

Residents seek unified voice by creating a community council



Photo by Rodika Tollefson

Community Council organizational committee meets once a month to discuss the vision, goals and other aspects of creating a council on the Key Peninsula.

By Rodika Tollefson
KP News

A group of Key Peninsula residents seeking a unified voice in dealing with government bodies and a way to mobilize the community into solving local issues embarked on a journey to form a community council. In its early stages of organizing, the committee is brainstorming ideas on what kind of council could be created, what its roles would be, and what issues it should tackle.

The council could take so many shapes that the organizers are presenting a few preconceived ideas. "If we came in with a specific vision, it would be our vision. (Instead), the process of establishing a com-

munity council should generate those ideas," said organizer and Administrative Sub-committee Co-chair Jeff Harris at the group's Jan. 28 meeting. "The council is designed to represent a broad range of interests, whatever the community decides to be important."

Residents who feel the area doesn't get its fair share of attention have discussed the idea of the council around the peninsula for some time, along with other possibilities like incorporation. Safe Streets Community Mobilization Specialist Dennis Taylor, who saw a community council as

(See **Council**, page 15)

KPFD hosts flashover training

By Hugh McMillan
KP News

Key Peninsula Fire Department personnel hosted a flashover training session in January for themselves and two representatives each from Gig Harbor Fire and Graham Fire and Rescue. They did so at Key Peninsula's Volunteer Park, where the equipment was set up in a virtually non-ceasing rain that reached tropical down-pour stages several times.

It didn't matter. The training proceeded at 8 a.m. as if on a balmy summer day as far as firefighters' attitudes were concerned, and it continued throughout the day, one session following another.

KPFD firefighter Scott Marsh said he felt "the training is good." "Just watching the flame roll over your head in a controlled environment is impressive. It's really hot, particularly when the flames come down to your helmet level," he said.

Training was conducted in the Bates Technical College flashover equipment, a semi-trailer-sized steel vehicle in which fire is deliberately set with combustible materials that generate substantial temperatures and smoke. All personnel were in bunker gear and breathing apparatus and



Photo by Hugh McMillan/Courtesy Peninsula Gateway

The nonstop rain offered no respite to the firefighters, who "battled" hot flames during their January flashover training.

learned how to extinguish such a ferociously blazing phenomenon.

The roof of the vehicle was glowing red and illuminating the rain-generated steam pouring into the sky. KPFD's Division Chief Tracy Lyon supervised the training.

(See **Training**, page 17)

Key Peninsula News is back in business

By KP News staff

Despite the stopped presses, things were busy at the Key Peninsula News the last few months. A Reconstitution Committee that was formed after the August shutdown worked on ways to revitalize the publication financially and editorially. Many options were considered for making the operation support itself on a break-even basis, and all pieces fell in place in January.

The Key Peninsula Civic Center Association approved new publishing policies that would focus the news and editorial coverage on the Key Peninsula area while maintaining the mission of supporting and building the sense of community and reporting on important local issues. An editor was hired part-time, and a host of people worked behind the scenes to make things happen.

Special thank you to those who made the relaunch possible: Reconstitution Com-

mittee Chair Bill Trandum; KPCCA Executive Board members Loyd Miller, Tim Kezele, Dale Loy, and Sylvia Haase; President Betty Kelly and Past President Dave Stratford; KPCCA Board members Richard Brudvik-Lindner and Phil Bauer; Bob Stackhouse, Alice Tramil, Ed Taylor, Marty Marcus, Ann Taylor, Ken Bushnell, Hugh McMillan, Vicky McClung, Colleen Slater, William Dietz, Marjorie Dietz, Simon Priest, Irene Torres, Rodika Tollefson, Dave Brasfield; and other residents who have attended meetings or offered their assistance and encouragement.

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Special thank you to the Angel Guild for their generous support.



Local grocery stores change owners, keep competitive prices

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Friends and strangers touch 11-year-old and his family with the gift of caring

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Citizen of the Year nominations wanted

By Hugh McMillan
KP News

The Key Peninsula Lions Club is looking for the new Key Peninsula Citizen of the Year—and it needs your nominations. The deadline has been extended to Feb. 15.

Last year, near 20 citizens were honored as nominees, but this year, “not nearly as many nominations have been received to date,” according to representatives of the sponsoring Key Peninsula Lions Club.

The event, to be held at the KP Civic Center Saturday, March 15, will feature Adm. Herb Bridge (retired) as keynote speaker.

Anyone living, owning property, or working on the Key Peninsula may be nominated for volunteer services performed on behalf of the community.

Members of the Lions Club are not eligible. Letters of nomination should contain the name, telephone number, and mailing address of the nominee(s) and a signed statement by the person making the nomination(s) describing why the candidate(s) deserve recognition. Nominators may submit one or several names. Letters should be mailed to KP Citizens of the Year, P.O. Box 63, Vaughn, WA 98394, or emailed to: hmcnp1000@harboret.com. For information, call 884-3319 or 884-3485.

Citizen of the Year keynote speaker

Admiral Herb Bridge (ret.) will be the keynote speaker for the 19th annual Key Peninsula Citizens of the Year banquet on March 15. He joined the Navy as a 17-year-old enlisted man in 1942 and after WWII and Korean War service, was active in the Naval Reserve for 43 years, retiring as its senior rear admiral.



His last command was a 45 ship fleet in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. He received the Seattle/King County First Citizen Award for 2001 as well as Junior Achievement's prestigious McNaughton Award for being that year's individual best exemplifying the spirit of community service.

Decision time for local landmark *Wauna store may be gone?*



Photo courtesy KP Historical Society
The W.E. White Flour Feed & Groceries circa early 1920s, with "Grandma and Granddad White" on the right.

By Tim Kezele
KP Historical Society

As the lyrics go, “you don't know what you've got till it's gone.” In this case, it is the White/Goldman store located at the south end of the Purdy sand spit along State Highway 302. This local landmark, which was built in 1899 by W.E. White along the shores of Henderson Bay, has met the needs of our community for well over 100 years. A local group of concerned citizens hopes to preserve it for another 100 years.

In December, the Pierce County Parks Commission made a recommendation to the Pierce County Landmarks Commission to remove the building from the register of historic places and to be given permission to tear down the structure. County officials say they do not have the funding to preserve it and that the liability issues are getting out of hand.

With news of this decision on the Key Peninsula, a group of interested parties

got together to discuss ways of preserving the local landmark. The groups on board so far, the Key Peninsula Parks & Recreation District (KPPRD), the Key Peninsula Business Association, the Key Peninsula Historical Society, and the Key Peninsula Trails Committee, will investigate the possibility of preserving the building through a community effort, and the funding avenues for the project.

The community representatives have met with the Pierce County Parks Director Jan Walcott to request the demolition of the building be stopped, and to discuss an interagency agreement with the KPPRD to take a custodial role in managing the building.

Concerned community members will meet again in early February with the Landmarks Commission and Pierce County Parks and Recreation in hopes to come up with a plan to preserve the historic structure for the benefit of the community. For more information, contact Tim Kezele at 884-6951.

Plans in the works for the Home park

By Nancy Lind
KPPRD

A few years ago Home had a recycling site that was a dilemma to the community. This site separated those who hated looking at a recycling center and all the debris it entailed, and those who thought it was doing a service to the community. The owner had been there for many years and had been a resident of the Key Peninsula all his life. He and his father were loved by many for all the services they had done and for helping to keep refrigerators, dryers, cars and other junk out of the woods and off the side roads.

Unfortunately, things got tough for them and they lost the property. Pierce County offered to clean the site if an organization would take it over and that group could assure the county that they would keep it clean. The Key Peninsula Parks and Recreation District took over the nearly 2-acre site, and the county followed up by hauling away several dozen containers full of litter.

KPPRD will outline a master plan for the park, and the public is asked to help with the process. Those interested are invited to attend a meeting on Feb. 10 at 7 p.m., at the KP Community Services building (the old school house on the so. side of the Home bridge).

KPPRD Information

KPPRD welcomes anyone interested in helping and/or becoming a Friend of Home Park. Call Nancy Lind at 884-3347, email nancyind2000@yahoo.com or visit the park Website at www.kpprd.org.

KEY PENINSULA NEWS

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Grocery stores change owners, aim to bring low prices KP loses a leader

By William C. Dietz
KP News

Peninsula's three main grocery stores are once again fully stocked, after shelves stood empty late last year during a pending sale by former long-time owner and Key Center resident Walter Schmidt. Walt's Fine Foods in Lake Kathryn and Key Center were renamed to Peninsula Market after the sale to Stoltz Northwest Inc., while the Purdy location continues to do business as the Bridgeway Market.

"The business is up, running, and doing well," said Kip Bonds, general manager for Stoltz Northwest, a privately held company that took over the three grocery stores on Nov. 22.

The three locations have been cleaned, painted, and restocked after the sale, and have been equipped with suggestion boxes that are checked on a frequent basis. "If you want something new, let us know," Bonds said. "We can't stock everything that larger stores do but we'll continue to do everything we can. For example, we've had requests for organic milk, and now it's available."

Bonds has responsibility for all the Stoltz stores on the Key Peninsula, as well as those located on Vashon Island and in Renton. He said the company employs approximately 100 people, about 50 of whom work on the Peninsula. The company's owner, Donald Stoltz, visits each one of the markets on a weekly basis.

"Business has picked up and we're headed in the right direction. Convenience is important but so is price," Bonds said.

To keep the prices competitive, Bonds said the company uses a nationwide distributor called SUPERVALUE that offers a program allowing smaller stores to compete with retail giants like Wal-Mart Stores Inc. "For example, we charge an everyday low price of \$1.29 for a four-pack of GE light bulbs that would cost \$3.65 at one of the larger stores," he explained. "We're trying



Photo by Rodika Tollefson

Peninsula Market shelves are filled with a variety of groceries that the new owners say they will keep competitively priced.

to be competitive throughout the store."

Bonds said the company would like to build a new Key Center store about twice the size of the existing structure after a couple of years—assuming "that everything goes well."

"In the meantime, we're here for the long haul. We see ourselves as permanent mem-

bers of the community. That's why we provide a 1 percent rebate to nonprofit organizations. All they have to do is collect Peninsula Market receipts from people they know and bring them in. With the exception of certain items and taxes, we'll give them 1 percent of the total. It's a way for them to raise money and a way for us to say 'thanks.'"

News briefs

Search is on for new Key Peninsula logo

The Key Peninsula was named by a contest sponsored by the KP Business Association in 1931. The KPBA is sponsoring another contest to develop a Key Peninsula logo that will promote community identity and tradition. The logo should be uniquely representative of the Key Peninsula so that any organized group may use it to identify them as part of our KP community.

Anyone interested in the Key Peninsula

may enter and compete for the \$100 first prize. Submissions should be postmarked by June 1, 2003, and the judge's decision will be made by July 1. The winner may be announced publicly at the Key Peninsula Fair on Aug. 15.

Send official submissions to: KP Logo Contest, c/o Key Peninsula Business Association, P.O. Box 439, Vaughn, WA. 98394. For questions and submissions format and sizes, call Logo Contest Committee Chair Mary Ramsdell at 884-4834 or email framsdell@harbornet.com.

By Hugh McMillan
KP News

A recent Saturday in January was one of the wettest days any of us could recall. Not just the on-again, off-again mists, torrential downpours, gentle rains, and millisecond-long dry spells, but in the hearts of some 15 friends who were helping load the personal effects of Key Peninsula mover and shaker Vicki McClung into a Ryder moving van that would take Vicki away to Dallas, Texas.

Why?

As she put it, "I got a deal I just couldn't resist." She will be the office manager for Lady Walton Cookies, a Texas yummy produced in a factory owned by Vicki's close personal friends, the Waltons.

Her friend, Claudia Loy of SunnyCrest Nursery, said, "The three main characteristics that come to mind when I think of Vicki are: great laugh, wonderful cook, dear friend. SunnyCrest is key to all of my friendships and, of course, that is where we first met Vic. Her laughter and smile started a great relationship. I know that is what drew everyone to her."

McClung and her then-husband bought their home in Vaughn in 1990 and moved into it in 1992. Betty Kelley, president of the KPCCA Board where McClung served as treasurer, said, "Vicky is my friend and mentor. Vicky is always there when you need her. She will be in my heart no matter where she goes."

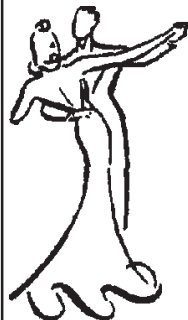
Among the helping friends, which included KP Historical Society President Tim Kezele, his daughter Caitlin, Tom and Nancy Howard, Mike Reeves and Bill Elliott, an aura of camaraderie, affection and joy to be helping a soulmate was mixed with a heart hurt at the impending loss of a dear friend. Jack Sheehan, jokingly described as McClung's, "heartless landlord," was also there, with a huge bag of freshly popped corn, an adequate supply of beer, and damp eyes.

(See **McClung**, page 15)

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Editorial

New year brings new start for Key Peninsula News

Making New Year's resolutions is perhaps an old-fashion occupation. In fact, many people make a resolution not to make resolutions. At the Key Peninsula News, the new year seemed like a good time to advance a new vision for the paper and set a relaunch in motion.

Although things have been in the works for the last few months and possibilities were being examined, many pieces were still missing. One thing was certain: The community needed its paper back, and back it would come one way or the other. What happened next is a good example of how this community solves problems. In less than three weeks, word spread that we needed help, individuals and groups offered support, and the last few pieces came in place at incredible speed. What you see today is the result of a tremendous effort by a few individuals, supported by the community. It doesn't always take a large ensemble to accomplish a goal. All that's needed is a vision, a tight group of people willing to do what it takes, and a lot of perseverance.

We see these kinds of examples all around the Key Peninsula, which thrives with organizations, groups and individuals who dedicate long hours to serve their community and each other and to solve challenges. It is by far one of the aspects that make living on this beautiful land, brimming with opportunities, a rewarding experience. We hope to highlight those efforts throughout the year and recognize those movers and shakers. We also hope to bring our readers stories that inform about important issues, and to write about things that make us cry or laugh, make us mad or content—and either spring the community into action, or reaffirm its good works. Key Peninsula News is about the issues and the people of the peninsula—and in a sense it's a partnership with our readers with whom we make a pact to report without bias and help build the sense of community. The newspaper is a vehicle for informing the residents about what is happening around them, and we hope you take advantage of this tool to either announce your group's efforts or get involved in one of the many projects that help improve our peninsula.

The new year is a great time to renew the spirit of community journalism and plant new ideas. To all those who have thrust the vision and helped bring the community's voice back, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Letters to the Editor

Thinking about the rebirth of new Key Peninsula News, I reviewed some works from another small newspaper, halfway across the country. The takeaway message is: The community newspaper represents a grass roots "slice of life." It should reflect the varied lifestyles of our citizens, each of whom has a general idea about what should "make the news." Smaller papers, like ours, have less stringent rules about newsworthy items, and will target a more isolated audience. The people in this community will again have the opportunity to see their names (or those of their children) in print, whether their news shakes the world, or merely strengthens the backbone of America. Welcome back, Key Peninsula News!

*Irene Torres
Vaughn*

Last fall, I was cutting firewood on my property when I fractured my left collarbone. At Evergreen Elementary School where I substitute teach, a parent, Kim Sparks saw me and said she'd come out

with a support brace to help heal the bone. She came to my house and fitted me in the support, with instructions to let her know if I needed anything else. Another parent, Chris Sherman, ran into me at the school and said the call for help went out and the firewood fairies would be out with some wood.

Chris and Vickie the post office lady came and unloaded firewood until dark. I cried. Chris came back another day with a small crew of happy helpers, her two sons Johnny and Robert. Jane Tobey of The Home Store, her husband and their daughter Aubrie. You should see the wood! I was so happy and moved to tears. Chris, her sons and husband Scott came back three weeks later and changed my chimney; then they fixed my leaky roof. When I asked how much they would accept, they just said, "God wanted us to do this for you!" They gave me two warm bear hugs and drove out of sight! What a warm, caring and loving community I live in!

*La Verma Williams
Lakebay*

Key Peninsula embodies community spirit and exhibits dedicated volunteers

By Marian Berejikian
Special to KP News

I recently witnessed an example of a group of people giving their time and putting their ideas into action. I had the pleasure of attending the Key Peninsula Community Council Organizational Committee meeting co-chaired by Jeff Harris with Community in Schools of Peninsula and Dennis Taylor with Safe Streets. The group was large (over 50 people), diverse, enthusiastic and willing to get the job done. People were willing to commit to the vision and follow through with the work. This group is exceptional. It is refreshing to see so many people come together to work on difficult issues that affect their community.

Too often groups that come together do not succeed because of lack of volunteer involvement and commitment. Time constraints and busy schedules usually keep the majority of people from volunteering. With a few volunteers doing the majority of work, "burnout" is high and vital work goes undone.

Volunteers are in short supply and are wanted desperately by many worthwhile organizations and for many worthy causes. There are many local groups in Pierce County and beyond deserving of committed members. Before taking the plunge, however, volunteers should make sure they are signing up for a stint with a professional, positive, and well-run organization. Nan Hawthorne (*Volunteer Recruitment That Actually Works*, March 2002) states: "...People are not content with busy work tasks and poorly designed and run volunteer programs. They expect organizations to succeed in solving community problems and to be given roles that directly impact this success."

On the national scale, President Bush has called for civic engagement asking Americans to heed the call for community service. The president's goal is for Americans to volunteer four or more hours per week to reach 4,000 lifetime volunteering hours in less than 20 years.

A recent study by Independent Sector (IS) found the value of the time people will give to charitable organizations



climbed to \$16.05 per hour, up from \$15.39 in 2000. According to Independent Sector's *Giving and Volunteering in the United States* national survey, 44 percent, or 83.9 million people, volunteered their time in 2000, representing the equivalent of over 9 million full-time employees at a value of \$239 billion.

Volunteering is not only good for your community, but some claim it is good for your health. "The healing power of service" by Edward V. Brown cites a story about a small rural town in Oregon, where a teenage boy died in a drowning accident. In all likelihood his death could have been prevented if an ambulance and trained medical personnel had been available. However, this small town was too poor to afford these services.

The boy's mother transformed her grief into community service. She became an Emergency Medical Technician and raised money to purchase an ambulance and trained volunteers to help her. It is estimated that this volunteer ambulance service has saved the lives of over 100 people who might have died, as her son did, due to a lack of emergency care. When interviewed, this woman said, "It's easier to forget your own loss when you are busy helping others." Mr. Brown stated, "Medical scientists are beginning to discover what this woman already knows: that there is healing power in helping others."

May the Key Peninsula group continue in their success. They provide a good example to the rest of us. I hope that more people will consider giving their time to build better communities for us all.

Marian Berejikian is the executive director of Friends of Pierce County.

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KPPRD develops leisure plan for Key Peninsula

By KPPRD
Special to KP News

KPPRD has five volunteer commissioners who serve a four-year term and are elected by voters on a staggered basis on our national Election Day. The present commissioners are:
Dick Granquist, 884-9596
Nancy Lind, 884-3347
Pat Medveckus, 884-5097
Fred Ramsdell, 884-4834
Marilyn Tagert, 857-3660

The Key Peninsula Parks and Recreation District (KPPRD) has undertaken the development of a comprehensive plan for public leisure on the Key Peninsula. Leisure includes local parks and facilities, sports leagues, recreation activities, and all other forms of community programming.

Pierce County has recently released a new comprehensive plan for parks and recreation that uses current information from the Gig Peninsula, but relies on a decade-old plan for the Key Peninsula. Our community clearly stands to benefit from updating the comprehensive plan and submitting it for adoption by the Pierce County Council.

For the past six months, the five KPPRD commissioners and a host of volunteers have been working with local resident Dr. Simon Priest, an early-retired professor of parks and recreation, to create the plan.

In August and September, existing local leisure resources were identified. Then, a series of five public meetings were held in October and December to determine the leisure needs of local residents and visitors. A draft version of the plan can be found on the KPPRD Website at www.kpprd.org.

The last half of the process calls for the community to provide feedback. A series of monthly meetings are scheduled to examine specific pieces of the plan, listed in the "Story of KPPRD" below. Citizens are invited to attend the meetings and share their ideas, or email messages to info@kpprd.org; send letters to P.O. Box 46, Vaughn, WA. 98394; or leave voice recordings at 884-9240.

After this final round of public input, the KPPRD commissioners will explore ways to make the comprehensive plan work. This is your chance to influence the future of our community and determine the quality of leisure and life on the Key Peninsula.

Proposed plan summary

Existing leisure resources

Green spaces: 3 Washington State Parks, 3 DNR public land parcels, 3 Pierce

County Parks, and 3 KPPRD Parks: Sport Center & Fairgrounds (aka Volunteer Park), Home Park, and Rocky Creek Conservation Area.

Land & water access: 16 hiking trails, 5 public beaches with road or trail access, 10 public beaches without land access (marine approach only), 9 boat launch ramps, 2 marinas, and 1 private ferry.

Facilities: 15 concentrations of historical points, 1 historical museum, 1 public library, 3 community centers, 4 schools, 6 fire stations (some with meeting space), 10 churches (many with meeting spaces), 8 private camps, 3 bed & breakfasts, 15 tourist attractions, 3 horse stables, and 10 farms and ranches (retailing to the public).

Future needs

Conservation refers to the protection of sensitive environments, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources. The public identified these 5 locations as high priorities for protection: Rocky Bay and Creek, Devils Head, Herron Creek Estuary, Maple Hollow, and Dutcher Cove (Haley) State Park. Other issues included water quality, pollution, bulkheading, logging, fishing, and Salmon enhancement.

Preservation refers to the protection of historical and cultural assets. The public called for preservation of these historical sites: homesteads, stores & post offices, community centers, churches, cemeteries, school houses, marinas, and several other places. They also asked for public artwork, artist tours, garden tours, community gardens, arts and crafts instruction, and upgrading theater facilities.

Trails were a large component of Pierce County's plan. The Key Peninsula Trails Committee is already developing an integrated system of dedicated and separated trails for different user groups:

- multi-user trails along the 144th St. powerline right of way
- a kayaking trail from Allyn to Purdy (with 4 campsites)
- a sailing trail from Allyn to Gig Harbor (linking marinas)
- scuba trails in Case and Carr inlets
- hiking and backpacking trails from Devils Head to Rocky Creek
- a network of connected equestrian loops for horse riders
- off-road mountain biking trails and a BMX track
- on-road bicycle routes, lanes and/or paths
- a series of short wheelchair, fitness, and nature trails.

Sports areas included the desire for playgrounds, fields and courts to be built in a small "pocket" park for each neighborhood. Then, three regional

parks (Longbranch, Home/Lakebay, and Vaughn/Key Center) would contain facilities like those of the KP Sports Center & Fairgrounds (formerly Volunteer Park).

A recreation center or complex was requested for the north end of the Key Peninsula. The wish list contained: a swimming pool, fitness center, exhibition building, multipurpose gymnasium, sports fields with lighting, covered arena, sand volleyball, outdoor courts, camping, picnic areas, concessions, and an outdoor amphitheater.

Programming awareness was a public concern. KPPRD was asked to develop a database of existing leisure programs, distribute a list of those leisure programs, coordinate advertising for existing program providers, identify new programming needs for all age groups, and create a talent pool of potential staff, providers and/or volunteers.

New parks were strongly desired by the public and KPPRD was encouraged to manage existing public lands for new park spaces.

Park upgrades were requested for the 3 existing KPPRD parks: Home Park, KP Sports Center & Fairgrounds and the Rocky Creek Conservation Area.

Suggestions for **Home Park** (focused on culture) were nature trails, display gardens, artwork exhibits, gazebo, amphitheater, historical plaques, information kiosk, arboretum, playgrounds, picnic area, and overflow parking for community events with a bus "park and ride."

Suggestions for the **KP Sports Center and Fairgrounds** (centered on sports) consisted of: a swimming pool, lights for all playing fields, a multi-use surface, an alternative activity space, a covered building, camping, trails, nature walks, BMX tracks, mountain bike trails, a park manager, additional overflow parking, picnic tables, and more toilet facilities.

Suggestions for Rocky Creek aligned with the environment and nature) involved: interpretive trails, environmental

education center, information kiosk, board-walking, a park custodian, a large parking area, road and footbridge over the creek, security gates, and toilets.

Facilities requested were: swimming pool, roadside visitor center, and the use of green technologies (composting toilets, wind powered lights, solar heated water, gray water irrigation, or recycled plastics).

Other concerns expressed by the public included issues indirectly related to leisure and directly related to quality of life: transportation, road safety, pollution, and governance. These concerns are outside the mandate of KPPRD, but we stand ready to support other groups (such as a newly forming community council) in dealing with them.

The story of KPPRD

The Key Peninsula Civic Center helped form the Key Peninsula Parks and Recreation District by community vote in 1972. KPPRD began searching for ball field sites the following year. Pierce County leased the organization 20 acres of tax-title property at a price of \$10 for 10 years. Local loggers, bulldozers, graders and many volunteers put in the first field. The site was named the "Key Peninsula Sports Center,



ation District by community vote in 1972. KPPRD began searching for ball field sites the following year. Pierce County leased the organization 20 acres of tax-title property at a price of \$10 for 10 years. Local loggers, bulldozers, graders and many volunteers put in the first field. The site was named the "Key Peninsula Sports Center,

(See **Plan**, page 7)

(Plan, from page 6)

built by Volunteers"; however, it became popularly known as "Volunteer Park." Facilities were improved with a \$5,000 grant from the Ben Cheney Foundation, a \$50,000 contribution from HUD and some levies. Water, lights, septic system, additional ball fields, tennis courts, picnic areas, concession stand, bathrooms, shop, playground equipment, and horseshoe pits were added with the money. After the lease expired in 1983, the county saw that the community was serious about the park and gave the deed to the site to KPPRD. A private home was later donated and moved to the park for use as a meeting, office, and storage area.

In 1994, 224 acres of tax-title property was leased by Pierce County to KPPRD and became the Rocky Creek Conservation Area. Decades of damage from garbage dumping, car abandonment and all-terrain vehicle use has been cleaned up by volunteers, such as the "Friends of Rocky Creek" who now manage the site. Quarterly work parties have built trails, closed off-road access, opened overlooks, erected a reader board, planted trees, and developed a picnic area with parking.

In 2001, KPPRD proposed the creation of Home Park: approximately 2 acres on the southwest corner of Key Peninsula Highway and 8th Avenue. After assistance from Pierce County in removing tons of housing debris, automobile junk, and appliance salvage from the property, the volunteer group known as the "Friends of Home Park" has begun planning for its future development.

KPPRD receives no regular funding from property taxes. Instead, the \$67,000 annual operation costs are recovered by occasional levies. Most of these funds go to maintain the facilities and equipment in the KP Sports Center & Fairgrounds that get 20,000 user-days a year. For example, the tractor was purchased over 20 years ago and the mowers are donated "hand-me-downs" from Pierce County Parks. The considerable

maintenance of this machinery is being conducted by volunteers at extremely low cost.

Today, KPPRD's future vision is Key Peninsula residents and visitors enjoying a wide range of leisure opportunities that enhance the quality of their lives. Their mission is to manage parks and their related facilities, to coordinate sport leagues and recreation activities, to collaborate with government and community-based organizations, to develop local resources with respect for all people and the environment, to plan sensible change strategies that are both desirable and sustainable, and to collectively do all of this in a way that realizes our vision.

KPPRD meetings

Meetings are normally held on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. and the fourth Monday at 4 p.m. in the Annex Building of the KP Sports Center & Fairgrounds Park. The public is welcome to attend. Please come to the public input meetings listed below and help determine the future of KPPRD.

Feb. 10 – Home Park (7 p.m., Key Peninsula Community Services)

March 10 – Sports & Leagues (7 p.m., Sport Center & Fairgrounds Annex)

April 14 – Leisure Programming (7 p.m., KP Civic Center)

May 12 – New Parks and Green Spaces (7 p.m., Sport Center & Fairgrounds Annex)

June 9 – A recreation complex (7 p.m., Sport Center & Fairgrounds Annex)

Previous meetings have already begun master plans discussions for the KP Sports Center & Fairgrounds and Rocky Creek Conservation Area.

Improvements discussed for KP Sports Center and Fairgrounds

By Simon Priest
KPPRD

The Key Peninsula Parks and Recreation District held the first of its public input meetings for 2003 that are part of a series of meetings to discuss the future of leisure opportunities on the Key Peninsula. Seventeen people attended the Jan. 10 meeting to discuss priorities for future improvements of the Key Peninsula Sports Center and Fairgrounds (previously called Volunteer Park).

After two hours of passionate exchanges, the top priorities were decided as:

- Water management: New well for upper field area; improved irrigation and drainage on all fields.

- Field construction: Expand clearing and level upper field area; soil and seed

or sod upper field area; move all over flow parking to the school.

- Building upgrades: Retrofit to meet ADA compliances; improve toilets and main office; insulate concession and add heat; add rain gutters and downspouts.

Funds for these improvements will come from a pending Real Estate Excise Tax grant from Pierce County for approximately \$150,000, provided that the community matches this amount with monies, labor, and resources.

The outlined priorities will now be used to begin a park master planning process for the Sports Center and Fairgrounds. Once this plan is completed, the public will be invited to comment and suggest changes at a future KPPRD meeting.

Contact KPPRD Commissioner Fred Ramsdell at 884-4834 for information.

Food Bank receives grant



Photo by Hugh McMillan/Courtesy Peninsula Gateway

VFW Post 4990 Ladies Auxiliary member Roxanne Wooldridge presents a check for \$10,000 on Feb. 16 to the Key Peninsula Community Services/Food Bank's Board of Directors, left to right: Board member Marge Adams, Wooldridge, Treasurer Earle Saxer, Secretary Helen Saxer, President Bud Ulsh, and Executive Director Cristi Watson. Earlier the same week, VFW Post 4990 presented another \$10,000 check to the food bank. The money is dedicated to the KPCS building fund to help cover costs for a planned expansion of the KPCS facility.

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Camp Colman expands winter community outreach

By Justin Benjamin
Camp Colman

Many on the Key Peninsula have heard of YMCA Camp Colman, while some people have not. Located on the end of the Key Peninsula, next to Joemma State Park, Camp Colman has been part of the Key Peninsula since 1965. In the past Camp Colman has hosted community events, such as the Community Christmas Breakfast, and family camps. But what is Camp Colman?

Originally owned by the Colman family, Camp Colman was a summer camp that was later passed into the hands of the YMCA. Throughout the years the camp has expanded its summer residence camping program, which now includes some specialty off camp trips, and their spring and fall Outdoor Environmental Education Program that provides hands-on science, leadership, and teamwork classes for elementary, middle, and high school students.

This winter season Camp Colman has expanded our winter community outreach

programs to reach a wider variety of people in the Key Peninsula area. "The goal is to help fill the need for more programs in the area for the community," said Koffi Kpachavi, director of Camp Colman. "Being the YMCA, we are in a great position to fill that need, working with schools and other community groups."

Camp Colman offers a wide variety of community events. These could be activities such as the seniors trip to the Tacoma Museum of Glass, family trips to the Tacoma Children's Museum, the Point Defiance Zoo, or even as far as organizing a ski bus to Crystal Mountain.

The real gem of the program is Camp Colman itself. Located in a beautiful place, with an almost endless assortment of activities, the camp is a place that shines in the hearts of people of all ages. In addition, the wide variety of activities, from the climbing wall and low ropes course, to having fun with canoe, kayak, and archery classes, learning with marine science courses, to the free energetic community campfires, Camp Colman is a source of fun

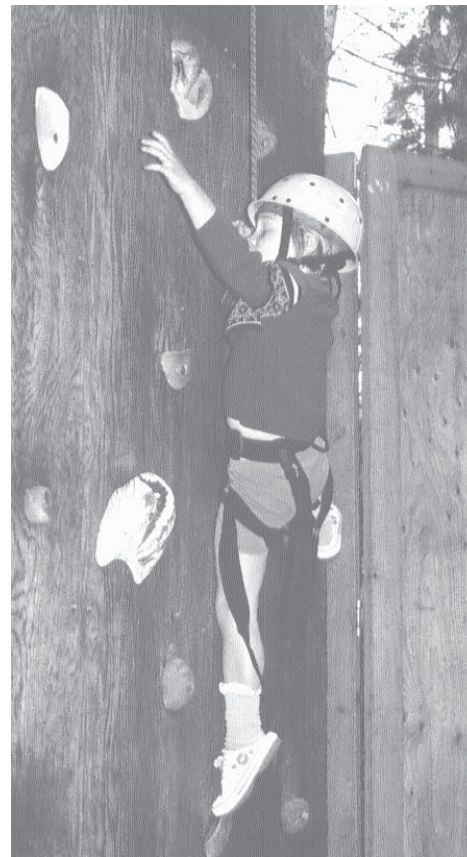


Photo courtesy of Camp Colman

YMCA's Camp Colman has lots of fun programs for different ages and interests.

for people of all ages. "What camp has to offer is a unique thing, and we are able to provide that to the community to help kids and families grow," Kpachavi said.

A special happening for February is Camp Colman's Mid-Winter Break Day Camp, a unique experience for elementary school children during their midwinter break to have fun, take a few field trips, and get to know camp. Students can sign up for the day, or the whole week.

Look for upcoming programs and events throughout the year, as more programs will be organized. "We have a lot to offer the community, and we haven't even scratched the surface," said Kpachavi. Joanna Stark, Camp Colman program coordinator, said, "The YMCA's motto is 'building strong kids, strong families, and strong communities' and we're thankful for the opportunity to make the community our main focus."

Mid-Winter Day Camp

Date: Feb. 17 – Feb. 21

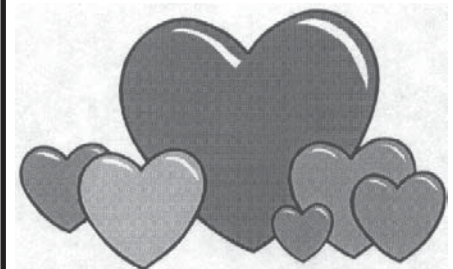
Time: 9 a.m.- 4 p.m., extended care available 4 p.m.-6 p.m.

Costs: \$22/day, \$100/week, extended care \$6/day

Daily lunch: \$3/day

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Project looks at livable community aspects

By Rodika Tollefson
KP News

A livable community has been defined in many ways, and each community may find its own priorities. But a foundation for a livable community is a safe one, says Dennis Taylor, a community mobilization specialist for Safe Streets. The organization launched a pilot project called the Key Peninsula Livable Community Program last spring that is helping mobilize residents to improve their community.

The program's focus is on fighting crime, but other projects initiated as part of the program encompass other livability aspects. A well-attended forum in December served as the starting ground for the creation of a community council, another effort under the Livable Community Program's umbrella.

"The correlation between community councils and crime is very strong," Taylor said. "We decided that a community council can be a crime-prevention tool."

The newest element of the Livable Community Program is the Key Peninsula Crime Prevention Project, unveiled at the January meeting of the Community Council's organizing group, that will focus on methamphetamine and domestic violence via block watches, Citizen Patrol, vacant land crime watches, a youth court and a domestic violence outreach effort.

"At least 50 percent of the local 911 calls relate to meth and domestic violence," Taylor said. "If we can solve some of those issues, we can free up the deputies to deal with other problems."

Livable Community Fair

The Livable Community Fair will be held on May 10 at the Civic Center and it needs volunteers to help with the program. To volunteer or to learn about free booth rental, contact Dennis Taylor at 884-7899.

Taylor meets with interested neighborhoods to help form a block watch and help address their specific problems. Neighbors organize to watch for each other's properties, develop a phone tree, or target specific areas or homes that have illegal activity and formalize a plan for fighting back.

"Word gets out about the block watch, and the activity stops, or the people move out," he said.

Vacant properties are another target, thriving with abandoned vehicles—often stolen and stripped—and other illegally dumped paraphernalia. Taylor said the program will launch a campaign this year for property owners to identify those sites so that the activity can be stopped.

The program will create a mobile methamphetamine education exhibit, support the local domestic violence outreach effort, and work with other groups to support existing programs. In May, in conjunction with the Civic Center Association, Safe Streets will sponsor a livable community fair that will showcase local organizations and people that help make the community livable—from crime prevention, social service and civic groups to county agencies.



Photo by Rodika Tollefson

Safe Streets Community Mobilization Specialist Dennis Taylor unveils the new Crime Prevention Project to the safety subcommittee of the Community Council organizational group's meeting on Jan. 28. Taylor is available to help interested neighborhoods create block watches.

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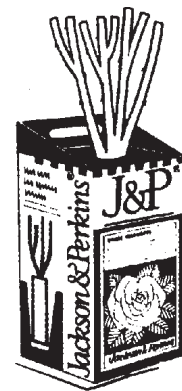
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Two Waters announces Arts Alive spring classes

Combining equal parts enthusiasm, talent and generosity, the third season of arts classes, workshops and events are coming to Key Peninsula this spring. Two Waters Arts Alliance has assembled its largest offering yet, with classes ranging from kids' drawing to master oil painting in the coming Arts Alive season.

The spring lineup includes workshops, classes and special events, most held at the Key Peninsula Community Center in Vaughn. Saturday workshops include felt-making, sumi painting, jewelry-making, framing, colored pencil drawing and animal sculpture for kids. Six-session weekly classes feature essential writing tools for kids, hand-built pottery and Chinese brush painting. A master class by renowned local realist painter Kurt Solmssen is titled "Plein Air Painting." Monthly drumming circle is first Tuesday, life drawing studio third Wednesday.

For complete information, call Tim at 884-0577, or pick up a schedule brochure at the library, post offices, school offices, selected retailers, or the Civic Center.

Two Waters invites you to the 2003 Spring Fling

Come share in the celebration of our first year and see what our spring program has to offer! Wine and hors d'oeuvre will be served and there will be an opportunity to participate in a raffle and silent auction. Spring Fling will be held Saturday, March 1, at 7 p.m. at the Civic Center Whitmore Room, and you must RSVP by Feb. 26. Call 884-2955 or email Twowaters@hotmail.com.

Garden Club demonstrates container planting

Embellishing garden pots will be the program for the Feb. 19 meeting of the Vaughn Bay Garden Club. Kathie Du Priest will demonstrate how to "jazz up" plain planting containers. The annual White Elephant Sale will also be held during the meeting. Janet Gormly is hostess, with Mary Krumbein and Elsie Vezzani assisting her, and plans for the celebration of the club's 75th year will be discussed. Please contact 884-1527 or 884-5403 for more information.

—Submitted by Colleen Slater

Vaughn Union High plans reunion

Vaughn Union High School all-school reunion is planned for June 21 at 3 p.m. at the Civic Center. More information to come.

Angel Guild offers bargain shopping

Toys! Clothes! Books! Linens! Pots and pans! The Angel Guild Thrift Store in Key Center has it all, and much more! Come visit us from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. any Wednesday through Saturday for amazing bargains. Donations are accepted Mon. – Sat. 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Please be kind and make sure all donations are clean and in working order. We are unable to accept stuffed furniture, appliances, TVs and computers due to limited space.

Angel Guild is operated and staffed by volunteers and all proceeds benefit Key Peninsula projects. Call 884-9333 for information.

Party in the snow with Camp Seymour

Let's go play in the snow! YMCA Camp Seymour's Family Snow Day on Saturday, March 8, will organize a trip to Hurricane Ridge to snowshoe and hike in a winter wonderland for ages 5 and up. Snowshoes will be provided for a 1.5-hour guided walk with a park ranger.

Participants will leave from Camp Seymour at 7 a.m. and return by 7 p.m. and must bring a bag lunch and snacks, snow gear, and sleds. Cost is \$35 for YMCA members and \$37 for nonmember. Call Jimmy Livengood at 884-3392 or email jlivengood@ymcatacoma.org

Women take the weekend off at Camp Seymour

Ladies, take time for you and take steps toward balancing your life with the help of a Women's Wellness Weekend, "Stepping Stones to a Balanced Life," at YMCA Camp Seymour March 29-30.

Arrive at camp early Saturday morning for a continental breakfast and introductions, then spend the weekend choosing from a wide variety of activity options including Pilates & Yoga classes, boating, manicure, massage, hiking, dynamic speakers, archery, wall-climbing, crafts, and sports – do as much or as little as you want!

You'll enjoy delicious, healthy meals, and sleep tight in comfortable, wood paneled cabins shared by eight to 10 women, with adjustable heat and beautiful views. Cost is \$64 for members, \$67 for nonmembers and includes all the programs except massage and manicure, as well as five meals, lodging, snacks and a T-shirt.

Call Susan Dickerson, 884-3392 or email sdickerson@ymcatacoma.org.

D.4 Color/Honor Guard "Veteran of the Year"

Dale E. Spittler, member of the VFW Post #239 and District No. 4 Color/Honor Guard was awarded Veteran of the Year 2002 in January by the district. He was recognized for his service to veterans and their families, and the district and for his commitment and event participation. Spittler served in the U.S. Navy from 1950 to 1954, in the South Pacific, the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, specifically on the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands during nuclear bomb testing by U.S. forces. He owns and operates "Affordable Water Treatment" and is a member of the Masonic Temple and the Shriners. Spittler was the principle donor for a local Boy Scout Eagle project to beautify the American Flag pole in Purdy and other scout projects, and participates in other community and district programs.

District No. 4 Color/Honor Guard decided at its Jan. 11 meeting to operate the concession stand for the Gig Harbor Little League.

—Submitted by Jim O'Roke

TOPS holds open house

If your new year's resolution is to lose weight, help is right around the corner. The self-help, nonprofit group Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) doesn't offer any magic pill or food to buy, but it does offer friendship and fellowship to those who want to keep on track. Our chapter TOPS WA #1019 will hold an open house on Feb. 18 beginning at 6 p.m. with a meeting that starts at 7 p.m. at the Civic Center. Group members will answer questions and entertain you with a skit on this year's theme, "Hand in Hand."

Three more members last year reached their personal goals of weight loss and joined the elite group Keep Off Pounds Sensibly (KOPS): Marilyn Lyden, Lolly Ketchum and Phyllis Tiernan. Chapter members lost more than 329 pounds collectively last year.

Fees to join TOPS are \$20 per year with additional \$5 for local chapter dues. If you join us, we are here to help you every week. Call 884-3456 for information.

—Submitted by Frankie Johnson

Get involved *Local groups need volunteers*

The Key Peninsula Parks and Recreation District needs volunteers to get involved with trail construction, park development, and recreation programming. Call Nancy Lind at 884-3347.

The Key Peninsula Historical Society is looking for help restoring the old White/Goldman Store & Post Office on the Purdy Spit. Call Tim Kezele at 884-6951.

The Key Peninsula Community Services

is searching for volunteers to assist with senior meals and food bank. Call Cristi Watson at 884-4440.

All schools need volunteers, and the need for volunteers always exceeds availability. Stop by a local school or call Linda Youngchild, volunteer coordinator for Communities in Schools of Key Peninsula, at 884-5733—whether you have two hours or two days a week.

Ladies Auxiliary's grant benefits Boy Scouts



Photos by Hugh McMillan
Courtesy Peninsula Gateway



VFW Post 4990 Ladies Auxiliary member Debra L. Simon presents a check for \$5,000 to Boy Scouts of America Troop 220's Senior Patrol Leader Derek Weyhrauch on Jan. 14 (right). The money will be used to buy scout uniforms for needy members and to supplement the troop's camping and activities fund.

The Community Calendar is compiled by Key Peninsula Electronic Newsletter, www.keypen.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		KPCS Senior Luncheon EC Daybreak Bridge Key Singers	KPCS Senior Luncheon	KPCS Senior Luncheon Senior Bowling Lunch KPCS Senior Steps KPCS Women Meeting	KPCS Senior Luncheon Movie Night	
		KPCS Senior Luncheon EC Daybreak Bridge Key Singers	KPCS Senior Luncheon	KPCS Senior Luncheon Senior Bowling Lunch KPCS Senior Steps	KPCS Senior Luncheon Movie Night	KPCS Petting Show/Brunch
		KPCS Senior Luncheon EC Daybreak Bridge Key Singers	KPCS Senior Luncheon MSAC Meeting Dinner	KPCS Senior Luncheon Senior Bowling Lunch KPCS Senior Steps	KPCS Senior Luncheon Movie Night	
		KPCS Senior Luncheon EC Daybreak Bridge Key Singers	KPCS Senior Luncheon	KPCS Senior Luncheon Senior Bowling Lunch KPCS Senior Steps	KPCS Senior Luncheon Movie Night	March 1 EMSA Spring Fling
		KPCS Senior Luncheon EC Daybreak Bridge Key Singers	KPCS Senior Luncheon	KPCS Senior Luncheon Senior Bowling Lunch KPCS Senior Steps	KPCS Senior Luncheon Movie Night	Camp November Trip
		KPCS Senior Luncheon EC Daybreak Bridge Key Singers	KPCS Senior Luncheon	KPCS Senior Luncheon Senior Bowling Lunch KPCS Senior Steps	KPCS Senior Luncheon Movie Night	

To have an event listed in the COMMUNITY CALENDAR, please send an email message to info@keypen.com with the answers to these questions: WHAT is the event, WHY should people attend, WHO is the sponsor, WHEN is it happening, WHERE is it located, HOW can people find out more?

Regular Community Meetings List

WHO	WHEN	WHERE	HOW
KP Civic Center Association Board	First Monday, 7 pm; Second Thursday, 7 pm	KP Civic Center, Vaughn	884-3456
Key Peninsula Community Services Board	Second Monday, 10 am	KP Community Services, Home	884-4440
Veterans of Foreign Wars & Auxillary	Second Monday, 7 pm	KP Civic Center, Vaughn	
Key Peninsula Parks & Recreation District	Second Monday, 4 pm Fourth Monday, 7 pm	KP Sports Center & Fairgrounds Annex	884-9240 info@kpprd.org
Angel Guild	Fourth Monday, 10 am	Key Center Library	
Peninsula Neighbors	Second Tuesday, 10 am	Longbranch Fire Station	
Key Peninsula Lions Club	1st and 3rd Wednesdays 6:30 pm	KP Civic Center in Vaughn	
Longbranch Improvement Club Board	2nd Wednesday, 7 pm	Longbranch Improvement Club	
Longbranch Improvement Club general	3rd Wednesday, 7 pm	Longbranch Improvement Club	
Key Peninsula Historical Society	First Thursday, 7 pm	KPHS Museum (beside the civic center)	884-6951 info@kphs.org
Key Peninsula Trails Committee	First Thursday, 7 pm	Home Fire Station	884-3347 info@keypen.org
Lakebay Fuschia Society	First Thursday, 7 pm	Key Center Library	
Citizens Against Crime & Citizens Patrol	Third Thursday, 7 pm	Key Center Fire Station	
Key Peninsula Health Center	Fourth Thursday, 7:30 pm	Key Peninsula Health Center	
Key Peninsula Business Association	First Friday, 7:30 am	Homeport Restaurant	884-3600
	Third Friday, noon	Horseshoe Lake Golf Club	info@kpba.org
Bayshore Garden Club	Third Friday, noon	Longbranch Improvement Club	884-2487

To make changes or add to the Community Meetings list, please send an email message to info@keypen.com

Real Estate 2002

The past year has been a landmark year for the real estate industry. Due to continued very low interest rates and the uncertainties of the stock market many investors have chosen real estate as a more profitable investment vehicle.

The local market continues to be strong with many good pre-qualified buyers available but not enough listings to fulfill their needs. If you are thinking of selling your home in the near future - now is a great time to list since there are so few listings available. Call or stop by our Windermere office in Key Center for a free market analysis and/or listing information.
(253) 884-3304.

Windermere Foundation

You may know that out of every Windermere transaction the agent involved gives a donation to the Windermere Foundation. What you may not know is that money comes back to the community in which the Windermere Office is located. This past year (2002), Windermere/Key Realty has given back to the Key Peninsula nearly \$1000.00 in donations from Foundation funds. In supporting your local Windermere office - you are also helping your community.

Land, Land, Land

We have many parcels of land available, from buildable lots to various large acreage parcels and waterfront. Prices range from \$5,950 to \$750,000.



COUNTRY ELEGANCE- \$224,900

Wrought iron gates lead into this 5 acre miniestate, extensive landscaping, sprinklers in gardens, green house, 2 car garage, spacious 3 BR, 2BA 1704 sq.ft.spacious rambler w/family room,breakfast area and open kitchen. Set in the quiet and peace of tall cedars. MLS#23006591.



VAUGHN CHURCH- \$790,000

Excellent opportunity to own this unique church building and land including 150ft. of deep water moorage w/fnt on Vaughn Bay. Big deck, patio, large trees, sports court & fire flow from Vaughn Elementary School. Let your imagination soar! MLS#22232073.



CUSTOM HOME!- \$279,000

Hardwood floors, tile counter tops, radiant heatw/zone control, 2 BR, 3 BA, 2332 sq.ft., Gated entrance, privately surrounded by 6.3 acres of cedar trees and beautiful sunsets through this wooded and private setting.MLS#23011408.253-884-3304.



GREAT STARTER OR RENTAL!- \$43,000

This 2 BR, 1 BA mfg. home is great for just starting out or as a rental. Home has been rented for \$550 per mo. Owner will put in tip-top shape for sale. Community lake for boating, fishing and swimming. MLS#23000452. 253-884-3304.



MODERN LIVING IN LAKEBAY- \$108,500

Nice, newer home at Palmer Lake. Good floor plan w/mstr and one bdrm on upper level and 3rd bdrm on lower level. Open concept kitchen, living rm/din.rm area. Just a short walk to the community lake and recreational area. MLS# 230024036. 253-884-3304.



ARTISTS RETREAT- \$394,400

33+ acres of fenced pasture and very roomy2600 sq.ft. home. Shop(3300sf) has pull through garage, wood working area, art studio down and apartment above, plus, an old barn for your animals! Perfect place for your home business. MLS#22021085. 253-884-3304.



IF PRIVACY IS YOUR DESIRE.... \$182,000

Than this is the home for you.Set on 2.5 acres of forested land, this home is situated at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac..Lrg kit., mst.BR in 2nd story loft overlooking lvg.rm and out thru clerestory windows to the woods beyond. Jacuzzi tub and walk-in closet are additional features complimenting this wonderful home. 253-884-3304. MLS# 22260533.

STATS FOR 2002

304 Residential Sales on the Key Peninsula:

80	\$0 - \$100,000
157	\$100 - \$200,000
62	\$200 - \$500,000
5	Over \$500,000

Highest residential sale on the Key Peninsula this year was \$1,450,000.00.

125 Vacant Land Parcels Sold on the Key Peninsula:

Lowest \$5,000
Highest \$530,000



Program offers free exterior house painting

Key Peninsula staff

Seniors, low-income and disabled citizens on the Key Peninsula could have their house painted for free, thanks to a program that has been helping people in Pierce County for more than 10 years.

Paint Tacoma-Pierce Beautiful began in 1985 as a volunteer program to paint the homes of those in need in Tacoma, but in 1991 had expanded to the entire county. Thousands of volunteers since then have worked to brighten homes and hearts, painting homes as far as Longbranch. A total of 27 homes have been painted on the Key Peninsula—at no cost to the homeowners—thanks to the efforts of the program’s volunteers.

Deadline for this year’s applications is April 1. The program only provides exterior painting. To be eligible, applicants must be a senior (60+) or have a disability (including disability income); own their own home in Tacoma/Pierce County; and be low-income. People may apply for themselves or request an application to help someone else fill it out. For applications and information, call (253) 383-3056, ext. 105.



Photo courtesy of Paint Tacoma-Pierce Beautiful

The Gig Harbor Lions, pictured here with a Key Peninsula homeowner in 1998, have been volunteering with Paint Tacoma-Pierce Beautiful since 1992. Key Peninsula’s low-income senior and disabled homeowners are eligible to apply for the program, which paints house exteriors for free with donated supplies and volunteer labor.

News briefs

Group finds alternate news medium

Trying to fill the news void during the Key Peninsula News’ downtime, local resident Simon Priest found a solution: an electronic newsletter. Priest and a group of other residents created a news vehicle for information about community events. The Key Peninsula Electronic Newsletter (not affiliated with Key Peninsula News) was launched in December, delivering news via email to about 500 subscribers, who were encouraged to forward the newsletter to other interested parties.

The e-newsletter’s focus is on sending announcements and listings rather than actual news articles. The information is also posted online at www.keypen.com, along with links to relevant sites. With the relaunch of Key Peninsula News, Priest hopes the two outlets will collaborate on publishing the information in print and online.

To subscribe or to send an announcement (list what, who, when, where if listing an event or a meeting), send an email to info@keypen.com.

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The gift of caring

Family blessed by community, strangers helping 11-year-old leukemia patient

By Rodika Tollefson
KP News

For many 11-year-old boys, life consists of school, playtime with friends, sports and other activities, and maybe the occasional family outing. For 11-year-old Sam Stewart, many of the usual childhood pursuits have been deferred. For the next few months or perhaps years, his focus is on snatching his body back from the clutches of leukemia and regaining his health.

It's not an easy battle at any age—taking 10 or more pills a day just to keep the treatment side-effects at bay, taking steroids that can have a strong impact on the emotions, having to constantly change foods during chemotherapy treatments to find something that tastes good, struggling with fatigue from medications. But even in this fight, Sam's family keeps a positive attitude and feels blessed by many friends and strangers who came forward to help.

"We are the fortunate of the fortunate," said Sam's mom, Donna, marveling at the opportunities this country presents and at "this great planet." "I feel we can handle what's given us, and we've had such incredible support."

Sam had to make many changes in his lifestyle since he was diagnosed July 11. Going to school became risky because of possibilities of infections, so Sam and brother Joey, both Vaughn Elementary students, turned to home studies. "I miss my friends the most," Sam said, proudly showing off the cards his classmates made for him. He handles his situation in good spirits, with his little brother, "his comrade," by his side.

Taking care of Sam, supporting him emotionally, and comforting him during hospital stays is perhaps one of the biggest life lessons Joey will learn, and he carries out the responsibilities with pride.

"We are on a walk, and it is a family walk," Donna Stewart said.

To demonstrate their support, part of the family members adopted Sam's "hairstyle" when his hair was falling so much that it had to be shaved.

"He's got a hilarious sense of humor and has always been a dramatic kid," mom said, recalling his reaction to the shaving: "He'd slap his head and say, 'I love it! I love the way it looks and feels!'" Brother's, uncle's and dad's hair was next—everyone wanted to look like Sam. But the real treat came when grandpa had his turn. "I got to shave papa's hair," Sam said, beaming.

Stewart recalls being in a state of shock after the diagnosis, watching the doctors

perform an ultrasound but not fully comprehending the extent of the situation. To allow direct access of the medications into the aorta, Sam had heart surgery to implant a "port." Instead of researching the disease, however, she began learning about alternative treatments that could support her son's body and keep it from going into relapse. Since the family always ate healthy, looking into alternatives seemed the best way. Stewart credits the supplements and other alternative treatments like Essiac tea with helping Sam's body fight back. She hopes to share with others what she learned about the benefits of alternative medicine. Always being a giver and helping many people in tough situations, Stewart says being on the receiving end requires adjusting, but she continues to advocate for others. For their family, the emotional support has been extraordinary—she said for the first three months they were buoyed by prayers.

"It is emotionally devastating to learn your child has cancer," she said. "But we felt lifted by other people's prayers. We had wonderful blessings that have come of this."

The blessing of caring and community spirit is perhaps the biggest one. Strangers have called or sent money. A Tacoma grocery store has invited Sam, any time he was in the chemotherapy treatment, to come by and choose any foods that sounded good. Staff at Vaughn Elementary and family friends have been trying to raise money to help the family pay for medical costs, which are extraordinary even with insurance coverage. "It's incredibly difficult for the family," said friend Diana English. "They have built an incredible support system in the community, and watching people come together helps you have faith."

How to help Sam

Family friends, staff at Vaughn Elementary and the Vaughn PTA are organizing a fundraising dinner and silent auction on March 29 at the Civic Center at 5:30 p.m. Cover charge is \$10; all proceeds go to the family to help offset medical costs. Tickets available at the door, and in advance at the school, Lisa's Deli and Shear Magic.

Donations to the Sam Stewart Fund can be made at First Community Bank in Gig Harbor, or mailed to P.O. Box 657, Vaughn, 98394.

For information, call Laurel Young or Paula Warren at 884-5700.



Photos by
Rodika Tollefson

Sam and his brother Joey (above, right to left) are the best of friends. Joey goes with Sam to the hospital during chemotherapy treatments and helps him every step of the way.

Despite the trials, the family feels blessed and uplifted by the outpouring of help from others. Sam's mother, Donna Stewart (with Sam, above right) has been using alternative treatments to keep Sam's body strong and says she would like to share her knowledge with others.



(From **McClung**, page 3)

Another close friend, KP firefighter/EMT Don Blischke, recalled first meeting McClung while celebrating "the first millennium year 2000" at the KP Civic Center New Year's party. They quickly became friends and "dance partners for the night and many events thereafter."

The KP Civic Center Board's immediate past president Dave Stratford and wife Sabra, a teacher at Evergreen Elementary, were saddened to report, "It will indeed be a tremendous loss to us personally and to this community. Vicky has special talents in business, art and friendship. It is rare to connect with a special friend who adds spark to your life and makes social gatherings memorable."

Kristen Bottiger called McClung her best friend, her sister and her mother and said she will miss her dearly. "This generous woman has given much of herself and time over the years, donating light fixtures, paint and artistry to our community's Civic Center as well as tending to bookkeeping duties, and hours upon hours spent researching records in an effort to keep the center solvent when past tax errors came to light. Vicky was one of three, among others, who really turned the spectacular Flavor of Fall auction/dinners, into a class act event."

McClung became involved with the Flavor of Fall, a major KPCC fundraiser that was held every October, and is credited with greatly improving the event's organization. She later joined the board and then became treasurer of the organization.

Dave Stratford said McClung was, "the glue that brought many good friends and people together," and praised her for the



Photo by Hugh McMillan

Vicki McClung and her friend Kristen Bottiger hand down a table from the upper level office to friend Don Blischke.

many long hours of service and giving time and financial support from many sources to the Civic Center. "Our gatherings in this community will be minus a shining star, infectious laugh, many hugs and her presence. She was an excellent member and treasurer of our KPCC Board, always quick with humor and intelligent ideas. Little did we know that her long hours of work at the Civic Center caught her new employer's attention and prepared her for her new job in Dallas. It certainly is their gain and this community's loss."

As the truck pulled away into the dark, lump-throated, and rainy night, there was some comfort in knowing that Bottiger and Dave Stratford would be sharing the driving with McClung all the way to Dallas. "I love this community," McClung said,

"and intend to visit every three or four months. I might be going away, but I'm not staying away."

(From **Council**, page 1)

a crime-fighting tool, proposed a project that would be supported by Safe Streets, propelling the idea forward. With the help of the Key Peninsula Business Association and community members, he launched an organizing committee, and used a livable community forum last fall as a starting point.

"It is a grass roots, voluntary citizen effort to look at what needs the community has, and it will affect the entire Key Peninsula," Taylor said.

Even in the preliminary stages, the organizational committee has the support of county officials. Pierce County Councilman Terry Lee told the group at the January meeting that the council would play an important role in discovering what makes the community unique and in laying the groundwork for planning. County Executive John Ladenburg had also publicly expressed his support of the council and said it could serve as a model for other communities.

Having a unified voice in working with the government is one of the council's goals, Taylor said, as well as working on issues that reflect the community's needs. To create the council, the group has to address a variety of aspects, such as bylaws, council structure and composition, election procedures, funding, needs assessment and community outreach. The group has been divided into sub-committees that will tackle individual aspects and generate ideas.

"It's a voice, another vehicle to bring together the diversity that exists on the peninsula and to address priorities and find solutions," Harris said.

Community Council

The organizational committee meets every last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Key Peninsula Middle School. For more information on how to get involved, contact Dennis Taylor at 884-7899.

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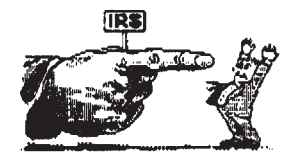
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LeRoy Challenger: *Clam Digger to Author*

By Colleen Slater
KP News

Long-time Key Peninsula resident LeRoy Challenger has dug clams, picked huckleberries and logged trees while enjoying the good and the bad times of the peninsula's earlier days—and wrote all about it in his two books.

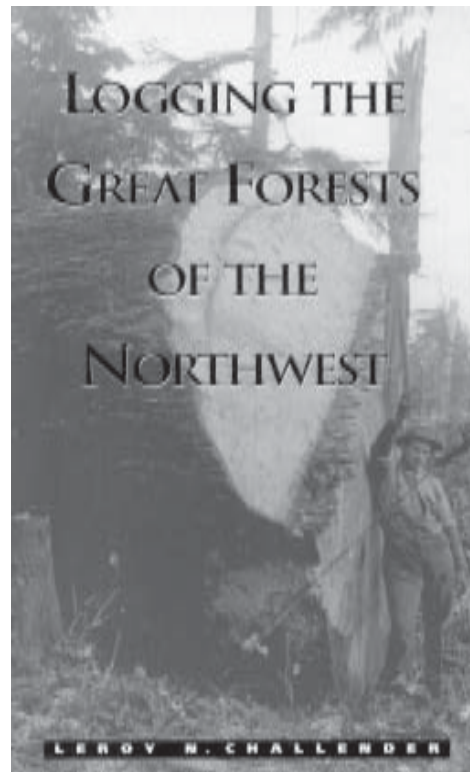
He believes he's told all of his stories in these two volumes. Good times and bad, funny incidents and difficult ones are sprinkled through his memoirs. He laughs and says he's afraid to write fiction. These books were easy, because he lived those days. His love of his chosen land shines through them.

"We had a clam business," he recalled, adding that Vaughn Bay had an abundant supply. His family arrived in Longbranch in 1926 and rented a house near Far-A-Way. They moved to Purdy and dug clams on the outside of the sandspit. In 1927, they moved to a house in Vaughn across the road from his current home. Inside the bay were two good sand bars where clams abounded.

Challender met Ted Mills and Leonard Lonning, Sr. digging there. On a good low tide, a digger could fill two or three sacks. His record was eight sacks on one tide. Each sack weighed about 110 pounds. They used five-gallon cans, called boxes, which previously held olive oil, butter or lard to ship their clams to two oyster companies in Olympia. Glen Harriman, a freight boat operator, stopped once a week to pick up the clams.

In 1929 Challenger's father died, leaving his widow with seven children. As second son, Challenger decided he needed to help his mother financially, and worked hard to earn what he could. He also plowed the large garden and milked the cow. Besides digging clams, he worked for various chicken farmers in the area until that market dried up. He mixed feed, cleaned chicken houses, and culled out the old hens for cooking. He cut wood and did general chores for L.D. Howe and helped Bill Campbell, who let him drive his team of horses for stump pulling.

Huckleberry picking was profitable in the 1930s, and Challenger did very well in sea-



son. Elmer and Elsie Olson, whose shed was in the original building that now houses the Huckleberry Inn, bought huckleberries from Challenger and other pickers. Challenger picked close to 300 pounds a

day, his record a whopping 476 pounds.

At 17, Challenger left the area for about eight years and worked in California, Oregon, Grays Harbor, Tacoma and Olympia. In 1940 he bought 13½ acres of land with a seven-room house on Vaughn Bay below the

cemetery. Ten years later he and wife Marian sold the waterfront land. He had built a small cabin on the upper portion of land, and enlarged it to be of more use, hiring Aldy Visell's carpenter, Harry Blundell, to build on weekends.

The comfortable living room where he and current wife Frances display Lions Club memorabilia was formerly a two-car garage. Challenger now devotes time to the Lions, selling raffle tickets. He sold three winning tickets and expects to do more.

From clam digger, berry and brush picker, logger and welder, to author of two books, Challenger feels fortunate that he was always able to find work and to live most of his days in the most beautiful place on earth.

Good times and bad, funny incidents and difficult ones are sprinkled through his memoirs.

Challender books

LeRoy Challenger has authored two books that chronicle his life events in Vaughn and the Northwest: "Vaughn, Paradise of Puget Sound" (1995), currently in its 3rd printing, and "Logging the Great Forests of the Northwest" (2002). For information on how to purchase or borrow a copy of the book, call the Key Peninsula branch of the Pierce County Library at 884-2222. Books can also be purchased at the Challenders' home; call 884-3485.

Challender, historic author

Readers brought into noisy, busy logging world

Review by Temple A. Stark

Those who've met and spoken with LeRoy Challenger may be surprised to know his second book stops at 75 pages.

The book, "Logging the Great Forests of the Northwest," has been a labor of love. Challenger said he collected pictures and wrote it over a period of 10 years. It was published in his 88th year on earth.

While the timber industry can be considered tinged with sadness, for what once was, Challenger makes it clear in "Logging ..." that the Northwest as it is today would not exist without it.

"I worked in the logging camps and woods for seven years," he writes in the epilogue. "In 1933, I owned a 1926 Model T one-ton Ford truck. I also had a Wade Drag saw. I would buy trees from individuals and cut them into firewood. As everyone burned wood, I sold it easily."

In spare language, he writes about a time of abundance. The photographs scattered throughout show the scale of both production and destruction.

Challender effectively brings the reader into the logger's world, as at the beginning of Chapter three: "Almost all camps of years ago had a tough bunch of men working for them. The men were, in general, very agreeable. ... The bosses had one thing in mind, and that was to get as many logs per day as they could for shipping out."

Books that happen to mention the Key Peninsula tend to center around Home, as a community of free spirits. Challenger tells the tale of the grit, the noise and the

sweat on the surrounding Key during that same period. Over the years, the Davidson Brothers of Vaughn, K.O. Anderson and Cibus Logging of Victor, and the Mac McCuen logging company of, yes, Home, worked the land.

"When I moved to Vaughn in 1927, lots of forest trees could be seen," he writes near the book's end. "And, now instead, are many homes. But, I feel very fortunate to look out my window and enjoy looking upon Cases Inlet of Puget Sound and towards Hartstine Island, with many trees in view."

As it must be, Challenger's attempt to cover such a wide-ranging subject falls short. But Challenger has always been a wily salesman — just ask

his Lions Club brethren. Last September, when I spoke to him outside an Albertson's in Port Orchard as he was fundraising for the Lions, he told me he was aware of people's limited time. He said he wanted to introduce the subject to as many people as possible.

Overall, "Logging..." tells of the transition from big camps and big companies and a large workforce, to a more efficient, less strenuous modernization.

"The Northwest still has quite a few trees," he writes, "but today logging is conducted by many small companies logging small areas (five acres or less) owned by independent people. ... We will never again see the logging camps where men lived and worked."

Temple A. Stark is a freelance writer living in Kent. Reach him at writer@templestark.com

Book
Review

(From **Training**, page 1)

“The Swede Survival Flashover Trainer provides a safe and realistic environment for firefighters to learn about one of the most dangerous aspects of our jobs, flashovers,” Lyon explained. “Flashovers develop when high temperatures within a room cause all combustible material to instantly ignite. Firefighters trapped in flashovers are often severely injured or killed. This training device has been providing exciting and educational fire training statewide since 1998.” KPFD rented the trailer for one day. Originally scheduled for Dec. 7, the training had to be postponed due to a burn ban.

The design of the device allows students to be seated just below a burn room. As the fire develops, firefighters are surrounded by dark smoke and increasing heat, which, in the upper parts of the trailer, can be in excess of 1000 degrees F. Firefighters learn the signs of an impending flashover, how to avoid being trapped in one, and emergency procedures if they are. The Flashover Trainer also enables firefighters to meet state laws requiring annual live fire training.

Graham Fire’s Assistant Chief Gary Franz, formerly KPFD chief, said, “The fire service is a big family. We’re here to learn things we’ve not worked with before and the good folk of KPFD will come to Graham to help train our firefighters when we arrange to get this equipment. We help each other. Always have, always will.”

In a bit of levity, KPFD’s Capt. Guy Allen said the experience is “like what a firefighter would want to see on a Hallmark card: ‘Wish you were here.’”

Twenty-two KPFD firefighters were trained in the exercise: Billy Foreman, Ryan Williams, Christie Lyon, Wes Van Slyke, Tony Carr, Dee Dee Kerkes, Jeremiah Stilley, Chief Eric Nelsen, Jeremy Bail, Division Chief Tom Lique, Robert Fisher, Capt. Paul Bosch, Jerry Marsh, Capt. Chuck West, Scott Marsh, Gary Way, Greg Buttner, Mike Riegle, Bill Sawaya, Capt. Guy Allen, Scott Campbell, and Greg Glassie.

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Barn becomes artist's studio, art classroom

Artists and crafters found lots of bargains at the Two Waters Arts Alliance's art swap last month. Key Peninsula artist Beverly Pedersen, one of Two Waters' instructors, has leased a barn from James Blundell and dubbed it the "Art Barn." Pedersen and Two Waters helped liquidate some of the supplies the late Mrs. Blundell used for her successful crafts business, to make room for an art studio. "It's 'under construction' but it's adequate for us to work in now," said Pedersen, who will welcome other artists to share the space and will open the studio for some of the group's art classes lined up for the spring season.

The barn has extra parking space and is in a convenient location, just off Highway 302. If grants become available, Pedersen hopes to enhance the lighting, paint and make other improvements.



Photo by
Rodika Tollefson

The "Art Barn" got lots of visitors during the Two Waters' art sale, which helped create room for the new studio. "This is the perfect space, and we could have different events," said artist Beverly Pedersen, who leases the building.

Spring history cruise ready to set sail

By Tim Kezele
KP Historical Society

Get ready to learn more about the history of the Gig Harbor and Key Peninsulas on March 16 from the deck of the tour boat "Sprit of Adventure," a joint venture between the Gig Harbor & Key Peninsula historical societies that will give you a water-view history of the two peninsulas.

The cruise, which will follow the water routes of the 20th century steamboats, is a chance to learn how the peninsulas were established. Starting with Gig Harbor, the boat will visit West Pass, Pt. Fosdick, Wollochet Bay, Hales Pass, Henderson Bay, Pit Pass, Filucy Bay, Balch Pass and return up the Tacoma Narrows back to Gig Harbor.

The boat, which can accommodate up to 200 passengers, leaves Jerisich Park at approximately 12:30 p.m. and returns at 4:30 p.m. A box lunch and souvenir pamphlet will be included in the in cost of the trip. The cost is \$40 per person for historical society members and \$50 for nonmembers.

Don't be left at the dock! For more information, call the Gig Harbor Peninsula Historical Society at 858-6722 or the Key Peninsula Historical Society at 884-6951.

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Stage remodeling would bring theatre to peninsula

Volunteers, funds needed to make the dream a reality

By Irene Torres
KP News

The curtains have closed, the lights are dim, but the thunder of applause still echoes through the rafters. Yes, it is only a dream, a dream of the Key Peninsula Civic Center Board of Directors, to remodel the stage of the Civic Center building and bring drama theatre to the Key Peninsula.

Sylvia Haase, Civic Center board member and fund seeker for restoration of the stage, cites Richard Wagner, German composer and originator of the music drama: "Drama is the essence of creativity: music, painting, and poetry, rolled into one unified work of art." It is her dream, in conjunction with the Two Waters Arts Alliance, to build a local theater program. Once the facility is ready, she hopes to

have local talent form a group and entice theater troupes from other areas to perform on the Key Peninsula, which is "starved for culture," according to Haase. Opportunities for drama classes, community or dinner theater will bring the generations together, she says.

In 1998, Civic Center Board embarked on an ambitious plan to renovate its building. The building, which was built as a school in 1908, has become a hub of the community. First came the initial grant for the commercial kitchen. Later, a needs assessment committee created a five-year plan to implement improvements. Funded by grants from different sources, the board was able to re-roof and paint both buildings, install new windows, paint the gymnasium and repair the ceiling. The stage project is the last phase of the renovation effort.

The final stages of the remodel include: a state-of-the-art sound system with better security, upgraded electrical and lighting systems, a fire-retardant curtain and baffle, and a refurbished floor. The Civic Center will accept any offer of volunteer help or monetary donations, as well as good, used items from television studios or theatrical companies for lighting, sound equipment, backdrops or settings. The Civic Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, so donations are tax-deductible.

Operating expenses, taxes and insurance premiums have increased significantly over the years, and the Civic Center Board is dependent on grants and donations for the project. If you can contribute time, talent, expertise or treasure to this endeavor, call 884-3456.



Caye Williams

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