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THE VOICE OF THE KEY PENINSULA

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Photo: Tim Heitzman, KP News

KP Icon Lulu's to Close New owners, menus and décor. And breakfast, all coming later this year.

LISA BRYAN/TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Lulu's Homeport Restaurant and Lounge is scheduled to close its doors in early January after nearly 30 years of hardening the arteries and warming the hearts of Key Peninsula diners.

The beloved blue diner, located at 1509 Key Peninsula Highway NW in Home, had been for sale since June 2017 and was sold to Ricardo Sahagun and Edgar Anaya, the cousins and business partners who own Two Margaritas in Allyn, Poulsbo and Union. The Lakebay location will make their fourth Mexican restaurant when the sale closes in a few weeks.

Lulu's Homeport has been an oasis for a variety of local wildlife, ranging from loggers to programmers, teachers and pastors, and cabals of crusty old men debating events both current and long past. The lounge was the go-to meeting place for groups such as the KP Business Association and KP News for monthly meetings and planning sessions.

"I'm tired, worn out, like a dirty old dish cloth," said owner Lulu Smith. She said it's hard to imagine retirement after working so long, but said she's getting a lot of good feedback from customers and others begging her not to go. "I'm nearly 74 now, so that's a lot of years. We'll have a good closing party before it's all over."

Smith got her start in the restaurant business "at age 14, working as a soda jerk at Woolworth's" in her home town of Kansas City, Missouri. From there she worked in food service for many years and eventually opened Lulu's on McKinley Avenue in Tacoma. After a dozen years there she decided to build her own restaurant in Lakebay and Lulu's Homeport was born.

Smith, who lives at Palmer Lake, said she has no intention of leaving except to visit her sister, maybe go to Hawaii, or see an old friend in Mexico if she gets up the nerve.

Smith earned an honorable reputation for helping the community with Christmas present giveaways, Easter egg hunts and fundraisers to support local schools, and awarded free meals to students at Evergreen Elementary who achieved high academic goals. During the infamous ice storm of 1996, much of the KP was without electricity for many weeks but the Homeport had power and the kitchen staff worked around the clock to help feed a cold and hungry community. "Peninsula Light had so many workers to feed, they set up a running tab," Smith said.

The new owners plan a complete remodel including new floors, new bathrooms, and some work in the kitchen that they hope to wrap up within three months.

"We're going to get busy on that right away, but you know, with construction business, it may take a little longer," Sahagun said.

"Our family has been in the restaurant business for a lot of years," he said. "Edgar's parents opened on Bainbridge Island in '93 and my parents opened on Vashon in '96."

For locals accustomed to breakfast at Home on the weekends, there is hope that chicken fried steak with gravy and eggs and those stacks of enormous pancakes with bacon might return before too long.

"We're looking to do traditional American breakfasts in Lakebay," Sahagun said. "We took over the Bistro a few years ago up at the golf course in Lakeland Village (in Allyn), so that's ours also. We've got Brandon up there and he does really good breakfasts, so we're developing a breakfast menu for down here as well." They plan to see how it goes with breakfast, starting out with Friday, Saturday and Sundays.

"We've made a lot of friends over the years who live down here and drive all the way up to Allyn. That's what really brought us out here," he said.



Photo: Chris Konieczny, KP News

Lakebay Marina Owner Agrees to Sell to Boating Group

A boaters' advocacy association wants to set a new course for the historic property.

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

The Recreational Boating Association of Washington and its nonprofit RBAW Marine Parks Conservancy announced Dec. 12 that it has entered into a purchase and sale agreement to acquire Lakebay Marina with the goal of rehabilitating and preserving it in perpetuity as a marine park by donating it to the state.

The reported purchase price of \$1.25 million, which remains to be fully funded, has a closing date set of Sept. 2020. As of Dec. 20, \$280,000 had been raised, with

"WE'RE NEVER GOING TO GET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS."

\$250,000 of that coming from the Pierce County 2020-2021 biennial budget thanks to the efforts of Pierce County Councilmember Derek Young (Gig Harbor-Dist. 7).

"We need to show that this is really important to the community and that's why we made the \$250,000 appropriation," Young said. "Frankly, it wasn't unanimous but we got there. Rural areas don't have a lot of job opportunities, but recreation is one of them."

Bob Wise, president of RBAW, said, "We want this to remain a property that's open to the public. If we lost another marina, particularly in south Puget Sound, what a tragedy."

RBAW is a large organization, with over 10,000 individual boaters and 50 clubs promoting the interests of boaters in Washington. Wise said the first objective is to secure funding for purchase and that he is confident people will come forward to donate. The nonprofit RBAW Marine Parks Conservancy organization has already applied to the IRS for a 501(c)(3) tax status and expects approval shortly. After the title transfer, additional money will be raised for improvements.

"It's a special session, not a budget year for state legislators, so getting a major capital request funded is not the easiest thing in the world," Young said. "The big push will be down in Olympia and our 26th legislators are really going to have to do some heavy lifting."

Wise said, "We've met with all the representatives of the 26th Legislative District. This is not a political issue. I think they are very supportive."

After seven years as a director of RBAW, Wise became its president in 2019.

"This year I wanted to start us back on a legacy-building tradition and this is part of a plan to return RBAW to its roots," he said. This is not the first time the RBAW has

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KEY PENINSULA NEWS

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Here's What I Think About That

LISA BRYAN,
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, KP NEWS

I am settling in with a cup of hot coffee after a walk in the woods with the dogs. There is nothing so invigorating as the feeling that follows a winter walk with my friends in the cold morning air, with lingering fog in the fields and ever widening gaps of blue sky. Light streams into the forest and steam rises as winter sunbeams gently kiss huckleberry and salal just enough to make them blush.

Happy New Year. A fresh calendar awaits, full of hope and opportunity, as I edit my own list of resolutions for 2020. With plenty of calendars behind me, the voice of experience mocks anything too ambitious.

Saying hello to a new year means bidding an old one farewell.

In late 2019 my faithful companion, a German shepherd named Deacon, died. From the moment we adopted as a rescue in rural Montana, he followed me everywhere without fail. In his first two weeks, I leashed him up for walks to show him his new boundaries along the acres of unfenced property lines. It quickly became apparent neither leash nor fence was needed. He heeled beautifully without command, exhibiting no inclination to roam.

Later as we progressed to walks along country roads, a simple collar and leash sufficed. I used it to keep him safe from cars and more to put the other occasional walkers at ease than any fear that Deacon would act poorly.

His hackles rose at the smell of every recently used bear trail, pointing out a few I hadn't known existed. He was a pacifist. When I realized he could be stopped from chasing a squirrel by a simple 'leave it alone,' I bought a PETA membership in his name. He gave chase to deer a time or

two, but couldn't be away from me for long. Who would watch over me in his absence?

Whenever I left home by car, that dog sat in exactly the spot my feet last left the ground and waited until my return. His behavior was similar in the house. When I used the bathroom, he waited outside the door. At night, despite a soft bed of his own, he chose to sleep on the floor at the foot of ours — never dissuaded.

It was odd. He certainly liked everyone else, but he bonded to me in a way I have never experienced. As a family we've enjoyed many loyal dogs, but Deacon was different.

The details of his life before age three or four were largely unknown. Was he a registered purebred? An unneutered male at the time of his rescue, that service was performed before his adoption. Did he live strictly outdoors or indoors? How was he trained? He excelled at basic commands and heeling, but fetched neither ball nor stick. I'd toss either and he'd look up at me smiling as if to say, "Nice throw."

All we knew was that Deacon had been reported by neighbors to be sick and starving along with three other large dogs living outdoors in a fenced kennel. Their owner was a woman who spent much of her time alone. Her husband, a long-haul trucker, was rarely home so the neighbors knew little of him. The woman, diagnosed with late stage cancer, died shortly thereafter. The husband came home but grew dangerously depressed and stopped caring for himself or the four dogs his wife left behind.

What might have happened to this

trucker were it not for his wife's dogs? It was the dogs that alerted neighbors to the man's deteriorating condition. Social workers took over; he relinquished the dogs. All four were adopted by good homes and I like to think the man got his second chance too.

As many dog lovers know, one rescue begets another. Thanks to a dear friend with a big heart for German shepherds, an out-of-control 10-month old juvenile delinquent shepherd named Augie came

to live with us.

He was no Deacon. Early on I felt a little scared of him myself. He was pushy, full of himself and fearfully aggressive toward men in ballcaps. It took six months before the young dog became civilized and is currently pushed around by a 13-year

old cairn terrier, Frodo.

Thanks to Deacon, who led the way by following, Augie is now my good shepherd.

Cheers to 2020 and to dog walks every day of the year.



R.I.P. Deacon. Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News



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Third-grade student Scarlett Struthers enjoys reading aloud with Sasha. *Photo: David Zeigler, KP News*

Tutors with Tails Help Young Readers at Vaughn Elementary

The ever-popular Communities in Schools of Peninsula's Tutors with Tails program expands into Vaughn. Expansion of human mentoring is needed in Vaughn as well.

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

“Meet Sasha. She is a toy-sized Australian Shepherd. They don’t normally come this size,” said her owner Jill Peters. “And that’s the big joke around here — about Tutors with Tails — Aussies don’t have tails,” she said.

Smiling is infectious around 5-and-a-half-year-old Sasha. She’s very friendly, but Peters said she especially likes kids.

“After they’re done reading, I let them give her a treat and have her do tricks. She loves doing tricks.”

Peters is in her second year as a volunteer math and reading mentor with Communities in Schools of Peninsula. She began with math at Purdy Elementary

and reading at Minter Creek Elementary School last school year, while she was going through the process of getting Sasha certified as a therapy dog. By spring she added reading with the dog at Harbor Heights Elementary School to the delight of students there.

“They didn’t have a dog program in Vaughn and I’ve always told them I’m willing to go wherever I’m needed,” Peters said.

Christian Castillo is in the fourth grade. With Sasha by his side Christian quickly becomes oblivious to everything else in the library, petting the dog while comfortably reading his book aloud. At the end of

each session, Sasha seems to know there is a treat coming.

“Sasha, you’re a real mind reader, aren’t you girl?” Christian said, giving her a tiny treat as expected.

The next round of reading went to Julia Davis, a fifth-grader. Her session is similar, focused on reading aloud while gently petting the dog.

To the casual observer, it may appear to be more like fun and games, but underneath it all, real emotional and structured reading goals are being met simultaneously.

CISP Volunteer Coordinator Cathy Rich said the interaction provides not only an academic boost to students, but also helps kids who need social and emotional support, teaching equally important lessons such as kindness and compassion.

Rich said the Tutors with Tails Reading Program is currently offered at Vaughn, Evergreen, Minter Creek and Harbor Heights Elementary Schools. Launched in partnership with Peninsula School District, the pilot program provides students who may be struggling with reading, the opportunity to read with certified therapy dogs, boosting literacy, confidence and social skills.

While Sasha and student reading happens in one small corner of the library, elsewhere the long running human mentoring that goes on in this after-school program administered through CISP has a playful aspect as well.

At another table in the library sits veteran volunteer mentor Dick Vanberg, teaching a young boy to play the classic card game 21. The two talk as he shuffles the cards for another round, “It’s a fun way to learn math,” he said.

Volunteer mentors at Vaughn, like Vanberg, are in for the long game. Vanberg was recruited by Congressman Derek Kilmer for the program 15 or more years ago, he said, long enough to have forgotten exactly. Other mentors at Vaughn have racked up over a decade at the school.

The consistency and dedication of CISP mentors is appreciated by Patti Wilson, the librarian at Vaughn Elementary since 2015 and the manager of the after-school volunteer reading program and staff for CISP. Wilson said she loves her job and is proud of the long-running program at Vaughn, the school where the after-school program was born.

“Our volunteer mentors make a big difference here and that’s what it’s all about,” Wilson said.



Fourth-grader Christian Castillo reads Sasha a story. *Photo: David Zeigler, KP News*

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Victoria Beeber helps fifth-grader Willow Mossberg with her speech. *Photo: Krisa Bruemmer, KP News*

Successful Little Toasters Program Supports Young Girls

The growing 80-girl program, modeled after Toastmasters International, is offered at all elementary schools in the Peninsula School District.

KRISA BRUEMMER, KP NEWS

Little Toasters is about far more than public speaking practice and leadership skills. It is a place where young girls are able to boost their confidence level, discuss emotions and work towards personal goals. Teachers and counselors recommend third through fifth grade girls for the Children's Home Society of Washington-sponsored after-school program, and students in the group invite siblings and friends to join.

"One of the reasons I joined was because I saw there was free lollipops," said fourth-grader Isabella Ruiz, who goes by Bella. "But this also did help me a lot. I used to have a lot of stage fright.

"You can share anything you're feeling. If you're feeling really sad you can share to the people here," she said, looking serious despite her cheetah print cat ears and big pink bows.

The Vaughn Elementary School library hummed with energy Dec. 5 as nine Little Toasters discussed their "high and low" for the day.

The group is silly and fun. There are unicorns, rainbows, glittery polka dots, and light-up sneakers. There are giggles. There is also invaluable work being done.

"I auditioned for a solo," Bella said, smiling wide as she shared her high for the day. "Little Toasters has definitely made me less nervous because last year I auditioned for a third-grade concert solo and I didn't get the part. But I was pretty nervous. This year I wasn't as nervous."

"THIS IS A CRUCIAL PART OF THE PROGRAM BECAUSE IT VISUALIZES THAT GIRLS TRULY CAN DO ANYTHING THEY WANT BECAUSE AN EXAMPLE IS IN FRONT OF THEM."

"My high is that I got to play in the dirt today," said third-grader Georgia Madrid. "My low is that my finger hurts."

Other highs included an upcoming sleepover, a joke that made everyone laugh, a good book and excitement for the weekend. Broken headphones, spilled water, miscommunication and a scheduled flu shot were among the lows. When math homework came up, some girls insisted, "That's a high!" while others frowned and said, "Not for me."

One girl said, "Oh no! My brain's losing it!" when she forgot what she wanted to say.

The group facilitator, Victoria Beeber,

reminded the girls not to talk over each other, to remain seated and to keep their eyes on the speaker.

"After school it can be really hard for them to get out of class and just come and sit down and need to focus again," Beeber said. "I try to make it as fun as possible to keep them engaged, but sometimes it's just really, really hard to sit down and I recognize that."

Following "Highs and Lows," the girls spent 10 minutes writing speeches about their dream job. Some moved to far corners of the library to write. Others stayed at the main table where Beeber helped with spelling and ideas.

Some speeches were filled with theatrical noises and gestures. Some girls were more soft-spoken, enunciating each word carefully or rushing through to the finish. There were two veterinarians, two bakers, a teacher, a hairstylist, an architect, a police officer, a singer and a soldier.

"I love baking," Georgia said. "It's just like finding the song in your soul."

Every girl received a sticker and a round of applause.

"What I get out of Little Toasters is like, standing in front of a crowd, talking to people, not getting sick or pretty much petrified," said fifth-grader Ella Youngchild.

"A major success story is my Big Buddy, Teagan Nastansky," Beeber said, referring to her group's mentor, a former Little Toaster who now attends Key Peninsula Middle School and participates in the Big Buddy program.

"Teagan was super shy when I first met her," Beeber said. "She has worked really hard and made so much progress. She's constantly encouraging the current group of Little Toasters and letting them know that even though it seems hard now, it does get easier."

"It's easier for me to speak in big groups and talk to teachers and be more confident in my work," Teagan said. "I didn't use to go up in front of the class because I was too scared, but now I'm more confident doing that."

Gina Cabiddu, community manager for CHSW, said she hopes to recruit more Big Buddies. Her goals for the program also include having more female guest speakers talk about their experiences, particularly women working in male-dominated fields.

"This is a crucial part of the program because it visualizes that girls truly can do anything they want because an example is in front of them," Cabiddu said. "Prior guests have included legislators, doctors, pilots, vice presidents of Fortune 500 companies, park rangers and more."

You did it!

As we go to press, we're wrapping up our most successful fundraising season ever. It took a combination of do-gooders, altruists, supporters, benefactors and general fans. Come to think of it, that sounds like a pretty fair description of the folks who settled this place decades ago and built what we now call home. And still call our community.

Our success and growth are deeply, firmly rooted in our amazing community — and the people who give time, money and care to take care of each other.

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LAKEBAY MARINA SALE, FROM PAGE 1

purchased property to preserve for public use.

Its parent organization, the Puget Sound Interclub Association, raised \$25,000 in the 1950s to purchase part of Sucia Island, the small archipelago north of Orcas Island, in 1960 before it could be developed for private vacation homes. The organization later donated it to Washington for protection as a state marine park.

Wise, of Bainbridge Island, is no stranger to the marina business — he owns four on the Olympic Peninsula — and he kept abreast of the legal troubles of Lakebay Marina owner Mark Scott, who purchased the property in 2012.

"To a large extent the property condition had degraded to a point that it didn't make financial sense from a profit and loss standpoint," Wise said. "Mark certainly had some issues with the community, but I do think his vision was right — it's a unique property and we need to save stuff like this."

"The good news is I know how to rebuild marinas — I'm not a novice at this," he said. "Our goal is actually to fix the property up and provide the funding to do that so we're not handing the parks department a mess, and so that they can use the revenue from the marina to maintain it going forward for multiple generations."

Once known as the Washington Cooperative Egg and Poultry Association Lakebay Station, the marina is the last survivor of the mosquito fleet ferry route that operated in South Puget Sound. The marina was listed on the Pierce County Register of Historic Places by unanimous vote of the Pierce County Council on Feb. 12, 2019. (See "Lakebay Marina Awarded Historic Place Status," KP News, April 2019.)

It was later added to the Washington Heritage Registers on June 28, 2019 (See "Lakebay Marina Cafe Reopens for Now," KP News, August 2019.)

"It's going to be an incredible jewel of a property," Wise said. "We just see boaters flocking to it for literally hundreds of years. It will be perfectly preserved, it's close to Seattle, close to Tacoma and Olympia. We think it's going to be a premier boating destination for all of Puget Sound."

Wise said he was acquainted with Scott, so he picked up the phone and called him and proposed the deal.

"We were able to make something that would work for both parties and I congratulate him on having the foresight to get hold of the property and now transfer it to an organization that's going to be able to ensure that it lives on in perpetuity," Wise said.

Mark Scott did not respond to requests for comment.

Ted Olinger ANOTHER LAST WORD



A Kind of Stranger

I don't like talking to strangers. You never know what they're going to say.

I can do it if I have to — it's part of being a writer, after all — but there are some strangers I'd rather not meet.

For example, I avoid adults who are wearing pajamas in public, unless they have just emerged from a burning building.

I have little patience for strangers pointing at my face or tallying points on their fingers as they talk. These are provocative gestures symptomatic of a lazy intellect, poor impulse control and sinister motives.

Last, and obviously, I don't want drunk strangers talking to me. They are difficult to understand and impatient when not understood, and that makes them say things like: "exchoose me, exchoose me" while wagging a finger in your face.

Add to this the minefield of potential conversation disasters we must navigate nowadays: politics, climate change, the booming economy, the fake economy, mass extinctions, mass migrations, mass shootings. It's hard to take a risk on strangers.

But over the holidays, so fittingly, I was reminded it's a mistake not to.

I was in a local grocery store, a place where I am always alert to the danger of encountering strangers. But I made the mistake of opening the beer cooler and lingering too long there, having become dazzled and baffled by new and unfamiliar holiday brands.

An atmosphere of stale tobacco enveloped me. I perceived a very tall, lanky figure sliding into my periphery. He was wearing big sheepskin-lined boots that were really slippers, a faded Clint Eastwood-style serape-poncho, and on his head was perched a battered diadem that may once have been a fedora. While not exactly sleepwear, his attire did not inspire confidence.

He presented a tall boy — a 24-ounce can of beer — for my inspection. I recognized it as a generic specimen of substandard lager favored by males under 21 and over 75 years of age. In other words, men who don't know any better.

"Is this any good?"

It was the kind of question that there really is no good answer to, especially if you happen to know the truth, as I did.

"It's a bargain," I offered, diplomatically.

I glanced up at my interrogator. He was in his seventies and had a dark, deeply lined face that spoke of many seasons in the wild. Most remarkable were the bright silver eyebrows nearly the size of his enormous mustache.

"It's not for me," he said. "I don't drink anymore."

I sensed an unwanted conversation coming on when a middle-aged woman appeared at the end of the aisle 20 yards away, locked her gaze on me and bellowed, "Hey, you! Where are the gluten-free burritos?"

Did I mention I also don't like being accosted by strangers like a stray dog?

I ignored the woman to continue my unwanted conversation with the serape-sporting Clint Eastwood stand-in. This impelled her to careen down the aisle, point a finger in my face and shout, "Exchoose me! Do you work here?"

I was wearing a soggy raincoat and fisherman's bill cap with a big blue marlin embroidered on the crown, and I was carrying a basket of groceries with one hand while holding a beer cooler open with the other. After the blast of her wine breath blew past me, I said, "What does it look like?"

She stood up straight, huffed and slammed her arm down to her side, though from experience I fully expected it to come right back up at me with a fist. Instead, she looked my companion up and down and said, "Are you carrying a gun?"

Again, this is another one of those questions there is really no good answer to, especially if someone without a badge is asking it.

"Not today," said the man in the serape.

"Well, you look like you are and you should be," the woman declared, jabbing a finger first at him and then up toward heaven. "Jesus Christ loves guns," she said. "Jesus loves hunters. When God told Adam and Eve to get dressed, they went out and hunted some animals and made clothes out of the skins. God loves hunters. Do you?"

She stared at us with indignant defiance.

"My soul is prepared," the man next to me said. "How's yours?"

She stood up even straighter than before, if that's possible, slamming her arm down at her side again for emphasis. Her dyed red hair was well-styled, she sported some modest jewelry, and she wore a once elegant long blazer. Beneath that, I noticed, were pajamas.

She glared at us both. "You must be from New York!" She simultaneously lifted her chin to look down her nose at us, spun on

her heel and marched back in the direction whence she came to resume her search for gluten-free burritos.

I now considered the man in the serape a good friend. I nodded to the beer in his hand and said, "I would be happy to recommend something better than that. Who is this gift for?"

"It was for me," he said. "I just needed to be talked out of it." He handed me the can.

"Thank you," he said, and walked away.

Ted Olinger is an award-winning journalist. He lives in Vaughn.

Joseph Pentheroudakis ON THE WING



Hungry Birds

It's early December. Fall is winding down and winter is waiting in the wings, chomping at the bit. Exhausted, the garden is lying low and catching its breath. The tomato vines are a limp, tangled mess. A few desiccated artichokes perch like rusted finials on tall leafless stalks. The dahlias have long given up trying to look their best. Adding to the devastation, the ever-vigilant deer marched in and devoured what was left of the chives, kale and chard one evening when I had accidentally left the garden gate unlatched. They chewed off every single leaf on the new jasmine too while they were at it.

Yet all is not death and destruction; life still stirs here and there.

The pineapple sage, undeterred by the season and passed over by the herb-averse ungulates, shows off its bright green leaves and late-blooming spires of red tubular flowers. Those flowers in turn are a perfect fit for the long, thin bills of Anna's hummingbirds who, equally undeterred, overwinter here.

In beds and pots, the flowering annuals and perennials I planted a few years back and that spread like gangbusters may be mere shadows of their summer selves, but their seeds are nutritious snacks for dark-eyed juncos, spotted towhees and other ground feeders.

And over in the corner, just outside the fence, a giant huckleberry is home to a couple of the towhees, offering cover but also sweet treats.

Nectar, seeds and berries: those are important food sources for small birds, especially in the winter when long cold nights can challenge survival. While many species migrate to warmer latitudes where food is abundant, a large number are year-

round residents in the lowlands of Western Washington, while others extend their range by migrating short distances, from the snow zone down to lower elevations.

Chestnut-backed and black-capped chickadees, song sparrows, dark-eyed juncos, spotted towhees, red-breasted nuthatches, pine siskins, robins, golden-crowned kinglets, Pacific wrens, and even some white-crowned sparrows and American goldfinches — the list of winter birds is long. We don't notice them as much in the winter months, in part because our lives are more focused indoors, but also because many of us stop keeping our backyard feeders stocked. If you don't feed them — they will not come.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife reminds us that feeding birds is no substitute for the natural habitat they need for winter cover and spring nesting and rearing. Point taken, and luckily for our local wildlife, the Key Peninsula is no concrete metropolis; green space is still the norm. There remain a myriad of pockets, however, where that green space has been replaced by our own habitat — our roads and highways, businesses and parking lots, houses and schools, and that iconic feature of rural and suburban America: the lawn. Planting a garden that morphs into a seed depot in the winter is one way to mitigate the effects of our footprint and keep birds coming.

Whether or not you plant a garden, you can also help birds survive the winter by setting up a bird feeder or two. The practice is recommended by the Humane Society of the United States: "Bird feeding," they write, "is most helpful at times of when birds need the most energy, such as during temperature extremes, migration, and in late winter or early spring, when natural seed sources are depleted."

Most birds don't need our help in the summer, preferring a diet of insects during breeding and when rearing their young. Feeding them during that time is something we do primarily for our own enjoyment and, one hopes, edification. I am the first to admit to spending a substantial chunk of time watching all the avian goings-on at the feeders and avoiding doing whatever it is I should be doing instead.

If you're going to set up feeders, do it responsibly. Keep them clean and free of moldy seed; the National Audubon Society recommends emptying them and cleaning them at least twice a year by scrubbing them with detergent using a bottle brush, then rinsing and soaking in a 10 percent

non-chlorine bleach solution. Air-dry them, in the sun if possible.

My own offerings are simple: nyjer seed, black oil sunflower seeds and hulled sunflower chips in the tube feeders, and, in winter only, suet with bits of fruit and nuts. Suet gets messy in the summer. Fat is an important part of a bird's diet in the winter when its energy needs are higher. And, of course I keep the hummingbird feeder full as well, bringing it inside on nights when the thermometer will drop below freezing.

Finally, if you have feeders you can be a citizen-scientist by joining the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch, which collects data from November to April and helps scientists track long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Joseph Pentheroudakis is an artist, naturalist and avid birder who writes from Herron Island.

Vicki Husted Biggs

A SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE



Disenfranchised Grief

Mary's 21-year-old son died of a heroin overdose in his dorm room at college during a break between semesters. Three days later he was discovered by a cousin. He had a history of addiction, but was thought to be doing well. Mary's family and friends were devastated but did their best to comfort and support the grieving parents. However, an aura of judgment and indifference began to emerge from some friends, with a cloud of implied questions like: "What kind of parents were they?" and "How could they let this happen?" Mary and her husband eventually made the decision to move to a new location for a fresh start.

Anne's sister died by suicide. Anne was overwhelmed by grief and unable to fully comprehend what had happened, let alone answer the questions of others. The unending "Whys?" and the feelings of guilt and anger obscured any offers of comfort. Anne was also part of a cultural community that did not acknowledge suicidal ideations or acts. Anne felt incredibly alone and did not know how to mourn her loss.

I reconnected about a year ago with a relative whom I had not seen or heard from in many years. We enjoyed phone calls across the country, reminiscing about family stories, trading news of a family separated by life. Then, after not being able to reach this woman for several weeks, I received by return mail a card I had sent her with the shocking word: "deceased" handwritten

on the front of the envelope. Because of family difficulties over the years, there was no one I could call to commiserate with, or who could even tell me the circumstances of her death. It was a lonely and painful feeling because of the death itself and because there was no one to share the grief.

These are examples of disenfranchised grief, a term that refers to relationships or circumstances of a death that are considered out of the mainstream or unusual in some way. These types of losses do not elicit the kind of sympathy or support one might receive in more "normal" circumstances.

While disenfranchised grief is more familiar to grief counselors and academics, this type of grief happens in real-life settings everywhere. Knowing there is a name for it often helps people understand and cope with their losses. Simply put, disenfranchised grief can occur when people are denied the right to grieve or even to fully express their mourning.

It can also come from a death that is stigmatized by society: the result of a suicide, overdose, drunk driving, or a family member dying in prison. Other examples include deaths of an ex-spouse, a co-worker, a same-sex partner, a stillbirth, a stepparent or stepchild, a neighbor, a friend or other non-blood relationships, including the death of a beloved pet. These are often the types of relationships that others perceive as somehow less important than they are.

People manifest grief in many ways: sleeplessness, sleeping too much, overeating or lack of appetite, physical pain, crying, not crying, numbness or oversensitivity, lack of focus or hyper focusing. In short, anything that people experience in grief is normal. The process of grieving and mourning is not time-specific and there is no set order for stages of grief. These symptoms of bereavement are common to all types of grief and loss. Simply recognizing that people in disenfranchised grief are hurt by these less visible types of losses, and that their grief is no less real or painful than others, is helpful.

Disenfranchised grief is real and more difficult for its hidden or camouflaged aspects in the lives of the sufferers. As a friend recently said to me: "People in disenfranchised grief are victims twice. Once for the loss itself, and once for the shame or guilt or loneliness they experience."

Acknowledging loss in all its manifestations helps to alleviate the pain caused by death. Leave any judgment of character or morals aside, and simply bear witness to the pain of another.

Most people who go through loss eventually come to a state of reconciliation with it. The key phrase in this statement

is "go through," as someone finding their way in uncharted territory. Each person's journey is unique. Friends and family can offer support, bravely making themselves vulnerable in the face of another's pain. By standing alongside the sufferer, not as a guide, but as a fellow sufferer, we can help those who mourn.

Vicki Husted Biggs is a longtime social worker who lives in Home.

Richard Gelinas

EMPIRICALLY YOURS



Seals Discuss Rising Sea Levels

Note: Rude, raucous laughter among the seals is transcribed here as: Bark-bark-bark-bark-bark.

Seal 1: Hey do you guys smell that? Smells like raw sewage...

Seal 2: Yeah, I smell it too. It's really bad by those Homo sapiens (h sap) buildings above the beach. It comes from their septic systems, which are either poorly designed or not maintained, or both.

Seal 3: Wow, it really stinks. Why don't they just clean it up? Don't they know we have to swim in it? I'm not bringing the pups here.

Seal 1: H saps have a chronic blind spot to their own waste products like CO2 in the air and feces in the water.

Seal 2: And the other problem we can taste in Puget Sound is agricultural runoff. That's high in nitrogen and phosphorus, both of which aggravate blooms of algae or the "red tide" (see KP News, August 2019).

Seal 3: But listen, I read a seal-mail saying that there is an even greater sewage disposal problem in North Miami, Florida. Septic systems in thousands of homes near the ocean in North Miami no longer perc, the freshwater table is only a few inches below the surface. And just below the freshwater is saltwater. Hello, Mr. Atlantic Ocean.

Seal 1, Seal 2 and Seal 3: Bark-bark-bark-bark-bark.

Seal 2: The predictions about the rate of sea level rise are a bit uncertain, but recent measurements suggest that sea levels are rising faster than predicted. The oceans are absorbing enormous amounts of heat from the atmosphere, making even more warm water that is melting glaciers and the big ice sheets around Antarctica from below. It's happening much faster than anyone thought. Even in the winter, ice in Greenland is melting at rates much faster than historic rates. They say Western Canada's glaciers have only a few decades left before they virtually disappear.

Seal 1: Why is anyone surprised that

Florida is sinking? Our old seal legends say that all of Florida was underwater at one time; it's an ancient sea bed.

Seal 2: Well the h saps who live in Florida will have to do something, like install proper sewage pipes and a sewage treatment plant.

Seal 3: If the ocean level keeps rising, won't the h saps have to leave?

Seal 1: Naw, they'll ask the federal government to bail them out, pay their insurance bills or pay them to relocate.

Seal 3: I hope they don't relocate here and install more defective septic systems.

Seal 2: If they relocate, won't their property become worthless? Why, they'll have nothing to bequeath to their pups.

Seal 3: Say, isn't Mar-A-Lago near there, on a Palm Beach barrier island?

Seal 1, Seal 2 and Seal 3: Bark-bark-bark-bark-bark.

Richard Gelinas, Ph.D., whose early work earned a Nobel prize, is a senior research scientist at the Institute for Systems Biology. He lives in Lakebay.

Rob Vajko

KEY THOUGHTS



My Mum Passed Away

My mum passed away in April last year. My mother was British and a British "mom" is always a "mum."

Mum was just beginning to experience the symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease but her memory lapses weren't bad enough yet that Dad couldn't cope with it on his own. Then, just before Christmas, she fell and hit her head hard on the nightstand. The doctors say that there was bleeding in the brain but felt that letting it clear up on its own was better than any kind of surgery. On a scale of one to seven, Mum's Alzheimer's symptoms suddenly increased in severity from mild decline at level two, to the severe decline observed at level six. She died on April 8th.

My father met Mum while he was stationed in England in the Air Force after World War II. They were married for almost 62 years. They had four children; I was number two.

It wasn't until she was no longer with us, however, that I realized how little I actually knew her. I vaguely knew that she had grown up in war-torn England and that her father, my grandfather, had been a conscientious objector who had volunteered to disarm unexploded bombs because, while he didn't believe that he could take a life, he could volunteer to save others. Life

CONTINUED PAGE 8

MY MUM, FROM PAGE 7

expectancy for someone in that line of work was around 18 months. I don't think anyone would call my grandfather a coward for being a conscientious objector. He survived the war and lived to a ripe old age.

I never, however, thought to ask my mother about her childhood; about what it must have been like to have been evacuated to the countryside with so many other children so that they would be safe from the bombings in London. I never thought to ask her what she thought about when she had to go to the shelters, about what it was like to hear the planes overhead and to hear the bombs falling.

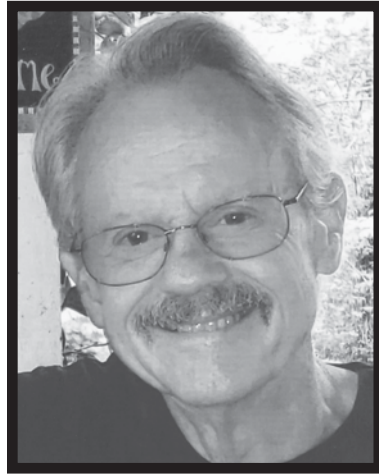
Fortunately, my sister Gail had a lot more foresight and wisdom than I did. She sat down with Mum when the early signs of Alzheimer's started to manifest themselves and recorded several hours of interview material. She asked her the questions I never got around to asking and I'm grateful to her for asking them because I now have a better understanding of how the war shaped my mother. I know her a little more now that she's gone than I did while she was still alive.

December 25 marked the first year that I wasn't able to call Mum on Christmas Day to wish her a Merry Christmas. It also marked the first Christmas I wasn't able to call her and ask her what Christmas was like for her as a child living with the shortages that war inevitably brings. I have the recordings but I don't have the complete story and it is most likely gone forever now.

I keep telling myself that I will one day write a book about her life. I don't know if that will ever happen but I do know that I've started asking others to tell me their story more often than I have in the past because I really would rather know them well while they are alive than learning more about them after they're gone.

Rob Vajko lives just north of the Key Peninsula.

OBITUARIES



Craig Paul Hunter

Craig Paul Hunter was born Aug. 8, 1950, to parents Paul and Lee Hunter in San Jose, Calif. and died at his Lakebay home Nov. 24.

His love of plants began early in life, earning a master's in plant biology from the University of California at Davis. Craig taught as a college professor in California.

Craig moved to Washington in 1983, where he became adept at restorations and repairs. Soon he opened his own business, The Window Company. He went on to work as a librarian at the Gig Harbor branch of the Pierce County Library System before retiring in 2018 after 27 years of public service.

He settled into retirement and fully devoted himself to his beloved Herronridge Farm, where he nurtured the plants as he nurtured God's love in his heart.

Craig leaves behind his cherished wife and best friend, Aubryn McCarrell, his son Brian, daughters Amy and Lori; his stepchildren Stashu, Kyra and Galilee McCarrell; grandson William and granddaughter Ellysha Beth.

A memorial service was held Dec. 7, at WayPoint Church in Gig Harbor.



Eric Von Lick

Born May 22, 1948, in Chelsea, Massachusetts to parents Henry and Gertrude Lick, Eric Von Lick died Sept. 10 at his home on Rocky Bay in Gig Harbor.

Eric grew up in Seattle. During his sophomore year at Seattle University, he put his education on hold to enlist in the U.S. Navy. As a veteran he returned to complete his college education on the G.I. Bill and graduated with a bachelor of arts in political science from the University of Washington. Employed by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service, he retired from his career as a U.S. Customs inspector.

A beloved husband, father, grandfather, uncle, cousin and dear friend, Eric will be remembered for his love, hard work, sense of duty and generosity. His gregarious nature and sense of humor always made him the life of the party.

A private family graveside service was held at the Vaughn Cemetery. Donations in his honor may be made to the American Heart Association or the American Cancer Society.

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Letter to the Editor

THANK YOU

On behalf of the Key Peninsula Community Council, thank you for your factual reporting in the December issue of the presentation by CenturyLink engineer Christopher Black about the internet connection problems on the KP.

*Irene Torres, Vice President
KP Community Council*



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Seahawks teammates celebrate win over rival Gig Harbor. *Photo: Veronica Foley*

PHS Girls Volleyball: All the Way to State

DANIEL SHURR, SPECIAL TO KP NEWS

In a historic season for girls volleyball at Peninsula High School, the Seahawks finished with their best record in years and put up a strong fight in the 2019 Washington Interscholastic Activities Association playoffs at the end of November.

Both varsity and junior varsity teams remained poised all season, knowing that every Thursday evening they had one mission: Protect the home court at all cost.

Peninsula had so much talent, the Seahawks seemed to have two varsity teams. JV posted a record of 11-2, smothering opponents all year, while varsity pummeled the top dogs in the 3A South Sound Conference, posting a record of 11-3.

Varsity protected their home court, posting a record of 5-2 at home with losses to Central Kitsap and Capital, but also dominated on the road, marching into schools across the region to end the season with a 6-1 record as the visiting team. Their lone loss on the road was at Capital.

Last year's SSC MVP Maeve Griffin returned for her senior year as the Hawks' team captain. "We trusted and believed in each other and really came together as a team to reach our goal of going to state," she said.

Rising stars Laney Lovrovich and Josie Hampton also had outstanding seasons, and both have a shot at this year's MVP, to be announced later in the year.

Hampton was a scoring machine, and even had one game where she scored 20 points for the Hawks, while Lovrovich never let the ball touch the ground in her zone, wreaking havoc on opposing teams. Last season, Lovrovich was a first team conference player, with Hampton and Tommi Gallucci on her heels as second team conference players.

Peninsula advanced to the district tournament with the top teams in the state. After beating both Wilson and Prairie High Schools 3-0, the Seahawks took only one loss in the tournament to their old conference rival Capital, which clenched the SSC for the second consecutive year with a 13-1 record.

After that single loss, the Seahawks were down but not out, winning their last game of the bracket 3-1 against Central Kitsap, qualifying for state. The top six teams from the tournament advanced to the 3A state championship at the SunDome in Yakima.

The Seahawks were the second best team in the bracket. Gig Harbor, Peninsula's fiercest rival, was given the third seed in the tournament.

In round one of the playoffs, the Seahawks played the Arlington Eagles in hopes of moving on. Peninsula played hard but lost 3-1 in their first match against Arlington. The Hawks had a chance to stay in it, but took their final loss of the year in a 3-2 nail-biter against Seattle Prep.

"This year we really were able to connect as a team and we were able to have a lot of fun together on and off the court, which I feel helped us relax and play our best," senior Zoe Erkers said. "We also have an amazing coach who pushed us to be the best players we could be and we wouldn't have gotten where we did without her."

Head coach Katrina Cardinal recognized she had a ton of raw talent on the teams this season, and even had a few freshmen start on varsity. It's no surprise that the JV squad produces varsity players — the only problem PHS will have for a few years is who to pick from the talent pool.

Daniel Shurr is a Peninsula High School senior and PHS Outlook sports writer. Read more of his work at www.phsoutlook.com.



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TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY SCHEDULE

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EVERGREEN TUES & THURS AM

- 8:50 Evergreen Elementary School
- 8:59 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 9:00 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @ 193rd Ave
- 9:05 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 9:06 Home Gas Station @ KP Hwy N
- 9:10 67th Ave Ct NW @ KP Hwy N
- 9:14 Food Market in Key Center
- 9:15 KP Hwy N @ Minterwood Dr NW
- 9:21 Lake Kathryn Village SR 302 & 92nd Ave NW
- 9:26 Purdy Park & Ride

EVERGREEN WEDNESDAY AM

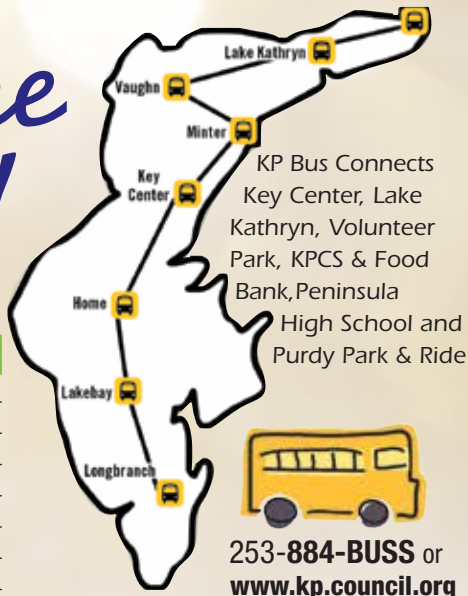
- 9:50 Evergreen Elementary School
- 9:54 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 9:55 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @ 193rd Ave
- 10:00 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 10:01 Home Gas Station @ KP Hwy N
- 10:05 67th Ave Ct NW @ KP Hwy N
- 10:09 Food Market in Key Center
- 10:10 KP Hwy N @ Minterwood Dr NW
- 10:16 Lake Kathryn Village SR 302 & 92nd Ave NW
- 10:21 Purdy Park & Ride

VAUGHN TUES & THURS AM

- 8:50 Vaughn Elementary School
- 8:59 Wright Bliss Road @ Olson Dr NW
- 9:00 Wright Bliss Road @ 104th St Ct NW
- 9:05 Wright Bliss Road @ SR 302/4-Corners
- 9:06 SR 302 @ 150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 9:10 SR302 @ 140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 9:14 SR 302 @ Charbonneau Construction
- 9:15 SR 302 @ 92nd Ave NW/Lake Kathryn Village
- 9:21 Purdy Park & Ride

VAUGHN WEDNESDAY AM

- 9:50 Vaughn Elementary School
- 9:51 Wright Bliss Road @ Olson Dr NW
- 9:52 Wright Bliss Road @ 104th St Ct NW
- 9:54 Wright Bliss Road @ SR 302/4-Corners
- 9:57 SR 302 @ 150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 9:59 SR302 @ 140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 10:01 SR 302 @ Charbonneau Construction
- 10:04 SR 302 @ 92nd Ave NW/Lake Kathryn Village
- 10:09 Purdy Park & Ride



TUESDAY & THURSDAY MIDDAY

- 10:33 Peninsula High School
- 10:35 Purdy Park & Ride
- 10:38 Cost Less Pharmacy @ Lake Kathryn Village
- 10:48 SR 302 @ Windermere Realty, near 118th Ave
- 10:50 SR 302 @ 140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 10:51 SR 302 @ 150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 10:54 Wright Bliss Road @ SR 302/4-Corners
- 10:56 Wright Bliss Road @ 104th St Ct NW
- 10:58 Wright Bliss Road @ Olson Dr NW
- 11:00 Food Market @ Key Center
- 11:06 KP Hwy N @ 167th Ave Ct NW
- 11:09 Home Gas Station @ KP Hwy N
- 11:12 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 11:18 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 11:19 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @ 193rd Ave
- 11:25 Evergreen Elementary School

TUES, WED & THURS PM

- 4:43 Peninsula High School
- 4:45 Purdy Park & Ride
- 4:51 Cost Less Pharmacy @ Lake Kathryn Village
- 4:54 SR 302 @ Windermere Realty, near 118th Ave
- 4:58 SR 302 @ 150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 5:00 Wright Bliss Road @ SR 302/4-Corners
- 5:02 Wright Bliss Road @ 104th St Ct NW
- 5:03 Wright Bliss Road @ Olson Dr NW
- 5:06 Food Market in Key Center
- 5:06 KP Hwy N @ 84th St NW/Red Barn
- 5:10 KP Hwy N @ 167th Ave Ct NW
- 5:14 Home Gas Station @ KP Hwy N
- 5:14 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 5:19 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 5:20 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @ 193rd Ave
- 5:24 KP Hwy N @ 17th St Ct SW
- 5:36 KP Hwy N @ 84th St NW/Red Barn

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"Music was my shelter, companion, friend and teacher." Photo: David Zeigler, KP News

Music Brings a Rock 'n' Roller to the KP

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

"What is music?" is the first thing Mel Hing said as he sat down in Lulu's to talk about his life and what brought him to the Key Peninsula. "It's been turned into entertainment, but originally it was about communication. Before we had written language, it helped humans remember."

Hing described himself as a jack of all music trades, and music has been constant in his life. What has happened between his start with a violin in grade school and his current work as folk rock guitar technician (he modifies guitars to make the sound musicians seek and makes adjustments to accommodate aging hands) could fill a book. In fact, he said he is writing a book, which he will call "Yellow Mustard."

Now 80, Hing grew up in Seattle's south end, the black sheep in a family of Chinese immigrants with ties to the business and restaurant community. His father was a chef with the Four Seas and owned the Jade Pagoda, and wanted him to go into business. "But music was my shelter, companion, friend and teacher," he said. When Count Basie donated his repaired upright double bass to Hing's middle school, he was hooked. Later, he played strings in the band at Garfield High School.

He also worked at his uncle's electronics repair shop during high school. He became an electronics technician, but music was his passion. Hing discovered jazz and blues in the clubs in Seattle's Central District. "I hung out after gigs and learned," he said.

He married and left music for a while,

worked full-time in electronics and tried to start his own business. His marriage fell apart, and he returned to his old haunts. He worked as a watcher in the gambling clubs, and after hours he joined the music scene, first as a side gig and then full time as a roadie for some Seattle bands. "I basically traded a gun for a guitar," Hing said. "I was responsible for getting all the equipment onto the stage, making sure it worked, fixing it if I could and knowing where to get it fixed if I couldn't."

Hing thought the Seattle music world of the time was a snob scene. Intrigued by what he heard about Haight-Ashbury, he moved to San Francisco in the Sixties. He connected with Chet Helms, the promoter who founded the Family Dog production company, operated the Avalon Ballroom and recruited Janis Joplin to Big Brother and the Holding Company. "It was a magic carpet ride," Hing said.

He drove and provided security for Helms, wrote music, and worked closely with lead guitarist James Gurley, refining his guitar tech skills. He regarded Joplin as a close friend and mingled with just about every big name that passed through, including Jerry Garcia, Bob Dylan, Mike Bloomfield and Ram Dass. Money flowed and it was a star-studded life.

Then Joplin died. Hing said that with her death he felt like the San Francisco music scene ended. He moved to Los Angeles and spent time in Big Sur. He worked when he could, but described that time as a blur. There were a number of deaths from overdoses, and paying bail for others ate up any

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

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

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

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

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

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

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JAN. 3**FREE BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK**

Get your blood pressure checked and enjoy a nutritious meal at KP Community Services. 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 253-884-4440

JAN. 4**INTRO TO SPEAKING BASICS**

Join the Key Peninsula Toastmasters for a free mini workshop focusing on the basics of public speaking. 2 to 4 p.m. at the Key Center Public Library. kptm.toastmastersclubs.org

JAN. 10**COMMUNITY BEACH MONITORING**

Join Harbor WildWatch to survey the beach at night. All ages welcome, no experience required, stay for all or part of program. Meet at Maple Hollow Beach Park entrance by gate at 8:30pm; ¼ mile hike to beach. 253-514-0187

JAN. 11**TOWN HALL: SEN. EMILY RANDALL**

Town hall on transportation and natural resources with Sen. Emily Randall. Key Peninsula Civic Center, 4:30 to 6 p.m. Contact Legislative Assistant Sarah Myers at 360-627-7610.

JAN. 14**HOOTENANNY**

Sing songs from the fabulous years of folksinging plus traditional songs. Words and chords will be provided. 2 to 3 p.m. at The Mustard Seed Project. 253-884-9814

JAN. 16**VETERANS OPEN HOUSE**

Get information about services available for veterans at the KP Community Council office in Key Center. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. 253-432-4948

JAN. 28**PENINSULA SONGWRITERS**

Learn, hone and share the craft of songwriting in a supportive group of enthusiastic tunesmiths at Key Center Public Library. Info: peninsulasongwriters@gmail.com and on Facebook — Peninsula Songwriters.

JAN. 31**KP FREE DENTAL CLINIC**

Seniors and families lacking dental insurance or dealing with limited income are eligible. 8 a.m. at KP Lutheran Church 4213 Lackey Rd. NW. Call 253-1101 or email pdcc@dentists.org

OFF THE KEY**JAN. 4****PIER INTO THE NIGHT LIVE DIVE**

Take an underwater journey of Gig Harbor Bay without getting wet. Stay dry on Jerisich Dock while divers live stream underneath the dock with an ROV and our biologists interpret exactly what visitors see. 253-514-0187

JAN. 11**JACK GLADSTONE CONCERT**

An enrolled citizen of the Blackfeet Indian Nation, Jack illustrates Western and Native American culture through a mosaic of music, lyric poetry, and spoken word. Olalla Community Club, 12970 Olalla Valley Road SE, Olalla. Potluck 6 p.m., concert 7 p.m. Suggested donation \$20. www.olallahouse.org

WEEKLYEVENTS**MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS****YOGA AT THE CIVIC CENTER**

Bring your mat, blanket or towel. Drop-in \$12.00 or four classes for \$40. Cash or check. KP Civic Center from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. 253-884-3456.

MONDAYS, WEDS & FRIDAYS**S.A.I.L. EXERCISE CLASSES FOR 65+**

At The Mustard Seed Project. Improve balance and mobility and prevent falls. For any fitness level — you can even participate sitting down. \$5 for drop-in. Preregistration required. Limited scholarships. Mon. 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.; Wed. and Fri. 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. 253-884-9814.

S.A.I.L. EXERCISE CLASSES FOR 60+

At KP Community Services. 8 to 9 a.m. and 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. Free; suggested donation \$5. Call 253-884-4440 to register.

TUESDAYS**REFIT FREE WOMENS EXERCISE**

REFIT is a fitness experience designed to engage the heart as a muscle and a soul. Childcare provided. Tue. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. WayPoint Church, 12719 134th Avenue NW. waypoint-church.org or 253-853-7878.

COUNTY ON SEPTIC

A Tacoma-Pierce County Environmental Health Specialist will answer questions about septic systems or help submit applications for design or repair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the KP Community Council office. sriley@tpchd.org, 253-798-6470 or 253-432-4948.

KEY SINGERS REHEARSALS

Rehearsals for KP choral group. All singers welcome. Membership \$10 per year. 7 to 8:30 p.m. at KP Lutheran Church. Marianne at 253-884-5615

LOVING HEARTS KNIT OR CROCHET

Knit or crochet for charity. Yarn donations needed and very much appreciated. First Tuesday 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.; all other Tuesdays 1 to 3 p.m. WayPoint Church, 12719 134th Avenue NW. Virginia at 253-884-9619 or lovingheartsonkp@gmail.com.

SENIOR SHOPPING DAY

Shopping trips Jan. 7 and 21. Sign up with KP Community Services. 253-884-4440

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY

First TOPS meeting is free with no obligation. Weigh-in from 8:35 to 9:25 a.m., meeting starts at 9:30 a.m. Key Peninsula Lutheran Church, 4213 Lackey Road NW. marcgrubb1990@yahoo.com

OASIS YOUTH CENTER

Are you a queer or questioning youth between the ages of 14 and 24? Games, new friends, learning and snacks. Oasis Youth Center satellite program Tuesdays 3 to 6 p.m. at the KP Civic Center. oasisyouthcenter.org, oasis@oasisyouthcenter.org or 253-671-2838

STORYTIMES

Preschoolers discover books, learn nursery rhymes, sing songs, play with blocks and do arts and crafts at the Key Center Library from 11 a.m. to noon. 253-548-3309.

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS**PRESCHOOL & TODDLER PLAYTIME**

The Children's Home Society of Washington KP Family Resource Center offers an indoor park program 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the KP Civic Center gym. Caregivers stay with child. Drop-ins welcome; stay as long as you wish. \$1 per child donation suggested. 253-884-5433.

SENIOR TAI CHI

KP Community Services, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. Free; suggested donation is \$5 per class. Sign up at 253-884-4440.

TUES, THURS & SATURDAYS**S.A.I.L. EXERCISE CLASSES FOR 60+**

KP Community Services from 9 to 10 a.m. Free, suggested donation is \$5. Call 253-884-4440 to register.

WEDNESDAYS**BLEND HOOKERS AND TINKERS**

Join in at Blend Wine Shop for a rollicking good time. All skill levels and fiber interests welcome; 21 and over, 5:30 to 8 p.m. hannah8ball@gmail.com or 817-929-3943.

KP YOUTH COUNCIL

Meets at the Key Center fire station, 2:30 to 5 p.m. Keypercouncil@gmail.com

LAKEBAY WRITERS

A writing workshop for people who love stories. Share yours; hear others. Key Center Library, 1 to 4 p.m. Loren Aikins, 253-884-2785.

READY SET GO!

Free early learning program for 3- and 4-year-olds, limited to 16 with parent or caregiver. Focus on kindergarten readiness and lots of fun. KP Civic Center, VFW room, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. 253-884-5433.

WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS**SENIOR MEALS**

Nutritious meals for ages 60+ served at noon at KP Community Services; \$3 suggested donation. Guests under 60 welcome to attend; \$5 suggested donation. 253-884-4440

THURSDAYS**FREE COMPUTER CLASS FOR SENIORS**

Bring questions and learn the basics. Seniors 60+. From 10 to 11 a.m. at KP Community Services. 253-884-4440

COUNTY ON WELLS

Jan. 2 and 16, a Tacoma-Pierce County Environmental Health Specialist in drinking water and Group B wells answers questions about drinking water or shared wells 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the KP Community Council office. sriley@tpchd.org, 253-798-6470 or 253-432-4948

COUNTY ON WASTE

Jan. 9, a Tacoma-Pierce County Environmental Health Specialist on household waste management answers questions about household hazardous waste, garbage haulers and recycling 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the KP Community Council office. sriley@tpchd.org, 253-798-6470 or 253-432-4948

SENIORS LUNCH

Join the fun when the KP Senior Society meets for potluck, games and fellowship from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Whitmore Room at the KP Civic Center. Potluck lunch starts at noon. Please call Darla Graham at 253-345-0926 with questions.

TOASTMASTERS

Have fun improving your public speaking ability and leadership skills. Guests are welcome with no obligation to speak. 8 to 9 a.m. at WayPoint Church, 12719 134th Avenue NW. keypeninsulatoastmasters@gmail.com

REV & FLOW FREE WOMENS EXERCISE

Free Womens Exercise Class at WayPoint Church from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. REV & FLOW is an easy on the joints workout. waypoint-church.org or 253-853-7878

FRIDAYS

BOARD GAMES FOR SENIORS

Games and social time at KP Community Services, 1 to 2:30 p.m. 253-884-4440

TRIPLE P PARENTING CLASSES

Sign up for parenting classes and apply for assistance with basic food and health insurance applications. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the KP Community Council office. 253-432-4948 or 253-884-5433

MONTHLY MEETINGS

- Jan. 1 & 15, 6 to 9 p.m. **KP Lions Club**, Key Center fire station. 253-853-2721
- Jan. 2, **26th Legislative District Democrats**, 6 p.m. social; 6:30 p.m. meeting. Public invited. Givens Community Center, 1026 Sidney Road, Port Orchard. 26thdemocrats@gmail.com
- Jan. 4, **Writers Guild**, 10 a.m. to noon, KP Community Council office. 253-884-6455
- Jan. 6 & 20, 7 to 8 p.m. **KP Veterans** group, KP Lutheran Church, 4213 Lackey Road NW. Veterans, military service members and families with children 16 and older are welcome. 253-884-2626
- Jan. 7, 11 a.m. **KP Historical Society** board meeting in the museum at civic center. 253-888-3246
- Jan. 7, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. **KP Business Association** business meeting at Blend Wine Shop. kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com or 253-312-1006
- Jan. 7 & 21, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. West of the Narrows **Depression and Bipolar Support**-Lakebay Group, KP Lutheran Church, 4213 Lackey

Road NW. Kimberly 253-753-4270 or dbsalakebay@gmail.com

- Jan. 7 & 21, 5 to 6 p.m. **Gig Harbor North Rotary Club** in the Maritime Room of Heron's Key, 4340 Borgen Boulevard, Gig Harbor. gigharbor-northrotary.org/
- Jan. 8, 10 to 11:30 a.m. **Bayshore Garden Club**, Longbranch fire station. Wendy, 253-332-4883
- Jan. 8, 10 to 11:30 a.m. **Peninsula Emergency Preparedness Coalition**, Gig Harbor Fire District Headquarters, 10222 Bujacich Road NW. Pep-c.org, Steve Rees, 6ftwav@gmail.com, 253-720-0662
- Jan. 8, 7 to 9 p.m. **KP Community Council**, Key Center fire station. 253-432-4948
- Jan. 9, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. **Ashes** support group for Fire District 16, Key Center fire station. 253-884-3771
- Jan. 9, 6 to 7:30 p.m. **Peninsula School District** board, district office in Purdy. 253-530-1000
- Jan. 9, 7 to 8:30 p.m. **KP Civic Center Association** board, Whitmore Room, civic center. kpciviccenter.org, 253-884-3456
- Jan. 13, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. **KP Parks Commission**, Volunteer Park office. 253-884-9240
- Jan. 14 & 28, 5 to 7 p.m. **KP Fire Commission** at Key Center fire station. keypeninsulafire.org or 253-884-2222
- Jan. 15, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. **Key Peninsula Advisory Commission**, KP Civic Center, reviews applications for proposed developments and makes recommendations to Pierce County. Verify meeting details at piercecountywa.gov/5937/Key-Peninsula-Advisory-Commission
- Jan. 15, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. **Longbranch Improvement Club** monthly meeting, Longbranch Improvement Club. 253-200-0308
- Jan. 16, 7 to 8:30 p.m. **KP Citizens Against Crime**. Discuss what's happening in our community with Pierce County Sheriff. Key Center fire station. dolores-starr@centurytel.net or 253-884-3105
- Jan. 16, 7 to 8:30 p.m. **Key Peninsula Emergency Prep**, Whitmore Room at the KP Civic Center. Contact Peggy at 253-686-7904
- Jan. 17, 1 to 3 p.m. **Two Waters Arts Alliance** board welcomes artists and art lovers. VFW Room, KP Civic Center. twowaters.org 253-884-1163
- Jan. 17, Noon to 1 p.m. **KP Business Association** luncheon meeting, El Sombrero. kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com or 253-312-1006

- Jan. 18, 10:30 a.m. to noon. **Key Peninsula Caregivers Support Group** at The Mustard Seed Project. For caregivers of those with memory loss. Free and open to the public. Please call Debra Jamerson before attending, 360-621-1110
- Jan. 20, 7 to 8:30 p.m. **KP Democrats**, Home fire station, johnpatkelly@aol.com
- Jan. 23, 11 a.m. to noon. **Book discussion group** at KC Library. 253-548-3309 or ajackman@piercecountylibrary.org
- Jan. 27, 6 to 8 p.m. **KP Farm Council** board meeting at Key Peninsula Community Council office. 253-432-4948
- Jan. 27, 6 to 8:30 p.m. **Relatives Raising Kids** support group. Grandparents and relatives raising children meet at Evergreen Elementary. Potluck dinner and childcare provided. 253-884-5433
- Multiple dates, **KP Sportsmens Club** board meets first Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.; general meeting and potluck second Thursdays at 6 p.m.; bingo \$1/card and potluck fourth Fridays at 6 p.m.; Ladies Bunco last Wednesdays at 6 p.m. Bring snacks and \$5 to play. Sportsmens Clubhouse, 5305 Jackson Lake Road NW, 253-884-6764

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Call for Citizen-Scientist King Tide Watchers

STAFF REPORT

The University of Washington Sea Grant Program is asking the public to report on local king tides in mid-January by submitting photographs of local waterfront locations. The collected data is intended to assist scientists and planners measure the impact of sea level rise and storm surges on the environment and infrastructure.

“King tide” is an informal name for an unusually high tide. Tides rise and

PREDICTED KING TIDES FOR HENDERSON BAY

Jan. 13 7:16 a.m. 15.5 feet
Jan. 14 7:58 a.m. 15.6 feet
Jan. 15 8:39 a.m. 15.6 feet

fall because of the gravitational pull of the moon and sun and are amplified by local geography, like that of South Puget Sound. A king tide is said to occur when certain astronomical variables combine with local atmospheric elements — such as high wind or low pressure.

The highest tides of each lunar cycle (approximately 27 days, 7 hours and 43 minutes) occur when the moon is full or new and aligned with the sun, combining their gravitational effects to create what is called a spring tide.

Three or four times a year the moon’s orbit brings it closer than average to Earth, a position called perigee. When spring tides coincide with the moon in perigee, the moon has a greater than average pull on the oceans, causing higher than average high tides that are called perigean high tides.

Higher tides also regularly occur in early January each year when the Earth is closest to the sun — a position called perihelion.

The most useful photos of tidal impact are those where the tide height can be gauged against familiar landmarks, like buildings, roads, sea walls and piers. Photos can be submitted to mycoast.org/wa.

Sound View Camp Seeks Logging Permit

Removing danger trees is primary goal

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

Sound View Camp, owned and operated by the Presbytery of Olympia, plans to log a number of trees on 60 of its 92 acres.

“We have been contracted by the Presbytery of Olympia to administer a variable-retention thinning. We are also working with the Nisqually Land Trust on this property. The result will not be noticeable to the neighbors,” said Dick Hopkins of Hopkins Forestry, who submitted the permit application in November.

Although there will be some income generated by the harvest, the driving force is forest health, safety and a plan to improve the fields and facilities at the camp, according to Hopkins and Sound View Camp Director Kurt Sample.

“Last winter two trees fell and did considerable damage,” Sample said. “We have many hemlocks and maples that are not doing well and are leaning over buildings and trails. There is no safe place in high winds.” In addition, the playing field has become smaller as the forest has intruded over time. “We want to redefine the perimeter so we can play a game of soccer.”

Sample said that the camp board chose to go through the county process because they hope to make improvements before the six-year moratorium that is required if logging is done under a state permit. In addition to logging, the camp will extend a road around the cabins to create a circular emergency access for the fire department. Currently the road dead-ends.

There will be no logging near the beach. The plan includes reclaiming a formerly logged area that is overgrown with invasive blackberries. Laminated root rot has been an issue, so replanting will include white pine and cedar, which are resistant to root rot, as well as Douglas fir.

“We are mostly fixing what wasn’t done right,” Sample said.

The boundaries of the harvest are from the Key Peninsula Highway on the west toward the dining hall on the east, then within the north and south property lines. Hopkins thinks that logging could begin by mid-February at the earliest.

The trees marked for harvest are all tagged with orange paint and Sample said once the permit is approved, they will have an open house to review the plan for any who can attend. He will announce the open house via the camp website and Facebook page, on the Key Peninsula Facebook page and in the KP News if scheduling allows.

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April 28 Park

Appreciation Day

at location TBD

May 9 Mom & Me Tea

at KP Civic Center

June-July-Aug

Popsicles in the Park

June 20 Youth Mt. Biking

Jamboree/Bike Rodeo

July 4 Fourth of

July Community

Hot Dog Social

August Friday nights

Cinema Under the Stars

Oct 17 All Hallows

Eve Celebration

Dec 6 Letters to Santa

Seasonal maintenance for park buildings, facilities and grounds; 40-hour work week for six months. Description and application at www.keypenparks.com under Employment or visit the park office during regular business hours.

For the latest news see www.keypenparks.com or Facebook page

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When a Giant Pacific Octopus Washes Ashore

CHRIS RURIK, SPECIAL TO KP NEWS

Walk the peninsula's beaches this time of year and you won't find much of a high tide line. Gone are the mounds of seaweed, the stranded jellyfish. Gone is the brownish scum of planktonic life. The bay is as clear as well water.

Nonetheless, on a sharp cool morning, my cousin tells me she has found an octopus. My eyes get big. She says it's been left by the tide on a beach we often walk.

I cannot resist. I go to inspect it. And it is not hard to find. Sagging on the rocks is a rotting pouch of pinkish flesh as big as a saddlebag. Its tentacles are gone. The stumps are massive, each as big as my fist and warted with a few protruding suckers.

The bulk of the half-decayed specimen is the rounded front of the octopus — the mantle. Its eyes are missing. I find a stick. Holding my breath, I reposition the mass until I see the octopus's sharp black beak hiding in a ring of white muscle. I then find the siphon, now limp, that once jet-propelled the octopus around its haunts.

I rock back on my heels and gaze over Carr Inlet. It's incredible. Here is the fabled, lionized, never-seen-by-ordinary-eyes Giant Pacific Octopus, right at my feet. I have lived here nearly my entire life and never have I seen one outside an aquarium.

And I'm not the only one looking. A yellow jacket picks at it too.

One of the sad realities of life as a naturalist is that your best chance to study an animal often comes when it has died. The worlds in which animals live and move can be so different from our own — and our perception can be so limited — that just to cross their paths can be darn near impos-

sible. I think of the peninsula's shrews, its saw-whet owls. Death has made visible what is normally beyond me. It has carried this octopus across a threshold between worlds.

Now, I'll admit to enjoying the process of dissection — much can be learned from scars and stomach contents — but what I'd like even more, in this moment, is to see this octopus in action, to watch it interact with its living world, to get a sense of its relationships. Naturalists love to think about relationships.

Hang on, I ask. Why is this octopus here?

The Giant Pacific Octopus, known affectionately to marine biologists as the GPO, lives around rocky reefs with plenty of hiding places; hence our local legend of a granddaddy octopus inhabiting the sunken wreckage of Galloping Gertie. Carr Inlet is sandy-bottomed from tip to tail. GPOs might be among the smartest invertebrates alive, shape-shifting masters of their environment able to fit through a three-inch hole, but they have a strong fear of open water. None would willingly enter Carr Inlet.

By size alone there is no doubt this is a GPO. The only other octopus in Puget Sound, the East Pacific Red Octopus, which can be seen at low tide at Penrose Point, never gets bigger than your hand.

GPOs seldom live more than five years in the wild. When it is time to reproduce, the male uses a special tentacle, the hectocotylus, to deliver a yard-long packet of sperm to the female. The female keeps the packet until she has made a burrow in which to lay her eggs, thousands of them. She guards and cleans the eggs until they hatch, and then she dies.

By that point, the male is long since gone. After delivering his package, he enters a

phase of life called senescence. It is a slow death. His body begins to disintegrate. He loses his fears of light and open water and leaves the reefs. Other creatures begin to eat him. His body unfolds on the currents until it ends up in a place like this.

I take a moment to ponder the journey this octopus took to arrive here, the worlds it has crossed.

Like this yellow jacket — talk about crossing worlds. When was the last time a wasp in these parts ate octopus? Again, my mind fills with questions. Like, how can this wasp encounter such a completely strange type of flesh and know it's safe to eat? I don't sample strange mushrooms.

I watch as it works on its rare treat. This particular species, *Vespula germanica*, is a recent introduction into America and has already made itself at home in most of our local environments.

There is something special about such a generalist. Researchers who study the learning powers of yellow jackets are finding a surprising cognitive flexibility.

The Skinny on Giant Pacific Octopus

The Basics

Giant Pacific octopus:

Enteroctopus dofleini

Order: Octopoda

Family: Octopodidae

Life span averages three to six years.

Identification

Naturally reddish brown skin with bulbous eyes. Weights average about 90 pounds with an arm span reaching as much as 20 feet. The largest giant octopus on record weighed 600 pounds.

Habitat

They live solitary lives in rocky habitat and intertidal zones, and down to depths of over 6,000 feet. A 50-pound octopus can squeeze through a 2-inch space, hiding from predators by occupying nooks and crannies.

Diet

Carnivores, giant octopus prefer shellfish, including crabs, clams, abalone, shrimp and certain fish.

Special Features

Masters of disguise, these octopuses instantly change the color and texture of their appearance to mimic their surroundings. The only hard part of their body is their venomous parrot-like beak, through which they eat and squirt ink into the water that blinds other sea creatures.

They not only create efficient maps of their environments but respond quickly to changing conditions. They can integrate experiences over time. This wasp will not be confused when the next tide carries this carcass away. It will move on.

On into another environment, another encounter, another brief relationship. Out here on the high tide line, worlds are continually overlapping. Wasps eat octopus, and for the observant naturalist, questions follow questions. There is always more to see.

Chris Rurik is a writer, naturalist and historian who lives in Lakebay.


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Local Leader Marcia Harris Retires After Four Decades in Education

Her career in education has come to an end but Marcia Harris continues to serve the common good.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

After 41 years in education including four years on the board of the Peninsula School District, Marcia Harris is retiring from education. For the second time.

"I've had some amazing experiences and been supported by many people along the way," she said. "Nobody does this alone."

Her career took her from Olympia to Yakima, Moses Lake to Chimacum and Shoreline, and twice to the Peninsula School District. A longtime Key Peninsula resident, she remains active on the KP Community Council, serves on the board of KP Community Services, oversees the free KP Connects school bus service, is an active member of the Gig Harbor Rotary Club, and volunteers as a master gardener.

Harris was born in Alpena, Michigan, and graduated from high school in Muskegon. "We lived in a few different places; my dad worked for the phone company for over 40 years," she said. "He actually started delivering telegrams when he was 14."

After earning a degree in English at Kansas State University in 1970, Harris went to work in the insurance industry.

"I was sort of on the leading edge of women going into that field as a marketing rep and it put me in a management training program," she said.

The company sent her to work in Fresno, California, where she met Jeff Harris, who was a city planner. In 1973, he was set to return to Washington and she was transferred to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Instead, Harris left her job and the two were married in 1974.

"Insurance was in the basement then, it was a bad time, and I wanted to work," Harris said. She took some state tests and qualified as a financial analyst "because of my English degree," and was hired at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

While working at OSPI in Olympia, Harris also attended night school to earn a master's degree in business administration from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma. "An MBA is very useful regardless of what you want to go into," she said.

A chance to test that theory came in 1980 when she learned of a job opening at a small school district having financial troubles in the Yakima Valley.

"I thought I could apply for this job and I probably wouldn't make it worse," she said.

Harris became the assistant superintendent

in a small district of 550 students for half the year that grew to 800 at springtime, when people arrived to work the harvest.

"What they wanted in the worst way was for their kids to get an education and to learn to speak English," she said. "They were so passionate about it that it really taught me a lot about what it meant to be an American, people doing that for their children and grandchildren. It was an incredible education."

In 1983, Harris moved to a district of 5,500 students in Moses Lake that needed a business manager.

"They also needed a serious financial turnaround," she said. "But there were some great leadership opportunities, and while I was there I enrolled in a doctoral program at Gonzaga in educational leadership. Jesuit education is fascinating; they truly believe there's no one right answer."

Harris earned a superintendent's credential and planned to spend a year working on her dissertation while searching for a superintendent position, but she got the first job she applied for and moved to Chimacum in 1989, leaving no time to finish her dissertation. "I got pretty close," she said.

Chimacum had 1,100 students when she arrived and had just passed a construction bond. "My first day on the job I started building a school like I knew how," Harris said. Five years later, the district had opened a new elementary school, improved existing facilities, and added almost 400 students. "I felt like I went to a district that was in the 1950s but when I left we were moving into the 21st century."

Harris still keeps a memento from those days created by a former student, a small horseshoe welded together out of two pieces of smooth, silver metal seamlessly joined at the apex of the curve.

"He was a troubled kid," she said. "He had an ankle bracelet and was spending part of each day in jail. He went to the skill center in Bremerton and was doing welding



Marcia Harris, right, with Leslie Harbaugh at their last PSD board meeting Dec. 12. Photo: Aimee Gordon, Peninsula School District

and that (horseshoe) is, as I understand it, a perfect weld. Here was a kid that looked like a loser from everything you saw, and yet he had a real talent that brought him to another level.

"That's been on my desk since 1993," she said. "It speaks to me about how quickly our students grow up and what little time we have to give them just some of the skills they need to have a rich and productive life."

Harris got a call from the Peninsula School District in 1995.

"They were in serious financial trouble; they'd had four levy failures," she said. "They were asking kids to bring reams of paper to school to run copies. It was pretty horrible." She was offered a job as deputy superintendent. "It looked like I had pretty much finished what I wanted to do in Chimacum, so I took it on."

Harris found a host of problems. "There were 16 (state) audit findings, which was the worst any school district had ever experienced," she said. "We had leaking roofs, we had ancient technology, the phone system didn't work, Purdy Elementary needed to be totally rebuilt; at Harbor Ridge we had money to do half of what had been promised back in the early '90s."

The district created a sustainable maintenance program and negotiated take-backs from staff. "We were in good shape

and passed a bond in 2003 for construction," Harris said. "I had all of the Human Resources, all of the finance, all of the maintenance and capital projects under my umbrella. That's not something you can just walk away from — I tried to build things for people to tap into and not have to reinvent the wheel. I knew that the people who were there could carry on; they knew how to do more than their jobs."

In 2006, Harris was asked to become the deputy superintendent in the Shoreline District. "They were 2.7 million dollars in the red, which is totally unacceptable," she said. "We had to close schools. We had to make cuts that were sustainable because the money wasn't coming back. That was a very, very tough job."

But voters eventually passed two bonds to simultaneously replace two new high schools.

"That was unbelievable," Harris said. "I worked with really good people — the principals were great; the project managers were great. There's a little dislocation, but when you see things start to happen and schools come out of the ground, suddenly people can roll with the punches."

She and her husband Jeff moved to the Key Peninsula when she took the job at Peninsula in 1995, and rather than move to Shoreline when she worked there, Harris commuted every weekend.

"It was only with Jeff's continued support that our lives were able to grow through our journeys across the state," she said. "We wouldn't live anywhere else. We just love the eclectic nature of the people out here. We're always learning something new from the people around us."

Harris retired in 2012, but that didn't last long. Within a month of retiring, she was invited to a meeting to help organize a new local

bus service called KP Connects to replace the public transportation lost to county cutbacks. A month after that she was running for the KP Community Council. Two years later she joined the board of KP Community Services.

In 2014, Harris started looking for someone to run in the race for the Peninsula School Board. It ended up being her.

"It's different on the other side of the board room table," she said as a former PSD employee.

"Maintenance is one of the drums I've been beating on since I came back. You need to have a maintenance plan; you need

"IT SPEAKS TO ME ABOUT HOW QUICKLY OUR STUDENTS GROW UP AND WHAT LITTLE TIME WE HAVE TO GIVE THEM JUST SOME OF THE SKILLS THEY NEED."

"I TRIED TO BUILD THINGS FOR PEOPLE TO TAP INTO AND NOT HAVE TO REINVENT THE WHEEL."

to be working on a cycle of sustainability. To me it's a matter of good stewardship. I'm not trying to be critical, the finances make the realities," she said.

After one four-year term on the board, Harris stepped down Dec. 12.

"I really did some soul-searching to decide whether I was going to run again," she said. "It feels good to have passed a bond (in 2019)."

Harris plans to continue volunteering in her current positions on the KP. She and her husband have also been active members in the Rotary Club of Gig Harbor and other branches since 1989, advocating for their communities and raising funds for local projects.

"I kind of grew up doing things and giving back," she said. "My grandma said about volunteering, 'Giving back is the rent you pay for the space you take up while you're on Earth.'"

Replacement School Levy On February Ballot

STAFF REPORT

The Peninsula School District will ask voters for an educational programs and operations levy in a special election Feb. 11, to replace an expiring levy from 2016.

If approved, Proposition 1 will "provide funding for programs, athletics and extra-curricular activities, safety and security, professional development for staff, and preventative routine maintenance projects," according to PSD.

The capital bond approved by voters last February can only be used for construction. The levy maintains funding beyond what Washington state provides for basic education, which is approximately 82 percent of the district budget according to PSD. The levy funds the remaining 18 percent.

PSD will open a new elementary school called Pioneer in Gig Harbor next fall and is planning to begin rebuilding Evergreen and Artondale Elementary schools, the two oldest in the district, in the spring. A fourth elementary school known as No. 9 will be built in north Gig Harbor.

The proposed new property tax rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value is lower than the existing rate of \$2.16 per \$1,000, raising approximately \$25,140,000 in 2021 and up to \$28,225,000 by 2023.

Low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities may qualify for exemption for property taxes.

Ballots will be mailed Jan. 24. Ballots are due Feb. 11.

For more information, go to the county assessor's website at co.pierce.wa.us.



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Pierce County Developing Plan to Close Broadband Divide

The plan is slated to be completed by the end of 2021. The implementation is uncertain.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

The Pierce County Council received the results of a study evaluating broadband access and speed in the county last spring concluding that no solutions to inadequate access to high speed internet would come from the private sector alone.

In March 2018, the council hired Denver firm Magellan Advisors to conduct an audit to inventory current infrastructure, identify strategies to increase broadband access and speed in rural areas, and explore ways to increase and expand broadband infrastructure. The audit methodology included outreach to residents, businesses, service providers, utilities and county departments. A survey, primarily of households, included more than 1,200 responses.

The executive summary stated: "Gaps exist due to nonaggregated markets, and existing internet service providers have not committed to addressing these gaps without significant incentives; basic economics keeps broadband out of many of the county's rural areas. The starting point is for Pierce County's leaders to decide that lack of broadband is more than a problem: It is a critical roadblock to solutions for numerous problems."

The report summarized three approaches: rely on the private sector, have the county become an infrastructure provider, or consider a hybrid public-private partnership model.

In July 2019, the council passed a resolution that declared broadband to be essential infrastructure and defined three steps to make that a reality. The first was to remove policies and codes that are barriers to providing broadband services.

"We currently are under contract with CBG Communications to deliver the first component of the resolution. That work will kick off in February 2020, and we expect to have the deliverables within three to four

months," said Senior Legislative Analyst Hugh Taylor. "We are trying to make sure the county isn't standing in the way of the private sector doing their business."

Second, the council will hire a project manager or facilitator. County Councilman Derek Young said that person will be tasked with planning, identifying funding, and implementation of building the "middle mile" — the backbone of a broadband network in the county. "The goal will be to serve as many as possible as quickly as possible," he said. Two firms are being considered and a contract should be in place by early 2020.

Finally, the council will establish a stakeholder group. Taylor said there may be two groups — one that is a technical advisory group with expertise in providing broadband, and a second that would include representatives from the community, institutional groups (such as education and health care), telecommunications companies, and local and county government.

"We envision that it could take through the end of 2021 before we have a plan in place. And that works well with the two-year budget process," Taylor said. "I don't want to upsell the delivery of a brand new fiber

and speed. Width refers to capacity — how much data can be carried. Speed is about how fast the signal moves. The Federal Communications Commission defines broadband as 25 Mbps downstream (what is received) and 3 Mbps upstream (what is sent).

Speed of data transmission is typically expressed as the number of thousand (K), million (M) or billion (G) bits transmitted per second: 20 Mbps stands for 20 megabits per second. A bit is the smallest size of data storage; a byte, the unit used in file sizes, contains eight bits. Data transfer will not exceed the speed in a consumer's plan, but it may be slower depending on internet traffic, physical distance from the nearest network connection and several other factors.

The technology to carry information has evolved. Legacy dial-up telephone wires can handle speeds up to 56 Kbps. Digital subscriber lines (DSL) offer speeds of 10 to 24 Mbps, and copper-based cable can increase the speed to 150 Mbps. But signals in copper wire degrade over distance and are susceptible to electrical interference. Cable TV companies sharing those lines with multiple users will also reduce speed.

Fiber optic cable is considered the backbone of broadband networks. Fiber optic uses strands of glass to carry data via light waves and it has nearly unlimited capacity with speeds in the Gbps range (a billion bits per second), far surpassing copper.

Wireless or cellular technology uses radio waves to transmit data, requiring cell towers and antennae rather than wires. 4G cellular networks typically operate in the Kbps rather than Mbps range. 5G networks, or fifth generation technology, use higher frequencies and shorter wavelengths and are expected to provide speeds in the Gbps range. But the shorter wavelengths require antennae placed close together and in line of sight, and can be affected by environmental conditions. Those limitations mean that the new technology will probably not close the rural-urban broadband divide anytime soon.

"LEADERS NEED TO DECIDE THAT LACK OF BROADBAND IS MORE THAN A PROBLEM: IT IS A CRITICAL ROADBLOCK."

optic service in the community... It is a very complicated issue that is primarily driven by the marketplace

right now and the county isn't in the broadband business."

Young said that Pierce County presents some unique challenges. Nearly all other counties in the state have one or just a few utility providers for electricity, water and sewer. In Pierce County there are multiple utility providers, each with its own easement issues, which can make coordinating a broadband infrastructure, and even deciding who owns or runs it, complicated.

Broadband, which refers to high-speed internet services, is defined both by width

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FARM - TO - TABLE PASTA WITH A GREEK HERITAGE



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Lambie Lasagna

JANICE BRYANT, KAUKIKI FARM

A farm kitchen in winter is a magical place of warmth, rich aromas and family. The kitchen table, always the social hub, fills with neighbors and friends for long cups of coffee, tasty bites and special conversations. The “mad dash and out the door to grab the last bit of light” moments of other seasons is gone.

As the rain patters against the windows, there is time to plan and prepare, to share, laugh and tell stories. Great food in our family is an outright expression of love. Chocolate chip cookies when the boys have friends over, decadent macaroni and cheese to offset snowy days, oven-roasted beets and carrots claimed from the wet garden.

Serving what we grow ourselves is a matter of special pride, and we celebrate those meals sourced solely from the farm the most. The next best are recipes that have been shared by dear friends over the years, sublimely adjusted to our family’s tastes, traditions and timelines as the years go by.

This recipe is one of those, an absolute staple for the cold days, fancy enough to share with friends, satisfying enough to feed the teens, simple enough to prepare in advance or serve on a whim. I am

sure it is a variation on traditional Greek moussaka, but came from the incredible kitchen of my friend Claire Clark at Verde Orchards. Based on a “Pasta and Co. By Request” cookbook start, it morphed over the years into what we affectionately call “Lambie Lasagna.”

Serve with a fresh romaine salad heavy in avocado, winter pear, pecans and balsamic vinegar. Finish off with a peppery New Zealand Pinot Noir or Napa Cabernet. Keep dessert light!

LAMBIE LASAGNA

MEAT SAUCE:

- 2 pounds ground grass-fed lamb
- 1 pound ground grass-fed beef
- 2 cups onion, peeled, coarsely minced
- 2 tablespoons fresh minced garlic
- 3 teaspoons oregano
- 2 teaspoons fresh ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 3½ cups crushed tomatoes
- 2 cups diced tomatoes
- 1½ cups chicken stock
- ½ cup Chardonnay
- ½ cup tomato paste



Cook ground lamb and beef together until no longer pink, drain off all fat, then return meat to pan. Crumble well. Add onions, garlic, oregano, pepper, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves. Cook over medium heat for about 5 minutes. Add remaining ingredients. Cook another 15 minutes. Remove from heat and reserve. To keep clean up easy, use a Dutch oven that you can serve it in as well.

PASTA: 14 ounces dry penne pasta
Cook pasta 2 to 3 minutes only in boiling water (it will continue to cook in the dish). Rinse with cold water, drain well until nearly dry, then fold into meat sauce.

CHEESES:

- 1 pound feta cheese
- 2 cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Fold all the feta and one cup of Parmesan cheese into the meat and pasta sauce and transfer to a 9 × 13” oven-proof pan or keep in the Dutch oven. Sprinkle the remaining cup of Parmesan on top and sprinkle very lightly with a touch of cinnamon.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Bake covered for 45 minutes, uncovered for 15 minutes, adding aluminum foil if the top starts to brown too much. Let the dish sit for at least 5 minutes prior to serving.

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Thanks to a phone app, this dummy could be you receiving CPR from a volunteer first responder until medics arrive. *Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News*

Pierce County Fire Departments Launch “PulsePoint Respond”

Deaths resulting from sudden cardiac arrest peak in December and January, according to the American Heart Association. A convenient phone app may help save lives.

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

In collaboration with South Sound 911, the Key Peninsula Fire Department and 18 other fire and rescue agencies in Pierce County deployed PulsePoint Respond—a free cell phone app that alerts subscribers within “walking distance” of a sudden cardiac arrest that someone needs CPR immediately. The program, already in use by fire departments in neighboring Kitsap County and many others nationwide, rolled out Dec. 3 in Pierce County.

KPFD Public Information Officer Anne Nesbit set the stage in early December with a 911 call reporting a person collapsed on the floor of the South Hill Mall in Puyallup during a mock cardiac emergency. It was all part of a coordinated media event to help spread the word using a live demonstration of how this technology works in real time.

Within seconds of 911 dispatch, subscriber cell phones nearby sounded the alert. With local television crews in place and cameras rolling, volunteer Larry

Rucker with Gig Harbor Fire and Medic One received the alert on his phone and went into action, performing CPR on the dummy “to keep the blood circulating” until medics from Central Pierce County Fire & Rescue arrived to take over.

Meanwhile, Chasie Deyer, an ER nurse at Good Samaritan Hospital in Puyallup on her day off, happened to be in the mall with her family that morning when the alert sounded from the PulsePoint app on her cell phone.

“I could hardly believe it was happening,” Deyer said. “I looked at my mother-in-law and said, ‘There is a cardiac emergency. I’ve got to go now.’” She pressed “respond” on her phone and the PulsePoint app led her in the direction of the mock event where she saw a crowd gathering.

Organizer Kris McNamar of South Sound 911 was surprised but thrilled to see Deyer respond and asked how she had heard about the app.

“I talk to a lot of medics and firefighters in the ER and they told me about the phone

app going into use today, so I downloaded it this morning,” Deyer said, laughing. “I’m relieved it was only a drill.”

Julie Offner, of Gig Harbor, a survivor of sudden cardiac arrest, was on the scene to share her personal story with reporters.

Offner had been out ringing doorbells last March to encourage support for Peninsula School District’s capital bond measure and suddenly fell over. Her canvassing partner saw Offner fall and shouted to their driver to call 911 right away.

“She ran up two flights of stairs and started CPR on me immediately and kept it going until Medic One showed up,” Offner said. “That saved my life and most likely saved the quality of my life.”

Nesbit said she is pleased about the roll-out of the PulsePoint app and how simple it is to use. In Pierce County the CPR response feature is only activated on devices within a quarter mile radius of the victim and only in public places. On the KP, that might be places like stores at Lake Kathryn Village, the Key Center shopping

area, the library or the KP Civic Center.

“Ours is one community that really works together to help people,” Nesbit said.

PulsePoint users may select other types of notifications within the app to be alerted whenever there is a car accident, downed power lines or a house fire. Nesbit said the app doesn’t give the specific address of an incident, due to privacy concerns, but will inform users of the nature of response, the type and number of units dispatched and the general vicinity.

“Almost immediately after the release of the phone app, I saw people on social media posting screen shots of PulsePoint notifications, sharing news of a collision blocking the road, for example on KP Highway and 92nd Street NW,” Nesbit said.

“It’s very helpful for us as a department that people are already being alerted,” she said. “When it’s dark, rainy and cold outside, it’s great to know ahead of time there’s a hazard ahead and to be cautious — so that one bad thing doesn’t turn into two or three more bad things.”

Nisqually Reach Reserve Expansion Under Review

Proposed expansion will provide protection for prime aquatic habitat surrounding McNeil Island and south Key Peninsula.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

The extensive shoreline and waters surrounding the Key Peninsula and McNeil Island have long been recognized as important habitat for flora and fauna in south Puget Sound. In early December, staff from the Washington Department of Natural Resources and the Nisqually Reach Nature Center addressed a gathering at the Longbranch Improvement Club about plans to improve protection of that habitat.

DNR proposes expanding the boundaries of the Nisqually Reach Aquatic Reserve to encompass state-owned aquatic lands surrounding the north side of McNeil Island and the south end of the Key Peninsula that includes Sound View Camp, Devils Head and Taylor Bay. The expansion would provide resources to monitor, protect and restore habitat.

The Nisqually Reach Aquatic Reserve was established in 2011 and includes the lands on the south end of McNeil, a site identified in a 2006 DNR study as a top priority for preservation. The state recently discovered that aquatic lands on the island's north side are state rather than federally owned, prompting a plan to expand the reserve.

Dan Hull, executive director of the Nisqually Reach Nature Preserve, played a lead role in sponsoring the expansion proposal. He said that as the committee worked on the proposal, they decided to include the waters around the south end of the Key Peninsula. There are several unique habitat areas, including a sandspit, saltmarsh and a bull kelp bed. "And there are valuable upland partners," Hull said, citing conservancy lands and Sound View Camp as examples.

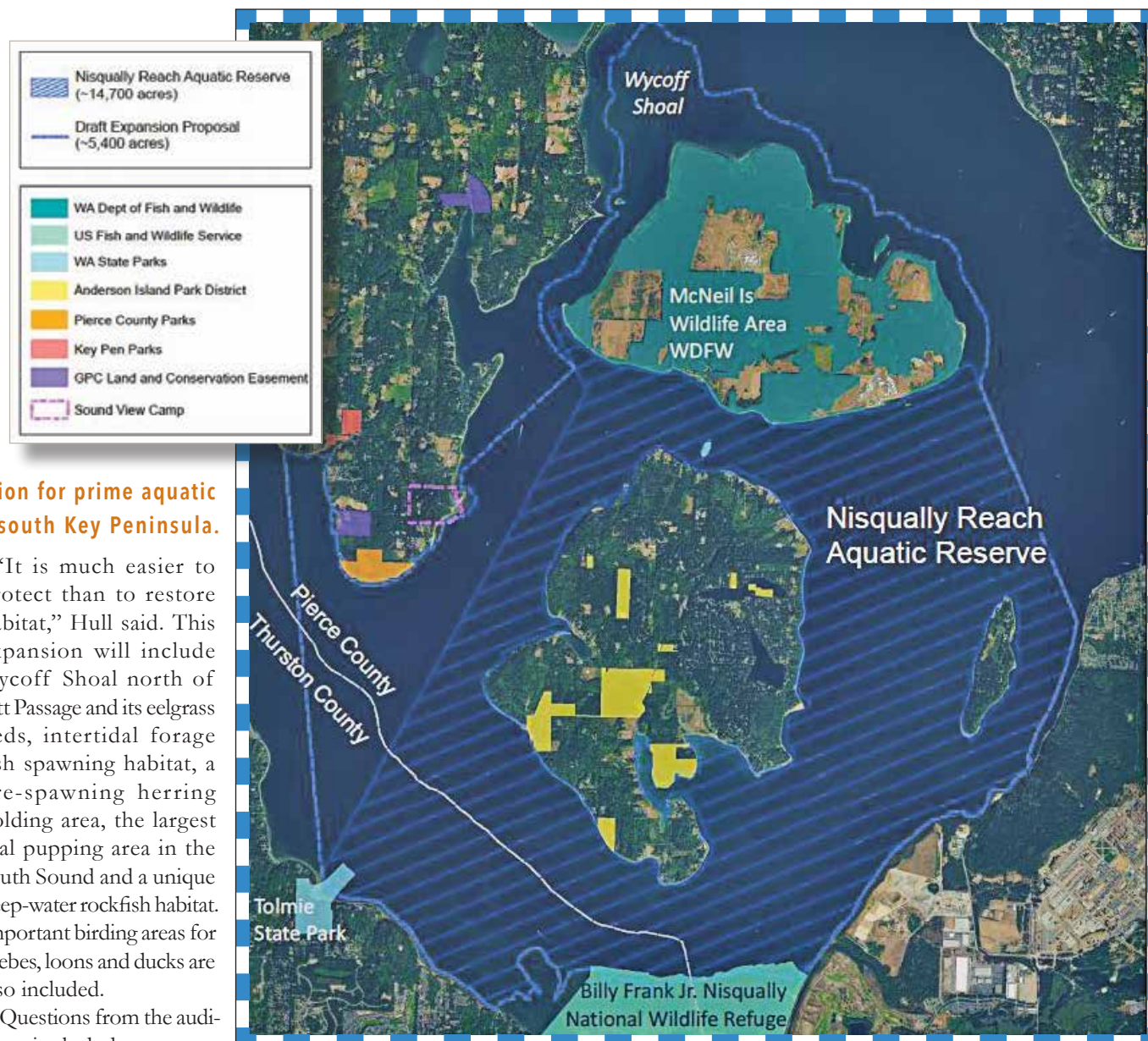
"It is much easier to protect than to restore habitat," Hull said. This expansion will include Wycoff Shoal north of Pitt Passage and its eelgrass beds, intertidal forage fish spawning habitat, a pre-spawning herring holding area, the largest seal pupping area in the south Sound and a unique deep-water rockfish habitat. Important birding areas for grebes, loons and ducks are also included.

Questions from the audience included concerns about how a reserve might affect the beach property owners and fishing and boating in the area.

Roberta Davenport, aquatic reserves program manager, said that owners of shoreline adjacent to a reserve should not be affected. All licensed activities such as fishing, crabbing and harvesting of native geoducks will continue to be managed by the Department of

Fish and Wildlife with no resulting change in the rules. She explained that throwing an anchor in eelgrass, provided it did not lead to dragging and disrupting the bed, would not be prohibited. New leasing agreements would require that the management goals of the reserve would have to be met, so that, for instance, shellfish farming on the McNeil shoreline would not be allowed.

A benefit of establishing a reserve is the existence of state staff that help focus and manage the program. They include the manager, an educator, six field staff, a marine ecologist and someone to manage GIS and data. Partnering with organizations



Map: Washington State Department of Natural Resources

and citizen-scientists to help monitor the shoreline, participate in bird counts and run educational programs are all part of the reserve program.

The technical advisory committee completed its recommendations in May. Its recommendations were then reviewed by tribes and other stakeholders including the shellfish industry and land trusts before public meetings in December. A State Environment Policy Act review will be the final step before the expansion is official.

The aquatic reserve program, established in the early 2000s, is designed to protect important native ecosystems on state-owned aquatic lands. To be considered, a potential site must address environmental, scientific or educational needs. The process to establish or to expand a reserve is a lengthy one, involving scientific scrutiny and public input.

"The site must have something special and the ecological resources should be high quality," Davenport said, adding that if the area has been significantly degraded it may be too much of a challenge to restore.

There are now eight reserves in the state. The most recent, Lake Kapowsin, is the only freshwater reserve. The rest are in Puget Sound and include Cherry Point, Cypress Island, Fidalgo Bay, Smith and Minor Islands, Protection Island, Maury Island and Nisqually Reach.

Anyone with questions or comments can contact Roberta Davenport at 360-902-1073 or email roberta.davenport@dnr.wa.gov.



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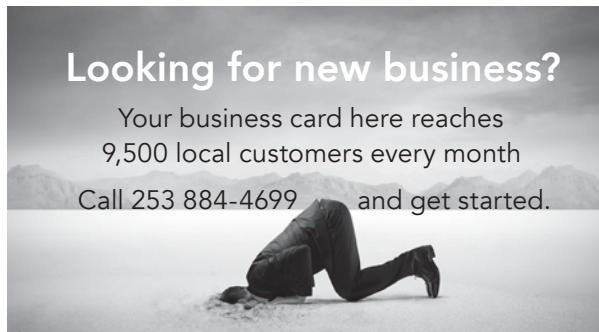
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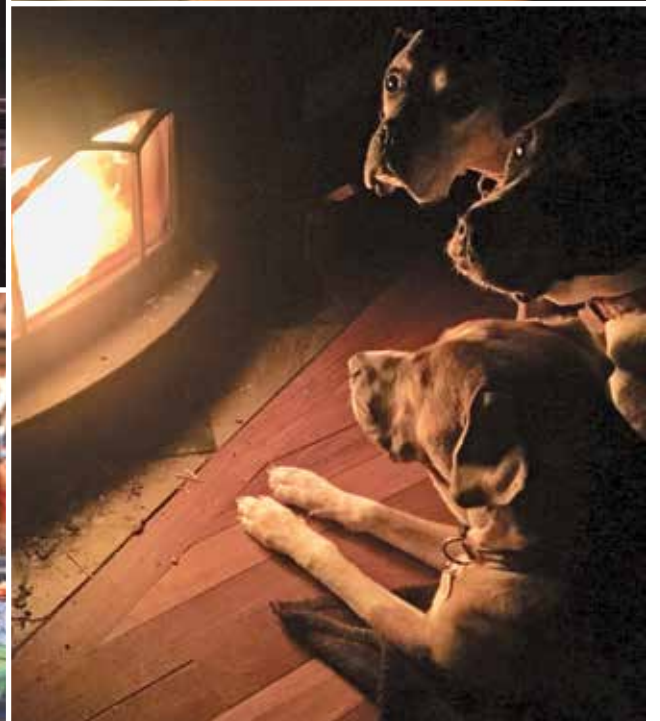
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UPPER LEFT Three generations of Girl Scouts: Julie Thomas, daughter Jessica Ruckle and granddaughter Veronica Ruckle at the LIC's Kids 'n' Christmas. *Photo: David Zeigler, KP News* **UPPER RIGHT** December sunset on Vaughn Bay. *Photo: Bea Berry* **CENTER LEFT** Helpful parking lot elf Larry Layton. *Photo: David Zeigler, KP News* **CENTER MIDDLE** Vintage Lakebay home decked out for the holidays. *Photo: David Zeigler, KP News* **CENTER** LIC lighted boat parade. *Photo: David Zeigler, KP News* **CENTER RIGHT** KPMS student Oliver Lund, 11, enjoys the fun at Red Barn Youth Center's Christmas party. *Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News* **BOTTOM LEFT** Lulu Smith and Rhonda Honda celebrate the last Christmas party at Lulu's Homeport. *Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News* **BOTTOM CENTER** Denny Pritchard and grandson photo elf Nolan Littleton at LIC Kids 'n' Christmas. *Photo: David Zeigler, KP News* **BOTTOM RIGHT** A very warm three-dog night. *Photo: Larry Buck*