

The Key: Island Living Without a Ferry.



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Photo: Jacob Million Photography

TREEHOUSE FROM PAGE 1

Peninsula in 2009 when they purchased Frog Creek Lodge. The lodge was built in the 1970s for a large blended family and had been converted by the next owner into a retreat center. With friends in the hospitality industry and Ouellette's experience as a contractor, they felt they had what they needed to make the business a success. They have poured energy and money into renovations and upgrades over the years. A nearly mile-long trail circles the 10-acre property as well as a gazebo surrounded by a labyrinth.

They have never looked back. "We like it here and we will never move back to the Seattle area," Ouellette said.

They are as busy as they want to be with an average of 35 bookings each year, mostly repeat customers, and new bookings through word of mouth and Facebook. The lodge itself can sleep 21 and is too large to consider booking for just a single person or a couple, but they wanted to offer that for customers.

Initially they intended to add a small ground-based building. "But why put our money in a little place on the ground when we can put it up in the air?" Ouellette said. Planning began in earnest in early 2017. A friend sent him a picture of a staircase winding around a tree and he knew that

was how they would access their tree house.

After talking to various tree house contractors for advice, Ouellette was disappointed by the interactions. "We decided to do it ourselves."

It wasn't easy. "No one seems to have ever done anything quite like this before. Our architect had never designed a tree

house, the engineer had never done a tree house, our contractors had never built a tree house, the

health department and planning departments had never permitted a tree house," Ouellette said.

It was a challenge and learning experience for everyone involved. The house is supported by four 25-foot steel vertical beams, each with 10 feet buried in cement. Ouellette and the builder designed the braces for the house and for the stairs, which must be independent of each other for safety. Motion-activated lights guide guests up and down the stairs.

Despite the challenges, Ouellette said that, if this venture is successful, they are ready to build another tree house. But, he said, "The next one will be smaller and it will be a single story. Having a loft really complicated the engineering and construction."

For more information: frogcreeklodge.com

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Rusty Van Slyke's Model A Ford, used for his newspaper deliveries

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Photo courtesy Schillinger/Van Slyke Archives; Key Peninsula Historical Museum Visit Tuesday & Saturday afternoons 1-4pm

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On a break from flying in WWII, Rusty Van Slyke shows off his 1938 Chevrolet

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Spring has Sprung!



A member of the Tulalip Tribes, Chelsea Craig, is searching for documents about the tribe's history, assisted by volunteers Janice Hemingway and Dick Hall. *Credit: KUOW Photo/Deborah Wang*

Pacific Region Archives in Seattle to Close

The archives contain artifacts and records directly linked to our local history.

JOSEPH PENTHEROUDAKIS, KP NEWS

The community of Northwest archivists, historians, genealogists and writers as well as many ordinary citizens were shocked at the announcement in January that the National Archives facility in Seattle, containing records from the Pacific and Alaska regions, had been selected for closure and eventual sale. The 56,000 cubic feet of archives would be consolidated into the National Archives center in Riverside, California, while federal records would be relocated to Kansas City, Missouri.

The facility, operated by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), was one of 12 “underutilized high-value” assets nationwide selected by the Public Buildings Reform Board for closure and sale mandated by the 2016 Federal Assets Sale Transfer Act (FASTA).

FASTA requires the OMB to approve or reject the full slate of recommendations; the agency is not allowed to reject the sale of individual properties on the list.

According to the reform board report, the 1973 Seattle building has a deferred maintenance backlog of \$2.5 million. The report adds that “NARA has indicated its willingness and desire to consolidate operations at more modern facilities.”

NARA has requested to be allowed to stay at the Seattle facility for an additional three years following the sale.

The Seattle facility is located in U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal's district; according to Jayapal, her office received notice of the closure in November and offered to help with public outreach, but the board did not follow up.

The archives contain original documents,

photographs and maps from Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Idaho as well as microfilm records representing a direct link to over 150 years of history in the Pacific Northwest.

Although NARA has been digitizing its archives, to date only a small portion of the enormous volume of material has been scanned and made available online.

Among the original files and microfilm records at the Seattle archives are documents relating to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the first significant law restricting immigration into the United States, and transcripts and decisions by U.S. District Courts, such as the 1974 Boldt decision that reaffirmed the rights of Indian tribes to fish at their accustomed places as guaranteed by treaties; documents from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Documents relating to native tribes and their interactions with the federal government are a particularly significant part of the archives. Records from the Office of Indian Affairs, Indian Agent reports, correspondence between Indian agents and superintendents and commissioners, reservation and allotment records, censuses and marriage records are available at the archives and have been used in legal proceedings as well as in tribal affairs for decades.

The early days on the Key Peninsula and neighboring areas are also represented in the archives. Articles on the early settlers on Herron Island published in the Key Peninsula News have relied on records available at the Seattle facility.

Local writer Greg Spadoni has also drawn on the archives. “Stories I wrote on logging railroads in Rosedale and Minter include information from Admiralty Court

and McNeil Island Federal Penitentiary,” he said. “Those records are not available anywhere else than the National Archives in Seattle.”

Organizations and institutions were quick to react to news of the closure. Stephanie Lile, director of the Harbor History Museum in Gig Harbor, said that the museum signed a letter to the OMB by the Heritage League of Pierce County urging reconsideration of the decision. “While I understand that archive buildings have to meet rigorous safety standards to protect the archives, to relocate the entire PNW collection to a distant location will have serious implications for researchers throughout the Northwest,” she said. “Most researchers are independent scholars or volunteers working with a modest or non-existent budget. As a result, having to make the trek to a distant state will pose an even greater barrier to accessing the primary documents so critical to in-depth scholarship.”

Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman released a statement Jan. 27 offering her assistance in the effort to keep the archives in the Northwest. “My staff and I are ready and willing to work with our congressional delegation, National Archives, and the historical records community to

discuss alternative solutions to the closure of this facility for the continued regional access and storage of these important documents,” she said.

Jennifer Kilmer, director of the Washington State History Museum, underscored the importance of offering access to original documents in a statement released Jan. 31: “As history professionals whose mission and practice it is to collect, preserve, and interpret historical artifacts, objects, documents, photographs and ephemera, we know firsthand the research value that lies in the authentic article,” she said. “That is something that cannot be replicated in a digital facsimile.”

The Northwest congressional delegation signed a letter to the OMB requesting that the decision be reconsidered and the public be included in the process. The Muckleshoot Tribal Council is also working with its U.S. congressional delegation to look for a way to block the sale.

In a letter to the OMB and the PBRB dated Feb. 25, Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson requested that the agencies reconsider their decision in light of the harm it would cause to the community. Ferguson also claimed that the manner the decision was reached violated FASTA and several other statutes.

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Rusty Van Slyke and Buck Buckell
 working on Buck's 1931 Model A
 at Brones Farm in Vaughn, 1942

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