, who grew up in a small town in Minnesota and has lived in Texas, Missouri, North Dakota, Germany and several other places, said she feels fortunate to be living on the Key Peninsula now more than ever.

“This is the best community I have ever lived in. I just think it’s wonderful,” she said. “We take care of one another here. All the resources and the people, it’s amazing. Yes, everybody’s concerned and they want to take care of their own and stuff, but they also reach out a hand to help everybody else.”

For more information, visit twowaters.org.

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Don Mills astride his 1931 Ford truck: Photo courtesy Key Peninsula Historical Museum

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360 Trails	OPEN	360 Trails mountain biking jump trails OPEN				
Volunteer Park	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN
Home Park		CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED		
Key Central Forest	OPEN					
Rocky Creek Conserv. Area	OPEN					
Maple Hollow Park	OPEN	Water access is OPEN. Restrooms are CLOSED.				
Taylor Bay		Water access is OPEN				

OPEN facilities subject to social distancing. Don't stand in groups. Keep 6 feet between people who are not from your household. Cyclists note: 6 feet is a little over an adult bike length.

Effective June15, 2020: This chart will be updated on our Facebook page and at www.keypenparks.com

As the COVID-19 situation evolves, we are monitoring directions from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department for best-practice recommendations for parks and recreation response.

We'll keep our www.keypenparks.com website and Facebook page current with park or office closures, event cancellations or postponements, and other park-related notices as they occur. We are not taking shelter reservations at this time.

The Fourth of July Hot Dog Social has been cancelled for this year. We're hoping to offer Cinema Under the Stars later in the summer. Stay safe – we are all waiting for Phase 4 to lift restrictions.

Pierce County Enters Phase 2 of 4-Phase State Reopening Plan

A conversation with Councilman Derek Young.

MEGAN SCHOWALTER, KP NEWS

In an interview with Pierce County Councilman Derek Young (D-7th), Young assured constituents that they wouldn't have to wait much longer for the burger and beer they've been dying for. With the county's transition into Phase 2, people can look forward to the reopening of small businesses and restaurants at reduced capacity.

"This was a really in-depth application and it was tough for us to meet (Phase 2 requirements)," Young said.

While the county application was in review, Gov. Jay Inslee announced an update to the state metrics to match the standard across the country. The new standard relaxed metrics slightly and required counties to have no more than 25 new cases per 100,000 people within a 14-day period.

"Pierce County did not meet all the metrics," Young said. "We were close, but we weren't in the red on any of them either."

In the end, both Inslee and the Washington State Secretary of Health John Wiesman, approved Pierce County for Phase 2 with the expectation that the county would implement a system of response incorporating increased testing and the introduction of case investigators and contact tracing.

"The second someone tests positive, the case investigator would get in contact with them to trace where they've been and who they've been in contact with to help contain the spread of the virus," Young said. Contact tracing is a common public health technique that will operate with voluntary participation and is a critical

component in the next phase.

Phase 2 means that most businesses will be able to reopen. Restaurants will be allowed to operate at 50 percent capacity. No one can sit at a bar, but people can still order a drink from their table. Outdoor religious or faith-based services can be held with up to 100 people. County courts will reopen to address the court backlog. People can also meet with up to five others at a time from outside their home.

Young suggested that community members "figure out which five people you want to spend time with and try to keep it to that." This will help to limit the number of contacts going around while the virus continues to spread.

Young said that a mandatory mask order went into effect June 8. Masks are not required outside, but multiple studies have shown that even homemade cloth masks reduce the spread of disease indoors.

With the receipt of federal CARES Act funding, the county received \$158 million for local use in four areas: public health, economic development and recovery, human services, and essential government services. Despite being frustrated with how slow the process has gone for public health services, Young said he was excited that "on the economic development side, we've done some really good stuff," to aid the transition into Phase 2.

All businesses have been offered free supplies of masks and no-touch thermometers for employees and customers. The county started a simple small business loan program that can go into effect immediately with a no-interest loan of up to \$1,000 per employee. The county is looking into converting the loans into grants for those who apply.

Worker retraining programs have also been developed to help accommodate the sudden change in the job market. The county continues to look into options for expanded broadband coverage in rural areas such as the Key Peninsula. All programs are aimed at helping people who have been impacted by this crisis "through no fault of their own," Young said.

At a minimum, Phase 2 will last three weeks, Young said. However, he cautioned community members to think twice about their decisions at this time.

"Now, here's the deal. We can fall back into Phase 1 if something bad happens. This is not a licensed free-for-all," he said. With the beginning of wildfire and then flu season, it's unknown whether the county will experience a second wave of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths. "People need to continue following the guidance of local and state health officials and maintain social distancing in order for this to work," Young said.

"Sadly, we have three major crises happening all at once, and they are somewhat if not completely related," Young said. People in public health have been agonizing over this because these are health related disparities as much as there are economic and racial disparities. Young advised community members to "at least wear masks and try to social distance" while participating in protests. In a way, the increased community support and accountability toward one another "has been one of the really positive things we've seen coming out of the pandemic," he said.

"The country that went into this pandemic can't be the country that came out of it," Young said. "We have to work to be part of a solution."

For more information on Washington State's response to the coronavirus and use of masks go to www.doh.wa.gov.

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‘Life of Johnson’ — The Ultimate Stay-at-Home Read

You think self-isolation is tough? Try doing it on a boat.

KATRINA HERRINGBOTTOM

The best thing about sailing, as far as I’m concerned, is that when you do it right it’s really boring.

I sailed to Hawaii with one of my early husbands. It was 24 hours of terror stretched out over three weeks of tedious routine, dried food and frayed nerves.

No, not the marriage.

As Samuel Johnson famously opined: “No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned.”

I read all about him in “The Life of Samuel Johnson, L.L.D.,” written by James Boswell in 1791.



Portrait of Samuel Johnson
c. 1772, by Sir Joshua Reynolds

It’s supposedly the greatest of all English biographies, but all I cared about was that it got me halfway across the Pacific.

Of course, that was on the trip back to the mainland, having armed myself after realizing how stupidly unprepared I was for the first crossing.

Pro tip: The best used bookstores are always in small towns next to big oceans, and it’s because of people like me selling what they’ve read to buy something they haven’t. I hit this place in Lahaina that was guarded by a cat born with its tail in a knot and picked up a three-volume hardcover edition of Boswell with slipcases for \$3.

Sorry Amazon — we had fun, but you’re dead to me now.

Born in 1709, Johnson was one of those people who are too smart for their own good. His parents didn’t help, showing off his startling intellect while bemoaning his tactless behavior and strange physical tics. Modern observers suspect he suffered from Tourette syndrome, a condition unknown to the 18th century.

Johnson left Oxford University without a degree after one year when he ran out of money, then got fired from a teaching post after an argument with the headmaster, and opened his own private school that went bust a year later. But a well-connected

former pupil got him a job writing for a London magazine in 1735, and that changed everything.

His articles made him popular, and that made him prolific. He became a poet, playwright, critic and essay writer. He wrote a 10-volume critique of English poets and an introduction to Shakespeare’s works that is famous to this day.

In 1747 Johnson was commissioned to create “A Dictionary of the English Language,” the most successful, if not the first, attempt to standardize spelling, definition and usage — if you can imagine that. It took nine years and half a dozen assistants and remained the last word on the subject until the Oxford English Dictionary

was published 150 years later on the threshold of the 20th century.

But Johnson was still mostly broke until 1762 when King George III (Remember him? Yeah, that guy) gave him an annual pension of £200 in appreciation for the Dictionary. Oxford also gave him an honorary degree, hence Dr. Johnson.

James Boswell was 22 when he met the 54-year-old Johnson in, unsurprisingly, a London bookstore, in 1763. For a touch of context, that was the same year a 6-year-old Mozart entertained the 8-year-old Marie Antoinette at the Hapsburg imperial court of the Holy Roman Empire in Vienna.

Johnson was famous and Boswell was a titled but diffident Scottish provincial on his way to law school. For reasons never explained to my satisfaction, they hit it off and remained friends until Johnson’s death in 1784.

Let’s say you meet Mick Jagger at a bar, or better yet Keith Richards, and he likes you for whatever reason. Then you become dining buddies and pen pals for 20 years and you end up writing his biography. That’s what we’re talking about.

Once you get over the flavor of 18th century language in the biography — much to me like the briny assault of raw oysters (which Johnson fed to his cat) — there is

a subtle mixture of light and penetrating observation about the man and his times that makes you see things in a different way.

According to Boswell, Johnson famously said, “When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life.” What Boswell did not say was that Johnson despised traveling. He preferred transport through discourse, a vocation at which he excelled and that made him a popular dinner guest in spite of the impulsive behavior he spent a lifetime trying to control, and the famous sesquipedalian snark he deployed to cover it.

We would have gotten along, I decided, unweirdly. Johnson was a misfit trying to remake himself, who instead remade the

way the world defined itself — literally (at least the English-speaking part of it). And one should admire that.

It’s all uphill sailing home from Hawaii, by the way. The prevailing wind blows against you; meaning, for you non-sailors, the wind hates you. You are cold, wet and tired all the time. When I was off watch, I ate meals out of a bag in my soggy bunk, wearing my foulies and reading the droll judgments of a long dead Englishman for comfort, before I fell asleep to dream of better husbands.

According to Johnson, “Great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance.”



Hugh Maxwell, left, with school board members and Superintendent Art Jarvis, in vest. Photo: Peninsula School District, Larry Steagall

EVERGREEN FROM PAGE 1

with them. Absher has built a number of big projects, including replacement of Wilson High School in Tacoma.”

Patrick Gillespie, director of facilities for the district, said that the bid process for Evergreen was delayed briefly due to COVID-19 to allow companies to sort out the processes of bid preparation during a time of social distancing. With the extension, “we picked up more bidders and the bids were more competitive. We were happy with the process,” he said. The district was required by state regulations to accept the lowest qualified bid.

Although Evergreen was designed prior to the pandemic, Gillespie and Greene both said that the plans, which emphasize flexible space in addition to traditional classrooms, will allow for more separation of students if that is needed.

“If we all had a crystal ball — the one we have now is fractured badly — we might have a different answer. During the pandemic new things are being learned and tried, and there is potential that teaching will look a little different in the future,” Gillespie said. “At some point we hope

that things get back to whatever normal is. You wouldn’t want to build something now for what the situation is today and have it become obsolete in a couple of years. We continue to build according to what we think education will look like in a few years.”

The school bond passed in February 2019 will pay for construction of two new schools, Pioneer and Elementary School No. 9 (as yet to be named) and replacement buildings for Artondale and Evergreen. Because school construction is deemed essential, there have not been any significant delays. Pioneer should open in fall of 2020 and the other three schools are scheduled to open in the fall of 2021.

Jarvis said at the May school board meeting that school opening in the fall will be different from previous years. State rules, which had not yet been released, would likely not allow normal operations. Leadership has developed guiding principles and will work on a comprehensive reopening plan with oversight by an advisory task force including students, community members, staff and union representatives.

Crabbing South of Narrows Bridge Closed for Third Year

Ocean acidification may be a factor in falling Dungeness crab population.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

Although Gov. Jay Inslee has lifted fishing restrictions in the state due to COVID-19 concerns, crabbing in South Puget Sound will likely remain closed to all crab harvesting for the third year in a row.

The Dungeness crab population, which is monitored by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the tribes through test fisheries, continues to be dangerously low in Marine Area 13, the part of Puget Sound south of the Narrows Bridge. Marine Area 11, just to the north of the bridge, has shown some improvement and will be open for crabbing this year. The other marine areas in Washington, with the exception of south Hood Canal, have historically had higher numbers as a baseline and continue to have stable crab populations.

According to data from the WDFW, the crab harvest in Marine Area 13 fell from a peak of 285,505 pounds in 2012 to 9,457 pounds in 2017, a decline of 96.7 percent.

The number of legal-sized male Dungeness crab

remains low. In 2020 the test traps had an average of 0.6 legal-sized male per trap, an improvement from 2018, but still just half the number seen in 2014. That contrasted to an average of 17 to 34 per trap in the Whidbey Island area. In addition, there was only one crab in the size range of 3.5 to 5.7 inches — there were none in 2017 — an indication that several year classes of Dungeness crab are still missing.

According to WDFW, overharvesting is unlikely to be the cause of falling numbers because of the reproductive characteristics of the crustacean. Female Dungeness crab are able to store sperm from mating for up to two-and-a-half years, and male crabs can mate at least once before they reach legal harvesting size. Once fertilized eggs are released, the larvae remain suspended in water for about four months before settling to the bottom. Where the larvae settle depends on tides and currents. It takes about five years for crabs to reach the legal harvesting size of 6.25 inches.

If overharvesting were the problem, recovery would be seen within a few years,

and that has not been the case. The failure of the crab population to recover, even in the absence of harvest pressure, may indicate that larval crab are not surviving into adulthood. Factors that could contribute to this include changes in physical oceanography limiting the movement of larva from one region of Puget Sound to another, as well as chronic effects of changing ocean conditions such as warming surface waters, ocean acidification, pollutant levels and lower oxygen levels.

Until recently there was little indication that Dungeness crab were vulnerable to current levels of ocean acidification observed along the West Coast. But a study published May 10 in *Science of the Total Environment*, an international peer-reviewed journal covering environmental science, suggested that acidification already had an effect on



Photo: Caleb Galbreath, KP News

larvae. The study, funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, demonstrated that acidification in some coastal waters was associated with adverse effects on the shell that could cause developmental delays, which could increase energy demands, interfere with maturation and cause problems with sensory organs.

Daniel Sund, a crustacean biologist with WDFW, said, “We are a ways away from being able to quantitatively account for the impacts of ocean acidification and hypoxia, or integrate these factors into how we manage crustacean fisheries along the West Coast or in Puget Sound. Studies like those recently published lay the groundwork for being able to understand how crustacean resources will respond to rapidly changing and highly variable ocean conditions.”

Although the South Sound red rock crab population appears to be intact, crabbing for all species may be prohibited pending a final review. Dungeness crab, even if released from traps, would be injured if a red rock-only fishery was implemented and any additional stress and mortality must be avoided to allow the resource the best chance possible to recover. In addition, it is difficult to enforce a closure for just one species when the same equipment is used to harvest both, according to WDFW.



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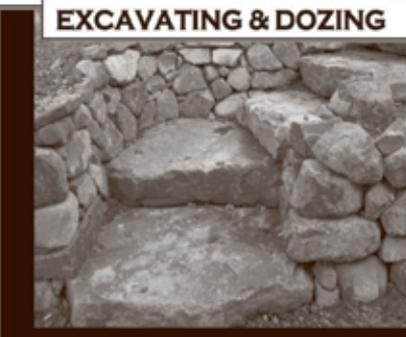


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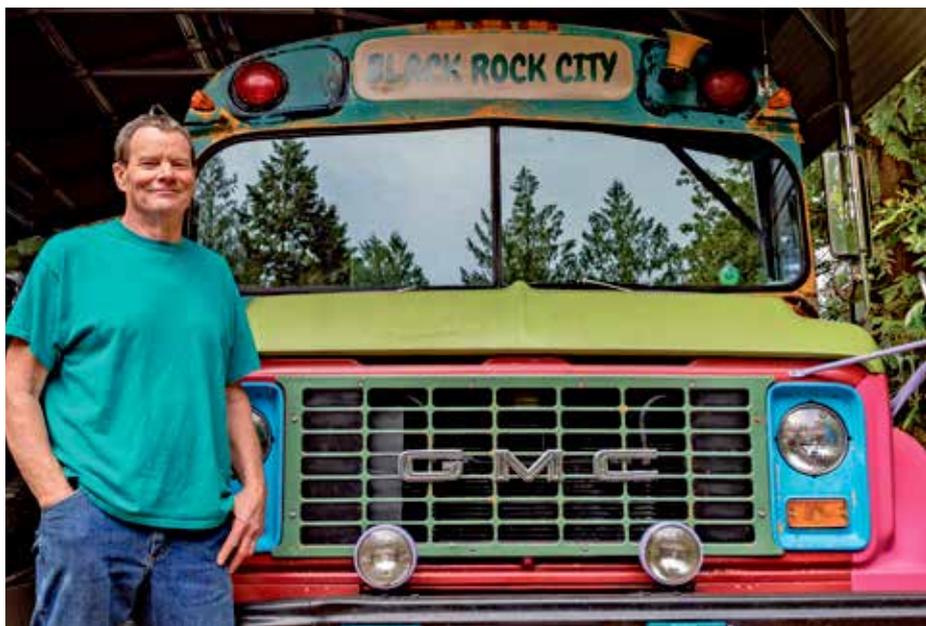
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Mark Ambler and his restored vintage bus. Photo: Caleb Galbreath, KP News.

(Below, right) Jim Olson's Longbranch cabin in mid-construction. Courtesy Jim Olson.

Mark Ambler: A Student of Life

Local craftsman has built a reputation for creativity and generosity.

CALEB GALBREATH, KP NEWS

Being a student of life is a commitment to lifelong learning. It's the acceptance that no matter how much someone knows, there is always more to learn.

Mark Ambler is many things: a carpenter, general contractor, bus driver — but above all, he's a student of life.

Ambler has lived on the Key Peninsula for a little over 50 years. His family moved to Wauna from California when he was about 14 years old. After proving himself on a community building project, he got his first job driving dump trucks on the KP.

"I was just this teenager working with a bunch of 20-something-year-olds, they told me what to do and I'd do it," Ambler said. "So when they told me, 'You've got to buy this property and build there,' I did. I built myself my first house when I was a junior in high school."

In 1972, Ambler started building houses for Wayne Shields, launching a lifelong career. Even after joining the Navy in 1975 as a hull technician, Ambler continued to take on work whenever he was on leave.

"Work just found its way to me," he said.

When he left the Navy in 1979, Ambler helped complete the former Brookside Restaurant, now the Windermere Real Estate office on SR-302 east of 118th Avenue NW. He continued to remodel the building as well as help manage the restaurant and cook breakfast, lunch and dinner.

"I can't believe I did so many things at that age," Ambler said. "I can't imagine having the time for all that now."

After a few years, Ambler returned to building full-time. He eventually helped

convert the restaurant into the real estate office when Windermere took ownership.

Labeling Ambler as just a builder or contractor would be insufficient. It describes neither the scope of his work nor the philosophies that define it.

"I do whatever people want. The more challenging the better," he said. "Those challenges let me learn new things."

He's pushed himself to learn virtually every facet of building a house, from laying a foundation to framing, electrical and plumbing.

Jeremy Thompson has worked with Ambler on different projects for the better part of a decade. He described Ambler as an amazing problem-solver.

"The level of complexity in his work is just mind-bending sometimes," Thompson said. "There's so many details to keep track of and he has a way of breaking it down to simple, digestible components."

Ambler's ability to simplify things makes him an effective teacher, Thompson said. But what is more impressive is how generously he shares his knowledge with others, which Thompson said is not a common trait in their industry.

Ambler's work even caught the attention of world-renowned architect Jim Olson. Olson's family has owned property in Longbranch for generations. When he decided to design and build a cabin there, Ambler was recommended to him.

"I've been an architect for a while now and I've become a bit of a perfectionist," Olson said. "But Mark is a perfectionist too and I think that's why we work together so well."

Olson said he liked working with Ambler so much that when he decided to build an

addition to his cabin, Mark was the first person he asked to build it.

"He's so intelligent, he can figure anything out," Olson said. "It doesn't matter what he's doing; he's going to think it all the way through and then do it. And he'll be right."

Ambler stood out to Olson for his ability to think outside the box — a way of thinking not only represented in his work, Olson said.

For more than 10 years, Ambler has participated in Burning Man. Once a year, Burning Man gathers tens of thousands of people in Nevada's Black Rock Desert where they form a temporary metropolis dedicated to community, art, self-expression and self-reliance.

Ambler's interest in Burning Man started after watching a documentary about the event. He was inspired by the magnificent structures and artwork the attendees created and shared.

"I was hooked the first time I went," he said. "The creations are incredible, but it's the environment of giving and positivity that keeps you coming back over and over. It just feels right."

Ambler restored a vintage school bus to caravan there and set up a repair camp at the event. The brightly painted bus now even features a table, added storage and areas for sleeping.

"People have all sorts of ideas about what Burning Man is," Olson said. "I think it speaks to his open-mindedness and creativity."

Ambler's success is not only a product of his skill but also his commitment to the community. He occasionally does jobs free of charge for people who need help. He recently donated his services to construct the Longbranch sign in front of the Longbranch Improvement Club.

Inspired by the spirit of Burning Man, he refers to his old school bus as his "gift to the community." Tickets for a ride to restaurants, bars and breweries are often raffled off at Key Center fundraisers. But he says he does it for free any other time too, just for the joy of giving.



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Key Pen Produce Express Brings Fresh Food to Key Peninsula

KP couple saw an opportunity to help farmers while meeting needs at home.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

Thanks to the dedication of a Key Peninsula couple, a simple post on a few Facebook pages has brought more than 25 tons of produce to Key Peninsula homes and food banks. And more is likely on the way.

“It all started when my husband Ray opened his mouth,” Susan Arends said. A Facebook post on a Key Peninsula group site announced that a warehouse in Othello would send its onions to landfill if they could not find someone to take them — the pandemic had wiped out their usual customer base. They offered the produce at a rock-bottom price of 10 cents a pound. Ray commented on Facebook that he would be willing to make a run to Othello, and responses poured in. Susan noticed at least four threads of comments. “I began to sift through them,” she said. “Then my brain began to fry.”

To manage the requests, Susan set up a new Facebook page, Key Pen Produce Express, and put her organizational skills to work. About two decades ago she got certification in Excel and now calls it her best friend. People placed orders in the comments section and many prepaid via PayPal.

Ray made his first run to Othello, a five-hour drive in each direction, April 29 and returned with 154 50-pound bags. Customers lined up in their cars at the Red Barn the next day to pick up their orders.

While in Othello, Ray learned about a potato warehouse facing similar storage and distribution problems. Susan contacted the warehouse and when she announced on the Facebook page that potatoes, unbagged, unwashed and unsorted, were available for 10 cents a pound, orders flew in.

One thing led to another. They got word of a farm with asparagus straight from the field looking for buyers, and by the end of May asparagus was added to the order list. Ray has been making weekly trips since the end of April, delivering thousands of pounds of produce to the Key Peninsula on each run. They hope to bring fruit and other produce later this year.

Susan remembers Ron the Apple Man, who sold Wenatchee apples from his truck until shortly before his death last July (KP News, September 2019) “Everyone misses Ron. Ray is thinking we can fill a need. Support from the community has been amazing.”

“Ray has retired a few times,” Susan said. His current job allows him the flexibility to make the drive. Susan manages the kitchen and garden at the Red Barn, which has made arranging for the location of the produce pick-up easy. Thanks to donations to support the operation, they have given produce to all three food banks serving the community.

Susan said that Key Pen Produce Express is not a business; they add a small per-pound cost for the produce to cover the transportation expenses. Although people can pay in cash (no change is available) at the time of pick up, Susan prefers that they prepay. “They are not so likely to forget the order,” she said. She has added several payment options in addition to PayPal.

A dedicated group of teens, members of the youth crew of the Sea Scout Ship Odyssey, along with a few friends, have made the endeavor possible. Susan thanked Fiona Dowden, Shane Dowden, Bowman Kunzl, Laura Soares, Abby Wainwright and Zella Wells.

Volunteers Shane Downen (left) and Bowman Kunzi sort unbagged potatoes. Photo: Anna Downen



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Angelic volunteers reopen the Angel Guild Thrift Shop in Phase 2. Photo: Caleb Galbreath, KP News

Angel Guild Faces Challenges

Pandemic and unexpected expenses present problems to local institution known for its support of the community.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

The Angel Guild, a KP institution that has been supporting the community for four decades, faced unexpected challenges during the pandemic. Accustomed to giving organizations grant money each month, the board found itself requesting assistance in May.

In February, the Angel Guild had an unexpected expense when its heating and cooling unit had to be replaced. The closure in March due to the pandemic meant it no longer had income to cover operational costs or to provide grants. Although it did receive a small Paycheck Protection Program grant, that didn't cover all of the ongoing expenses, and the bylaws require that the Guild have at least three months of operating costs in reserve.

The Angel Guild put out a call for help on May 16 through Facebook.

The community responded, with about \$3,000 donated to date. Carla Parkhurst, coordinator of the thrift shop, said that the donations will go a long way and both she and board president Pat Kunzl were grateful for the expression of support.

As soon as the reserves are replenished, the grants program will resume. From the first grant of \$1,000 awarded in 1979, The Angel Guild's contribution to the community has grown by leaps and bounds. The Guild has awarded about \$100,000 in grants annually for the past several years.

The store reopened June 11 with some rules to ensure the safety of the customers. Everyone is required to wear a mask, the number of customers in the store is limited to eight at any given time, people are not allowed to try on clothes, and the public bathroom is closed. The staff will remind customers to follow social distancing guidelines.

Donations of goods to the thrift store are welcome, but both Kunzl and Parkhurst requested that donations only be dropped off if there is someone at the building to accept them. "If we don't have space and things are left in the rain it just means we have to find a way to get rid of the donations," Kunzl said. "It makes for a lot of extra work."

Usual hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the store and 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for donations. Most of the volunteers are retirees and in the high-risk population for COVID-19 complications.

Some are anxious to return to work while others plan to continue to stay home and stay safe. The store and donation hours may be affected by the number of volunteers available, and any changes will be posted at the store, on The Angel Guild Facebook page, and on the We're Open tab on the Key Peninsula News website.

Editor's note: Key Peninsula News is underwritten with support from The Angel Guild.

Rotary Club Satellite Group Blossoms on KP

Flower baskets in Key Center are the first signs of growth for a new KP service club.

MATTHEW DEAN, KP NEWS

"We're people of action, and we like to see things happen," said Lisa Larson, president of the newly formed Key Peninsula Rotary Club. "We want to make our community beautiful and be proud of where we live."

The first club project was inspired by America in Bloom, a nonprofit that encourages communities to plant flowers and greenery in public spaces. Lakebay resident Kathy Lyons said she discovered the project through a friend in Castle Rock, a small town in southwestern Washington that participated in the program. Lyons felt the project themes of community pride and engagement would be a good fit for the KP, and she pitched the idea to Larson. Larson invited her to join the developing Rotary club, and Lyons is now leading the club's "KP in Bloom" initiative.

Hanging flower baskets and sidewalk flowerpots were placed around Key Center in late May and early June, for the purpose of lifting spirits during the COVID-19 quarantine measures. The baskets will be maintained by local business owners, and Lyons hopes to recruit a wide range of community members to participate in ongoing projects.

"In Castle Rock, they included kids, students, seniors, everyone, and they made their town really beautiful," Lyons said. "We'll start out small, but hopefully we can involve lots of people."

Further developments will include planter boxes and flowerpots, as well as efforts to add greenery to the southwest corner of the Key Center intersection.

The KP Rotarians will be organized as a satellite of Gig Harbor North Rotary, enabling them to be supported by the established club while avoiding the difficulties of setting up an entirely new chapter. The satellite will be officially incorporated when the Rotary Club administrative year begins in July. Membership requires an official application, as well as maintaining annual dues and regular meeting attendance.

Lyons said about a dozen individuals have submitted applications as of press time, and she feels that the ongoing beautification projects have generated more interest.

"We put up a Facebook page, and in just a short time we had 115 people following us," she said. "Pretty good for a small town, I think."

Rotary International is a service club

founded in the early 20th century to promote a variety of humanitarian and community improvement causes. There are currently three Rotary clubs based in Gig Harbor.

Gig Harbor North Rotary President Bob Anderson said the idea for a KP Rotary club has been around since last year, but only solidified in March, shortly before the quarantine.

"We think it's a great opportunity because there are 20,000-plus people on Key Peninsula, and there's a great combination of need, potential volunteers, and service opportunities," Anderson said. He views the establishment of a direct Rotary presence on the KP as a natural next step to previous Rotary efforts. Gig Harbor Rotary clubs have contributed to KP projects such as the Gateway Park Pavilion, fundraising for organizations like Children's Home Society and Communities in Schools of Peninsula. And, in full disclosure, Rotary Club of Gig Harbor recently awarded grant funding for web development to the Key Peninsula News.

Eager to get rolling, Larson and Lyons said the established local Rotary clubs have encouraged them to limit their focus for the time being, but they look forward to expanding their community service activities next year. One potential project would further decorate Key Center with banners designed by local students in collaboration with Two Waters Arts Alliance.

More traditional options include raising funds and resources for other community aid organizations. Local clubs also support Rotary International programs, such as polio vaccination.

"One of the differences with Rotary is that it exists at a local, district and international level," Anderson said. "The potential impact for making a difference is much greater."

Volunteer Dan Stokes hangs the first baskets Memorial Day weekend. Photo: Bob Anderson





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SUMMER IS PRIME TIME FOR BARBEQUE MASTERS TO SHOW OFF THEIR SKILLS



Not Another 'How to Barbeque' Article

HERALD UGLES

This is not another debate on grilling versus barbecuing or which coals to use or how to start your grill. It is how to respect quality food with a few simple steps using indirect heat. We in Washington should barbecue all year long, as there can be little difference in our seasons any given year.

Generally, most people who barbecue, whether gas or charcoal, can throw a couple of steaks, burgers or hot dogs on the grill, put a char on it and call it good. But that's not good enough for us who live in the Northwest with quality salmon in our reach. Here are a few of my lessons to grill flawless salmon, chicken and flank steak.

On the charcoal grill, start by lighting about three-quarters of a chimney of coals. Dump the lit coals on one side of the grill. For gas grills, light only half the grill. On the charcoal grill, make an aluminum foil drip pan, or use an old cake pan, and put some water into it. Place this opposite your coals to provide moisture and also serve as a drip pan.

With fresh salmon, season lightly with salt, lemon juice and olive oil and let the fish do the talking. The trick to cooking fish on the grill is to put it on a cold grate. On charcoal, just leave the grate off until you are ready to cook. Put the fish skin side down, opposite of the hot coals and open the top vent above the fish. For a light smoke, put some wood chips on the coals. Cover for

12 to 15 minutes, then check for preferred doneness. Fish continues to cook once you pull it off the heat, so taking it off the grill slightly underdone will ensure a perfectly cooked fillet.

This is the same for a gas grill but it will cook a little faster because the grate will already be warm. Use foil if worried that the fish will stick, but this is not necessary on a well-seasoned grill. I cook all fish using indirect heat. Try your favorite teriyaki or other sauce of your liking.

Chicken thighs are also another go-to favorite. You can use cut-up chicken parts, but bone-in chicken thighs are a no-brainer that is almost impossible to overcook. I call this recipe "Yard Bird" style, as coined in the South. Take all your spices out and line them up. I use salt, pepper Johnny's Spice, paprika, cayenne, garlic and onion powder, dry mustard, ginger powder, chili powder and olive oil.

Using a microwave-safe bowl, put a layer of the thighs down and then add spices, another layer of chicken and then spices, so you season throughout and then mix together. This is best done at least an hour before cooking and can be refrigerated overnight. Before you place on the grill, cover the bowl and microwave for 3 to 4 minutes. Stir and microwave for another 3 to 4 minutes. If the thighs start to cook, pull them out.

We'd love to feature a dish from your KP kitchen that friends and family ask for. Email the details to editor@keypennews.org with your phone number; we'll be in touch.

Grill chicken skin side up, opposite the coals. Cover and cook for 20 to 25 minutes. This method doesn't get the skin real crispy, so at the end turn the chicken skin side down over the direct heat. Watch very carefully because the skin will crisp quickly and will burn if you walk away.

The last recipe is for flank steak. For best results, prep this the day before. I have tried this on my gas grill, but it works best over charcoal. You can use London broil, skirt steak or flank steak for this recipe. Place the steak in a shallow pan and add one tablespoon of lemon juice or about half a lemon. Rub in a tablespoon each of fresh crushed rosemary, parsley and crushed garlic. Add salt and pepper and two tablespoons of olive oil.

Using a meat tenderizer or a fork, tenderize the meat really well. Flip over and repeat seasoning and tenderizing. Refrigerate overnight or up to two days. Pull out meat one hour before cooking to bring to room temperature. Place on heated grill over indirect heat and cook for 15 to 20 minutes. Do not flip. When done, pull off and cover. Let rest for at least 20 minutes. Slice thin against the grain and serve with your favorite horseradish sauce.

As with all recipes, adjust seasonings to your taste and grill with confidence year round.

A LITTLE TASTE OF HERON'S KEY

This recipe is brought to you by Heron's Key's own Chef Jason.

Apricot Braised Chicken Thighs

(Makes 1 serving)



INGREDIENTS

8 oz chicken thighs
 ¼ cup diced dried apricots
 1 tsp. diced shallot
 1 clove minced garlic
 1 tbsp. white wine or sake
 2 tbsp. chicken stock
 1 tbsp. honey
 ¼ cup orange juice
 1 tbsp. cornstarch to thicken
 Kosher salt and pepper to taste
 Sliced, roasted almond to garnish

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees and preheat sauté pan. Season chicken generously with salt and pepper and sear in canola/olive oil until brown and half cooked. In same pan, sauté apricots and shallots, add garlic. Deglaze with wine, add orange juice, honey and chicken stock. Reduce 3-4 min. over medium heat. Add chicken and bake until internal temperature is 165°. Sauce should have consistency of gravy, if not thicken with cornstarch. Garnish with almonds and serve over white basmati rice.



The best wine to pair with this delicious dish? Follow us on Facebook to find out what Chef Jason recommends!

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Church services at KPCC resume June 14

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TOP: Herron Island *Photo: Jim Bellamy*
 MID AND LOWER LEFT: Scenes from the Peninsula High School 2020 commencement parade at Tacoma Narrows Airport June 13. *Photos: Peninsula School District, Larry Steagall*
 MID AND LOWER RIGHT: A peaceful Black Lives Matter protest June 6 in Purdy. *Photos: Ryan Fischbauch, KP News*