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THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE KEY PENINSULA

July 2024 Vol. 51 No. 7

## KPFD Faces Mixed Support For August M&O Levy Renewal Vote

The shadow of past property purchases may have nothing to do with the levy but could affect the vote.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

Key Peninsula Fire District 16 will ask voters Aug. 6 to renew its Maintenance and Operations Levy, an \$800,000-a-year ballot measure in place since 2012. The levy has been renewed by a 60% super-majority with ease every four years since.

But this time may be different. The question seems to have shifted from renewing an existing tax to maintain emergency services to broader concerns about accountability and trust in the district.

The lingering elephant in the room is the \$2.125 million spent, or misspent depending on perspective, by the district board of commissioners on Key Center real estate in 2021 for a potential new headquarters building, training facility and health clinic.

It is a polarizing topic that's left a sour taste in the mouths of both people in the community and in the fire stations that might cause this levy to go down in flames.

Opponents say the board, including current commissioners Randy Takehara, Stan Moffett and Shawn Jensen, wasn't transparent about buying the properties while supporters say the past is in the past and the community should be focused on the future.

Fire Chief Nick Swinhart said he's spent the past few months trying to make the point that "One has absolutely nothing to do with the other. Even if the district never bought those properties, we need this levy to maintain our current staffing and level of service."

Swinhart said he will continue to make that point before the August election. He and the commissioners will have an open forum July 10 at 6:30 p.m. at the Key Center fire station where residents can learn about the levy and wildfire protection. He will also host his next monthly "Coffee with the Chief" Aug. 1 at 9 a.m.

Renewing the levy would continue to cost property owners 17 cents per \$1,000



KP Fire Citizen Academy participant Dee Starr, center, in June, backed up by Volunteer FF Garrett Cranford, left, and Battalion Chief Bill Sawaya. The academy is a two-day course introducing residents to basic aspects of being a first responder. *Anne Nesbit, KPFD*

of assessed property value, which is about \$68 annually for a property valued at \$400,000.

The fire district, funded almost entirely by residential property taxes, relies on the M&O levy for about 6.5% of its annual budget. Though it doesn't sound like a big chunk, without it the district could lose

up to six full-time firefighters/paramedics. That could lead to the closure of one KP fire station and increased response times, according to Swinhart.

"The levy is important because it guarantees that we will be able to continue the

## Evergreen Elementary School Wins National Award

The Lakebay school has successfully incorporated outdoor experiential learning and will launch its "Eagles' Quest" program for highly capable students in the fall.

CAROLYN WILEY, KP NEWS

Evergreen and Artondale Elementary schools are the only two schools in Washington State to receive the 2024 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School award. It honors the efforts that staff and community members have contributed to the development of easily accessible outdoor learning spaces and a focus on integrated environmental education.

In July, Evergreen STEAM teacher Wendy Moore will join Superintendent Krestin Bahr and other Peninsula School District representatives in Washington D.C. for the award ceremony. (STEAM stands for science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics.)

Nominations for the awards were initiated by Elizabeth Schmitz, the program supervisor of environment and sustainability education in the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The Green Ribbon School designation is for schools, districts, early learning centers and postsecondary institutions that demonstrate progress in three key areas: reducing environmental impacts and costs; improving health and wellness; and providing effective environmental and sustainability education.

Both Evergreen and Artondale are housed in new buildings designed to

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## WILLINGNESS & COMMITMENT

# Here's What I Think About That

LISA BRYAN,  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I don't need an alarm to wake me up anymore. The birds announce the time.

At last dusk, I walked into a big field thick with daisies. There was plenty of light left for picking and plenty of flowers to pick. Funny how excited I get over free daisies, while I shun dandelions, buttercups and a long list of other pushy invasives.

My mission was to make a small crown of flowers and fronds to wear atop my head for the summer solstice sunrise swim. I'm not much of a celebratory person, but I do love welcoming summer. Like so many joys in life, I learned to celebrate winter and summer solstice from friends made on the KP.

It's nearly my anniversary. I started plunging and swimming year-round in Puget Sound with a group of women three years ago in 2021. It's one of the best things I've done in my life, and I would never have imagined it for myself.

It's routine now, but it wasn't always. Even in the dark mornings of winter, I wake up in pitch blackness and don my essentials: swimsuit, booties, neoprene gloves. I only recently gave up wearing a wool hat. I put on my robe, grab a towel and a thermos of hot coffee and I'm out the door, no matter the weather.

I can't explain why I do this. It's not like anyone truly enjoys being cold. I hate it. But once I started enduring the cold with intention, I couldn't stop. I was so impressed with my tough-minded management that I had to do it again and again to prove if only to myself that I could take the discomfort long enough to find the joy in it. And yes, believe it or not, there is joy on the other side of pain, and it's called resilience.

If we made it through October, why not November? We swam surrounded by snow in December and during hailstorms in spring, so why not try swimming with air temps of 17 degrees? We don't have to stay in long, just dip in for a minute or two. Yes, it's extreme

and certainly not for everyone, but sharing the experience of a pod of harbor seals popping up just a few feet away is priceless.

What impresses me most is that we've stuck with it, through all sorts of life events, in sickness and in health, good times and bad. People may travel for a time, they come and go for many reasons, but still manage to return to the magical comfort

of being in the water with women who have become friends. Enduring the cold water brings a certain sense of balance to everyday life.

Over the years, countless people have talked about how to restore some balance to our polarized world.

Not long ago I sat at a table with a dozen people, most of whom I had

never met before. The inspiration for the gathering and the question of the day was how to get people with differing political views talking again about civic stuff that matters?

Is there any hope for a restoration of civil dialogue in our respective communities?

I was skeptical. I've attended things like this in the past organized by thoughtful people with diplomatic experience. The intentions were always the same, to bring people together to engage in a real and substantive exchange of ideas. Instead, we quickly became mired in ideological thinking. Covid didn't help matters, and the gatherings quickly fizzled out.

But this group felt different. From across all backgrounds, there was agreement that the stakes of apathy have grown exponentially. Over time, the result of polarization is that people who don't already agree stop talking entirely; nothing good can come from that.

What was different is that people were very candid and didn't mince

words about how they felt. But every bit as important is that we listened.

The first step is suspending judgment long enough to be present in the moment and able to listen, without a need to attack or defend, engage in immediate argument or draw premature conclusions.

I heard a young person voice thoughtful views different from my own that both surprised and intrigued me. I heard people share

their personal fears and motivations to create a space for open dialogue, not a repetition of talking points on subjects remote from their own lives — not the hardline black and white either/or of pundits or parties.

I walked away feeling hopeful. And it wasn't because I was sitting in a room full of like-minded people. They were people who wanted the same things only had different methods of getting there.

When people share a common goal and are willing to work together for the good of the order, great things happen. All that's required is a willingness to dedicate to a mission and a commitment to show up to help regularly.

June 9, the grand opening of the restored Vaughn Library Hall was a prime example of a dream and the work it took to make it happen.

Key Peninsula Historical Society volunteer Frank Shirley was wandering around that day, running his finger across the wood frame of a window, looking almost lost.

"What am I going to do now to give my life purpose?" he asked.

"Well Frank, you live on the Key Peninsula, and we do stuff. There will be another project," I said.

There's a relationship between being proud of where you're from but also a responsibility to nurture the kind of open community that feels accepting and supportive of others too.

There's room for all of us. No matter where we come from, we can make a good home here if we try. ■





# Emergency Food Donations Down on the KP and Across the County

Local food banks try to accommodate more clients with fewer resources, donations and volunteers while demand continues to grow.

VICKI BIGGS,  
KP NEWS

One in ten residents of Pierce County is food insecure, according to Marion Sharp, director of development for Nourish Pierce County in Tacoma. The Nourish program serves 60% of those one-in-10 in need with a 25% increase over the last year. It operates six fixed location food banks and 15 mobile food bank sites, including on the Key Peninsula. In 2023, it served 59,663 people in Pierce County.

Food insecurity is the limited or uncertain ability to obtain nutrition to adequately meet a person's needs. Food insecurity can be thought of in ascending stages from completely adequate, to stressed, in crisis, acute emergency or, finally, catastrophic.

Sharp said there has been an increase in need over the last year. Food prices are higher across the board, in addition to increases in rents, insurance and other household items. These increases hit lower-income families hardest.

The Nourish program has documented an increase in the number of children in need, especially two-year-olds and

The Nourish mobile food bank visits the Purdy Cost Less parking lot in Wauna on Friday afternoons from 1 to 3 p.m. <https://nourishpc.org>

younger. Thirty percent of those needing food are under 18, and 20% of those using the Nourish sites are older adults.

Sharp said that private donations have dropped and that emergency food sources are not providing as much food compared to a couple of years ago. Some of the food Nourish distributes comes from "grocery rescue" — stores that donate food of all sorts — but that has decreased as stores and farmers are "sharpening their pencils," reducing what is available for donation.

Financial security may be the most effective way to end hunger, Sharp said. It may take only one unexpected expense to topple the household budget. For example, an emergency car repair or a new pair of glasses for a child can easily drain any reserves a family may have. During the COVID-19 pandemic, families using SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps) saw an increase in the

amounts they were allotted. However, that extra amount was discontinued in February 2023.

"It's so difficult to get all the bills paid," said Zaida Woodworth, executive director of the KP nonprofit Food Backpacks 4 Kids, which delivers food to students at local schools and runs a food bank in Key Center, among other programs.

"In 2022 we served 6,000 households, and in 2023 that number increased to 10,000 households, for all programs combined. We cover all of the Peninsula School District, and we have people coming from Belfair and Port Orchard at times. Our contract with the USDA Emergency Food Network states that we will serve anyone in Washington State.

"Sometimes we have less food for each person, and it's a disappointment when we don't have enough produce," she said.

Willow Eaton, executive director of Key Peninsula Community Services in Home, said there was a 200% increase in usage at its food bank since the end of Covid funding in February 2023.

"Grant money is drying up, but Emergency Food Network supplies remain steady," she said. "The food bank

obtained \$15,000 from the Angel Guild in 2023 for purchase of proteins and has just received another \$5,000 for 2024."

KPCS also needs volunteers for the high volume of clients at the food bank, she said.

Food bank manager Brett Higgins said, "The challenge is now to keep up with needs." In July 2018, 209 boxes of food were given to 552 clients while in July 2022, 1,550 boxes were distributed to 3,280 clients.

KPCS also delivers 15 to 20 frozen meals each week to KP residents who are housebound.

The Wildwood Hollow Farm and Honeywood Farm deliver fresh local produce to the food bank each Wednesday. They bill the Emergency Food Network fair market value and are paid accordingly.

Waypoint Churches, north and south congregations, provide a weekly Sunday evening meal open to all community members. Pastor Mark Klingler said that they've had a 150% increase in attendance over the last year; over 90 people get the free meals each week.

*KP News Reporter Linda O'Brien contributed to this article.* ■

## AWARD FROM PAGE 1

reduce environmental impacts and operate at a lower cost than the buildings they replaced. Both schools opened in 2021, Evergreen in September and Artondale in November.

Research indicates that when children develop a sense of stewardship regarding their environment it contributes to academic success. OSPI developed the Environment and Sustainability curriculum that is integrated with state learning standards.

Evergreen will reopen in the fall as a magnet school with two Peninsula Accelerated Classroom Enrichment classrooms for its "Eagles' Quest" program, one for second and third grades and the other for grades four and five. This program will serve highly capable students from the Vaughn, Minter Creek and Evergreen service areas. The curriculum will incorporate the Environmental and Sustainability goals and learning standards adopted by OSPI.

The stated goal is "to support academic success and lifelong learning and to develop a responsible citizenry capable of applying knowledge of ecological, economic, and

sociocultural systems to meet current and future needs."

The staff at Evergreen has worked to enhance opportunities for outdoor learning for the past decade. Before new construction, the current parking lot was an outdoor instructional space. Invasive plants had been removed and replaced with native species so students could learn about them and observe seasonal changes. Undeterred by the loss of this space, the staff focused on developing new and expanded outdoor learning opportunities.

Evergreen Principal Hugh Maxwell said he is enthusiastic about the benefits of outdoor experiential learning. "Students begin to understand the relaxing and calming effect of being outdoors and the application of hands-on learning engages them and deepens their learning about their environment."

He added that children who have the opportunity to engage in outdoor learning seem to be more willing to put down their electronic devices and go outside.

Maxwell also credited community generosity to help reestablish and expand access to outdoor resources. Three new areas have been created since the new building

opened: the Garden, the Meadow, and a trail system.

Shortly after opening, Evergreen was selected as one of the schools to pilot a transitional kindergarten program emphasizing outdoor learning. The Garden provided support for this program goal. All Evergreen classes will do STEAM activities there. Purdy Topsoil & Gravel donated soil for the raised beds and volunteers from Harbor Covenant Church helped with the installation of the beds and planting. Children have grown a variety of vegetables — the current crop of interest is radishes.

The Meadow is on the south side of the school. A Light House grant provided funding for native plants and two small pavilions. The men's service group from Harbor Covenant North Campus buried stumps and helped install the pavilions. Trees and additional labor were donated by Heron Landscape and Design. On Earth Day in April, representatives from OSPI visited Evergreen and planted one of the trees in honor of the Green Ribbon School award. By June, the area was filled with wildflowers in bloom.

Evergreen's Moore has been actively involved in providing outdoor opportu-

nities for students. Although her STEAM responsibilities include design and engineering, physical science, and technology, she also ensures that every class has multiple chances to explore the meadow, the garden and the trails. Maxwell called Moore "our outdoor guru."

Because students have been engaged in examining their environment, there was great interest when trail cameras became available. Before the spring break, classroom teachers involved their students in discussion about monitoring wildlife around their campus. The classrooms selected spots along the trails where motion cameras could be installed. When school resumed, the cameras were retrieved and students analyzed the photos and found they captured shots of squirrels, birds, a coyote and a deer.

Students were amazed by the appearance of rare and unexpected animals in the photos. The cameras also picked up and confirmed local reports of unicorns frolicking about on the Key Peninsula. On closer analysis, students noticed that one of the photos showed a unicorn with a hand and concluded, "There's a human in there." ■



# June Blooms with Spring KP Farm and Garden Tour

*An opportunity that cross-pollinates farming on the peninsula with the community.*

LINDA O'BRIEN, KP NEWS

It could not have been a more beautiful day for the first-ever "June Blooms" spring farm tour event June 8. Each of the eight farms featured was clothed in bright, beautiful shades of green, bursting with life, and ready to engage families who came ready for adventure.

The Bill Family Farm of Wauna is home to Nigerian dwarf milk goats, a pack of corgis, a whole host of farm animals, and to Leona Lisa, the force behind the Key Peninsula Farm Council's Farm tours. She and husband Jonathan Bill operate the small family farm, selling handcrafted soaps, farm meats and eggs, while also mentoring others trying to find their niche in the KP farming community. They sent every visitor off with a free plant start and new appreciation for the many possibilities for farming.

Astrid's Lavender Farm near Glencove has its roots in Astrid Graham's childhood chasing butterflies through fields of flowers in El Salvador, and it grew in tandem with a love story between her and husband Don Graham. They chose the KP for a retirement relocation because of Don's familiarity growing up in the area. Once settled, they began looking for a new endeavor. They found a mentor in Victor Gonzalez from Sequim, who provided their first plants. Six years later, they have grown to include seven varieties and three thousand plants spread over 10 acres.

A tour through the farm and the manicured planting on a terraced, sun-drenched slope above the gift shop showcased their distillates, crafts and lavender products, including samplings of lavender scones and strawberry and rhubarb jam with lavender slathered on fresh homemade bread. Plant starts were available and a play area for the kids made this a popular stop on the tour circuit. The best time for catching the plants in bloom will be mid-July.

The Red Barn Youth Center in Key Center offered a budget-friendly selection of veggie and herb starts ready for transplanting. The Youth Garden is a great spot to grow farmers of the future. Each visitor was given a soup kit: recipe and ingredients for a farm-hearty bean and barley soup.



Two-year-old Westley walks his corgi, Ahsoka, in a prerace warmup. *Tina McKail, KP News*



Grand Farm & Haunted Forest of Vaughn, with its 26 acres of equine trails for riders of all abilities and interests, drew visitors with an exhibition of horse jumping in their outdoor arena. The highlight was a tour of the haunted forest led by the owner's young son, Carter, whose theatrical bent, smiling face and delight in scaring guests, makes visiting again in October a must.

Two Fox Winery in Home provided a calm respite from frolicking goats, jumping horses and the cuteness of baby farm animals by providing snacks and a sampling of their



LEFT: A corgi named Pickle takes it all in stride. RIGHT: A new honeybee queen in the making. *Tina McKail, KP News*



Ladybug on the run for Food Backpacks 4 Kids at Creviston Farm. *Tina McKail, KP News*





Food Backpacks 4 Kids volunteers Barb and Diane admire plant progress. *Tina McKail, KP News*



ABOVE: Liona looks for ladybugs at Creviston Farm. BELOW: Prerace playtime. *Tina McKail, KP News*



Honey beekeepers check their boxed hives. *Tina McKail, KP News*



Beekeeper David Leger handles a full rack of bees. *Tina McKail, KP News*

wines in a cozy setting.

Zaida Woodworth, executive director of Food Backpacks 4 Kids, is working with Creviston Farm in Longbranch to showcase the development and resurrection of this family farm while creating a resource center for FB4K's Food 4 All program.

With an organizational staff gathered from the community they serve, Woodworth's goal

is to build symbiosis by teaching the skills for families and kids to find passion in farming, growing, cooking, and preserving food to share with the community. Her cadre of volunteers is working toward a cooperative farm stand, possibly as soon as this summer.

Life-size Jenga games, sidewalk chalk, and music from The Improvement Club kept young and old entertained. Tables were set up in the barn where vendors shared their crafts, providing a cool spot when the afternoon turned warm. Face-painting, a ladybug release, seed-planting instructions for the kids, children's games and activities throughout the day made this stop feel, as Woodworth said, "like a big family barbeque."

The Barn Marche at Faraway Flower Farm, situated on Filucy Bay with its 100-plus-year-old barn restored and transformed into a floral shop, demonstration kitchen, and light-filled open loft, offered an elegant experience. Inspirational flower arrangements decorated every niche of the barn, along with a chromatically arranged collection of vintage vases. Stellar views of flower beds, outbuildings and animal enclosures caught the eye at every turn. Flower seeds, seedlings, distinctive magnificent potted peonies as well as cut flower arrangements were quickly snapped up.

This stop on the circuit also included plant starts from Honeywood Farm CSA, Alaina Seyssel's creative art made with recycled fibers, and treats for sale from 3 Clouds Bakery, Mount Virginia Pies and Purdy Organics. However, the highlight may well have been the photo ops with mini horses, Itsy and Bitsy, who also showed up as models for this year's poster artwork.

The 100 acres of Sound View Camp overlooking the southeast end of the peninsula are now a setting for a brand new outdoor environmental education program teaching sustainable living. Programs for kids to learn to plant and harvest their own food began with converting the former horse stable and corral area into a miniature farm populated with rescued goats, sheep, chickens and a llama. Visitors were able to interact with the animals and learn about their care. Many also enjoyed a guided nature walk through the wooded forest trails and along its sandy beach, currently home to nesting plovers.

The Key Peninsula Farm Council's mission is to promote farms, farming and environmental educational opportunities on the Key Peninsula. This was the first spring version of the established fall event in what Leona Lisa is hoping can become seasonal opportunities to showcase local farms more often.

As Don Graham of Astrid's Lavender Farm said, "Farm tours are the connection, events that cross-pollinate farming on the peninsula with the community." ■



## Jack Dunne

FROM THE CITIOT DESK



### A Pretty Big Story

In my last few messages, I shared my love for math and engineering. This time I hope to share the love that actually did capture my heart way back when — biology. I wanted to understand myself, my family, and all the rest of us. It seemed to me that my only chance was to understand all the rest of life, to see who we are by seeing who we are not.

I spent a little time learning about proteins and DNA, viruses and bacteria, but the deepest questions for me start at how cells organize themselves into animals. Each

cell has the same DNA, yet they all make different decisions about what to become, skin, liver, brain. How in the world can that happen?

Well, first, when did it happen? About 500 miles northwest of here the Canadian Rockies rise thousands of feet above sea level. About 500 million years ago, that land was a clay sea bed, and the sea was full of life. About 100 years ago, a guy from the Smithsonian had heard about workers on the Trans-Canada railroad finding “rock bugs.” He rode west to check it out and changed biology forever.

What he found, the Burgess Shale, is the legacy of the Cambrian Explosion — fossils of an enormous array of animals. Virtually all modern forms of animal life are there, including our ancestors, the chordates. You’ve maybe seen some modern cousins of our phylum; we call them sea squirts. Though they look nothing like us, they have immune and nervous systems very much like our own, and most significantly they have notochords, which are the beginnings of our backbones. By 500 million years ago, cells clearly knew how to organize themselves into very complex animals.

But let’s look at another group abundant in the clay, the cnidarians. They can teach us something important about who we are and maybe even why. You’re familiar with their modern cousins, jellyfish, corals and sea anemones. One thing all cnidarians share is the stinging

cells they use to capture and paralyze their prey. You might easily see other similarities; they all have tentacles. The jellies let them hang down as they float about, the corals and anemones hold their tentacles up in the current. What you may not know is that for many cnidaria, these two life forms are just two generations of the same animal, twins, conjoined by time.

Turns out, these are two fundamental strategies for life as a cnidarian, each successful for at least half a billion years. One is to float on the ocean currents, traveling the world and finding food. The other is to sit and wait, letting the world’s oceans bring food to you. Some species, the scyphozoans, are special-

ized vagabonds, others, the anthozoans, stick to the rocky ground. Each form feeds and reproduces in its type, either by shedding sperm

and eggs or by laceration, wherein chunks of tissue get torn away, reorganize their tissue, and form whole new animals.

A third class of cnidaria reveals an important evolutionary lesson. The hydrozoa alternate traveling and sedentary life forms. A tree of polyps grows on the ocean floor, communally feeding on whatever gets trapped by the colony, then when the time is right, they create special branches that form jellyfish, which then launch themselves into the deep, spreading their lives on the currents, to shed sperm and eggs colonizing new territory. The fertilized embryos settle to form a new community of polyps.

It’s not trivial to prove, but I think this is the primordial life cycle, and the anthozoa and scyphozoa have simply specialized, leaving one or the other life forms behind. Just to illustrate the drive of evolution, consider the Portuguese man-of-war, a colony of polyps that builds a raft to hang from, combining the strategies of their cousins. Life tries everything.

So, what do we learn about people? First, of course, people are unique among animals in many ways, but one important distinction is that we take so long to become reproductive. Fifteen to 20 years is common. I was 42 when I first reproduced. Absurd. Why?

I think it’s because the world we live in is very complicated and always changing. We’re not born with the

knowledge it takes to succeed, so we give birth to these lovely little worms that know nothing and can do nothing. We feed them, protect them, and teach them because while we share two requirements with cnidaria, eating and reproducing, we have a unique third requirement, adapting, and a new post-reproductive life stage, which I now inhabit.

There is a place in our village for folks who remember. I’m grateful that the joy of eating spans the whole of our lives, and I’d like to believe that learning lasts a lifetime, but we too often separate functions in time, specializing to fit each purpose. Early in life, we usually stay close to home, growing and learning. At maturation, we often travel, learning more and maybe finding a new home. Lastly, we settle down with children of our own, mostly teaching and, if we’re lucky, learning too.

Of course, we aren’t cnidarians, rigidly locked into roles dictated by our bodies, but it’s comforting to me to find some commonality, to recognize that life has some general order and that we are part of a pretty big story.

*Jack Dunne lives gratefully in Lakebay.*

## Jonas Koller

FROM THE PITCH



### Finding the Value of Youth Sports

Growing up here in the USA, soccer was never the most popular sport. The game, an immigrant to this country, always found itself secondary to several traditional American pastimes. Even now, I find that more kids take up football, baseball, or basketball as their sport. I dabbled in those sports growing up too, but soccer was the one that stuck.

I was immersed in fussball (soccer) by my German dad and my family in Germany, especially my opa. Looking back, I don’t think it was necessarily any technical attribute of the game itself that created this connection for me. It wasn’t soccer that made me love soccer. It wasn’t the kicking of the ball or scoring the goal. Sure, that rush of scoring or making

a good play was a piece, but not the most significant piece. It was something deeper that transcends sports. It was the memories. It was the love and connection that it made me feel with my friends, family, and community. It was the passion from those times kicking the ball with my dad and opa in the cul-de-sac in front of our house in Charlotte, North Carolina, and the summer memories of Germany, playing out in the street with friends during the day and watching the German national team play in the evening.

The sport has persisted as a way for me to connect with people in new places as I moved from Charlotte to Switzerland and back, eventually ending up here in Washington. As a sophomore at Peninsula High School, I’ve made so many friends playing for my high school and club teams. For this reason, I think that love for a sport depends not so much on the sport itself, but on the people and memories you associate with it. Youth sports are more than a way to keep kids fit and healthy. They offer kids a place to connect with their communities and develop those happy memories. Youth sports also are a path for kids to learn values such as hard work and respect through competition.

I started playing premier soccer for Harbor Premier, our local soccer club, in 2021, and since then I’ve had a variety of positive and negative experiences under coaches and cultures for both my high school and club teams. In this period I’ve gone through times where pressure and on-field struggles made me completely hate playing soccer. I’ve seen it with my peers as well. Youth sports can make you lose the reason you loved the game in the first place.

When Harbor Soccer hired a new director in May of this year, I was intrigued by his philosophy and German

history. Jason McGlothorn, formerly an Elite Clubs National Coach at PacNW soccer club in Tukwila, told me he believes culture is one of

the most important components of a soccer club. Born in Germany, he learned the love of the game from his opa too.

McGlothorn moved to Washington at 5 years old, where he played for clubs such as PacNW, Eastside FC, and later the Sounders Academy. In 2010,

**I THINK THAT LOVE FOR A SPORT DEPENDS NOT SO MUCH ON THE SPORT ITSELF, BUT ON THE PEOPLE AND MEMORIES YOU ASSOCIATE WITH IT.**



McGlothorn spent a year playing in the academy of 1. FC. Nuremberg, a German team then in the Bundesliga (German first division). He told me that this journey as a player taught him many lessons that he wants to apply to coaching and directing.

Like me and many other youth players, McGlothorn had times when he began to lose touch with the love of the game, albeit at a much higher level. "When I got to Germany (with 1. FC Nuremberg), like all of a sudden you're like, holy crap, you start to kind of forget why you played the game in the first place. You start to forget the days that you're running in the backyard or on the streets and you're playing just because you're purely excited and love the game."

He told me that at Harbor he wants to instill a culture that develops players and provides them with values that prepare them for life. "We're always looking to be the best in everything that we do, and I think there is some truth behind it. I think it is an important value to obtain, but winning isn't development. Winning is a byproduct of development. So I think it's really important that we as coaches cultivate environments that continue to nurture love for the game."

Playing youth sports can mean different things to different people. For some, it is simply a fun pastime, while for others it evolves into a full-time commitment that may lead them into professional or collegiate athletics. Soccer, a game treasured by millions across the globe and many within our community, is a joyful experience.

In the next two years, as I approach

the end of my time at Harbor Premier and PHS, I hope that I can contribute to the development of a culture that encourages players and coaches to foster positive values and love for the game.

*Jonas Koller is a sophomore at Peninsula High School.*

## John Pat Kelly

HOME ON THE KEY



### Fire Ops 101, or Why I Will Never Be a Firefighter

I received a message in February from Key Peninsula Firefighter-Paramedic Adam Morse about an opportunity. In my campaign for fire commissioner last year, I didn't get the endorsement of his union (IAFF Local 3152), and the last time we spoke was at a public meeting. It wasn't exactly a lovefest.

I was relieved, surprised and honored when he invited me to join him in a training called Fire Ops 101 in the Tri-Cities. The purpose was to give elected officials and other decision-makers a glimpse of what it's like to be a firefighter. He assured me that friends of mine, namely our Pierce County Councilmember Robyn Denson and my fellow fire commissioners Stan Moffett and Shawn Jensen, had all completed the training.

The week before the trip, Adam had me come into a station to get outfitted in full firefighter gear, known as a turn-out. He insisted I don the gear

like a professional, tucking the pants into the boots so I could pull them on simultaneously. They say we all put our pants on one leg at a time, but firefighters are trained to do even better to save time and lives. The gear was well-worn, bulky, and not the least bit fashionable (yet somehow sells for over \$5,000, as if it was made by Gucci).

Next, I was fitted for an oxygen mask, a self-contained breathing apparatus, known as an SCBA. A firefighter helped me adjust the mask and hooked me to a machine to measure how well it worked while I bobbed my head and ran in place. I was already panting when he told me the machine malfunctioned, and I would have to repeat the test.

A few days later, Adam and I hopped into a KPFD red Ford F-550 and headed east to the Tri-Cities. Along the way, we talked about fire department issues like the upcoming maintenance and operations levy and its potential effect on staffing. We also talked about our families.

Adam graduated from Peninsula High School and wanted to live on the KP but was unable to find any affordable housing, so he commutes from Rochester, where he lives with his wife, who is a social worker for the state.

As we crossed the Columbia River at Vantage, I started feeling hot and itchy under my KPFD jacket. When we arrived at the Hammer Training Center, the skin on my neck already looked sunburned. By dinner time, I had to

excuse myself to go back to the hotel lobby and buy an antihistamine. I had full-blown hives from anxiety.

About the time the Benadryl kicked in, the heartburn started, and I started taking antacids. Then the hives came back. Then the heartburn returned. I chewed the rest of the Tums. I ended up getting no sleep that night before Fire Ops.

I considered telling Adam that I had a rough night and just wanted to go home. Then I thought of the stories he'd tell about me around the firehouse, so I sucked it up. Now I know how a firefighter feels when he or she is unable to sleep during a 24-hour shift. It made the training even more authentic.

We did drills requiring us to enter dark, smoke-filled buildings in full gear. We rescued heavy mannequins by cutting through cars with the Jaws of Life. This equipment is so heavy that

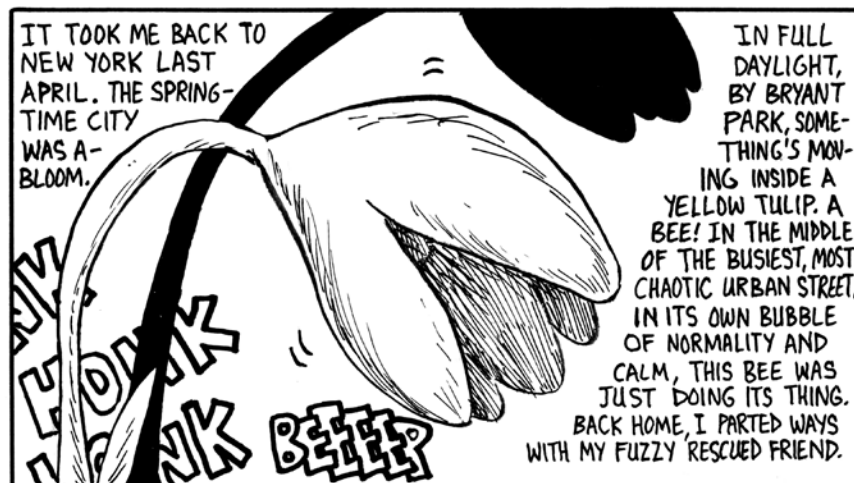
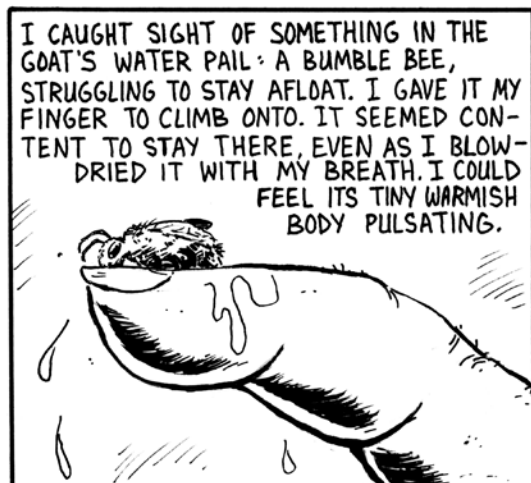
it makes sense to have weightlifting facilities at the fire stations. (I had just assumed that, like convicts, it gave firefighters

something to do in their free time.) We loaded a mannequin patient into an ambulance and assisted his breathing while the driver zigged-zagged his way through the facility. We extinguished a car fire and a dumpster fire. I conquered my disdain for the SCBA mask when I wore it with the air tank while climbing a 100-foot ladder from the fire truck to the roof of a 5-story tower.

Any good training has its takeaways — things you learned that you can use

I CONSIDERED TELLING ADAM THAT I HAD A ROUGH NIGHT AND JUST WANTED TO GO HOME.

## José Alaniz WE LIVE HERE: LI'L BUDDY





on the job. I learned there is a lot more science in firefighting than I realized. It's not just pouring water on a fire. More importantly, I learned firsthand why having more firefighters on-scene saves lives and property. I realized the true costs of cutting back on firefighter staffing.

I also learned a little about myself. In my very first training exercise, I had to crawl my way through a pitch-black, smoky building following the walls of the maze structure with one hand. I wore the SCBA mask and heavy tank on my back and continually bumped my helmet into the walls.

I didn't know that I was near the exit of this haunted house when I hit a dead end. I started to freak out from a smothering feeling of claustrophobia. Thoughts of dying from a heart attack or stroke raced through my mind. I wanted to rip my mask off and cry like a baby, "Get me out of here!"

But I didn't. My shadow, Adam, had my back. He encouraged me to feel around and crawl through the small opening ahead. I did, and I made it through to the daylight, frantically tearing at my mask to free my face. I did enjoy a sense of pride from the applause of my team members for making it out alive.

I also learned that it takes a special kind of something to be a firefighter, and I sure don't have it. I gained a greater appreciation for firefighters, and I will support them in my role as commissioner.

*John Pat Kelly is a KPFD fire commissioner. He lives in Wauna.*

## Mark Michel RIDE ON



### Life's Purpose

It has been over a year since I retired from a 35-year career. I feel very fortunate and am thankful to have had a job I enjoyed. It's a cliché, especially since I was a pilot, but all those years flew by.

One unique facet of my job was a mandatory retirement age. It was interesting to see how people felt as they got closer to retirement. Almost everybody said, "I can't believe I'm almost there. I can't wait." In reality, many were terrified to take that next step. It was like they were being forced

to step off the plank into shark-infested waters. I guess the "shark-infested" part is the legitimate fear of running out of resources. For many of us, I think the fear was stepping into a dark void. It was absolutely the "unknown."

Throughout our lives, most of our education and effort are geared toward taking progressive steps up the ladder to earn more money and/or more corporate power. Innately competitive, we work harder to get more. Success is measured in endless financial accumulation or professional advancement. Inspiring hard work and self-reliance is a benefit of American capitalism.

But there isn't much preparation for what comes after. Corporations and public education don't offer classes on

how to live "successful" lives after we stop working. If they exist, we sure don't want to take time off work to attend.

Financial institutions are happy to coach an employee on economic security in retirement (usually the advice is to keep working). Ads and solicitations for what to do with your money are abundant. But what about the most precious (and at this stage of life, dwindling) asset: your time?

I recently heard a radio personality say, "I talk to people who are elderly, and they lose their purpose in life when they stop working." I'm no Bible scholar, nor would I recommend listening to me for life guidance, but I don't believe our "purpose in life" is simply working for a paycheck. Truly enjoying your work is great but if it isn't fulfilling and bringing joy, we shouldn't let the inertia of the daily grind shackle us.

This podcast advocated increasing the age at which we start taking Social Security. As a 40-year-old multi-millionaire paid to sit and complain, I'm not sure he's qualified to recommend we all "work until we die."

It's shallow and insulting to say our job (and staying off Social Security) is our "purpose in life."

Talk radio is a fertile field for multiple editorials but not this one.

So, if our purpose isn't to make more money, what should it be?

A better purpose in life is to get more of it. Retirement can be filled with a longer, richer, more robust life

with a focus on us, our community, and the planet.

Numerous studies show consistent movement leads to a longer, happier life. Without the obligation of daily work, we could go for regular walks, hikes or rides. These are cheap investments in improving our physical, mental and emotional health. Joining others is even better.

Our parks and trails are busy with people out enjoying their time. When I'm out there exercising I often stop and talk to people I see. These quick conversations almost always make me happier.

If exercise isn't our thing, or possible, there are abundant community organizations that need volunteers. Reading to kids, litter pickup, community beautification projects, helping the elderly or those less fortunate, or pulling invasive plants are samples of the things we can do. Each involves spending time with inspiring people and helping our community (and ourselves) along the way.

Community colleges offer a ton of great courses. I'd love to learn a foreign language or environmental science. What about film studies or literature? Possibilities are much more abundant than the time available.

In appreciation for the very brief time we're given, how can we help our family, community and our world be better? Taking a few seconds to pick up and properly dispose of trash, or planting flowers or trees produces great results.

We can check out our local, state, and national parks. If we have the ability, we can go places we always wanted to go. There are amazing sights all over the world. I'm often blown away by the things I see and the people I meet when I go someplace different and keep an eye (and mind) open.

Anxious about the specter of slowly decaying in a rocking chair, people would ask, "What are you going to do in retirement?" My answer became: "Everything." At least as much as I have time for.

Gotta go!

*Mark Michel is a retired commercial airline pilot and a Key Pen Parks commissioner. He lives in Lakebay.*

## Obituaries



### Barbara Ann Bence

Barbara Ann (Schales) Parshall Bence was born April 10, 1934, in Sitka, Arkansas, to George Dave and Hester Irene (Bonhill) Schales. She was the eldest of 15 children with seven brothers and seven sisters. She died peacefully May 30, 2024, at the memory care residence at the Mustard Seed Village in Key Center.

When she was quite young her family moved to Michigan, settling in the Mount Clemens area. After high school, she joined the Army and met her first husband, whose family lived in the Artondale area, so Washington became her home.

As a young mother of four, she met her second husband, and they settled in Key Center.

Barbara was a retired nurse who loved singing, painting, dancing and traveling. She enjoyed being part of the community and spent many hours at the Key Peninsula Community Center. She was a prolific painter and sang throughout the whole of her life, including many years with the Key Singers.

She was also a beloved mom, grandma, aunt, sister and dear friend, and will be missed.

She is survived by five of her sisters: Helen Jo, Donna, Yvonne, Debbie and Gail.

Also by her children, Cheryl, Li (Anne), Laurel and Virginia (Brian), plus Lis, a daughter of the heart.

And by her grandchildren, Sara (Casey), Jessica (James), Seth (Amanda) and Joe (Laura); and by her great-grandchildren, Ronnie (Neveah), Alyssa, Gregory, Yuuki, Alex, Trinity, Natallie, Elspeth, Aubrey and Noah.

She was widowed more than 40 years ago and is now at Haven of Rest cemetery in Gig Harbor beside her late



## Obituaries

husband, Paul Dene Bence.

Please join us for a remembrance June 27 from noon to 4 p.m. at the Key Peninsula Civic Center in Vaughn. A brief sharing time will begin at about 12:30 for anyone who'd like to speak about who she was to you.

Instead of flowers, you may like to donate to local groups that were important to Barbara, such as Key Singers, Key Peninsula Community Services, The Mustard Seed Project, or Mustard Seed Village. There are also various Alzheimer's associations that do good work.



### Elizabeth (Betty) Lamb Boyd

Betty was born March 16, 1924, in Bordeaux, France, where her father worked for the YMCA. She died in Gig Harbor April 20, 2024.

Her school years were spent in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she graduated high school and went on to attend Macalester College in St. Paul. Her studies were interrupted by the call to serve in World War II. Betty was proud to enlist as a WAC (Women's Army Corps). While stationed at Schick General Hospital in Clinton, Iowa, she met Milton S. Boyd, who was recovering from wounds he sustained overseas as a soldier. Both received bachelor's degrees from Macalester after they were married.

They raised their six children in Rock Island, Illinois, and Gig Harbor, Washington.

Betty was extremely well-read and could hold her own in debates and discussions on many subjects. At 100 years old, she was still reciting poetry and Shakespeare.

She worked for the Peninsula School

District and the Purdy Correctional Center for Women. She had a deep interest in politics and education. She loved her family, her church and traveling.

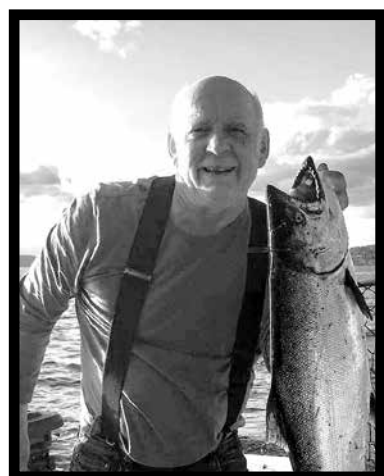
While two-up on their Honda Goldwing, Betty and Milt saw all the contiguous states, plus Alaska. They also traveled to many countries of the world.

Betty volunteered for food banks, church and the theater. She helped design and build sets, sewed hundreds of costumes, and was a dress and prop mistress extraordinaire.

Preceded in death by her husband Milton, Betty leaves behind six children and their spouses, 14 grandchildren, and many great and great-great-grandchildren.

A truly remarkable woman.

A memorial service for Betty Boyd was held June 9 at the Gig Harbor Methodist Church.



### Charles Robert Niemann, Jr.

Born Aug. 9, 1950, to Charles and Joyce Niemann of Key Center, Washington, Charles Robert Niemann, Jr. was the fourth generation to live and farm on the family's homestead property, SunnyCrest farm. He passed away May 25, 2024, with his wife and daughter by his side.

Chuck graduated from Peninsula High School in 1968 and then entered the U.S. Navy. He suffered a serious accident while home on leave and was retired from the Navy on disability several years later. He never let his disability stop him from fully living and was known for all the physically hard work he did, such as logging, farming, growing Christmas trees, picking and processing huckleberries, sawmill work, and building beautiful

wood tables and benches. He was still picking brush and splitting kindling a month before his passing. He enjoyed sports and loved hunting and fishing all his life.

Chuck married Vicki Stewart in March 1975 and accepted her two boys, Sammy and Danny, as his own. They had one daughter together, Nicole, whom they raised in the home that Chuck built. He later helped Nicole and her husband Tony build their home on the farm property. Chuck's grandson Colton makes the sixth generation to live on the farm. He was always close by to help them, and all his family, with whatever they needed. Chuck was the man most people called if they needed help with a project.

Chuck had many lifelong friends and made new friends wherever he went, always happy to take them fishing, cut them some lumber or show them how to dig clams.

Preceded in death by his parents and his sister Cheryl, Chuck is survived by his wife Vicki, brother Christopher, sister Noel, sons Sam Baderdeen (Brenda) and Dan Baderdeen (Paige), daughter Nicole (Tony), four grandsons and three great-grandchildren. He was also dearly loved by his many aunts, uncles and cousins.

Chuck's physical presence will be deeply missed in the community, but he will live on in our hearts and stories forever.



### Herbert A. Marra

Herbert A. Marra, Ph.D., ABFP, ABPP, of Vaughn, died May 28 after a long battle with colon cancer. He was 79 years old. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Pamela, a son and three grandchildren.

Board-certified by the American Board of Professional Psychology in forensic and clinical psychology, he held numerous positions over his 45-year career.

Capt. Marra served five years with the Army Medical Service Corps. He spent decades in the field of criminal justice at the county and state levels for Pierce County. He served as a director at the Pierce County Juvenile Court and in the 1980s was lead forensic evaluator for the Department of Assigned Counsel. At the state level, he held the position of Superintendent and Warden in Monroe, where he wrote national legislation on standard of care for institutions in the area of suicide prevention and involuntary medication.

He also lectured and published as an adjunct professor for 20 years at the University of Washington School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Before his retirement, he served as a forensic and public safety psychologist for numerous police, fire and 911 agencies.

Herb was a lifelong unitarian and universalist since attending the church on 50th Street in Minneapolis that he and Pam found welcoming and accepting. They were registrars for several years and found Sundays both uplifting and spiritually moving. The couple attended unitarian services in San Francisco, Tacoma and Bremerton, and while it was hard to attend services, the pair always remained true to their faith and beliefs.

Whether in the pristine woods of Northern Minnesota or the majestic firs of Washington, God's bounty could be seen everywhere. Herb was in awe of snow-capped mountains, descending into the forest cathedral where he spent time offering gratitude, where lakes, pools and rivers flow into Puget Sound — the Salish Sea. "This represents the sea of life constantly renewing and fulfilling our spiritual needs," he wrote.

"Tearfully do two souls come down together, meet, bond, and become eternal soulmates — this was my blessing to share with Pam, my forever soulmate. If time is an illusion, this bond is past, present, and future; it can never be weakened.

"Love is universal. Love is truth. Love is unwavering and love endures."



# From The Outside Looking In: Visitors Take On the KP

Travelers share the good and the bad about vacationing in a rural community. Makes you wonder why you need to go when you live here.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

Key Peninsula News spoke with recent travelers to the KP who revealed the charm and challenges they came across while visiting the area: Brian Cantwell, the former travel and outdoors editor at the Seattle Times, who now sails Puget Sound and blogs about it on [www.brianjcantwell.com](http://www.brianjcantwell.com); Anna Rasmussen, a photographer based in Chicago, who shares her travel pictures on Instagram @annarasphoto. Historian, outdoor enthusiast and blogger Lauren Danner, an avid patron of national and state parks, jots down her explorations on [www.laurendanner.com](http://www.laurendanner.com). Rachel and Brian Lockwood, who moved from the Midwest to live on a 43-foot sailboat, document their experiences on Instagram @sailwithrachel-andbrian. David Lee, a Pacific Northwest transplant from Green Bay, Wisconsin shows how he car camps on his YouTube channel (@RVJedeye).

Traveling preferences, especially in the post-pandemic era, have undergone a significant change. Many are bypassing crowded cities and looking to get a little extra shoulder room in rural communities.

Some come here purposely for the serenity, while others stumble across it accidentally. Recent visitors shared their pros and cons about the place we call home.

## A Cherished Retreat

"I'm always looking for a place off the beaten-path not many people know about," said David Lee, who filmed his car-camping experience at both Joemma and Penrose State Parks for his YouTube channel.

"It has this feeling of being far away from urban Puget Sound, even though it isn't," said Lauren Danner. "It doesn't feel like there's many places left on the Puget Sound where you can get that peaceful, beautiful summer day where you get that feeling of well-being."

"The natural beauty of the KP keeps me coming back. Looking out on the Sound, it's the most peaceful place," said Anna Rasmussen, who escapes Chicago city life every year or two to stay at her family-owned Airbnb in Lakebay.

Lee said he can feel the stress melt away the closer he gets to the KP. "You start to see things differently. Things slow down and you start to separate yourself from the day-to-day grind," he said.

## Hidden Gem

Though a little out of the way, all visitors agreed that Penrose Point and Joemma State Parks are well worth the travel.

"The view of Mount Rainier from Penrose



A visitor's view of the Key Peninsula. David Lee

is the best in Puget Sound," said Rachel Lockwood. Her husband, Brian, agreed. "The part of Penrose we anchor at is exposed to the wind, but we'll deal with the weather to get that view. It's high on our list as one of the best places to anchor."

Brian Cantwell, who called the parks beautiful and underused, said Mount Rainier is "right in your face. It surprised me how huge that mountain is (near the KP)." He added that it's easy to find a spot in August to put your boat around the area, where in the San Juan Islands it's too crowded to get a mooring. "The whole south Sound is undiscovered by Seattle boaters, who all head north."

## Pay More Attention to Boaters

"Boaters can bring a lot of money into a community without affecting the highways or other infrastructure that bother local residents," said Cantwell, a seasoned boater who sails down from the San Juan Islands, where he now lives. Cantwell has been keeping an eye on the Lakebay Marina redevelopment. He remembers when the store was still open and he could run over to get ice cream. "I was really taken by that place. I think that's one of those undeveloped treasures that could bring a lot more boaters."

Cantwell made a comparison to Tides Tavern in Gig Harbor, saying that if a restaurant at the Lakebay Marina could be known for something like its fish 'n' chips, boaters would make it a part of their itinerary. The Lockwoods would love a place they can

easily get to for a quick off-the-boat snack and to restock their galley.

It's not just boaters, though, who say a redeveloped Lakebay Marina is wanted. Danner would love a place to get coffee when she is camping at Penrose Park and Lee said even being able to get a bag of ice would be nice without having to leave the park.

## The KP Fails on Trails

Residents seem to know where to go for a stroll through the forest or a ride through 360 Park, but Rasmussen and Danner said that if they go outside the state parks, it's hard to move around without a car.

"Because it's so pretty, the roads seem ideal for biking, until you notice the lack of shoulders," Danner said. "You'd have to be very strategic just to go on a leisurely bike ride." Rasmussen feels forced to walk on the roads because of the lack of a trail system.

## Tourist Trap

Cantwell is fascinated with the anarchist history of Home. He recalled seeing Jake the Alligator man at Marsha's Free Museum in Long Beach and thinks a similarly quirky, lighthearted museum dedicated to the "nudes versus prudes" could bring in some day-trippers.

"You're missing your chance," Cantwell said, challenging the community. "It's an interesting part of history that could cover all the outrageous things that happened out here."

## Look No Further Than Twisp

Danner, who has traveled to rural communities across the state while checking out 127 Washington state parks, said if the KP has the desire to become more of a destination community, it should look at the town of Twisp in the north-central part of the state. The town itself is home to less than 1,000 people, but travelers frequent it for its restaurants, shops, more affordable grocery store, and friendly community.

"There's no need to reinvent the wheel," she said.

## What More Could You Want?

Though they all understand that residents appreciate the KP for what it currently is, as outsiders, they would appreciate a touch of convenience and modern amenities without compromising its rustic charm. Danner thinks a taproom would be a nice touch in a community like this. Rasmussen would like to see Key Center become a more "super-cute, smalltown downtown with an ice cream shop and a couple of boutiques." Lee agrees but would also love to see more fruit or vegetable stands from the local farms.

To advocate for their onboard dog Maui, the Lockwoods want areas outside of the state parks to be more dog-friendly for boaters.

"You want some things to be developed just enough, but at the same time I don't want to overdevelop it because (the KP) really is a beautiful part of the state that more people should be exposed to." ■



## NATURALIST'S NOTEBOOK

## An Uptick in Unwanted Hitchhikers? On Woodpeckers, Dragonflies and Ticks

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

It's July. In late evening, when a touch of moisture returns to the sky and I linger in the dregs of the day's light, worn out by the farm, an occasional nighthawk adds its lone-some "peent" to the world. The sound lingers.

Everywhere water exerts a magnetic pull on living things large and small. In the shallows of wetlands, where giant water bugs lurk, I find myself surrounded by a mad collection of insect life. It's finally happening, I think to myself. It's all here. A rainbow of dragonflies is the highlight; blue and green darners, red meadowhawks. I especially like watching the eight-spotted skimmers on their black-and-white blotched wings. They patrol with minimal effort.

Down on the tideflats, knee-deep in the bay, I swear I see a sculpin dart from a patch of sea lettuce with a big piece of green algae in its mouth. It vanishes into eelgrass. Huh, I think. Movable cover? Smart fish if so.

If you're on a dock at night you might

get lucky and see a swimming polychaete worm, out to breed in the moonlight. If we're all lucky we might have one of those



warm-day rainstorms when we get to run out in shorts and bare feet and drag potted plants out from their shelters. A warm spiced aroma fills the air, and we are forced to laugh, after all the effort we have put into watering, stressing ourselves as much as our plants in our attempts to apportion our limited muscle, at the effortlessness with which the atmosphere can blanket the entire landscape with water.

**Ask Chris: Ticks**

**Q:** I'm hearing more and more about ticks in the area. I'm so disappointed to hear of their presence. I really don't want to weed-whack my meadow. We love the variety and abundance of butterflies, moths, bees, birds, praying mantises, and beetles. What do you know about ticks in the area? Justina P., Vaughn

**A:** Fair warning: I'm going to bounce this question back at you, readers, since one of the bottom lines about ticks in our area is that we need better data if we're going to talk about population trends.

First, some basics. Ticks have always been here. Historically, we have been fortunate in Western Washington to have few enough



As they spend spring and summer on a circuit of trees they have tapped, sapsuckers also eat the insects that get stuck in their sticky wells.

*Ollie Oliver*

to make it unlikely that you would pick one up as a human. Dogs get them occasionally. Deer often have a few.

Ticks are arthropods related to mites. Blood is their only food. The species we have here, the western black-legged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*), finds its way to a wide variety of hosts, including birds, mice, squirrels, deer — even lizards. Actually, its host preference seems to change as it goes through its multi-year life cycle. Research done in California, where these ticks are far more prevalent, found that as small larvae and nymphs, they are most common on western fence lizards and gray squirrels, while as adults they are most common on deer mice and deer themselves.

Ticks are hardy and can go dormant all winter, but they are vulnerable to desiccation. So contrary to what your instinct might say, you won't find as many ticks in your exposed grassy meadow as in the moist thickets of woodlands. Ticks are most active in medium-warm temperatures: spring to early summer for nymphs; autumn for adults. Here they can be found year-round.

Unfortunately, the western black-legged tick is a host for Lyme disease. Fortunately, cases in Washington remain quite rare.

Far more can be written about ticks. For now, I want to know your experience with ticks over time on the peninsula.

The recent flare-up of interest on parent Facebook groups has resulted in a lot of parents checking their children and dogs and collectively finding a few ticks. Beyond wondering if this is an artifact of increased attention or a true population boom in ticks, both of which I see as a distinct possibility, I'm wondering how the California studies apply to Washington ticks. I'm wondering if the recent expansion of eastern gray squirrels onto the peninsula is significant. I'm wondering about the impact of development and invasive species and booming deer populations.

To me, what you do about the small risk you might find a tick on yourself and the minuscule risk that it gives you Lyme is all about personal risk tolerance — and the magnitude of the willies you get from ticks. This is something that will be different for everyone. Regular checking of your body can take care of much of the risk. I'd hate for you to sanitize your meadow and woodlands, a practice unfortunately encouraged by the state department of health. Eliminating tick habitat eliminates habitat for the

rest of the wildlife we love.

**Sapsuckers Alongside Beavers**

I can't end on ticks, so let me give love to suckers of another sort. Ever seen perfectly spaced rows of quarter-inch holes going up a tree trunk? Those aren't the work of beetles. Those are the wells of sapsuckers.

Unlike most woodpeckers, which have crazy long tongues to reach deep-burrowed bugs — tongues that wrap around their skulls to provide shock absorption — sapsuckers have strange brush-tipped tongues designed to soak up tree sap. As they spend spring and summer on a circuit of trees they have tapped, they also eat the insects that get stuck in their sticky wells. The wells rarely injure trees.

In the last two years, sapsuckers have excavated a nest in a dead alder at the Gateway Park beaver pond. It's right by the main dam. I find myself there often. Here is a bird dependent upon healthy sapful trees that is also dependent upon dead trees. Which is not too different from beavers. Their food is the cambium and leaves of healthy trees, yet their lifestyle cannot go on without the death of trees. The pond has space for all of it. Its water is magnetic, especially in summer. ■



# Local Businesses Say They Hit the Wall in Permitting Process

Permitting processes and a lack of infrastructure make problems for small businesses on the KP.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

Last January, Tedra and Kyle Hett, owners of Two Fox Winery in Home, applied for a food permit. The winery opened in 2022 and they wanted to offer cheese and crackers to the people who came to enjoy a glass of their wine.

They expected a straightforward process. What they experienced was a frustrating series of interactions with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.

Part of the problem, Tedra said, is how the department is structured. The application must address water, water waste and food handling. Each of those areas is dealt with in separate areas of the department, and they are siloed. “We either got different answers from people or we didn’t get answers — it was vague and unclear, hard to get anything in writing or an actual direction,” Tedra said.

The lack of water and sewer infrastructure compounded the situation. They were told that if they served 25 people or more in any one day they must upgrade to a Group A well. Group A wells are permitted by the state and are required if more than 25 people are on the property more than 60 days a year. “We can speak to our volume,” Hett said. “There are days when we have three people and days when we have 30. The health department doesn’t take into consideration what your business model is and your usage. It feels very discriminatory for a small business in a rural unincorporated area that can barely get other services.”

“Converting a well to a Group A system can take up to a year,” Lydia Bower, engineering manager for Northwest Water Systems told the KP News. The company, based in Port Orchard, specializes in small water systems all over the state. Conversion requires ensuring the current well is suitable, then designing an engineering plan and submitting it to the state. Those plans might be approved or have constraints, Bower said. The cost is likely in the tens of thousands of dollars even if the well needs no additional work.

The Hettys were also told they would need two refrigerators. “I asked them if we could have a policy to throw food out if the refrigerator broke down,” Tedra said. It was not an option. And she was concerned that at some point the department might require a new septic system.

“It’s so frustrating,” she said. “With all the requirements it forces you to decide to go big or go home. Everyone tells us we are so lucky, living our dream. It’s kind of a nightmare trying to do this.”



Elli and Blake Lechner opened Serve Nutrition in Key Center in November 2023. *Tina McKail, KP News*



Bryant and Sarah Anderson, owners of Madrona Café. *Tina McKail, KP News*

Sarah Anderson, owner of Madrona Café, had opened three cafes before coming to the Key Peninsula. “I found the health department really helpful when I was proactive,” she said. “But Pierce County was the most difficult I have ever dealt with. In Portland it was easier, they were very upfront with what was needed, you were given a checklist. They do the same thing here, but the list is five pages long and the requirements are incredible.”

She said that she had the advantage of knowing what questions to ask because she

had done this before, and she also found an advocate within the department who was quick to answer her inquiries.

When Anderson purchased the property, she did not know that the septic system had been decommissioned. She had to install an underground tank that is pumped out. She uses disposable cups and containers to minimize water use. The café opened in January 2020.

Elli and Blake Lechner opened Serve Nutrition in Key Center last November, months

later than they had hoped. Like Anderson, they had previous experience with two sites in Arizona.

“Working with any health agency is always challenging,” Elli said. “It has been some time since I last navigated, but this was frustrating. This is probably the only kind of business serving food that could exist here. Very little is washed down the drain. Everything goes into the cup and there is no waste. Nothing is baked.”

They hired a septic designer recommended by the county who came to the site, discussed the business model, and reviewed records of water use from a business with the same model. The health department didn’t accept his report, required them to resubmit with a higher volume, and charged an extra fee. “All this without coming to visit,” Elli said.

“It was a good thing that my husband and I had other jobs,” Elli said. They both continue to work outside Serve but are thrilled by the community response.

Two Fox opened its doors in May after closing for the winter. They withdrew their food permit application. They will offer shelf-stable snacks — crackers and popcorn — and will no longer wash glassware. But they will provide customers with a Two Waters glass they can take home and bring back. ■



# Alli Kimball: From State Champ to National Runner-Up

The KP native is one of eight finalists vying for college softball's National Freshman of the Year honors.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

It was a beautiful 65-degree day in Lacey May 27, 2023, when Peninsula High School senior Alli Kimball and her Seahawks softball teammates hoisted the 3A state championship trophy. It was the perfect way to end a stellar season for one of the state's top pitchers.

Just 363 days later, in a city 3,160 miles away, on a day 30 degrees warmer, Kimball was the starting pitcher in yet another title match-up, this time as a freshman for the Western Washington Vikings in the NCAA Division II National Championship series. It wasn't the perfect way to end another stellar season, but what a year for one of the country's top pitchers.

"It's a year I will never forget," said Kimball, whose Vikings team finished 52-12 and national runners-up after losing two straight to University of Texas-Tyler. "I feel like I've done a pretty good job of staying in the moment and being able to cherish everything as it goes. But pitching in two championship games in less than a year, honestly, it doesn't feel real."

But Kimball is no doubt the real deal. After capping off an incredible prep career where she was the 2023 Scorebook Live Washington 3A Pitcher of the Year and the South Sound Conference Pitcher of the Year for the third straight year, Kimball went 24-4 during her freshman season with the Vikings, including 9-2 in the postseason.

Her 24 wins rank as the third most in a single season in school history. She made 32 starts, pitched seven complete games, had four shut-outs, and recorded an impressive 1.41 earned run average.

The Vikings won the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Championship and the NCAA Division II West Regional Championship. For her hard work, the honors came rolling in: All-GNAC honorable mention team, All-West Region second team, NCAA Championships All-Tournament team, and just last month she was selected as one of eight finalists for the 2024 TUCCI/NCFB Division II National Freshman of the Year Award.

Pretty good credentials for a kid who grew up on the Key Peninsula.

Kimball and her family moved to Vaughn when she was 5 years old. She went to Vaughn Elementary and Key Peninsula Middle School before becoming one of the premier softball players in the state with the Peninsula Seahawks.

Her dad, Joe, played catcher all the way through the semi-pro ranks, and Alli said he was the reason she started playing softball.

"As a parent, you start living vicariously through your kids," Joe said. "In my mind,



Kimball is congratulated by her teammates at the NCAA II World Series May 24. She went 24-4 during her freshman season in 2024, making 38 appearances (32 starts) while earning a 1.41 ERA. She recorded seven complete games and four shutouts. Her 24 wins ranked third in WWU single-season history. *Western Washington University Athletics*

my daughter was a catcher and she'd do all the things I never could do. But we never forced her to play. It was a game she fell in love with."

She got her first taste of competition when she was in third grade playing with the Key Peninsula Little League.

"(KPLL) helped me grow my passion," Alli said. "It helped me realize this is what I wanted to do." Both Alli and Joe credit Alli's KPLL coaches, Jason and Jen Moberg, for noticing Alli's potential early and encouraging her to get involved in club softball.

And that's where it all changed for Alli.

She was on the path to becoming a catcher her dad could take pride in, but it was her underhand pitching style when she was 11 that caught the eyes of both club coach Mark Anderton and University of Washington softball pitching coach Lance Glasoe.

"My dad is a great catcher and he wanted me to be just like him," Alli said. "No matter where I said I wanted to play (on the field), he said, 'Nope. You're a catcher. Catching runs in your blood.'"

But after Alli threw just a handful of pitches, Joe heard some dream-shattering news from the two subject-matter experts: "They said your daughter is a pitcher, not a catcher," Alli remembered Anderton and Glasoe telling her dad.

"It was heartbreaking," Joe said, in jest. "But

when a coach who has won a national championship (Glasoe) and a knowledgeable friend of yours (Anderton) give you that kind of feedback, it's an easy decision."

Alli's softball trajectory changed, and Joe was all in. He quickly converted a batting cage at the Kimball house so that it could also be used for pitching, something Joe is less familiar with, especially the underhand style used in softball.

"I really think she benefited from me not knowing how to pitch," Joe said. "She brings home everything she learns at practices and lessons and I just get to be a dad sitting on a bucket, catching balls. Now she's living her dream, her way. It's humbling and it's just awesome to sit back and see that."

The hard work and determination paid off. Alli played four years of varsity softball for the Seahawks where she earned a 44-6 record as the team's starting pitcher while throwing five no-hitters and recording 599 strikeouts. Her success on the softball field likely would've drawn interest from colleges across the country, but Alli said she accepted the offer from Western Washington within five minutes of getting it.

"I knew this is where I wanted to be," she said. "They really prioritize the student-athlete, and I know my academics are what is going to take me through life and softball

is just a small part of it."

Being somewhat close to home was another reason WWU was an easy choice. The Kimballs are a close-knit family and Alli repeatedly used the word "grateful" when talking about them.

Joe, Alli's mom, Shari, and her brothers Kody and Joey made the trip to Bellingham to watch the Vikings all season. Because playing in the national championship series was nearly last-minute, only Joe and Joey could make the trip out to Longwood, Florida, while Shari and Kody stayed behind to run the family's auto detailing business in Gig Harbor. The two were able to watch the online broadcasts of the games on all the TVs in the shop.

Alli wrapped her freshman year at WWU last month where she is finishing up her general requirements before deciding what she wants to major in. Right now she's leaning toward coming back to the area after graduation to teach and coach, but she has three more years to figure it out. She also has three more years to compete for another championship, and according to Alli, that is likely since the team is not losing many seniors to graduation this year.

"On the plane ride back from the national championship, we were already planning our trip to Tennessee (for next year's NCAA championship)," Alli said. "If our team keeps going as it is, the chances are high we'll be back." ■



# Naloxone Vending Machine Comes to Key Center Library

It is one of several free distribution points in the county for the potentially lifesaving drug anyone can possess and administer to stop an opioid overdose.

VICKI BIGGS, KP NEWS

Thanks to a partnership between the Pierce County Rural Library District and the Tacoma Needle Exchange, naloxone (also called Narcan) is available for free at the Key Center Library to assist anyone in danger of an opioid overdose on the Key Peninsula.

The two-pack nasal spray naloxone kits are kept in a vending machine like those used to sell newspapers, making a small footprint in the library, together with instructions for its safe use and on finding additional resources.

“The library system priority is to align with and strengthen connections in the community,” said Jessica Widner, supervising librarian at the Key Center Branch.

The library staff received training on the drug from the Tacoma Needle Exchange staff June 13, upon installation of the vending machine. Tacoma Needle Exchange paid for the machines and is responsible for monitoring, restocking, and maintaining them. The Tacoma Public Library has had vending machines for some time.

Needle Exchange Executive Director Paul LaKosky and Director of Operations Stephanie Prohaska presented the information to the staff. LaKosky said “The kits are here at the direct request from the community,” following a meeting in spring 2023 at KP Community Services for opioid awareness hosted by the Elevate Health organization. “We’ve been trying to get the kits out there ever since that meeting,” he said.

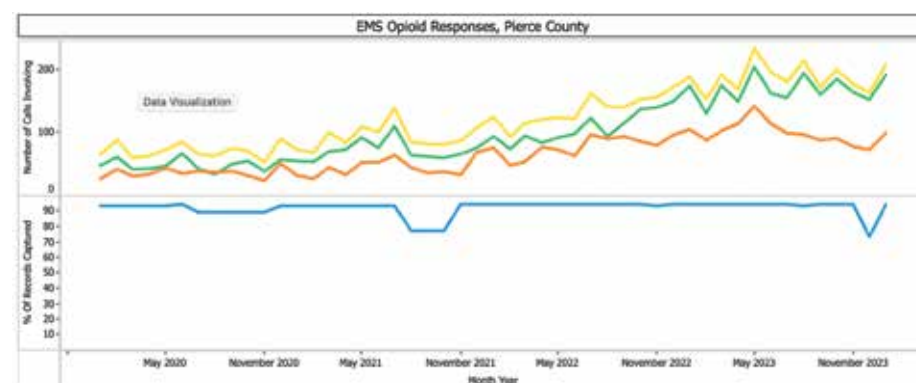
The only purpose of naloxone is to help an overdosing person keep breathing, allowing time for other emergency measures. It doesn’t require a prescription, and anyone can possess and administer it. Most first responders carry it.

“If a person has the means to save a life and does not use that means and chooses not to, it says more about that person,” LaKosky said. “Every person who overdoses, who needs our help to survive, is someone’s father, mother, or child, or friend. We carry naloxone because we care about our community.”

According to the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, opioid-related overdose is the most common cause of accidental death in the county, surpassing both traffic accidents and firearm deaths. There were 240 overdose deaths in the



At least one patron used the vending machine the day it was installed. Tina McKail, KP News



Pierce County EMS opioid overdoses from May 2020 to November 2023. Yellow: possible overdose. Green: opioid impression. Orange: naloxone response. Blue: total records.

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

county in 2021, the most recent year with complete data according to TPCHD. Overdose deaths in Washington are growing fastest among people ages 18-24.

Naloxone is the generic name for a drug approved in 1971 to reverse opioid overdoses under the brand name Narcan. There are other products now, but

OPIOID-RELATED OVERDOSE IS THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF ACCIDENTAL DEATH IN THE COUNTY, SURPASSING BOTH TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS AND FIREARM DEATHS.

many people continue to call them all Narcan. It is effective against any type of opioid: heroin, fentanyl, oxycodone, (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine and morphine. It has no effect on other drugs.

Signs of opioid poisoning include gurgling, gasping, blue lips or fingertips, loss of consciousness, pale or gray skin, and slow or no breathing. Anyone trying to help with an overdose situation should first call 911, and then follow instructions for using the naloxone kit.

Mary Getchell, marketing and communications director for the Pierce County Library System, said this is a pilot project. There are three locations slated for naloxone vending machines. In addition to Key Center, Eatonville and Parkland will be part of the pilot project.

Placing naloxone vending machines in libraries is a good way to assist with harm reduction, she said. “Anecdotally, it is friends and family of individuals picking up the packs for user emergency. Someone who is close to them, to have something on hand.”

Libraries are public spaces, open to all, with lots of foot traffic, where all people are welcome; they are neutral ground for those seeking help, Getchell said. On the Key Peninsula, as well as in Eatonville, emergency services and hospital care are out of quick reach for most, and the availability of a lifesaving remedy for opioid users could help many families avoid tragedy.

The partnership is reaching out to community entities to inform them of the new service.

The Key Peninsula Fire Department was dispatched to 21 overdoses from January to mid-June, though not all were opioid-related according to Public Information Officer Anne Nesbit.

“My hope is that there are resources present (at the vending machine) to show people when, where, and how to use it and resources on how to get help,” she said. “Narcan isn’t a fix. It’s a Band-Aid. There are still needs to be addressed to get people healthy.” ■



# The Storyteller and the Princess: The Mystery of Filucy Bay

A closer look at the legend of how the bay got its name. First installment of a two-part series.

JOSEPH PENTHEROUDAKIS, KP NEWS

William Sipple of Filucy Bay was a gifted woodworker, contractor and boat-builder, a maker of violins that he often played at local dances, and an active and well-loved member of the early Longbranch community. He built a house on the 13 acres of logged timber land on the northeast shore of the bay. The iconic boathouse on the beach that was home to his business was sometimes used for dance parties and other entertainment.

Sipple was also an accomplished storyteller, sharing tales with anyone who would listen. Two of his stories have survived in typescript, dictated in the 1930s when he was in his 70s. Their elaborate plots weave romance and adventure, tragedy and unrequited longing, secrets kept and revealed. Fact and fiction, real and imagined characters, the present and the past blend seamlessly against the familiar backdrop of Filucy Bay and the shores of Puget Sound.

Sipple's "Story of Filucy" is the source of what has effectively become the origin myth about the name of Filucy Bay. As his grandson Cliff Bartells remembered it, Sipple thought it would make a good movie.

The story has survived thanks to R.T. Arledge, the preeminent chronicler of the Key Peninsula's past. Arledge, whose family had roots in Longbranch, drew heavily from the story and included it in its entirety in "Early Days of the Key Peninsula" (1998), his expansive account of the community's beginnings.

It's the tale of the beautiful Indian Princess Filucy, daughter of a Haida Chief and a white mother, and French-Canadian Pierre Legard who

came to Puget Sound to work for the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Nisqually. Legard met and fell in love with Filucy in Port Ludlow while on HBC business; the two were married and had a son. Another man fell in love with Filucy, abducting her and her son. Heartbroken and defeated, Legard returned to a log cabin he had built in Filucy Bay on what would years later become Sipple's property. The cabin was still standing in the 1930s, according to Bartells.

There was more drama in store for Filucy and Legard, but the pair eventually



Undated photo of William Sipple by Cliff Bartells in "Early Days of the Key Peninsula." Courtesy KPHS

reunited on the bay. When Filucy died, Legard buried her near the cabin. Sipple writes that his Native friends pointed to a pile of stones on the property as the place where she was buried.

Or so the story goes.

Arledge was ambivalent about the story. "Those of a more romantic inclination will share Sipple's fascination with the tragic account of the Indian Princess, Filucy, and easily associate her with Filucy Bay," he writes. "The skeptical reader of the story would require more data and documentation."

He also suggested that Legard may have mentioned Filucy's name to visiting surveyors, who then used it on their maps. That key detail is missing from Sipple's story; the origin of the name was not what the story was about. Yet local

lore has distilled the love story to the different claim that Filucy Bay was named for Princess Filucy, the beautiful

daughter of a Haida Chief and a white woman.

The history of how the bay was named will be the subject of the second part in this series, but that description still contains two claims that are problematic on linguistic and ethnographic grounds.

First, Haida, like all Native languages in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia, lacks the sound "f". That was observed by Horatio Hale, the philologist on the Wilkes expedition that reached Puget Sound in 1841 and is still the case today. In Chinook jargon, the



O.A. Anderson owners' map of Filucy Bay, ca 1888 (detail). Sipple's property was still under Joseph Shettleroe's name.

Tacoma Public Library

trade language in the 1800s, the English word "fish" was realized as "pish."

Looking at this from the other direction, there is no sound in those languages that is realized as "f" in English.

In short, the name Filucy was not a Haida word or a word in any language in the region.

Secondly, the claim that Filucy was the daughter of a Haida chief and a white woman flies in the face of Native ethnography. According to local archaeologist Lynn Larson, while marriages between white men and Native women were common and are well documented, unions between Native men, particularly chiefs, and white women were rare to nonexistent.

These inaccuracies in no way detract from William Sipple's story. Sipple was not writing history; he told a captivating tale, perhaps loosely based on what he had heard about a beautiful and inspiring place that he loved.

But there is a more interesting element in the story that may be the closest it gets to historical fact, and it has to do with Pierre Legard.

Legard is said to have given up the benefits of higher education and life among his own white community in favor of life among the Hudson Bay trappers, making his home in remote Filucy Bay. The bay was an important

site for seasonal gatherings by the tribes of the south Sound, and it may well have served as a stopping point for Natives traveling to and from Fort Nisqually.

Pierre Legard is absent from archival sources. He is not listed on Canadian censuses in the 1800s, nor does he appear on the Hudson's Bay Company employee archives under any spelling (Legarde, Lagard, Lagarde), although the HBC's online archive does not include all employees. He is not mentioned in the journals of Fort Nisqually, and is missing from county, territorial or U.S. censuses and other documents.

Arledge mentions that Pierre Legard had a brother named John who had settled on a donation claim near Roy. As it turns out, the HBC employee archive does mention a Joseph Lagarde who worked on the steamer Beaver from 1844 to 1846. The Beaver was the first steamship to operate in Puget Sound starting in 1836, three years after the company's post at Fort Nisqually was established. Lagarde left the HBC in 1853.

Joseph Lagarde also shows up as Joseph Legard on the 1851 census of Lewis County, which included today's Pierce County and at the time was still part of Oregon Territory. On later censuses he stated that he was born in the Red River of the North, the site of a Métis colony in Manitoba. Métis are communities in Canada that resulted from unions between Indigenous and European people.

In fact, Lagarde's daughter Mary Lagarde-Wren did describe him as "half Indian" on her application for enrollment in the Quinault tribe in 1914.

Joseph Lagarde must have been Arledge's John Legard of Roy, which would make Pierre "half Indian" as well. That might explain his preference for the company of Native people in Puget Sound.

The discovery also makes it more likely that Pierre Legard existed, even though he avoided detection by history. The mention of a brother in Roy is hard to explain otherwise.

In the end, the story of Filucy may be a romantic tale inspired by distant echoes of the complicated love between a Canadian Métis man and an Indigenous woman from British Columbia.

As it turns out, the story of how the bay got its name has enough complications of its own. ■



# The Dreaded Herb Robert, or the Curse of Stinky Bob — Beware Ye Gardeners!

KAMRYN MINCH

On most summer days you'll find me toiling away in the garden, crawling around on all fours or standing at a 90-degree angle, hands on my hips, staring into the green and brown abyss like a mad woman on the hunt for one of my archrivals, the dreaded Herb Robert.

To the unsuspecting novice, Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), also called Robert's geranium, looks to be a splendid native wildflower. Preferring to grow on woodland edges, the delicate pink flowers adorn the long fuzzy red stems against a backdrop of elegant lacy foliage. So effortlessly does it form large drifts among the ferns and salal, that it almost seems wrong to assume it's a stranger from a far-off land. But that's exactly what it wants you to believe.

Herb Robert is among the nastier little weeds we must contend with here in the PNW. Along with most of our noxious intruders, it was brought here as either a medical herb or someone's favored cottage ornamental, and from there it made itself at home choking out less competitive native species. To eradicate it would be a resounding victory for the region. But its greater ecological impact is beside the point. Where it really gets on my nerves is where I don't want it — in my dang gardens!

But compared to other weeds, a young, tender Herb Robert is my preferred adversary. It's easy to identify and easier to pull than most invasive species, which tend to anchor down with tap roots that might as well be a mile long. And unlike hairy bittercress or creeping oxalis, the seed pods don't explode upon the slightest graze and shoot me in the eye. But that's where the redeeming qualities of Herb Robert end for me.

The moment Herb Robert begins to sprout in spring it's a race against the clock to locate and remove as much of the population as possible before it goes to seed. Of course, it's a crucial time for controlling a plethora of our most persistent weeds, but there are some things unique to Herb Robert that make a mature plant especially dreadful.

As the arrival of longer, warmer days triggers most plants

to bounce into reproductive action, Herb Robert is no exception, and like a teenage boy with unsupervised access to Old Spice, Herb Robert develops a most obnoxious stench.

If you've never had a whiff of this particular aroma, imagine basting Brussels sprouts

**IF YOU'VE NEVER HAD A WHIFF OF THIS PARTICULAR AROMA, IMAGINE BASTING BRUSSELS SPROUTS IN PAINT THINNER.**

in paint thinner. It's about like that.

It's a sneaky sort of stink too because Herb Robert doesn't gas you until it's pulled. I'm assuming this is some sort of defense mechanism against herbivores

that seems to have been duly noted by our local fauna since the plant has spread so efficiently.

As if the smell wasn't bad enough, the early sprouts that were so small and easy to shimmy out of the soil turn into spindly behemoths that become intertwined with every neighboring ground cover, shrub and ornamental grass, rarely ever in a convenient location to yank out. Identifying the origin point of one of



Herb Robert looks to be a splendid native wildflower. Don't be fooled. *Kamryn Minch*



the gangly stems is a mystery one does not care to solve in the middle of an oppressively hot day. And despite my best efforts to glare them into submission, I often find the best I can do is decapitate the exposed peduncles to slow down Stinky Bob's pace until the fall frost finishes the job.

I've tried not to regard invasive plants as anything other than what they are — the enemy. There's a phase all new gardeners go through where we decide to learn about the weeds in our gardens to maybe appreciate their purpose beyond being a menacing

fart carpet on our forest floors.

A quick Google search will come up with a lengthy list of the traditional uses of Herb Robert. One is, quite fittingly, a treatment for diarrhea. A study published on the National Library of Medicine's website from May 2023 examined Herb Robert's antibacterial properties that showed promising results in the plant's ability to treat "hard-to-heal wounds." Physical, not emotional, unfortunately.

Despite these attempts to endear Herb Robert to me, none of it changes the fact that it just doesn't belong here. Until further studies prove its potential as a medicinal cash crop, I can't afford to see it as more than just a stinky weed. The hunt must go on. ■



## LEVY FROM PAGE 1

services that we are currently bringing to the community,” said Public Information Officer Anne Nesbit. “The public has been giving the department this blessing since 2012. We are hopeful that it continues and that we get the voter turnout needed to pass.”

There are staunch supporters of the levy.

Vaughn resident Tom Buerger said that ever since he needed the help of first responders when he lived in Bellevue he will always approve levies like this.

KPFD volunteer firefighter Garrett Cranford said his “inspiration to become a firefighter is because of the Key Peninsula Fire Department.”

There are also detractors, including district members fed up with the commissioners “not being truthful with the public.”

Then there are some leaning toward a yes vote who share a common caveat: the desire for increased accountability from the board.

One firefighter who spoke to KP News on condition of anonymity out of fear of retaliation said they will vote for the levy, but understands “A no vote may be needed to wake the board of commissioners up. They’re not handling the matters of the district well.”

Another said, “I feel like it’s saying, ‘We don’t have to be accountable to you because if you vote yes, then it’s business as usual, but if you vote no, then you lose services.’ That’s frustrating to think about it.”

After Commissioner John “Pat” Kelly was elected to the board in 2023, he told KP News it was “iffy” whether he would vote to approve the levy, but he has since moved to support it. “We need the money, but I don’t begrudge anyone who wants to send a message,” he said. “There’s still zero accountability for this terrible decision.”

Kelly referred to the district’s decision to buy two parcels of property near Key Peninsula Highway and Olson Drive nearly three years ago. KPFD has been under fire since it paid for the property at double its assessed value.

Recently retired KPFD Captain Robert Bosch thought having the properties was a good idea that lacked an implementation strategy.

“The idea was big and bold and needed more time to grow,” he said, “It’s way more complicated than (saying the fire district) paid too much for the property.”

It was just bad timing, Bosch said. During negotiations, Morrow’s name came up for the top job at Central Pierce Fire &

Rescue and he left just as the last purchase was finalized.

“That’s where it lost traction. Nobody else was prepared or briefed or was capable of communicating what the goal was,” Bosch said. “The vision was greater than what we see today, but unfortunately it got misread . . . some could argue mishandled.”

“(Morrow) had a great plan and that was to get property to adequately train our members,” another district member said. “That’s what our community deserves — a department that’s trained and skilled in its profession.” But the member added: “(When Morrow left) the board didn’t know what was going on with it, so they looked like buffoons when answering questions.”

Others don’t look as favorably on Morrow’s decisions.

“He was the beginning of some of the biggest problems our district currently faces,” said another fire district member on condition of anonymity. “Why would we need another fire station when our current stations are fine, and we aren’t even fully staffed at all of them?”

Claudia Jones, who was a fire commissioner from 2009 to 2015 and remains a longtime KPFD volunteer, credited Morrow for being ambitious, but didn’t think he researched what was available “to follow that dream of his.” She said to build something like he planned the district would run into logistical issues like The Mustard Seed Project faced successfully developing its assisted living campus: water, septic, permitting.

The issue of transparency has also been a point of contention. Some community members felt blindsided by the property purchase, accusing the board of making decisions without adequate public discussion.

“I don’t remember getting a heads-up about them buying the property, and for a number of my neighbors that was their big beef,” Buerger said.

“The commissioners make some weighty decisions with zero public discussion,” said another community member who regularly attends board meetings and asked to remain anonymous. “They have to have these discussions somewhere. That’s not transparency. We want to hear the discussions and how they arrived at a decision. Instead, it’s just silence, and then it’s done.”

There is time set aside for public comment at board of commissioner meetings, which are held the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month at 5 p.m., but it’s not meant for questions and answers. If residents do have questions for board members, Board Chairman Randy Takehara advises them to use the email addresses listed on the

## Update on the Key Center Properties

Nearly three years ago the Key Peninsula Fire District spent \$2.125 million on Key Center real estate for a new headquarters building, a training facility, and a health clinic.

KPFD will begin repaying the principal on the loans used to buy the property in December 2024, with payments of approximately \$129,000 due twice a year until 2040, unless one or more of the properties are sold by then.

The corner parcel — known as the O’Callahan’s property after the former restaurant at the location — was bought specifically to house a new health clinic, but since then Peninsula Community Health Services opened two miles away. Takehara said that the clinic meets the community’s needs and because of that the fire district is entertaining offers for that parcel. The board, however, isn’t actively trying to sell it because of high interest rates and low interest in the property itself. A recent offer to buy the property to open a daycare at the location was turned down by the board because it wasn’t willing to sell at that price.

Takehara addressed why the district didn’t inspect what appeared to be a derelict building before it was purchased. “The plan is and was to demolish it, so we did not want to waste (taxpayer money) on one.”

The parcel behind O’Callahan’s, known as the Olson estate, is designated for the

new fire station and training center. Takehara said that currently KPFD must take personnel out of service or pay overtime to send them to training centers in Gig Harbor, Bremerton and Lakewood, and a local training center would save on costs.

Once a new station is in operation, Takehara said that the current Key Center station would be put up for sale.

That wouldn’t be soon enough, according to one fire district member who wished to remain anonymous.

“That building that calls itself the KPFD headquarters is a rusty tin can that needs to be brought down and repurposed. It’s exceeded its shelf life.”

Takehara doesn’t disagree. “This site is too small and is expanded to its absolute maximum for district needs. This would offset costs of the new construction, as well as give back retail frontage on the KP Highway.”

The district doesn’t have the funding in its budget to develop any of these buildings.

“If we were to build a new station, we would have to go out to bond,” said KPFD Public Information Officer Anne Nesbit.

One community member said, “I don’t see (a bond going out for vote) being successful with the current reputation and level of trust within the community.”

Another district member raised the question: “If there’s no money to build on it, is there even a reason to have it?”

KPFD website. He said each email will get a response. “We still get little to no feedback directly,” Takehara said.

“We’re sensitive to the fact there are community members out there that have distrust, and we make our decisions accordingly,” Takehara said. “At the end of the day, (board members) are KP residents who care about the community and the district, and we want the best services for everyone possible.”

Passing the levy is not as simple as getting more yes votes than nos. In order to pass, the levy needs a 60% super-majority and a minimum 40% voter turnout (based on the previous election). The latter number is a concern for one anonymous firefighter: “The mistrust has built apathy and people may not vote at all.”

Jones said she doesn’t think 40% will turn out either.

“If it does fail, I plan on asking in an open forum that (Commissioners Jensen, Moffett and Takehara) submit their resig-

nations so (newly appointed Commissioner Cambria Queen) and I can find some citizens who want to work hard to get this thing right,” Kelly said.

Swinhart said he is being realistic and filing to have the levy appear again on the November ballot in case the August attempt doesn’t go according to plan. If the levy fails both times, the district has stable funding through the end of 2024, when the current levy expires, he said.

But it’s clear wherever the vote lands, those inside the fire stations are ready for this ballot to be over.

“The property purchase is said and done,” said firefighter Kevin Koehl. “We have to respond to emergencies on the KP, regardless.”

Volunteer firefighter Cranford agreed. “I think it’s time for us to move on. I’m ready for this ‘for or against’ to be done with, and I’m ready for this fire department to grow back to where it was. It’s going to take work and it’s not going to be easy.” ■



# July 4th Pancake Breakfast Coming to an End After 18 Years

The long march of the Home parade goes on, but the pancakes waiting at the end of A Street may not be there after this year.

VICKI BIGGS, KP NEWS

The unadvertised and unorganized 4th of July parade on A Street in Home has been an open secret for more than 20 years. In its infancy, the paraders were mostly children on bicycles, dog walkers, and riders on lawnmowers draped in American flags. Nowadays the parade is made up of firetrucks, classic cars, family bands, and the occasional goat, dog or donkey.

At the end of the parade route, the far end of A street, an evolving group of neighbors set up canopies and grills and served pancakes and orange juice to one and all. There was no charge or donation. Friends and neighbors gathered to spend some time together, hug those not seen for an entire year, and make plans for the day.

One change the group noted in the last few years is fewer people walking and stopping to talk at the breakfast site. There are many more vehicles in the parade, and they tend to continue driving on.

Brothers Gerald and Garry Schneider, along with Paul Gruver, are the team that created this grand finale scene for the last 18 years. All three of the founding members are retired military officers. They plan, keep meticulous records, and share the costs and labor. "We are all uber planners," Gerald said. The three are joined by spouses and family members and a few other neighbors to assist at the time of the event, ensuring that pancakes are fresh and served efficiently.

The parade has grown, especially since the Covid years, and Team Pancake organizer Gruver estimated they served over 325 meals in 2023. The servers wear specially designed aprons for the event. The goal is to serve food as fresh, tasty, and fun as possible.

Margaret and Alan Golston joined the team about 10 years ago. Alan was assigned to the pancake flipping table. Gruver's mother, Maruth, ran quality control.

"She was exacting and insisted I learn the proper technique," Alan said.

Maruth was flipping pancakes until her passing just before the 2023 event. "Her apron is retired," Gruver said.

The group has created and printed stickers to give away with meals for the last four years, with the hopes that the "stickers will end up on water bottles or car windows and remind our neighbors of one happy event ... where there were no political parties or arguments, in a place where the whole point is to say hello, catch up on the latest gossip, and laugh with a mouthful of sweet and savory breakfast without judgment," Gruver said.



Comradery and fun are foremost for Team Pancake. "The level of kibitzing is unreal," Garry said. "God forbid one of your pancakes is burnt because you are going to suffer like being attacked on some celebrity cooking show."

For his brother Gerald, the parade is all about the children, those watching and those walking.

"These are the best pancakes I've ever had in my life!" said one kid to Gerald. "I look forward to it every year," said another.

"The pancakes are made with love," Gerald said. "We've gotten to know the people in the community. This is a point of recognition. It's an opportunity to come together every year on our nation's anniversary. It's harder to dislike a stranger when you find common ground."

Despite all the years of enjoyment and goodwill, the group said this may be the last year for Team Pancake. The group is feeling some of the effects of aging combined with changes in families, and the addition of grandchildren. "There is a special sense of community in Home, and it was wonderful being part of something that added to that spirit," Garry said.

"Our goal has always been to have this event remain free, easy, and without ties to any organization of any kind, so there is nothing other than the idea of having breakfast with your neighbors on a beautiful summer morning," Gruver said. "It is difficult to convey how hard it is to give up this thing. It is just my baby and I've loved it. The motivation and fire came from me. But everyone wants to scale back a bit."

Team Pancake hopes the community will

find a way to step up and continue the tradition. They are all willing to mentor a new team and provide support for a handoff to a new

group. They have set up an email dedicated to responses to the call for help at Home4thpancakes@gmail.com. ■

All good things must come to an end — maybe. The pancake team of A Street created and then maintained a KP tradition for nearly two decades. They seek intrepid souls ready to take on the mantle. Are you worthy of the apron? Answer the call at Home4thpancakes@gmail.com.

Courtesy Garry Schneider

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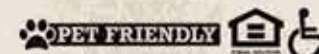
  
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# The Nacho Cheese Revelation — Yes, More Cheese Will Save Us All!

KAMRYN MINCH

The other night I had a huge hankering for some nachos. Usually, in that situation, I would go to the store and get a jar of queso. However, in an effort to avoid eating anything containing ingredients I can't pronounce, my New Year's resolution was to not eat any "junk" food. But because I know my willpower can't always be trusted when certain cravings emerge, I allowed myself a loophole where if I wanted to indulge in my usual processed favorites, I would need to learn how to make a version of them myself.

This might sound like torture to some, but once you've made something from scratch you'd normally buy, you're going to feel unstoppable in your newfound sense of freedom. And that's exactly how I felt when I made this nacho cheese for the first time.

Your kids, your grandkids, your friends and your enemies will fall at your feet begging to be blessed with the drizzle of this liquid gold.

I think this recipe might be my biggest revelation, if not the pride, of my entire culinary journey — and I've survived the ordeal of making croissants. Getting those labor-intensive pastries to rise doesn't compare to the satisfaction of producing a smooth, flavorful, nacho cheese sauce.

**ONCE YOU'VE MADE SOMETHING FROM SCRATCH YOU'D NORMALLY BUY, YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL UNSTOPPABLE IN YOUR NEWFOUND SENSE OF FREEDOM.**

I've attempted nacho cheese before, and it's just never been awesome. It always turned out too grainy and too thick, which I have decided to chalk up to using flour as the thickening agent. Something has always felt off about concocting nacho cheese with a roux (butter, flour, milk). It's too formal. It's like wearing a ball gown to a barbecue. Nacho cheese needs something akin to dirty sneakers. And for that type of grime, I turn to cornstarch.

While considered an ultra-processed ingredient lacking any nutritional value, cornstarch is on its own an ingredient derived from something with a name that I can pronounce and is actually

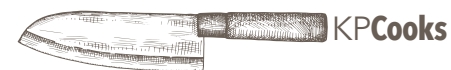


Serve cheese over nachos or as a stand-alone dip. *Kamryn Minch*

a product I could (through a mildly arduous process) make at home using dent corn. Therefore, I give it a pass on my quest to recreate the junk foods

of my dreams.

When I substituted cornstarch for flour in a nacho cheese recipe for the first time, I nearly fainted at how silky



the texture was both in the pot and over the chips. It was reminiscent of my days as a teen working a ballpark concession stand, ladling a near-neon orange concoction from a giant can onto a bed of stale tortilla rounds. But now my cheese has an air of sophistication with the addition of sautéed red onion, jalapeños and real spices.

This recipe is super easy and takes about 10 minutes to throw together. Leftovers (if there are any) can be stored in the fridge for up to a week (if they last that long). And while this cheese sauce is amazing for nachos paired with other toppings like ground beef, black olives, tomatoes, sour cream and salsa, it is also great as a standalone dip. Wherever you decide to serve it, be it at dinner time or during a tailgate party, you're going to be everyone's hero.

## Nacho Cheese Sauce

- 3 cups of shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ½ red onion, diced
- ½ cup diced jalapeños (from a jar) or 1 can of green chiles for a mild heat
- 3 cloves of minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon Ancho chili powder
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 can of evaporated milk

Shred 3 cups (or one 8-ounce block) of sharp cheddar cheese and set aside.

In a medium-sized pot melt butter over medium heat, add the red onions, and sauté for about 2 minutes or until translucent.


Next add diced jalapeños, minced garlic, and spices, sauté until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Then sprinkle in the cornstarch and mix well.

After the cornstarch has been thoroughly incorporated, slowly pour in the evaporated milk and stir. Bring to a boil, add the cheese and mix consistently until it melts through, creating a creamy consistency. Take off the heat immediately. The sauce will thicken as it cools down.

Serve right away! ■



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**Peninsula High School Band Boosters:**  
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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

To add a listing for your event or find the latest details, visit [www.keypennews.org/calendar](http://www.keypennews.org/calendar)

**July 1 Brunch and Bingo** 11:30 a.m. The Mustard Seed Project. Open to the community, \$5 for brunch and suggested donation of \$1 per game for bingo.

**July 3 Low Tide Walk - Penrose Point** 10:15 a.m. – 2 p.m., Harbor WildWatch. Discovery Pass required, meet on the lawn near the fire pits. More details at [harborwildwatch.org](http://harborwildwatch.org).

**July 3 KP Readers: An Hour of Coffee and Conversation** 10:30 a.m., Key Center Library. "Remarkably Bright Creatures" by Shelby Van Pelt.

**July 3 Peninsula Community Health Services Mobile Clinic** 1 p.m., Key Peninsula Community Services, 253-884-4440.

**July 3 Cribbage Club** 2 – 4 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Everyone is welcome - no experience required.

**July 4 Home 4th of July Parade** 10 a.m., lineup on the Home Bridge and south along the KP Highway. Anyone interested is welcome to march.

**July 5 Low Tide Walk - Purdy Sand Spit** 10 – 11:30 a.m., Harbor WildWatch. Meet at the top of the boat launch, all ages welcome. More details at [harborwildwatch.org](http://harborwildwatch.org).

**July 5 Washington Old Time Fiddlers Association** 3:30 – 6 p.m., Crandall Center. All fiddlers, banjos, mandolins, guitars, and string basses are welcome to play.

**July 6 Bird Walks** 8:30 a.m., rain or shine. Meet nature guide Chris Rurik at Gateway Park pavilion.

**July 6 The Everlasting Harvest** 11 a.m., Key Center Library. Learn basic information about growing a year-round edible garden.

**July 6 Low Tide Tour - Joemma Beach State Park** 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Harbor WildWatch. Discovery Pass required, meet at the boat launch. More details at [harborwildwatch.org](http://harborwildwatch.org).

**July 6 Low Tide Walk - Penrose Point**

11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Harbor WildWatch. Discovery Pass required, meet on the lawn near the fire pits. More details at [harborwildwatch.org](http://harborwildwatch.org).

**July 9 TacomaProBono Legal Aid** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Key Peninsula Community Services. 1 – 3 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Free civil legal help.

**July 9 Alex Zerbe - The Maniac Comedy Show** 11 a.m., Key Center Library. For children and their caretakers, family friendly comedy show.

**July 10 Gig Harbor Literary Society** 6 p.m., Harbor History Museum. "This is Chance!" by Jon Mooallem.

**July 11 MultiCare WIC Program** 12 – 4 p.m., Key Center Library. The WIC Clinic helps pregnant people, new and breastfeeding moms, and children under 5.

**July 11 KP Parks Swing Dance** 6 – 8 p.m., Gateway Park Pavilion. Live music from Indigo Jazz.

**July 13 Master Gardener Talks - More Trees Please** 10 a.m., Sehmel Homestead Park Demonstration Garden. Creating your own urban forest.

**July 16 Salmon - The Ultimate Champion!** 11 a.m., Key Center Library. Ages 5 and up. See what it's like to migrate through a salmon challenge course.

**July 16 Hootenanny** 2 – 4 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Folksong sing and play along.

**July 17 Cribbage Club** 2 – 4 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Everyone is welcome - no experience required.

**July 18 Kid's Concert with Eric Ode** 11 a.m., Gateway Park. Free kids concert.

**July 20 Youth Gardening Workshop** 10:30 a.m., Sehmel Park Demonstration Garden. Children will learn about flowers and pollinators. Registration required.

**July 20 - 21 38th Annual Summer Art Festival** 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sehmel

Homestead Park. Over 100 artists, live music, food and drink vendors, and kids activities.

**July 20 - 21 Olalla Lavender Festival** 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Olalla Community Center. Vendors, classes, workshops, and food and wine. Full info at [www.olalla-lavender-festival.com](http://www.olalla-lavender-festival.com).

**July 23 Build and Create - Drop in Art and Science for Kids** 11 a.m., Key Center Library. For elementary aged children and their caretakers.

**July 25 KP Community Council Coffee Hour** 11 a.m., KPC Office at the KP Corral. Coffee, pastries, and a guest speaker. [keypencouncil@gmail.com](mailto:keypencouncil@gmail.com).

**July 25 Key Pen Book Club** 11 a.m., The Mustard Seed Project. July's book selection: "Empire Falls" by Richard Russo.

**July 25 "That Ribbon of Highway: Woodie Guthrie in the PNW"** 6:30 p.m., Harbor History Museum. RSVP required, \$10 for non-members, \$5 for members.

**July 27 KP Parks Trails Day 2024** All Day. Visit 360 Trails for a self-guided trail walk and find all the rubber ducks.

**July 28 Edible Perennials for PNW Gardens** 2 p.m., Gig Harbor Library. Learn from Lisa Taylor about perennial food crops that thrive in Maritime Northwest gardens.

**July 28 Mopar Magic Car Show** 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Peninsula High School. Car show, drink and food vendors, and charity raffle to benefit South Kitsap Helpline.

## WEEKLY EVENTS

**Monday Al-Anon Keys to Sanity** 5 p.m., Key Center fire station. Family group.

**Monday Yoga at the Civic Center** 7 – 8 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. Schedule classes online at the civic center website.

**Monday REFIT Workout** 7 p.m., WayPoint South, [heartfitwp@gmail.com](mailto:heartfitwp@gmail.com). Women's free fitness classes.

**M-W Yoga at the Civic Center** 9:30 – 10:30 a.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. Schedule classes online at the civic center website.

**M-W SAIL** 4 p.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440. Flexibility and balance for those over 60.

**M-W-F SAIL** 10 a.m., The Mustard Seed Project, 253-884-9814. Stay Active and Independent for Life.

**M-F Tai Ji Quan** 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Exercise training program for improving balance and preventing falls.

**Tuesday Pickleball and Board Games** 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Longbranch Improvement Club. Open to the public. Coffee and games in the foyer.

**Tuesday Beginning Tai Chi** 10 a.m., The Mustard Seed Project, 253-884-9814. Drop-ins welcome, \$5 a class.

**Tuesday Friends of the Key Center Library Book Donations** 1 – 3 p.m., Key Center Library.

**M-T-W-TH Key Senior Information Center** Mon/Wed: 1 – 4 p.m., Tues: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Thurs: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. The Mustard Seed Project, 253-884-9814.

**T-W REFIT Workout** Tue 6 p.m., Wed 5:30 p.m., WayPoint North, [heartfitwp@gmail.com](mailto:heartfitwp@gmail.com). Women's free fitness classes.

**T-W-TH Red Barn Youth Center Summer Program** 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Free drop-in activities and meals offered for youth in sixth through 12th grade.

**T-TH Tai Chi** 9:45 a.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

**T-TH Summer Lunch in the Park** 12 – 1 p.m., While lunches last. Free sack lunches for kids of all ages. Gateway Park, Home Park, KP Civic Center, Gig Harbor Skate Park.

**T-TH-SA SAIL** 8:30 a.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440. Flexibility and balance for those over 60.



**T-SA KP Historical Society & Museum** 1 – 4 p.m. Open through November. keypeninsulamuseum.org

**Wednesday Shuttle Service to The Mustard Seed Project** afternoons, available for seniors 60+ and adults with disabilities on the KP. Call 253-884-2216 for information.

**Wednesday Cards and Games** 9:30 a.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

**Wednesday Open Pickleball** 10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. Open to the public. Waiver required to play; donations accepted.

**Wednesday Gentle Yoga for Older Adults** 11:15 a.m., The Mustard Seed Project, 253-884-9814.

**Wednesday Chair Yoga** 1 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project, 253-884-9814.

**Wednesday Write & Share Group** 1:30 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. With Carolyn Wiley, \$5 per session.

**Wednesday No Tears Tech Help** 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Key Center Library. Call the library to book an appointment, 253-548-3309. No tech help July 3.

**Thursday County Council District 7 Constituent Office Hours** 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., Councilmember Robyn Denson and her staff. Contact 253-798-6654 for information.

**Thursday Gig Harbor Farmers Market** 1 – 6 p.m., Skansie Park. Downtown Gig Harbor.

**Thursday Senior Bingo** 12:30 p.m., first and third Thursdays. KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

**Thursday KP Toastmasters** 8 a.m., WayPoint Church, 253-514-2836.

**Thursday Family Story Time** 10:30 a.m., Key Center Library. Story-centered fun for young children and their caretakers. No story time July 4.

**Friday Movie Screening** 12:30 p.m., second and fourth Fridays, KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

**Friday On the Road with Summer Reading** 1 – 2 p.m. Hosted by the Pierce County Library system.

**Friday Nourish Mobile Food Bank** 1 – 4 p.m. at Purdy Cost Less Pharmacy.

**Saturday Amateur Radio Club of Burley** 9 – 11 a.m. Located behind Burley Post Office at 14831 Burley Ave SE. <http://w7jq.org>

**Saturday Waterfront Walking Tour** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., tour starts at Donkey Creek Park and ends at Maritime Pier. Tour guides from Harbor WildWatch and Harbor History Museum.

**Sunday WayPoint Community Dinners** 6 p.m. Free community dinners at WayPoint North and WayPoint South churches.

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

**26th LD Democrats** First Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Meeting locations vary, check 26d.org for monthly updates.

**Baby Lounge** Third Fridays, 12 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. A gathering for connection with other parents.

**Caregiver Support Group** Third Mondays, 2 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project.

**Friends of the Key Center Library Board Meeting** Third Fridays, 10:30 a.m., Brones Room of the Key Center Library.

**Key Peninsula Advisory Commission** Fourth Thursdays, 5:30 p.m. [piercescountywa.gov/5937](http://piercescountywa.gov/5937)

**Key Peninsula Beekeepers** First Thursdays, 7 p.m. Home fire station.

**KP Business Association Luncheon.** Third Fridays, noon at El Sombrero. [kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com](mailto:kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com)

**KP Business Association** Business meeting. July 2 at 6:30 p.m. July location: Purdy Cost Less Pharmacy. [kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com](mailto:kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com)

**KP Community Council** Second Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Key Center fire station, [keypencouncil@gmail.com](mailto:keypencouncil@gmail.com). Zoom link available on Key Peninsula Council Facebook page.

**KP Civic Center Association** Board meeting, second Thursdays, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Whitmore Room, KP Civic Center, 253-884-3456.

**KP Democrats** Third Mondays, 6:30 p.m., Home fire station. [johnpatkelly@aol.com](mailto:johnpatkelly@aol.com), 253-432-4256.

**KP Emergency Prep** Third Thursdays, 7 p.m., KP Civic Center. [eprep@kpciviccenter.org](mailto:eprep@kpciviccenter.org)

**KP Fire Regular Board Meeting** Second and fourth Tuesdays, 5 p.m. on Zoom. [keypeninsulafire.org](http://keypeninsulafire.org), 253-884-2222.

**KP Historical Society** First Tuesdays, 11 a.m. at museum. [kphsmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:kphsmuseum@gmail.com)

**KP Lions Club** First and third Wednesdays, 6 p.m. Potluck at Key Center fire station, 253-525-0802. [keypeninsulalions@outlook.com](mailto:keypeninsulalions@outlook.com)

**Key Free Clinic** First and third Thursdays, 4:30 – 7 p.m. (check-in from 4:30 – 5 p.m.). KPC Office in the Key Center Corral.

**Key Pen Parks Board of Commissioners Meeting** Second Mondays, 7 p.m., Home fire station, 253-884-9240.

**KP Veterans** First and third Mondays, 7 – 8 p.m., KP Lutheran Church, 253-884-2626.

**Lakebay Fuchsia Society** First Thursdays, 7 p.m., KP Civic Center – Whitmore Room, 253-549-3015.

**Longbranch Improvement Club** Third Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Longbranch Improvement Club. 253-200-0308 or [licweb.org](http://licweb.org).

**Medicare Assistance** Second Tuesdays, 12 – 2 p.m. KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

**Peninsula Emergency Preparedness Coalition** Second Wednesdays, 6 p.m. Check [pep-c.org](http://pep-c.org) for meeting location.

**Peninsula School District Board Meeting** July 23, 6 p.m. Swiftwater Elementary School.

**Public Safety Committee** Third Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Key Center fire station.

**Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department** Tues and Thurs, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Key Center Corral. Call 253-432-4948 for the schedule; Air Quality, Triple P, COVID-19, General HD, Water/Wells, and Healthy Housing advice.

# JULY @ RED BARN

Free Summer Program for middle school & high school youth with funding by The Bamford Foundation, Peace Point, & Tacoma Pierce County Youth Violence Prevention

2-3

## 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION

Theme: Celebrate USA's Independence with foods and games  
No Field Trip this week

9-10-11

## WHEELS • WATER

Theme: Try out different wheels and experience water pressure  
Field Trip: Explore 360 Trails & cool off in the Spray Park

16-17-18

## WHAT'S IN THE WOODS?

Theme: Explore Red Barn's 8 acres  
Field Trip: Maple Hollow Beach Hike

23-24-25

## YOU'LL BE SANDY

Theme: Sand, water balloons, and popsicles  
Field Trip: Penrose Point State Park for low tide

30-31-1

## IT'S SHAPING UP TO BE A GOOD DAY!

Theme: Going in circles and checking all the boxes  
Field trip: Civic Center to roller skate and play tennis

Hours: 8:00a - 4:30p 15921 84th St NW, Lakebay, WA

Questions? [kellie.bennett@redbarnkp.org](mailto:kellie.bennett@redbarnkp.org) or 253-884-1594



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waypoint-church.org 253-853-7878 office@waypoint-church.org

Lakebay Community Church

Prayer for the World, Mondays @ 5 p.m.  
Harvest Share Food Ministry, Wednesdays @ 1 p.m.  
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LEFT: Dr. Roes and The Down Home Band waited all their lives to play in the Vaughn Library Hall, refurbished, restored and reopened June 9. *Tina McKail, KP News*  
ABOVE: A trio of Olson girls from pioneer stock wouldn't have missed this grand opening. *Tina McKail, KP News*  
BELOW: Project Manager Bart Wolfe tells captivating stories of the restoration work. *Tina McKail, KP News*



MID LEFT: KP Historical Society stalwart and president emerita Judy Mills of Vaughn dreamed for 10 years this day would finally come. *Joseph Pentheroudakis, KP News*  
BELOW: A vintage photo of early Vaughn students on the hall's main stage. *Tina McKail, KP News*  
BOTTOM LEFT: After a decade of work by scores of volunteers, the hall is once again ready to fulfill its purpose to serve, educate and entertain the community. *Tina McKail, KP News*  
BOTTOM RIGHT: The grand old dame has overlooked Vaughn Bay for 131 years. *Tina McKail, KP News*

