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Fair Delano on the Sound: The Story of the Delano Beach Resort

JOSEPH PENTHEROUDAKIS, KP NEWS

The beach at Delano Bay south of Penrose Point State Park extends in a graceful curve for nearly a mile. At low tide the water can peel back away from the shore for almost a quarter of a mile, exposing smooth, seemingly boundless tidal sand flats to the delight of gulls, crows or the occasional human visitor drawn to the view.

It is on the gently sloping shores of the bay that was to bear their name that Captain George Delano and his wife Edith decided to settle in 1887. It is also where they would build the storied Delano Beach Resort and Hotel, which operated from 1891 to 1948.

Settling on land must have been a difficult decision for Delano. Born in Maine in 1852, he had gone to sea at 13, eventually rising to captain and commanding merchant ships that sailed trade routes around the world. His wife, Edith H. Weeks Delano, also born in Maine, would often join him on those trips, an experience that must have become challenging once their daughter Virginia was born in 1882.

On the night of Jan. 30, 1887, the Austria, a merchant ship with Capt. Delano in charge, was caught in a powerful storm a few miles south of Cape Flattery off Washington's Pacific coast. The ship's three masts, no match for the gale, quickly snapped and the Austria ran aground on a reef not far from shore. Fortunately, Edith and 4-year-old Virginia had not accompanied Capt. Delano on this trip. Members of the local Ozette tribe rescued the crew and helped salvage what was left of the ship, later sold at auction.

As captain, George Delano had a financial interest in the Austria. Even after the insurance payment, however, Delano was ruined. Although he would eventually go back to sea, settling on land now must have seemed like a sensible decision.

For reasons history does not record, a few months earlier Edith Delano had bought 145 acres of waterfront property on Carr Inlet in the future Delano Bay. That was where the Delanos settled and built their first house, which was completed in 1888.

In the summer of 1889 the Delanos, assisted by local fishermen and cooks, organized an enormously successful Indian-style clambake on the beach for a large group of visitors. Edith came from a long

line of innkeepers in Maine; entertaining was in her blood. According to the family, the success of the clambake, combined with Edith's background and the increasing interest in summer hotels and resorts in the Sound, led to the couple's decision to start a resort on Delano Beach.

Two years later, in the summer of 1891, the 20-room Hotel Delano (later the Delano Beach Resort and Hotel) opened for business. Guest cottages surrounded the hotel; their number would eventually grow to 24.

The resort complex occupied about 40 acres. The grounds included pastures, a barn, orchards and chicken coops that provided fresh eggs. Several Jersey cows gave fresh milk and cream. Other supplies came from local farmers.

There were Chinese cooks, Filipino dining room servers, and housekeeping staff drawn from the surrounding area. Notably, according to family history Edith Delano did not hire anyone from Home Colony, the peaceful community of free thinkers established nearby in 1896, fearing their "communist" views.

The open dining room seated 100 with tables topped daily with vases full of flowers freshly cut from the hotel's English gardens. From the covered porch on clear days, guests could see the top of snow-capped Mount Rainier over South Head, the narrow arm of land at the south end of the beach.

"The best hotel in the state," newspaper ads would later boast. "Fair Delano on the Sound! Renowned for delicious eats, geoduck soup (Delano style), an Epicurean delight. Warmest bathing beach on Sound. Dancing pavilion, tennis court, boating and fishing."

A baseball diamond, a croquet field and a putting green were also available. The accommodations may not have been luxurious, although the hotel did include indoor plumbing, but in the summer months guests probably did not spend too much time inside.

Before roads and cars, guests and visitors arrived on the Mosquito Fleet's steamers or by private pleasure boats. In 1905 an 830-foot long pier with a floating dock at the end replaced the floating dock at the beach; it extended past the shallow part of the beach at low tide, allowing ships to dock at any time. Some of the pilings can still be seen at low tide.

The crossing from Tacoma by commercial steamer could easily take three to



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extra money. His beloved pet wolf Mojo died. John Lennon's death in 1980 was the last straw for him, and he moved to Hawaii.

A friend introduced Hing to the slack-key Hawaiian guitar, and music returned to its critical role in his life. He volunteered at the university radio station and started the Monday Night Live program, which continues to this day. He helped remaster recordings for Hula Records, opened his guitar tech business, and discovered good nutrition and aquaponics.

Then, last year, after a 27-year separation, he found that his mother needed him. Now 102, she lives in Lynnwood, and though her mind is intact, her body is failing. His good friend, Palmer Lake resident Tom Murphy, who drummed with the Robert Cray Band, found a place for him to stay on the Key Peninsula in July.

The move has had its challenges. Hing had hoped to have a place to run his guitar tech business but that has not worked out yet, and his car broke down, making it hard to get to his mother. But the community stepped in.

At lunch at Key Peninsula Community Services, he learned about The Mustard Seed Project and connected with a few resources. Volunteer driver Larry Bingham took him to Lynnwood once a week. Financial help from the Gig Harbor FISH food bank and St. Vincent de Paul in Tacoma helped cover the costs of replacing an engine. And, in turn, he took a look at the sound system at the Longbranch Improvement Club and offered some advice.

Hing said he's one of the last people standing from those heady San Francisco days. Although he lived the same hard life as the others, he thinks that staying under the radar is what kept him alive. Despite the cold and dark, Hing said he likes the Key Peninsula. "Everyone here is really cool. I'm meeting people my age who could care less about rock stars, and I like that." He's not sure about what the future holds, but he could see this as a place to settle.

Reach out. We're here to help.

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Going Solo: Wauna Woman on Fifth Sailing Race to Alaska

It's 750 miles from Port Townsend to Ketchikan with no engine or support.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Sailor, salvage officer and 100-ton master's license captain Katy Stewart of Wauna will compete in her fifth consecutive race to Alaska, known as the R2AK, starting June 8.

Now in its fifth year, R2AK has become infamously popular with a certain kind of adventure seeker. The race from Port Townsend to Ketchikan for wind- or human-powered vessels only — no engines and no support crews — is the longest race of its kind in North America. First prize is \$10,000; second is a set of steak knives.

Race organizers describe R2AK as "like the Iditarod, on a boat, with a chance of drowning, being run down by a freighter, or eaten by a grizzly bear."

Last year 45 teams entered and 25 finished. The fastest passage to date is three days, 20 hours, 13 minutes.

"At the postrace party this past year they handed me a giant punch card that said: 'Your fifth race is

free.' " Stewart has already completed more R2AK races than anyone — that's over 3,000

miles of sailing when there was wind and rowing when there wasn't. With the entry fee taken care of, she aims to keep her most frequent racer status this year.

But this time she's going alone.

"I decided the thing I haven't done yet is to single-hand it," she said.

Stewart has skipped a different boat, mostly with a different crew, every year.

"My first year I used a homemade trimaran my dad built in the '90s that was sitting in the bushes in Lakebay. My sister and another friend restored it and we sailed it, just us three girls."

The trimaran was called Coyote and her crew was Team Onism, "which, according to the Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows, means the sad awareness that you can't possibly do everything there is to do in life," she said. "It was great. I think it took two weeks."

The next year Stewart's husband and her other sister wanted to come along. "He decided that it looked like I'd had a lot of fun, so it was me, my husband and my two sisters on a boat that we found on Craigslist for \$2,500."

That crew was called Team Global after

Stewart's employer, Global Diving and Salvage, paid their entry fee and became a race sponsor.

The boat was a 1960s-era Columbia Sabre called Greener, "a really skinny missile, but heavy," Stewart said.

Some sailors might be reluctant to take an unfamiliar 50-year-old boat on a 750-mile cruise to Alaska, but not Team Global.

"There was precedent for that," Stewart said. "My husband and I bought a boat the year we got married in 2003. It was from the mid-1970s, and we took off and sailed all the way down to Mexico and over to Hawaii and back to San Francisco. It's just about knowing what you're looking at, triaging what needs to be fixed."

During that second race, Greener suffered a dangerous mechanical failure during a gale off Aristazabal Island in southeast Alaska.

"We were in a really big following sea; I think we decided it was probably 8 feet," Stewart said. The boat jibed, getting side-

ways to the wind and waves. The mainsail swung from one side of the boat to the other and the

sudden backpressure snapped the boom holding it in half.

"We left the headsail up and we were just surfing down the swells," she said. "It was perfectly fine; we were doing 4 knots just with that. We had an old rowing machine from the '80s up in the cockpit, just a sliding seat on a rail, so we took it apart and lashed the rail along the length of the boom as a splint. It was perfect."

For year three, a new Team Global raced Not Bad, Stewart's own newly acquired Beneteau 345 built in 1988.

"Oh man, the thing had a head and an oven and a wine rack; it was great," she said. "I pulled together a whole group of friends, none of whom had ever met each other until a week before the race started. We also didn't sail that boat before the race, we just started from the line. With all that crew, we got a luxurious amount of sleep."

When year four rolled around, Stewart almost didn't go.

"But then a friend of mine bought a 1989 Farrier-27 trimaran called Magpie and told me that I should use it," she said. "For most of the winter and into spring I was in Florida doing salvage, cleaning up



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Take a Walk on the Wonky Side: Property Tax at a Glance

You know you don't like it, but do you know how it works?

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Washington state property tax is one of the most complicated in the nation, according to the Tax Foundation, an independent nonprofit research institute.

Property tax is a real estate ad valorem tax ("according to the value") that is considered to be regressive. The Washington state average effective tax rate is 1.03 percent of assessed value, slightly below the national average of 1.08 percent.

Pierce County has the highest property taxes in the state at an average effective rate of 1.21 percent.

Taxes on real estate account for about 30 percent of all state and local tax revenues. Property taxes pay for local services like fire protection, public schools and parks, and are calculated by applying the total tax rate for a given property to the assessed value of that property. The tax rate and the assessed value can change from year to year.

Property values rose in Pierce County by 7.5 percent last year, but an increase in property value does not directly correspond with a change in property tax. The state Constitution limits the total of all non-voter approved property tax rates to 1 percent per year on a given property, plus the tax resulting from any new construction on the property.

However, there is no limit on voter-approved ballot levy taxes.

According to Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer Mike Lonergan, "Your tax in 2020 will be the 2019 value multiplied by the combined tax rates of your school district, city, fire district and so forth, added to the state and countywide property taxes that everyone pays. A lot depends on votes by the public and the Legislature."

Lonergan said most property tax bills in Pierce County went down in 2019. This year's increase raises them higher than 2018.

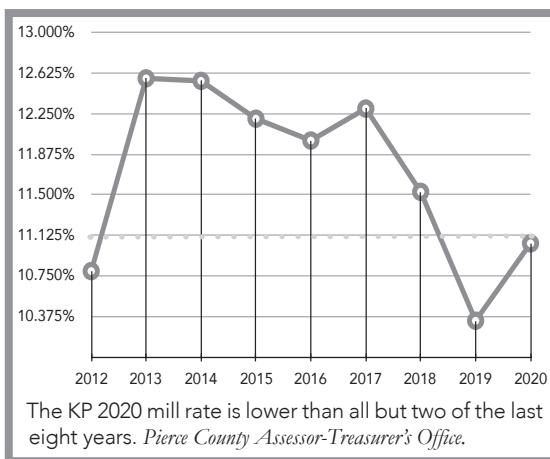
Property taxes are expected to increase by an average of 14 percent in Gig Harbor and 9 percent on the Key Peninsula in 2020.

"While our assessed values continue to rise, that's not what drives these big increases," Lonergan said. "Over 58 percent of the taxes I collect go to K-12 school funding, so the voted changes there have made a huge difference."

This includes the Peninsula School District 20-year, \$198,550,000 school construction bond approved in 2019 that

begins this year, which adds 79 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. The education and operations levy approved this year will begin next year, replacing the existing levy at a rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000. The levy is for a fixed dollar amount and PSD cannot collect more money if property values increase.

The effective tax rate is expressed as a percentage of assessed value, but the amount of tax payable is usually expressed as a dollar amount of tax per \$1,000 of assessed value of the property. That is called the mill rate or millage, a word that derives from the Latin word "millesimum" that means "thousandth part" (1/1000). One mill is \$.001.



To convert millage rates to dollar amounts, divide the mill rate by 1,000 and multiply by the property's taxable value. Mill rates are listed as Tax Code Area rates on individual property listings on the assessor's website.

For example, a house assessed at \$300,000 on the Key Peninsula has a 2020 mill rate of 11.051297. This is the total of all the government taxes and voter approved levies per \$1,000 of taxable value. Divide the mill rate by 1,000 to get 0.011051297. Multiply that by \$300,000 to get \$3,315.39. Add to that any other fees and subtract any credits on the tax bill, and the result is the annual property tax, in this case an approximate effective tax rate of 1.1 percent.

The same can be done to determine the cost of an individual levy. For example, the cost of the recently approved PSD replacement levy is \$1.50 per \$1,000. For the hypothetical \$300,000 home, that would be 1.5 divided by 1,000 and multiplied by \$300,000, which equals an annual cost of \$450, or \$37.50 per month.

Anyone can appeal their property tax assessment. Seniors earning less than \$45,708 a year and individuals with disabilities may qualify for exemption. For more information, go to www.co.pierce.wa.us.



Thankfully, our volunteers just don't know how to stop giving.

In 2019, volunteers gave 3,390 hours to the Food Bank, 2,304 to the Senior Center, making our programs possible. This month, we're thanking them with a 50's-themed Recognition Dinner. To find your way of helping our community, call 253 884-4440.

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