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THE VOICE OF THE KEY PENINSULA

September 2020 Vol. 47 No. 9

County Mandates Virtual School; Most Parents Want In-Person Teaching

Schools must adjust to a landscape continually altered by COVID-19 while many in the community just want to get back to normal.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

The Peninsula School District board of directors approved a guide for the district to reopen for online teaching at its meeting Aug. 13. Held virtually through Zoom and streamed live on Facebook, the meeting included a discussion with Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department Director Dr. Anthony Chen about his mandate requiring schools to open online classes only.

Chen clarified his July recommendation not to reopen any public or private school facilities. “I am not simply recommending but am requiring all schools to begin the school year using distance learning until COVID-19 disease activity in Pierce County decreases to a level safe to reopen schools for in-person learning,” he said.

Exceptions remain for classes of some special-needs students meeting in groups of five or less.

The district responded by switching gears from a plan for a partial, hybrid

reopening to creating the reopening guide approved by the board Aug. 13.

Focus groups of 650 teachers, parents and students reviewed the initial guide draft. The participants emphasized a need for balance between flexibility and structure, and the need for better communication and lead time between each reopening stage. Individual schools will finetune the guide to meet the needs of local families.

Balancing the risk of infection and community spread at a time when COVID-19 cases remain high, while also acknowledging the social and emotional impact of school closure, were front and center at the board meeting.

GOING BY THE NUMBERS

Chen explained that the measure for



OSPI candidate Maia Espinoza speaks at a rally to fully reopen schools Aug. 13 across from the construction site of Elementary No. 9 on Harbor Hill Drive in Gig Harbor. Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News

COVID-19 activity used by the state and county is the number of cases per 100,000 over 14 days. That number initially fell below 20, but when Pierce County reopened to phase 2 in July, it skyrocketed to 149. At the time of the board meeting it had fallen to 120.

The state Department of Health issued guidance on when to begin to offer

in-person learning on a limited basis. If the number of cases exceeded 75 per 100,000 over 14 days, remote learning was strongly recommended. DOH noted that when other countries have successfully opened schools, rates were below 50 and trending downward.

Based on infection rates and surveys from
CONTINUED PAGE 4



Photo: Kamryn Minch

Community Rallies with Back to School Supplies

Volunteers distribute donated school supplies to KP families.

STAFF REPORT

The parking lot of the Key Peninsula Civic Center became a massive drive-through back-to-school supply donation festival Aug. 8, thanks to the efforts of the Children’s Home Society of Washington – Key Peninsula Family Resource Center, which spearheaded a broad-based community effort to help families in need.

The third annual event was twice the size of the previous year, according to CHSW Program Manager Gina Cabiddu, providing 152 Peninsula School

District students with backpacks full of school supplies, together with new shoes, clothes, headphones and masks gathered by two dozen sponsors and donors, and 40 volunteers.

Student needs were identified and met by CHSW and other local organizations, including Rotary Club of Gig Harbor, Harbor Christian Center - Harbor Hope Center, the Kiwanis, Chapel Hill Church and FISH Food Bank. Subway also donated lunches.

Families drove through six different stops in the parking lot to receive supplies from a safe distance, cheered on by volunteers, teachers and staff, including Communities in Schools of Peninsula and their four-legged Tutors with Tails reading

mentors, Rohan, Brodie and Sasha.

“I have never known a community that took such good care of the kids going back to school,” said one new mom at the event.

CHSW staff delivered supplies to families unable to attend.

The variety of school supplies were selected to help students adapt to online classes and to learn in different ways. In addition to more traditional materials, STEM and art supplies were included complete with instructions and exercises for at-home experiments and projects, sending a small part of the classroom home for students until students can return to the classroom.

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Here's What I Think About That

LISA BRYAN,
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Does voting really matter? Key Peninsula voters say yes.

And 2.5 million people in Washington State agree. An impressive 54.44% of registered voters cast ballots in the Aug. 4 primary election certified by Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman.

"The turnout rate is the highest on record for a primary since 1964, when 840,000 Washingtonian voters, representing a 56.06% turnout," Wyman said in a statement.

Voters in Pierce County weren't far behind with a huge turnout of 51.9%. Pierce County Auditor Julie Anderson said things were humming along as anticipated for a predicted 35% turnout, until the last two days when an enormous number of ballots poured in. She told me it was like "a boa constrictor accustomed to eating bite-sized rats suddenly trying to swallow a wild boar." (See page 14 of this edition for more.)

Most impressive of all was the whopping 60% turnout of Key Peninsula voters in the primary, demonstrably more engaged in local races than either Pierce County or the state as a whole.

Pause for a moment. Let that sink in and make your chest swell with pride. It should. Key Peninsula is a civically engaged community; we are where democracy lives, breathes or dies.

Hyperbolic rhetoric from the other Washington claims voting by mail will result in massive election fraud. That is flatly untrue.

Beginning in 1993, Washington voters could request to permanently vote by mail. Voters appreciated the ease and comfort of voting from home and the practice grew steadily throughout the state. Ten years later, 76% of ballots were cast by mail.

It was 2004 and the closest gubernatorial race in history between Dino Rossi and Christine Gregoire, who eventually beat Rossi by 133 votes after two recounts and multiple lawsuits, that paved the way for election reforms leading to the adoption of vote-by-mail as the law of the land in Washington.

In 2005, legislation left it up to county auditors to decide whether to conduct their elections by mail-in voting, polling

stations, or both. By 2009 every county in the state adopted mail-in voting except Pierce County, which continued operating polling stations despite nearly 90% of its own voters already voting by mail. In 2010, our Legislature determined that having two different systems on the books was inefficient and mandated mail-in-voting across the state, and we haven't looked back.

Some doubters point to the Aug. 1 primary of 2017, when 152 ballots collected from a drop box in Purdy on election night were discovered months later — after the election was certified — at the Tacoma election center, buried by maintenance supplies in a sealed bag, that never made it to the ballot processing area.

Anderson immediately notified the secretary of state, the county executive and the canvassing board, and could have stopped there as nothing more was required by law. Instead, she went public and alerted the media.

The Auditor's Office implemented a good number of changes, new procedures and crosschecks to prevent any future mistakes.

While those 152 ballots would not have affected the outcome of the election, that wasn't the point for Anderson, who said at the time, "We don't judge the importance of our error based on its impact. The potential impact matters. Voter confidence matters. Accountability matters."

Mounting criticism lobbed from both sides of the political divide points to concerted politicization of the U.S. Postal Service as a tool to achieve political ends and discourage mail-in voting nationwide, despite a nation still suffering under a pandemic.

Wyman remains confident in the state's partnership with USPS and its ability to continue delivering the same outstanding service to voters.

"Politicizing these administrative processes is dangerous and undermines public confidence in our elections," she said. "Washington voters should know

that sending ballot material to millions of voters this fall is a routine operation of the U.S. Postal Service. Though it is imperative the agency maintain its functionality and efficiency, this volume of

work is by no means unusual...and an operation I am confident the U.S. Postal Service is sufficiently prepared to fulfill."

Elections in Washington State are safe, secure and — above all — accountable.

Even the well-known conservative Heritage Foundation, which

tracks voter fraud, has shown that of the approximately 1,300 cases of fraud going back the last 30 years, most didn't include mail-in ballots.

Keeping up with the news outside our KP bubble is dizzying, as it spins, twists and shape-shifts from one unimaginable disaster to the next. Each day is exhausting in its own special way.

Even a solidly centrist point of view draws the ire of extremists left and right. KP News is not immune to outrage and criticism, in an ironic game of both sides against the middle. Yet most of those people who write us to complain about our coverage refuse to see their name published, they say for fears of reprisal or even physical harm.

It does not have to be this way.

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on these pages is on
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CORRECTION

"Census Deadline Extended to Oct. 31," August 2020 KP News, included a numerical error: "For every household not counted, the state could lose up to \$580,000." The amount should have been \$58,000. We regret the error.





KPFD's Brandon Hagen, Chris Hagen, Jason Learned, Michelle Learned and Tim Davis encouraging voters July 15 at Purdy. Photo: Anne Nesbit

Supermajority Renews Fire Levy

The existing \$800,000 annual levy will continue for another four years, helping pay for salaries, facilities maintenance and new vehicles.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

The Key Peninsula voted to renew the existing maintenance and operation levy for KP Fire District 16 in the primary election Aug. 4.

The department will continue to receive \$800,000 a year from KP taxpayers for another four years, though the annual millage rate will vary according to the rise and fall in value of assessed properties.

Renewal required a 60% supermajority of voter approval and a 40% threshold of local voter turnout compared to the last general election, which was Nov. 5, 2019.

The levy cleared the threshold with 4,715 KP voters weighing in, far more than the 2,344 needed, approving renewal by 65.45%, according to the Pierce County Auditor.

"Since I've been here, I've consistently heard from the community, 'Tell us what the plan is, share where you're headed, and we'll support you,'" said Fire Chief Dustin Morrow, who began his tenure in April 2019. "Even though this organization did a great job before I got here, I really feel that we have doubled down to be present in and with the community."

The M&O levy pays for salaries and facilities and vehicle maintenance. "At any given time there are between three and six positions that ride across that dollar amount," Morrow said. KPFD employs 27 fulltime firefighter/paramedic/EMTs, who are supplemented by more than a dozen volunteers.

"Unfortunately, a lot of money right now is going toward our fleet, and a lot of money is going toward facility upgrades that we have to do," Morrow said. "We have just gone through a process of replacing a lot of communication equipment in our buildings that was outdated and malfunctioning. We have a lot of fundamentals to do — painting, caulking, siding, repairing a storm drain."

The levy will also be used to upgrade the department's vehicles.

"All of our apparatus is aged; the four primary engines are 2004s. Hal (Wolverton, assistant fire chief) has been doing an amazing job keeping those things up to speed, but I'm watching bills come in right now in the \$10,000 to \$15,000 range for those units, so we're at a tipping point," Morrow said.

The department purchased two ambulances a few years ago, but they were new chassis with old ambulance "boxes" mounted on them. "For our fire service here on the Key Peninsula, they are grossly inadequate," Morrow said. "We are a multi-duty agency, so we take those ambulances and throw half of our fire stuff in them, like vehicle extrication tools, so they're packed tight and they are really light duty chassis that aren't meant to be used the way we're using them."

The first of three new ambulance units built on heavy duty truck chassis should

appear on the KP early in 2021.

"They run in the \$230,000 to \$260,000 range, and if we do our work right and we take care of them, they should last a full 10 years without any problems," Morrow said.

About 80% of KPFD's calls are medical or rescue-related. The department recorded 1,154 total responses in the first six months of 2020, including 704 medical calls.

New fire engines can cost up to \$650,000, Morrow said. "We have the four main engines from 2004 and two 1985-6 engines that are in place as a last ditch. Our new engines will be much smaller, much shorter; they'll still have the firefighting capacity, but the girth will be something very different." The new design will make it easier to get to remote areas at the end of narrow, unpaved roads on the KP.

Morrow said he and the board of fire commissioners are developing a plan to start saving money for equipment replacement and perhaps prepare a bond to put to voters sometime in the future. "The strategy right now is to keep what we have on the road. It isn't like we have an abundance of resources, but with proper planning and execution, when we use the resources that are given to us in the right way, they can actually go quite far," he said.

"There's more for me to do: There's a strategic plan that needs to be done, there's a long-term forecast that we are finishing up, we are going to start these bond conversations about what the long-term needs are, I have to create more formal processes about showing what the need is. We've got a long way to go, but we are really on the right track.

"I don't even know how to articulate it, but we are so thankful that our community is engaged and we have some advocates out there who have really helped us along."



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www.kpciviccenter.org The Key Peninsula Civic Center Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, fosters and promotes the civic, social, cultural and general well-being of the Key Peninsula community.



We're all in this together, even when being together is impossible.

The Civic Center was started in 1956 to give local groups a place to meet. Since then, we've hosted an amazing variety of groups large and small, from wrestling to yoga, Boy Scouts to fuchsia growers, churches, civic forums, public celebrations to toddler play schools—all enjoying the amenities.

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Like many of you, our income this year has been limited. The overhead expenses to maintain our beautiful, beloved facility—a treasure for our community—continue every month.

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VIRTUAL SCHOOL FROM PAGE 1

parents last spring, PSD initially planned to open schools with a dual model offering in-person learning with a remote option. Then infection rates spiked. The board approved a remote learning plan at its July 23 meeting following TPCHD recommendations. Chen later issued a letter Aug. 11 clarifying that all schools were required to open with remote learning.

The board asked Chen if PSD could use local data to determine whether or not to offer in-person teaching, since infection rates in local census tracts have been lower than the county as a whole. Chen said there were several reasons to stick with countywide numbers. Data is recorded by where people live and not where they contracted the infection. Cell phone data shows that people are very mobile; they may live in one place and work in another. He also said that when a location opens earlier than others, people flock there, increasing rates of infection.

Chen emphasized that if infection rates are high, the virus cannot be kept out. For instance, when infection rates were low, there was little transmission in essential businesses or daycare, but that changed after infection rates rose. If the rate is high, he said, infections will occur at school no matter how careful students

and teachers are, resulting in quarantining and closures, and in further spread to the community.

Some board members relayed parent frustration that while childcare is deemed essential, school is not. Chen responded that childcare cannot be delivered remotely, and although everyone agrees that remote learning is not equivalent to in-person learning, it is an option.

THE DISTRICT PLAN

“Our decision to open with remote learning does not change our commitment to physically returning children to the buildings for those who elect that option. It changes the timing depending on safety conditions,” PSD Superintendent Art Jarvis said.

Teachers will likely work from their classrooms and most students will learn remotely. The highest need students — such as those with disabilities or who are experiencing homelessness — will be onsite in small numbers with health safety measures in place. As infection rates fall to safe numbers, students will gradually return to school. Students with special needs will be the first to return, followed by elementary students and then middle and

high school students. The ultimate hope is that all students who want to attend school in person will be able to do so by January, but that is dependent on infection rates.

The plan has two key aspects. First, there are all the physical measures needed to assure safety such as masks, distancing, scheduling, flow of students, use of lockers and many other considerations.

Second, there is the DOH decision process on when and how to resume in-person learning. The district developed a dial system, based primarily on infection rate metrics, going from stage 1, with full closure, to stage 6, with schools fully opened. In stage 2 teachers are onsite, as are the very highest need students. The continuum for stages 3 and 4 is being more fully defined but would call for a staged return of students by grade level, with a hybrid of remote and in-person learning. Stage 5 would be a dual platform to accommodate all students who wish to return and remote offered to those who do not.

WHAT PARENTS WANT

A survey conducted by PSD in July found that about 71% of district families wanted to return to classrooms.

PSD Families for Reopening Schools, a group organized largely through Facebook, held a rally opposite the construction site of Elementary School No. 9 on

Harbor Hill Drive in Gig Harbor Aug. 13, before the school board meeting. Approximately 140 attendees listened to speeches calling for reopening, including from Rep. Jesse Young (R-Gig Harbor) and Maia Espinoza, a candidate for the state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

“We believe schools can open safely and professionally,” said Jenn Bunch, one of five administrators of the Facebook group, which has 850 members. She is also the parent of a recent PHS senior, an incoming freshman and a preschooler.

“We are doing our best to expand our group, including doctors and lawyers to build our voice. Key Peninsula and Gig Harbor are different from the rest of Pierce County and we need to press that issue. (Remote learning) 2.0 doesn't work for us, especially in a rural area. We wish the board had waited to present more options, spent more time reviewing what parents said at the focus groups and polled parents again.”

Tim Toerber, a father of two who attended the rally, said “I think there is a lot of risk that can be mitigated, similar to how when nurses first had to face the pandemic, they didn't have a lot of safety precautions in place, but they are an essen-



Marilyn Soule teaches forensics, robotics and 7th grade math at Kopachuck Middle School. Her daughter begins her senior year at Peninsula High School in September. "I am here today as a parent." Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News

tial service, similar to schools, so they had to show up to work and figure it out."

His wife, Avery, added, "I think it's an odd line to draw, at children, when you have places like Target and Nordstrom and Heritage (Distillery) where you can go out and get a drink and sit next to five perfect strangers, but why here? Why now? I think it's a parent's decision to decide what's best for their family."

One parent who didn't attend the rally, and declined to be identified because she is also a paraeducator at PSD, said she was concerned that school board members seemed hesitant to follow the science behind Chen's closure decision, and were ready to pressure schools to open faster than is safe.

"We need to start at stage 2 and do it well, then get ready for the next stage," she said. She was frustrated that the district, like most in the state, seemed to have spent most of the summer planning for in-person teaching and then had to rush to get

a remote learning plan in place. Her school is now planning how to adjust the guidelines to make them work for families. "We need to find nontraditional solutions to a nontraditional problem," she said.

"There is no question that it puts a burden on families and is not ideal," said Jody McVittie, co-founder and director of strategic partnerships for Sound Discipline, a nonprofit that works with schools, educators and parents through a number of programs to improve communication, reduce discipline problems and build social-emotional skills. She has worked in several schools in the district, and said there currently is no good data on the success

of online virtual education, especially of young children.

"For kids to be resilient they need safety, predictability and community." McVittie said it is time to focus on how teachers come together and connect with kids. "We need to be practical. You can do virtual community building. We can recover learning. We can't recover dead people. This is not about winning or losing, but about making the best of a bad situation."

FINDING SOLUTIONS

Sheri Ahlheim, a Peninsula High School math teacher and vice president of the Peninsula Education Association teachers union, said, "We are not a monolithic group. When we polled our members some wanted to return to school, but the majority wanted to teach remotely at this time."

She urged parents to give school a chance. "We will do the hard work to develop

"I THINK IT'S A PARENT'S DECISION TO DECIDE WHAT'S BEST FOR THEIR FAMILY."

the curriculum and be able to make the shift to in-person teaching when students return and make it as easy as possible for parents." She said she is worried that parents who elect to try home schooling until classes resume in-person will not have followed a curriculum that fits or developed a relationship with their teachers.

Lynda Richards, an English teacher at PHS and a product of Peninsula schools herself (as are her grown children) spent the summer taking professional development classes on remote teaching. "Teaching remotely is different," she said. "But I am confident in my colleagues. We have an amazing workforce of teachers. This is daunting but it is awesome to see people rise to the task."

She is concerned about her incoming

students, she said: they will have had five months experiencing how not to be in school. But she is worried most about the disparities in internet access, the high-need students, and the divisiveness she has seen on social media.

Richards is part of a group exploring how the community can support families in need because of the phased school reopening. Gina Cabiddu, program manager of the Children's Home Society of Washington - Key Peninsula Family Resource Center; Colleen Speer, executive director of Communities in Schools of Peninsula; Kellie Bennett, executive director of the Red Barn Youth Center in Key Center; and Mark Cockerill, a member of the Key Peninsula Community Council, are working together to identify several locations with reliable internet access that could provide students with a place to meet and study.

Although in its infancy, their plan is to provide transportation and adult supervision while complying with health department requirements.

GETTING CONNECTED

Kris Hagel, PSD executive director of Digital Learning, said the district plans to distribute additional hot spots and devices to families. Enrolled students have already been issued Chromebooks. There are

several school buses with Wi-Fi and some will probably be placed in strategic neighborhoods, he said. All schools now have accessible Wi-Fi in their neighborhoods. KP Fire Department Chief Dustin Morrow said that all fire stations now have Wi-Fi available in their parking lots. The district is also creating tech help for parents and is planning to have evening hours available for working parents.

At the school district meeting, County Councilman Derek Young (D-Gig Harbor) said he is working with satellite providers to expand broadband access and is asking the council to make \$5 million in federal CARES Act funding available to county school districts to help fill the need. He estimated that could amount to \$250,000 to \$300,000 for PSD.

Young is also working on a Pierce County initiative to bring broadband to underserved areas, but full service to the Key Peninsula is more than a year away.

School starts online Sept. 8.

"I'm sad for my children, I'm sad for the teachers," said Renee Harding, a parent of three students at Evergreen Elementary School. "I would 100% have sent my kids back with or without masks. But I don't want to be flip-flopped if they have to shut down."

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Anne Nesbit
SIREN'S SONG



Being Mindful for Kids

Mindfulness can boost the quality of our lives in numerous ways.

The question is, what is mindfulness? What does it do to spark “just being” in ourselves and our children?

Mindfulness is a type of meditation where you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress.

Living with our current COVID-19 status and knowing that schools will start online sessions only, it is perfectly natural that feelings of stress, anxiety and fear should occur.

Mindfulness is a technique to reduce these feelings, and it can be learned. It is appropriate for any age and mindfulness practice can be an especially important component of a child's life if they suffer from anxiety. Learning about mindfulness can help a child realize that worrying is normal, and there are useful coping methods when we are worrying too much.

Teach kids to recognize and identify their own emotions. Children need to associate the word or term for an emotion with the actual experience of feeling that emotion. Encourage them to think about how each emotion feels in their body. For preschoolers, we can use tools like pictures of objects, food and music to help them develop the ability to focus their attention and stay present. A fun activity is to listen to music while also noticing the sensation of a small tone on their stomachs rising and falling with each breath. This can be entertaining as well as relaxing, and teaches kids how to be more attuned to their bodies, breathing and to the music.

When exploring what mindfulness means with teens it is important to begin with a few guidelines. Make sure they are ready and willing to give mindfulness a try. Clearly explain what mindfulness is and give examples of what it is and is not. For example, introspection or chasing things down a “rabbit hole” is not what it's about; listening to our bodies is. Offer to practice mindfulness with your teen. Not only is it a terrific shared activity, but it models mindfulness for life as a strategy that is good for everyone.

It is important that mindfulness practice

be positive; it should never be used as a form of discipline. Set a daily routine for practicing and build an environment for it. Involve everyone in the process. Share your experiences.

Start with the basics. Mindful breathing is something you can do anywhere, anytime, with any age. Imagine a sailboat that is rising and falling with the waves; with each inhale and exhale the boat rises and falls. I admit I was dubious about this simple breathing exercise — until I tried it. After just a minute of mindful breathing, I could feel tension leaving my body. I use it often as a reset throughout my day.

Another easy technique appropriate for all ages is the body scan. Lie flat and tighten every muscle in your body as hard as you can. After a few seconds, release. Then, starting with your toes and working up your body to your head, focus on each area and think about releasing the tension. Think about your toes, feet, ankles, calves, etc. For younger kids it helps to talk them through this practice. Those who are older are capable of having an inner dialog that guides them.

Mindfulness activities can facilitate the ability to manage stress and lead to a deeper sense of well-being with significant cognitive benefits. Mental skills that require attention, changing focus, planning, organizing and remembering details are enhanced. It helps with behavioral regulation, self-awareness and focus. All of this can translate effectively into creating a positive, nurturing environment that can help navigate changes and deal with the stress created by the pandemic.

The take-home message is this: Mindfulness can improve mental health by exercising attention and self-regulation. It can also lead to increased social competency. It just needs to be practiced and encouraged.

Anne Nesbit is the prevention and public information officer and a volunteer battalion chief for the Key Peninsula Fire Department. She lives in Lakebay.

Krisa Bruemmer
IRREVERENT MOM



Plague Parenting

My 4-year-old and I were talking about running and I was telling her about different sports she can try if she wants to one day, like track, swim team, crew team, volleyball, tennis, softball, etc.

Violet said, “Well, I think I just want to do pie-eating contest.”

When I was in second grade, starting out at a new school, my mom asked me if I wanted to play T-ball.

“It's a way to make friends,” Mom insisted. “And it's good exercise.”

After about 20 seconds of serious contemplation, I asked Mom if I could just read books after school instead.

Whenever I got antsy reading inside our trailer in the woods, I wandered into the trees and built a fort where I swept the ground down to dirt with bundled up tree branches. Inside my fort, I'd mark out a bedroom where I sat reading Nancy Drew, Laura Ingalls, or, later, Mary Higgins Clark while swatting away mosquitoes out in the fresh air.

Violet and I have been home since the fourth of March. She has drawn over 400 pictures. I have read 13 and a half books. We have sent 62 pieces of mail to our friends. A section of our yard has become a fairy garden. I gained 10 pounds and then lost five. We have both watched way too much TV.

Back in March, it felt like I'd been worried forever by the time my friends and family caught up, before the shut-downs started. A mom at preschool laughed when I said I hoped we weren't all about to die.

“You're worried? About this?”

It wasn't an appropriate thing for me to say during drop-off, where I usually showed up wearing a Hello Kitty shirt or a rainbow dress, carefully censoring myself down to a cheerful, early childhood level. But sometimes, especially when I'm worried or scared, things fall out of my mouth before I can think.

That day, as everyone sang and laughed, their mouths open wide, sitting close together on the colorful carpet or standing side by side at the edge, I felt like I was the only one able to see the ghost in the room. I glanced at the unperturbed mom and grasped at a straw, hoping she was right and I was paranoid, like my own mother, who to this day can't have a conversation with me that's not riddled with panic and nerves, forever warning me of danger looming all around. I remind Mom that in the 1980s she let me wander off into the woods alone. “Things were different back then,” she says.

As I write this, the global death count from COVID-19 is at 694,287. The kids have to start school on their computers. T-ball is no longer an option.

I can't believe that this has gone on so long, that there seems to be no end in sight.

I worry my daughter is turning feral in isolation. The fart jokes never end. Yesterday she wore her underwear as a hat and sprinted around the living room naked, bending over to yell, “Mooned you, Mom!”

Violet's dad jokes about our future parent-teacher conferences.

“Violet is a very clever girl,” the teacher will say. “She's ahead in reading and math, but she distracts her friends in class with inappropriate stories and language.”

“Fart jokes?” Kenny will ask.

“It goes beyond that.”

“We're so sorry!” We will apologize. “We blame COVID!”

After 147 days cooped up at home, we ventured out to meet our friends at their private beach. Violet and her small friend giggled and kicked up a million sand fleas. They swam and splashed and collected shells and rocks. They did not stay 6 feet apart.

I pulled Violet aside to remind her to keep her distance. She rolled her green eyes and said, “Mom, we're just having fun!”

The girls' smiles overrode the buzzing of my internal alarm. At the end of the day, Violet tried to hug her friend goodbye. When I stopped her, she yelled, “But Mom! I touched Ella a million times today!”

Violet's dad and I apologized as everyone laughed. I worried we might not get invited back. Violet cried the whole way home.

“I want this coronavirus to be dead!” she screamed, her small face scrunched up all angry and red.

“I know, honey. Me too.”

As we pulled into the driveway, with our dark blue house and our woods filled with fairy gardens, small statues, wildflower coves and forts, I said to Violet, “That was a really fun day, huh?”

She scowled at me in the rearview. With her arms crossed, her bottom lip pouting, and her long noodle of a leg kicking the center console, she said, “It was the best day of my whole life.”

Krisa Bruemmer lives in Vaughn.

Phyllis Henry
COAST TO COAST



The Edge

A few steps from the drop-off at the edge of a cliff overlooking the Grand Canyon, my children gathered around their father. My 5-year-old son was picking up small rocks and stuffing them into the pockets of his blue shorts. His twin sister, oblivious of the seemingly bottomless void before her, dreamily twisted back and forth, staring at the sky. My older daughter listened to her father's lecture about how the canyon was formed, unconcerned that a stumble could send her screaming into the pit.

Twenty feet behind them I stood, too terrified to warn them about the danger. What if one of the girls toppled over back-

ward and fell into that endless chasm? What if my son reached for a rock and lost his balance and fell onto these wicked boulders far, far below?

I had read the brochures about the Grand Canyon, about how majestically the waters of the Colorado River below had beautifully carved the rocky sides, and how the width of the huge river looked as if it had been reduced to a silvery thread. Earlier that day I had inched my prone body right up to the edge just so I could see the glory — and it was glorious. Lying on my stomach with my eyes peeking over the edge was agony. What if the edge crumbled and I fell down into those cruel depths?

That sounds like acrophobia, but my fear isn't of heights; it is basophobia, a fear of falling from those terrible heights. When I soared with my husband in his ultra-light plane, the view from 1,500 feet was spectacular. We floated over trees and cows, we waved at people on the ground, and we listened to the tiny sounds of Earth — even heard a cat meowing. I was not afraid of the height. I was afraid that, even while tightly cinched with two seat belts, I might slip out the open door and plummet into the giant oak trees below. The violence of the landing, should I fall, was not part of my fear. Probable death was not part of my fear. The actual falling, the total loss of control, the heart-stretching agony of the uncontrolled plunge contaminated the joy of the flight.

When we visited friends in Atlanta, we stayed at the beautifully decorated Peachtree Hotel and were pampered by the excellent staff there, but accessing our room on the 20th floor required courage. The glass-enclosed bubble of an elevator was exposed on three sides. While other passengers jockeyed for position near the glass, I cowered on the building side and faced the solid back wall.

Standing on the balcony atop the Space Needle, and on that terrible, beautiful deck of the Empire State Building, has twisted my innards, drained the strength from my legs, and silenced my voice. With the barriers there, falling would have to be deliberate, but still my gut experienced that endless drop to the Earth below.

At the House on the Rock in Spring Green, Wisconsin, a 40-foot walkway projects over the trees below, and guests there can get an airplane-like view of the surrounding area. By walking very carefully directly down the middle of the walkway and not looking to the right or left, I managed to join my family there, until we reached the small area, about six feet square, where the floor is replaced with glass. Thousands of visitors have walked over that glass and no one

has fallen, but I could not do it. My feet would not move, and I stood on the safe side while my family exclaimed about the beauty below and urged me to join them.

Today my age and COVID-19 guarantee that never again will I be required to exist at a higher elevation than my third-floor balcony, where a chest-high metal railing protects me — that is unless an earthquake demolishes the building or a tornado blows me into the night — or COVID-19 comes to visit me.

Award-winning columnist Phyllis Henry lives in Gig Harbor.



Lynn Larson
STEPPING BACK

The Magic Seine of the Minter Bay People

Salmon and cedar were the lifeblood of Native people on Puget Sound. For the S'Hotlemamish of Minter Bay, the coho, chum and cutthroat trout runs were so productive that the villagers were thought to have a magic seine. Woven from cedar limbs, the seine was always full.

At this time of year, the coho runs that filled that seine began to return to Minter Bay, bringing with them the first families coming back to their Minter Creek home from their summer sojourns. Spending a few days to a few weeks at what are now Fox Island, Longbranch, Lakebay, Rosedale and Arletta, the Minter Bay people came home laden with the fruits of summer. Visitors, mostly relatives, arrived, too, seeking to share in the silver salmon rushing upriver.

Rich in salmon, the S'Hotlemamish of Minter Bay were wealthy enough to be considered a high-class village by other villagers on Puget Sound. They married into only the best families throughout the Key Peninsula, the Sahewabc of southern Puget Sound, and upper-class villagers from the Duwamish and Puyallup River drainages, to ensure they would have only "good children."

Continuously occupied for 1,400 years, the village was located north of the mouth of Minter Creek, and had at least three big houses, a potlatch house, and a training house, in 1855. Up to 20 families lived in each of the three longhouses, which featured roofs with a drainage system, an interior lined with mats in lovely geometric designs, and house posts painted in red and black. Bed platforms were built around the interior of the house, with hanging cattail mats partitioning a family's section, each family's living area having its own fire hearth.

Villagers arriving in September unloaded

their canoes filled with huge baskets of dried red elderberries, blackberries, huckleberries, serviceberries and salal berries, the sweetest of the dried berries; dried camas and fern roots, and medicine plants to refresh their pharmacopeia. The decorated baskets were stored under the bed platforms in their respective longhouses. Visitors erected mat houses close to one another, and near the longhouses. Then, the people set the long basket traps in Minter Creek and trolled for silver salmon at the mouth of the creek.

Those not fishing processed the silver salmon for drying. They wiped off the fish with vine maple moss (because bigleaf maple moss was too dirty), laid the fish on ferns on the ground, cut open each fish, removed the backbones and inserted cedar stick splints to keep the fish sides open. The fish were hung on racks over a smudgy fire under a lean-to or in a smokehouse. Backbones, skeins of salmon eggs and fish heads for snacks were cured too. Other villagers prepared meals to feed the hungry fishermen and fish processors — savory soup with salmon, crunchy dried salmon backbones, camas and a handful of dried huckleberries, seasoned with fresh herbs, accompanied by clams and meat steamed in earth ovens over rock pavements.

The families that had not returned in September came home to Minter Bay by November to prepare for the big chum run, all of it to be cured and stacked in baskets or hung from the rafters in the house away from the heat. It was the dried chum that sustained the villagers through winter. Any visitor who helped with fishing or processing could expect a share of the fish, otherwise the salmon would be offended by the lack of generosity and avoid the fisher-people in the future. With the chum cured and put away, the villagers turned their attention to winter activities — cleaning and repairing gear, winter dances, and potlatches.

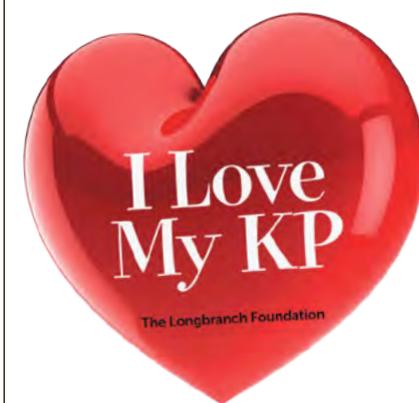
Upheavals in the settlement pattern of Indigenous people in southern Puget Sound followed decades of epidemics and the signing of the Medicine Creek Treaty in 1854. Remnants of the Burley Lagoon village joined their Minter Bay brethren sometime before 1854, though most people had moved from the Minter Bay village by 1868, only returning for the fall salmon runs. In 1874, homesteaders torched the Minter Bay longhouses, sweat lodges, menstrual huts and smokehouses.

The Minter Bay S'Hotlemamish joined their kin at the Glen Cove village, established earlier by Minter Bay families, building another longhouse there around 1870. The big fish runs continued to draw the Minter

Bay people to their old village site, where loggers did not bother them, and where they cached their dried salmon in a big tree stump, returning periodically to replenish their supplies at home. Eventually even the Glen Cove village disappeared, the inhabitants finding homes on or near the Nisqually, Squaxin Island, Muckleshoot and Puyallup Reservations.

The whispers of those vanished Minter Bay people haunt me as I sit in my car on State Route 302, or slow down to 25 mph for the never-ending construction of the new bridge over Minter Creek, on the Key Peninsula. I hear the echoes of boys chasing fish crows away from the drying racks, drumbeats from the potlatch house accompanying the singing for winter dances, the click of bones for the gambling game, the welcome shouts to relatives arriving by canoe for the salmon runs, and the gasps of children listening to the storyteller talk of a time when Sun was younger brother to Moon. I feel satisfaction in knowing a culvert is coming out, and soon, the wild coho and chum salmon may be bumping each other as they race up Minter Creek past the Minter Creek Hatchery, to redds abandoned long ago, and again overflow the magic seine.

Lynn Larson is an archaeologist and anthropologist who lives on Filucy Bay.



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Letters to the Editor

REGARDING THE VIRUS

I have been enjoying the KP News for years and appreciate your efforts as well as our diverse group of people living on the KP. However, I think your latest editorial is a bit optimistic (“Here’s What I Think About That,” August 2020).

Having spent years overseas, I have realized Americans are unique in this world and unfortunately I believe you are giving us too much credit. In recent decades we have become a culture that cares little about the greater good. We are now a nation full of narcissists.

I am deeply saddened we are going in the wrong direction. This virus doesn’t care about anyone’s opinion. If a small percentage of foolish people ignore the threat, the virus will spread endlessly. And given the large percentage of science deniers in our society this is not going to stop.

We need to treat our public health crisis like the highway. If someone breaks the rules and endangers others by speeding or reckless driving, they are punished. This is how our society functions now. We must treat these people as criminals for endangering society. And the punishment must be strong enough to discourage their behavior.

I don’t have the solution; I am just afraid people lack motivation and they are influenced by ignorance.

Thank you for your good work.
Brian Nicholson, Lakebay

THANK YOU KP NEWS

Ted Olinger’s item on the cost and benefits of the COVID-19 lockdown was a better analysis than anything I’ve read elsewhere, even nationally.

And Chris Rurik’s bat article was supremely well documented and timely in more ways than one, since bats are all over my neighborhood right now, and then there’s that COVID-19 bat thing...

The toxic plants and Toni Morrison articles were also very good.

Last but not least, the census article by Joseph Pentheroudakis was so funny because it was so true. Amazing that this thing just landed in his lap.

Thanks again.
Diane Yorgason-Quinn, Wauna

Vaughn Elementary Welcomes New Principal

Born and raised in Tacoma, Abbie Barabe has years of experience as an administrator and principal.

KRISA BRUEMMER, KP NEWS

Vaughn Elementary School has a new principal, Abbie Barabe (pronounced “bear-a-bee”), with an extensive background in the field of elementary education.

After earning her bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Washington State University, Barabe taught a range of elementary school grades, later receiving her administrator credentials at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, where she was born and raised.

In the Bethel School District, Barabe served students as a teacher, an associate administrator, and a program specialist. At Manitou Park Elementary in Tacoma, Barabe spent six years as building administrator and three as principal.

“Manitou Park probably taught me everything I needed to be successful here at Vaughn,” Barabe said. “It taught me how to become a part of a community and how to work with the community.”

Barabe said when she applied for the Vaughn Elementary position, the close-knit, friendly and welcoming atmosphere of the Key Peninsula appealed to her and her family.

“I have experience with all different children, children with special services, gifted children, students who didn’t have breakfast in the morning, and children who had everything and more,” Barabe said. “You can’t just give kids academics; you have to meet their needs. Working with the whole child, we know that students need academic support but they also need social-emotional support.”

Barabe’s experiences have given her a strong foundation and belief in the “whole child” approach, which goes beyond academic achievement with a focus on social and emotional learning and support.

“I believe the hardest part for our students has been the lack of social interactions because that’s how children thrive,” she said. “As we move into remote learning and teaching happens online, my hope, my vision, is that we are providing students with self-regulation tools, social and emotional tools, so that they can be successful. So that

they learn grit and tenacity, and that even at home when a problem is put in front of them, and it is hard, that they are going to continue to try and not give up.”

Barabe faces many unique challenges in the upcoming school year, including getting to know her new school, students and families mid-pandemic.

“Being outgoing is a strength that I’m going to bring to this. I love what I do and I want people to know,” she said. “One of

the things I’m struggling with is that the community doesn’t know me. I think one of the foundations of education and teaching is relationships first. No child will ever trust me until they have a relationship with me and they know that I mean what I say, and right now that is a barrier.”

Although Barabe is optimistic about plans for the fall and

her ability to successfully build relationships from the ground up in a primarily virtual environment, she admits, “It’s not perfect.”

The school is preparing a list of students who disengaged last spring and Barabe plans to contact each of those families and offer support. She has also put together a school supply wish list to help kids succeed with online learning and has asked the community and local community resources to help.

“For families who need to spend their hard-earned money on basic needs, I don’t want them to worry about these materials,” she said, “but I want to make sure they have them.”

“Last year when we went into remote learning, it happened in every district, it happened overnight and nobody was prepared. No teacher, no administrator could tell you what our next steps were,” Barabe said. “So, what we’re doing as a school now is we’re building that trust again. I really want the community and the families to feel like I’m here and I’m open. Even though I can’t open my door, I can open my computer.”

Barabe plans to do ongoing outreach through Zoom, both in small groups and one-on-one. Vaughn families will also receive a weekly phone call relaying updates

and important information.

“I want to encourage people to reach out. Please, come find me and talk to me and tell me what I’m missing, because it’s a large community with a lot of great things and I don’t see it all yet. Don’t hesitate to tell me. I’m a good listener and I’m proactive and I’ll get out there,” Barabe said. “I already feel the excitement to watch our students grow and to meet high expectations.”

Principal Barabe can be reached at barabea@psd401.net.



Principal Barabe Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News

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Home Park		OPEN	OPEN	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 August 14, 2020: This chart will be updated on our Facebook page and at www.keypenparks.com



Join us welcoming Tracey Perkosky, Key Pen Parks new Executive Director. She's already become a vibrant and active part of our KP family. Welcome Tracey!

KPFD Promotes, Assigns Captains to Stations

A new policy strengthens retention by providing leadership experience for officers working with the community.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Key Peninsula Fire District 16 promoted three firefighters to lieutenant and three lieutenants to captain at a swearing-in ceremony July 28.

Promoted from lieutenant to captain were Kaci Corrigan, Dale Heidal and Jeremy Underwood.

Promoted from firefighter to lieutenant were Doug Gelsleichter, Danny Hansen and Nate Jean.

“I applied to be a lieutenant because I have a passion for the job,” Lt. Gelsleichter said. He volunteered for the KP fire district in 2009, was hired in 2013, and became a paramedic in 2015. “I had no idea what I was signing up for. I fell in love with the culture, the passion and the camaraderie — it really is like a second family here,” he said.

KPFD employs 27 full-time firefighter/paramedic/EMTs, including Fire Chief Dustin Morrow, Assistant Fire Chief Hal Wolverton and three battalion chiefs. One battalion chief is on duty every shift, while Morrow and Wolverton share the responsibility of duty chief to respond if needed.

Between seven and 10 career personnel are now available at all times on the KP. Volunteer firefighters, who number anywhere from 12 to 16 at a given time, also began responding out of the Key Center fire station in August.

The rank of captain was reinstated as part of staff growth and roster reorganization, according to Morrow. The emergency medical services levy approved by voters in 2019 allowed the department to hire three additional firefighter/EMTs. As a result, three stations — Wauna, Home and Longbranch — are now staffed full-time for the first time in years, and each will have a specific captain assigned to it.

“The captains will be involved in community outreach in our respective station areas,” said Capt. Heidal, who joined KPFD in 1993 after firefighter training in the Navy. “We will be managing community relations, equipment, training for all assigned to the station, supplies, apparatus.

Chief Morrow likes to get things done and has lots of good ideas about how to do it, and he has expectations of us all to do the same.”

Choosing which captain would go where was left up to them, Morrow said. “They were very purposeful in how they deliberated about that and I’m pleased with where folks are landing.”

Medic units are on duty at Wauna and Longbranch while the fire engine on call is

“I grew up in the north end of the KP off of Creviston and went to Minter Creek, Key Peninsula Middle School, and graduated from Peninsula High,” he said. “I have always been motivated to lead and help make positive improvements in the organization, so when the opportunity to test for captain became available, I was very excited to apply.”

Capt. Corrigan said she wanted to be assigned to Station 47, in Home.



Top: Capt. Kaci Corrigan, Capt. Dale Heidal, Capt. Jeremy Underwood Bottom: Lt. Doug Gelsleichter, Lt. Nate Jean, Lt. Danny Hansen, Photos: Garrett Morrow

in Home. “It made the most sense to put Kaci (Corrigan), who’s a paramedic, down at Home because that allows the engine to respond as ALS (Advanced Life Support) instead of BLS (Basic Life Support). Kaci also has some real passion about engine operations and the craft of firefighting, and the other two want to spend more time on the medical side of things, so that worked out for them to be at the medic stations.”

Capt. Heidal will be stationed in Wauna, in part because of his wildland firefighting expertise, Morrow said. “Jeremy (Underwood), our hometown guy, lives just south of the Home bridge and has really wanted to pick up the community and connection components of being a captain, and the Longbranch station made great sense for him.”

Capt. Underwood started as a volunteer on the KP in 2006, went to paramedic school in 2009, and was hired fulltime in 2011.

“Because it is geographically the middle station of the three, I will be able to backup and assist both the north and south end crews, which means I get to see and support all of my people,” she said. “As captains, we will be spending time out in our dedicated areas to really get to know the people we serve, better understand their needs, and to identify the particular hazards and risks that are inherent to that area.”

She joined the fire service in 2007. “My daughter died at the age of five months back in 2003. I got the call while I was at work. Because of the efforts of the fire department, I had a chance to say goodbye. As time went on after losing her, it became clear to me that part of my journey toward trying to make sense of any of it, or find peace, was to try to stand in the gap for people in their darkest time, because I’ve been there, I know what it feels like. I want to help solve problems and ease burdens, and give back.”

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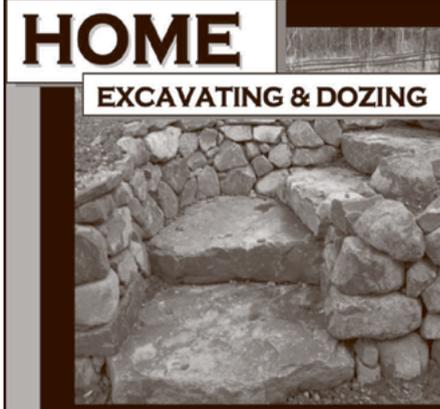
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Meet Some of Your 2020 Election Candidates

Key Peninsula News interviewed candidates for three important local races, asking each: What are your priorities for the KP? What is the No. 1 thing you want to accomplish in office? Why are you qualified to do it?

The responses below are the candidates' own words, edited for length only. Voters can ask their own questions at the virtual 2020 KP Candidate Forum via Zoom Oct. 13. Email questions in advance to keypencouncil@gmail.com.

Pierce County Executive

INCUMBENT

BRUCE DAMMEIER, R-PUYALLUP



If we're not healthy, nothing else matters. That's number one, that our entire community including the KP is healthy. We've brought testing events into rural areas, at Key Center and Longbranch. We've distributed 2 million masks in the county to small businesses and organizations. We need to keep our small businesses going and help them hang on through COVID-19 and the recession. We've got loans for both business and personal, rental assistance and mortgage assistance primarily focused on keeping people in their homes. What we don't want is for the pandemic-induced recession to cause a greater housing collapse.

The biggest factor in why we're coming down off the July peak; I'd say it's widespread mask usage. Masks are effective in reducing the spread.

Shifting beyond COVID-19, obviously nothing is more important right now, but we have been making significant investments in behavioral health, an issue throughout the county and the state and one of particular importance to the KP. To characterize my work as county executive, it's bringing people together to get things done.

We have mobile intervention teams out on the edges of the community supporting high 911 utilizers. We've got more co-responders supporting law enforcement in Pierce County than ever before. We finally have a behavioral health hospital up and running or close to it, more than doubling the number of behavioral health hospital beds. We've got a veterans clinic to support post-9/11 veterans and their families. From Kitsap County we've recruited Coffee Oasis to get our first youth homeless shelter. Later this fall we'll be opening our second ever crisis recovery center, in Parkland where it was most needed, but we're keenly aware that there is significant need on the peninsulas and likely our next steps will be there.

On the Key we hear a lot about transportation. We've been working hard through Pierce Transit and various funding sources. Fundamentally, I think the systems are

pretty broken on how they support Pierce County. We're looking at federal grants to deliver the next generation of transit. The ultimate dream is connected electric, shared and autonomous. We're not trying to put in place the transportation system of the last 50 years, we're thinking of what the next 50 years looks like to lower the costs.

While Seattle and King county are cutting law enforcement officers, in Pierce County we're not doing that. We saw a strategic opportunity to bring in high quality, highly trained law enforcement personnel from other agencies. That saves basic training and almost a year of training before a new deputy is on the street patrolling. With lateral transfers we can get them out in six to eight weeks. Because of strong financial management we were positioned to take advantage of that. That's the kind of leadership we have and I hope the voters will say, we like what he's done and we want him to lead us for another four years.

CHALLENGER

LARRY SEAQUIST, D-GIG HARBOR



My priority for the KP, as I know it well after serving its residents for eight years in the state Legislature, is the same as I have for the unincorporated parts of the county in South and East Pierce, and that is to feel that they are being listened to and met with local services.

We've got a very large county government with over 3,000 employees and a \$3 billion budget, but it's largely centered in the urban core of the district. My belief is that because we're going to be living with less revenue, we need to rebuild county government to trim it down and distribute it throughout the county with special attention to the rural unincorporated citizens.

We can build a new government that has the county services distributed through regional offices in an unincorporated community, similar to the KP Community Council office where county health department staff come into the community from time to time. I'd like to see that expand to, for example, the sheriff's department. The sheriff used to have an office in Purdy staffed with an assistant to answer

nonemergency calls and solve problems that didn't take a deputy's time.

That's the heart of my sense here: We need to show that Pierce County can build a new model government that's got this distributed capability of being in the communities delivering social services, mental health and policing through these regional offices and that people feel like they are consulted.

We had some success with community input through the Land Use Advisory Committees but the county sidelined those LUACs. I thought they were quite valuable.

We know the county budget is in deep trouble and facing an extended recession. Rather than implementing top-down, across the board cuts, we need to go into the community centers to hold meetings — here's the budget situation, here are the choices, what do you think? We need to rebuild the county budget from the community up. Huge changes are bound to happen as this economy just grinds away.

I'm running for office because we are facing an incredible negative set of events happening. I'm worried even about our democracy. I cannot sit on the sideline. At the county level, we've got an opportunity to show that our country does work. We can rebuild America, one county at a time, starting here in Pierce County. I have the skills with executive, political and strategic planning experience to be useful.

Legislative District 26 State Representative-Position 1

CHALLENGER

CARRIE HESCH, D-GIG HARBOR



Having lived on the Key Peninsula in Longbranch for eight years, I know how vulnerable Key Peninsula is to fire due to the highway situation for getting out. If there was a major fire, one of the only ways people could get out is by boat. Trying to provide better ingress and egress through transportation is important. I have a master's degree in infrastructure from the University of Washington and have long been interested in how we provide a second highway into the KP.

I feel like more work needs to be done in Olympia to put pressure and move forward with that. Our highway system is really struggling. I think that folks on the KP deserve better safety measures and transportation infrastructure.

I also feel like living on the KP, we are really disenfranchised. People are often focused on Gig Harbor and not necessarily the KP. We're out there, but we must not need anything because we're sustainable, tough and can do it on our own. Well, that's not true — we have a voice. We have the right to be heard.

We need to have our infrastructure bolstered, a better medical system in place for safety and for people who need preventative care, and for growing homelessness. We can't see it, but it's there. People need to be able to find services so that they can find a better means of living safer. For people living out here who are worried about people living on their property, we need to be giving those folks the services they need so they're not living in tents. This is something that really needs to be addressed.

I work for the Washington State Department of Corrections. I have a background in state service and that networking is in place working with other state agencies and other leaders. Being on the board of directors of Key Peninsula Community Services is another way I've done networking through different county, city and state agencies, so building that infrastructure and those connections is very important.

I've done several different research projects with the UW where we focused on vulnerable populations and preparing them in the face of crisis. In the City of Bellevue, I was on the research team for Livable City Year 2019-2020, where we provided a research project to prepare that city in the face of climate crisis — what they needed to do to prepare their communities, their healthcare, their educational systems, their electric grid, etc., for the next 10 years.

Problem-solving isn't done by the person who goes to Olympia. Problem-solving is done when everybody has a voice at the table. I don't always have all the answers. I have some really amazing ideas but I like to hear from other people.

INCUMBENT

JESSE YOUNG, R-GIG HARBOR



The Key Peninsula is unique in my mind. Of all the doors I've knocked on over the years, you've got a unique blend of people there who want to maintain the rural magic out there. People don't want to see it turn into a big pipeline of traffic going straight down through and then you've got people who really want to resolve the Purdy bottleneck. It's a unique balance.

Since I've been in office, they've done a number of follow-up studies on the main study done a number of years ago. The effort I've worked on is to develop a long-term plan, following my work on the Narrows Bridge to keep tolls from rising, has been to work on a connector route between State Route 16 and State Route 3 that would utilize the Pine Street corridor that we could build through. That does two things, an ability to bypass Purdy and still be able to get down into Key Pen while still honoring the desire of people to maintain that rural touch.

At the same time it will provide a major relief to the Gorst bottleneck that you're going to have with the massive growth happening in the South Kitsap industrial area. If you look at what's happening by the airport, and then with the tech companies and Amazon coming in, we need another bypass. That bypass, if done right with enough strategic horizon thinking, will be done in a way that honors the commitment to keep the KP rural while also providing a major infrastructure avenue through there or at least adjacent to it that allows multiple options for people to get on and off the Key Peninsula without getting bottlenecked at Purdy.

I serve and have served on the transportation committee. I am in leadership now and help write the budget and that's one of the major efforts I'm currently working on.

I am unique for a couple of reasons, in conjunction with Rep. Calder, in all fairness, but since I've been in office we've brought massive amounts of money into the 26th district specifically to Key Pen. We've done it for environmental reasons and for community reasons, and that's from the capital budget. We didn't see that happen before my entrance into office. We saw a lot of people talk, but to bring a lot of funding takes a lot of work and you're looking at the only person in the Legislature on either side of the aisle that serves on leadership in two budget committees.

I am one of the few IT professionals in

the Legislature. If you want someone to deal with and come up with creative solutions to getting rural broadband issues fixed, I'm your guy. I like to think that's what uniquely qualifies me relative to other people too.

Legislative District 26 State
Representative-Position 2

INCUMBENT

MICHELLE CALDIER, R-PORT ORCHARD



When I first came into the Legislature, I went back to look at capital budget projects and where the funding was going. I noticed KP rarely got capital projects.

One of the problems in the 26th is that the other areas, Gig Harbor, Port Orchard and Bremerton, all have paid lobbyists but the KP doesn't. And if legislators don't know you have a problem, you're really not going to get anything.

Key Peninsula tends to try to take care of itself and doesn't ask for help as much as you should compared to other areas. That was the biggest focus for me: reaching out to different groups and helping to get capital budget projects identified and funded. We got \$1.5 million for The Mustard Seed Project, funding for the KP Civic Center and the Longbranch Marina. I want to continue making sure Key Peninsula gets their fair share, so working with some of the nonprofits to help them get through the process is important to me.

One of the reasons I work well across the aisle is that I think it's OK to argue and still be respectful to people. Some people believe that if you get in people's face and yell at them that will make them change. A better response is to have well thought-out reasons and be nice to people.

I'm one of the top Republicans for getting bills passed and amendments accepted because I am respected. In Olympia, you can run bills just to say, "Darn those Democrats," or you can run bills that are well thought-out.

I think it's OK to stand up and point out flaws in people's logic. What works for Seattle or one segment of the population may not work for the entire state. A perfect example is what's going on with our educational system. The foster kids that I have, most of them really need one-on-one care and on top of that a lot of the foster kids who were reunified at home where there's been abuse, that could be really bad for that child. That's one of the ways you can make a difference — by bringing up different perspectives and

coming up with solutions.

My number one priority for this next session is turning our state back around and getting through COVID-19. I hear from constituents from every walk of life. The way it affects someone who is 80 is very different from the way it affects someone who is 30, just had a kid, lost his job, can't get unemployment, but has bills to pay.

With my experience as a dentist, and in nursing homes for 16 years, I've got the most education in the Legislature when it comes to health care. I do think some of the problems are the inconsistencies that are put in place. Some things help reduce the spread of the disease, some things don't. We have to look at COVID-19 as a whole. We're not going to see the full effects of this for years.

CHALLENGER

JOY STANFORD, D-GIG HARBOR



For the Key Peninsula, small business is the bread and butter of our community and what people know and love. We need economic recovery and to keep

making sure we are helping those small businesses thrive and be healthy economically. That for me is number one for the KP.

Housing and homelessness. It's my passion. We have got to make sure we have affordable, safe housing and then we can layer in all the other things.

After that it's probably transportation. How can we bring back options out there, and bring back dollars to create options? That's my job, to go to Olympia and do that. And that's for every system. That's for the public health system, the education system, the transportation system. I don't feel like we've had that for the last six years.

What rises to the top of my list is policy that is inclusive for more people to achieve the greater good. It's rising to the top; we need those people to rise to the top who may be low wage earners, low income, middle class families. It's time we make sure we are inclusive with those folks. There's a lot of working class in the 26th and I want to make sure we are including them in policy, including them in the conversation, and having them at the table to be a part of it.

Internet connectivity is not a luxury, it's a utility. Those are the champions we need in Olympia, the champions we need locally. We've got Derek Young at the Pierce County Council and he is preaching this every chance he gets, saying, "I've got people in rural areas who don't have connectivity.

Why?"

What do we need to do? Let's tear down these barriers, stop talking about it and let's get it done.

I feel qualified to do this work after the last 20 years of grassroots work I've done, working with populations of people who didn't have access to good health care or health insurance, working with a population now to find safe, affordable housing, starting conversations with groups of people that don't agree. How do you start that conversation? I can do that.

It's interesting after the killing of George Floyd how many people called asking me, "What is happening?" and my reply was "This is the conversation we should have been having 20 years ago."

I love that women, white women, were saying "I need to ask you something." In the moment, it was so raw for me. As a mother of two black sons, I worry. But it just made my heart so full to be able to have a conversation, to be able to encourage and push people to do what they think is right.



SAVE THE DATE

The 2020 Key Peninsula Candidate Forum will be **October 13** on Zoom.

We'll publish all the details in the October edition of Key Peninsula News.

Questions for the candidates at the forum may be emailed to the Key Peninsula Community Council at keypencouncil@gmail.com.

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KEY
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NEWS

Auditor says Pierce County Sets the Standard for Mail-in Voting

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

With over a decade of experience managing vote-by-mail elections, Pierce County Auditor Julie Anderson knows a thing or two about running elections. Other states look to Washington as a leader in safely voting by mail and particularly Pierce County, Anderson told the KP News.

"When you return your ballot, we're looking for two things: that you signed your oath and that it's most likely you who signed it, and we're also looking at the barcode, to make sure you haven't already returned a ballot," she said. "Your neighbor could steal your mail, could hijack your ballot, and could Xerox it 20 times and return 20 ballots, but only one is going to get counted and that's the one that's returned in the envelope that we provided."

The outer return envelope has the signed affidavit of the voter swearing they are qualified to vote and a bar code that is a unique voter identification. A sorter machine records the bar code and photographs the signature. Election employees compare that signature to the registration signature on file.

"If a signature is questionable, we have a second pair of eyes to look at it. There are always two election workers looking at the signature together and they must agree," Anderson said. "If they don't agree, it will move up to another, more experienced set of eyes."

The staff inspecting signatures is trained by the Washington State Patrol fraud division.

"Anybody can walk into the Pierce County Election Center at any hour live ballots are handled; can look in the glass-enclosed hallway and directly see incoming ballots, ballot processing and tabulation," Anderson said.

In addition, a closed circuit camera system with over 10 different motion-activated cameras in the election center records everything that happens, all handled by a security department outside the auditor's office. The live video becomes part of the permanent election archives.

Voters can look online to see if their ballot was received and accepted.

"If people are concerned, they can call us and we're happy to research it for them, or they can go online to vote.wa.gov and check their ballot status," Anderson said. "It will show accepted, rejected; it will also show the date that we prepared the ballots

to mail to them."

Anderson said it's important to vote early. "Election day is a deadline, it's not an activity."

For the August primary, the county would ordinarily see about a 30% voter turnout, though the Auditor's Office expected it to go as high as 35% this year.

"We had a 51.9% turnout," Anderson said. "That's huge."

Ballots need to be postmarked by election day in Washington, which was Aug. 4 for the primary.

"But we got hundreds and hundreds of ballots marked Aug. 5," Anderson said. "You've got to look at the pickup time for that blue mailbox, but even that time is no guarantee the post office is going to give it a cancellation stamp that day. This is one of the reasons we encourage people to make their way to one of our 47 election drop boxes."

Election drop boxes are secure and a better choice for many voters, Anderson said.

"Pierce County is a gold medal winner in this regard and received national recognition for our work," she said. "We part-

nered with a metal fabrication company and custom-designed our drop boxes. They're made out of quarter-inch folded steel and set in concrete. We've had people accidentally hit them, but the vehicle and driver were the losers."

Drop boxes are always located in public places that have good lighting and visibility, like fire stations and libraries, and places with closed-circuit camera systems, she said. But even there, voting early is better. Eighty percent of the primary ballots at drop boxes were returned in the final 48 hours of the election, slowing down the final results.

"We pick up ballots from the drop box every 48 hours during the 18-day voting period and then, as the election nears, daily," Anderson said. "On election day we pick up from the drop boxes multiple times a day."

In a statement to media, Anderson also said "President Trump's remarks about not funding the USPS are not relevant to our November election here in Washington State. We are not depending upon any new USPS budget authority. Our system of outbound and inbound election mail is well-tested and relies only upon ordinary postal operations."



Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News

Dolphin Pays a Rare Visit to the KP

A long-beaked common dolphin named Cinco introduced himself to the neighbors.

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

A dolphin has been putting on a show around the southern tip of the Key Peninsula.

“The acrobatics I witnessed were incredible and unlike anything else outside of Sea World,” said Longbranch resident Jeffrey Tritt. His string of encounters with the rare cetacean began July 18, on the return leg of a boat trip to Olympia.

He was passing the red buoy off Devil’s Head when another boat appeared. “Two people stood in the boat laughing and pointing at a dolphin weaving across their bow and at times going completely airborne,” he reported. Tritt has enjoyed encounters with porpoises over the years, but this animal was something special.

When the dolphin left the other boat, Tritt did a circle of the area. Before long the dolphin appeared just off his bow. As Tritt sped north the dolphin kept pace, at times leaping on either side of the bow. Tritt’s son and his son’s girlfriend lay in the bow of the boat and Tritt watched as the dolphin rotated its body to give them a close look from 4 feet away.

The animal is a long-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus capensis*), a species with a global range in warm-temperate and tropical waters that is the most abundant cetacean in the world, with a population estimated at 6 million. These dolphins are numerous off the coast of Southern California and Mexico, living in groups of hundreds or even thousands of individuals, but rarely do they venture farther north.

In 2016, according to Cascadia Research Collective, two pods of these dolphins made an unprecedented excursion into Puget Sound, finding their way to its southern

reaches. Most soon exited, but a handful of individuals stayed behind and have been living in South Puget Sound ever since, spending much of their time in Case Inlet, near Olympia, and around Anderson Island, with occasional forays as far north as Tacoma.

One male in particular, nicknamed Cinco, has been photographed often over the last year. Usually alone, Cinco is described as being playful and having a breach like a skipping stone. Experts identify individual dolphins by examining photographs of their dorsal fins — something Key Peninsula boaters can aim to record to help the research collective better understand these rare animals.

A few other species might be mistaken for a common dolphin.

The first, the more well-known bottlenose dolphin, reached Puget Sound a handful of times over the last few decades, most notably in the fall of 2017 when five or six individuals spent several months in Washington waters. One of them was photographed well enough in Hale Passage to be identified by researchers in California.

Incredibly, it was a female named Miss who was first photographed in Orange County in 1983. Miss has a long record of expanding the range of bottlenose dolphins northward, being one of the first to reach Monterey Bay and, later, San Francisco Bay. To reach Puget Sound was a significant leap.

In comparison with long-beaked common dolphins, bottlenose dolphins have a much shorter and rounder snout.

Far more likely to be seen than any kind of dolphin in Puget Sound are harbor porpoises. Historically native to the Sound, harbor porpoises had all but vanished by

the 1960s before they began to reappear after 2000. Today they are quite common.

Harbor porpoises are small and dark. They often travel in groups of three to 10 and make a gasping noise when they surface. Unlike the curving, swept-back dorsal fin of dolphins, they have a triangular dorsal fin.

Long-beaked common dolphins eat many types of fish and squid. Individuals often remain loyal to a small area. Unlike many dolphins and whales, their pods are not matrilineally organized. And their playful antics are not confined to speedboats — they have been observed bow-riding large whales.

Tritt’s wife missed the first dolphin encounter. On the following Saturday afternoon he took her out in his boat to check the area near the red buoy. Sure enough, the dolphin reappeared and repeated its performance. “At times he went airborne six feet in the air 10 feet away parallel to the boat, wriggling his tail vigorously,” said Tritt.

A week later they had a final sighting while having an outdoor dinner at a friend’s house. From the high bank property, which has a commanding view from Pitt Passage to the Nisqually Flats, they saw an inflatable with two people aboard.

Again and again the dolphin launched itself into the air around the tiny boat. The inflatable went back and forth and the dolphin showed no signs of tiring as it leapt.

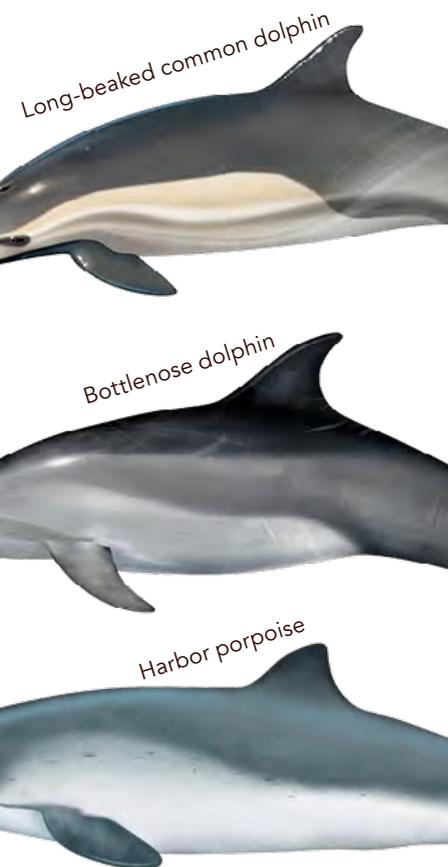
“A very entertaining after-dinner act, indeed,” Tritt reported, calling it the most incredible encounter of all.

“We went to our home around the corner on Filucy Bay. The inflatable actually led the dolphin into the bay. Many people were outside their homes enjoying the weather. The dolphin continued to go airborne accompanied by the cheers of those watching from shore with incredulous eyes!”



An unforgettable dolphin experience.

Photo: Jeffrey Tritt



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Key Pen Parks Hires New Executive Director

Well versed in finance, land acquisition and grant writing, Perkosky landed the top spot after impressing park commissioners with her vision of the future.

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

Tracey Perkosky, previously employed by the City of Bothell as parks planning and grants manager before COVID-19 costs and decreasing revenues caused layoffs in June, began her new job as executive director of Key Pen Parks July 27.

The position opened after the sudden death of Scott Gallacher, affectionately nicknamed “Park Daddy,” in April — the only executive director the young district has ever known.

“I’m really excited to be here,” Perkosky said. “There are a couple of things that really attracted me to Key Pen Parks; one of those is that sense of community, volunteerism and involvement that really comes from both a more rural area and a smaller service area.”



Tracey Perkosky is “delighted to lead an amazing team.” Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News

Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District Commissioner Ed Robison, in his 11th year on the board and serving as president this year, said hiring a new executive director was the single most important and critical decision he’d ever helped make for the district. “The second was buying Elmer Anderson’s property to make Gateway Park.”

“We (the commissioners) were all in agreement that Tracey was the right one for the job,” Robison said. “We took advantage of Bothell’s loss. With her experience level and capabilities, we would never have been able to get her otherwise.”

The initial round of formal applicant interviews were conducted remotely and included a good number of community panelists and others with relevant experience, including park staff and longtime volunteers, to help commissioners hire the best fit for the district.

“Her answers in the final round convinced us this wasn’t going to be a short term stay, but for the rest of her career,” Robison said.

“My career has spanned an interesting path,” Perkosky said. “I worked in the not-for-profit world and my job there was to network innovative cities and counties — what was one city doing that was cool that could be shared with someone else? I learned a lot about local government and how all those pieces work together.”

She worked in the private sector in the early 2000s, helping cities and counties find, write and manage grants. Perkosky said the

work was fun but included lots of travel and she missed being at home. She also missed the satisfaction of watching the projects she helped put together come to fruition.

Perkosky began her career at a local government in Southern California. From there she moved up and more into finance work, moving to St. Helena in Northern California. There she said she was beginning to feel a little burned out. Largely working

with numbers and without much direct contact with the public, she felt she was missing something.

“The interim city manager there saw something in me that I am incredibly grateful he saw,” Perkosky said. “He tapped me to be the interim recreation director as the previous director stepped down. Oh my, I just fell in love. I fell in love with communities

and development all over again.”

She worked with youth and supported adult men’s softball teams. “Doing a complete redo of the entire softball field was one of the greatest experiences of my life,” she said.

Eventually Perkosky headed north to Washington where she took a position with the City of Bothell as the parks planning and grants manager, “still wanting to be in that realm, wanting to use my community facilitation skills and again — build real things — and provide great places for people.”

“I think we see it now more with COVID. As we struggle to figure all this out, where do we go for refuge for our physical and our mental health? We go outside,” she said.

A couple of months into her job in Bothell, she was once again plunged into the role of interim director after the previous director left.

“It was a great opportunity to learn hard and learn fast,” Perkosky said. “Through that I was involved in a land acquisition, bought a really big park, and made a huge impact on a community in perpetuity.

“I’m really just beginning my outreach into the community. I met with the Key Peninsula Council at their last meeting and my eyes actually watered up, because of all the support, all the people reaching out and offering help and wanting to learn and continue partnerships. It not only felt really good but it speaks to the magic of this place.”

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KPCooks



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PICKLE

Age cannot wither nor custom stale the infinite variety of the long-honored, simple but elegant pickle.

The method and result have bewitched humanity for millennia. Enjoyed by Cleopatra, mentioned in the Bible and Shakespeare, cucumbers (a native of India) are thought to have been first elevated to their briny glory in the Tigris Valley about 2000 BCE.

The word “pickle” comes from the Dutch *pekel* or German *pökel*, meaning salt or brine. Pickling was a necessity for preserving and transporting food, feeding hungry travelers and families over the long, carb-heavy winters of the Northern Hemisphere.

Home pickling became less perilous in the mid-19th century when two essential canning tools were invented. An American tinsmith from New Jersey named John Mason patented his eponymous jar, and a Scottish chemist named James Young created paraffin wax, coincidentally, to seal it.

Pickles come in limitless form — sweet, sour, salty, hot; made of cauliflower, radishes, onions, green beans.

When the English arrived in the New World, they brought their recipe for sweet pickles with vinegar, sugar and spiced syrup. Eastern Europe gave us lacto-fermented cabbage sauerkraut. The French tease us with tiny cornichons to offset pâtés and cheeses (always best with Champagne, to pickle one’s self). Pickles accompany every meal in the Middle East, from peppers to olives to lemons. Russians pickle tomatoes, for some reason. Koreans gave us the glorious kimchi, while the Japanese pickle mind-blowing plums and daikon radish, and Italians pickle eggplants, a fitting end to an otherwise unworthy fruit masquerading as a vegetable.

Pickles, from Sour to Sweet

BARBARA VAN BOGART

My mother-in-law Edna was a wonderful cook, reigning supreme in the kitchen. She excelled at making pickles (and pies, but that’s for another column at another time). Her recipes, handed down from her mother, are tried and true, and I’m the lucky recipient of many of them, all handwritten and tattered around the edges from decades of use.

One of my favorite, and among the easiest to make, is her recipe for bread and butter pickles. When winter rolls around, you will be happy to have a reminder of summer in your cupboards.

A great place to buy cucumbers is Duris Cucumber Farm on River Road, just south of Puyallup, as they have excellent cukes in three sizes — small, medium and large. The recipe below uses their medium size. Edna knew how many cucumbers she would need for a batch, so never bothered to include that information on her cards. Through trial and error, I’ve arrived at quantities of cucumbers and syrup that work.

This recipe is from 1943.

Grandma Edna’s Bread and Butter Pickles (makes around 8 quarts)

Collect about 26 medium-size cucumbers, washed and with the ends cut off. Slice cucumbers about 1/8” thick, put into a roasting pan, lightly salt and let sit overnight at room temperature. Rinse well in the morning and then drain.

Fill a large roasting pan with water and heat to boiling. Add canning jars, rings and lids. Turn down heat to keep the water simmering while you prepare the syrup.

Syrup:

- 9 cups vinegar
- 3 cups water
- 9 cups sugar
- 6 tablespoons mustard seed
- 3 teaspoons celery seed
- 3 teaspoons turmeric powder

Bring syrup to a soft boil and continue boiling for three minutes.

Add sliced pickles to syrup and simmer (do not boil) for 15 minutes. Using sturdy tongs, carefully remove jars, lids and rings from the simmering water; fill sterilized jars with pickles and syrup. Carefully wipe the top of the jar before placing lids on top, and then screwing down the rings. Leave about one quarter of an inch space between pickles and the top of the jar.

Onions and red peppers may be added at the time you fill the jars. Three bottles of Mezzetta brand whole small onions work well for this recipe, along with 2 red peppers, seeded and sliced thin.

Let jars cool at room temperature, covering with a kitchen towel so they don’t cool too fast. As the jars cool, you will hear a little “pop” as the lid seals.

When jars are completely cool, check to make sure each lid is sealed (you may need to press lightly on the center of the lid to give it a little assist) and store in a cool place.

You may choose to use a water bath to further process the jars once they are filled and lids and rings are on but before they start to cool. There are many videos online about how to accomplish this step.

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.

A LITTLE TASTE OF HERON’S KEY

This recipe is brought to you by Chef Matthew Lecours of Emerald Communities.

Short Rib Lettuce Wraps



(Makes 2 12oz portions)

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz boneless chuck short rib beef
- 1/2 cup long grain rice
- 1 & 1/3 Tbsp fresh ginger root
- 1 Tbsp garlic cloves
- 1 & 1/2 limes
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 & 1/2 tsp brown sugar
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 10 Boston Bibb lettuce leaves
- 1/2 English cucumber
- 1/2 cilantro bunch
- 1 Tbsp coconut oil
- 1/4 cup & 3 Tbsp walnut halves

DIRECTIONS

Place short ribs on a plate and freeze uncovered for 15 minutes. Cook rice according to directions. Add finely grated ginger, garlic cloves and the juice of 1 lime to a medium bowl. Cut remaining lime into wedges and reserve for serving. Add brown sugar, sesame oil, and salt to the bowl and stir with a fork to combine. Cut short ribs crosswise against the grain as thinly as possible. Add to bowl with marinade and massage into meat until coated. Let sit at room temperature for 15 minutes (or as long as 2 hours). Meanwhile, tear Bibb lettuce into large pieces. Rinse and thoroughly dry. Crush walnuts into small pieces and set aside for serving. Slice cucumber in half lengthwise, then cut crosswise half-moons. Heat half of the coconut oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add half of short ribs in a single layer and cook, undisturbed, until deeply caramelized on one side, about 3 minutes. Turn with tongs and continue to cook until second side is deeply caramelized, about 1 minute longer. Transfer to platter. Return skillet to medium-high heat, add remaining coconut oil and repeat with remaining meat. Arrange cooked rice, steak and reserved walnuts on platter with vegetables. Garnish with cilantro.



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

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How to Tie-Dye a Shirt

Supplies:

- All-purpose dye
- Plastic squirt bottles
- Rubber bands
- Plastic gloves
- Plastic bags or plastic wrap

1. Select your workspace: Tie-dye can get messy, so working outdoors is ideal. If your workspace is in a garage or indoors, arrange garbage bags or plastic sheeting to catch splatters and spills.

2. Select your shirt. Prewashed, 100% cotton soaks up dye the best. "The Tie-dye Lady," Joanna Babbitt, recommends saving spotted or stained white clothes for tie-dye projects.

3. Prepare your shirt. Immerse your shirt in lukewarm water, then lay flat.

4. Prepare your dye. Most tie-dye kits come with packaged instructions, often containing half-full squirt bottles of concentrated dye to be mixed with warm water. Adding a little salt will enhance the color. You can also make your own dye bath using powdered dye, available at most craft stores.

5. Plan your design and tie your shirt. The most popular designs are included with most tie-dye kits and endless possibilities can be found online. Here are two to get you started:

Swirl — Decide where to place the center of your spiral, then position your fingers around the center point

and twist fabric in a spiral direction. Wrap rubber bands around fabric to hold spiral together. **Stripes** — Fold shirt vertically or diagonally in two to three inch folds, like an accordion, then wrap with rubber bands every few inches.

6. Start tie-dyeing. Squirt dye from the bottle onto the shirt, applying only one color at a time, starting with lighter colors first. Babbitt recommends using only one to three colors. "I try and use one color on one side of the rubber band, then another color on the other side of the rubber band," she said.

If you don't have squirt bottles or if your shirt is made of synthetic material, an immersion bath method is recommended. Instructions can be found at ritdye.com.

7. Let it dry. With the shirt still rubber-banded, place it in a plastic bag or cover with plastic wrap. Let sit for 12 to 24 hours to allow the color to set.

8. While wearing gloves, unwrap shirt and take off the rubber bands. Rinse in cold water until the runoff is clear, ideally using an outdoor hose. Then wash shirt with cold water in the washing machine. Babbitt recommends using Shout Color-Catcher Sheets, which absorb and trap loose dye.

9. Dry on hot and your tie-dyed shirt is ready to wear.

The Vibrant Resurgence of Tie-Dye

KRISA BRUEMMER, KP NEWS

For some, tie-dye never died.

It flowed on through the decades after Woodstock as an everlasting symbol of counterculture, peace and love, and the backdrop for the Grateful Dead Bears. Vivid, undulating textiles and colorful garments with psychedelic swirls have long had their place at summer festivals and quirky roadside stands.

But in 2020, tie-dye has experienced an arguably unprecedented resurgence into the mainstream.

In July, Oprah Magazine called tie-dye "the unofficial uniform of the pandemic." Target implored its email subscribers to "dive into a tie-dye swimsuit." Nordstrom started selling tie-dyed sweatpants, rain boots, dresses and earbuds.

Just about every clothing company seems to be in on the trend. Converse has customizable tie-dyed high-tops. Anthropologie offers tie-dyed dog sweatshirts. Dior has a tie-dye-inspired jewelry collection featuring rainbows of fine gemstones and pearls. Their tie-dye print sneakers sell for \$1,150 a pair.

Superstars like Leonardo DiCaprio and Jennifer Aniston, along with innumerable runway models, have been strutting around the world and the internet in tie-dye getups, including tie-dyed face masks.

Tie-dye's widespread, mid-pandemic popularity, however, has perhaps more to do with creativity and fun than fashion, or what's trending on the internet.

"Seems like people stuck home are trying to find their creative juices," said local artist Taylor Reed, who grew up in Vaughn.

"I did a lot of tie-dye in middle school. Went nicely with all the Jim Morrison and Hendrix and Marley portraits I did," Reed said. "The inspiration came from my middle school art teacher at Key Peninsula Middle School, Ms. Feek. She was the best and is really who taught me to love art."

According to Dr. Carolyn Mair, behavioral psychologist and author of "The Psychology of Fashion," tie-dye can provide a level of thrill and spontaneity that has been lacking during shutdowns and quarantine, where, for some, every day is exactly the same.

"There's an inherent excitement derived from the chaos — from not being able to fully predict the outcome," Mair wrote. "In fact, dopamine rises during the phase between tying the bands, and seeing the final product."

KPMS teacher Joanna Babbitt, "The Tie-Dye Lady" who has been making tie-dyed t-shirts with kids at local schools

for over 10 years, agreed.

"The kindergartners, they loved it. They always loved the big reveal that we did," Babbitt said. "You leave the shirts for 24 hours, all bundled up, and then you rinse them out with cold water, and take all the rubber bands out and wash them on hot, then dry them on super-hot to get the color set. So, they wouldn't see them for a couple days."

"It's so fun," Babbitt said. "Those Vaughn Elementary kids, when they made their purple shirts, they'd wear them all the time to school."

After tie-dyeing with fellow KPMS staff as a team-building exercise, and with friends and family for the Fourth of July, Seattle Sounders games, and visits to the Puyallup Fair, Babbitt has tie-dyeing pretty much down to a science.

She has done shirts, aprons, sweatshirts, underwear, socks, tights, dresses, bandanas, shorts and onesies. White, 100% cotton items tie-dye best, prewashed in hot water.

"You can't really mess it up," Babbitt said. "You kind of have to expect to get a little bit messy but you can take precautions. You do really want to wear gloves. I've dyed my whole hands blue. And if you dunk your hand below the wrist of the glove, I've had the whole glove fill up."

Babbitt tie-dyes in flip flops or bare feet while wearing old clothes, all black, or a tie-dye shirt she doesn't mind getting dripped on or splattered.

For beginners, Babbitt recommends the Dharma Trading Company starter kit, which includes professional quality dye, squeeze bottles, rubber bands, gloves, masks, and a book of instructions and patterns. Michaels and Joann Fabrics also have a variety of tie-dye kits.

"I think it's more fun if you do it together in a group," Babbitt said. "It would make a great COVID outdoor tie-dye party. You do really need to have your gloves on. And when you're mixing chemicals, you're supposed to wear a mask anyway. When this first started I went to my tie-dye kit to grab my mask."

In these strange and turbulent times filled with obstacles, adversity and boredom, as some turn to handmade sourdough for comfort, while others march and protest, or struggle to recreate Jennifer Lopez's \$360 neon rainbow tie-dyed sweatsuit at home, may the words of the great Stoic philosopher Seneca echo and swirl around us all as we trudge onward: "A good person dyes events with his own color... and turns whatever happens to his own benefit."



Joanna Babbitt's (far left) family reunion tie-dye, celebrating 4th of July at Home circa 2018.

Photo: Courtesy Babbitt family.

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Connecting with friends and neighbors strengthens our community, so we're investigating ways in which the Civic Center can continue to serve the KP safely during pandemic restrictions: virtual events, drive-thru-style gatherings, and other creative ideas.

We hope you'll consider helping us with this effort by joining our Board! Your ideas, efforts, and creativity can help shape the future of the Key Peninsula Civic Center.

Contact the KPCCA office by October 31 for more information about joining our Board of Directors.



Key Peninsula Civic Center, 17010 S. Vaughn Road 253/884-3456 www.kpciviccenter.org The Key Peninsula Civic Center Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, fosters and promotes the civic, social, cultural and general well-being of the Key Peninsula community.

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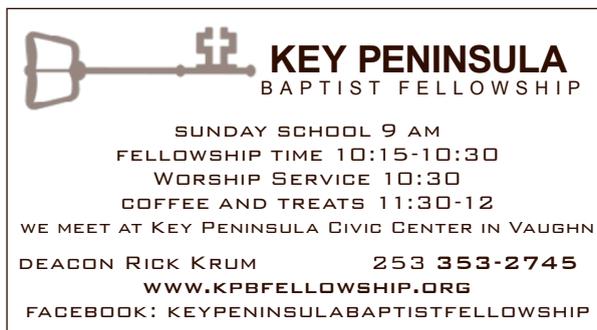
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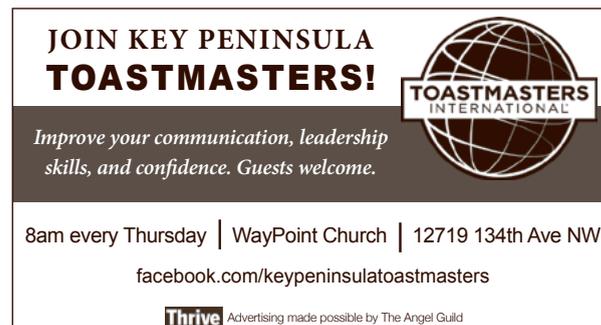


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TOP LEFT Longbranch resident Rich Hanson shows off his 15 lb. chinook salmon near Filucy Bay. *Photo: Rob Hanson* **TOP CENTER** Driver Phil Bauer of Vaughn gets his COVID-19 test during a Pierce County event at the Longbranch Improvement Club Aug. 12. *Photo: David Zeigler, KP News* **TOP RIGHT** Librarian Corrine Weatherly is thrilled to see patrons again for curbside pickup at the Key Center Library branch. *Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News* **CENTER** The sun sets on Vaughn Bay. *Photo: Anna Brones* **BOTTOM LEFT** An Orca from J pod hunts for chinook salmon in Case Inlet Aug. 9. *Photo: Tina McKail* **BOTTOM RIGHT** Caution tape removed, Gemma and Jaxon Hill play on the fire truck at Home Park. *Photo: Ed Johnson, KP News*