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THE VOICE OF THE KEY PENINSULA

February 2020 Vol. 47 No. 2



Photo: Jacob Million Photography

Tree House Opens to Guests This Spring

Long-time dream becomes a reality.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

Imagine spending a night of luxury in the trees, 15 feet above ground. Mike Ouellette and Mike Peterson, owners of Frog Creek Lodge in Lakebay, will offer that unique opportunity to guests early this spring.

A staircase winds around a cedar tree leading to the door. The first floor is complete with a sitting area, fireplace, dining area and a bathroom with toilet, sink and shower. A spiral staircase hand-constructed from a tree trunk leads to a sleeping loft

"IT'S NOT QUITE A TREE HOUSE SO MUCH AS A HOUSE UP AMONG THE TREES."

with a queen-sized bed. Windows view surrounding hemlocks.

"It's not quite a tree house so much as a house up among the trees," Ouellette said. He has been taken with tree houses for years and said his inspiration came while watching *Tree House Masters*, an Animal Planet series that premiered in 2012 and features Northwest builder Pete Nelson. But his dreams probably go back further – he has a picture on file of a tree house that caught his attention in 2009.

Ouellette and Peterson moved to the Key

CONTINUED PAGE 4

The Night Key Center Burned

Arson or coincidence? An in-depth look back on a catastrophic fire.

JOSEPH PENTHEROUDAKIS, KP NEWS

Fifty years ago, in the early morning hours of Feb. 4, 1970, a fire of unprecedented proportions burned through several businesses in Key Center, leaving only ashes and charred rubble in its wake. Nothing was left of the complex, originally built in 1932, that housed a grocery store, meat lockers, a state liquor store, a lawyer's office, and a hardware and building materials store.

It was the end of a long chapter in the history of Key Center, a chapter that had been started by Alden E. Visell and Elmer Olson almost 40 years earlier.

Until the 1930s the Key Peninsula was known as the Lower Kitsap Peninsula or the Longbranch Peninsula. In 1930, Visell and the area's Business Men's Club offered \$50 in prizes in a naming contest, hoping that a new name would give the peninsula its own identity and make it easier to promote. The results were announced in early 1931: The winning entry was "Key" by E. M. Stone of Lakebay, a name inspired by the peninsula's resemblance to an old-fashioned skeleton key. Second place went to Doris Bolton of Vaughn for "Arcadian," while Nelson Peck, also of Vaughn, earned third place for "Pensylva."

The name Key Peninsula caught on, although it would not be officially recognized by the state's Board on Geographic Names until 1980 and by the U.S. Board of Geographic Names in 1981.

Villages and towns have always needed a central marketplace to grow around. The peninsula was not going to be an exception. Key Center, its business hub, soon came into being and was inaugurated the following year. "Key Center is Opened to Public" read the headline in the March 12, 1932, edition of the *Tacoma Daily Ledger*: "New Business Center on Peninsula Has Many Modern Stores." Located at the intersection of the highway and the road connecting Vaughn and Glencove, the new development included a service station, Visell Lumber & Hardware Co., owned by



The scene of the fire in the early morning, looking up from the bottom of the gully towards the gas station across the intersection. Photo: Bob Boxberger, collection of Nadine Niemann.

Alden Visell, a radio and electrical store, a drug store, a coffee shop and a grocery store "with the most modern fixtures," to be operated by Chester and Leah Hipp.

The 300-foot long complex occupied the southeast corner of the intersection on land that Visell owned. Customers parked in front of the store or in a parking area across the highway. A gully, 15 to 18 feet

on average below street level, dropped off behind the building. The back of the store was built on stilts. A road down the gully was used for loading and unloading merchandise from below for the stores above.

By the late 1960s the grocery and the hardware store, the primary businesses in the complex, had changed hands. Italian-born

CONTINUED PAGE 3

KEY PENINSULA NEWS

253-884-4699

www.keypennews.org

www.facebook.com/KeyPenNews

editor@keypennews.org

PO Box 3, Vaughn, WA 98394

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Lisa Bryan

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Ted Olinger

STAFF CONTRIBUTORS: Krisa Bruemmer,
Matthew Dean, Joseph
Pentheroudakis, Dave Stave,
Sara Thompson

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS: Ed Johnson,
Chris Konieczny, Richard Miller,
David Zeigler

COLUMNISTS: Michelle Caldier, Emily
Randall, Derek Young, Jesse Young

CALENDAR EDITOR: Matthew Dean
calendar@keypennews.org

WEBMASTER: Chris Konieczny

SOCIAL MEDIA: Joseph Pentheroudakis

OPERATIONS/DESIGN: Tim Heitzman

AD SALES: Deanna Hunter
sales@keypennews.org

DISTRIBUTION: James Allyn, Phil Bauer,
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Here's What I Think About That

LISA BRYAN,
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, KP NEWS

Unprecedented times call for unprecedented editorials.

The best I can write within the confines of our local Key Peninsula News tradition comes in the form of an untraditional request:

From your comfortable seated position, please sit up as straight as your body allows and roll your shoulders a few times to relax. Enjoy several deep healing breaths and full exhales. Take your time — observing your chest expand and shoulders rise with each inhale, noticing how your body begins to relax and your shoulders fall with every exhale. Repeat this a few times. In the tradition of Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, close your eyes and repeat the phrase, "There's no place like home." Feel perfectly free to tap the heels of your ruby slippers (or muddy boots) three times if you like.

During this brief intermission, we invite you once again to take a break from the busy present and discover the past, present and future of your community.

February 4, 2020, marks the 50th anniversary of a devastating fire featured on the front page of this KP News in "The Night Key Center Burned." It destroyed several businesses at the center of daily life on the Key Peninsula, yet failed to dampen the tenacity of the people and community that rallied to forge ahead. Staff writer Joseph Pentheroudakis takes us back in time, with dogged determination and sleuthing to rediscover and further document the fire, adding details that preserve the treasure of local KP history like never before.

The 2020 Washington State Legislative session began at noon Jan. 13 with an opening ceremony where Rep. Laurie Jenkins, D-Tacoma, was sworn in as Speaker of the House Jenkins is the first woman, as well as the first openly lesbian person, to be selected House speaker in Washington state history.

Shortly before the opening of the Legislature, KP News invited our elected officials representing the 26th Legislative District to write op-eds sharing their thoughts and priorities for this 60-day regular session which is scheduled to end March 12. We will report on the legislative outcomes in our April edition.

KP News also invited Pierce County

Councilmember Derek Young, D-Gig Harbor, District 7, to provide his take on our council's activity.

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We could not exist without their loyal support. If you can spare a few bucks, you're welcome to join this fine group in supporting the only local newspaper dedicated to keeping everyone informed on the KP, regardless of their ability to pay.

This month we also bid a fond farewell to Lulu's Homeport. The restaurant served its final meal and poured the last round on Sunday, Jan. 26, closing its doors after 30 years in business. The restaurant, sold to new owners Richard Sahagun and Edgar Anaya, will undergo remodeling to open as their fourth Mexican restaurant by mid-spring. (See "KP Icon Lulu's to Close," KP News, January 2020).

Key Peninsula Community Council President Don Swensen announced the appointment of four new directors to the council: Joan Cyr of Vaughn; Emme McAbee of Lakebay; Mark Cockerill of Lakebay; and following a coin toss in a tied vote, Joseph Crain of Lakebay.

KP News will never tell you how to vote, but we encourage everyone to cast a ballot in the upcoming Peninsula School District special election — Proposition No. 1, Educational Programs and Operations Replacement Levy. (See "Replacement School Levy on February Ballot," KP News, January 2020.)

Casting your vote in Pierce County could not be easier. No postage is required to mail it but ballots must be postmarked no later than Feb. 11, or dropped at a Pierce County elections drop box location by 8 p.m. election day.

If you haven't received your ballot yet, contact piercecoutelections.org or call 253-798-VOTE (8683) to request a replacement.

Thank goodness for the sight of blossoming hellebores and swelling crocus buds. These hardy winter bloomers survive blankets of snow, persevere and rise above torrential rains, taking their cue from the sunlight growing longer day by day. It can be hard to remember that spring will come

and the sucking sounds of squishy mud underfoot will give way to lush grass-covered fields and the refreshing smells of a more hopeful season.



[A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY]

Subscribing to the KP News is still only thirty dollars. That pays for 12 issues of Who, What, When, Where and How, not to mention our community calendar, not-always-flattering head shots, surprising stories and sometimes-wild opinions.

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www.longbranchfoundation.org or Facebook page

FIRE FROM PAGE 1

Dominic Marietta was the new owner of the grocery, now called Dominic's Foods; a state liquor store was added. Marietta was also a butcher who dressed, cut and wrapped game for hunters, and provided freezer space in the store's meat lockers.

Libby Rittenhouse, Marietta's stepdaughter, remembered Dominic as a man with "a big heart," always ready to extend credit or help customers home with their groceries. According to Tim Kezele, Dominic was cheerful, never without a big smile. "He always wore a white dress shirt, old country-style. And he loved his '48 Cadillac," Kezele said.

By then the owner of Visell Lumber & Hardware was Ken Brones, who kept the name of the business. Brones, who had grown up in Vaughn, was "a friendly and honest man," according to his nephew Norman Brones, "always with an inner calmness and poise that people found comforting. He had a sense of community and was a great listener to all his customers."

By all accounts Marietta and Brones were the mainstay of the Key Center community. Brones was sometimes referred to as the mayor of Key Center. "Those were fun times in the village," Norman Brones recalled.

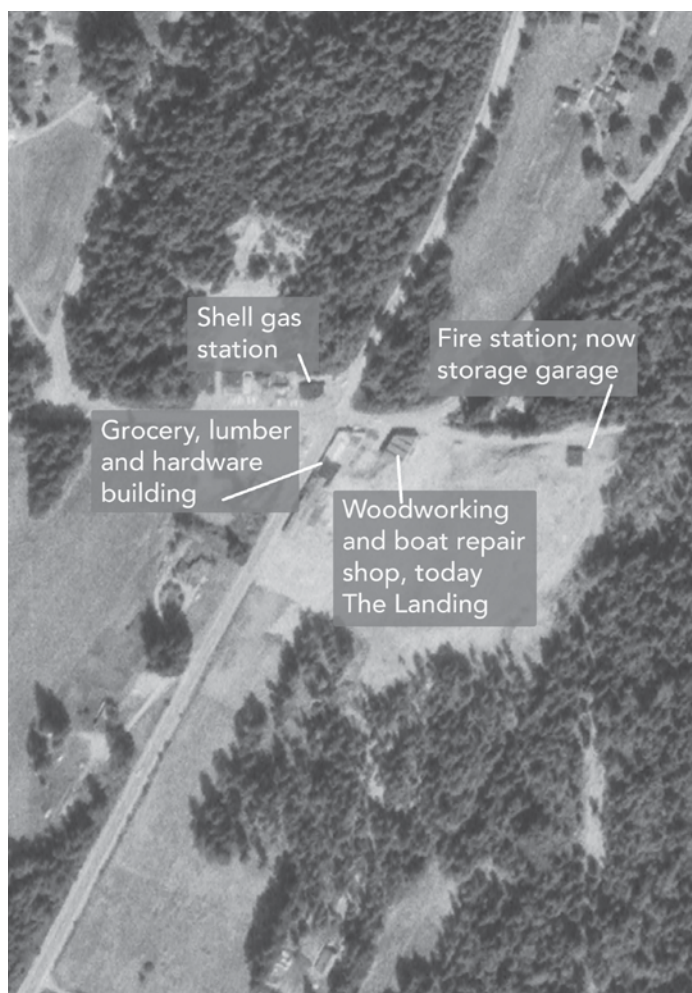
Ken Brones also bought Visell's house and the rest of his property, which stretched about a half a mile south of Key Center.

It was in that house, from her north-facing upstairs bedroom window, that Ken Brones' teenage daughter Nadine first saw the glow of the store on fire at 3 a.m. Feb. 4, 1970.

"I wore curlers in my hair and they were bothering me," Nadine said.

"I woke up and I saw the sky was orange. So, I went to the window, looked out and saw the flames. As fast as I could get down the stairs I went and told Dad. He woke up, got dressed, put on his boots and away he went." Nadine then called the fire department, the first person to do so that night. Fire District 16, then headquartered in Wauna, sounded the alarm.

Don Mills, at the time also a volunteer fireman, immediately responded from Vaughn Bay. Mills' wife Judy remembers the call coming over the Plectron, a device on their phone that was used to call the firemen. "I don't think I've ever seen Don move so fast," she said.



Key Center a year before the fire. Photo: USGS acquired via HistoricAerials.com

Mills rushed up to the fire station, a cinder-block building a few hundred feet up the road to the east. "The tanker truck had a dead battery, so I had to roll it out of the station to get enough momentum to get it started," Mills would later recall. Fighting the blaze was not going to be easy.

Don Olson, another volunteer fireman, lived across the highway southwest of the burning building. Awakened by the roar of the flames, he ran out of the house and saw the fire, which at that time was burning only in the middle of the building at the center

of the hardware store. The flames hadn't yet reached the grocery store at the north end of the building or the lumber store at the south end.

By the time responders and equipment arrived at the scene the fire had spread to the entire building. Paint cans in the hardware store were exploding, something that Joyce Niemann remembered hearing at Sunnycrest Farm up the hill from Key Center.

Fred Ramsdell, who responded from Home, recalled that the heat was so intense the Shell sign at the gas station diagonally across the intersection from the fire had melted. Whatever water was available was used to save burning utility poles and nearby buildings, where paint had blistered and

peeled in the heat. Water used on the heat mass of the fire would have been wasted.

The fire burned for several hours; the building was completely destroyed. Nothing was left of Visell Lumber & Hardware, Dominic's Foods, the liquor store and meat lockers, the law office of attorney Wayne Knight, which occupied a narrow space between the two stores, or a small apartment under the grocery. Key Center as the community had known it for almost 40 years had ceased to exist.

At 5:30 a.m. Pierce County Fire District 16 Chief Medric Schwenka, suspecting arson, phoned the state fire marshal's office to report the incident and request an investigation. When two fire marshal deputies arrived at the scene shortly after 10 a.m., they found the building completely destroyed, with pits of smoldering fire in the gully. According to the report the cause of the total loss was "delayed discovery

and exposure hazards together with limited water supply." The report estimated that the fire had started around 1 or 2 a.m., burned for approximately 10 hours and reached a maximum temperature of 1,800 degrees.

The total losses to the grocery store and the hardware and lumber store were estimated at \$200,000, about \$1.3 million in today's dollars. Both businesses were underinsured.

A stunned community gathered at the site of the fire over the next few days to take in the loss. The morning of the fire Don Olson's daughter Claudia arrived from Sun Valley with Dale Loy, her future husband, "to show Dale my hometown," as she later said. Instead what Loy saw across from Claudia's parents' house was an enormous hole in the ground.

The fire was front page news in The News Tribune and The Peninsula Gateway on Feb. 5. "Fire Flashes Through 2 Key Center Firms; Just a Hole in the Ground Remains," was the headline in the Tribune. "Disastrous Fire Strikes Key Center," reported the Gateway. "Ashes and rubble are all that remain."

The fire marshal's report concluded that the origin and cause of the fire could not be determined. "The loss of this complex may be a result of vandalism or arson," the report said. "There is no evidence at this time to indicate this, however. Cause and

origin must remain as unknown until further evidence is found pending the investigation." Two juveniles were reportedly seen in the laundromat across the highway before and during the fire, but they were never identified. Key Peninsula News has been unable to locate any additional reports or records of arrests at the state and county archives or in the local press.

As early as 1967, work had begun filling in the slope of the gully opposite the store. After the fire the work accelerated, and the hole left by the fire was soon filled in. By 1971 planning for a new shopping center was underway. A new station for Fire District 16 opened in 1973 at its current location in Key Center.

The state fire marshal's report on the Key Center fire, obtained from the Washington State Archives, is available at keypennews.org/fire-marshall-report/.



McDermott Pt. lighthouse. Photo: private collection

LIGHTHOUSE AT MCDERMOTT POINT BURNS EARLIER THAT NIGHT

A fire destroyed the abandoned lighthouse at McDermott Point at the entrance to Filucy Bay after midnight Feb. 4, shortly before the fire in Key Center. Not an official lighthouse recognized by the Coast Guard, the structure had fallen into disrepair. A neighbor saw a flash in the building at 9:45 p.m., which later was interpreted as suggesting the use of an accelerant. After midnight reports came in of a fully engaged fire. The fire marshal's report includes an account of this incident, concluding that although it may have been a diversionary tactic intended to draw resources away from the fire at Key Center later that night, no evidence to that effect was found. No equipment was sent to fight the lighthouse fire since the site was not easily accessible by land and as an abandoned structure the fire did not pose a danger.

"ASHES AND RUBBLE ARE ALL THAT REMAIN."

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Photo: Jacob Million Photography

TREEHOUSE FROM PAGE 1

Peninsula in 2009 when they purchased Frog Creek Lodge. The lodge was built in the 1970s for a large blended family and had been converted by the next owner into a retreat center. With friends in the hospitality industry and Ouellette's experience as a contractor, they felt they had what they needed to make the business a success. They have poured energy and money into renovations and upgrades over the years. A nearly mile-long trail circles the 10-acre property as well as a gazebo surrounded by a labyrinth.

They have never looked back. "We like it here and we will never move back to the Seattle area," Ouellette said.

They are as busy as they want to be with an average of 35 bookings each year, mostly repeat customers, and new bookings through word of mouth and Facebook. The lodge itself can sleep 21 and is too large to consider booking for just a single person or a couple, but they wanted to offer that for customers.

Initially they intended to add a small ground-based building. "But why put our money in a little place on the ground when we can put it up in the air?" Ouellette said. Planning began in earnest in early 2017. A friend sent him a picture of a staircase winding around a tree and he knew that

was how they would access their tree house.

After talking to various tree house contractors for advice, Ouellette was disappointed by the interactions. "We decided to do it ourselves."

It wasn't easy. "No one seems to have ever done anything quite like this before. Our architect had never designed a tree

house, the engineer had never done a tree house, our contractors had never built a tree house, the

health department and planning departments had never permitted a tree house," Ouellette said.

It was a challenge and learning experience for everyone involved. The house is supported by four 25-foot steel vertical beams, each with 10 feet buried in cement. Ouellette and the builder designed the braces for the house and for the stairs, which must be independent of each other for safety. Motion-activated lights guide guests up and down the stairs.

Despite the challenges, Ouellette said that, if this venture is successful, they are ready to build another tree house. But, he said, "The next one will be smaller and it will be a single story. Having a loft really complicated the engineering and construction."

For more information: frogcreeklodge.com

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Take a look at this list — these folks are amazing.

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FROM THE LEGISLATURE



Per-mile Charge Could Add Up

It is amazing how state government has no limits to the imaginative ideas to separate you from your hard-earned money. It's been only five years since the Legislature adopted an 11.9-cent gas tax hike to pay for a 16-year, \$16 billion statewide transportation package. At 49.4 cents per gallon, Washington has the third highest gas tax in the nation, behind Pennsylvania (58 cents) and California (56 cents).

Since 46 other states take care of their transportation system by not collecting as much as our state, we should get by just fine, right? But Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) officials say it's not enough. They want more of your money.

WSTC has been on a path for the past eight years to sell the public and the state Legislature on a statewide "road usage charge," in which you would pay by the mile.

With a \$3.8 million federal grant and authorization from the Legislature, WSTC created a 12-month statewide pilot program using 2,000 volunteers to test the road-usage charge concept. Volunteers were given one of four payment systems, ranging from a year-long permit that allowed them to drive unlimited miles to a smartphone app that automatically tracked all the miles they traveled. Other options included using odometer readings to gauge miles traveled or an automated meter inside the vehicle, neither of which would require GPS location data. During the test period, drivers were not charged for miles they traveled. The experiment wrapped up early last year.

In an online survey I conducted last summer, I asked my 26th district constituents, "Do you support a pay-by-mile road usage charge?" The majority, 82.24 percent, said "NO!"

This tax is disproportionately unfair to rural citizens, such as Key Peninsula commuters who drive to more populated areas for work or to receive services. It would especially impact those who make their living by driving — pizza drivers, newspaper delivery drivers, landscapers, in-home repair services and more. With higher minimum wage requirements, new family and sick-leave employer taxes, increased payroll taxes, and higher business and occupation taxes, pay-per-mile could be the final nail in the coffin of many smaller businesses struggling to get by. The closure of businesses means the loss of family-wage jobs.

With the state gas tax, 49.4 cents per

gallon is collected every time you go to the gas pump. However, if a per-mile charge is assessed with an annual odometer reading, would you have to cough up hundreds, or even thousands of dollars at once? How would that affect families and senior citizens with limited incomes?

There are also privacy concerns. While WSTC says mileage tracking equipment that would be installed in vehicles does not contain GPS tracking, there is nothing to guarantee that wouldn't change in the future. And what about the option to use the phone app? That certainly relies on GPS tracking.

Also, because transportation projects have been bonded to the gas tax, the pay-per-mile would be an additional tax. While there is talk to phase in pay-per-mile, I do not trust future legislatures to remove or phase out the gas tax. Historically, our state has added taxes, not removed them. In fact, last year the Legislature raised taxes by more than \$2 billion. State government spending has increased by 70 percent since 2013. Has your income increased by that much?

The road usage charge is one of several taxes being discussed in the 2020 session, along with the possibility of a state income tax and a low carbon fuel standard that could significantly raise gas prices at the pump. Washington voters have already sent a strong message through the passage of Initiative 976 (\$30 car tab fees) that they are taxed enough. Shouldn't the Legislature be listening to them?

Our 60-day session will conclude March 12. I encourage you to contact House Transportation Committee members and voice your opinion on this issue. You can find a member list online at: leg.wa.gov/House/Committees/TR or leave a message on the toll-free Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000.

Our citizens and small businesses simply can't afford to send more of their hard-earned dollars to Olympia. It's time to stand up for taxpayers and say "no" to a new road-usage charge.

Rep. Michelle Caldier, R-Port Orchard, represents the 26th Legislative District.

Emily Randall
FROM THE LEGISLATURE



Your Stories

I am fueled by your stories.

I gather these stories at the end of your long, winding driveways; over knitting needles and wine in Key Center; while breaking bread with seniors in Lakebay; and when we share a table and oysters on

the far side of the Hood Canal. Through these stories, my community members — you — tell me what matters to you, and what matters to you matters to me.

Since being sworn in as the state senator from the 26th Legislative District in January of 2019, I have advocated for the necessities, hopes and concerns you've shared with me: greater access to equitable health care, wider pathways to higher education, better transportation options, improved services and support for our elderly loved ones and those with developmental disabilities. Last session, I fought for these values that we share. Driven by your stories, I am continuing that work this session.

I will continue to focus on health care policy that provides more Washingtonians with better, affordable access to care. I focus on that kind of policy because that's what served my little sister, Olivia, after she was born with microcephaly. This is my story — the story of a family that received Medicaid coverage to pay for my sister's extensive needs. It was that coverage, which the state legislature expanded just after Olivia was born, that protected and provided for my family and many like ours.

This year, I will keep advocating for policies that make health care truly more accessible. I'm sponsoring a bill (SB 6128) to extend Medicaid coverage for a full year after a mother has given birth. Ensuring new parents have access to health care saves lives, improves health outcomes for newborns and strengthens communities. I'm expanding access to school-based health centers (SB 6279), which are successfully meeting the needs of students in North Mason, Vancouver, and other school districts around the state. I'm also sponsoring a bill (SB 6058) in partnership with the Key Peninsula Fire District to authorize Washington fire departments and districts to provide some health clinic services — especially in communities where there isn't good access to non-emergency (or any) care. KP Fire Chief Dustin Morrow and I are excited to better connect our neighbors to health care, rather than rush folks far away to an emergency room — a costlier and less effective alternative.

For nearly three decades, I have heard story after story from neighbors with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their caregivers, that the support and service that exists are too few and too hard to access for too many people. Washington is ranked 41st in the country for investments in the disability community. Nearly 14,000 individuals are lingering on what is called the "No Paid Services Case-

load" — a queue of folks with disabilities without a caseworker who are waiting to receive services to assess their needs. I've introduced a bill (SB 6056) that will require the state to budget for the needs of our community, and to provide case management and assessment to the thousands of folks who've been left waiting. Thanks to brave community advocates who shared their stories, we are moving forward.

In addition to strengthening our safety net services, I'm committed to building pathways to economic empowerment and family wage jobs. As the new Chair of Higher Education and Workforce Development, I have the incredible honor of preparing our students for the careers of tomorrow. Last session the Legislature passed a nation-leading investment in financial aid for low and middle-income families — aid that can be used for a bachelor's degree, at our community and technical colleges, or for certificate programs or apprenticeships. This session I'll focus on ensuring that students of all ages understand how much aid they qualify for, allowing them to make the best-informed decision about what path to take, and ensuring that we continue to remove barriers to successful degree or credential completion. This work is important not only for the students who will benefit, but for the employers who will have their pick of a well-trained workforce — growing our economy and supporting innovation.

Each of these policies are informed by your stories. Our conversations at community coffee hours, your emails, phone calls, and your trips to Olympia provide the fuel, the motivation and in many cases the critical insight that makes good policy possible. Thank you for entrusting me with your stories. Keep sharing them.

Sen. Emily Randall, D-Bremerton, represents the 26th Legislative District.

Jesse Young
FROM THE LEGISLATURE



A Call for House Republican Unity

Elected service calls for a principled courage that rises above personal and political differences. Citizens choose their representatives for varying reasons, but foundation to their choice is the expectation that those they elect will work hard and stand up for their rights. On the Republican side of the Legislature, constituents want us to stand for something and fight, together, to achieve it; not play second fiddle to Democratic agendas.

The increasing rise of political vitriol, recent events, and media speculation of potential legislative actions by the House majority party, however, are now exerting unprecedented influence that could divide state Republican officials and constituents irreparably. Therefore, a bold call for unity around principles we all hold paramount is needed.

I do not believe in litmus tests and am making no such request here. Rather, I am asking for each House Republican member to consider joining me in support of this Statement of Republican Unity, as the 2020 session begins, so that we can together publicly demonstrate our commitment to Republican, constitutional, conservative and professional principles and caucus unity. We must show citizens we are united and will support them.

I, Representative Jesse L. Young, District 26, Position 1:

- Stand committed to transparency, in all its forms, and the unalienable Constitutional right to due process. I am affirming my commitment to these principles by:

- Pledging to oppose any formal House legislative action against Representative Matt Shea until he has had due process to defend himself from accusations made against him by the Rampart Group report. We take an oath to uphold due process rights, and at a minimum Representative Shea should be allowed equal time to respond and defend himself as it took to produce the accusatory report.

- Pledging to immediately support and co-sponsor House Bill 2190, which seeks to permanently end the use of title-only “Ghost Bills.” Submitting bills without actual legislative content only to add in the tax increase language at the last minute, as was done in 2019, stifles public review and political debate. It is dishonest, disrespectful to Washington citizens and downright shady. Transparency is fundamental to our roles as public servants and this should be the 2020 Legislature’s first order of business.

- Stand committed to honoring the will of the people as expressed in their passage of Initiative 976 to reinstate \$30 car tabs. I am affirming my commitment to voter rights by:

- Pledging to immediately support and co-sponsor House Bill 2227, which is the legislative version of Initiative 976. Voters have spoken and the Legislature should honor the will of the people.

- Stand committed to protecting our Second Amendment rights. I am affirming my Constitutional oath by:

- Pledging to vehemently oppose any attempt by the State Attorney General or the House majority party to force through unconstitutional legislation that:

- Seeks to enforce “red-flag” laws that attempt to eliminate due process rights and the presumption of innocence.

- Makes or labels any current valid gun owner a criminal.

- That seeks to ban or eliminate currently legal firearms or accessories.

- Finally, I reaffirm my pledge to always fight for families, faith, freedom and fiscal responsibility.

Standing for something always produces results. It’s also the key to getting effective bipartisan solutions. It’s the exact technique I used to stop the tolls from increasing on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. I couldn’t have done it alone. I needed bipartisan support from the Democratic Caucus in order to get this done.

But when you stand for something and truthfully and honorably advocate for it, and then roll up your sleeves to work hard, you can accomplish a lot of great things in a short amount of time. And that’s the same process it’s going to take to accomplish all of the important objectives outlined here. It won’t be easy, but I’m committed to these causes and I will stand up for them.

Rep. Jesse Young, R-Gig Harbor, represents the 26th Legislative District.

Derek Young
COUNCIL UPDATE



County Council Update

It is a privilege to begin my sixth year serving the Key Peninsula on the Pierce County Council. With no changes to council membership, our assignments have mainly stayed the same with just a couple of changes. This year I was elected to council leadership and will serve as executive pro tempore.

I am also stepping down from chairing the Community Development Committee, which covers land use, environment and parks. I’ll stay on as vice-chair to assist Councilmember Morrell, who will be taking over.

The issue is that there’s an assumption by the public that committee chairs have control over the body’s agenda. That is not the case in land use where we are dependent on executive department staff. Without enough people to get all the work

we want done, they prioritize their workload, which means other issues fall off the agenda.

I want to be clear: the core problem is that the council hasn’t budgeted for enough staff, which I tried to correct this year. It’s not the staff’s fault that they have more work than people to get it done. I’ll also take over as vice-chair of the Human Services Committee and continue serving on Public Safety as well.

Externally, I’ll continue to represent Pierce County in Olympia, chairing our state association’s legislative committee. Other outside boards include:

- National Association of Counties Medicaid and Indigent Care Subcommittee, Chair.

- Puget Sound Regional Council.

- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department Board.

- Puget Sound Partnership Ecosystem Recovery Board.

In November, we wrapped up Pierce County’s first biennial budget thanks to voters supporting the charter amendment I sponsored in 2017. While the move allows us to think long term with our budgets, it also considerably raised the stakes since a majority of our council is leaving next year. That made this the last opportunity to get their priorities in the budget.

At the countywide level, we’ve added additional resources to public safety, continuing the restoration of staffing to the sheriff’s department with five new positions. While we still aren’t able to afford the level of staffing that we think is necessary, it’s good to see a corresponding decrease in crime rates.

When we first convened the Opioid Task Force, I’m not sure what I expected to come out of the process, but with staff support, we’re now turning ideas into reality. It used to take more than a week to find and begin treatment services. Now we’re rolling out programs to start intake immediately.

We’ve expanded treatment into jail and continued to build the drug courts, and funded staff to support United Way’s South Sound 211 to respond to the full spectrum of behavioral health disorders. We’re also training and equipping the entire sheriff’s department with naloxone to save lives.

On the environment, we’re adding a planner position to update and monitor our Sustainability Plan as well as a sustainability manager to oversee the implementation of the work countywide. We’re also giving staff additional direction to develop

regulations and policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Reaching out to people in need with non-emergency medical services is not only the right thing to do, but it also saves first responder resources and emergency room capacity. Two years ago, we started the Mobile Community Intervention Response Team pilot, and it’s been a success. I’m excited that we’re now ready to bring it to the peninsulas.

More locally, we’re proud to continue our partnership with community organizations like the Key Peninsula Family Resource Center (Children’s Home Society of Washington), and the Key Peninsula Partnership for a Healthy Community. We’ll also continue directing capital funding support to our peninsula metropolitan park districts.

I’m also very excited about a partnership we’re developing with the Recreational Boating Association of Washington to purchase Lakebay Marina. We budgeted \$250,000 to support the purchase of the facility and associated lands, which will allow RBAW to restore the marina, dock and concession, then turn it over to the state for conservation. We’re working with Sen. Randall and Reps. Caldier and Young on a capital budget request from the state to support the rest.

For KP’s transportation needs, we’re preparing improvements to the Lackey Road-Jackson Lake Road-KP Highway intersection and the KP Hwy-134th Avenue NW intersection. We’ll also continue the shoulder widening project on the KP Highway, working away from Key Center.

Derek Young, D-Gig Harbor, represents the 7th District, including the Key Peninsula, on the Pierce County Council.

Letter to the Editor

SASHA THE TUTOR

Just wanted to thank Lisa Bryan for the terrific article on the Communities in Schools reading program. (“Tutors with Tails Help Young Readers at Vaughn Elementary,” KP News January). She did an excellent job describing the program and its benefits, as well as capturing the spirit of the kids and volunteers involved. I was honored to be included along with my dog Sasha, who thrives on spending time with the kids every week. It’s clearly the highlight of her week.

Jill Peters, Fox Island



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Going Solo: Wauna Woman on Fifth Sailing Race to Alaska

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

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But this time she's going alone.

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

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

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

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

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

That crew was called Team Global after

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

sudden backpressure snapped the boom holding it in half.

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

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

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

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

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



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from Hurricane Michael. So, zero planning.”

Team Razzle Dazzle signed up on the last day of registration and got their boat in the water the day before the race. “We had zero time on it before we left,” Stewart said. “We crossed the starting line just trying to get the sails up. It was messy.”

They finished the race in nine days.

For her fifth race, Stewart will be a one-woman Team Razzle Dazzle piloting a narrow, decked expedition kayak-like craft called an Angus Sailing Rowcruiser.

“It’s a trimaran ketch, 20 feet, with a tiny, tiny little cabin,” she said. “It’s made to travel well under oars, which will be refreshing.”

One of the biggest challenges in the R2AK, after injury, exhaustion or damage, is getting becalmed.

“There’s always some crazy contraption to propel the boat,” Stewart said, but most sailboats don’t row very well. “If there’s no wind, you’re just slaving away to gain a knot and a half, which is super bad for morale. You end up with these little twirly circles on your GPS track.”

But this year Stewart’s small boat may give her a big advantage.

“I think what I have to look forward to is that this is going to be the best boat I’ve used under human power, absolutely,” she said. “The builder said he can maintain 5 knots easily and I’ve never come anywhere close to that in any of the crazy things we’ve tried before.”

But Stewart won’t be entirely alone.

“My husband has decided to race against me,” she said. “I had other friends who still really wanted to go, and when I made this solo decision there were a bunch of people left aimless, so they’re going to band together and take Not Bad again. They’re going to take the comfortable way while I suffer.”

“But that’s the great thing about this race,” Stewart said. “There’s always going to be the big shot or two in the expensive, fast boats that are going to win this thing, but after the first five or six boats finish it’s just one giant, happy family. It’s really just about finishing.”

For more information on R2AK, go to www.nwmaritime.org.

Captain Stewart’s R2AK Record

2016: Team Onism took 17th place after 12 days, 14 hours and 10 minutes aboard the homebuilt 24-foot trimaran “Coyote.”

2017: Team Global took 13th place after 10 days, 1 hour and 54 minutes aboard the 32-foot Columbia Sabre “Greener.”

2018: Team Global took 13th place after 9 days, 2 hours and 0 minutes aboard the 34.5-foot Beneteau 345 “Not Bad.”

2019: Team Razzle Dazzle took 16th place after 9 days, 10 hours and 52 minutes aboard the 27-foot trimaran Farrier-27 “Magpie.”



Team Global rings the 2018 finish line bell, Stewart fourth from left. *Courtesy Katy Stewart*



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Key Center Library Exhibits Yemen Photos by KP Man

One-time KP resident Luke Somers was a teacher and photojournalist in Yemen when he was abducted and killed by al-Qaida.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

The Key Center Library will host an exhibit in February of photographs from Yemen taken by the late photojournalist Luke Somers. Somers, who lived in Palmer Lake from 2009 to 2011, was abducted by al-Qaida in Yemen in 2013 and died during a failed rescue attempt by U.S. forces in December 2014. He was 33 years old.

His mother Paula Somers, 72, of Lake Holiday, has lived on the KP for 12 years. She and her son, Jordan Somers of Seattle, have organized five exhibits of Luke's work already. The first in the Northwest was at Seattle University in 2017.

"It was three days and it was so much work," Paula said. "But we didn't want to leave. We were thinking of bringing sleeping bags because it felt just so good there, surrounded by Luke."

Luke spent hours documenting everything he could find, she said, ranging from protesters in the street to a women's bowling team; from Yemen's former president to children suffering malnutrition.

The first exhibit was "spectacular," Paula

"I HAD THE FORTUNE TO ARRIVE IN SANA'A, YEMEN IN LATER FEBRUARY 2011 — JUST AS TENTS WERE BEING ERECTED AND AS RALLYING CRIES WERE GROWING LOUD AND CLEAR."

said. "We had Luke's photos and testimonials from his friends and their pictures and newspaper articles. They did an eight-page article in a newspaper in Yemen just on Luke."

Some visitors had heard of him, some hadn't, she said, "But they love it (the exhibit). Some people are in tears by the time they finish it, and some people are beaming, saying 'I want to be like him.'"

The Somers family also met Aisha Jumaan at the first exhibit, of the Yemen Relief and Reconstruction Foundation. Jumaan organized more shows and now a portion of the proceeds from any photos sold go to her charity to feed families in Yemen.

Luke lived with his mother in Palmer Lake while taking a course to learn how to teach English in a foreign country and

developing his photography skills. He went to high school in Renton and attended Beloit University, where he graduated in 2008 after studying abroad in Morocco and Egypt. He worked in various parts of the United States, including Washington, D.C., and Alaska, and had volunteered abroad, when he decided to teach overseas.

Luke saw an advertisement for a job teaching English in Yemen at the time of the Arab Spring and was excited to go.

"I had the fortune to arrive in Sana'a, Yemen in later February 2011 — just as tents were being erected and as rallying cries were growing loud and clear," he wrote. "I found myself within walking distance of the epicenter of a remarkable revolutionary movement in its earliest stages."

Luke was popular with his students and colleagues, but gradually shifted his focus to become a full-time freelance journalist



Above: Luke in his element amongst the Yemeni people. Upper right: A truck carrying tribesman supporting the election of Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi in Sana'a, Yemen Feb. 11, 2012. Photo: Luke Somers Lower right: As part of a massive display of the Yemeni flag colors, young women prepare to parade on the second anniversary of Yemen's Youth Revolution Feb. 11, 2013. Photo: Luke Somers

working for Yemeni newspapers. He went on to sell photos to The New York Times, Al-Jazeera and the BBC. He also exhibited his work in Granada, Spain, in a 2011 show called "Women and the Arab Spring" and in a show called "Yemen: An Ongoing Retrospective" in Brussels in 2012.

Paula said Luke felt at home in Yemen. "He loved the people. He took pictures of lots of everyday sorts of things that other journalists weren't doing," she said.

In 2012, Luke began work as a copy editor and photographer for the National Dialogue Conference between local and foreign government officials and tribal leaders working on a peace agreement.

He was preparing to come home for a visit when he was abducted in September



2013. He and a second hostage were killed in December 2014 during a rescue attempt.

"It's difficult for me to have another exhibition; it's bittersweet," Paula said. "I want people to remember Luke but then it makes me sad to see his pictures. But people knew him, he was here and he was part of the community."

"Of course, we don't have anything from after 2013 and a lot has happened to Yemen since then," she said.

The exhibit opens at the library Feb. 3 with a reception in the Brones Room Feb. 15 at 2 p.m. with Yemeni coffee, tea and hors d'oeuvres.

For more information, go to www.luke-somers.com and www.yemenfoundation.org.

Yemen at a Glance

Yemen is located on the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula south of Saudi Arabia and west of Oman, with 1,200 miles of strategically valuable coastline along the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. In ancient times, it was home to the Sabaeans, who founded the kingdom of Saba' in 1200 BCE, the biblical land of Sheba.

The name Yemen is thought to come from "yamn" or "yumn," meaning felicity or blessed. The Romans called it "Arabia felix" — fertile Arabia.

Yemen was divided and controlled by imperial and regional powers from the turn of the 20th century until two separate countries coalesced in the 1960s. North and South Yemen were united in

1990 under the first president of the new Republic of Yemen, a former army officer named Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Protests against President Saleh's 21-year rule began in 2011 with the advent of the Arab Spring. Saleh stepped down and Vice President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi was elected president in February 2012 in a one-candidate election.

The chaotic transition created an opportunity for insurgent groups such as the Houthis rebels of Ansar Allah, the al-Islah militia and Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula.

The Houthis rebels, officially called Ansar Allah ("Supporters of God") but known simply as Houthi, are a largely Shia Islamist political movement backed by Iran that began in northern Yemen in the 1990s. Its founder is from the Houthi tribe. Al-Islah ("Congregation for Reform") is a loose coalition of Sunni tribal and religious groups supported by Saudi Arabia.

In September 2014, the Houthis took over the capital of Sana'a with the help of former president Saleh and set up a new government. Saleh broke away from the Houthis and was assassinated by them in December 2017, setting off a Saudi-led military intervention to return President Hadi to power. The United Arab Emirates joined Saudi Arabia's fight against the Houthis in the north but also supported a separatist movement fighting Hadi in the south with the goal of restoring an independent South Yemen.

Six years on, the United Nations reported that Yemen, already one of the poorest nations on the planet, is suffering the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, with 80 percent of the population — 24.1 million people — in need. The fighting has killed 100,000 people since 2015, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project, including 12,000 civilian deaths in directly targeted attacks, largely destroying the country's infrastructure and creating a famine. A lack of safe drinking water caused the largest cholera outbreak in modern history, with the number of suspected cases approaching 1 million. Over 2,000 people have died of the disease since April 2017.

In August 2019, UAE-backed southern separatists took control of Aden, the home of the UN-recognized Hadi government.

In November, Saudi Arabia brokered a power-sharing agreement between President Hadi and the separatists to halt fighting in south Yemen and concentrate on the Iranian-backed Houthi forces that control Sana'a and the north where the Houthis have consolidated their power and launched missile attacks against targets inside Saudi Arabia.

New Leadership and Programs at KP Community Services

STAFF REPORT

Willow Eaton became the executive director of Key Peninsula Community Services in October.

KPCS runs a senior center with a variety of classes, social events and field trips, and offers assistance with anything from dealing with Medicaid to balancing a checkbook. There is also a food bank available to anyone who is hungry.

"I have over 20 years experience working with seniors and most recently was running senior programming for the city of Tacoma," Eaton said. "The primary focus right now is increasing participation in the senior center by increasing programming options."

KPCS served 227 individual seniors last year, she said, in any number of visits.

"We have two new programs coming up: On the third Thursday of every month we'll have a themed potluck and if you follow the theme you get entered into a drawing to win a prize," Eaton said.

"But what I'm most excited about is that Titus-Will (car dealership) is sponsoring a dance with live music on the last Friday of every month to celebrate birthdays. We'll start with old style rock 'n' roll, and we'll see how it goes from there as to what people like. I'd like to have a lot of people participate because it's going to be a lot of fun."

Eaton has lived just north of Wauna for over 23 years. "This is my passion," she said. "I love this community, I'm part of it, and I love working with seniors and this is a great program with a great reputation and I am just delighted to be a part of it."

KPCS is located at 17015 9th Street Court NW, just south of the Home bridge on the KP Highway. Call 253-884-4440. Office hours are Tuesday through Friday 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

New Director Named at Red Barn Youth Center

STAFF REPORT

Kellie Bennett is the new executive director of the Red Barn Youth Center.

Bennett started with Red Barn in November 2016 as a program assistant. She officially assumed the director role in December after filling in since June.

"We are here to provide a safe place for middle schoolers and high schoolers to come after school," Bennett said. "It's not only a place to get homework done, but a safe place to hang out with their friends. We also provide a hot, full meal every day."


"Kellie is very capable and naturally moved into the directorship role," Peter Hedin, RBYC board president said. "It was an easy decision to recognize her accomplishments. We're thankful to have a first-rate staff."

Red Barn provides monthly presentations from the Pierce County Library and some craft activities. There are also basketball and volleyball courts, a foosball table, ping pong and air hockey. "And we've been doing a lot of chess lately," Bennett said. There are 30 kids a day attending on average.

"Prior to coming here I taught financial literacy with Junior Achievement," Bennett said. "I know there are so many students who are just trying to survive middle school, and I am excited that I can be part of a center that wants them not just to survive but have some great experiences, whether that is learning how to do life skills, such as work in a garden or cook their own food, or just getting time to know there's other people out there, whether it's their friends or adults, that want to spend time with them and want to listen to them."

Red Barn Youth Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, opened in September 2014. It's open Monday through Friday during the school year from 2:30 to 6 p.m. It is located at 5921 84th Street NW, south of Key Center. For more information, call 253-884-1594 or go to www.redbarnkp.org.

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Position descriptions and job applications on www.keypenparks.com or pick up an application at the park office during regular business hours. These posts will close when filled.



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FEATURE YOUR EVENT HERE

Click on "Submit an Event" at keypennews.org and fill out the form. Send questions or updates to calendar@keypennews.org or call 253-884-4699.

FEB. 6 & 20**COUNTY ON WELLS**

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

FEB. 7**FREE BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK**

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

FEB. 11**FUN DAY AT LEMAY CAR MUSEUM**

Key Peninsula Community Services and The Mustard Seed Project offer a free bus to visit the museum. Depart KPCS 10 a.m. and return after lunch. Pack lunch or eat at museum cafe. Admission provided by KPCS. Call TMSP 253-884-2216 or KPCS 253-884-4440 to reserve a spot.

FEB. 13**COUNTY ON WASTE**

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

FEB. 15**YEMEN THROUGH LUKE'S EYES**

Please join us in the Brones Room at 2 p.m. for a reception celebrating photojournalist Luke Somers (1981-2014) during his years in the midst of Arab Spring in Yemen with this captivating exhibition on display Feb. 3 to Feb. 29 at Key Center Library.

FEB. 22**CRAB FEED**

Annual KP Civic Center benefit dinner with fresh caught Pacific Coast Dungeness crab and more. 4 to 7 p.m. Tickets on sale now: Adults \$40, Children 6-12 \$20, under 6 is free. 253-884-3456 or kpciviccenter.org

FEB. 25**PENINSULA SONGWRITERS**

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

FEBRUARY 29**HOT MEAL FOR THOSE IN NEED**

Join us for a hot meal and a warm clothing drive helping those less fortunate in our community. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the KP Civic Center hosted by Working Class Beards and Dames WA Chapter and Gnosh Food Truck. Sponsors Kitsap Harvest, The Hub-Belfair, Mrs. Washington and International 2020 Pageant.

OFF THE KEY**FEB. 8****DAN WEBER CONCERT**

Former National Park Ranger Dan Weber is a national touring artist known for his upbeat and engaging performances, songs and off-the-cuff stories. Olalla Community Club, 12970 Olalla Valley Road SE, Olalla. Potluck 6 p.m. Concert 7 p.m. Suggested donation \$20. olallahouse.org

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

Bring your mat, blanket or towel. Drop-in \$12 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 per class. Call 253-884-4440 to register. No class Feb. 17.

TUESDAYS**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 Feb. 4 and 18. 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/class. Sign up at 253-884-4440.

REFIT FREE WOMEN'S 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., Thursdays 10 to 11 a.m. WayPoint Church, 12719 134th Avenue NW. waypoint-church.org or 253-853-7878

TUESDAYS & SATURDAYS**KP HISTORICAL MUSEUM OPEN**

Historical Society museum at the civic

center is open 1 to 4 p.m. Free admission. 253-888-3246 or keypeninsulamuseum.org

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. Keycouncil@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 children with parent/caregiver. Focus on kindergarten readiness and lots of fun. KP Civic Center, VFW room, 10:30-11:30 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

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 WOMEN'S EXERCISE

Free Women's 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 for seniors 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

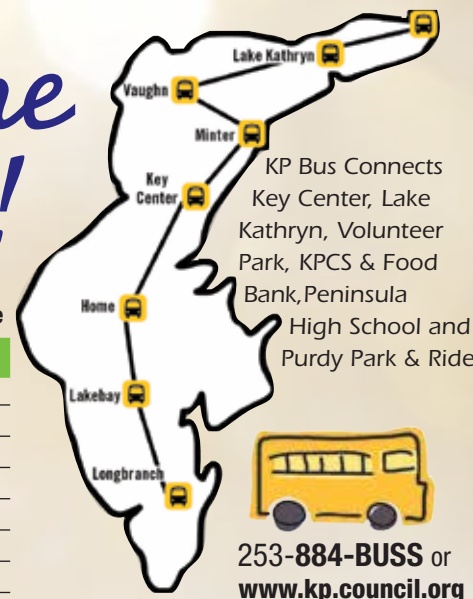
- Feb. 1, **Writers Guild**, 10 a.m. to noon, KP Community Council office. 253-884-6455
- Feb. 3 & 17, 7 to 8 p.m. **KP Veterans** group, KP Lutheran Church, 4213 Lackey Road NW. Veterans, military service members and families with children 16 and older are welcome. 253-884-2626
- Feb. 4, 11 a.m. **KP Historical Society** board meeting in the museum at civic center. 253-888-3246
- Feb. 4, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. **KP Business Association** business meeting at Blend Wine Shop. kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com or 253-312-1006
- Feb. 4 & 18, 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
- Feb. 4 & 18, 5 to 6 p.m. **Gig Harbor North Rotary Club** in the Maritime Room of Heron's Key, 4340 Borgen Boulevard, Gig Harbor. gigharbornorthrotary.org
- Feb. 5 & 19, 6 to 9 p.m. **KP Lions Club**, Key Center fire station. 253-853-2721
- Feb. 6, **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
- Feb. 6, **Lakebay Fuchsia Society** meeting, 7 p.m. KP Civic Center, Whitmore Room, 7:00 pm. Contact Myvanwy Shirley, 253-884-2283
- Feb. 10, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. **KP Parks Commission**, Volunteer Park office. 253-884-9240
- Feb. 11 & 25, 5 to 7 p.m. **KP Fire Commission** at Key Center fire station. keypeninsulafire.org or 253-884-2222
- Feb. 12, 10 to 11:30 a.m. **Bayshore Garden Club**, Longbranch fire station. Wendy, 253-332-4883
- Feb. 12, 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

- Feb. 12, 7 to 9 p.m. **KP Community Council**, Key Center fire station. 253-432-4948
- Feb. 13, 7 to 8:30 p.m. **KP Civic Center Association** board, Whitmore Room, Civic Center. kpciviccenter.org, 253-884-3456
- Feb. 13, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. **Ashes** support group for Fire District 16, Key Center fire station. 253-884-3771
- Feb. 14, 6 to 7:30 p.m. **Peninsula School District** board meeting at district office in Purdy. 253-530-1000
- Feb. 15, 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
- Feb. 17, 7 to 8:30 p.m. **KP Democrats**, Home fire station, johnpatkelly@aol.com
- Feb. 19, 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
- Feb. 19, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. **Longbranch Improvement Club** monthly meeting, Longbranch Improvement Club. 253-200-0308
- Feb. 20, 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
- Feb. 20, 7 to 8:30 p.m. **Key Peninsula Emergency Prep**, Whitmore Room at the KP Civic Center. Contact Peggy at 253-686-7904
- Feb. 21, noon to 1 p.m. **KP Business Association** luncheon meeting, El Sombrero. kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com or 253-312-1006
- Feb. 21, 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
- Feb. 24, 6 to 8 p.m. **KP Farm Council** board meeting at Key Peninsula Community Office. 253-432-4948
- Feb. 24, 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
- Feb. 27, 11 a.m. to noon. **Book discussion group** at KC Library. 253-548-3309 or ajackman@piercecountylibrary.org
- Multiple dates, **KP Sportsmen's 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. Sportsmen's Clubhouse, 5305 Jackson Lake Road NW, 253-884-6764

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY SCHEDULE

FREE KP BUS CONNECTS

Welcome aboard!



Yellow buses aren't just for kids anymore

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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Hugh McMillan: Four Decades of Impact on the Key Peninsula

Ex-CIA recruiter uses multiple talents to strengthen community.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

He is a ubiquitous presence, camera slung on his neck, quick to share his opinion, ready to step in if action is called for, and equally prepared to recruit others to his cause.

Hugh McMillan, retired CIA agent and Key Peninsula activist for four decades, will be 94 this year and shows little sign of slowing down. And Janice, his wife of nearly 68 years, while also being an active volunteer, has kept the home fires burning to make his work possible.

Hugh was born in British Columbia in 1926 and moved to Tacoma at age 3. He describes himself as a middling student academically but a “self-proclaimed big man on campus” in junior high and high school — serving as yell leader and student body president. He joined the Navy in 1945, but World War II ended while he was still in training and he was released. In 1948, he enrolled in what is now the University of Puget Sound.

It was there he met Janice. “I started ogling her in ’48 but we didn’t go on our first date until ’50,” he said. When he moved to Berkeley, Calif., for graduate work, Janice and her family moved to nearby Alameda, allowing the budding romance to continue.

Hugh went to the University of Washington to pursue a Ph.D., but a car accident left him strapped for cash. He went to Fort Lewis to look for a job, but the receptionist declared him overqualified for labor and handed him applications for other opportunities. Among them was one for the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency.

Hugh was hired as an operations officer; a recruiter of spies. His original reason for joining, he said, was to give himself an entree into public office. From age 10, when he met then Congressman John Coffee, he wanted to be a representative. He figured a background in the CIA would be just the ticket when he decided to run.

In 1952 Hugh moved to Washington, D.C. Janice joined him six months later and four days after that they were married. “We lived in a furnished apartment that cost \$115 a month, with plastic curtains that had holes in them,” she said.

Their first posting was in Japan. “We were there for six years. Our kids were born there,” Janice said. They went on to consulate and embassy postings that included India, Turkey and Egypt with intervals in Washington, D.C.

In 1964 Hugh met U.S. Sen. Henry “Scoop” Jackson, who said he’d give his blessing to him to run as U.S. representative. “I was in the stratosphere for about three days,” Hugh said. And then, as he realized how much more of the world remained to be seen through his job, “I came crashing down.”

Jackson suggested he wait until the Republican incumbent retired the following term, and the two-year wait made sense to them both. But the Democratic challenger won that year in an upset and went on to serve six terms. Hugh had no intention of running against him or the men who followed him — Norm Dicks and Derek Kilmer — and his dream of becoming a representative came to an end.

Janice kept the household running and worked at times during their postings, helping to file reports. In New Delhi she started a boy scout troop for sons Lance and Marshall. And, she said, “I was very good at big receptions, at meeting people that Hugh would be interested in. I’d say, ‘Oh, I want you to meet my husband, and that way we got to know a lot of people.’”

“She was superb,” Hugh said. “She was so effective that when we landed in Egypt we weren’t met by Americans. We were met by the Lebanese consul, who gave her a bouquet and took us to dinner.”

Hugh retired in 1978. “I loved the business,” he said, “but after 26 years I was pretty well burned out.” There was never any question as to where they would move after retirement. “Janice is a Stadium girl. I’m a Lincoln boy. The Pacific Northwest is home to us.”

They knew they wanted to live on the water. From the moment they saw their house in Home they knew it was where they would settle. “I walked to the bulkhead, looked down and could see the pebbles through four feet of clear water,” Hugh said.

They busied themselves settling in, and then tragedy struck. Marshall, then 19, died in a boating accident in 1980. The family was devastated. Hugh credits the KP fire department with giving him something to live for. The fire chief called and asked him to join as a volunteer firefighter. Soon after



Janice and Hugh McMillan, together every step of the way. Photo: Richard Miller, KP News

that Hugh helped save the life of a heart attack victim. “I figured I had a reason to hang around for a while,” he said.

Hugh went on to hold an elected office after all; he first became president of the Fire Fighters Association, then was elected fire commissioner for 14 years. He served as a Pierce County Fire Commissioner and as a board member of the Washington State Fire Commissioners Association. For that work he has been recognized as a lifetime honorary Washington state fire commissioner and volunteer.

Hugh brought certain skills from the CIA to his work on the Key Peninsula. “My son calls me gregarious, and that helped in the business,” he said. It also helped him recruit himself into the KP Lions Club and to recruit others to join causes he cares about. “Lots of people would like to do things but no one has invited them,” he said.

Hugh did not limit his energy to the fire department. He was a founding or early member of many local organizations, including the Lions Club, Citizens Against Crime, the food bank now at Key Peninsula Community Services, Communities in Schools of Peninsula, Peninsula Schools Education Foundation, Peninsula Emergency Preparedness Coalition and Hope Recovery Center.

Students continue to be his passion. He and Janice have volunteered as tutors for years. “Hugh is an incredible champion for the children in our community,” said Leslie Livingood, who teaches special education at Voyager Elementary School. “I am the co-chair of Voyager’s literacy night Camp Read a Lot and he has come every year since the event began.”

A frequent and early contributor to KP News, Hugh now writes a long-running column in *The Peninsula Gateway* called Kids’ Corner. He said his goal is to bring the two peninsulas together, and sharing the success stories of students every week is a way to do that. Daughter-in-law Sheri Ahlheim, who teaches at Peninsula High School and is married to son Lance, said, “You’ll go to their house for a bit, and McMillan checks the clock, grabs his camera and jacket and exclaims, ‘Oh! I’ve got to go photograph some kids.’”

Hugh’s mantra is “Don’t tell me what’s wrong. Come on in and help me make it right.” His work to make things right has been recognized on many fronts. The Pierce County Council proclaimed April 22, 2006, as Hugh McMillan Day; the Gig Harbor Chamber of Commerce named him Citizen of the Year in 2010; Gig Harbor Rotary North awarded him their Star Award in 2014; Rep. Derek Kilmer recognized his 90th birthday in a speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, calling him the unofficial mayor of the Key Peninsula; and last spring a plaque celebrating his service was installed in front of the Key Center Fire Station.

“If it was up to me, I’d make him governor of the Key Peninsula,” said former Peninsula School Board member Marcia Harris. Her husband Jeff, a longtime local activist, said, “Hugh is one of a kind among many community leaders that I have had the pleasure of working with and knowing who have the ‘Give Back DNA’ that the world so desperately needs more of. The Key and the world are the better because of Hugh, especially the children and our future.”

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Owners Orachorn and Lucas Schultz. Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News

Easy Thai Easy Go Brings Chiang Mai Cuisine to the KP

When opportunity knocked, a new Purdy restaurant was the answer.

KRISA BRUEMMER, KP NEWS

Easy Thai Easy Go, located in the Purdy Shopping Center, has been going strong since its grand opening in May 2019. Although the restaurant is only eight months old, its history goes way back, starting with a whirlwind romance that spanned the globe.

Owners Lucas and Orachorn (or-a-shon) Schultz met in Chiang Mai in 2003 when Luke was on a tour of Orachorn's hometown. Luke was taking the trip between jobs and when he met Orachorn, his whole life changed.

"I just never boarded the plane to go home," Luke said.

"It was about two or three years of going back and forth, like working three months and then going back for a month, until she decided to move here."

Orachorn's family ran a restaurant in their village in the north of Thailand, where her mother taught her how to cook when she was very young.

"When I moved here with Luke and I cooked for his family, my mother-in-law would tell me, 'You should do a cooking class,'" Orachorn said. "That was 14 years ago."

The couple offered Thai cooking classes for about 10 years before buying a food truck.

"We bought the truck and got everything ready," Luke said. "Then we needed to find

a commercial kitchen, so we came to this spot when it used to be teriyaki, just trying to see if we could use the kitchen, and they told us they were actually looking to sell.

"So, we decided let's jump in rather than doing the food truck thing and just go for it."

Their most popular dishes are pad thai, golden cashew nuts, spring rolls and panang curry. Other menu items include noodle and rice dishes, soups, salads and seasonal favorites such as sweet mango with sticky rice.

In January, panang curry wings were a snow day special. Another popular special is khao soi gai, a northern-style curry soup

with noodles and a slow-cooked chicken drumstick.

With nearly 50 options to choose from, young locals, such as 4-year-old Aiden Smith of Lakebay, have the opportunity to discover a love for Thai specialties close to home.

"It's delicious!" Aiden said. "I want some more Thai tea and peanut noodles!"

"My grandpa is Thai and makes some stuff but not pad thai," said Aiden's mom, Nichole. "So, Aiden figured out his love for the noodles and Thai tea there."

Key Peninsula folks of all ages appreciate having the new restaurant nearby.

"It's great to have more and more local restaurant options," said Rocky Bay resident Sarah Wiryck.

"It's a great option to have a different type of cuisine close to the peninsula," said

Vanessa Lentricchia of Vaughn. "I like that you can choose your spiciness level. I like my food at a 5 whereas my husband likes his closer to a 1 or 0."

Although it can be difficult to please everyone, the owners try their best to accommodate customer tastes. After receiving feedback about their pad thai, they adjusted the recipe.

"When we started, we did it traditional Thai style, which is dry and not as sweet," Luke said. "Now we use more sauce to make it a little bit more wet and a bit sweeter."

Providing high-quality service is important to Luke and Orachorn and their customers have noticed.

"They're very fast," said Home resident Jen Maynard. "I've been able to pick up on my way home from work with no wait."

"They're super nice," said Lara Yelken of Gig Harbor. "I'm always impressed by their friendliness."

As Easy Thai Easy Go approaches its first anniversary, Luke and Orachorn's goals for the future include staying busy, seeing customers return and maintaining high quality food.

"I want everybody (to) walk in my store and walk out with happiness," Orachorn said.

Easy Thai Easy Go is located at 6707 Tye Drive NW in Purdy.

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Easy Crab for Difficult People KP Cooks

KATRINA HERRINGBOTTOM

My relatives weren't in our house 24 hours before disaster struck.

That's the problem with living in the paradise that is the Key Peninsula; people are always trying to visit and if you're related to them — and it's the holidays — it's hard to keep them out. And they're everywhere! They're sprawled on your couch, they're in line for the bathroom, they're rifling your fridge.

That's where the trouble started.

I woke up early the morning after the arrival of the Perennially Visiting Relatives to find the freezer door ajar and a large freshwater lake on the kitchen floor. Inside were the thawed remains of our long summer's hard work: many, many pounds of once frozen salmon, shrimp and Dungeness crab.

Also, the gin was missing.

"Oh, well," said one grinning in-law, "I guess we'll have to eat it all."

I spend a lot of time fishing, shrimping and crabbing, and am somewhat conflicted since the populations of those delicious species are endangered in our neighborhood. I am careful about what I take and particular about preparing it well and serving it only to the Most Deserving Friends — another increasingly endangered species.

But the disaster was upon us and there was no point crying about spilled seafood. Yelling and screaming, yes, but no crying. Instead, I created a production line to prepare everything we had right then, conscripting groggy relatives to prepare soggy seafood on an industrial scale into

handy and portable holiday treats suitable for delivery to the Most Deserving Friends, or even to serve to Perennially Visiting Relatives.

This recipe for crab croquettes is one of them. It has been scaled down to a humane size and remains intentionally simple for deployment in any relative-related emergency. But it can be easily adapted to accommodate a crowd or, more importantly, different seafood. Almost all of the ingredients are pantry staples that can be readily replaced with fresh ingredients like red pepper, garlic or ginger, to name a few, to add depth and body for any diner, deserving or not.

- ¼ cup chopped green onions
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt (yes, it matters)

- 6 ounces cooked crab
- 2 eggs
- ¾ cup panko bread crumbs
- About 4 cups vegetable oil for frying
- Hot sauce

Saute onions in butter until softened and transfer to a bowl to combine with mustard, garlic powder, salt, crab, one egg and ¼ cup of panko.

Mix into eight bite-sized or better balls and set on an oiled baking sheet. Whisk remaining egg with 2 tablespoons water in a small bowl. Put the rest of the panko in another. Dip crab balls in egg and then roll in the panko.

Heat oil to 350 or so, hot but not smoking, and gently fry three or four balls at a time until medium brown. Should take less than five minutes

Do you have a recipe that your friends and family ask for? Email the details to editor@keypennews.org with your phone number, we'll be in touch.

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Owners begin to transform their acquisition into Madrona Cafe. Photo: David Zeigler, KP News

A Cafe Comes to Key Center

A local couple plans to offer breakfast and lunch this spring.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

Sarah Anderson spilled the beans on Facebook in mid-October. She, her husband Bryant and mother Nan Feagin had purchased the building located between El Sombrero and the KP Smoke Shop and are planning to open a cafe.

"We had started improving the exterior," Sarah said, "and people were posting that they heard a new pot shop or donut shop was coming. I thought it was time to let them know about our plans."

After Sarah's father died, her mother moved from the family home on Fox Island to Home. The Andersons and their son Dylan moved from Portland, Ore., in 2014 to be near her, and they have worked on plans to open a cafe on the Key Peninsula since they arrived.

They have chosen the name Madrona Cafe. "Bryant grew up in Hawaii, and when he saw madronas for the

with take-out as an option. As they grow, they would like to offer dinner on weekends.

"We want to use local growers and producers as much as possible. We will steam and bake rather than fry and won't use high-fructose corn syrup," Sarah said. "We will serve healthy food, not health food."

The Andersons are no strangers to the restaurant business. Together they owned and operated the successful Anna Bannanas Cafe, with three locations in Portland.

It was Bryant who drew Sarah into the cafe business. She moved to Portland where she earned a degree in ceramics from the Pacific NW College of Arts and was working at Ann Sacks Tile and Stone when, she said, "I fell in love with the boy next door." Bryant had a coffee cart and was just opening his first cafe when they met. Sarah joined the effort.

They are working with local contractors to upgrade the exterior and the interior – including shelves of madrona. The

first time when he moved to Portland, he loved them. They are his favorite tree and we are surrounded by them out here."

Finding a location for the cafe was a challenge, but Sarah said they think the building on Olson Drive NW is a good one. Remodeling plans were delayed after they discovered the building's plumbing was connected to a drain field that was already at or beyond capacity. The solution, a 3,500-gallon underground holding tank, was approved in January. How often it will need to be pumped will depend on how busy they are and there is a per-gallon fee.

Breakfast and lunch are on the menu,

cinderblock building that once housed a state-licensed liquor store and later became a medical marijuana dispensary will be transformed.

Customers will enter a room with espresso and bar seating. The kitchen will be in the back, and cafe seating will be to the left. The number of seats, which is based on health department rules, is yet to be determined. The walls will be lined with salvaged barn wood, and the furniture will be inviting and home-like.

"Three books were written at our old cafes," Sarah said. She anticipates writers will come to this place as well.

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KP Social Worker Reflects on Year One

After a year of leadership at Children's Home Society of Washington Key Peninsula Family Resource Center, program manager and KP native Gina Cabiddu looks back on her past and ahead to new opportunities in 2020.

MATTHEW DEAN, KP NEWS

Gina Cabiddu's passion for social work is driven by her own experiences in the foster care system. After being separated from her biological family by Child Protective Services at age 3, she spent the next seven years in various foster homes, including on the Key Peninsula.

Now she manages a KP resource center to help families and children like her.

"I remember a lot of moving around, not knowing where I was going to be the next day," Cabiddu said. The constant transitions made it difficult for her to find stability. "It took a lot of adaptation: getting used to different people's cooking, remembering where the bathroom was when I got up in the middle of the night. It was a lot of driving, and a lot of strangers."

After seven years of uncertainty, she was adopted at age 10 by Monika Cabiddu, a woman she had bonded with during earlier rounds of foster care. "When no one else would take me, I kept insisting to be put back into her care. Thankfully, my social worker listened to me and put me back with Monika," Cabiddu said.

The adoption marked a shift from a life of constant change to one of consistency and support. "I knew what the rules were, I knew what the boundaries were and those did not change. And the other piece was that no matter how much I pushed those boundaries, she was always there, and she always said that she loved me."

Cabiddu's tumultuous upbringing was a topic she made a deliberate effort to be open about with others in her peer group and family.

"It was never a secret, it was never a shame, it was always a very open conversation in the family I was raised in. It's just my norm, there were other youths who grew up in happy, stable homes, so they couldn't relate, and that was OK to me because I couldn't really relate to what they had experienced."

Despite Cabiddu's early acceptance, the process of integrating into a new family was not free of friction. "I did have members of that adopted family that would point out, even after I was adopted, that I wasn't one of them, that

I didn't belong by blood, that I was just a member by ink. Then there were others that just said, no, this is my sister, and this is who she is."

Cabiddu said her time in the foster care system and her experience with community support programs inspired her to pursue a career of her own in social services. Early memories of caring CPS workers touched her, and she remembers their gestures of kindness.

On days requiring lots of travel by a car, she said, "one of my social workers would let me choose which country CD we were going to listen to that day.

Just having that small amount of choice, when everything else in my life was out of my control, was so important to me. I carry that forward with me today, as I try to think of those little details."

Cabiddu's dreams of helping others were supported by her adoptive family.

"They were always adamant that I could be whatever I wanted to be," she said. Always a good student, she continued to excel with an eye on the future. "I knew even from an early age that I needed to get into a four-year degree program for social work, and we didn't have a lot of money, so it was going to take good grades to get scholarships."

She credits teachers and staff in schools from Evergreen Elementary to Peninsula High with nurturing her interest in the field, and local organizations for supporting her dream through scholarships.

"My schools had several staff who made me feel special, important, and that I was going to go change the world," Cabiddu said. "If I didn't have those resources from the community, I wouldn't be where I'm at."

One of the most memorable local contributions was a \$1,000 scholarship from the Longbranch Improvement Club. When Cabiddu returned to the KP, she made a point to contact the LIC to report on her success and her new role. Cabiddu said the lesson is simply that "when you invest in our kids here, they will go out to do great things, but they'll also come and pay it back to the community."



"We don't have to take everything on by ourselves." — Gina Cabiddu. Photo: Richard Miller, KP News

Cabiddu enrolled in the Running Start program for her last two years of high school, studying at Olympic College in Bremerton before transferring to UW Tacoma. Pursuing her degree at UWT included training in law, ethics and communication, as well as gaining field experience through internships and job shadowing.

During her education, Cabiddu found herself constantly exposed to new points of view that helped her develop a deeper view of social work.

"At Peninsula High School we were bringing all the middle schools together into one community, and you had to learn about different experiences," she said. "Going to Olympic College, I got exposed to new ways of thinking, new values, and then when I went to Tacoma it was the same thing. Having that exposure helped me to consider different perspectives I never would have otherwise."

Cabiddu graduated from UWT with a bachelor's degree in social work in 2015 and earned her master's in the same field in 2017. As part of her graduate work, Cabiddu spent time working for CPS as an investigator before interning with Jud Morris, who directed the program at CHSW Key Peninsula Family Resource Center. Working with Morris offered her the chance to expand her knowledge of the connections that support social work in a small community.

"I didn't understand the importance of those political relationships, I didn't know

about grant writing," she said. "I didn't understand the importance of going to board meetings or coalitions. We don't have to take everything on by ourselves."

Cabiddu supervises the CHSW KP Family Resource Center after taking over from the retiring Morris in January of 2019. Many of the programs Cabiddu and her family benefited from in her youth are now partners in her work, giving her a unique understanding of their importance.


"My family didn't grow up with a lot of money, so we needed those resources, we needed that support," she said. "I definitely have a chip on my shoulder, after growing up on the Key Peninsula, that our needs need to be recognized. And we do need to be advocated for."

Although social work can be emotionally and physically draining, Cabiddu is careful to set aside time for recovery and relaxation.

"If you're not taking care of yourself, you're going to burn out, and you're not going to be able to do the work," she said. "You're going to lose that compassion, that drive for service."

Cabiddu's own commitment has remained strong, and she continues to draw strength from the daily impact of her work.

"Even on my hardest days, when I just want to throw my hands up, I get to walk away knowing that I and my staff have made a difference in someone's life. Every day I'm fulfilled by the fact that we really do make people's lives better."




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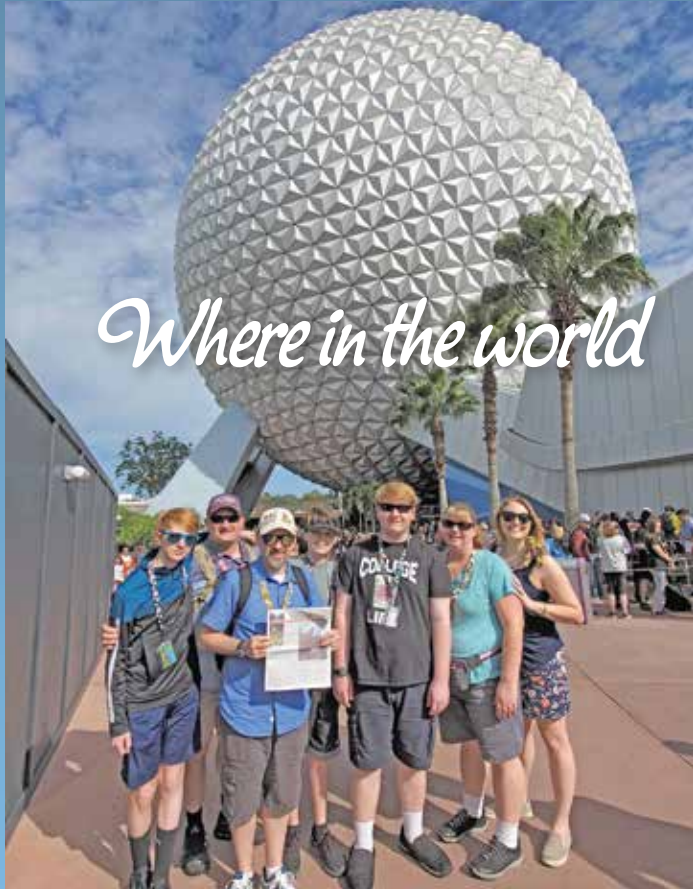
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KEY PENINSULA
BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9 AM
FELLOWSHIP TIME 10:15-10:30
WORSHIP SERVICE 10:30
COFFEE AND TREATS 11:30-12
WE MEET AT KEY PENINSULA CIVIC CENTER IN VAUGHN
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UPPER LEFT Duke waits for his walk. *Photo: Brett Allen* **UPPER CENTER** A KP resident female flicker. *Photo: Ed Johnson, KP News* **UPPER LEFT** A gull chases a falling star. *Photo: Ed Johnson, KP News* **CENTER LEFT** Perennial hellebore's rose-like flowers bloom early in the winter garden. *Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News* **CENTER** Douglas fir hosts the iconic bald eagle. *Photo: Ed Johnson, KP News* **ABOVE** Forest Turkey Tails (*Trametes versicolor*) and oyster mushrooms (*pleurotus ostreatus*) spotted along a woody path. *Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News* **LEFT** A pair of common mergansers. *Photo: Ed Johnson, KP News*