



KEY PENINSULA NEWS

The voice of the Key Peninsula



Non-Profit Org. U.S.
Postage Paid Vaughn,
WA 98394 Permit No. 2
BOX HOLDER

'Celebrating the
Holidays' special
section, Inside

www.keypennews.com

Vol. 34 Issue 12 • Circulation 8,600

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Key Pen's 'low' crime rates: Statistics don't tell the whole story

By Irene Torres, KP News

Crime statistics for the Key Peninsula on file with the Pierce County Sheriff's department are low compared to the rest of the county. One factor that seems to keep the statistics low is the work of neighborhoods collaborating with agen-

cies like Safe Streets, Neighborhood Watch, the Sheriff's, and Citizens Against Crime (CAC).

To help neighborhoods take the necessary steps to protect their properties, the Pierce County Sheriff's office has established a program called Neighborhood Action Teams (NAT). No less than 11 KP

teams have been formed, including Key Peninsula, Bond Beach, Crescent Beach, Horseshoe Lake, Key Peninsula Lutheran Church, Lake Holiday, Palmer Lake, Lake of the Woods, Morningside, Sunshine Beach, and Taylor Bay.

(See CRIME, Page 18)

KPMS launches last year of NASA program

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

The Key Peninsula Middle School entered its last year as part of the NASA Explorer program with a variety of exciting opportunities for both students and staff. Several teams throughout the year will participate in activities ranging from teacher leadership conferences to flying in a low-gravity aircraft with a student-designed experiment.

KPMS became the first NASA Explorer school in Washington state, thanks to the innovation of science

For more NASA
Assembly photos, visit
our Website at
www.keypennews.com.

(See NASA, Page 26)



KPMS
students greet
the VIP guests
arriving for the
assembly.

Photo by
Mindi LaRose

Wrecking yard site has high contamination

By William C. Dietz, KP News

According to a letter from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, addressed to the couple who own the land on which Horseshoe Lake Auto Wrecking is located, "The site's hazard ranking... has been determined to be a 1. The ranking scale ranges from 1 to 5, with 1 representing the highest relative risk and 5 the lowest relative risk."

A site assessment conducted in April 2002 turned up significant amounts of

benzene and cadmium. Benzene is a natural constituent of crude oil, but is usually synthesized from other compounds present in petroleum, and was once used to increase octane ratings and reduce knocking. Two-thirds of cadmium, an impurity found in zinc, is used to make batteries. Both substances are classified as carcinogens, which is why the site has been targeted by the county and the state.

When asked about the status of the site, Rebecca Lawson, Southwest Region

manager for the Department of Ecology's Toxic Cleanup Program said, "I don't think we've taken any action on that... Unfortunately, we have highly ranked sites that have been on the list for years, and we don't have the resources to work on them as quickly as we want to."

Lawson explained that while she was recently allowed to hire three new staff people, it was with the understanding that they would work on sites within half

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Children's Home Society looking to expand

By Lori Losee, KP News

A plan is in the works to expand Children's Home Society/Key Peninsula Family Resource Center (KPFRC), along with the Key Peninsula Civic Center, and it is in the county's hands to approve the project.

The project is estimated to cost \$1 million.

KPFRC Director Jud Morris and Key Peninsula Civic Center President Phil Bauer are spearheading the project, which calls for the expansion of the KPFRC office, nearly doubling the size of the current office space.

When Morris came on board last January, he realized something needed to be done to the KPFRC office to accommodate staff and the work done by their nonprofit organization.

"Within two months on the job, we increased the staff by one and came to the realization that to better serve the community we need more office space," Morris said.

The next step was to invite members of the Civic Center board to the KPFRC office and give them a tour.

"I think it became clear to all of us that our space was not adequate for what we are doing and what we plan for the future," he said.

Morris said the organization is the flagship of the Civic Center, and the board has made it clear that KPFRC is vital to the community and to the Civic Center.

"(KPFRC) is one of our more valuable KP nonprofits because it helps families and children at risk," Bauer said. "We want to continue to support them."

The first step in the expansion process is adding another conference room at KPFRC, which will be completed in January.

"The great thing is that this decision for expansion was mutually arrived at and both parties realized that our current location was not adequate," Morris said. "This is going to be a partnership between KPFRC and the Civic Center. It is just critical that this happens."

Currently, a draftsman hired by the Civic Center is working on a preliminary design of the expansion. Input for the design came from the KPFRC staff. Bauer said he expects to bring the proposed design to the county next month. If the design is not approved, he said the board would look into building a whole new facility for Children's

Home Society.

"We don't want to lose them," he said. Not only would the KP Family Resource Center benefit from the expansion, but also it will bring about more rooms for the Civic Center for rentals and provide space for a potential location for the Boys and Girls Club.

Morris said he and Bauer are in the process of talking with government entities and local politicians about funding for the project or bundling up funding in a capital campaign. Both agree that the project, if approved by the county, would take between two to three years to complete.

"I am not worried how long this project takes as long as it gets done, and we are proud of the final product that will benefit the community that we serve," Morris said.



Photo by Mindi LaRose

Crews mop up PHS.

Storm impact minimal on KP

Peninsula High School was closed for a day in November due to flooding that followed a storm. One teacher, who has worked at the school for nine years, said he hasn't seen flooding of this magnitude at the school before. The auditorium, the main office and the main hallways were affected the most by water damage.

Around the Key Peninsula, residents in various neighborhoods reported flooding on roads as well as some damaged homes. Fire District 16 responded to several incidents of downed trees. Some water-related problem was also reported at Key Peninsula Middle School in at least one classroom, though school continued in session.

Linda Goheen, supervisor at the Pierce County Public Works' Purdy maintenance station, said in mid-November the problems caused by the storms were not as severe as last year, when several roads were damaged and one, Olson Road, was closed for several months. Crews were around the peninsula with heavy equipment clearing out plugged ditches and culverts and cleaning tree debris. Goheen said one small slide, on Herron Road, was picked up the same night when it happened, and a few "water over roadway" signs were removed the next day following one of the storms.



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Unsolicited submissions including
press releases: 17th of each month
www.keypennews.com

Key Peninsula News is published monthly by the Key Peninsula Civic Center Association at the Key Peninsula Civic Center in Vaughn, Washington. Copyright 2006 with all rights reserved. Reproduction of editorial or graphic contents in any manner without permission is prohibited. Annual subscriptions (12 issues) are available for \$20.00 and are mailed first class. Copies are mailed presort standard to residents and post office box holders of the Key Peninsula. Single copies are available at the newspaper office in the basement of the Civic Center annex and at various distribution points located on the Key Peninsula. Approximately 18,000 people live in the distribution area.

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KP watershed plan moves to council for adoption

By Irene Torres, KP News

The Key Peninsula-Islands Basin Plan for surface water management has received a "do pass" recommendation from the Pierce County Council's Economic and Infrastructure Development Committee in November. The hearing day before the full council was set for Dec. 12, at which time an ordinance amending Chapter 19D.60 of the Pierce County Code, "Storm Drainage and Surface Water Management Plan," and the adopting of the "Key Peninsula - Islands Basin Plan" would be considered.

Once the county adopts the plan, the adopted version will be available online and at local libraries. The link to the Water Programs Basin Plan Website, www.piercecountywa.org/kibasin, contains all the details of the program, displays a map of watersheds located on the Key Peninsula and Herron Island, and explains the purpose and goals. It also outlines recommended capital improvement projects and program

The Key Peninsula-Islands Basin Plan's goals: Reduce flood hazards, improve fish and wildlife habitat, improve water quality, coordinated and responsible use of public resources, and influence location and methods for new development. For details, contact Barbara Ann Smolko, Pierce County Water Programs, at 798-6156 or visit www.piercecountywa.org/kibasin.

actions totaling more than \$35 million over a 10-year period, and a strategy for their implementation in order of priority.

Barbara Ann Smolko, of Pierce County Water Programs, said in an email to the KP News, "It's always exciting to move beyond the planning phase and into implementation. Once the plan is adopted, Water Programs will be able to begin work on the recommendations included within the plan."

Smolko added that the "do pass" recommendation from the EID Committee is "the biggest hurdle for these basin plans."

Public workshop to look at commercial design standards

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

There may not be a clear consensus among the Key Peninsula Community Planning Board members whether the Key Peninsula needs design standards for new commercial buildings—but they are definitely interested in hearing the options. That was the conclusion at which the board arrived at the last meeting, which means the county will pay an architect firm to facilitate a six-hour "design charette" meeting to get public input.

Two representatives from the Tacoma-based firm, BCRA, were present at the Nov. 15 meeting to give some preliminary ideas on how an area can become more attractive to shoppers and tourists without requiring major changes or "going to the extreme."

"Growth will occur, and it will occur whether you plan for it or not... You can plan for it and provide design criteria," said Gareth Roe, planning director for BCRA, whose projects include Gig Harbor's YMCA and the new MultiCare medical facility.

As part of the project, BCRA will create an "existing and desired conditions" report outlining existing conditions at the Key Peninsula's seven commercial "centers," along with design alternatives including a feasibility analysis showing associated implementation costs. The "desired conditions" report will be based on the input received during the design charette.

Several business owners in the audience as well as some board members expressed concerns about creating

requirements that would be cost-prohibitive for small businesses.

Lynn Marshall of Blondie's restaurant expressed a common sentiment, saying modest enhancements such as signage and landscaping should be done to improve a commercial area such as Key Center, where Blondie's is located. "This is not Bellevue, it's Key Center," he said. "We need to do something that's attainable financially... without becoming a Bellevue."

BCRA Principal Stewart Young said the requirements do not have to be overly restrictive in order to help create a sense of place and an identity.

"Sprawl, or uncontrolled growth, is expensive," he said. "Individual owners will end up paying for it in the long run."

Mike Krueger, a Pierce County planner who has been overseeing the community planning process, said grants could be sought for community enhancements, especially once a community plan shows desired improvements. Responding to several concerns regarding parking and restrooms in Key Center, he also suggested that the planning board identify a property for county acquisition where such facilities could be provided in the future.

The design charette will take place on Dec. 9, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Key Peninsula Civic Center in Vaughn, with lunch provided. The planning board will hold its regular session on Dec. 6 at 7 at the Key Center Library, at which time the sign code draft language will be discussed.



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EDITORIAL

A tale of two opinions

The geoduck farming articles have brought in extensive feedback from our readers, which confirms the topic is important to the local community.

It's interesting, however, to receive contradicting comments based on the same reports. When one of the articles in the series showed the geoduck farming industry's view about this aquaculture, some of the responses we received from the anti-geoduck-farming groups said the information was faulty and should be retracted — and suggested we have fallen prey to the industry's "PR machine." Industry sources, on the other hand, said the article was well-done and balanced.

This past month, the tables have turned. Following an article that focused on environmental concerns, we received multiple replies from the environmental groups (some are published in Letters) saying the story was well-researched and well-done — while an industry source said we owed our readers an apology and that the article was biased. There is clearly no consensus on the subject. Not enough is known about the long-term impacts of geoduck farming, a fact industry representatives have acknowledged in interviews. Elected officials, however, have apparently received enough concerns to take note and look into the issue. The discussion is only beginning.

We invite your feedback, from either side of the fence.

Community plan: Good or bad?

By Rick Sorrels, Special to the KP News

You may either praise or curse the Key Peninsula Community Plan, depending upon your particular circumstances.

The Community Plan is being developed by 15 citizens appointed to the Key Peninsula Community Planning Board. They have met at least twice each month since August 2004. In early February 2007, the board will present its proposed plan to the Pierce County Council for its review/changes/approval. The approved plan will establish the parameters with which all future zoning and development ordinances for the Key Peninsula must comply. It will be a very important document, affecting for a long time to come, our very lives, homes, property, environment, transportation, and commercial development.

The board has matured over the past two years. It started with a group of individuals unconcerned with anything outside of their own individual interests, and developed into a team with concerns for Key Peninsula residents as a whole. Praise needs to be given for their handling of complex topics like environmental concerns, open space, parks, economic development, cottage industry, tourism, rural characteristics, parks, trails, roads, bus service, commercial activities, zoning etc.

Problems still remain, however, and may return to haunt us. Some samples follow:



Nothing is free. The county will not fund these changes. Expect higher taxes for implementation, heavy requirements placed on developers, and the county's continued cavalier attitude of "taking" private property without paying compensation.

The language that denied property owners near Bay Lake any ability to develop or use their land has been removed from the current draft. The board agreed to remove the language after a vehement protest from Bay Lake landowners. Monitoring is needed to ensure follow through.

Most of the language that mandates that two-thirds of every parcel of land be maintained in its natural state (never to be developed or used) no longer appears in the latest draft, but some references still remain, and the recently released Basin Plan declares the existence of this extreme restriction in the plan. Again, monitoring is needed to ensure the elimination of these oppressive restrictions.

Even small details like fence standards can cause great consternation. Maximum fence height of 42 inches with bottom wire at least 16 inches above ground may

'Free lunch'

Pierce County is providing a free lunch. All you need do is attend a public forum on Saturday, Dec. 9, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Key Peninsula Civic Center in Vaughn. The Pierce County Planning Department hired an architect to look at alternative ideas for development and design standards applicable to all future commercial development on the Key Peninsula. Come help determine the future face of our community.

be great for allowing wildlife movement, but does nothing to confine dogs, chickens, children, or leaping horses. These restrictions have also been removed from the draft plan.

The board members are strangers to you. They are unaware of individual citizens' particular needs or concerns. Your particular plans and even livelihood might be in jeopardy. Provisions in the plan may seriously affect you and your property. Now is the time, before it's too late, for you to step forward to ensure that your interests are protected.

Meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 7 p.m. at the Key Center Library. Dec. 6 will be the only meeting in December. The last topics to be discussed are sign codes and commercial standards. The entire plan will be reviewed before it's sent to the County Council for approval. Public comments are welcome.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Destroying historic Wauna building a mistake

My dad, Robert R. White, was the grandson of Walter E. White, the man who built and owned the old building at the Purdy Spit. I have to say, what is this world coming to when we lose the pride of our history and where we came from? I always was full of pride when I would tell people my family was one of the first to settle over here. That my great grandma named Wauna and that the old building on the waterfront was their place of business. I also made sure my children knew the story so they too

could share it with pride.

Now where there was once pride and history is nothing but emptiness. Making room for progress is what they say, I say nothing but greed, ignorance, and destruction is the cause of all the evil in this world. I feel as if my children and grandchildren have been robbed of something very special. All because of the intruders that have descended into the Key Peninsula claiming it as their own.

My family may not be rich with endless mounds of cash but at one time we were very rich in history and heritage. Now we are even losing that. Something could have been done to save that building or at least replace it with a replica. Turn the building into a museum/coffee and snack bar for all the beach goers. It would pay for itself and the upkeep, not to mention teach the younger genera-

tions to learn how important our history is and how the hardships of the past were not only overcome but thrived and grew to all the lives around here. The only lesson I see being taught now is that nothing or no one matters as long as the individuals get what they want. Only people with money have any say in things and no matter how tricky you have to be to get it done it's OK as long as you don't get caught.

So I guess what I really wanted to say is thanks, thanks a lot for stealing something very important from all my family. I'm just glad my dad isn't alive to see it because it would have broken his heart! Really, is this all the thanks my relatives get for donating the beach to the public all those years ago? To be bulldozed away and forgotten. Ask yourself, is this really the right thing to do? Or are the people around here too far

gone to take the time and a little bit of out of the pocket expense to say thank you the proper way?

*Kristi L. Brown
Wauna*

Geoduck discussions one-sided

For months now I have been observing messages declaring war on the potential deterioration of area beaches and habitat, specifically our geoduck controversy. It is a vehicle apparently out of control with tension swelling. Regardless of position, equality in the pursuit of factual awareness need prevail in this apparently one-sided offensive. Statements such as "...save Penrose State Park" and "...what

(See LETTERS, Page 5)

(From **LETTERS**, Page 4)

happens when harvesters implode the beaches” are biased and unsubstantiated comments. In the effort of fair-play, allow us (the reader) equivalent information, both pros and cons. It is more than difficult to evaluate information from this handicap position.

I was curious about the motivational factors that spawn geoduck farms. It is my understanding that scores of these potential farmers are motivated economically to cover high tax assessments on their waterfront property, land that has been with their family for generations and without severe tax implications until recently. These farms serve as a deterrent or counter to meet these tax challenges, especially for those currently retired or those with fixed income.

The vast majority of these landowners are eco-sensitive, value entrenched families; many long standing in Key Peninsula history. Their heritage and linear extension exhibits pride and a keen awareness to the natural beauty these surrounding areas have offered for generations.

It is evident another perspective waits to be shared as opportunity for fair debate remains. There is extensive proof authenticating farm shellfish benefits, yet we receive a majority of one-sided credentials. As affirmed in the “People for Puget Sound” dated Oct. 26, 2006, “Just as fiscal honesty demands an accountant to record fiscal debts as well as credits, intellectual honesty demands that evaluation of environmental policies consider both sides of the ledger.”

Our area residents deserve opportunity of intellectual selection combined with adequate rebuttal of these published accounts.

*Glen Ehrhardt
Longbranch*

Geoduck article showed bias

I’m writing regarding the November geoduck farming article. According to KPN Contributor’s Guidelines, “stories should not contain any unverified or biased information.”

Paragraph 1 – “...a present-day Gold Rush.” Geoduck farmers invested millions of dollars and a decade of time and only now are making a profit.

Paragraphs 2 & 3 – “monoculture planting” and “monoculture farms.” Monoculture by all standards is a loaded word. In the context used it’s not even accurate. There are more species that

inhabit a geoduck bed then a bare beach. Any biologist familiar with geoduck farming will verify this.

Paragraph 3 – “What permanent damage...” is done as “harvesters implode the beach...” releasing “potentially harmful organisms.” Geoducks “expelling waste,” what living creature doesn’t do that?

Paragraph 4 – “...water quality has deteriorated...” and “industrial wasteland.” Even “World War III” can occur from shellfish aquaculture. Why didn’t the reporter get quotes from sources at the Oct. 4 Rosedale meeting?

Paragraph 5 – Quoting Laura Hendricks, “we didn’t see anything move anywhere...” and “industrial district.” Where’s the balance? The balance presented is a DNR official “who admitted he has never visited” Totten and who is quoted as saying Totten is in “bad shape; it might go eutrophic...” and that “there is no science.”

Paragraph 6 – KPN has had “no reply to date” while questions “remain unanswered” and “requested copy is... still outstanding.” A conspiracy? All attributed to unnamed KP News “interviews and audience participants.”

Paragraph 7 – Perhaps the worst example of journalism, an indirect personal attack. In a paragraph where industry practices and the “for profit” motive are raised in conjunction with Taylor Shellfish Farms, we see in the very next sentence a DNR spokesperson saying they’re “taking a real close look at who we’re doing business with. There are real slobes in the industry.” Is the reader supposed to believe that the Taylors are crooks?

Paragraph 8 – Laura Hendricks, someone on record as preferring polluted waters to shellfish farming, tells the reader what Bill Taylor said.

Paragraph 10 – Reads like a call-to-arms especially with the final editorializing sentence, from another written source. Why not interview someone?

There are factual errors, too.

First Sentence – “...harvested by commercial divers since before statehood...” Washington became a state in 1889. Commercial geoduck diving began in 1970.

Paragraph 1 – “when commercial shellfish growers discovered lucrative markets for geoduck in Asia.” Growers have known about lucrative markets in Asia for 25 years, but only in the last decade came up with a way to farm geoduck.

Paragraph 3 – “...a minimum concentration of 90,000 geoducks...” The impli-

cation is that 90,000 animals grow on the beach. Nowhere does survivability factor in.

Paragraph 4 – An unnamed Totten resident says, “World War III can occur without science to provide carrying capacity (for nutrient waste and flushing)...” Two scientific concepts intermixed that don’t make any sense.

Paragraph 7 – Pacific Shellfish Institute is not owned by Taylor Shellfish. It’s a nonprofit that gets funding from government grants.

*Jim Gibbons, president of Seattle Shellfish
Olympica*

Research efforts appreciated

Thank you for Chris Fitzgerald’s November article that reflected my views on the frightening, lurking commercialization of Key Peninsula beaches. I appreciate the effort that this newspaper is making to research and explore all views on this controversial topic. I learned quite by accident this summer that the characteristics of the beach I frequently walk may be forever changed by the Department of Natural Resources and the shellfish companies in their race to potentially make profit by intensive planting of non-native geoducks. The battle lines are drawn with concerned citizens firmly on the side of caution. I encourage everyone who cares about the Sound to get informed about this pending threat. There is lots of information out there.

*Charlotte Smothers
Key Peninsula*

Geoduck articles well done

I just want to congratulate you and your staff for turning this paper into a very informative and vital part of the Key Peninsula. I used to wait for the Gig Harbor paper to come out to find out what is going on but now I can hardly wait for your paper.

In addition, I would particularly like to congratulate Chris Fitzgerald for her articles concerning the geoduck controversy. I am a member of a group who is deeply concerned with the commercialization of tideland geoduck farming. I think that Chris has done an excellent job on her research and understands the local concerns very well. Keep up the great job... all of you.

*Bev Smith
Lakebay*

Fire-based ambulance service continues

By Chuck West, Special to KP News

The ambulance service that began on the Key Peninsula in the 1960s with the basic “load and go” techniques has transformed into today’s full service of advanced care delivered by your Fire Department paramedics.

With the recent passage of the EMS lid lift levy, some desperately needed new paramedics will be added to our rosters in 2007 in an effort to keep up with the increasing demands of a growing community. This additional staff will not give us the two full-time, staffed paramedic units that we are seeking but will bring us much closer to that goal.

With the current demand for medical aid services, we call upon outside agencies such as Gig Harbor and Kitsap County medics for assistance several times each month with hospital transports for our citizens.

With the successful passage of the EMS levy, the citizens of the Key Peninsula will continue to benefit from the promises we made when the full 50-cent levy first passed in 1999. This allows us to cover the remaining balance from ambulance bills issued by our district to our residents that exceed the insurance benefits.

Let me say that again, our customers, the residents of the Key Peninsula, need to only sign a statement provided with their billing statement to have the balance remaining after the insurance payment covered by the EMS levy program for fire department ambulance transports.

That is a promise we made to you, and we will strive to keep that promise as long as funding allows.

Unfortunately, if we are not the ones providing the service, those rules change. Currently we are working with the outside agencies to minimize the cost to you in any way we can. Your continued support of the fire department is appreciated. Thank you.

Chuck West is a Fire District 16 division chief and a Key Pen resident.

Bridge moves toward completion, tolls discussed

By Lori Losee, KP News

The nine-member, governor-appointed Citizens Advisory Committee is in its final stages of making recommendations for the tolls and/or discounts for the second Tacoma Narrows Bridge, with a final decision to be unveiled to commuters in the spring.

The CAC met in October and will meet again on Dec. 6 to work on recommendations that will be forwarded to the state transportation commission, which will make the final toll schedule, according to WSDOT spokesperson Janet Matkin.

"Right now, the CAC is looking at toll rates and possible discounts for commuters using the 'Good To Go' option," she said.

The "Good To Go" electronic toll collection program gives commuters the option to pay tolls on the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge without stopping.

A total of six toll booths will be managed by toll collectors, including three express lanes, which will utilize "electronic" toll collectors mounted over the highway lanes to read the "Good To Go" sticker on vehicle windshields and debit the user's account each time.

"The CAC is working on fulfilling its obligations to pay for the bridge while



Photo by Mindi LaRose

A barge delivers the bridge decks earlier this summer.

addressing the community's needs," Matkin said. "They just need to find the right mixture. That is why they are looking at various scenarios and then will evaluate what makes the most sense."

Matkin said she expects the CAC's recommendations be made to the transportation commission after the first of the year, and then a final decision on the toll schedule to be finalized in the spring after

Public comments welcome

The Citizens Advisory Committee is accepting public comments about the toll schedule for the second Tacoma Narrows Bridge. To have your comments be heard, visit www.tacoma-narrowsbridge.com.

a public hearing.

According to Claudia Cornish, WSDOT media relations manager, the WSDOT toll projections to pay back the bonds for the construction of the bridge begin at \$3, with an increase of \$1 each year for three to four years and peaking at \$6.

"This is just a projection by the WSDOT," Cornish said. "It is fully up to the transportation commission for a final price and incentives."

Bridge update

Cornish said the project was 83.29 percent complete as of the end of October. By the end of November, all 46 bridge decks would have arrived to the construction site. The last 15, which were en route from South Korea, were expected to arrive shortly after Thanksgiving. The remainder of the lifting of bridge decks is expected in

December.

The next step is permanent bolting and welding of the bridge decks, which are currently temporarily suspended.

Cornish added that due to several powerful storms and high winds, work on the bridge decks was suspended several times.

"I don't know if that will cause any delays in the opening," she said.

The second Tacoma Narrows Bridge was supposed to open in April 2007, but the opening has been pushed back to early July 2007.

Cornish said the three-month delay was due to corroded cable wire. "We had to reject one-third of the wire we ordered from the South Korean wire company," she said.

Cornish said the reason for such a long delay in ordering new cable wire is that it is very specialized wire that only a few companies worldwide fabricate. Three new companies in South Korea, China and the United Kingdom fabricated the new cable wire.

After the completion of the second suspension bridge, the first bridge that was built in 1950 will undergo an 11-month renovation. The entire project will be completed by 2008.

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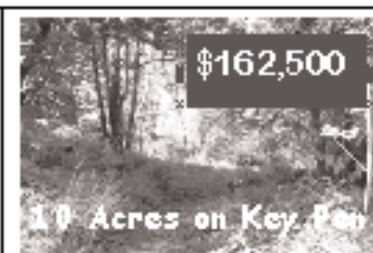
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	128 Homes	79 Homes	653 for Sale
Highest	\$3,300,000	\$1,990,000	\$3,500,000
Lowest	\$89,000	\$114,950	\$86,500
Median	\$358,250	\$330,000	\$484,000



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Design work begins for new skateboard park

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

On a stormy night in mid-November, two Peninsula High School students met with Chuck West and Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District Director Scott Gallacher at the Key Center fire station to begin laying out a skateboard park design. With \$100,000 in funding secured from the county through Councilman Terry Lee's office, and \$14,000 raised by West and peninsula youth through fund-raisers held over many months, coupled with approval from the parks board, the project is a "go."

Making use of what is now a multi-purpose (non-netted) tennis court at Volunteer Park, the new facility will take advantage of existing asphalt and fencing. The above-ground park design the workshop participants envision will accommodate both beginners and medium level skaters. Using composite materials and steel for the skating structures, West hopes there will be funding enough to also provide a cover for inclement-weather use.

Jake Marrero and Andrew Fallon, the

"We want input from everybody. The skaters need to have a say in the design of the park."

-Chuck West

two students present at the meeting, said a park of this size can handle 20 to 30 skaters at a time. They thought there were easily 200 skaters on the Key Peninsula. West said all skaters who are interested in joining in these planning sessions are welcome to attend future meetings. A second workshop is planned after the holidays, sometime in January.

"We want input from everybody," West said. "The skaters need to have a say in the design of the park." He feels strongly that if the people who will use the park are not involved, it will be just another project that adults (non-skaters) planned. Giving the kids a voice in design of the skate park gives them ownership in it — and a respon-

sibility for helping maintain it, West believes.

That attitude of inclusion resonated with Fallon. He offered to provide scale models through his architectural design class at PHS. Marrero looked carefully at the proposed design, and said it would be great for skaters not to have to go to Gig Harbor to practice their sport. When asked if the skaters were part of a group or club, he said, "We're just kids raising money so we can have somewhere to skate."

Gallacher and West hope the new park will be "open for business" by mid-2007. They and Kurt Self, new president of the Key Peninsula Little League, are negotiating a move of batting cages from the tennis court to a grassy area now being prepared. The remaining tennis court will remain for the enjoyment of tennis buffs.

West said he still hopes to build a skate park at the 360-acre parcel that is in the process of being acquired by the KPMPD, but since the development of that park is still years away, he would like to get the smaller skate park off the ground now.

League of Women Voters focused on SR-302

The discussion topic at the next Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor League of Women Voters Unit meeting will be the group's transportation study of traffic flow and congestion on State Road 302. The unit will begin this new local study by reviewing present traffic conditions and will look at past studies of this vital link done by the state Department of Transportation. Staff members from the Pierce County Planning Department and the state Department of Transportation have been invited to brief the unit on their plans. The unit's plans for carrying out this new study of the issue of traffic congestion on SR-302 and land access on and off the Gig Harbor and Key Peninsulas will be discussed. The League welcomes both women and men interested in participating in the Gig Harbor — Key Pen Unit to join the topic discussion.

The meeting will be held on Dec. 14, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Gig Harbor Visitor and Volunteer Center, 3125 Judson St., Gig Harbor (across Judson from the Post Office). For information on the meeting call Liz Lathrop at 851-2210 or Mary Mazur at 884-1061.

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November election results for local races



The Democrats came out on top during this year's general election on Nov. 7, both in state races and nationwide, and that proved true in Pierce County. Six of the proposed nine county charter amendments were approved by voters in November.

Pierce County results for 26th district State Senate

Derek Kilmer (D)	28,074	60%
Jim Hines (R)	18,734	40%

State House, Position 1

Patricia Lantz (D)	26,368	56.7%
Beckie Krantz (R)	20,121	43.3%

State House, Position 2

Larry Seaquist (D)	25,312	55%
Ron Boehme (R)	20,705	45%

County Charter amendments

No. 1, Election of sheriff

Yes	130,863	65.76%
No	68,137	34.24%

No. 2, Performance audits

Yes	135,824	69.44%
No	59,772	30.56%

No. 3, Instant runoff voting

Yes	101,407	52.95%
No	90,106	47.05%

No. 4, Initiatives

Yes	75,926	39.32%
No	118,738	60.68%

No. 5, Referendums

Yes	63,203	32.39%
No	131,904	67.61%



Photo by Kristen Pierce

Voters fill the polling station at the Key Center fire station on the evening of Election Day.

No. 6, Presentation of annual budget

Yes	122,503	64.11%
No	68,578	35.89%

No. 8, Balance of power

Yes	101,146	53.24%
No	88,826	46.76%

No. 7, Executive appointments

Yes	97,708	52.76%
No	87,471	47.24%

No. 9, Eminent domain

Yes	137,832	70.11%
No	58,773	29.89%

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Opposition to geoduck applications grows

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

Editor's note: This is an installment in a series of articles about geoduck farming on the Key Peninsula. To read the entire series, visit www.keypennews.com.

Local opposition resulting from two unrelated aquaculture events in 2006 has become a multitiered effort to force an industry, and state and county governments supporting it, to curtail new geoduck farms until objective scientifically-applied environmental standards can be applied.

In midsummer, the Mayo Cove Shoreline Association was formed to stop a permit Taylor Shellfish Farms had applied for on behalf of the Souers' family on their private beach in Mayo Cove. That application is still pending. About this same time, Save Our Shoreline! was formed to oppose what they see as nontraditional geoduck farming practices as well as new farms. Save Our Shoreline! is primarily concerned with the shoreline environments of the Key Peninsula, according to President Laurie Brauneis. Her group and Tacoma Audubon are actively following pending permits. At a Pierce County hearing examiner's request, they met with Taylor Shellfish Farms and negotiated an agreement acceptable to all three resolving differences of debris, equipment and visual impact issues on two geoduck applications in the Key Pen area.

Now closed, those permits, shellfish shoreline permit Nos. SD53-05 and SE 55-06, also provide a concession for eagle fledglings. Taylor Farms will remove large nets and replace them with individual nets and rubber bands over tubes during fledgling season (May through August) when

they or the Department of Natural Resources observes juvenile eagles in the area, according to a TSF letter.

Also in late spring, Henderson Bay waterfront owner Laura Hendricks was confronted by several men on her private beach. They told her to leave, that she was interfering with preparations for a new geoduck operation on their leased land. The tidelands belong to Hendricks, and after a title company confirmed her deed, that issue was resolved, but not before she learned enough about the shellfish industry to become alarmed. Hendricks and other concerned citizens formed Henderson Bay Shoreline Association to oppose large-scale, nontraditional monoculture aquaculture without the benefit of science. They oppose the compromise agreement between Save Our Shorelines, Tacoma Audubon, and Taylor Shellfish.

In contrast to the other two groups, whose focus seeks to preserve the residential beaches of their immediate areas, Henderson Bay Shoreline Association has joined with other organizations in neighboring counties, long inundated with allegedly destructive nontraditional aquaculture practices. A documented slide show from this coalition was to be broadcast Nov. 27 to federal, state, county and local jurisdictions in all coastal states nationwide, including Alaska and Hawaii, scientific and aquaculture organizations in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and "anywhere else we can find to alert people to (these nontraditional destructive) aquaculture methods," said Hendricks. "This is war." (To view the slideshow, visit www.protectourshoreline.org/slideshow/CommercialShellfish20062.pdf.)

The Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor-Islands Watershed Council met Nov. 18 and noted

the proliferation of "special interest" groups for Puget Sound marine environments and aquaculture (geoducks specifically). Lorin Reinelt, who resides on Vashon Island, is the watershed coordinator for Pierce County Water Programs. He doubted Vashon Island held much interest for shellfish companies. Two days later, the Vashon-Maury Island Community Council introduced a motion to its membership reading: "The Vashon-Maury Island Community Council urges the State of Washington to impose a complete moratorium on the expansion of such (aquaculture) operations along the shorelines and within the nearshore waters of Puget Sound."

Other environmental organizations weigh in according to their county and/or community affiliations or mission statements. A summary of the September People for Puget Sound policy statement on intertidal farming reads: "A Sound-wide, independently prepared, comprehensive scientific study should be carried out... to fill significant information gaps. We support the precautionary principle... erring on the side of protection when information is uncertain or incomplete."

Pacific Shellfish Institute in Olympia appears to be the shellfish industry's "educational outreach" arm. "PSI is a nonprofit organization whose charge is to develop and disseminate scientific and technical information of value to the general public, shellfish farmers, and public officials related to environmental and health safety issues arising from shellfish aquaculture," according to a PSI statement.

Citizens for a Healthy Bay Executive Director Dr. Stan Cummings says, "I think their science is pretty good, but the board will influence the group by determining what questions will be researched. Why do you think there is not one study on the impact of harvesting on habitat? The Pacific Shellfish Institute researches rearing techniques and the most efficient way to do it. The government promotes that just like they promote and subsidize the growing of corn and other farm products."

Cummings notes the administrative board is made up of shellfish executives from Taylor Shellfish, Seattle Shellfish, and Nisbet Oyster Co., according to PSI's Website.

Cummings is leaving Citizens for Healthy Bay, which focuses on Pierce County, to direct the Maritime Center in Port Townsend. He is also on the Port Townsend Marine Advisory Board. After leaving, Cummings will have a broader voice. "I intend to stay involved," he said. "If not on a professional level, then as a volunteer. Once a Shoreline Development Permit is issued for a geoduck farm, it is

virtually impossible to retract. It can be modified but not eliminated. Once geoduck farms are allowed on a shoreline, they will be there forever — hence, it is a lot easier to prevent the problem now than to solve it later."

At a Pierce County Council meeting in Gig Harbor on Nov. 8, initial interim geoduck farm regulations were presented by a Pierce County Planning and Land Services planner. After lengthy audience commentary, and discussion among the council, the regulations were sent back for minor revisions. None of the council members present (three live on saltwater), nor the planner who had participated in writing the regulations, have observed a geoduck operation from planting to harvest.

The state Department of Natural Resources owns thousands of tidebed acres, and derives its income from leasing the natural resources of the state: tidelands, mineral rights, forest land, natural gas, etc. Pierce County still has no regulations governing geoduck aquaculture in place. According to the county attorney, a moratorium on pending/new aquaculture permits is not possible at this time, due to a pending lawsuit over an aquaculture permit. Thousands of dollars have been spent on independent scientific investigation warning of oversaturated monoculture aquaculture crops resulting in marine failure. This information has been given to state agencies and local elected officials.

Undeterred by the public outcry for restraint, the first year of the Department of Natural Resources' plan to lease 25 acres of tidelands per year for 10 years is underway. At least one of those leases is on the Key Peninsula, referred to by DNR land manager Jeff Schreck as "Herron Lake." A Notice of Application dated Nov. 15, referring to a four-acre proposed geoduck aquaculture farm between 213th Avenue Court KPN and Russell Road KPS involves five parcels of land totaling 58.8 land acres and 2,100 linear feet of shoreline, and three landowners operating under the name Case Cove LLC. The application states, "Small geoducks would be planted on the tidelands (of the state-owned property) between the +2 and -3 tidal elevations. (They) would be protected from predators by PVC tubes, planted 3 to 4 to a tube spaced about one foot apart (18,424 tubes and 55,272 to 73,696 geoduck on four acres of tidelands) ...The project is in the Rural 10 zone designation; Natural Shoreline Environment." The Notice from PALS continues with permits/reviews requested: "Shoreline Substantial Development Permit, and environmental review (SEPA)... No other county permits are necessary."

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Fund-raiser benefits domestic violence shelter

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

Gig Harbor-based West Sound Workforce raised \$2,000 for Key Peninsula's IMPact domestic violence shelter, following a "ladies night out" event focused around shopping and networking. Four artisans, including two Key Pen residents, answered the employment agency's call to participate in the November Una Bella Notte, donating between 35 percent to 60 percent of their proceeds to the fund-raiser.

"We were really excited to be approached by West Sound Workforce. They came up with the idea and planned the whole event," said Penny Gazabat, IMPact House executive director. "We were surprised to see the turnout. It was also a great opportunity to get more exposure to the business community—because of our organization having to be low key (due to safety reasons), we don't have this kind of opportunity often."

The event, hosted at the business' Gig Harbor office, started out as an idea to "invite some friends and buy some jewelry," said company President Julie Tappero.

"Then we decided it should be for a good cause," she said. "The domestic violence shelter on the Key Peninsula has been on my mind for a long time; we wanted to do something for them."

Una Bella Notte (One Beautiful Night) was geared for business women, though the men who came were not turned down. Many people made additional cash donations toward the fund-raiser, and the West Sound Workforce staff solicited door prizes and small gifts for the guests.

IMPact staff was on hand to share information about their work and the program.

"I think all women know someone who's been affected by domestic violence. I thought it was great when the shelter opened in the area," Tappero said. "It gave us all a chance to be educated about what (domestic violence) means in the workplace."

The shelter is in its fourth year of operation at an undisclosed location on the Key Peninsula. It was funded through a three-year grant for seed money from the Geneva Foundation as well as community donations. Gazabat is the only paid support staff, with volunteers coordinating a variety of jobs ranging from yard maintenance to a clothing closet program.

The seven-bed capacity shelter started out under the auspices of IMPact, an interdenominational-based group that also serves meals to residents in need. Since then, the safe house has continued to be faith-based but has become independent from church affiliation, which is the reason it may be changing its name to better reflect its identity, Gazabat said.

The nonprofit organization is currently applying for grants to fund its operations, including paying for more support staff. The group is actively searching for a new facility that could accommodate as many as 19 beds, within the limits of the city of Gig Harbor is the desired location. Gazabat said being in Gig Harbor would allow for faster police response and better security, as well as allow the shelter to serve Key Peninsula women. Currently, due to safety concerns, Key Pen victims of domestic violence are not housed at IMPact.

"We hope to partner with the city, or an individual who wants to donate property, or a portion of their property for a



Wauna's Rebecca Gilbert (left) of "Third Wish Jewelry" participated in the fund-raiser, selling her handmade jewelry that is mostly made from natural stones and fresh-water pearls. Key Pen resident Morgan Sobeck also participated, selling her pottery.

Photo by Rodika Tollefson

tax break," Gazabat said.

In addition to being able to hire a part-time advocate and a donations coordinator, Gazabat hopes the organization can restart its program at the Women's Correctional Center in Purdy.

The program, which was put on hold due to funding shortage, educates inmates on issues of domestic violence.

For more information about IMPact Safe House, visit www.impactkp.org or call 884-5086.

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Horseshoe Lake Estates reinvents itself

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

Jesse White, president of the Horseshoe Lake Estates Homeowners' Association, says he will remain at that post until the neighborhood's suspected drug houses "are all gone." He is working hard to attract builders to the 125-lot subdivision, as derelict properties are removed. This has resulted in 10 new stick-built homes, five since January, with more to follow, and appreciation of property values for the 105 property owners (20 residences occupy double lots).

Most recently, a drug house in the 9200 block of 147th Street Court has finally been demolished, after two years of effort in documenting illegal activity.

The proof required to begin a formal investigation of activities at the house was time-consuming and meticulous, White said. Over several months, residents recorded more than 60 license plate numbers of "visitors" to the house who stayed but a few minutes, often without ever turning the car off. The house had no electricity, was running on a generator

for lights; water had also been shut off. Residents could smell meth "cooking" from the street, and wondered why the occupants weren't being busted, according to White.

They learned the sheriff had to actually see the activity occurring — and after approximately 24 months of neighborhood observation and documentation of dates, times and activity, a raid paid off. The house was eventually foreclosed while its owner was in jail, and auctioned on the courthouse steps, where it had no takers. (Any new owner would be required to pay for the toxic cleanup of the site.) Eventually it was sold to a company that cleaned and sold it, according to White, to John Follese of Twin Towers Construction who has built several homes in Horseshoe Lake Estates.

Concerned about the number of nonowner-occupied residences in the subdivision, in May 2005, the association voted to exclude long-term rentals (an allowance was made for currently rented properties and short-term nonowner occupancy following the death of an



After two years of effort, this Horseshoe Lake drug house was finally demolished and the site cleaned.

Photo courtesy
Jesse White

owner). The new covenant says, in part, "This land use restriction... limit(s) and ultimately prevent(s) the renting of lots... which the owners declare has led to frequent lot use in numerous ways by renters which is detrimental to land values and quiet enjoyment of all lots..." Eighty-five percent of the subdivision's land-owners signed the petition, including several off-site landlords. Seventeen residences are currently being used as rentals, and are "grandfathered in" until those renters vacate.

Rationale behind the change is simple, and potentially useful to other similar communities, White said. Recently, a member of Taylor Bay Estates called for a copy of the new covenant. According to White, some current landlords have inherited their property. "They have nothing in it," he says. "If they don't keep them up, the quality of renter goes down." He contends that if the owner lives next door, residents can police themselves through the use of a neighborhood-based "community watch" security system.

Interestingly, one Horseshoe Lake Estate nonoccupant owner who signed the covenant change decided to rent out

his property after the covenant was approved. That owner, living in the Jackson Lake area, has allowed the residence to deteriorate, according to White. Attempts to enforce the new rules have failed. The community association now believes it has no choice but to file a noncompliance suit.

That may prove to be difficult; both ABC Legal Messengers and the Pierce County Sheriff's Department have said they could not serve the owner papers because of dogs patrolling his fenced property. Registered letters of notice have been sent twice, and twice returned to sender, unsigned.

Still, White, his wife, Charlene, and their neighbors are determined to make these new rules "the law" in the subdivision, and to make it clear to everyone that drug activity is no longer tolerated.

"We drive around two or three times daily — making our rounds," Charlene White said. "We all want the neighborhood cleaned up."

With an 85 percent consensus on the covenant shift to eventual exclusively owner-occupied residences, it seems almost the entire development is in agreement.

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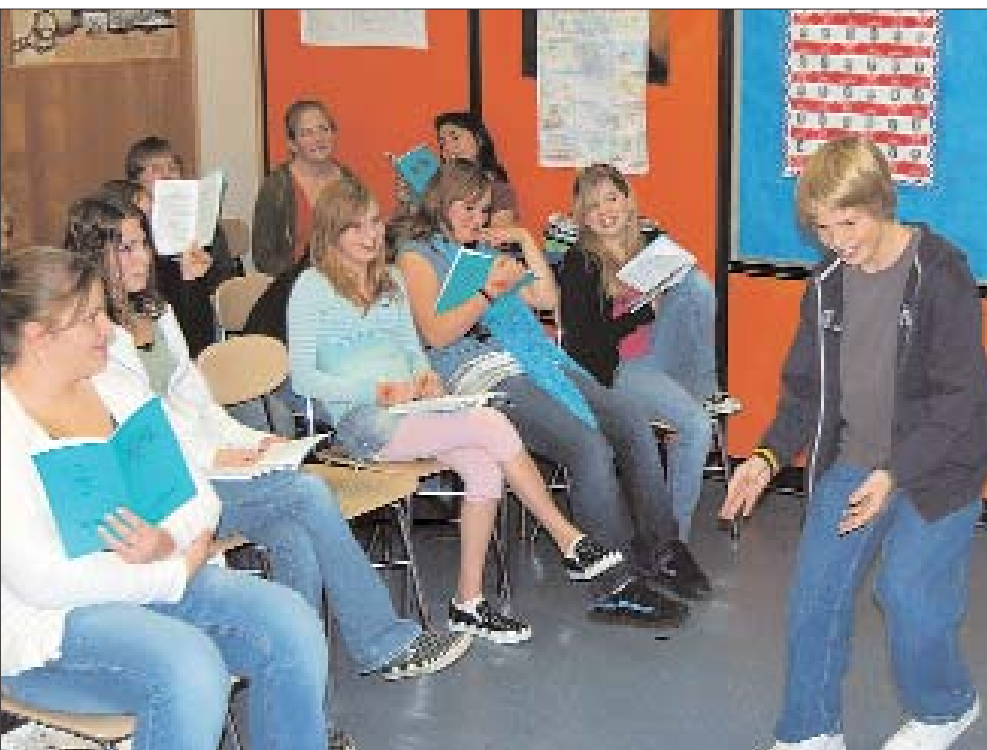
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Show & Tell



Key Peninsula Middle School eighth grader Cody Brower acts a scene from the play "Lagooned," wherein he is wrestling with a snake. The play is a work-in-progress by Mr. McWhirter's beginning drama class. *Photo by Mindi LaRose*



Eighth grader David Larson and seventh grader Jessica Kahler joke around with "props" during their digital photography class. Students are allowed to go outside and be creative with their cameras, under the supervision of their teacher, Mike Hunziker.

Photo by Madison LaRose, KPMS seventh grader



Evergreen Elementary fourth graders perform a flag folding ceremony during the Veterans' Day assembly.

Photo by Hugh McMillan

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Middle school teachers receive intensive training in new literacy curriculum

Peninsula School District has implemented a new, district-wide literacy curriculum this school year for middle school that allows for a great transition from the elementary school program. The SpringBoard curriculum was created by the highly acclaimed nonprofit organization College Board, which is providing extensive support for the district's SpringBoard teachers during this first year of implementation.

This past August, middle school language arts teachers spent five days in the classroom studying the theory behind SpringBoard and practicing its key components, giving them a window on students' perspectives. Teachers will continue to collaborate in district-wide grade level teams, as well as in building teams, throughout the year.

"The SpringBoard trainers gave our teachers hands-on strategies; they were learning as much as they could," says Literacy Specialist Judy Cromett.

"The teachers are working hard to learn the program," says Executive Director of Curriculum and Professional Development Claudia Thompson. "We have more to learn but their commitment has been extraordinary."



Middle school literacy teachers during a Spring Board training session.

In addition, school administrators at all grade levels are receiving training, which includes visiting classrooms to observe students using SpringBoard. Thompson says already positive results can be seen, just two months after implementation.

"All students are engaged in this program and that's a great thing to see," Thompson says. "Another strength is the consistency throughout the district,

which is a big deal because we didn't have that before."

The goal is to align literacy across the district for grades K-12. This school year, a curriculum committee will examine literacy programs for the high school level, with the goal to complement the elementary and middle school levels.

"Our goal is seamless education for students K-12, and we are getting closer," Thompson says.

Photo of the Month



Key Peninsula Middle School science teachers Karen Borders and Cindy Knisely at a NASA Explorer School Sustainability Conference in Huntsville, Ala., earlier this summer. KPMS recently kicked off its third year as a NASA Explorer School.

Program offers new teachers support, encouragement

Peninsula School District participates in the state supported Teacher Assistance Program. TAP serves teachers who are new to the profession, providing them with the following assistance:

- ♦ A full-time mentor teacher who visits them regularly, observes their classes, and coordinates their program
- ♦ Individual attention to their growth
- ♦ Balance of support and challenge
- ♦ Encouragement to develop a vision of themselves as the teachers they want to become
- ♦ Training sessions
- ♦ Release time to observe in other classrooms and schools
- ♦ Partnership with an experienced teacher in their school for help with curriculum and building issues
- ♦ Assistance in meeting requirements to professional certification.

December Events

- 2-3** TideFest Gig Harbor High School
TideFest, a Gig Harbor tradition since 1981, is recognized as one of the best art shows in the region. It attracts hundreds of artists from around the Pacific Northwest. TideFest is a great opportunity to spend time with family and friends while enjoying a diverse variety of food and fine art.
- 14** School Board regular meeting 6:30 p.m.
District Office
- 18-31** No School - Winter Break

EALRs for specific subject areas (OSPI)

Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) exist for Reading, Writing, Communication, Science, Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Health/Fitness. The EALRs form a common core of subjects and skills that all students in Washington are expected to master. The Essential Learnings focus on content, skills, thinking processes, and preparing our students for the workplace and the future. For an in-depth look at the EALRs, visit Learning and Teaching Curriculum and Development at our website: www.psd401.net.

General Fund

The General Fund Budget of over \$79,500,000 is for the District's annual operations.

Education is provided to over 9,000 students by 600 certificated and 300 classified staff members.

Volunteers bring 'Hands On Art' to KP schools

By Hugh McMillan, KP News

Thanks to Marla Morgan, president of Peninsula Hands On Art, students, teachers and parents from Vaughn, Artondale, Voyager and Harbor Heights elementary schools gathered at Harbor Heights which hosted Hands on Art's first training night of the year.

"Hands On is a program created by dedicated parents and local artists to bring art to the children of the Peninsula School District," explained Morgan. "Local artists are asked to design an art project and then each artist teaches that project to parent docent volunteers who, in turn, bring the project to the classrooms."

The four participating elementary schools have a combined student count of 2,268 and 150 parent volunteers. Morgan said, "Our program is 100 percent funded by the generosity and hard work of the Downtown Gig Harbor Gallery Association. This year's first docent training, where parents learned our first project, 'Waste Notes,' a sculpture presenta-

tion inspired by local Northwest artist Marita Dingus, was presented by Meredith Hale."

"Waste Notes" proved to be a truly unique recycling program. The presenters had a vast array of items that are all too often simply confined to the trash basket but, thanks to the busy hands of the assembled volunteer docents and participating kids, they were turned into cleverly-contrived dolls and other pleasurable usable things.

"This year (PHOA) is featuring four projects including 'Waste Notes' sponsored by CenturyTel and The Museum of Art; 'Put Yourself in Perspective,' a lesson in perspective presented by Gwen Hageman; 'Quelling, The Lost Art,' presented by Vaughn Elementary teacher Ernie Donehower; and 'Under the Sea by Me' presented by Sherri Bails, a watercolor project where we are partnering with the educational foundation 'Wild Watch' introducing to the children the sea life of Puget Sound," Morgan said.

"The intent behind (PHOA) is to explore a wide variety of media and



A few weeks ago at Harbor Heights Elementary, Vaughn Elementary School participants at Hands On Art's first training night of the year, Anne Skoglund, Suzie Albertson, and Phyllis Whittington are learning to be docents in "Waste Notes," a sculpture presentation inspired by local Northwest artist Marita Dingus and presented by Meredith Hale.

Photo by
Hugh McMillan

processes and where appropriate, incorporate relative art history," she said. "The projects will be designed to engage children and parents from kindergarten through fifth grade. We are funded 100 percent by donations, with our main source of income being the proceeds from the Downtown Gallery Association's (SalmonChanted) auction!" The event, which includes

"salmon" artwork created and donated by local artists, is now in its second year, with a launch reception planned for May and the auction to follow next fall.

To see some of the creations concocted by Vaughn students, drop by the school and check out the display case in the front hall. To learn more on PHOA, call 851-1603.

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KPMS photography work on display in Gig Harbor

By Erica Ma, Special to KP News

Mike Hunziker, teacher of the digital photography class at Key Peninsula Middle School, just can't say enough about his extraordinary students. As soon as the bell rings for class to start, cameras are snapping, flashes are blinking, and students are putting all their imagination to work.

Hunziker takes little credit for what his student's produce. "All I do is instruct them on how to use the camera, give them a few pointers, and off they go, producing amazing images," he said.

One of the most talented students in the digital photography class, Madison LaRose, has taken absolutely phenomenal pictures. Nearly everyone who sees her work is blown away by her eye for design.

"I really love how this class gives you the freedom to express yourself," LaRose explained. Her friend Jessica Kahler agrees. "There's a lot of creative independence involved," Kahler said. Both girls concur they love being with

Be sure to support the local middle school by dropping by and checking out the works of art at the Gig Harbor city hall (Gig Harbor Civic Center) located at 3510 Grandview Street. The exhibit dates are Dec. 4 to Jan. 26. As photography teacher Mike Hunziker says, "These students are truly phenomenal."

friends and having the ability to relax in this class. Unlike the other classes they have, digital photography doesn't have super strict rules. The class and the teacher promote a relaxed atmosphere, and Madison and Jessica are free to express their inner selves.

Other students also enjoy the liberty they have. Nick Turner, another gifted photographer, stated, "We learn a lot of skill in taking pictures." When asked what his favorite part of the class was, he lightheartedly declared, "We get to go outside and enjoy the fresh air!" According to Evan Solandros, this photography class really lets the students tap into their originality and



This photo of Jessica Kahler, taken by seventh grader Madison LaRose, is among the collection that will be displayed at the Gig Harbor city hall.

imagination. "You get to learn more about how a camera works and picture-taking techniques," he said.

Unlike the others, Makenzie Miller's favorite part of the class is learning about new technology to enhance the photos she takes. Most of the time, she'll be in front of a computer, fixing up an image using digital imaging software. With technology these days, students can fix up, crop, and amplify the wonder of their photos on the computer. One of her best pieces was of a photograph of fellow student Stacie Etheridge taken in sepia.

Most of the students agreed they really enjoy the freedom this class gives them. "You can express your individuality," Etheridge said.

Freedom aside, students believe photography is a challenging subject. "You have to try and get your subject to pose in an exact way," Danielle Andrews said. "It's really not as easy as it seems." Still, Hunziker could not be more pleased. He encourages his students to bounce ideas off each other and allows them to be as creative as they can possibly be.

"This is a great avenue for them," he proudly said. "Some of these photos border on professional work." When students and staff see the images taken by this class, they are amazed by the shots these aspiring photographers capture within the borders of their

viewfinders.

The Gig Harbor Civic Center has agreed to display nearly 100 photographs taken by Hunziker's talented students including a beautiful silhouette by Riley Embly, a colorful landscape by Dustin Phillips and an array of photographs by Madison LaRose and Krista Kooker. The work of nearly 30 students will be represented. Their workmanship will be displayed in from Dec. 4 through Jan. 26.

"Thanks to Waters Edge Gallery and the Gig Harbor Kiwanis Club, the show will be very professional," Hunziker said.

Bill Fogarty, at Waters Edge, agreed to do nearly \$1,000 worth of mounting and matting for just the cost of materials. "I approached Bill with my plans for the project and he immediately jumped on board enthusiastically," Hunziker said. "Bill asked the Gig Harbor Kiwanis Club to provide funds for the materials and the KPMS supporters at the GHKC gave a big thumbs up.

"This just would not have come to fruition without the help of Waters Edge Gallery and the Gig Harbor Kiwanis Club. I couldn't be more thankful of, and impressed by, their incredible support."

Erica Ma is a Key Peninsula Middle School eighth-grade student.

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'Not guilty' verdict has no sway with school district

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

Sitting quietly beside his mother on the couch in their attorney's office, this high school freshman looks like any other kid in any number of different groups teenagers divide themselves into. However, he does not attend Peninsula High School in his "home" school district. A court order prohibits his attendance. And last spring, during the school break, he was expelled from the Key Peninsula Middle School.

Allen (not his real name*) was one of three defendants in a criminal lawsuit stemming from last year's alleged plot to blow up the school and shoot several individuals; one of the two convicted classmates allegedly shared the plans with him regarding the plot. Allen was since found innocent of all charges against him.

In July, in Pierce County Superior Court, Judge Susan Serko ruled "the respondent (is) found not guilty of conspiracy to commit assault in the first degree. All conditions of release are hereby exonerated..." The family's attorney, Dennis Xavier Goss, supported an interview with the teen and his mother, Tricia Robins, on condition the young man remain anonymous.

Allen says he has no idea why that classmate chose him to confide in; the classmate, when asked during initial interviews by the school administration, reportedly did not even know Allen's last name. "I was just nice to everybody," Allen says. "I have lots of friends (at school)." He says he's "definitely aged" from the stress of the last few months, and wistfully shares his desire to return to a classroom setting and his friends.

In August, Goss began the process of reenrolling Allen, only to receive a letter from PSD Superintendent Terry Bouck stating, "Upon careful consideration... and review of KPMS Principal (Sharon)

Shaffer's recommendations, it is my decision that the ... request for readmission is denied." He wrote that Allen's presence at school "would continue to pose an immediate and continuing danger... (and) continuing threat of substantial disruption of the educational process."

Subsequently, Goss filed a Notice of Claim against "Peninsula School District and appropriate employees of Peninsula School District," alleging Allen's constitutional rights were violated under the Fourteenth Amendment, and the Washington State Constitution. Goss received a letter from district attorneys (Dionne & Rorick) stating that he and his parents failed to request a hearing within a stipulated 10-day period, and as a result, the district has "decided to deny your request for reconsideration... The emergency expulsion remains in place indefinitely..."

Shortly thereafter, Goss applied to the Kitsap School District on Allen's behalf. He received correspondence back that, upon the advice of the district's attorneys (the same firm representing the Peninsula School District), Allen's request for admission was denied.

"The district is prohibited from releasing information per FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) without the parent's consent," Bouck told the KP News. He was not able to provide any information regarding the total permanency of the expulsion, or an alternate duration of that action, or whether the interim principal of Peninsula High School was in agreement with the district's decision.

Robins says she was never told the expulsion would continue over into another school, and that Allen was apparently enrolled at PHS. She says his friends kept

hearing his name during roll call, and the attendance office called to ask why he wasn't in school. Then the school realized he was expelled and sent the family an "apology" by way of their attorney. What Robins knows for sure is that "I have a son who needs to be in school; he doesn't cause problems." Allen has two younger siblings, and "neither one of my other kids will go to KPMS," she says.

On Nov. 17, Goss received a motion from Peninsula School District asking the court to reconsider its request that the district return to court and justify its decision to continue denying Allen admission to school. Goss contends the district is "telling the court that (it) does not have the authority to order a hearing to show cause due to alleged procedural errors."

"The school district maintains that it (the district) has unfettered discretion and that the court cannot rule on whether (Allen) should be allowed back into school," he says.

Goss asserts the school district is abusing its discretion by not allowing Allen back into school after he was found not guilty of the charges in a court of law. Additionally,

he says, "For each dollar the school district pays their law firm, a dollar less is available to district students. What a double shame and tragedy."

Meanwhile, Allen is "attending" classes in a virtual high school, Advanced Academics.com. He is "enrolled" in the Marysville School District in Snohomish County, one of two relatively local school districts in the state under contract with the virtual school. Allen's interactive classes take place at his home on the computer; he must travel to Marysville to take the WASL, and it is there that he will also receive his diploma, unless his fortunes change. In this virtual school, he has "no place to go" and spends his time either at home, or at his mother's business. He has seen friends only infrequently, and says missing them is the worst part. He's alone most of the time.

"I really just want to go back to school," he says. With the optimism of youth, he still hopes to return to the Peninsula School District, and to classes among his friends.

* The KP News is not disclosing the real name of the student, who is a minor.



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Photo by Rodika Tollefson

Then-Superintendent Jim Coolican congratulates the Key Peninsula Youth Council after reading a resolution proclaiming the group a community partner last spring.

Key Pen Youth Council tackles priorities

By Rodika Tollefson, KP News

Following months of organizing and priorities, the members of the Key Peninsula Youth Council are ready to roll up their sleeves and get involved in more projects. In November, they created several committees, which will meet starting in December.

The council, which operates under the auspices of the Key Peninsula Community Council, is comprised of 19 students from the Key Peninsula Middle School and Peninsula High School. The youth council is modeled after the community council. The KPYC has partnered with Safe Streets, which enabled the youth group to receive some grant funding.

Last year, the KPYC also partnered with the Peninsula School District. In addition to tapping into the expertise of Assistant Superintendent Shannon Wiggs for conducting leadership workshops and other assistance, the council was recognized by the PSD Board of Directors as a community partner and a resource.

"The youth council had been created as a community project independent from the school district," said Barb Trotter, who got the KPYC off the ground as part of the community council's Human Services Committee she chaired. "We felt it was important for the school board and the school district to recognize the Key Peninsula Youth Council as a partner... It helped create credibility."

Last year, the youth council took on various projects in addition to creating by-laws, designing a logo and electing executive officers. The biggest project entailed surveying KPMS and PHS students on priorities. The survey was given to 800 students, who ranked 14 items. The results of the survey were

used to create the new committees, which include a Red Barn Project committee, a 360 Park Project committee, and Community Service Projects committee.

"(Youth Council) is a great concept that finally came to light. We are up and running, and it's not just a vision any more. It's a quality organization, and the kids are dynamite," said Terry Fandel, a Peninsula High School educator who is the adviser to youth council.

The council recently transitioned to new leadership. Trotter will step back as co-adviser following her election to the position of community council president. Fandel, who has been a co-adviser since last year and has been involved since the group was started, has assumed leadership of the KPYC.

Other projects students undertook last year and are slated to become annual events include road cleanups, help with the Citizen of the Year banquets and with community council elections. Trotter and Fandel said the group took several months to organize because the students were involved hands-on with everything from survey design and compilation to meeting with the Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District officials to discuss ideas for the proposed 360-acre park.

"Our position has been (that) this has to be student driven... We had to step back and let them do it at their own speed," Trotter said.

Trotter uses the 360 Park involvement as an example of what the youth council can be empowered to do. "This is what the youth council was created for — to be involved in civic decisions that affect our community, where normally there is no voice for the youth," she said.

(From **CRIME**, Page 1)

At the Palmer Lake community, crime deterrent efforts are paying off, according to local residents. Barbara Waller told the KP News, "We work with various groups. We have no formal crime watch but combine the best of all forums, and it seems to work for us. Rick Lingle of Palmer Lake is the new CAC president and is also a member of the Key Pen Crime Task Force. He is a member of the Palmer Lake Improvement Club and passes all information to this group. Rich Holden and Emily Watson, Community Service Officer with the Pierce County Sheriff's Department, are active in our community."

For more information about forming a Neighborhood Action Team, or to view crime statistics for your neighborhood, visit www.pierce-countycrime-data.org.

Watson said, "The NAT is about getting to know your neighbors and interacting with the residents of the neighborhood, causing suspicious people and activities to stand out. The residents are then able to report the suspicious activities and people to law enforcement and ultimately reduce crime. This program allows neighborhoods to report their physical boundaries to the Sheriff's Department, generating monthly reports showing only crimes within the neighborhood instead of the half-mile radius from an address within the neighborhood. The NAT is qualified to purchase signs for posting, alerting the public of their organized group."

Waller said they pass information on all activities ranging from speeders' license plate numbers, to houses that have a lot of traffic. "We also provide periodic lists of suspect houses to our community liaisons with the Sheriff's Department

(Bryan Ward and Dave Plummer), who patrol at the expense of the Palmer Lake Beach Club on their off hours," she said. "As a result of this we have closed one major meth house and removed at least two drug house inhabitants from our area. We have also installed security lights in areas where there seems to be the most activity. We did this as a result of input from the community liaisons."

Patricia Latshaw, president of the CAC/Citizens' Patrol said CAC members are the "eyes and ears" for the sheriff's department. "If we hear or know of a problem area, we alert the (Peninsula) detachment. This summer there was a lot of construction site burglary and those contractors either took all their equipment home each night or had someone stay on site to watch," she said. "A lot of theft on the Key is related to meth use. However, this is decreasing as new construction comes in and more people are made aware of what to watch for."

Another factor in the apparent low crime rate on the KP seems to be under-reporting. For years, the response by the sheriff's department to the Key Pen was slow and officer-coverage was sparse. Now, with 24-hour coverage, county records show response times have improved.

Lt. Larry Bauer, the head of the Peninsula Detachment, wrote in a message posted on the detachment's Website, "Keep in mind that there is a difference between (the statistics reported) and the actual numbers of crimes that occur in our communities. Not all crimes get reported to law enforcement. There are a lot of reasons for this, but the one I hear most often is, 'I don't call 911 because your officers never respond.' As you might expect, this is the last thing that I want to hear. If crime is not reported, it makes it look like crime levels are lower than they actually are. My deputy staffing levels are partially dependent upon the number of crimes

Any emergency calls should be directed to 911. For a nonemergency, to report a crime that has already occurred, or to speak with an on-duty deputy, call (253) 798-4721 and choose option 1 when the recording begins.

To report illegal drug activity in your neighborhood, you can telephone the hotline at (253)798-7537, or call Crime Stoppers at (253)591-5959. Or make an online report at <https://yakima.co.pierce.wa.us/PCSDTips/index.cfm?TipType=Drug>

To see a summary of Key Peninsula Crime Statistics from 2005 and 2006, visit: www.co.pierce.wa.us/xml/abtus/ourorg/sheriff/D14statreports/PC15NoPct.pdf

reported in our detachment each year. Each time a citizen decides to not call to report a crime, it hurts the entire community. So please report crimes when they occur."

Last summer, incidents of car prowls occurred in several neighborhoods, as car stereo systems were targeted. Watson said that during the period of June 1 to Aug. 31, the detachment received 2,269 calls for service, 13 of which were for vehicle prowls.

"The detachment received 78 calls for service for vehicle prowls for the unincorporated areas of Pierce County west of the Narrows Bridge," she said. Of those, 33 reports were taken to document the crime. Areas affected by multiple incidents include the State Route 16/State Route 302 interchange area and SR-16 near the west side of the Narrows Bridge area. The 78 recorded incidents only include those reported ... by the victim. If the victim failed to call the sheriff, it is not recorded as a crime. The victim may think the value was insignificant, (or that) there is no chance of catching the perpetrator or (that) law enforcement doesn't care. We cannot factor unreported crimes into our trend watch and cannot account for how unreported crimes affect a trend we are monitoring."

Long driveways, dark roads, and heavily forested areas make it difficult to keep a vigilant watch for criminal activities. Stories have been circulating about Vaughn homes with their front doors kicked in, with nothing apparently missing. In November, a rash of

vandalism was reported to the KP News by resident Troy Erwin. At least 30 mailboxes were destroyed near Carney Lake, off Wright-Bliss Road, on three different streets, according to Erwin.

"From the look of the damage, it appears they used a 2-inch metal pipe," to damage and knock the boxes off their posts, he said. "My mailbox was completely destroyed, but five mailboxes in the same vicinity were not damaged, which might give an indication (the vandals) know someone in the neighborhood."

A couple living across the street, "who don't miss a thing," according to Erwin, "didn't see them and they didn't hear their dogs bark." He added, "We learned a long time ago, if we want to get our important mail, we need a post office box." Erwin is offering \$100 toward a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible, and he said he hopes that reward fund can grow through other contributions.

In other incidents, batches of stolen mail found roadside, under brush in a ditch, were returned to the Vaughn Post Office for investigation and delayed delivery. Mail theft is a felony under Federal Title 18 Section 1708, punishable by fines and/or not more than five years imprisonment.

Watson noted, "The detachment reviews all calls for service on a daily basis and receives monthly reports from the Pierce County Sheriff's Department's Crime Analysis Unit. We are constantly monitoring to determine any trends we can curtail."

If the detachment notices a trend, the active community groups and neighborhoods in the vicinity are contacted and informed about the trend, so they can spread the alert. The detachment also offers an electronic peninsula-wide alert system for notification of incidents occurring within its jurisdiction that may affect many residents living in this area. Residents can sign up for that email notification by clicking on the "My Account" link at www.co.pierce.wa.us. The Peninsula Detachment Website, www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/Abtus/ourorg/sheriff/peninsula.htm has complete instructions.


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Fire commissioner ignores attorney advice

By Rick Sorrels
Special to the KP News

Fire District 16 Commissioner Al Yanity attended the fire department's Future Planning Committee meeting on Nov. 8 in defiance of the fire districts attorney's opinion that it would constitute a violation of the Open Public Meetings Act. (See related story in last month's KP News).

Commission Chairman Rick Stout said, "I consulted again with our attorney and decided to act in the least conflicting manner possible. When he arrived at the committee meeting, I informed Yanity that he could remain present as an audience member, without actively participating in discussions. This may still be a technical violation of OPMA. I just hope that nobody challenges it."

FD-16 attorney Joseph Quinn wrote two letters to the board in October, advising against Yanity's attendance. "My advice is that two board members

"There are conditions that must occur for there to be a violation and I am well aware the restrictions of the law and I will not violate the OPMA."

- Al Yanity, FD 16 commissioner

cannot attend other groups' meetings when the topics to be discussed include that fire district's business. The Future Planning Committee Meeting is a perfect example of such a meeting," he wrote in one of the letters.

Yanity maintains that Quinn is wrong, and said he received correspondence from the state Attorney General's office stating it is the district that may be in violation. "There are conditions that must occur for there to be a violation and I am well aware of the restrictions of the law and I will not violate the OPMA," he said in an email to the KP News.



Photo by Mindi LaRose

A driver was injured in a road accident on Elgin Clifton and 150th Avenue in November. According to Fire District Division Chief Guy Allen, who was at the scene, the rollover accident was likely because of the slope of the road and probably "not a result of high speed." The driver, the only person injured, was taken to a hospital, but was expected to survive.

Key Peninsula Fire Department Rescue Calls

Oct. 28

Paramedics and firefighters responded to a motor vehicle collision in the Rocky Creek area of State Route 302. Arriving units found a single vehicle involved in a collision with a deer. The driver was shaken but uninjured and declined medic care.

Oct. 29

A passer-by found a woman lying unconscious on a dirt road after being thrown from a horse. Fire department EMS crews responded, stabilized the patient, and transported her to a Tacoma hospital for further evaluation and treatment.

Oct. 30

Crews responded to the Minter area for a van fire, which was unattended and left possibly due to mechanical failure. The fire consumed the engine compartment and dash area before it was extinguished by firefighters.

Nov. 1

Paramedics responded to a residence after a man fell from his roof, suffering a fractured leg. He was treated at the scene, placed on a spine board to splint his injuries and transported to a Tacoma hospital.

Nov. 3

Firefighters were called to Whiteman Road to perform their road crew skills

after a tree fell across the roadway during high winds. Firefighters responded to several similar requests throughout the week.

Nov. 6

Firefighters were called to a Lake Minterwood residence that was suffering from flooded waters due to a blocked culvert. Firefighters worked for about an hour to remove the debris from the drain and the water level rapidly receded away from the home.

Nov. 7

Fire District 18 and the city of Orting requested mutual aid as widespread flooding caused a life safety hazard throughout their community. Key Peninsula sent one engine and a water rescue team along with personal water craft to assist with evacuating residents from the flooded area.

Nov. 9

A Pierce County road worker escaped serious injury when his hand was sucked into a wood chipper. The man sustained only minor lacerations to his hand and was taken to an area hospital by his colleagues.

October total calls: 161
Medical aid: 95
Fires: 21
Burn complaints: 21
Vehicle crashes: 16
Weather related: 1
Other: 7
Mutual aid from GHFD: 8

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COMMUNITY WORKS

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Dec. 1-21 — KPVI Trees of Sharing

The Key Peninsula Veteran's Institute "Trees of Sharing" have now been placed in several different locations on the Peninsula, giving residents an opportunity to make small, personal gifts to U. S. service veterans at the American Lake Hospital facility.

The "Trees of Sharing" are located at the Home Shell Station/Market, Lulu's Home Port Restaurant, the Peninsula Market in Key Center, the Peninsula Market at Lake Kathryn Village and the Bridgeway Market in Purdy. Each tree has tags on it, each tag requesting a small personal item for a veteran's Christmas. Gifts such as a deck of playing cards, scarves, shaving items, etc. will be greatly appreciated. Those wishing to make a gift to a hospitalized veteran may take a tag(s), obtain the item(s), wrap the item(s) for Christmas, put the tag on the outside of the wrapped present, and take the gifts back to a collection box at the store where the tag was obtained by Dec. 21.

KPVI sent 500 sets of underwear and 500 trousers to residents at American Lake, donated \$1,000 to Community House in Home for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets and food, and collected a large number of new toys that will be distributed by the Children's Home Society office in Vaughn.

KPVI is open to veterans of all services and their families. The group meets the first and third Monday evenings at 7 p.m. at the Community House in Home.

Christmas Dinner — seniors wanted

The Salatino family is preparing the annual Christmas Day dinner for senior citizens. An invitation is extended to all seniors who are going to be home alone on Christmas Day. The dinner includes a visit from Santa with gifts and a sing-along party.

Because of all the preparations of food, gifts and transportation, the Salatinos are not equipped to accommodate unannounced or drop-in guests. They need to know in advance who will be joining them that day. They ask that everyone help them reach out to potential guests. If you or a senior you know

would like to enjoy this dinner, please call Mike Salatino at 851-4556 as soon as possible, so that invitations and or confirmations of the senior's attendance can be made.

Dec. 2 — SAVE holiday open house

Combine magical Christmas shopping with quality and low prices at the SAVE Thrift Store's Holiday Open House on Saturday, Dec. 2. The shop is run by the scholarship committee of Peninsula High School, whose member "elves" transform the store into a sea of red, green, gold and crystal for this event. Featured are festive glassware, shoes and clothes for all ages, toys, games and books as well as Christmas decor. Refreshments will be served.

The shop is located at the foot of the hill below Peninsula High School in Purdy and is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Funds raised at SAVE Thrift Store benefit the scholarship and activity groups at PHS. Saturday, Dec. 2, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., SAVE Thrift Store; Marsha 857-2800

Dec. 3 — Key Singers welcome Santa

The Key Singers will sing at 4 p.m. at the Key Center Corral on Sunday, Dec. 3, prior to the lighting of the Christmas tree and greeting Santa in his sleigh.

The Singers' Christmas performance will be Dec. 19 at 7 p.m. at the Key Peninsula Lutheran Church. This is a benefit for the Community House/Food Bank. A donation of nonperishable food or cash will be greatly appreciated.

The Key Singers meet at the Longbranch Community Church Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. All singers are welcome to join. Sadly, they have lost a member of the chorus. Anita Dougherty is greatly missed.

Sunday, Dec. 3, 4 p.m., Key Center Corral; 884-5615, 884-4511 or 884-2686.

Dec. 5 — Narrows Strut Busters meet

The next meeting of the Narrows Strut Busters Chapter of the National

Wild Turkey Federation will be on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 6:30 p.m. at chapter President Al Prante's Key Pen home. The members are currently planning for their annual Hunters Heritage Banquet and will also be discussing next year's other activities. This is a great time to come meet the wild turkey guys.

Tuesday, Dec. 5, 6:30 p.m., call 884-9663 or email turkeydancer@centurytel.net for directions or information about the chapter; www.gigharbor-nwtf.org

Dec. 6 — Grief support group

The new grief support group will meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. Dec. 6, 7 p.m., Key Center Fire Station 2; 884-2054

Dec. 6 — Community Planning Board meeting and design charrette

The next meeting for the Pierce County - Key Peninsula Community Planning Board is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 6, 7 p.m., at the Key Peninsula Public Library. A Design Charrette will be held on Saturday, Dec. 9, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., at the Key Peninsula Civic Center in Vaughn. The Community Planning Board is working on policy development for the Community Character Element of the Key Peninsula Community Plan regarding commercial design standards. Members of the general public are encouraged to attend the meetings.

Mike Kruger, 798-2700 or www.piercecountywa.org/landuse.

Dec. 7 — Grief support group

The new grief support group will meet every Thursday morning.

Dec. 7, 10 a.m., Fire Station 5 (SR 302 & Wright-Bliss Rd); 884-2054

Dec. 14 — Civic Center Christmas potluck dinner

Everyone is invited to come to the Civic Center's annual Christmas potluck dinner at 6 p.m. on Dec. 14. The

monthly business meeting will be held at 7 p.m. following dinner.

The KPCCA Halloween Party was a lot of fun with an estimated 200 trick-or-treaters attending. Everyone had a really good time. The KPCCA thanks all the organizations and individuals who helped make it a success.

Reminder: Friday Night skate is now split into two sessions: 6-7 p.m. for elementary only at \$2 per person and from 7-9 p.m. for middle school, \$4 per person. Contact Phil Bauer, 884-9172, for comments or info.

Thursday, Dec. 14, 6 p.m., Civic Center; Jena 884-3456.

Dec. 14 — Jazz band at library

'Tis the season for music at the library! The Hook-Me-Up Band will entertain all comers with contemporary jazz, blues and familiar tunes for all tastes.

Tracey Hooker is the leader of this quartet. He plays the trumpet and flugelhorn and provides vocals in company with three other professional musicians on bass, drums and piano. Fun and celebration will be the theme of the evening, with audience interaction guaranteed.

The Friends of the Key Center Library sponsors these communitywide programs. Everyone is welcome.

Dec. 14, 7 p.m., Key Center Library; Mary Watson, 884-4690

Dec. 15 — Peace Vigil

Key Peacemakers invite the community to participate in a candlelight vigil to keep alive the hope for peace during a time of war. Friday, Dec. 15, 5:30 p.m., Home Park; Dory Myers 884-9299

Dec. 27-29 — Basketball camp

KP Metro Parks is offering a camp during winter break for basketball players in grades 1 to 7. The high-energy camp will stress techniques and team play. Campers should wear sweats or shorts and basketball shoes and bring a beverage, a snack and a basketball. The director, Eric Grieve, is a PE

teacher who coaches at Cedar Heights Junior High.

Grades 1-4, 9 to 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Dec. 27-29. Fee \$24
Grades 5-7, 12:30 to 3 p.m., Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Dec. 27-29, Fee \$24

Call 884-9240 to sign up.

Fuchsia Club takes a break

The Lakebay Fuchsia Society will not be holding a regular club meeting in December or January, but will be celebrating its annual Christmas party later in the month. The next regular meeting of the Fuchsia Club will be in February at the Library in Key Center. For information, contact Ginnie at 884-9744.

KP Lions Club changes dues

The Key Peninsula Lions Club meets for dinner at 6 p.m. on the first and third Wednesday of each month at the Horseshoe Lake Golf Course Restaurant. The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m., a speaker or program at 7 p.m., and the meeting is over at 7:30 p.m. Members often socialize following the meeting. Business meetings are on the fourth Wednesday at the Library in Key Center.

The club has enacted a new dues policy as a result of a change in dues payable to Lions International. Effective immediately, when two or more family members living in the same home join the same club, dues are reduced for the additional members. KP Lions Club dues are \$70/year for the first member and \$100/year for a couple or two

family members.

The dues change is designed to make it inviting for spouses to both join and be active in a club that is providing vital services to the community. It also permits other related adult persons living in the same home the same special rate.

KP Lions provide hearing aids and eyeglasses to the needy, sponsor Boy Scouts, and assist other community groups, including the KP Metro Park District. They participate in recycling programs by collecting and distributing used eyeglasses overseas and used hearing aids, which Lions recondition for distribution to the needy. The club sponsors the annual Key Peninsula Citizens of the Year Banquet, being held for the 23rd time on March 10, 2007, and an annual Volksmarch.

Saturday Mornings — Writers' Guild meets

A peer group of local writers meets to share their work and write together every Saturday morning. All ages are welcome and it's free.

Saturdays, 9-11 a.m., Key Center Library; Carolyn, carolyns_finearts@hotmail.com or 884-7771.

TOPS 1019 News

Eighteen members of the TOPS group lost a total of 72 pounds in the month of October. Eight members lost over 5 pounds and Sheldon Fancher lost the most weight, 10.75 pounds. TOPS meets at Fire Station 5 on Wright-Bliss Rd at SR-302 every Monday. Weigh-in: 6 p.m.; meeting 7-8 p.m. Frankie, 884-4102

January- K-2 youth basketball skills clinic

The KP Metro Park District will be offering a five-week youth basketball skills clinic at the Civic Center in January. Focus of the clinics are dribbling, passing, and shooting. The co-ed clinics will be on Saturday mornings; cost is \$39/participant and includes a basketball and shirt.

2nd grade 9-9:50 a.m.

1st grade 10-10:50 a.m.

Kindergarten 11-11:50 a.m.

To sign up, call Scott Gallacher, 884-9240.

January — KP Metro Parks adult basketball league

The Key Peninsula Metro Park District is now accepting team registrations for the Adult 3-on-3 Basketball League. Team play will start the end of January at the Civic Center. The season is 10 games plus the season-concluding tournament. All games will be played on Sunday late afternoon and evenings. Cost \$275/team. A minimum of four teams and maximum of 12 teams will be in the league. Players without a team may contact KPMPD and ask to be put on a player availability list. League and tournament champions receive individual awards.

To sign up or for more information, call 884-9240.

Jan. 24 — KP Family Resource Center meeting

The Key Peninsula Family Resource Center has been the recipient of several

grants during the fall. Grants were received from the Geneva Foundation (many thanks to John and Shirley Nederlee), the Gateway Foundation, the Baker Foundation, and the Jennie S. Baker Fund. They also received a generous contribution from Peninsula Subaru and Suzuki's (in Bremerton) Benefit Golf Tournament.

KPFRRC will have its next community advisory meeting on Jan. 24 in the new conference room, which is being remodeled through the generosity of the Key Peninsula Civic Center.

Wednesday, Jan. 24, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Civic Center

Get Involved Volunteer listings

- The Franciscan Health System's Improving Care Program is seeking volunteers with gentle hearts and good listening skills to telephone local patients and families who are dealing with a serious illness. Training and monthly meetings are provided. Volunteer time ranges from 4 to 6 hours per month. Contact Nicole, 253-534-7014.

Volunteer spotlight

Volunteer Spotlight will return in January. Do you know a worthy volunteer who should be featured in this monthly column? Nominate this person by calling 884-4699 or emailing us at news@keypennews.com. Please include your contact information.



PHS senior wants to 'Pay it Forward'

Peninsula High School paraeducator Donna Forbes, of Home, works with PHS senior James Washington, also a Key Pen resident, on his senior project, "Pay it Forward," a dinner auction to raise funds supportive of the Community Inclusion Program from which he has benefited. He said, "I want to give back to those who have helped me so much."

CIP is a program involving individuals with disabilities in which families, neighbors, and community members come together in a safe environment for friendship, relationships, networking, and to have fun. High school students who are interested can work toward their school's requirements for community service hours by taking leadership training that involves students from a variety of school districts. The "Pay it Forward" dinner auction will be held at PHS on March 30. Washington's goal is to raise \$5,000. To help make Washington's project a success, contact him at PHS at 253-530-4465, or via email to forbesd@peninsula.wednet.edu. *Photo and story by Hugh McMillan*

'The Landing' restoration continues

By Kristie Byrd, KP News intern

Alisa and Ira Specter, the owners of the Key Center building that formerly housed the Key Center Trading Post, said the remodeled building will be ready to open soon but there is not a firm date.

The Gig Harbor couple has been working on the building about six days a week since January 2005.

"The transformation is fantastic. I think it's beautiful and unique, and I'm sure anyone else that has seen it would think so as well. The restoration has been formidable," Alisa Specter said. "Before, it was really run down. Now, it's come a far, far distance and we love it."

There were six suites available in the building they call "The Landing"; now there are only four. The two confirmed

tenants are a barber and an investment specialist. The four available spaces range in size from 264 square feet to 1,018 square feet.

Regarding an opening date, Specter said, "We don't want it to sound like we are making any kind of promise. I can say that we are in the finishing stages. There are things you can't plan for in this type of restoration. We are appreciative of the two businesses we have for being so patient."

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Laurie Ellis (standing) and her mom, Genevieve, complement each other's strengths: Laurie likes the accounting side while Genevieve enjoys doing tax returns.

Photo by Chris Fitzgerald

Mother-daughter team helps businesses succeed

By Chris Fitzgerald, KP News

Commercial space is sparse on the Key Peninsula, and when a visible location opens up along the highway, a new (or relocated) business quickly seizes the opportunity to become better known. That's just the timely occurrence that happened a few months ago when Ellis Accounting moved from the library building in Key Center to the recently remodeled building on State Route 302 near the New Brookside Restaurant.

Laurie Ellis, the business owner, has been a certified accountant since 1991, and formerly owned a practice in Tacoma. She employs her mother, Genevieve, who moved to the Key Peninsula several years ago; Laurie's decision to relocate the business here was a natural outcome of visits with her family and feeling right "at home" among peninsula residents.

Business has grown since they moved to the new location in October 2005. While practicing in the library building, primarily a healthcare-related venue, "Nobody knew we were there," Laurie said. Now, they enjoy walk-in traffic, and feel they have a professional office that is also a reflection of services offered.

Both women share in decision-making, and each has individual areas of expertise. Laurie handles all aspects of business accounting, trusts and estate tax returns. Genevieve takes care of personal tax returns. Together, they provide a system of "checks and balances" that benefit their clients. This year, they became IRS certified enrolled agents, having studied for and passed a two-day exam. Washington state has no laws regulating tax preparers; the Ellis' IRS ER certifications give them the ability to represent clients and write letters on their behalf to the IRS. To maintain the designations, they will take additional training on an ongoing basis.

Laurie enjoys the challenge of puzzling

together the financials that make a business work. "People bring their lives in when their taxes are due," she said. "It's not just number-crunching; it's their lives and how they got where they are."

She especially encourages new businesses, and individuals thinking about beginning a business, to talk with her. The final decision about whether to continue — or begin — always rests with the individual, but Laurie says she can show anyone how a balance sheet works, and if their plan appears financially "healthy" or not. She notes the failure rate for small businesses, and the fact that it takes a minimum average of two to three years to really make it work. She can advise an entrepreneur about legitimate expenses, tax consequences, and basic financial "bare bones" of business finance. She also says it's not always clear ahead of time who will succeed and who will not.

"Who knew coffee stands would be on every corner? It's luck and timing to tune into what consumers want at the right time," she said.

Both women agree they are seeing more entrepreneurs every year, and more in the last year than during the previous 10 years, mostly small and medium-sized ventures.

"If you're not an accountant (to begin with)," Laurie said, "you can't afford not to have an accounting service." She advises businesses to start small, become comfortable early with "delegating services," and focus their energies and talents on the skills, talents and/or products that brought them to business ownership in the first place.

Genevieve said an office manager will join them in January, freeing the mother-daughter team to focus entirely on clients. Understanding the importance of the bottom line, she said, "We're here because we feel this area will grow. If you are planning to start a business, we are here to support you."

*APR = Annual Percentage Rate. Subject to credit approval. Your rate and credit limit will be determined based on individual creditworthiness including income, debt ratio, employment and equity in your home. Regular rate as of 1/1/06 ranges between 4.99% and 9.99% APR. The maximum APR will never exceed 18% and the minimum APR will never go below 4.65%. See details for current rates. Homeowner's insurance required. A \$195 early closure fee is applied when the loan is closed within the first 36 months. Must be a Sound Credit Union member to participate. Membership or Sound Credit Union requires a meeting, services with a minimum balance of \$25. This plan has a variable rate feature and an APR corresponding to the variable periodic rate and the maximum payment may change as a result. Closing on your home is based on 100% of the current value or 105% of appraised value. The annual percentage rate includes any interest and an upfront cost is based on the value of the loan. This table is the Prime Rate published in the Wall Street Journal and is current as of 8/1/06 and could change at any time. Most loans require down payment for 100% financing interest. Consult your tax advisor for details. **Except appraisal if needed.

At home on the Key Pen

Former immigrant contributes to his community

By Linda Anderson, KP News

The Key Peninsula is known for its peaceful, rural setting, tall trees and a community of people who have come from the four corners of the globe to settle here, raise families, make lifelong friends and give of themselves to the betterment of all. One such person is Neal Van Der Voorn, who immigrated to the United States after World War II and now serves the community he has come to call home.

Van Der Voorn moved to the Pacific Northwest in 1983 and came to the Key Peninsula in 1990, looking for a treed rural setting. Since childhood, he had lived in crowded dwellings and urban areas and longed for space and a quiet living area in which to make his home.

Van Der Voorn was born in the Netherlands, one of five children. With housing difficult to find in the 1950s' Netherlands, his large family lived in the cramped quarters behind the father's butcher shop. State-run schools were readily available, offering education through high school. Higher education, however, was attainable only by the elite.

While conditions have changed for the better over the years, according to Van Der Voorn, in the '50s the family had to make life-changing decisions to improve the quality of their lives.

Following World War II, changes to the immigration laws raised the quota of immigrants allowed from certain countries, if the immigrants could prove hardship related to the war. So, when Van Der Voorn was 12 years old, the family came to the United States, passing through the portal at New York City. The family was sponsored

by Catholic Social Services, which assisted in finding the head of the household a job as a butcher in a large hotel in Wichita, Kan.

Education was very important to the family. All five of the Van Der Voorn children went to college. Four of them have graduate degrees. Neal became a teacher of American government and American and world history courses.

Van Der Voorn recalls his biggest adjustment to life in the American Midwest was the triple-digit temperatures of the Wichita summers. After 10 years of enduring the heat, Van Der Voorn was happy to venture out to further his education and career in other parts of the country.

When he reached the Pacific Northwest, Van Der Voorn took a position as a medical librarian at Western State Hospital. In 2002, as the state was deciding to end all funding for state-run libraries in favor of Internet access for research, Van Der Voorn left the hospital to work in a similar position with MultiCare. He finds his new work of researching information for medical personnel both interesting and challenging.

At present, Van Der Voorn enjoys the social and community service aspects of his involvement with the Key Peninsula Lions Club. He will be busy with the annual Volksmarch event this coming year. He is also involved with Amnesty International, an organization that meets monthly and searches online for the proper contacts in international government to write letters encouraging these leaders to deal with civil liberty issues in their countries.

Van Der Voorn is looking forward to retirement in three years, but not to a "rocking chair." He plans to continue using



Photo by Mindi LaRose

Neal Van Der Voorn, pictured at his home computer, loves to do online research and hopes to use the Internet to help people with medical issues.

his talents to give back to the community that has given him so much. One of his ideas is to use his excellent database-searching skills to help people looking for information about their illnesses and medical questions. While he cannot give medical advice, he is able to locate educa-

tional materials and provide sources where people can do their own research.

Even though Van Der Voorn's family is scattered about the country, he plans to remain on the Key Peninsula and enjoy the rural setting and the good friends he has made over the years.

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(From **WRECKING**, Page 1)

a mile of Puget Sound, as part of Gov. Chris Gregoire's Puget Sound Partnership. A plan which, according to the Partnership's Website, is an initiative "to protect one of the state's crown jewels."

So sites like the Horseshoe Lake Wrecking Yard, off State Route 302, remain on the list until Lawson's department musters the resources necessary to go after them. And that's when the hammer will fall. "When Ecology approaches them they don't have an option," Lawson says. "They have to clean it up."

If they don't, the agency can issue an enforcement order requiring the cleanup. "Or we can clean it up ourselves — and recover the cost from the owners," Lawson said.

In the meantime, owners Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Ennis could legally sell the wrecking yard, if someone were willing to buy it in spite of the contaminated soil. Lawson says that isn't likely, since most lenders wouldn't loan funds for a contaminated site, but there's nothing to prevent such a transaction if the buyer has enough money.

Len Lonning Sr., who lives behind the Lonning Saw shop located just south of the wrecking yard, filed the complaint about the contamination.

"After oily looking water backed up into my garage, I took samples, and took them to the county," he said. "They took a look but they haven't done anything."

The saw shop, which was originally owned by Lonning's grandfather, is operated by his son, Len Lonning Jr. When asked how he feels about the situation, Lonning Jr. expressed more unhappiness with county, state, and federal regulatory agencies than the neighboring wrecking yard. "There are too many regulations," Lonning said, "and they're too expensive."

Asked if he's comfortable with having contaminants like benzene and cadmium right next door, he replied, "To a degree, yes. But they should have a containment at the wrecking yard. Common sense should prevail."

Lonning Sr. said, "I wish there was some way to divert it (the water) so it wouldn't run into my garage. They have bales of hay over there — but they don't stop it. The problem is that it runs past my place to Little Minter Creek."

Lawson said regarding the creek allegation, "We won't know until we go in to do



The Horseshoe Lake Wrecking Yard was placed on the state's Hazardous Sites List last year.

Photo by
Mindi LaRose

a remedial investigation." And because of the staff shortage, that investigation could be years away.

Leonard Larson, who has operated the wrecking yard for 10 years, has a different perspective. "I don't have to stop the water," he said. "I just have to make sure that it's clean."

Both Larson and his daughter, Deane, were eager to tell KP News about the containments they use to keep toxic materials from leaking into the ground, the water samples they submit to the county on a regular basis, and their ongoing efforts to understand relevant regulations and comply with them. "You really have to have a college education to understand the regulations," Deane Larson said. "But I call and ask questions."

On the day KP News was there, a pile of hand tools was sitting on top of one spill kit, which made it difficult to access, and the cleanup materials that were supposed to be stored inside the other kit were missing.

For his part, Ennis said, "Like anyone else I'm concerned with the level of contamination. That's why we spent \$45,000 to have an engineer come in and map out the situation."

Ennis says that after drilling bore holes, and taking soil samples, Raymond Donahue of Environmental Consultants Inc. concluded the site could be returned to "pristine condition" using one of two

methods. The first approach, which would cost Ennis about \$35,000, would be to scrape the topsoil into a pile and infuse it with contaminate eating microbes. That process would take years to complete.

The second cleanup method, which would cost approximately \$80,000 and could be completed in a matter of months, involves scraping the topsoil off and having it hauled away to be recycled. Either approach would force the wrecking yard to shut down, thereby forcing Larson out of business, and denying both men the incomes they presently derive from the property.

So, until the government forces some sort of action, there's no motivation for Larson or Ennis to do anything other than prevent further contamination. "You do what the law requires," Ennis said, "and that's what we're doing."

As for the possible contamination of Little Minter Creek, Ennis said, "Little Minter I don't think is affected. I haven't tested it and I don't think the county has. We haven't been cited for contaminating the creek."

Given the fact that the adjacent fire station recently sold for nearly half-a-million dollars, Ennis admits his property could be worth as much as \$1.5 million. He said they don't have any "near term plans" to sell the wrecking yard, but they would have to sell it if forced to close it.

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Landmarks Commission seeks members

Applications are being accepted to fill three positions on the Pierce County Landmarks Commission. Please contact the Advance Planning Office for an application. The deadline for submitting completed applications is Dec. 22.

For two of the positions, the county is seeking individuals who are practicing professionals in the fields of history, architecture or archaeology or who have professional or avocational knowledge and/or interest in community history,

architectural history or archaeology. The third position is for practicing architects or individuals with a professional/educational background in architecture.

The nine-member commission makes recommendations to the county executive and council on historic preservation-related matters including nominations to historic registers and applications for historic road names. In addition, the commission conducts design reviews and reviews special tax valuation applications on rehabilitation of historic properties. To receive an application, call 798-2783.



(From NASA, Page 1)

teacher Karen Borders, who applied for the highly competitive grant. As part of the three-year partnership program, which started during the school year 2004-05, the school participated in a variety of NASA-sponsored activities that included frequent visits by astronauts, trips by student or teacher teams to NASA facilities to participate in training and experiments, and cash grants that allowed the school to purchase videoconferencing, robotics and science equipment.

"It has engaged kids in science, technology, engineering and math — there's been some incredibly high-interest investigations and opportunities for teacher professional development we would not have been able to do without NASA," Borders said. "Some kids were inspired to explore science and aerospace careers."

And that is exactly what NASA hopes to achieve — inspire the next generation of explorers and show youngsters some real application of math and science. "It's important to show (students) the reasons for studying science," astronaut Col. T.J.

NASA Family Night

All KPMS families are invited to attend the NASA Family Night on Jan. 3, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the school. Activities will include robotics, a planetarium, and presentations by NASA scientists and the school's micro-gravity team. Dinner will be provided.

Cramer said in an interview before the school's NASA kick-off assembly at the end of October. "This is the generation that will be doing the future NASA projects." He said that part of his goal during his presentations at various schools is to inspire the younger generation "that by thinking outside of the box you can progress farther toward your dream."

Cramer, who works at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in Houston, told the assembly audience, which included local civic leaders and dignitaries: "I've seen a lot of schools... and spoke to a lot of schools, and let me tell you right now, this is absolutely the best, inspirational and (full of) enthusiasm."

In his presentation about NASA,



Left, astronaut Col. T.J. Cramer talks about current and future exploration projects at the KPMS NASA assembly.

Far left, staff members of the student newspaper "Eye of the Cougar," I-r, Erica Ma, Danae Fishman, Adrienne Torres, Chelsey Groves and Julie Sutherland, were assigned to interview NASA guests for the newspaper.

Bottom left, KPMS science teacher Karen Borders leads guests to the assembly.

Photos by
Mindi LaRose



Cramer made a link between science fiction writers and scientific discoveries, pointing out that technology such as radar and the laser "were first described accurately in science fiction."

"People were thinking for a long time outside the box, ahead, trying to predict what will happen," he said.

KPMS students have had various opportunities to think outside the box as part of their NASA activities. Several KPMS student experiments were selected by the aerospace agency through a competitive process. The latest, testing the impact of microgravity on the reaction rate between vinegar and soda, will be taken on a DC-9 low-gravity flight by a small team of teachers and students. The two students, PHS senior and KPMS alum John DeLeo, and KPMS/PHS alum Brett Knisely who is now a college sophomore, will not fly on the DC-9, but as the ground crew will do everything else alongside the teachers.

"Just getting the school geared up and students involved will be the most exciting part (of the project)," said one of the teachers who will fly in that aircraft, Kathy Tucker, who teaches math at KPMS.

In addition, other teachers will participate in a five-day weather-investigation program in Yellowstone and in national math and science conventions. For aerospace students, robotics, NASA videocasts, and space shuttle pilot panels are among this year's activities. Later in the year, middle schoolers will also lead NASA activities at the elementary schools.

One of this year's goals is to create a sustainability plan so the school can continue its space exploration activities once the grant expires at the end of this school year. Borders is on NASA's national committee that is discussing the idea of a program in which Explorer School "graduates" can become mentor schools. She also continues to look for other opportunities. Recently, she applied and received a grant from the National Gardening Association for a hydroponics activity. KPMS was one of 12 schools selected nationwide.

School Principal Sharon Shaffer, summed up the impact of the Explorer program on the school at the NASA assembly: "The NASA program has provided inspiration for us here... As a school, we continue to shoot for the stars."

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A Message from a Geoduck Clam Farmer

It seems to me that a sense of perspective has been lost in the current debate on geoduck clam farming. Puget Sound is in a crisis as can be seen most vividly by the fish kills now plaguing Hood Canal each summer. You can view a truly sad underwater video of last summer's fish kills by visiting the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife web site. The nutrient pollution which is devastating much of the marine life in Hood Canal and threatening much of Puget Sound is a worldwide phenomenon. The source for that nutrient over-enrichment is people.

Shellfish farming, and geoduck clams are shellfish, is recognized by many renowned individuals and institutions as one thing we as concerned citizens can do to help mitigate excessive nutrient enrichment. You can see this from the quotes below. What is amazing to me is that none of the folks opposed to geoduck farming seem to acknowledge the beneficial effects of shellfish aquaculture let alone ask themselves the question of whether their time, and your time, might be better spent addressing the real problems occurring in Puget Sound of a far greater magnitude than any perceived problems they see with geoduck clam farming. If this has any ring of truth to you, I urge you to call Representative Pat Lantz as well as the Pierce County Council and let them know that you think geoduck farming, like all shellfish aquaculture, is good for the marine environment.

Jim Gibbons
Seattle Shellfish
Olympia, WA

Shellfish and the Environment - What the Experts Are Saying

"Filter-feeding mollusks can clarify the water by consuming plankton in aquatic systems, significantly improving water quality. Mussel farms can remove nitrogen from water at a 70% higher rate than occurs in surrounding waters... Moreover, shellfish farmers are often among the loudest advocates for clean water." - Pew Oceans Commission. 2001. *Marine Aquaculture in the United States*. Arlington, Virginia.

"Nutrient over-enrichment is a significant problem for the coastal regions of the United States... Benthic filter feeders such as oysters, mussels, and many species of clams can have a major influence on phytoplankton populations in coastal waters." - National Research Council, the principal operating agency of both the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering. 2000. *Clean Coastal Waters: Understanding and Reducing the Effects of Nutrient Pollution*. National Academy Press. Washington, DC.

"One type of aquaculture - mollusk farming - actually reduces nutrient pollution... Because 35-40% of the total organic matter ingested by a mollusk is used for growth and permanently removed by harvest of the mollusk." - Environmental Defense. 1997. *Murky Waters: Environmental Effects of Aquaculture in the US*. New York, New York.

"EPA notes that mollusks are filter feeders and, in some cases, are recommended not only as a food source, but also as a pollution control technology in and of themselves. Mollusks remove pollutants from ambient waters via filtration." - Environmental Protection Agency. September 2002. 57 Fed. Reg. 57,872, 57,885. Washington, DC.

"...we believe that there is generally a net overall increase in aquatic resource functions in estuaries or bays where shellfish are produced." - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. September 2006. *Proposed Nation Wide Permit D for Shellfish Aquaculture*. 71 Fed. Reg. 56,258, 56,275. Washington, DC.

"Excessive nutrients are by far the worst cause of the (Chesapeake) Bay's pollution... The Bay's health is deteriorating leaving the Bay's oysters and signature blue crabs at risk as well as the people who make their livelihood off fishing in the Bay." - Sierra Club. 2005. *Sick Waters - Excess Nutrients Harm the Health of Our Waters*. San Francisco, CA.

"These filtering and recycling processes are critical in regulating the health of coastal ecosystems. The processes take on even greater importance as human activities and related pollution discharges increase in shoreline areas. The processes help counteract the potentially damaging effects of excessive nutrient enrichment of coastal waters, a process known as eutrophication." - Puget Sound Action Team. July 2003. *Keystone Species of the Estuary - Bivalve Basics*. Olympia, WA.

"Oceans have a mighty appetite for swallowing carbon dioxide," and "lovely carbon reservoirs-as oshells to the layman" are one place the missing carbon goes. - National Geographic. February 2004. *The Case of the Missing Carbon*. National Geographic Society. Washington, DC.

"Eastern oysters are experts at sucking up the algae and silt that plague the Chesapeake." - US News & World Report. Dec. 24, 1997. *How to revive the Chesapeake Bay? Filter it with billions and billions of oysters*. US News and World Report. New York, New York.

"Dense populations of oysters and other suspension-feeding bivalves graze plankton so efficiently that they limit blooms of phytoplankton and prevent symptoms of eutrophication, just as occurs with grazing by zooplankton in freshwater ecosystems." - Science Magazine. Vol. 293, July 2001. *Historical Overfishing and the Recent Collapse of Coastal Ecosystems*. Science Magazine. Washington, DC.

"We are deeply concerned that more of these dead zones may exist in other parts of southern Hood Canal. Our treaty-protected resources and tribal economy are threatened by the declining health of Hood Canal." - Dave Herrera, fisheries policy expert for the Skokomish Tribe. September 2006. *Bacteria Thriving in Hood Canal*. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Seattle, Washington.

"On an eco-friendly scale, bivalves generally rate highest among the more than 220 species of fish and shellfish that are cultivated commercially. Mussels and oysters are filter-feeders that make the surrounding water clearer..." - Time Magazine. November 25, 2002. *Is Fish Farming Safe?* Time Magazine. New York, New York.

"Unlike other farmed species, shellfish remove organic particulates, suspended matter, and nutrients from the water and tend to improve overall water quality. Because shellfish are filter feeders they act as natural biofilters in the water, removing phytoplankton, sediments, and organic particles. For example, it is estimated that every kilogram of shellfish meat harvested results in a removal of 16.8 grams of nitrogen." - SeaWeb, leading voices for a healthy ocean. 2004. *At a Crossroads: Will Aquaculture Fulfill the Promise of the Blue Revolution?* A SeaWeb Clearinghouse Report. Silver Springs, Maryland.



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Once again, Windermere/Key Realty agents are sponsoring children for the *Holiday Helper Program at the Children's Home Society*. Toys and clothes will be provided for several children through this wonderful program.

We would like to thank all our clients for a productive and fulfilling year and wish all of you a wonderful *Holiday Season*. It's an exciting time on the Key Peninsula with lots of residential growth, new construction everywhere and new business activity. We try to be aware of all the changes, keep you informed and be ready to help with all your real estate needs.



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A 'Gremlin' story

Key Pen falconer answers the call of the wild

By Colleen Slater, KP News

As a child, Dean Johnson brought home injured animals and birds needing care. One day as an adult, he was out working and saw a red-tailed hawk with both feet injured. He took the bird home to nurse it back to health.

After being released, she flew off, but returned to the area, and Johnson with his wife, Kathy, often see her in the surrounding trees. She apparently nests and raises her young there. They identify her from one toe upraised, "like she's sipping tea," says Kathy. That toe was unable to be worked into the healing cast Johnson applied.

Caring for this hawk, Johnson learned about the Washington Falconry Association, and decided to become an apprentice falconer. This required obtaining state and federal permits, building housing with an outside weathering area, and learning more about falcon care. Johnson has been an apprentice falconer for two years, and will complete his apprenticeship next spring.

The housing, 12 by 12 by 12 feet, with one window, is called a mew. The weathering area is surrounded and covered with a particular kind of wire. Johnson's mew is carpeted to keep the birds talons sharp.

Gremlin, the red-tailed hawk Johnson currently has, was captured in the wild, with a rodent in the trap. When trapped, the young bird is placed in the mew, with the window covered, and food pushed through a trap door. The falconer steps into the mew to "get acquainted" and gradually spends more time with the bird, until it is used to his presence. This may take from a few days to two weeks.

"Gremlin calmed fast for a wild bird," Kathy says.

The Johnsons bring Gremlin inside their home to watch television with them on a regular basis, but have to cover the interior of the room with plastic. "She's pretty good," notes Kathy. Gremlin even squats to "do her business," but some birds can send a stream of droppings some distance.

Johnson takes Gremlin hunting at least once a week to areas where he knows there are rodents and rabbits. Gremlin



flies to a tree, and Johnson beats the brush to stir up the small animals. The hawk will return to his arm at a whistle command, as she's been trained.

The practice of capturing these birds and nurturing them to maturity is done to increase the population, which seems to rapidly diminish in the wild. The falconry program, with active chapters in Port Orchard, Tacoma, and Graham, has recorded increased numbers of red-tailed hawks and other native birds of prey.

Johnson raises rabbits and pigeons to feed the hawk, but buys the rats used for food.

When the time for release of the bird nears, it is kept in the mew with darkened windows, and the falconer gradually withdraws, throwing in the food. Johnson will release Gremlin in the area where she was captured.

After the forced captivity in the darkened mew, without human contact, the birds readily fly to freedom. The falconer feels the emotional break more than the bird, but he will capture another young one soon, and spend a year becoming attached to that one.



Dean Johnson shows off Gremlin's red tail feathers.

Photos by Colleen Slater

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FROM PIONEER STOCK

HENRY RAMSDELL, LIVING A GOOD LIFE IN LAKEBAY

By Colleen Slater, KP News

Henry Ramsdell has lived a good life on the Key Peninsula. His father worked on the Lorenz boat, Arcadia, and moved to Lakebay rather than staying in Tacoma, when Ramsdell was less than a year old. His dad was a deck hand, but did whatever was needed on board.

When the boats stopped operating, Mr. Ramsdell turned to logging, worked on fishing boats at times, and did tractor work around the area. He put in most of the roads at Penrose Park.

The family lived near the water in Lakebay, where Henry's younger brothers, Dale and Fred, were born.

"We had a wonderful life as kids," says Ramsdell. "We didn't have anything much, but then neither did anybody else."

They did have the beach, a boat his grandfather built, and the woods. "We could go anywhere in the woods," he says. His grandfather lived in a cabin near the gravel pit down Cornwall Road. The Ramsdells had 40 acres there, and built a home on the land.

"We didn't get in much trouble when we

were kids," Ramsdell says. "We knew we'd have to pay for it if we did." He tells about stopping on the way home from school, going down to the beach near the bridge at Home and throwing rocks at ducks. He and his friends got muddy shoes and pants, so they "cleaned up" in the creek, but his mother knew where he'd been, and laid on the punishment.

Ramsdell's uncle took him and his sister, Muriel, to Gig Harbor to see the animated Disney movie "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," when he was about 8. It was the first time Ramsdell had been to Gig Harbor by car, as they always traveled by boat, and he had no idea where the road went.

"Everybody had chickens," he says, although their family only raised enough for their own use. Some chicken houses were two-story affairs, and to someone coming in on the boat at night, Home and Lakebay looked like cities because of the chicken house lights. Many folks had electricity for their chickens before they put it in their own homes. The Ramsdells didn't have it until after World War II.

Ramsdell and his friends picked brush



Photo courtesy Henry Ramsdell

Henry and his sister, Muriel, with Santa at Rhodes Department Store in Tacoma, ca 1931. Ramsdell has a similar photo with different kids, printed in the Tacoma News Tribune a few years ago, with the number (upper left corner) only a couple of digits different.

and peeled cascara for spending money. He milked cows at Dusty Hoskin's dairy at Delano after the hired milker was fired. Ramsdell knew how to operate the milking machines, and Wes Rickert came

on board to do the stripping.

Ramsdell bought his first car from money earned on the dairy job. He wanted a blue Cord he'd found in Shelton.

"The inside looked like blue velvet," he says. His dad wouldn't let him buy the front-wheel-drive car that turned and ran fast. His dad was afraid the boy would kill himself. "So I got a '34 Ford coupe," he says.

When he was about 17, Ramsdell drove to Havre, Mont., to spend a couple of weeks with a friend. He stayed for several years. He went to apprentice school, learned diesel mechanics, and worked for the railroad in Havre.

In 1951, he joined the Army and became a medic for his two years in the service. After the service, Ramsdell returned to Montana for two or three years. "Montana has two seasons (hot and cold), but it took me a couple of years to figure it out," he says.

He came back to Washington, worked for a year at the Navy yard in Bremerton, then at the Veteran's Hospital at American Lake. His second job was towing and being a mechanic. Ramsdell and Alberta, his wife of 20 years, live not far from where he's spent most of his 78 years.

"It's been a good life here," Ramsdell says.

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Historical Society views antique medical equipment

The Key Peninsula Historical Society held a quarterly meeting and potluck at the end of October. An antique crank telephone was donated to the museum by Qwest Telecom Pioneers, Tacoma Club. Chuck Jorgenson, vintage telephone restorer and collector, made the presentation.

Dr. William Roes hosted the group at the Key Medical Center to give a brief overview of the history of medical practice on the peninsula, and to show off his extensive collection of antique medical equipment.

Roes, who holds a fascination for medical history, showed a chart of doctors who practiced on the peninsula beginning in 1897 in Vaughn, and commented on what he knew of each, including humorous and unusual tidbits of information. Some people in the room added their own remembrances.

He then invited the group into a room where he displayed a varied collection of antique equipment, instru-

ments, medical volumes, and even an actual skull. While in medical school, he wanted a real human skull, but such items weren't available, so he settled for a ferris-concrete replica. He later received the real thing from a friend whose doctor uncle died. Roes noted his friend finally got the "skeleton out of his closet."

Other items in Roes' collection include a surgical kit from the early 1900s, a blood pressure cup with mercury, a hand-blown urinal, and "sippy cups" for invalid feeding. He noted the early scalpels were made like fine cutlery, and one was double-ended — one end for circumcision, the other end for surgery on tongue-tied patients.

One medical reference includes instructions on how to never grow old.

Several items in Dr. Roes' collection have been donated from people on the Key Peninsula.

The Museum will be closed during December and January, and reopens on Thursday, Feb. 1, from 1-4 p.m.



Dr. William Roes shows off an early electric light.

Photo and story by Colleen Slater

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Arts organization wraps up successful year

Jerry Libstaff
The Genuine ARTicle



Two Waters Arts Alliance has accomplished another successful year of art endowment on Key Peninsula. As the holidays approach, TWAA concludes another successful season and begins preparation for the coming year.

Under the leadership of the President Magill Lang and Vice President Frank Garrett, the organization has brought new and exciting inspiration to the community. TWAA moves into 2007 with renewed dedication and excitement. Lang, a director at YMCA's Camp Seymour, highly compliments the direction of TWAA. Her background in providing activities for the community provides a great basis for the arts alliance. Though she is totally involved,



Zach Potts, age 5, tries on his "clown mask" made with a little help from his mom at a Two Waters' sponsored mask making workshop. Three women who are officers of Two Waters ran this event, Margo MacDonald, Paddy Gilson and Magill Lang (president of Two Waters). About 20 kids came to the workshop on Oct. 29. Several types of masks could be made including Mardi Gras masks, paper cutout masks and window screen masks.

Photo by Mindi LaRose

Lang's work schedule demands an extreme amount of time during the summer months. During that period, Garrett has been the driving force behind the organization. Garrett, a member of the Foundation Board of Tacoma Community College as well as other nonprofit boards, has made an invaluable contribution to TWAA this year.

As always, the next season begins with TWAA's widely anticipated annual function, The Spring Fling. The Key Peninsula evening highlights local artists, musicians, food and refreshments in an event that has become a community essential the past several years.

TWAA continues to support artists and provide access to the arts through adult classes, family programs, and art introduction for youngsters in our area. Program Director Carolyn Scott-Arnold says, "We're continuing to expand our schedule to benefit more and more of our neighbors. We're looking for suggestions from the community to focus on things they would like to experience."

In 2007, TWAA will join the Key Peninsula Civic Center Association to present The Flavor of Fall, a huge KPCCA fund-raising event that happens bi-annually. Both groups depend on volunteers for support. If you would like to be part of the local art scene, meet your neighbors and have a wonderful experience, contact TWAA's program director at carolyn@carolyns-finearts.com. You don't have to be an artist to be involved. There are many things you can do to help. Volunteers are essential to the experience. All of your strengths will benefit our community. In addition, if you have suggestions for new art programs that you would like to see locally, TWAA is always open to better serving their client base. Contact Scott-Arnold with suggestions.

TWAA was established five years ago to work with youngsters in need, and has progressed to a program that enhances our arts experience on the Key Peninsula. The organization has been given recognition for its work and awarded honors by Pierce County and others. In the years the Two Waters Arts Alliance has been in existence, they have become an inspiration and principal element of life on the Key Peninsula.

Jerry Libstaff is a past president of TWAA and a writer who lives in Vaughn.



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Vaughn boat ramp shows improvements

Photo and story by Frank Slater

The county road crew repaired the Vaughn boat ramp earlier this year. The upper beach had eroded on both sides of the ramp, and its unsupported outer edges were crumbling. The crew poured new supported-concrete edges.

Chuck West, KP Fire District 16 division chief, says the ramp at Vaughn is their first choice for access to Case Inlet for search and rescue work, because it's close to the station. With their new rescue boats able to get up to 60 mph, it doesn't take long to reach any particular scene once rescuers are in the water. The boats are light enough so that on a low tide the firemen can muscle them across a beach and into the water if needed.

Firemen, however, had some difficulty launching their personal water craft to respond to the plane crash in Rocky Bay on May 18 on a 1.4 foot minus tide. The truck had to move onto the beach, which was soft near the water's edge.

West's major concerns about the peninsula boat ramps are access and



maintenance. Occasionally the Vaughn ramp area is packed so full at the foot of Hall Road, it's difficult to get to the water.

Kip Clinton, KP Metropolitan Park District commissioner, says it's the county's problem. The KP Metropolitan Park District encourages maintenance of the boat ramps and

improved parking, but has a limited budget. She says the people out here are so independent, they don't have an organized boating group, so are unable to speak with a unified voice. Clinton encourages local citizens to make their wishes known to Pierce County Council and Councilman Terry Lee.



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OBITUARY

Gena Prechek Leonard "Jolly G"

Gena Prechek Leonard, a resident of Vaughn since 1969, died peacefully on Oct. 30. She was born in Pasco, Wash., on Aug. 14, 1930, but grew up in Tacoma. She had worked in the benefits office and regional accounting with St. Regis Paper Co. for 12 years and as a receptionist at Haven of Rest



LEONARD

Funeral Home for many years. She traveled extensively and lived in Morocco, Italy and Japan, during which time she worked for the Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Army.

Leonard was a member of Vaughn Community Church and was active in a number of ministries over the years. She enjoyed gardening, crocheting, traveling, reading, and animals, but most of all going on adventures with her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Family members include children Kelli M. Leonard of Sitka, Alaska; Jaymie P. Crider (Russell) of Hunters, Wash.; James S. Leonard of Bellingham; daughter-in-law Sue Leonard of Tacoma; sister Barbara Prechek of England; seven grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by son Michael and brother John Prechek.

Her life was celebrated at the Key Peninsula Civic Center on Nov. 4. Interment at Vaughn Bay Cemetery.

Remembrances may be made to Vaughn Community Church Youth Ministries, PO Box 269, Vaughn, WA 98394.

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Key Peninsula Lutheran changes pastors

By Colleen Slater, KP News

Last month, the Key Peninsula Lutheran Church congregation and friends bid adieu to Richard Hermstad, their interim pastor, and said an official hello to incoming pastor Heinz Malon.

Hermstad, who served the congregation as part-time pastor for the past year, was roasted and toasted at the event, with free-flying puns dispersed in all directions.

He and wife Marilyn have enjoyed being part of the church, and consider the members extended family, brothers and sisters in Christ.

"KPLC has been a blessing to us," he said.

In a recent statement, Hermstad noted, "It still amazes me that people who turn toward caring for others discover a strength within themselves that they could not have been told and would not believe was possible." As a pastor, he's seen it happen before, and was pleased to watch it

happen here, with the congregation preparing meals, giving away food, and honoring their guests. "It's what the grace of God looks like as it comes to us through the lives of real people," he said.

Hermstad continues to serve as part-time chaplain at the Tacoma Lutheran Retirement Community.

Malon, recently retired from 21 years of U.S. Navy service, moved his family to the peninsula two years ago, so son Raymond could attend school. Malon was stationed in Korea at the time, and then became chaplain at the Bangor submarine base for his final tour of active duty.

Malon is a first-generation American of German descent, and lived in New York City in his early years. He joined the Army right out of high school, later had a civilian job in Germany, and then was in the Navy for four years, where he obtained his college education. While at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, he was a part-time

pastor nearby. The Lutheran Church and the Navy had different requirements for him, but at a certain point, they linked up, so he was ordained as both pastor and naval chaplain.

His years as Navy chaplain took him to Fort Riley, Kan., Iceland, Norfolk, Washington, D.C.; and on the USS Anzio, where he met his Navy journalist wife, Robin. Much of his work was training — teaching recruiters how to deal with chaplains, Catholic lay leaders in providing Catholic services when a priest was not available, and teaching financial management. In his role as chaplain, he could "switch hats" to move from discussing spousal communication to financial problems.

In Korea, about 400 sailors were part of his detail, and they did a lot of local projects, such as gifts to orphanages, helping the elderly, fixing up the villages. After a typhoon destroyed a village of 100, Malon organized a community relations project, where the sailors helped restore homes and facilities. He received a rare letter of commendation for that service.

Malon used to run marathons, and has a

"It still amazes me that people who turn toward caring for others discover a strength within themselves that they could not have been told and would not believe was possible."

— Richard Hermstad

goal to run one in every state, with four to his credit to date. He enjoys reading and loves history.

He believes a pastor should live in the community, and understands his ministry isn't restricted to church members. He isn't used to the quiet, rural peninsula, but feels very welcomed, likes the spirit of the congregation, and enjoys sitting on his deck at home, absorbing the atmosphere.

KPLC did a good job of self-study on the church description, Malon says, and he likes their outward-looking approach, with a hunger to serve God and God's people. He plans to be a shepherd, rather than a taskmaster, and build on what Pastor Hermstad has done.



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Winter safety tips

By Chuck West
Key Peninsula Fire Department

The north winds are blowing and the power is bound to go out. Are you ready? I am.

In our house, we actually make an adventure out of the experience, and you can, too. Like any great adventure, it takes a little planning and preparation.

Be prepared. Just like we tell you for earthquakes or any natural disaster, you need to stock up on supplies. I like to have enough food and water for my family to last at least a week at home. But don't forget the other essentials like batteries, medicines, fuel for generators, pet supplies and activities for you and the kids. Have several battery-powered lighting sources on hand, such as small lanterns or fluorescent lights.

Have a safe heating source. During the winter months space heaters cause 50 percent of home fires. Most of these fires are started from combustible objects placed too close to the heaters. Also, do not use portable petroleum

More safety information is available on the Fire District 16's Website at www.Keypeninsulafire.org.

fueled (propane, kerosene etc) heaters inside the house. Carbon monoxide kills. A properly wired generator is a safe option. Contact an electrical contractor for proper switching of emergency generators.

Use candles with care. Five percent of the house fires are started by candles. Extinguish candles when you leave the room and before going to sleep. Use candle holders that are sturdy, won't tip over easily, won't burn and are large enough to collect dripping wax. Explain to children that the candle is not a toy and should be treated with caution.

Stay away from downed power lines. Even if you don't see arcing, the lines may be live. I've seen power lines turn rocks into glass. What the energy does to us humans is ugly. Teach your children these dangers.

Avoid driving in ice and snow. It's



best to prepare ahead of time so that you don't have to leave the house. I've assisted so many people driving the roads in the morning after a snow fall just to see them turned around and sent home because the business was closed anyway. Call ahead. Don't go unless you absolutely have to. And if you have to, prepare your car with good tires and some emergency supplies. Peninsula Light Co. sells a small preparedness kit for travel.

Be safe. Plan ahead.

Chuck West is a Key Peninsula Fire Department division chief. The department can be reached at 884-2222.

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Out & About



A curious pair peek inside the Seabeck Pizza restaurant a day before the establishment opened in Wauna. *Photo by Kristen Pierce* Below, Helen Fravel chats with Doris Warner, as Barb Bence shops, at the Longbranch Church Holiday Bazaar. *Photo by Colleen Slater*



A group of local leaders, including Reps. Derek Kilmer and Pat Lantz, Peninsula School District Superintendent Terry Bouck, and PSD Board of Directors members Jill Johnson and Jill Guersney, recite the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of the NASA Kick-Off Assembly at Key Peninsula Middle School. *Photo by Mindi LaRose*



In the center of this group of "nuns" is Key Peninsula's "Sister Mary Hubert," aka Marianne McColley, surrounded by, on the left, "Sister Robert Anne" Tamara Nelson, "Sister Mary Amnesia" Renee Marshall-Smith, and on the right by "Sister Mary Regina" Sylvia Shaw and "Sister Mary Leo" Palmer Scheutzow, all of whom, including their puppets, are having a ball at their dress rehearsal of Gig Harbor's Paradise Theatre's production of the musical comedy Nunsense! The play will be staged at the theater's new location at 9911 Burnham Drive weekends from Dec. 8 through 17. *Photo by Hugh McMillan*



Above, Rose Malmgren puts away the "goodies" after a successful KP Senior Society Holiday Dinner in November. She and fellow member Lou Mauk cooked two 14- and 20-pound turkeys for their 25 guests. Malmgren says the Senior Society "is always looking for and welcomes new members." Their next party will be a Christmas party in December. Left, left to right, Historian Arminda Doggett and Irene Davis are placing photos in the Key Peninsula Senior Society scrapbook. The photos are from past get-togethers including the Costume Party held in October. *Photos by Mindi LaRose*



The beautiful colors of fall on the Key Peninsula are a reminder of why we love it here. *Photo by Kristen Pierce*