

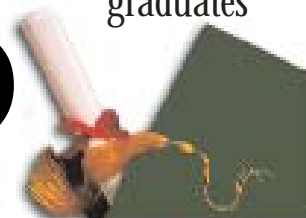
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KEY PENINSULA NEWS

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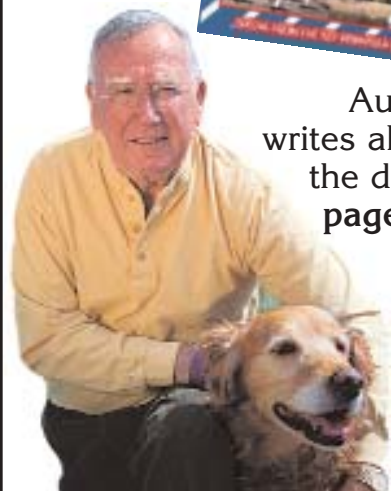
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Last alarm for Ross

By Hugh McMillan, KP News

The Last Alarm was sounded for Ross Bischoff, following the benediction from Pastor Heinz Malon, on May 17. Pagers sounded from the belts of Key Peninsula firefighters stationed around the sanctuary of the Key Peninsula Lutheran Church. Loud-and-clear came the dispatcher's voice, "The Key Peninsula Fire Department calls for the last alarm for firefighter Ross Bischoff. May his spirit continue to watch over us."

The dispatcher's microphone remained open for a few seconds, a routine procedure to allow for secondary instructions or a reply. When there was no reply, all pagers were clicked closed; the firefighters

(See ROSS, Page 30)



Photo by Karina Whitmarsh

Ross Bischoff at his farm at last year's Harvest Fest.
More photos online at www.keypennews.com

Maritime-ready KPFD initiates multi-agency water-rescue drill

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

When embarrassing accidents happen, most people would want to fling the mishap tale to the depths of the sea. Not rescuers with Fire District 16. After a boat collision during routine training last year, instead of forgetting about the moment, FD-16 decided to share the lesson learned with other districts. What started as an idea for a small-caliber "show and tell" instead turned into a drill involving 11 agencies, including the U.S. Coast Guard.

In May, these agencies' rescue teams (and their personal watercrafts, boats,

and in case of USGS, a helicopter) converged on the beach of Browns Point for an eight-hour exercise involving theory and practice.

"It (planning) started out small and turned into this humongous event," says Guy Allen, division chief with FD-16, who was one of the main organizers of the exercise and watched it from the shore. "This is the first time in Pierce County where we had all those water rescue resources [together]."

Those resources included Gig Harbor's and Tacoma's fire and police

(See FIRE, Page 35)

Has recession hit the Key Peninsula?

An informal review of
recession and the local economy

By Danna Webster, KP News

The question of whether or not we are in a recession usually gets the old standard answer, "Depends on who you ask." When The News Tribune reporter John Gillie asked the question last March, he concluded the answer remained open and identified the "R"

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Township idea proposed for Key Peninsula

Tax revenues would be spent locally under the proposal

By Jeanette Brown
Special to the KP News

Chuck West is frustrated with his efforts to get much-needed services and road safety improvements funded and implemented on the Key Peninsula. Many residents on the KP know West as the division chief for Pierce County Fire District 16 and, recently, as the 2008 recipient of the Citizen of the Year award. Now, West wears a new hat as he lobbies for more local representation and recognition on the Key Peninsula by the Pierce County Council and the Washington State Legislature in order to bring new services and keep existing basic services and their funding local to the Key Peninsula area.



WEST

After West realized the Key Peninsula was generating enough tax revenue to make the needed safety improvements to KP highways and congested intersections, he addressed county council members and tried to influence them to allocate the necessary funding. West said, "[I] got very little attention from the county regarding my safety concerns and found that council members were reluctant to deliver."

Once an area has been designated as an urban growth area, it can incorporate into a city. He explained that, "because the Key Peninsula is not a designated urban growth area under the Washington State Growth Management Act, the Pierce County Council can allocate funds generated from the KP's assessed tax evaluation of \$2 billion to other

“

The Key Peninsula does not have a voice at the county level or much local control over the tax revenue it generates.

— Chuck West

”

incorporated areas of Pierce County that meet urban growth area criteria.”

“The Key Peninsula does not have a voice at the county level or much local control over the tax revenue it generates,” West said. “I would like to see more Key Peninsula Community Council members attending Pierce County Council meetings to promote local funding and provide local representation.”

He noted the county council is ignoring the basic safety needs of Key Peninsula residents while approving a new \$6.5 million expansion of the Cushman Trail in Gig Harbor and allocating funding for a new golf course at University Place. “I can’t even get them to fund a crosswalk at Key Center,” he said, and asserts that the main intersection at Key Center needs a traffic signal too.

Realizing that most residents on the Key Peninsula would like to keep the KP rural and don’t want to incorporate as a city or become part of an UGA, West started to research the possibility of creating a new type of entity based on

the township models found on the East Coast. “We are in the early stages of researching the feasibility of a township model that would allow KP residents to have more local control with respect to the allocation of funds on the Key Peninsula in order to get the services they need and deserve and that they are already paying for,” he said.

The Key Peninsula Township would start at Purdy and extend to the end of the Peninsula at Longbranch. West recently approached the Key Peninsula Business Association and the Key Peninsula Community Council with his proposal to keep tax revenue locally; his idea has been well received by both organizations.

“KP business owners and residents would like to see their tax dollars put to use locally in order to fund road improvements and fix dangerous intersections,” he said. In addition, he believes if the tax revenue stays local, it could be used to build new schools, a new library near Lake Kathryn, and to create a

park-and-ride that would help ease up congestion at the Purdy Bridge. He would also like to see outreach programs offered on the KP through the new Gig Harbor Boys and Girls Club at the Vaughn Civic Center for local area youth.

West contacted State Rep. Larry Seaquist, who has embraced the idea with enthusiasm. Seaquist said in an interview he would like to see the Key Peninsula “grow modern and stay rural.” “The township would build on the existing master community plan approved by the Pierce County Council last year,” he said, adding that if the citizens want to proceed in that direction, he would be happy to sponsor the legislation necessary at the state level. “It is really all about what the residents of the KP want,” he said.

According to West, a township would create revenue to support services for an area identified as a geographically isolated region or belt. He believes the Key Peninsula meets this criteria and would like the community’s input.

KEY PENINSULA NEWS

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Unsolicited submissions deadline including press releases:
17th of each month

To subscribe, please write, call or fax:
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Funding reduced for SR-302 project

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

State Route 302 received a reduction in funding during this year's legislative session, and the project will be rescoped. Officials say the study remains active, but the funding, reduced in half, limits the end result.

In 2005, the state Legislature allocated \$5 million in "design money" for SR-302 as part of a transportation package funded by the new 9.5-cent gasoline tax.

The funding was cut to \$2 million this year, but went up to \$2.5 million by the end of the session. Legislative District 23rd Sen. Derek Kilmer said the project fell victim to the economy: People are driving more conservatively or buying fuel-efficient cars, which means fewer gas taxes flowing into the state's coffers.



KILMER

Additionally, costs have gone up for other projects. As a result, lawmakers have been cutting funding for Environmental Impact Statements (a final document outlining design and other details) funding to projects without allocated construction funds. "Last year, we (302) dodged the bullet," he said. "This year, the funding was dropped, and the project was turned into a corridor study."

A corridor study doesn't have the same teeth as an EIS, and a corridor study was already performed last time the Legislature funded SR-302, in 1993.

More information

For updates and details about the SR-302 corridor study, visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR302/newcorridor.

John Donahue, project manager for SR-302, said there is a "strong chance" a draft EIS could be created with the remaining funds, which would be "more valuable than a corridor study."

To date, about \$700,000 of the \$2.5 million has been spent on the first phase, which included extensive public meetings and resulted in a "Study Existing Conditions and Problem Definition Report." The report concluded, among other things, that traffic volumes on the highway and surrounding areas will grow by 1 percent per year, or a total of 26 percent by 2030. "The results of the traffic analysis indicate that the current highway capacity is inadequate to accommodate existing and projected future traffic volumes at key locations along the

highway," it stated.

The funding reduction also created another limit: Initially, the Washington State Department of Transportation hoped to document the entire SR-302 corridor, and determined that two separate studies should be done, one from KP Highway to State Route 16 and another between KP Highway and State Route 3 (western portion), because the two segments had "two fundamental and separate problems." "Unfortunately, the recent reduction in the project budget now makes further consideration of this western piece using the current project funding very unlikely," Donahue said. "However, by taking this step now, we will be able to focus project resources on reaching our milestone corridor decision in the east."

Donahue said the next step is to contract with a consultant in order to narrow down the range of alternatives identified in the first phase; the tentative timeline for completion of this step is September. "Our plan is to move forward and reengage the community this summer," he said.

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EDITORIAL

Sometimes, one must take matters into own hands

Key Pen resident Chuck West has been long frustrated by Pierce County's lack of funds for Key Peninsula projects. After all, property owners pay taxes here like everyone else, why is the community seeing more benefits?

Instead of complaining about it, West rolled up his sleeves. He has done the math to see how much of our taxes flows out, and how much comes back in improvements to roads and so forth. When he didn't like what he saw, West came up with a potential solution: Why not turn the Key Pen into a township — which means retaining the rural flavor along with the taxes? And he didn't stop there, lobbying lawmakers for support since legislative changes may be required.

The thought is not new. Several years ago, KP residents toyed with the idea of joining Kitsap County, or better yet, creating its own. Studies were done, meetings were held, but the talks eventually grew cold. This may be the people's second chance to take matters into their own hands if residents are not pleased with how their government is working for them. We're not talking anarchy or revolution here — just a little reorganization.

Community leaders should join West to explore the possibility. As Margaret Mead's famous quotes says, "Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that has."

Zoning promotes demise of KP businesses

New zoning ordinances that become effective on June 1 continue the attack that pushes KP businesses to their demise.

Prior to 1992, Key Peninsula in its entirety was zoned "general," which allowed literally any use on any parcel of land. Every parcel was effectively zoned for commercial use. In response to the state's 1990 Growth Management Act, Pierce County adopted zoning ordinances in 1992 that identified "commercial" areas for businesses, which limited the vast majority of the land on the KP to "residential" use only. Very little land was identified for commercial use.

Commercial businesses already existing on land zoned as residential in 1992 could continue to operate, but could never expand more than 10 percent. Businesses that violated the rules or stopped operating would revert to residential use.

Hundreds of existing commercial businesses got caught up in the zoning restrictions. Many went out of business simply because they did not know how to assert their rights when challenges were made by county officials. Others expired naturally for economic reasons. Others grew, their very success forcing them to relocate off the KP, because no commercial land was available. Very few were able to relocate to another location on the KP.

Peninsula Iron Works, Holland Pump, Bottcher's furniture factory, Mountain View Towing, Minter Creek Auto Body, and many others were all

RICK SORRELS
THE PRAGMATIC SOPHIST



existing prior to 1992; they have large commercial buildings located on a state highway or major arterial, and they will all eventually be forced out of existence due to arbitrary R-10 (residential) zoning wrongfully attached to their land. Hundreds of other local long-standing businesses face the same gradual extinction.

Rocky Bay Health Care Facility requires a license from DSHS to stay in business. By statute, that type of business must be located on commercially zoned land. The land is zoned R-10, but the business is "grandfathered" because the license was issued when the zoning was still "general." Any change in ownership or business structure would require a new license that cannot be issued without commercial zoning. Another pending extinction.

Great need exists for economical housing for our increasing older population, i.e., boarding homes, apartments, various kinds of assisted living. These all require commercial zoning. The Key Peninsula Community Plan recently adopted by the county council fails to establish zoning to which might accommodate these pressing needs.

One of the stated goals of the

community plan was to support and encourage commercial businesses. This goal was not only ignored, it was subverted. The plan acts to extinguish existing commercial businesses at a time when gas prices, bridge tolls, and population growth are demanding that more commercial businesses be established on the KP in response to greater and greater community need.

The "big box" stores have the money and legal staff to manipulate the system to their advantage. The mom and pop stores are the ones that should be nurtured, not extinguished. Expensive mandatory design standards will force business owners to continue to use 80-year-old buildings until they literally collapse around their customers. We need to encourage, not discourage, new, efficient, energy-saving structures.

Existing zoning ordinances act against the public interest in many ways.

The newly created Key Peninsula Land Use Advisory Commission (KPAC) needs to carefully study and recommend changes to the Key Peninsula Community Plan and implementing regulations. Citizens need to attend the KPAC meetings and voice their concerns. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Key Center library. Every meeting has a block of time when citizens can comment on any issue.

Silence leads to extinction. Be there. Let our "advocates" know what interests they need to represent.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dream team leads to dances' success

The Sound Byte dances (held at the Civic Center for high-schoolers, May 3 and 23) were a success because of all the volunteers. We had a dream team of people.

Thank you to all who helped: the Purdy Prison guards on security, high-schoolers on set-up, design, and advertisement, our friends at Lakebay Christian Assembly, our friends from

skate night, DEF productions on sound, and our DJs Kip, Dr. Derek, and Speedjay.

Thanks again; let's do it again in September.

*Tom & Julie Boardman
KP Civic Center volunteers*

July fair gears up

It's almost fair time again.... It is my pleasure to welcome you all back to the 2008 Key Peninsula Community Fair. For the eighth year in a row the KPCF will bring together folks from near and far to enjoy and celebrate life here on the Key Peninsula. Our hard-working Board of Directors has spared no effort to bring

you this year's array of entertainers and events. They will inspire, entertain and may even enchant you. This year we'll have that same great carnival back and the entertainment line up will feature "locals."

Over the past seven years, the fair has grown from modest beginnings to an event spanning four days with a little bit of everything for everybody. Did you know the fair is a nonprofit entity, there is no paid staff or board members? The fair is yours - come and enjoy it! Afterwards, every penny the fair makes goes right back into your community, through its owners: the Key Peninsula Business Association, the Key Peninsula Civic Center and the Longbranch

Improvement Club.

The fair is on July 10-13, with a teen night planned again and a new Polka Fest. Carnival all-day ride passes are on sale June 1. With every carnival pass bought in advance (prior to July 9) that person also get free admission! You can buy presale passes at Sunnycrest Nursery and Sound Credit in Key Center. See www.keyfair.org for more.

We hope that your experience as our very welcome guest is a fun and rewarding one. We are delighted to provide so many opportunities for you to meet and greet old and new friends. As you will see, a great deal of planning and hard work has

(See **LETTERS**, Page 5)

Economic 'shot in the arm' not all that stimulating

Gosh, I can't wait to get my Shot in the Arm Stimulus Package from the U.S. government! What are you going to spend yours on? It's actually a credit against your upcoming 2008 tax return, based on your 2007 tax return. I started to try to figure out if that was good or not, thinking vaguely about interest rates, dependents, and deductions, but before long I got dizzy and lost my balance, falling head-first into my office trashcan, lacerating my eyebrow and bruising my larynx. You'd need to ask a good accountant to get any sort of answer, because bad accountants give you worse answers than you can get by just making something up.

According to the Powers That Be, this "national stimulus package" is a "shot in the arm" for the American economy. From 40,000 feet, it sounds like a feasible plan. Inject 1 percent of the nation's gross domestic product, about \$145 billion, back to consumers to "put money into the pocketbooks of middle class families," as House Republican Leader John Boehner stated. I'm not

KEVIN REED HERE'S SOMETHING



even sure who uses the term "pocketbook" anymore, but that's pretty much besides the point — thing is, it sounds good on the macro level, but what will that money get injected into at the household/micro level?

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson says, "You give money to people, they're gonna spend it." Excellent point, Henry; glad you're in charge of our money. And spend it we will. But how? Well, if you ask President George W. Bush, this shot in the arm will help us all "meet monthly bills and pay for higher gas prices," which contradicts the point of the rebate. The underlying theme of that statement — that we are having trouble paying our monthly bills and buying gas — shows that the money sent to middle class families may not stimulate all that much. We're not going

to buy more gasoline than we usually buy, right? And if I pay bills that I'm having trouble paying now, then the money I get will go to a bank for a credit card or mortgage, or a utility, or wherever. What's being stimulated? A bank? An oil company? Do they need stimulation? If you can't make money as a bank or an oil company today, you have some serious internal management issues, which, of course, many of them do, hence the mortgage mess.

If you want to stimulate something, send me \$50,000! I'll go buy a boat and stimulate the boat manufacturing market with my purchase. But honestly, even with \$50,000, I'd likely pay off a bunch of bills and put the rest into savings, which is exactly what we're going to do with our money. Except if I had 50K, I'd take my family on a vacation someplace, as a lot of people I've asked are doing with this refund check. They're taking trips to Alaska, Oregon, and elsewhere, so there's some money going back into the economy, but it would be interesting to know the real numbers of what exactly went where.

So, assume we're all going to absorb the money into our bank accounts and watch it melt into our monthly expenses for a month or two, maybe stick some into savings if we're lucky, or we take a trip and spread some money out that way. Then what? Well, then the money's all gone, that's what. Frankly, I'd rather the government keep the money and pay down the \$9 trillion debt (~30K per person). Use the money to provide targeted, incentive-based tax breaks for the market to produce cutting-edge technologies, so our country can grow, compete, lead, have something to export, and regain our stature and foothold in the international market. Take the rest and revamp the schools so we can compete with China and India, before we get completely buried technologically. In other words, we could change our priorities and apply the \$1 trillion it costs these days to invade a country, and use that money to, oh I don't know, stimulate the economy? If we did that all the time, there would be no need to stimulate anything. It would already be stimulated.

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Fresh, original voices are wanted! The Key Peninsula News is looking for guest columnists to contribute bi-monthly columns (a total of 6 columns) after the current guest columnists' term expires later this summer.

The columns may be entertaining, informative, humorous or serious and must pertain to topics relevant to Key Peninsula readers. Previously published work is not a requirement for this position, which is unpaid.

To be considered, please submit: a one-paragraph biography or background summary, a one-paragraph proposal outlining your column ideas and potential topics, and at least two proposed columns (500-600 words or less). Young writers are encouraged to apply.

Submissions must be electronic (on disk delivered to our office at the Civic Center, 17010 S. Vaughn Road in Vaughn, or emailed to news@keypennews.com). For questions, call 884-4699 or email.

The finalists will be selected by a panel. Deadline is June 15.

(From LETTERS, Page 4)

gone into making this fair one of the best ones ever. But only you can validate our endeavors — your pleasure is both the reason for and the measure of our efforts.

Michael Hays
2008 KPCF President

Article appreciated

Thanks so much for writing the article on Mr. Magoc. As the parent of a child with Tourette Syndrome, I appreciate any publicity for T.S. and the people who live with it every day. Being able to show my child a living example of someone who has T.S. and still manages to have a wonderful life is a priceless gift.

Cheers and hats off to Greg and Jenni Magoc for persevering through the tough times, and an especially big thank you to Greg's parents. I know from experience that it isn't easy to raise a child with T.S., but the joys and rewards are worth all the struggles.

Thanks again, KP News, for shedding some light on this misunderstood syndrome.

Heidi Miller
Kingston

Yanity averts jail time

By Danna Webster, KP News

The court decision for Key Peninsula Fire Commissioner Allen Yanity is a year-long suspended jail sentence, subject to two years of court supervision monitoring his behavior, and a standard \$700 assessment — \$200 for the filing fees and \$500 for the Crime Victims' Fund. That was the ruling of Piece County Superior Court Judge Vicki Hogan in mid-May. A jury found Yanity guilty in April of fourth-degree assault, a gross misdemeanor, for attacking fellow Commissioner James Bosch last year during a recess at the commissioners' meeting.

In July, the court will determine restitution fees. According to defense attorney Gary Clower, the state has a right to restitution to reimburse the Crime Victim Funds used on behalf of Bosch for medical costs. "The reimbursement for medical cost for Bosch is not disputed," he said. However, the request for an \$800 reimbursement to the fire district for

“I’m satisfied with the sentence.”

— James Bosch, fire commissioner

increased security at subsequent meetings is still under study.

The jury found Yanity not guilty of second-degree assault or third-degree assault, which are felony crimes. A guilty decision of fourth-degree assault allows Yanity to continue his commissioner post.

Asked about the May court decision, Yanity said, "I'm not going to appeal. In the words of my attorney, we were hoping for a home run and we got a triple. We have to be satisfied with what we got. It could have been a strikeout or a single."

Bosch viewed the decision similarly. "I'm satisfied with the sentence," he said. "I'm glad to have it almost complete," he added referring to the impending July hearing on restitution.

BRIEFS

news

Local agro-producers wanted for board

Agricultural producers on the Key Peninsula who would like to guide federal farm programs from the local level have a chance to do so. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency is seeking candidates for the grower-elected county committee election, Nov. 3 to Dec. 1. The Key Peninsula is part of Local Administrative Area 2, which also includes Mason and Kitsap counties. Candidates are specifically sought from LAA 2 for this election.

The Farm Service Agency County Committee is the most direct link between USDA farm programs and local producers. Agricultural producers are eligible to nominate themselves or any producer willing to serve. FSA wants to include people representing a variety of crops or different types of operations and encourages women and producers with different ethnic backgrounds to seek nomination.

Nominations begin June 16. Request forms from the Puyallup FSA office by calling (253) 845-9272. Aug. 1 is the deadline for submitting the nominations. For information, call executive director George R. Jaquish at george.jaquish@wa.usda.gov.

Candidates sought for parks commission

Key Peninsula Parks is seeking an interested individual to fill the commissioner position held by Ross Bischoff, who recently passed away. Commissioner Bischoff was a dedicated supporter of parks and recreation. The position is open to residents of the Key Peninsula who are registered to vote. Commissioners attend monthly meetings.

Resumes will be accepted until 5 p.m. July 8. Commissioners will interview applicants on July 14 during a study session and appoint an individual during the regular scheduled meeting. This appointment will serve until the next general election in November 2009. Mail resumes and cover letter to: Key Peninsula Parks - Position #2, P.O. Box 70, Lakebay WA 98349; or email: scottg@keypeninsulaparks.com. For details, call 884-9240.

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Above, Lauren Littleton and Michelle Ewing man a booth for the Key Peninsula Co-op Preschool, which holds classes at Evergreen and Vaughn elementary schools and encourages everyone to join in registering their kids or seeking information for this group's programs by calling 884-5535. *Photo Hugh McMillan*

Below, Olive Bell Reid is shopping at the 13th annual plant sale of the Lakebay Fuchsia Society. She is a current resident and has had roots on the Key Peninsula since her father bought property near Key Center in 1937.

Bottom, Willa Eisel, 5, acts silly with Kawshun D Clown. Willa was a very mature and knowledgeable helper for the Lakebay Fuchsia Society during its annual sale at the Livable Fair. More photos at www.keypennews.com *Photos by Mindi LaRose*

Livable fair promotes community, services

By Hugh McMillan, KP News

The Key Peninsula Civic Center was filled with booths in May, with everyone from Pierce County Public Works Department to the KP Lions Club and many others in between. The occasion was the annual KP Livable Community Fair.

The PC Sheriff's Department and KP's Fire Department displayed emergency equipment including the PCSD's Zodiac water rescue unit. Lawns at the facility were covered with KP Fuchsia Society offerings, a master gardeners clinic and a separate booth promoting the KP Cooperative Pre-school. Those in need could buy hot food and soft drinks at the event. Classes on various subjects were available in the Whitmore Room for those seeking to broaden their reserves of knowledge. The main fair area enjoyed live music by Lorraine Hart singing with Quartet Musette. Kawshun "D" Safety Clown and KPF's huge "Sparky the Dalmatian" cavorted about, to the delight of squealing kids seeking a hug. A Pierce Transit small bus was on hand and, to encourage people to use the bus and leave our gas guzzlers at home, two ladies made available fabric carry-all bags to those interested.

The general consensus was that the fair was another great success — judged by the sea of smiling faces of all ages.



BRIEFS

news

KP fair gears up

This year's KP fair has several new events planned. A farmers market is scheduled for Saturday, July 12, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Agri-vision area. An art show highlighting local artists and some demonstrations will be held on Sunday. New activity fun will be provided by a dunk tank. This year the beer garden will move near the main entertainment stage.

The fair is still looking for vendors. For details on any of the events, call the fair hotline at 884-4386 or email Sue Stuhaug at suestu@centurytel.net.

Help with action plans

The Pierce County Coalition for Environmental Health Priorities will start working on action plans to address drinking water, Puget Sound, and food system issues. Join in the discussion June 12, 6 - 8 p.m., at the Key Center Library. For more information go to www.tpchd.org/ehpriorities, call 798-3823, or email mseifert@tpchd.

Making hay at the Red Barn

By Irene Torres, KP News

After an extended county permitting process, a local youth center project is finally seeing progress. The three-building "red barn" located just outside Key Center once housed a disposable-camera manufacturing facility, and will soon provide an after-school drop-in center, including a coffee lounge.

The vision statement of the Red Barn Committee reads, "The Red Barn is a response to the limited opportunities for socializing and indoor constructive recreation on the Key Peninsula... The goal is a safe and desirable location for Key Peninsula residents to mingle and recreate."

Rory Adams, the youth pastor with Waypoint Church, has been involved in the vision for this project for about four years. Adams told the KP News, "We want the facility to be used as a place where high-school youth can connect with each other and adults. Some organized activities will be planned, like youth groups and concerts, but we will start with small steps and wait to see how many

volunteers come forward to staff and run programs."

In addition to the coffee lounge theme, a gymnasium with a basketball court is planned. Adams said, "This will be a place for all local youth — regardless of religious affiliation — to hang out, do homework, and socialize." He added, "We're excited about it. We're closer than we've ever been before."

Early in the planning, there were discussions with the Boys and Girls Club — but the two groups had different visions so those talks did not move forward.

The project will require extensive renovations to the buildings before an occupancy permit can be issued. County requirements include the installation of a firewall between two of the buildings as well as a fire suppression system.

Pete Hedin, chair of the committee, said, "We're looking to find a superintendent, someone who can coordinate the work of licensed contractors and volunteers during the remodeling."

Initial funding was provided through private donors and the Angel Guild; more

If you'd like to help

Individuals and businesses can make tax-deductible donations to "The Red Barn" by mailing checks to PO Box 1032, Vaughn, WA 98394. Interested volunteers should contact Rory Adams at 884-1277.

funding will be needed, as most of the money was spent on the permitting process, and remodeling costs have escalated over the years. Adams estimated the project to exceed \$100,000 with the addition of the sprinkler system. He said, "We've been reluctant to fundraise until the permits went through, but we see this as a benefit to the entire community, to give the kids something to do. We have invited other churches to participate and they are supportive." Car washes and garage sales and other fundraising events may help fund the project.

Hedin said the plan is to open the coffee lounge by this fall. "The process has been amazingly slow, but we're motivated to get something done," he said.

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BRIEFS

business

Traffic signal in the works

Lake Kathryn Village owners have an application out for the money to finance the addition of a light at 94th Street and SR-302. Lake Kathryn Village property manager Joe Rhea said at a May KP Business Association meeting that Don Zimmerman, owner of Cost Less Pharmacy and primary stockholder in Lake Kathryn Village, has been told by the Department of Transportation he is expected to put in a traffic signal. The estimated cost for the signal is \$1.2 million, which includes a four-way light, turns lanes and asphalt for highway expansion. "We have buildings we've planned — office (buildings) and more small-store space. We're trying to maximize whatever square space we can occupy," Rhea said regarding future plans.

Beach Hut to be managed by O'Callahan's

Greg Calahan, owner of O'Callahan's Pub and Grill, has leased the Beach Hut, Home's drive-in eatery, for the season. "It's

a six-month deal with the same good menu. I'll staff it and run it," he said. "They (Beach Hut owners Mark and Lori Jones) need to do something else. This will help them out and put a dime in my pocket." Four O'Callahan's staff members will be transferred to Home to run the drive-in.

Business shows a way for getting rid of old shoes

As summer approaches, it's a great time to dig into your closet and get rid of those old shoes you never wear anymore and put them to use for a good cause — so says the Comfort Shoe Gallery in Gig Harbor.

On June 27-28, the Comfort Shoe Gallery will hold a shoe drive to collect gently used women's shoes for the Key Peninsula Family Resource Center. The store is located at 5125 Olympic Drive NW in Gig Harbor.

Anyone who brings a donation of women's shoes (or a contribution of \$5 or more) to the store, will receive a 10 percent discount.

"The drive will help the resource center's work in supporting women who are re-entering the workplace after not working for years or women who are just starting out," said Jud Morris, program manager at KPFRFC.

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Flexibility is key to new construction company's success

By William C. Dietz, KP News

Chris Gilliam is the kind of man who looks at a problem and sees an opportunity. And that was the case with the central courtyard at Peninsula High School, where Gilliam and his family go to church on Sundays.

According to Mindi LaRose*, who has a daughter at Peninsula High and was among those leading the effort to reclaim the courtyard, "it was a mess." The courtyard was flat, with areas of grass and broken concrete that would make it difficult, if not impossible, to navigate in a wheelchair. But not anymore. As reported in the May 2008 issue of Key Pen News, Gilliam not only agreed to tackle the project himself, but sought donations from local businesses and worked with PHS students and their parents to refurbish the courtyard, completing the project in May.

Gilliam was paid for some of the work but donated a lot of time as well. Thanks to the contribution of his company and the other supporters he brought on board, the project was done with about



Chris Gilliam at the newly completed Peninsula High School courtyard, which he was credited with making happen. See before and after photos online at www.keypennews.com.

Photo by Karina Whitmarsh

one-third of the cost. When asked why he went the extra mile, he says, "I saw someone who needed help. I just wanted to do something for somebody. Plus I knew hundreds of people would be able to enjoy it."

Gilliam was born in Virginia, his family moved to Idaho, and he grew up in Post Falls. In 1997, he moved to Washington state, where he became a member of the Laborers Union, and eventually the Operators Union as well, working

primarily on underground utility projects. He now lives on the north end of Key Peninsula with his wife and two children.

"I ran crews as a foreman for years," Gilliam says, "but I hurt my back a couple of times, and came to the point where I had to make a decision. Work job-by-job or start my own business." And that's what Gilliam did about a year ago. Most of his time is spent on excavation work, terracing, and water features but he's

quick to say that he'll do most anything "that involves dirt."

Since Gilliam is willing to tackle a wide variety of jobs, he's been able to keep going while many construction-related businesses have been hurt by the downturn in the housing market. It also helps that Gilliam is willing to take on projects as far away as Seattle if they're sufficiently profitable. And his strategy seems to be working. "In the first year, we've done pretty well," Gilliam says cheerfully. "And that doesn't usually happen with a new business."

When asked to describe what he would like to accomplish in the next five years, Gilliam says, "I want to be able to pass it (the business) on to my family if they want it. I want to build my business on referrals — and not have to advertise. Eventually I would like to have a couple of crews that I could depend on, own my own equipment, and work mostly on this side of the bridge."

In order to contact Gilliam Construction call: 253-880-2178.

*Mindi LaRose is a staff photographer for Key Pen News.



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Sailor mends sails in Longbranch

By Danna Webster, KP News

A sailor in Longbranch mends sails, repairs and rebuilds boat canvas, sews canvas covers for winches, steering wheels, and full winter-cover, and creates personalized canvas tote bags with trim and handles to match boat riggings. Robin Gould has five sewing machines in her studio and between them can manage most of the sewing jobs required for a boat. According to Gould, avoiding specialization has allowed her to stay busy and productive in her small community of Longbranch. Her boat canvas work can be seen on vessels moored in Filucy Bay and her tote bags, several designed by her husband, Doug, have become a popular item around the marina.

"I can mend everything that needs to be mended," says Gould, "and the bags are all free-hand. Each one is a little different with a hand embroidered robin on them. (That tag says) not made in China."

Gould and her trusty German-built Pfaff sewing machine are a portable team than can work at the dock or aboard ship to complete jobs. In her studio, the Pfaff's electric hook-up is bypassed and Gould operates it by treadle, converting it to her "green" machine. The tension control mechanism on the Pfaff and on all the big industrial machines in Gould's studio is the major difference between them and the typical home sewing machines. These machines must be capable of feeding the strong, thick thread required for sewing a boat's heavy man-made and natural fibers without giving out.

Boat canvas work has provided a range of work experiences. One job



Photo courtesy Robin Gould

Mending sails and building boat canvas covers are the specialty of Longbranch's Robin Gould.

required building a 41-foot winter cover. That kept Gould under an avalanche of 68 yards of fabric, which she divided in several pieces before assembling into completion. Another job found her staying two days aboard a cabin cruiser off Bainbridge Island with her Pfaff, making several covers for the boat.

The quality of Gould's work is enhanced by her lifelong experiences as a sailor. "I've been sailing since I was a small child growing up in Olympia," Gould says. "Longbranch was one of our destinations." She and her parents often sailed to Squaxin Island in the days when it was a state park and also Jarrell's Cove. Gould's parents are prominent writers on sailing and boating. Her father, John Bailey, retired from a Tacoma News Tribune column,

continues to write a newsletter for local sailors in the Port Townsend area and for "48° North-The Sailing Magazine." Her mother, Jo Bailey, is the author of "Gunkholing in South Puget Sound: A Comprehensive Cruising Guide from Kingston-Edmonds South to Olympia." It was written for the popular Afoot & Afloat Series about cruising and exploring out of the way places of Puget Sound and the San Juans.

Gould met her husband on a day when she sailed into Filucy Bay. Doug Gould was living aboard his boat. When she sailed in, he swam over and talked to her. That was the beginning of a romance that culminated with their 2005 wedding on a tandem bicycle at Penrose Park.

For the last couple of years, most of Gould's sailing has been restricted to

For more information contact Robin Designs at 253-884-3030 or email: robindesigns@hotmail.com.

local day trips in Filucy Bay — around Eagle Island and over to Anderson Island — as she has concentrated on her sewing career. "I've always sewed," she says. "I started sewing my own clothes since junior high. It was always a passion. I wanted to sew for a living." She waited to pursue her sewing passion until her children were grown and gone from home. She started her business three years ago. Winter months are slow but work picks up around February and March after the big boat shows. Working for herself, repairing and building boat canvas, and creating tote bags is satisfying work for Gould.

"The canvas work is kind of a partnership. I ask (the owner), 'How would you like this to look?' It's nice to have a balance of working with people and working on my own," she says.



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Changes to Burnham exit planned

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

Anyone commuting to the Key Peninsula during the rush hour is familiar with the long tail at the State Route 16 Purdy exit: drivers having to wait their turn on the shoulder (illegally) so as not to jam highway traffic. Some may have even encountered close calls while trying to meander in without colliding with cars exiting from the Burnham off-ramp, a few hundred feet away.

That hazardous meandering could get resolved — if a preliminary proposal by the city of Gig Harbor goes forward. The city is working on a long-term fix for traffic congestion at the Burnham interchange, and has narrowed it to two solutions. One would create a so-called Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI), a massive overpass that is as wide as it is long that would help regulate SR-16/Borgen Boulevard traffic. The other, called a “split diamond,” would close the eastbound on- and off-ramp, “moving” it about 4,000 feet, and rerouting traffic through backroads.

“It’s not the solution to the Purdy backup, but it helps with the weaving problem this off-ramp (Burnham) has with Purdy,” said Gig Harbor City Administrator Rob Karlinsey.

Gig Harbor has faced transportation issues in Gig Harbor North after a traffic study showed that even before St. Anthony Hospital is built, the interchange cannot handle the amount of projected traffic increase. Interim solutions were formulated. Once currently approved developments are built, the road infrastructure is maxed up again. “We have to look for a long-term fix in order for new development to happen,” Karlinsey said.

Two possibilities out of 15 made it through two stages of a “screening analysis”; the final solution is expected by



Photo by Mindi LaRose

A view of the Purdy exit backup from the Borgen off-ramp, which could be closed off as a way of solving Gig Harbor North congestion issues.

the end of summer. Karlinsey said both options would cost about the same. “SPUIs are all over the country now,” he said. “It’s designed to handle everything the freeway traffic can throw at it. The downside is that it still brings everything to the same point; it doesn’t distribute traffic like the split diamond does.”

A committee of community and business leaders, elected officials and city representatives has been discussing solutions for Gig Harbor North traffic

issues. Jud Morris, president of the Key Peninsula Business Association, attended the group’s last meeting. “My concern is for the safety of Key Peninsula residents, and (for) how accessible the hospital will be,” he told the KP News. “The (KPBA) members are concerned because one of the reasons the hospital chose that location is being close to the (highway) exit. What is the possibility of mortality issues when you start changing how quickly you can get to the hospital?”

The split diamond would leave the westbound on- and off-ramp in place, but the new exit would take traffic to a new road (to be built) connecting through the back of the YMCA area. Officials with the Franciscan Health Systems (builder of St. Anthony) say they are not making an endorsement except for whatever solution retains access to the hospital (which, by default, would imply the SPUI since the split diamond would most likely add extra commute time).

“We support whatever traffic solution will cause the least interruption to convenient, quick and easy access to the public and emergency vehicles,” said FHS spokesman Gale Robinette. “...It’s critical, it’s absolutely vital that access to the hospital will be easy... Which one is the city’s decision. We haven’t said, ‘This is the one.’ We said, ‘This should be the guiding principle.’” He would not speculate on how much extra time the split diamond would add to emergency response, saying the city’s analysis should determine that.

Emergency access is not the only concern. Bob Dragoo, Peninsula Light Co. CFO and president of the Gig Harbor Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, said not only would the split diamond require potentially millions of dollars of power infrastructure changes, but from the chamber’s point of view, businesses in Gig

More information

The Gig Harbor North Traffic Options Committee will meet on June 11 at 9 a.m. at Gig Harbor City Hall. To see renderings of the two current options, visit www.keypennews.com.

Harbor North (especially small ones) will greatly suffer. The other problem is for commuters from the Harbor Hill area going east toward Purdy or Kitsap — they would have to essentially backtrack in order to get on the highway.

Regarding the Penlight position, Dragoo said either solution will cost the utility, which in 2003 invested \$8 million into infrastructure along Borgen Boulevard. He thinks the SPUI change will cost the utility hundreds of thousands, while the split diamond could take that into millions of dollars.

The chamber’s concern is the “ingress and egress” for shoppers as well as for the hospital, he said. To go around the current exit, “I’m talking major, major minutes,” he said.

Jennifer High, Office Depot store manager who is representing a coalition of Gig Harbor North businesses, said it would be tough on all of them. “With the off-ramp closed, commuters will have to go all the way around us and quite frankly, probably just go shopping in Tacoma,” she said. “It’s important that the city keeps its options open — which I think they are.”

Karlinsey said the city is not officially favoring one option for the other. “We’ve been very open and doing a lot of outreach,” he said, adding that not doing something could mean major long-term economic development loss. “This is a really big deal,” he said. “It will have an economic ripple effect on the region in the billions over time.”



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Bryson Hunziker, 5, Hunziker's son, enjoys a bite of pizza while sharing his mom's table as she chats with her many friends at the Family Pizza Night fundraiser at the Lighthouse Christian School. Hunziker's husband, Mike, is a digital photography and math teacher at Key Peninsula Middle School. *Photo by Hugh McMillan*

Family Pizza Night spent for good cause

By Hugh McMillan, KP News

More than 250 people gathered to support Key Pen's Terri Radcliffe Hunziker and her family at a Family Pizza Night at the Lighthouse Christian School in Gig Harbor in May. Close to \$25,000 was raised for Hunziker to help pay for cancer treatment bills.

"A huge heartfelt thank you to all who attended the fundraiser for me. What an incredible event it was," she said, referring to those in attendance. "Your compassion and generosity has deeply touched us and there are no words to convey our appreciation."

Hunziker expressed her gratitude to her "awesome cousin, Angie Cabe, for making it happen" and to Dr. Frank Senecal "for taking time out of his packed schedule to

be there." Another guest, Dr. Doug Perry, displayed on stage a large, highly detailed 20-inch model of Shakespeare's theater Hunziker created when she was his student at Peninsula High School. "I still use it in my classes," he said. Hunziker's mom, Lynn Radcliffe, said after the fundraiser, "That was certainly quite an event, wasn't it? We can still feel the love days later and I'm sure it will stay with us for months to come. Terri was overwhelmed. It was a wonderful evening."

Hunziker started the trial drug IPI-504 at the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance in May. To learn more about her extensive research into the subject of cancer, visit www.mybumpintheroad.com. If you would like to help, write Terri Hunziker, P.O. Box 752, Vaughn, WA 98394.

Senior rides available

The Mustard Seed Project has launched a Key Peninsula Senior Ride Program, a collaboration with Catholic Community Services, for seniors ages 60 and over, regardless of income. Transportation is provided to medical appointments, grocery shopping and other important destinations. The ride service depends on the availability of local volunteer drivers, so

this free service is provided on a first-come/first-serve basis. Priority is given to lower income seniors without other transportation options.

Persons in need of transportation must sign up in advance by calling the Key Senior Information Center at 884-9814. Those interested in serving the seniors as volunteer drivers should call Edie Morgan at 884-1205.

CELEBRATING THE KEY PENINSULA



The Key Peninsula News Presents "Celebrating The Key Peninsula"

A commemorative book celebrating the beauty and the spirit of the Key Peninsula—including the scenery, people, events, the community and the neighboring areas. This limited edition hardbound, full color, coffee-table style book features photography from the Key Peninsula News staff as well as local photographers, artists and writers.

Don't miss the opportunity to celebrate with us, all that Key Peninsula has to offer—and support your local newspaper at the same time. The book is a fundraising project by volunteers, with 100% of the proceeds benefitting the Key Peninsula News.

Order now at \$40 and save 20% (Release Price: \$49.95)
Pre-sale price offered through July 15th. Estimated release date: September
 To pre-order, complete the form below and mail to:
Key Peninsula News Book Orders, PO Box 3, Vaughn, WA 98394

Production of the book was paid through grants from Angel Guild and an anonymous donor, and through sponsorships by local Key sponsors: St. Anthony Hospital, Key Peninsula Metro Parks, Key Peninsula Business Association, Gig Harbor/Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, Shear Magis & Co., Wierwynd Motel, Silver Key, Sunrise Two Waters Arts Alliance, Trillium Creek Winery; Bronze Key sponsors: William & Margie's Diner, Key Peninsula Community Hall, Long Beach Improvement Club, the McDonald Family, Sound Credit Union.

Sponsorships are still welcome! Call 253-884-4699 or email news@keypennews.com by June 10.

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PHS students win awards in state competition

By Rick Sorrels
Special to KP News

The music- and talk-meisters at KGHP and the broadcast journalism program at Peninsula High School held the first-ever Washington State High School Radio Awards and Conference on May 15.

Invitations were sent to all eight high schools with radio stations and broadcast journalism programs: KGHP, KNHC in Seattle, KMIH on Mercer Island, KASB in Bellevue, KAHS in Aberdeen, KTCV in Tri-Cities, KYSC in Yakima, and KUBS in Newport. Schools submitted entries for broadcast awards in 10 areas of competition and winners were selected for first through third place for each category.

PHS winners were Jet Moore, first place for Best Sportscast and third for Best Individual Newscast; Christer Bergus, first place for Best Public Service Announcement Campaign; Gabby Fiano, first place for Best News Feature and second place tie for Best Public Service Announcement Campaign; and Julia Stockton, second place for Best Public Service Announcement. Fiano, Moore,



Left to right, PHS journalism teacher Leland Smith with PHS winners Jet Moore, Julia Stockton, Christer Bergus, Ross Martin, Jake Hohbein, Gabby Fiano and Brett Roswell during the conference. *Photo by Hugh McMillan*

Jake Hohbein, Ross Martin, Lance Wallwork, Roman Popkov and Brett Roswell together won first place for Best Teamwork Newscast.

The comedy team of Martin and Hohbein acted as masters of ceremony with a well-rehearsed Academy Awards

type of presentation.

Prior to awards being presented, conferences were held on seven subject areas, led by accomplished personalities in the field of broadcast journalism. Greg Copeland, a 1990 PHS alumni and current morning anchor for NW Cable News,

discussed television news. Jeff Evans, 1996 PHS alumni and the current media relations director for the Seattle Mariners, discussed a career in professional sports. Vic Orlando, a 1971 PHS alumni and the signature voice for sports radio KJR-AM, discussed "voice-over" work for which he has achieved national acclaim. Other conference leaders came from Bates Technical College, PLU, KVTI-FM, and KIRO-AM.

The conference was opened by Andy Harms of KNDD-FM and closed with comments by Leland Smith, the broadcast journalism teacher at PHS who came up with the conference idea and organized the activities.

Smith said, "Our primary goals were to give long-overdue recognition to students in the field of broadcast journalism, and to raise everybody's work standards through broader experiences and exposure. It was very successful. Everybody left wanting more. We will raise the bar even higher next year. The cost to our school district was negligible. The cost to other schools districts was bus transport. The gain for the students was beyond measure."



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ltuttle@tchhd.org



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Kilmer wraps up first year in Senate

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

Enterprise Washington's "Business Institute" in April recognized 23rd Legislative District Sen. Derek Kilmer (D-Gig Harbor) as a "Legislative Business Star" for his sponsorship of legislation to help diversify and strengthen business opportunities in Washington. Kilmer wrapped up his first year in Senate with a host of sponsored bills.

"Senator Kilmer has taken a bipartisan approach to the economic vitality of our region, and made sure that economic development and business success are factored into legislative discussions," said Erin McCallum, president of Enterprise Washington.

Kilmer offered to meet with the KP News for an overview of some of the session's highlights.

Transportation, and State Route 302 specifically, was one of the issues. Funding was cut to the corridor project from \$5 million to \$2 million, which was brought up to \$2.5 million by the end of the session. Kilmer said keeping the funding at all wasn't an easy task, since many other projects that didn't have actual construction dollars allocated have received cuts for their EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) studies (see related story, page 3). "We need to keep making progress on this and the budgetary situation means that at least in the short run, the ball will not go as far down the field as we want, but the end goal remains the same," he said.

About \$4 million of expenses were cut during the session in costs of running the Tacoma Narrows Bridge project — specifically, the final budget



State Sen. Derek Kilmer reports on the last legislative session during a Key Peninsula Lions Club-sponsored nonpartisan political forums in May. The forum will continue on the first and third Wednesdays at the KP Civic Center at 7 p.m.

Photo by Hugh McMillan

approved the equivalent of 7.5 jobs instead of 25. The state is also contracting with a private company to run the toll-collection system. Asked why the tolls are on the rise despite those cuts, he said the initial financial plan was to have \$3 tolls for everyone. Last year, he sponsored a bill appropriating more than \$1 million in order to give discounts for the electronic toll payers while the old bridge was being retrofitted. Now that the discount time has ended, he said the Citizens Advisory Commission, rather than going back to \$3 toll for everyone, elected to continue a discount for Good to Go users (to \$2.75), which meant an increase past \$3 (to \$4) for cash payers.

He said for a project to actually receive construction funding, one of two things has to happen: Either an already approved project falls off the list (maybe due to other funding), or more money has to be allocated, usually through gas taxes.

Kilmer said his district has one of the highest numbers of military personnel

and veterans in the state, so much of his work has focused on them. Among the veteran-focused bills was one requiring a grace period for reservists returning from active duty whose professional licenses expires in the meantime. "Some people are coming back from Iraq and can't go back to work because of state licensing," he said. "Now the (involved) agencies will come up with a grace period—it's the right thing to do." Another bill would create a system to give veterans credit toward their certifications for military experience.

Kilmer has also sponsored several economic development bills, and said that will remain a priority next year, along with education and transportation as well as improving the government's efficiency. But he doesn't steer away from bills outside those priorities. "I like to listen to my constituents. It's important for elected officials to know who their boss is," he said. "There were a number of bills I sponsored that came out of calls from constituents."

Funding received for septic project

With grant funds from the Washington State Department of Health, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department will take a closer look at septic systems on the Key Peninsula. For most Key Peninsula residents, septic systems are the only method of wastewater treatment and disposal available. TPCHD focus will be on properties with the greatest potential to impact streams, lakes and the Sound.

In 2007, the state Board of Health implemented a regulation requiring local health departments to develop an on-site sewage system management plan. Plans must describe methods to protect public health and the environment by better locating and documenting septic systems and assuring proper maintenance of septic systems through regulatory programs and education.

Areas bordering Puget Sound that are vulnerable for the greatest potential contamination are referred to as Marine Recovery Areas (MRAs). The Key Peninsula was chosen for MRA status because of the extensive use of septic systems, the presence of numerous commercial and recreational shellfish beaches, and because a small number of locations have shown a decline in water quality. An MRA project was launched to build upon the health department's existing Shellfish Watersheds Program and to promote a relatively new project providing low-interest loan and grant monies to help cover the cost of repairing failing septic systems.

A meeting about the MRA Project will be held June 3 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Key Peninsula Civic Center.

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Visit www.gigharborhospital.com to see St. Anthony Hospital under construction and to learn more about the vital medical services that will be available in 2009.

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COMMUNITY WORKS

Submit calendar items to news@keypennews.com • Deadline 17th of the month

June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 – Bloodmobile

The bloodmobile will be at Albertson's, 11330 51st Ave NW, on Mondays from 12:30-7 p.m. For other dates or locations see the calendar at www.keypennews.com

June 4, 11, 18, 25 – Toastmasters meet

Toastmasters has helped many members in community service activities. Using the speaking and leadership skills developed in Toastmasters, people have become more active in business, churches, and service and charity organizations.

Wednesdays, 1 p.m. Key Center Library; Frank, fshirley@centurytel.net

June 6 – Pregnancy class starts

A free Healthy Start to Pregnancy Class will be taught by Jennifer Baxter, AAHCC, instructor for the Bradley Method® of Natural Childbirth. This class educates families about how nutrition, exercise and birth choices impact health of families and babies. Participants will be able to learn about relaxation and the coach's and/or doula's role in birth.

Friday, June 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Key Center Library Conference Room; Jennifer, 884-7832

June 7 – Orchestra performs

The Gig Harbor Peninsula Civic Orchestra will present the final concert in its season of dance music including Ravel's Bolero, Smetena's Dance of the Comedians, Dvorak's Slavonic Dance No. 1, selections from West Side Story, Leroy Anderson's Sandpaper Ballet and Music from Lord of the Dance.

Saturday, June 7, 7 p.m. Peninsula High School, free; www.ghpcorchestra.com

June 13, 19, 27 – Mustard Seed meetings

Friday, June 13, 10 a.m.: Transportation and Mobility for Elders Task Group meeting. More volunteer drivers on the Key Peninsula are needed. Come to this

meeting, or call the Key Senior Information Center, 884-9814.

Thursday, June 19, 10 a.m.: Elder Health and Wellness Services Task Group
Friday, June 27, 10 a.m.: Housing Options for Aging in Place Task Group
All meetings at Key Center Library; Edie, 884-1205

June 15 – Farmers market pep rally

In support of the local Farmers Market, Greg Calahan invites you to an afternoon of music with drink and food specials in O'Callahans' Beer Garden. Contributions and tips will be donated

for the startup market expenses, such as insurance, permits, and banners.

Sunday, June 15, 12-4 p.m. O'Callahan's, Key Center

June 20 – Family fun night

Lakebay Community Church presents a fun evening of board games, ping-pong, air hockey, and a movie shown on a huge screen. Bring family, friends and neighbors and a snack to share. Juice, soda and an evening of family fun provided.

Friday, June 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Lakebay Community Church, 11 Cornwall Road, Lakebay, free; Tracy, 851-4123 or church office, 884-3899

June 20 – Peacemakers host economist

Join the Key Peacemakers for a talk by Peter Bohmer, who teaches political economy at the Evergreen State College. He will examine the fractures in the economy such as inequality, recession, inflation, and personal insecurity regarding housing and the workplaces. He will also cover the challenges facing Americans, how a fair and healthier economy might be organized, and how folks can participate.

Friday, June 20, 7 p.m. Key Center Library, free; Dory 884-9299.

June 21 – Beach walk at Penrose Point

Join the Shellfish Partners' fourth annual guided beach walk at Penrose Point State Park. Guided along the low tide by WDFW's marine educator, Alan Rammer, the secret lives of sea stars, anemones, crab, octopus and more are explored. Afterwards, check out the Harbor Wild Watch touch tanks and enjoy a picnic lunch on the park's beautiful grounds. Registration required.

Saturday, June 21, 3 p.m. Penrose Point State Park, free; register, Erin 884-9474 or erine@piercecountycd.org

June 22 – Farmers' Market opens

Fresh, local foods are the feature of (See **EVENTS**, Page 21)

Dr. Penrose Guild celebrates 50 years

By Colleen Slater, KP News

Fifty years ago, The Dr. Penrose Guild of Tacoma Orthopedic Association was born, with a dream to support the health care of the children from the peninsula. Volunteers, whose sole purpose was and is to further the interest of Mary Bridge Children's Hospital and Health Center, dedicate many hours and dollars in project money to see their dream come to fruition.

Twenty-five charter members began the local organization in 1958, with Mary Carlson, Betty Kelly, Valda Young, and Jayne Palmer serving as officers. Their first project was a card party at the Key Peninsula Civic Center, with each member responsible for filling a table. This became an annual event for several years.

Smorgasbords, raffles, bazaars, game nights, dessert theater, holiday wreaths, cookbooks and other projects all provided monies to donate to Mary Bridge. The group's annual holiday lunch and auction is a highlight, with nimble fingers crafting ornaments and other items for sale or auction.

One of the most memorable projects was a smorgasbord held at Longbranch Improvement Club. As the dinner began, the refrigerator broke down. Quick trips took perishables and ice to nearby members' homes and the local store, and helping husbands ferried items back to the dinner as needed.

There are no charter members left, says Betty Arns, who joined in 1971, and claims the longest current membership.

The Guild was named for Dr. Stephen



Photo courtesy Betty Arns

Group of members in 1982 at LIC. Back row, left to right, Shirley Marietta, Audrey Tritle, Pat Rodine; front row, left to right, Pauline Finn, Beth Dowsby, Margaret Keasler, Peggy Schmidt, Betty Arns, Vickie Hemschel.

Missing documents

About 30 years of original records, pictures, and scrapbooks have been lost or misplaced over the years. If anyone has such memorabilia, Betty Arns asks for copies or permission to make copies from them, so the organization may have a more complete record of their early years.

Beasley Linnard Penrose, Whitman College president from 1894 to 1934. He purchased Key Peninsula property and established a summer camp for family and friends near what is now Penrose State Park. He encouraged the establishment of the Longbranch Congregational Church, and served as summer pastor there.

The Guild will hold its celebration luncheon on June 12. Membership numbers about 27, with Diane Cairns as president.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Tracey Wilber



WILBER

Tracey Wilber, age 17, daughter of Breck and Donna Wilber, was born and raised on Key Peninsula and has one younger brother.

Her reasons for volunteering are simple: "You get this feeling of accomplishment, the power to change and make a difference in the world you live in," she said.

Wilber is a member of the Key Peninsula Youth Council, which includes 17 youth guided by adviser Barb Trotter. The youth council participates in a variety of projects.

Wilber has chaired the Holiday Baskets Committee and Fundraising. The holiday baskets entail holding a food drive and selecting individual families with real need during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons. Wilber's favorite event was the Teddy Bear Tip-Off, which involved the collection of gently used or new teddy bears for Mary Bridge Children's Hospital. "Making Key Peninsula a better place and more of a place to be proud is reason enough to get involved in projects like these," she said.

Wilber, who is an "A" Honor Roll student and National Honor Society inductee, plays on the PHS volleyball team. Volleyball is her passion and she

began enjoying the sport in seventh grade. Those who know her see her as "Mother Nature's child" — she loves all things in nature and engages in activities that give kindness back to the Earth. One such activity is the Adopt-A-Road project, which the Key Peninsula Youth Council took on the last two years.

PHS counselor Spencer Iacolucci says of Tracey, "She is a very humble, very positive, awesome young lady." Wilber was a nominee earlier this year for the KP Lions' Citizen of the Year award.

She was accepted to Western Washington University, and plans to study psychology and to become a social worker.

— Donna Smeall

GET INVOLVED

Volunteers needed

Paint Tacoma-Pierce Beautiful needs volunteer crews to paint homes for senior and disabled homeowners. Matches between houses and crews are made by mid-June, so contact Sallie E. Shawl ASAP at 253-383-3056 x105.

The SAVE Thrift Store, which benefits Peninsula HS, needs volunteers to work regular 3-4 hour shifts. Tasks vary and training is provided on site. No experience needed. SAVE is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. 857-2800, savethriftstore@netzero.net

The Key Peninsula Senior Ride Program needs drivers and the KP Senior Information Center needs information specialists. 884-9814, or ediemorgan@themustardseedproject.org

OFF THE KEY

June 4 – Welcome Club luncheon

The Gig Harbor Welcome Club hosts a luncheon buffet, including a speaker from the Tall Ships Festival, at Canterwood Club at 11:30 a.m. Marcia, 857-5324

June 11 – Track & field meets begin

Track & field meets for ages 6 to adult and masters start June 11. Individuals as well as teams are welcome. The fee per person per meet is \$6 or \$35 for a season pass (7 meets).

Wednesday, June 11, 5 p.m. Franklin Pierce HS, 11002 18th Ave E, Parkland, fees; 253-798-4177 or www.piercecountywa.org/parks

June 14 – Flea market in Victor

Victor holds its annual flea market with household items, antiques, collectibles, books, clothing, linens, furniture, electronics, tools, plants, and great food too. The money raised goes to the maintenance of building, Boys & Girl Clubs, and high scholarships.

Saturday, June 14, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. behind Victor Fire Station on Hwy. 302; Debby, 360-275-1364

June 24 – Summer Sounds at Skansie

Big Hands Colvin will perform at Skansie Brothers Park in Gig Harbor from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Listeners should bring lawn chairs or blankets and arrive early to the free outdoor concert.

Now – Tall Ship Festival tickets

Tall Ships® Tacoma 2008 will be held July 3-7 along the Foss Waterway. More than 30 historic sailing vessels, including the USCG Eagle, HMS Bounty, the Niña and The Lady Washington, have signed up for the event. The festival is free, but tickets are required to tour a vessel or go sailing. Special viewing areas and video tours will be available for visitors in wheelchairs. Tickets range from \$10-\$60 for adults and kids under 11 are free with a paid adult. Tickets may be purchased online www.tallshipstacoma.com or at the Tall Ships Tacoma Ticket Office in Freighthouse Square, 2501 E. D St. Discount coupons available from all State Farm insurance agents in the Puget Sound.

The USCG Eagle, the only active duty sailing vessel in the U.S. military, will be open for free tours.

JUNE PUBLIC MEETINGS

- Pierce County Council District 6, June 3, 5:30 p.m. at Lakewood City Hall, 6000 Main St. NW
- Fire District 16, June 10 and 24, 3 p.m. at Lakebay Fire Station
- Key Peninsula Community Council, June 18, 7 p.m. at Key Center Library
- KP Metro Parks, June 9, 7:30 p.m. at Volunteer Park Annex (some meetings preceded by a 6:30 p.m. study session)
- Peninsula School District Board, June 12, 5:30 p.m. (special meeting) and June 26, 6:30 p.m. (regular meeting) at the District Office, 14105 62nd Ave NW, Gig Harbor

Email public meetings to news@keypennews.com.

(From EVENTS, Page 20)

the Key Peninsula Farmers Market. Seasonal vegetables, fruits, berries, greens, herbs, flowers, fresh baked breads, smoked Alaska salmon, fresh-frozen Copper River salmon, chocolate confections and more.

The outside gates of O'Callahans' Beer Garden will be open with food and drink specials and live music entertainment during market hours.

Sundays, June 22 -Sept. 28, 12- 4 p.m.

O'Callahans' parking lot; Holly, 884-3649, or femeros73@yahoo.co

June 25 – Community meeting

The Key Peninsula Family Resource Center holds its quarterly Community Advisory Meeting with an agenda including "News From Over the Back Fence," "Family Successes" and "Making A Difference." Everyone welcome.

Wednesday, June 25, KPFR's meeting,

1:30-3:30 p.m. Whitmore Room, Civic Center; RSVP by June 20, 884-5433

June 25 & 26 – Driving Course

The Key Peninsula Sportsmen's Club hosts an AARP 55-Alive Driving Review Course. Participants age 55 and older may receive a discount on car insurance for attending this course.

Wednesday, June 25 & Thursday, June 26, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Key Peninsula

Sportsmen's Club, 3503 Jackson Lake Road, Lakebay, \$10/person; RSVP by June 20, "Lefty" Dolfen, 884-5767

June 28 – KPLC BBQ

The Key Peninsula Lutheran Church hosts a barbecue with fun, food, music, games and prizes. Tickets available at the door or call the church.

Saturday, June 28, 1-4 p.m. McColley Hall, corner of Lackey Road and KPH South. 884-3312



PSD facilities can host a diversity of events. Pictured here is the Democratic caucus earlier this year and a Peninsula Athletic Association basketball game, both in the Key Peninsula Middle School's gymnasium.

Photos by Hugh McMillen and Rodiba Tolleson

District's facilities rental program meets community needs

When classes end every day around the Peninsula School District, many buildings remain open — welcoming community members to a variety of events lasting well into the evening. The facilities are available for rent to the general public, and have been popular sites for events ranging from youth sports to political rallies and concerts.

'There are few facilities and open spaces available in the community. This is a community service — we're here for groups looking for space,' says Jeremy Bubnick, PSD Director of Facility Use.

Nonprofit and community organizations are eligible to use the district's facilities, and everyone is asked to comply with policies and regulations. A variety of spaces are available — classrooms, gymnasiums, fields, auditoriums, even libraries and commons.

Peninsula Athletic Association is a key renter, which utilizes gyms and fields for practices and games. PAA has sports activities almost year round. Dance studios, churches, swimming clubs, Girl Scouts, public committees are some of the other frequent facility users. The pools at the two high schools are also popular to reserve for community rentals and birthday parties.

The rates for using the facilities are very competitive, with discounts offered for youth activities. 'Fees are collected to cover the overhead of coordinating the community use program and to pay for wear and tear,' Bubnick says.

The school district strives to accommodate various needs when renting the facilities. 'We work with each group, based on their needs and the type of activity or event they are hosting,' Bubnick says.

June 2008 events

- 13** Henderson Bay High School Graduation 7:00 p.m. at Chapel Hill in The Gathering Place 
- 15** Gig Harbor High School Graduation 12:00 p.m. at Tacoma Dome
Peninsula High School Graduation 3:30 p.m. at Tacoma Dome
- 26** School Board Study Session 5:30 p.m. at District Office

Did you know...

All-Day Kindergarten

All-Day Kindergarten registration continues through the last day of school on June 18. If you are unable to register prior to June 18, registration will resume the week prior to the first day of the 2008-2009 school year, Sept. 3. For more information visit www.psd401.net/education/kinder.asp.

Community flyer distribution update

Community flyers or handouts will not be approved for, nor will they be distributed to, students during the last two weeks of the school year. This is due to the priority of district materials being sent home, many requiring parent response. For complete details please visit the PSD website and the Education Programs drop down menu for Flyer Approval Process: www.psd401.net

Volunteers Needed!

Peninsula High School is participating in a week-long intensive business leadership program called Washington Business Week: June 11-13 & 16-17 from 7:15 a.m.-3:15 p.m. This unique program brings the business community and educators together at the high school to teach students about free enterprise, ethics, leadership, teamwork, and other skills and knowledge critical for future success in any career. The success of the Business Week Programs depends heavily on the commitment of numerous volunteers. Here are a couple of ways you can get involved:

Company Advisors are adults who volunteer for a full week to guide a group of 12-15 students through an intensive business simulation. (Training for Company Advisors will be held on June 9 from 3:00-6:00 p.m. at P.H.S.)

Judges view and evaluate student Companies as they present their progress in their industry simulation on June 17 from 8:00-11:15 a.m. Following the presentations Judges will attend trade shows put on by the students and invest 'Business Week Bucks' to support a variety of new and exciting business ventures.

For more information please contact Michelle McLean (800) 686-6442 or michellem@wbw.org.

Peninsula School District Summer School Program

WASL Support.....Free
Students must register by June 22, 2008.

High School\$175
for students who plan to take credit recovery classes.

High School Skills\$175
for students wanting to increase their skills before entering high school.

Saved by Faith: Life-saving dog to be honored on new program

By Sharon Hicks, KP News

During the recent Pierce County Sheriff's Academy that was held at the Home fire station through May, one of the popular "students" in the class was Faith, who had made national and international headlines a few years ago. But Faith didn't get a diploma — she is a Rottweiler who came to class to accompany Leana Beasley. Faith was one of three service dogs during this academy session, and in June, she and her owner will once again be nationally famous, to be featured on a new television show called "Heroes Among Us."

The pair are heading for Hollywood in June for a black tie ceremony, a Fox Award honoring them on the show. They are allowed to bring a guest each, so Beasley invited her friend, Teresa Cotes of Home, and Cotes' dog, Kyeuse, a German shepherd (both of whom were also part of this year's sheriff's academy). A Hollywood crew came out in April to do a reenactment at her home for the show in order for the audience to see just how Faith responds to situations.

The story of Beasley and Faith amazed the world and hit the media from Richland, Wash., where Beasley lived at the time, making national radio and television coverage in 2004. Beasley (who now lives in University Place) went into a grand mal seizure when her liver failed to process her epilepsy medication. Faith went into action without any commands and dialed the speed-dial button for 911, barking until the dispatcher knew something was wrong and sent help. While waiting for the medics, Faith used her medical training for impending



Photo by Rodika Tollefson

Leana Beasley with Faith at the Home fire station after receiving her community academy diploma.

seizures and went back to Beasley, draping herself across the woman then getting under her to roll her to recovery position. She took her nose and pushed her owner's chin up to open the airway, then licked the fluids away until help came. But the emergency didn't stop here, as Faith was trained to let only uniformed people into the house. She ran back and forth from window to door until she was sure it was OK to open the locked door.

Over 3,000 stories were heard from around the world when the news hit the wire services, and since then Beasley and

Faith have been on radio talk shows in Chicago, South America, Japan, and England and on television with Oprah Winfrey and Anderson Cooper. Articles have been in Ladies Home Journal; Faith played a part in Gizmos Tales, a show about and for children.

Beasley's seizures began 13 years before her grand mal. She had been in civilian law enforcement when she fell down a flight of stairs, hitting her head on a skill saw. This caused a brain cyst and in 1991 she started having epilepsy seizures. Three years later, Beasley had another seizure that landed her in the hospital in a coma for two months. She came out of the coma with irreversible lung damage, and could not talk, spell or sign her name.

Faith is not her first service dog. Bronson, a Rottweiler-shepherd mix, came into her life 15 years ago. He was the first service dog to be trained through the Prison Pet Partnership Program at the women's correctional center in Purdy. He won two awards for being service dog of 1997, and JCP Golden Rule Award in 1998 with Beasley. Beasley co-authored and published a book with Stephen Sawicki about how she became disabled and the way Bronson changed her life. Bronson retired four years ago and helped train Faith, then together they trained 15-week-old Gabriel. This miracle dog has been given the "real hero award" for ER rescue by the American Red Cross, the first such award given to a nonhuman.

Faith has never been trained in liver failure so when Beasley became toxic from medication three days prior to her grand mal seizure and was going into

liver failure, Faith started acting concerned, anxious, displaying odd behavior and being very clingy; all this time Beasley did not understand what was happening until she fell out of her wheelchair. Having no verbal commands, Faith knew she had to take action and went to the phone. From there the story unfolded. Both Faith and Bronson have training in seizure alert and response and water rescue. Most grand mal victims are very sensitive to fluorescent lights so Faith has medical training there as well.

Faith, Bronson and Beasley enjoy camping, fishing, swimming, and tennis ball throwing; nature walks in the woods is a favorite for the two dogs. Bronson is deaf and blind now so his trips are limited. They spend a lot of time on the Key Peninsula, where Beasley visits friends often. She plans to eventually move here.

"The most amazing thing is not about getting through life but getting your life back," Beasley says. "I lost all; now with dogs on top of my world, I've gone from first grade to college in four years."

("Heroes Among Us" will air on FOX in June — check local listings for date/time.)

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A fast-track look at the law enforcement system

Sheriff's academy informs, educates (even entertains)

At first, the Pierce County Sheriff's Community Academy sounded like a big commitment: giving up Wednesday evening for 13 weeks, sometimes even driving to the other side of the bridge for field trips. With three kids and as many jobs adding up to a 60-hour workweek, I didn't know if it would be worth the time. But it sounded like a good way to see the ins of our law enforcement system, and I found myself with a group of another 20-plus curious citizens filing into the Key Center fire station on Feb. 20 for the beginning of Session 84.

The program's stated purpose is "to increase understanding between the department and the citizens of Pierce County through education." In other words, a PR campaign of sorts, at least on the surface.

On the first day, Sheriff Paul Pastor greeted us with a sort of a pep rally that put the academy into context. "Citizenship isn't Costco. It's not about

RODIKA TOLLEFSON
KP News



how many goodies you can get cheaply," he said. "Public safety is not a spectator's sport... it ain't a one way-street," he said. He noted Pierce County has one of the highest crime rates in the state and is one of the lowest staffed and financed (anyone see the connection?). "They (sheriff's deputies and others) don't have enough resources, they don't have enough time — but they roll up their sleeves and somehow do it anyway. They have tremendous heart." Pretty good for a PR pitch.

"You're going to have a kick," Pastor promised. I couldn't wait.

Over the following weeks, we met a handful of very knowledgeable and friendly professionals, most of them obviously very passionate about their jobs. It was a journey of information overload, bizarre stories and even heart-tearing images — a crash course into the

county's justice system. The "curriculum" dipped into topics like domestic violence (did you know, according to state law, someone must always be taken into custody in a DV case?), constitutional law (who knew a dry subject could be so fascinating?), the courts system, patrol procedures, narcotics, and on and on. Some speakers could have gone on for hours — and we would have hardly noticed. It wasn't a PR campaign at all, just a sincere desire to share how the system works.

Our hosts through this intensive training were Peninsula Detachment's neighborhood patrol deputies Jake Kreis (a Key Pen resident assigned to the Gig Harbor side of the detachment) and Rich Folden (a Gig Harbor resident working the KP). Each is a veteran officer with more than a decade with the sheriff's department. During one of the sessions, Kreis said the deputies have 10 hours of adrenaline ups and downs, but they get used to it after a while and get numb. By the end of the 13 weeks, I understood that statement. Seeing a photo of a baby burned in a bucket of meth-making

chemicals, or the "take no prisoners" faces of some gangsters, and hearing real-life scenarios of do or die — it was all but a taste of why, so many of the presenters emphasized that their top priority every day is going home alive.

The visit to the forensics lab was a bust since the presenter apparently got the duty dumped into her lap (this was especially unsatisfactory for a CSI show fan); and we were dealt the disappointment of the century when we learned we wouldn't drive the police cruisers (something about Cheney Stadium's new owners not interested in allowing the sheriff's free use any more — if any Nick Lachey fans are reading this, take notes). But other than that, for me personally, every evening's two and a half hours spent on the academy was well worth the time.

We wouldn't stop asking questions when K-9 trainer Deputy John Munson talked about his work, and then we got to visit with his buddy, Fox, as well as another officer and his K-9. During a demonstration, Fox, who had been as

(See **ACADEMY**, Page 25)

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(From **ACADEMY**, Page 24)

friendly as a dog can be, transformed into a ruthless attacker on command. The dogs, who look like ordinary quadrupeds in public, would never attack without the master's signal, with one exception: "If mom or dad looks in trouble, the dog will come out of the car and take care of the problem," Munson said.

Prosecuting Attorney Terry Lane walked us through the reasons why some cases are not prosecuted, and why plea bargains are so prized. "I may have three cases set for trial on any given day," he said. "If I don't resolve most of my cases (through plea bargain), the whole system goes to a screeching halt." Having been subpoenaed to testify in one of his criminal cases the week or so before, I was connecting the dots.

Of course, we all loved the field trips. The jail was my favorite (how else could we law-abiding citizens get to see inside those walls?). We spent time in one of the "tanks," not necessarily mingling with the criminal element but pretty darn close (too close for some people's comfort). The visit was an eye opener, a sad commentary of our society. And as much as I enjoyed visiting and seeing the system first-hand, coming out truly felt like an escape from another world.

The 911 dispatch center (called LESA) lacked drama, as luck drew a slow night for us. But the pre-recorded 911 calls we heard made up for it. We heard someone requesting the arrest of a gay man and someone concerned about the aliens setting up base (incidentally, not far from the mental hospital), among other things. We listened to veteran 911 operator Dave Lovrack describe the forever scream of a woman who just arrived to see a hanging body in her garage. I decided I could never do that job, listening to nightmares unfolding in real time, trying to keep cool while summoning help. "What you hear as a monotone robotic voice is our attempt to keep you as calm as possible so we can gather information as best as possible," he said. "It we spend time consoling and empathizing, we can't gather the critical information."

The presentation about narcotics was far too short — at least for a mother of a teenager and a pre-teen, and for residents of this area ripe with meth labs. This information is an absolute requirement for any parent, and I strongly recommend for parent groups to seek out a presenter for your schools. If nothing else, you could learn how to recognize the red flags in their children or how to tell if a neighbor's cooking



Photo by Rodika Tollefson

Jim Bassey receives his diploma on May 14 from NPDs Rich Folden and Jake Kreis (not seen). More photos at www.keypennews.com.

more than just dinner. "People [using narcotics] are from all walks of life," said Deputy Oliver Hickman. "We've got lawyers, firefighters, teachers — once you get addicted, you'll do anything to get the drug, even make it."

While we experienced most of the action from our seats at the Home fire station, we did get in on the adrenaline kick once. At the Marskman in Puyallup, every student became cop for five minutes, using the same hi-tech training system officers use. The program uses simulated video scenarios (easily changed by the instructor) and a modified Glock with an infrared laser beam — a \$90,000 videogame system where you can have a suspect put his hands in the air by simply shouting at him to do so. (Oh and pointing the gun.)

"Firearms training is officer survival training. They use firearms when there is no other way," instructor Ron Schmitt said, and warned, "Forget all you've seen on TV, that's entertainment. There are a lot of myths out there, a lot of dangerous myths... You'll get an idea of what it's like." And that we did. The gun recoils and sounds like a real Glock, and is accurate within 1/10th of an inch.

Most students' scenarios turned into shootouts, sometimes with multiple bad guys. It seemed real, alright — we had to keep all our senses sharp to make split-second decisions. I had a bit of an airhead moment when, after shooting the first bad guy in the knee and watching him flee, I assumed the scenario was over and put my gun down. Suddenly, the "victim" lying on the ground fired at me. I

surprised myself at how quickly I grabbed the gun and returned fire (I got him in the butt — not lethal, but no doubt as effective). For a person who's only shot a gun once (at the range) about a decade ago, it didn't seem too bad, even if I did try to take a coffee break in between shootings.

The rest of the students did equally well: Most hit their moving targets dead on, reacting swiftly to recognize an ambush. Our shooting reaction and precision impressed even Kreis. He later said we did better than some officers. But the training is not about one-upmanship. If our scenarios involved real guns, flinching could mean not going home in one piece.

Schmitt's narrative put the entire academy in perspective. We were there to learn how the puzzle fits, but also to understand those men and women out there putting their lives on the line for us. "We hire humans first and we make police officers out of them, but they're still human with all the human emotions," he said. "They have to put those emotions aside (at work) so they can still go home at night after seeing horrible things all day long."

Pastor, who returned to present "Policing the police" toward the end of the course, said people enter the law enforcement profession not for the money, but because they have a Boy Scout or Girl Scout attitude. "We're ordinary people called upon to do extraordinary things," he said. "They see up close and personal the worse of what people do to each other. There are times when we look

Getting in on the action

To learn more about the Pierce County Sheriff's Community Academy, visit www.co.pierce.wa.us.

at what I can only describe as evil."

By the time we received our official diplomas on May 14, I had come out understanding what an incredible job these guys are doing. Yes, we all complain about the slow response time, even no-shows to minor incidents; and we sometimes hear local stories about cops who let their job go to their head. The academy, however, helped us see behind the scenes. It's always easy to criticize from the sidelines.

One of the students may have summarized my conclusion when she said during one class, "After this class, you just can't walk away anymore... I'd want to do something."

Jim Bassey, an ex-police officer from San Jose, Calif., took the class with his wife, Lynne-Marie. He had been to a sheriff's academy in Gig Harbor two years before, with 50 people in the class. He wanted to learn more about his local community, so he came back for this year's KP session. "More people should be involved. (The academy) is an excellent idea," he said. "I think it's needed now more than ever because there's a loss of respect in police serving the public."

Kreis, who has facilitated two academies prior to this one, said this class has been his most eclectic to date — three service dogs, media and Safe Streets reps, even a woman in a mobility cart. He said a lot of people are curious about what officers do, or want to see where their taxpayers' money goes. This is his chance to reach out to people who may only talk to him at traffic stops or calls, he said. "They get to do things people don't get to do (like the field trips), and that's special," he said.

The department usually schedules three classes each year (fall through spring), and Gig Harbor or Key Peninsula get a rotation once every year or two. It's unknown whether the program will be impacted in light of current budget cuts but according to the program's coordinator, plans for next year will be formulated soon.

When the academy is back on this side of the Narrows Bridge, if you're interested in our law enforcement system at work, don't hesitate to give up 13 evenings. You may even get a bonus — I hear the cruiser driving session may be back.

Pioneer cemeteries of the Key Peninsula

By Colleen Slater, KP News

Seven pioneer cemeteries exist on the Key Peninsula. The Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church started in 1889 with eight acres donated by four men — Messrs. Hopfensy, Johnson, Kruger, and Simon, who each gave two acres. The first recorded burial appears to be Evalt Martin Krause in 1896, who died at about 8 years of age.

Daffodils still bloom on the grounds, which became overgrown after the church was no longer used and eventually burned. State tax collectors wanted back taxes paid, so community donations were made, and the Key Peninsula Lutheran Church came to be overseer.

The oldest grave at Minter cemetery, on land donated by the Moss family, is Effie Eddington in 1892. Only three other graves are known to exist there. It is now overgrown and without a caretaker.

The Longbranch Cemetery Association was organized in 1905. Anders Olson

donated one acre for the cemetery, with another acre purchased later. The county needed 10 feet from the south side of the cemetery for a road, so the association deeded 10 feet back to Olson, who promptly deeded 10 feet on the north side to the cemetery. The first Board of Control included S. L. Doolittle, William Sipple and Charles Wyatt, all buried there, plus Harry Meyer. L. E. Olson, and W. R. Thrapp.

The Victor cemetery was set up about 1910 on land donated by Peder G. Pederson, who is buried there. The earliest burial listed is Gertrude Laura Nelson, who was about 15 when she died in 1916.

The Lakebay Cemetery incorporated in 1914, with 10 previous burials on land bought from the Thompson family for \$1. The property had been previously owned by Henry Tiedeman. The first officers included E. H. Delano, H. Dadisman, Mrs. H. S. Reed, and Mrs. H. Burke.

The Vaughn Bay Cemetery Association organized in 1915 as Bay View Cemetery Association, but changed names when officially incorporated in 1958, as a Bayview cemetery already existed in Washington. Charter officers, all buried in the cemetery, include Frank Bill, Matthew Bliss, Charles Lackey, Syble Palmer, and B. B. Sampson. Ella Maxwell sold five acres for \$5 to Robert Irwin in 1894 to be used as a cemetery. Irwin, a pharmacist, postmaster, and justice of the peace, laid out plots and sold the property to the association for \$125 in 1915. Mrs. Irwin took care of burials, but refused to let a Civil War veteran, Anson McClain, be buried there because he didn't have the \$1 cost required. Henry Hansen insisted his family had donated the land for a cemetery, was angered, and had McClain buried on his own adjacent land.

Lyman Freeborn covered the burial costs of a Mr. Holbrook — thought to be a victim of cattle rustlers — after he was found at Rocky Bay with his head bashed in by a rock.

In 1920, Joseph Heiman gave land for the Home cemetery to Home Grange No. 701. The Grange sold it for \$1 to Peninsula Social Club for a cemetery. Nine burials are recorded there. A trail



Photo by Colleen Slater

The Creviston stone at the Lakebay Cemetery is inscribed "Pioneers." Sarah Bradshaw Creviston came with her parents around the horn in 1855 in the USS Decatur. William J. Creviston crossed the plains in 1850. He was an Indian fighter and fought in the war of 1856. Sarah and William Creviston were the first settlers at Lake Bay and so named that community. Sarah B. Creviston was the first teacher on the peninsula."

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Memories of Key Peninsula railroads

By Rick Sorrels
Special to KP News

Not only does Key Peninsula have a history of private airports, but a number of private railroads have also made a profitable home on the KP.

One such railroad was owned and operated by the Rainier Logging Camp from about 1900 through about 1930. At least one Key Peninsula resident still retains those memories.

Helen Skahan's grandparents moved from Nebraska to the KP in 1905 with six kids in tow. They purchased a large tract of land where Ravensara, Charboneau, and Windermere (formerly Brookside Restaurant) are now located. They built a large house that stood on the hill on the north side of Little Minter Creek, back behind Brookside.

Skahan's father was employed at Rainier Logging; he told her stories about his life before her birth in 1918. "My father was working on a steam donkey when it blew up, causing a great deal of damage. He was so shook up that he couldn't go back to work for weeks," she said.

Steam donkeys were very large stationary steam engines with large pulleys to reel in chain or cable over long distances to drag in felled trees to a location where they could be transported to a mill, usually by water. Early trees on the peninsula were huge. Steam donkeys had their limit on how far the cables and chain could run, so a number of small railroads were constructed across the KP. The donkeys would drag the logs to the railroad, the railroad would transport the logs to a dock or saltwater inlet.

According to Skahan, "Rainier had a large logging camp about where Powerline Road and 188th Avenue are now located. The Rainier Railroad started up past where Glenwood School is located (miles north of the Kitsap County line) up by Port Orchard, and ran down 118th, continued south past Ravensara, and down the eastside of Minter Creek to a dock at the community of Elgin (where the fish hatchery is now located)."

"Not much of anything is left of Elgin. But it used to have a dock, grocery store, feed store, school, post office, and a gas station where you had to pump a lever by hand to fill your tank. Elgin was our community center," she said.

She said some people confuse the



Photo courtesy KP Historical Society

Upper Sound Logging Co. locomotive works near Vaughn in 1919. The company operated from 1914-1919 at the upper end of the peninsula. The tracks ran from near Carney Lake to the head of Vaughn Bay. The railroad grade can still be identified on some private property.

community of Minter with Elgin. "Minter didn't have any businesses, only a few houses on land located farther south. Minter was named after early settlers Minnie and Theodore Minter," she said.

"Minter was built on land originally owned by Smythe, another early settler. The fish hatchery was built on Smythe land...You can still see the grade where the train tracks ran down the east side of the creek. I wouldn't be surprised if some of the rails and ties could still be found." (Her first husband, Burton, was the superintendent at the hatchery until his death in 1942.

"When the Depression hit in 1929, the price of timber dropped, and it wasn't cost-effective anymore for Rainier to hire the tug boats to transport the long string of rafts (that contained the logs) from Elgin to the mills on the Tacoma tideflats," Skahan said. "About that same time, I can't remember the year, somebody forgot to set the brake on the train engine and it rolled a long distance down the hill and jumped the tracks right into the water down by the Elgin dock. They got the engine back out of the water. I just can't remember if it went back into service after that, or if that was the end of the railroad."

With the railroad and the logging company gone, Elgin went into decline. No businesses remain today, but Skahan still thrives in her lifelong home across the street from Ravensara. It is the house with all of the carefully tended beautiful flowers right next to State Route 302. She's been there longer than the road has.

FD-16 STATS

Key Peninsula Fire Department rescue calls

April 15: Paramedics and firefighters responded to a vehicle-pedestrian accident after a dump truck reportedly ran over a 10-year-old child in the Lake Minterwood community. The boy was taken by ambulance to a landing zone in Gig Harbor and then flown to a Seattle hospital by Airlift NW.

April 20: Firefighters and paramedics responded to an elderly male patient thrown from his horse. The man was transported to a Tacoma hospital for treatment of possible spinal injuries.

April 21: Fire personnel responded to a report of fuel leaking from a vehicle at the Home Post Office. Poorly connected fuel lines received temporary repairs by firefighters. The fuel spill was picked up using an absorbent material and disposed of properly.

April 30: Firefighters responded to a residential building for two separate fires in the same day, both the result of improper wiring and overloaded circuits. Damage was limited to a wall and some personal belongings.

May 2: Firefighters responded to a home on Vaughn Bay for a possible house

fire. Arriving units found power lines arching outside the residence, causing some damage to the vegetation near the house. No one was injured and Peninsula Light restored power.

May 3: Firefighters and medics responded to a three-car collision at the west end of the Purdy Spit on SR-302. No injuries were reported.

May 4: EMTs and paramedics responded to a collision between two bicyclists participating in the annual bike race in the Longbranch area. Two patients were treated and one was transported to a hospital.

May 7: A tree fell onto an occupied truck in the Lake Holiday community, causing serious injuries to the passenger. The patient was injured when a logger topped a section of the tree, causing it to fall onto the pickup truck he was riding in. The driver was uninjured although the passenger was rushed to a Tacoma hospital for care.

May 8: An elderly man was digging for clams when he became stuck in the muddy tide flats about 1,000 feet from shore at Penrose Park. By the time rescuers arrived, he had sunk down to his knees and the tide was coming in. Battalion Chief Hal Wolverton requested the fireboat from Anderson Island Fire



Photo by Hugh McMillan

Key Peninsula firefighter/Paramedics Kaci Sun, with chainsaw, and Chris Hagen open the wall of a Palmer Lake residence to check for extension of a wall fire blamed on faulty wiring at the end of April. No injuries were reported; the home was decorated for the 13th birthday party of the owners' son that was to take place that day.

Department and quickly formulated a plan of action. The man was placed in a life jacket as citizens and firefighters attempted to free his legs. The inbound tide was rising fast and was near his shoulders when the fireboat arrived. Using a 1-1/2 inch fire hose connected to the fire pump on the fireboat, firefighters pushed a piercing nozzle into the mud near the man's feet and floated his feet out of the loose sand. The man was treated for hypothermia and transported to a hospital. No other injuries were reported.

May 14: Firefighters responded to a report of a burn complaint in the Wauna area. Light wispy smoke was visible when they arrived to find a homeowner burning yard debris. The fire was found in compliance with burn regulations and no action was taken.

BRIEFS

news

KPFD promotes volunteers

The Key Peninsula Fire Department promoted four of its members to the volunteer rank of lieutenant. Fire Chief Tom Lique said that Saul Wolverton, member since March 2004, will be assigned to the Key Center fire station; Dean Junell, member since June 2004, will be assigned to the Wright-Bliss station; Eddie Reeves, member since January 2006, will be assigned as the volunteer



WOLVERTON



JUNELL

supervisor of the Home and Longbranch fire stations; and Brent Adams, member since January 2007, will be assigned to the Wauna fire station. Volunteer lieutenants supervise volunteer personnel assigned to the stations. They handle training, performance evaluations, and monitor performance of members. They can also serve as "first due" incident commanders, who are on the first arriving engine; they also take a role within the command structure on extended incidents.



REEVES



ADAMS

KP filmmakers win awards

Local Filmmakers Scott and Olga

Gribble won Best Film in a 72-hour film competition at the Grand Cinema in Tacoma. Their five-minute film, titled "An Army of Two," is about two brothers who set out on a journey only to stumble on to trouble. The film stars Nathan and Noah Gribble, Minter Creek Elementary students, and Peninsula High graduate Brandon Sawaya; it is set in Point Defiance and was written, directed, shot and edited by Scott Gribble. The film competed against 29 others and had to contain four elements including a fortune cooking and the line "I feel like I've been here before." and blowing bubbles.

The Gribbles are Key Peninsula residents since 2004 and founders of Wonderdog Media, a production company located in Wauna, with additional studio space in Tacoma. Scott was recently selected as the director of photography for the feature film "Keep Your Day Job, Superstar," filming in Seattle. He is also a volunteer firefighter with the Key Peninsula Fire Department.

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Key Singers turn 10

Group founded on a dream and a dare

By Irene Torres, KP News

Someone once told Jo Sturm, "There's not all that much talent on the Key Peninsula." For Sturm, that was reason enough to prove that person wrong, so she founded the Key Singers 10 years ago.

On May 18, the Key Singers presented a concert titled "A Decade of Song" and invited Sturm, now living in Spokane, to join them in celebration of their decade as an organization. Marianne McColley, the Key Singers director and a charter member, said, "One of the best community efforts is that of singing. There is a leveling effect when people get together and sing." McColley, a longtime music teacher, said, "The international — maybe galactic — mode of communication is the language of music."

The group started meeting at Strum's church in Longbranch. "It had the

instrument and the capacity," McColley said. "We still have some of the same people, but some come and go. Over the years, some were needed to be in the 'heavenly chorus.' We have not grown dramatically, but stayed within the range of 20 to 30 members."

The Singers "are always hoping to have an influx of sopranos, altos, tenors and basses." Several new people recently joined the group, who welcomes "anyone who can carry a tune, plink on a banjo, and play clarinet or piano."

"They don't have to read music," McColley said. "It's a lot of fun. We hope it's listenable and entertaining."

President Kathy Herold, a "lady tenor," sometimes wears a fake moustache when the group sings "Ragtime Cowboy Joe" because there aren't enough men's voices. Herold told the KP News, "Music is everything. It's such a great outlet, such an enhancement to life...We are a close-knit group. We care about each other." She said the group holds no tryouts or additions. "We do this for the community. We sing for people who appreciate it," she said.



The Key Singers are a group of Key Penners from all walks of life.

Photo by Karina Whitmarsh

Everyone in the group has some church affiliation, so many of the songs are spiritual; but they also perform many popular songs and Broadway hits, like "Hello Dolly!," "Cabaret" and "Kids." Ranging in age from teenagers to 92, performers in the group hold two formal concerts each year. One funds a scholarship to a musically inclined KP student attending Peninsula High School; it also purchases music, which McColley said is "extraordinarily priced." The other is the annual concert for donations to the food bank at Christmas. The Key Singers also

perform at a variety of events, including the annual Memorial Day celebration at Vaughn Cemetery, the Key Center tree lighting, and the Old Timers' Day; and at nursing homes like Cottesmore, Manor Care, and Maple Creek. This June, the group will have an extensive music program at Relay for Life at Goodman Middle School in Gig Harbor.

Vaughn resident Colleen Slater, who has been singing with the group for six or seven years, said, "Music has always been an important part of my life, and to find this group to sing and become friends with is a special gift." Her husband, Frank, added, "We're a social group with a common interest." (The Slaters are both KP News volunteer staff members.)

At the May concert, Sturm presented her solo rendition of "You'll Never Walk Alone" — one of her favorites — accompanied by her friend, original Key Singers piano accompanist Ann Craven, co-founder of the group. Sturm expressed her sentiments about the Key Singers, saying, in part: "[A community chorus] was a dream that I carried for many years. A door opened. And I found that dreams can come true with the help of others. All I had to do was walk through the door."

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(From ROSS, Page 1)

filed out and returned to duty.

The Last Alarm is a traditional ceremony reserved for firefighters and is only used when the family is comfortable including it as part of the memorial. "In working with the family, they felt that it would be appropriate," said Fire Chief Tom Lique whose father, Earl, served as a responder with Bischoff in the 1970s.

The sea of parked vehicles surrounding the Key Peninsula Lutheran Church were evidence of the love and esteem in which Bischoff was held by his many friends, neighbors, and family members. The community leader, who was friend and helper to so many, lost his battle with cancer on April 29. An estimated 250 people attended his celebration of life. The services were conducted by Malon in the church that Bischoff was instrumental in designing and building; he was a charter member there. The sanctuary was festooned with quilted and paper swarms of butterflies in memory of Bischoff's annual Easter release of hundreds of the winged beauties.

Following services, those who had come to honor him gathered in the church's McColley Hall, where memories of Bischoff's life were shared over refreshments.

"The Key Peninsula has lost a great pioneer and a hands-on worker who did all he could to better serve his friends and neighbors in the community," said friend Andy Isaksen.

Always ready to serve, Bischoff was elected to the Key Peninsula Parks and Recreation District's Board of Commissioners and, when that body was replaced by the current Key Peninsula Metro Parks District, was again elected commissioner.

He and his wife, Joyce, who died in 2005, had a cider press in a building on Hoff Road in Home where they created



Ross Bischoff in his rhubarb garden in June 2005.

Photo by Mindi LaRose

fresh cider bearing Bischoff's Lakebay Farm label. Their cider, honey, jams, jellies, and pies were coveted by many who snatched them up at farmers markets, the Key Peninsula Community Fair, the Renaissance Faire, and the Peninsula High School annual WinterFest. They conducted tours of the press room for students from Evergreen Elementary and every kid left with a free bottle of freshly squeezed cider.

For a time, they raised mink on their property on Hoff Road and earned the displeasure of some neighbors, who were not pleased with the odor of the

beasts. "Their mink farming days came during the mid- to late-'80s and I can't imagine any of the neighbors along Hoff Road not remembering the awful smell the mink produced," said his daughter, Carol Bischoff Larson.

Bischoff gave his time as a volunteer with several organizations, among them his church, the Peninsula High School's Future Farmers of America, the 4-H, Key Peninsula Business Association, the Renaissance Faire, and was involved with a number of local farmers markets. He was a moving force in the creation of the Gig Harbor Farmers Market, served as a

volunteer firefighter with the Key Peninsula Fire Department, and was interviewed for the department's added commissioner position this year.

In 1981, Bischoff was one of two who survived a primary election for fire commissioner but did little to win the general election. On meeting the person who won the election, he asked, "Do you smoke?" He then explained he knew that the other two commissioners smoked, as did the chief, and that he figured he would live at least 10 years longer by staying out of the smoke-charged commissioners' meetings, so he decided not to really seek the office.

Neighbor Lori Deacon Boll, who was a student of Bischoff's at Peninsula High School years ago, said, "He was the best teacher I ever had. He made me feel I could accomplish things that I might not even have attempted without his encouragement."

Bischoff was an honorary member of the Stillaguamish Tribe. Shawn Yanity, chairman of the Stillaguamish Tribe and tribal fisheries manager, presented Larson a ceremonial blanket. He explained, "In our culture, gifting is an important part of our ceremonies and custom. Blankets are one of the gifts that are special. We wrap blankets on loved ones, guests, leaders, witnesses called at ceremonies, or honoring someone. Last year, at my parents' annual barbecue, I wanted to share our culture and language of the Stillaguamish with the guests. I also wanted to honor Ross for his friendship, leadership, and as a very respected elder. I spoke of my appreciation for his help keeping me in school and graduating, his kindness, his love to teach. He helped me get interested in fisheries, where I have worked for several years."

Yanity held the blanket and said, "I wanted to honor him and wrap him in this blanket. The blanket is medicine for him."

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A story about canine heroes

Local author shares heartwarming adventures

By Sharon Hicks, KP News

Key Pen's Richard (a.k.a. "Dick") Dixon is a gentle and incredible man of courage who has had at least a dozen dogs since childhood. Five of them were so extraordinary that he felt compelled to write a book about them. His book, "My Heroes Have Always Been Dogs," was recently released by PublishAmerica.

Dixon, who has been through the jungles of Vietnam with two of those dogs, started writing the book for his children. His wife, Brenda, urged him to find a publisher. The book is tearful, sad, funny, but very heartwarming for dog lovers and anyone else.

Little Joe, a registered German shepherd, was born in Okinawa, Japan. Dixon was commissioned as a second lieutenant from the University of Washington in 1961 and assigned to Okinawa in 1964. Little Joe was born at the same time and soon became part of the Dixon family for security purposes. Numerous times he saved them from break-ins by house invaders. When Dixon was permanently assigned to Vietnam for combat duties, his family had to return to the States, forcing Brenda to turn Little Joe over to the Army for volunteer K-9 duty. Some months later, Dixon was watching a dog disembark from a helicopter and recognized him as Little Joe. That was the last time Dixon saw his companion, as Little Joe and his trainer disappeared into the jungle. He later learned that a dog fitting Little Joe's description had been killed in action.

The author returned stateside in 1968,

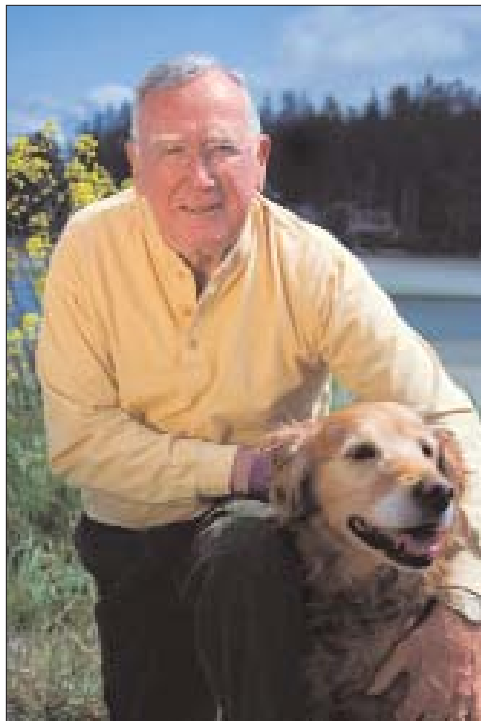


Photo by Karina Whitmarsh

Dick Dixon with Chloe, his current faithful companion and one of his heroes.

became a major and schooled for another year before being sent back to Vietnam as the leader of an advisory team. The work was near Cambodia, in 2,500 square miles of mountains and jungle. Here, Dixon befriended a dog called Snake, who at one time tripped a mine and barely survived. Together, the two encountered and survived many dangerous and harrowing missions on land and in the air. Snake won an air medal for flying in combat. This intelligent dog was also very sensitive to the enemy and would react when one was near. This saved his master's life several times. Once Snake took on and fought off a tiger about to attack Dixon, saving his life once again. Dixon eventually had to make the

'My Heroes Have Always Been Dogs'

Dick Dixon will read from his new book at Borders Books in Gig Harbor on June 7, 1-3 p.m. He will have a book signing later this summer at Mostly Books in downtown Gig Harbor.

hard decision of leaving Snake in Vietnam, feeling the canine belonged with the team.

On a sunny afternoon in 1970, Dixon was fishing near the Nisqually River when he felt some eyes peeking at him through the bushes. Slowly, a small ball of fur came toward him, all skin and bones with ribs showing. He was named The Bummer on the spot. After taking him home, Dixon discovered that Bummer was part-malamute and some wolf. Not finding an owner, he took the dog in, helping him heal and grow to 120 pounds.

Dixon was reassigned to Alaska in 1972 so he took his son, Chris, and Bummer and drove the Al-Can Highway in record cold, encountering exciting and memorable experiences along the way. For three years, he made several transfers and in 1979, back in Alaska, was promoted to lieutenant colonel. He eventually moved to Minnesota, which became Bummer's final resting ground.

After 20 years in the Army, Dixon went to Fort Bragg and made 300 parachute jumps on his 50th birthday; he retired with several top honors in 1985. Upon moving to Tacoma, he acquired a dog from a friend whose AKC bred dog had just had a litter. The family named him Tacoma's Proud Maharaja, or The Raj for short. Raj was a very regal pal and received a blue ribbon at age 1. He lived to be 14, buried on Vashon Island, where the family moved, with a rhododendron on his grave in his

memory.

Dixon wasn't ready for another dog, but Brenda felt he should have one to ease the pain. One year, their daughter, Evelyn, came home for Christmas carrying a shopping bag and asked her dad to hold it while she removed her coat. As he took it from her, the bag moved and out came the head of a small, furry Golden Retriever with a red ribbon around her neck. It was love at first sight with this little AKC puppy, soon named Chloe. Chloe would eventually become queen of Key Peninsula, where Dick and Brenda moved in 2000. (He and Chris had built two homes together in Lakebay.) Chloe is one of the five heroes portrayed in the book.

Dixon has been retired for two years from a civilian career. Today he loves to go for walks with gentle Chloe and she in return eagerly waits for a car door to open so she can go for a ride. He is currently vice president for the Lakebay Improvement Club and keeps active in community affairs — but his heart and memories will always be with Little Joe, The Bummer, Snake, and The Raj.

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After the world ends...

Key Pen author tells story of surviving as WWII refugee

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

Imagine a young girl who, at 7, has had to flee massacres by hiding in potato fields and listening to others' scream from torture. Yes, she survives — but only to see her world turned upside down and six years later to evacuate, in the dead of winter, while fleeing an enemy army known for raping and pillaging everywhere it went. Imagine this teenager watching babies freeze to death while she walks for days with little food; witnessing firebombing from afar and knowing they would have been in the carnage had their train been on time; or walking through a devastated town filled with bodies and limbs.

If you can picture some of that terror, you have a glimpse of Elonja Blocker's childhood.

"The world has come to an end, at least as far as we knew," Blocker writes in her recently published memoir titled "Elonja."

The short book follows Blocker, born as a German in Poland, as she and her family escape from ethnic cleansing, the brutal Russian Army and the terrors of World War II, and on to their trip to America. The book, which does start out a bit slow but becomes more gripping as the story unfolds, tells the story from a possibly not so politically correct angle — her refugee group was eventually rescued

“

The world has come to an end, at least as far as we knew.

— Elonja Blocker

”

by German soldiers, "shouting for joy." It recounts the life of a newly arrived immigrant on U.S. soil, her loss of her husband after 51 years of marriage, and her lifelong search for God.

Blocker, a 76-year-old Key Pen resident, was urged to write her story by her children. But even after 60-plus years, it was a painful memory. "I didn't think I could dive into that," she says. "My granddaughter said, 'You owe us this story.'... The emotional part was more difficult than remembering (the events)... Things that are life-changing, you don't forget them."

The themes of faith and God weave like a red thread throughout the book. "I'm a very committed Christian... The older I get, the more I blossom and [my purpose] becomes clearer," she says.

Blocker's family includes three adult

'Elonja'

The book is available for sale at some Gig Harbor bookstores and online at www.amazon.com. Author Elonja Blocker welcomes invitations to speak to groups, and may be reached at 857-4687.

children (two of whom are in the Gig Harbor area), five grandchildren and one grand-grandson. She says writing the book meant giving them their history and their roots. But once the book was published, she saw its potential interest to other people. "The book has lessons of survival when everything around you falls apart, when according to your life's securities, life has come to an end," she said. She said those lessons still resonate true today, with all the current wars and terrorist threats around the world.

Blocker and her late husband, Lee, moved to the Key Pen about 10 years ago when they couldn't sell the home of their daughter, who moved to Italy. The move is described in the book, along with her life after moving to America.

"We were a class below in Poland and a class below in Germany. When we came to America, we were equal," she says. "I am, for the first time, at home — I'm a very passionate American."



Photo by Mindi LaRose

Elonja Blocker holds her book, "Elonja," and a green tapestry, which is, to date, the only surviving physical item from her childhood, and is mentioned in the book. The tapestry was purchased by her mother when Elonja was 10 or 11 in a Jewish "ghetto" in Warsaw from a Jewish family selling personal items for food. Neither Elonja nor her mother knew at the time what "ghetto" even meant.

New book features Mosquito Fleet

By Colleen Slater, KP News

The "Mosquito Fleet" that swarmed over the waters of Puget Sound for more than 50 years included boats of less than 40 feet, up to nearly 300 feet. Steam-powered stern-wheelers, side-wheelers, and propeller boats, delivering whatever needed to be moved by water, comprised the "lifblood of the community and commerce that launched the Pacific Northwest."

The recently released book "Mosquito Fleet of South Puget Sound" chronicles those vessels that

mainly sailed the southern reaches of Puget Sound, from Olympia to Seattle, Case and Carr inlets, and Vashon-Maury Island.

Photos and stories include the boats Bernston, Elder, Harriman, Lorenz and Sipple, as well as many of the boats that serviced Key Peninsula residents and the communities where they stopped. Jon Robin Paterson, a collector of maritime history, and Jean Cammon Findlay, a journalist, teamed up to write the book.

Paterson, of Gig Harbor, a former Pierce County sheriff's deputy, owns the tugboat "Joe" and works with the

Retired Tugboat Association, comprised of people who own tugboats retired from active duty. Many of the photographs used in this pictorial history of the famous mosquito fleet come from his own collection.

Findlay, a Vashon Island resident, retired school teacher and author of genealogical and birding articles, was responsible for much of the text.

The Mosquito Fleet book is published by Arcadia Publishing, the country's foremost publisher of pictorial histories. Arcadia is also the publisher of "Anderson Island" and "Key Peninsula" books.



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Ex-attorney embraces adventure into art

By Jerry Libstaff

Britta Brones is one of the most prolific artists on the Key Peninsula. Her entire home is dedicated to her art. Several rooms are studios devoted to specific media. Paintings and tapestries adorn every wall in the home she and her husband have painstakingly built.

About 39 years ago, Brones, an attorney from Sweden, met Norman, an exchange student from the United States. Two years later, they married and moved to his family home on the Key Peninsula to be near nature and the mountains. Her husband's uncle, who owned the local hardware store, is honored for the donation of the property where the Key Center Library stands. Here, they found their ideal piece of property and continued their adventure. Brones says,



The Genuine ARTICLE



Photo by Jerry Libstaff

Britta Brones is versed in a variety of art media.

"We actually dug the foundation of our first house by hand." Her multistory home started as a 20-foot by 24-foot cabin.

Six months after arriving, Brones attended a weaving class and became enamored by artistic creation. Over the years, she has become extremely well versed in several media, spinning and

dyeing wool, weaving clothes, creating tapestries and producing beautiful rag rugs. She paints in acrylic watercolor and homemade natural inks. In addition, Brones makes silver jewelry, leaves of copper and art from peeled branches that she combines with her other creations. She makes stenciled art from nature and carves blocks for printing on both paper and fabric. She says, "Nature is my main source of inspiration for the prints: trees, leaves, birds and flowers." There is also a large collection of photos she has taken. Much of her work features water scenes.

In addition to her many other projects, Brones is a published writer. She and a sister were contracted to do a book in Sweden titled "Väva Kläder" or "Weave Clothes." The book highlights their clothing designs. As Brones was about to give birth to her daughter, much of the clothing didn't fit her, so a third sister modeled for the book, although Brones is featured on a few pages.

She says, "I love to write and I do what I can in my spare time," but she finds there is limited spare time. Her busy

schedule includes creating art books that she binds with natural materials.

Since October, Brones has dedicated her time to a 12-month project that captures the seasons. She creates daily drawings using acrylics, watercolors, colored pencils, markers and a homemade ink from mushrooms. She says, "Every day, I draw a simple picture of nature." On the back of each drawing, she conveys her feelings about the piece. At the end of each month, she binds the work into books with different covers in the same format. Six books have been completed thus far in the series.

When Brones talks of her art, a radiance surrounds her. Her love of nature is apparent in everything she does as she points to a favorite quote that inspired one of her remarkable paintings, "Art is a glass bottom boat over the subconscious." She says, "I love doing it all, but in the end, it's the process more than the result that thrills me." After a thought, she continues, "I am so lucky, just think, I could have been a lawyer in Sweden instead of this amazing adventure I am on!"

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(From FIRE, Page 1)

departments; fire departments from McNeil Island, Browns Point, Anderson Island and South King; Pierce County Sheriff's Department; Puyallup Tribal Police and USGS. Planning took a good six months, with more and more agencies jumping on board.

Eight water rescue technicians from FD-16 participated in the drill, which included practicing rescue of unconscious and conscious victims and transferring them to a boat.

After receiving some instructional time, the rescuers watched each other perform the rescues. "We learned new techniques the other agencies are using," says Tim Davis, an FD-16 firefighter who participated in the drill.

They took turns playing the victim. Later in the day, some also got to be "rescued" by the Coast Guard in a basket that was lowered from the helicopter, as teammates stood in the water nearby to get a taste of what it's like to have a chopper blasting air and water at them.

"It's like being in a hurricane," Davis says. "The wash is kicking up the wave, and you can't breathe." FD-16 firefighter Tony Carr drew the short straw to play victim, whisked up in the basket, which he found



From left to right, Fire District 16 water-rescue drill participants Saul Wolverton, Mike Riegal, Tim Davis, Hal Wolverton, Zack Johnson, Tony Carr, Robert Fisher, with Gig Harbor's Scott Brown on the right. See action photo online at www.keypennews.com.

Photo by Karina Whitmarsh

fun and a bit ...well, tight. "I didn't know the basket was actually that small," he says. "It was like being in a rainstorm, with pellets hitting you in the face. It was great to feel that, so you know what it's like."

The exercise was designed to help the agencies work better together and be aware of each other's resources. Some already respond to the same rescue operations, and this gave them the opportunity to learn who all the players are countywide and develop an element of trust. "The best part was the chance to meet all the different agencies that may be responding to a South Sound event," Carr says.

Allen says the district's accident showed communication is a major point of a

rescue — and that's what this drill helped improve. One result of the drill planning was getting linked into marine channel 21A, which will serve as the Puget Sound marine search and rescue channel. "It's a much more effective communication tools and use of resources in the long run," he says.

The drill was funded through a Homeland Security training grant spearheaded by Browns Point Fire District. Asked how successful this event was, Browns Point Assistant Chief Cliff McCollum, who served as the operations chief for the drill, says, "It was fabulous. Turnout was excellent. It met all our goals, plus."

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(From **ECONOMY**, Page 1)

word as a national economic storm that delivered its punch unevenly in South Sound. "That storm has most severely hit businesses with high energy costs or close ties to the home-building industry. Other businesses say they have yet to see a major change in the economic weather," he wrote.

Yahoo News reported that NBER (the National Bureau of Economic Research, a nonprofit research organization), which typically declares start and end dates for U.S. recessions, has not officially declared the country in a recession. But, the president of the NBER group, Martin Feldstein, said he personally believes the economy has been sliding into a recession since December or January.

Not finding the answer in those news sources, the KP News turned to some local businesses for a recession analysis.

Are businesses on the Key Peninsula experiencing a recession?

The questioning began by asking the local Key Center bank. A written response from Sound Credit Union CFO Russ Gowrylow stated, "We have observed a moderate slowing in the pace of loan growth, both consumer (auto) and real estate. Along with that, we are beginning to see the impact of rising prices due to a small increase in the number and amount of loans being paid late. On the positive side, we are experiencing great interest in our certificate product offerings, since members are keen to lock-in higher rates on risk free investments."

Since some news reports said home-building businesses are being hit hard economically in South Sound, the question was addressed to Birch Electric owner Kevin Canavan. It is his opinion that the Key Peninsula has been pretty lucky economically and he believes that the bottom has been reached on the slowdown. "Once we get past the election, and the interest rates stay low, we will move on," he said.

Canavan said that while residential work experienced some decline this year, commercial jobs were up. "We are not as bustling and busy as we were. Probably a

year ago, things started slowing down," he said. "I think it (business) will build back up when consumer confidence builds back up. It all works in cycles. I think the weather is going to change things, too."

Weather is a major factor on business at Sunnycrest Nursery, according to co-owner Claudia Loy. When she was asked about recession and the Key Peninsula, she said, "I feel that it's seasonal. Once the sun comes out, we're so busy, we can't keep up. My concern is the cost of fuel. How expensive will it get? It's not what I'd call a recession. I think it's inflation from fuel (costs)." Loy doesn't see her business as providing basic needs. "We are a luxury business. Life will go on without it. We are not the grocery where you buy bread and milk. I don't see the recession — not at this juncture. But if the fuel prices rise, we will feel it — (then) we are all going to have to make major cutbacks. What's bothering me is the weather. (It) has to warm up," she said.

When the weather is cold, the sweaters go quicker at Children's Home Society/Key Peninsula Family Resource Center, reported Program Manager Jud Morris. He said he had an interesting conversation recently, at the KP Livable Community Fair, with an employee of the electric company and was told, "This has been one of the coldest quarters in a long, long time." "Usage is down. People are turning the thermostat down and putting on more clothing," he quoted.

It is Morris' view that while some people are lowering their thermostats for environmental concerns, it is not a philosophical question for others. "They can't afford to be warm," he said. "It's heat or eat."

The CHS served more clients this year than last year. "People are suffering more. They have less money. They have more needs. A year ago gas was \$3 now it's \$3.85 in mid-May. Bread, milk, flour, and rice [prices have] gone up. All these things that are essential for people to live on have gone up. They must buy less," Morris said.

Key Peninsula residents can buy more for less at the Angel Guild. One Angel Guild volunteer included weather as an economic factor for their sales. "The lousy

wet weather, along with the price of gas, has been bad for yard sales," said Ann Larson, Key Peninsula resident and Angel Guild volunteer since 2000. As an Angel Guild worker, she has observed that "the downturn of the economy has been good for the thrift stores."

Receipts are also up for Key Center's pub and grill, O'Callahan's. The regulars are still coming in, and gambling is actually up, reports owner Greg Calahan. When he was asked about the cold, wet, weather factor, he replied, "Bad weather? I don't really see it in my business here. I've seen a change but I attribute it to other things." He attributes changes in his food item sales to the new "restaurant on the hill (Roadside)."

Calahan says his business requires quick business adjustments, regarding labor and food, on a monthly basis. In early May, the pub was overstaffed but the extra staff was needed because of two major changes for the business, the addition of the beer garden and a new agreement to manage the Beach Hut. He believes the success of Key Peninsula economy depends on businesses supporting one another and community patronage. "There's opportunity all over this place. It's how the community, as a whole, takes care of business — or not," he said.

This year, Peninsula Market reduced its store numbers on the Key Peninsula from three to two. The Bridgeway Market in Purdy was sold to a new private owner, John Lee, on April 4. The store is being remodeled and the food service has changed from barbecue to teriyaki and Chinese takeout and dine-in.

Plans for a new building and parking lot at the Key Center Peninsula Market are waiting on the slow process of county approval. "We have our plans. The plans have been submitted. But as far as all the legalities — it takes so long with the county," Operations Manager Kip Bonds told KP News. It is a new experience for Bonds to go establish a grocery store from the ground up. "I'm excited. We need it. The community needs it," he said.

The first couple of months of this year were real tough for the Peninsula Market, according to Bonds. "People just didn't have extra money. We try to be proactive,"

he said, mentioning marketing techniques of three-day and one-day sales and "Hot Buys." He was uncertain whether the opening of Costco had affected his stores. "We are exhausting all avenues to get special deals and pass them on. Just to spark people to stay on the peninsula," Bonds said.

Business is on the upswing at the Lake Kathryn pharmacy, Cost Less Prescriptions. Pharmacy owner Don Zimmerman credits the gas price increases and the fact they have "the lowest prices in the state of Washington" for keeping people on the peninsula and supporting his business. "Last week was the most prescriptions ever filled in the store," Zimmerman said, referring to the first full week of May. "It was the busiest number of prescriptions in 38 years."

When asked about recession and the Key Peninsula, Zimmerman shared the views of some of his customers in real estate sales who feel that Gig Harbor and the Peninsula area have been hit less hard than many areas of the nation. He has seen the effects of a housing recession from his son's personal experience last year, but his philosophical approach to handling recession is different from the norm. "I advertise more in recession," he said. "Some (owners) cut back, cut hours, don't pay raises. I go ahead with increases. A lot of nice people work here. And the community has accepted us here. There's so many doggone nice people (involved). We're just thankful for the support of the community."

Recession is defined in the New Webster's Dictionary as a period of reduced trade or business. When KP News asked, "Are businesses on the Key Peninsula experiencing a recession?" the eight businesses answering gave a split decision. Energy costs (gasoline and utilities) and residential financing were named as common culprits in the economic downturn. Seven of the eight businesses offered a positive prognosis for the near future. Fifty percent of the KP businesses blamed the recession trend of the last few months on the cold, wet, Northwest winter rather than the economic weather.

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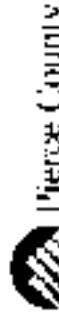
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Marilyn Jensen

State Representative - 40th

State Representative - 40th

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Out & About

To see more Out & About photos, visit our Website at www.keypennews.com and follow the Photo Gallery link. See more of your neighbors out and about, Key Peninsula scenes and happenings. The online gallery features only Website exclusive photos!



Mac Stewart stands in his front yard where he and his family hosted the Second Annual Sam Stewart "Hug Fest." The event was sponsored by the Stewart family in memory of 14-year-old Sam, who two years ago lost his battle with leukemia. A photo of Sam and his younger brother, Joe, can be seen on the right side of the photo. The money raised will go toward a PHS scholarship and to purchase a game system for Mary Bridge or the Children's Oncology Clinic where Sam spent some time during his illness. Donations can still be made to The Friends of Sam Scholarship Fund c/o Peninsula Seahawks, P.O. Box 283, Wauna, WA 98395. Insert: Balloons are delivered for the "balloon release." *Photos by Mindi LaRose*



The length some people go to harvest the succulent and reportedly delicious geoducks. This Port Orchard family had a good time at a Longbranch beach.

Photo courtesy Mark Runions



Some of the state's top riders competing in the Washington State Championships for Men and Women on KP Highway in Longbranch.

Photo by Danna Webster



Key Peninsula residents (right to left) Aiden Krug-Norem, Max Norton, Cannon Norton and Mason Hyde get excited and dance to the music at the Peninsula Athletic Association's Mother-Son Dance at the Best Western Wesley Inn in Gig Harbor May 10.

Photo by September Hyde



In May, Key Peninsula Middle School honored Students of the Month (for March and April) with a brunch sponsored by the PTSA. The students pictured here were nominated by teachers and honored for their "Positive Attitude and Effort." Each student received a pin, bookmark and a Certificate as seen in the photo. Two new hard-back books are also donated to the school's library with each Student of the Month's name printed on the inside cover. *Photo by Mindi LaRose*