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THE AWARD-WINNING VOICE OF THE KEY PENINSULA

November 2020 Vol. 47 No. 11

Key Peninsula News Wins 14 Statewide 'Better Newspaper' Awards

STAFF REPORT

For the third consecutive year, the Key Peninsula News won top honors for writing, photography and advertising in the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association's 2020 Better Newspaper Contest, held Oct. 9.

Now in its 133rd year, WNPA presents awards for work published the previous 12 months. This year, 51 newspapers submitted 1,420 entries judged by the New York Press Association.

The KP News received 14 awards in multiple categories from all four divisions, which include publications with circulations ranging from 2,500 to over 11,000. KP News won eight awards in 2019 and three in 2018.

Writer Sara Thompson received one of the WNPA's three highest individual honors when it named her Feature Writer of the Year for her articles on local artists and icons, including Pat Thompson



(June 2019), Tip Toland (Sept. 2019), Phoebe Toland and Dick Notkin (Dec. 2019), Mel Hing (Jan. 2020), and Hugh and Janice McMillan (Feb. 2020).

The judges commented that "Every piece in this collection is well thought out, easy to read and smoothly uses elegant language and style to tell the stories behind local artists... Not only does she comprehensively recount the interesting backgrounds of these subjects, but she sharply shares their unique perspective and aspirations behind art and what expression means.

"Half the battle writing a brilliant feature is finding fascinating people with stories worth telling, and this journalist clearly has strong enough roots in the community to do that. (She) clearly had deep, personal conversations with her subjects and delight-

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COVID-19 Spike Forces PSD Back to Remote Learning, Closing Classrooms Again

As Pierce County cases surge, most students will leave the classroom Nov. 2.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

The Peninsula School District plan to invite more students back to in-person learning in November stalled Oct. 23 when, in response to record-setting COVID-19 infections in the county, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department advised schools to cease classroom instruction.

The last day of in-person classes will be Monday, Nov. 2.

PSD welcomed kindergartners and first graders back to classrooms Sept. 28 and intended to invite second graders to return Nov. 5. Then the county infection rate hit a record Oct. 23 with 139 cases in a single day, 20 cases higher than the peak of the second wave in July, prompting the recommendation.

In an Oct. 22 letter to Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal, Dr. Anthony Chen, director of health of TPCHD, clarified its policy, writing "We will continue to closely watch the case rate and other metrics to determine when to issue our recommendation that schools stop in-person learning, but the school district or private schools will make the final decision."

"Our kindergarten and first grade children are thriving in school in person, and we have avoided any spikes in cases locally," PSD Superintendent Art Jarvis told KP News before the new recommendation was issued.

"Although Gig Harbor and Key Peninsula area cases are lower than Pierce County's, TPCHD has local control over the county as a whole and will not make exceptions for specific areas within the county," Jarvis said in a statement Oct. 23.

In his Oct. 22 letter, Chen also said "No school is an island and variations based on local, district-specific measures are only



Vaughn Elementary kindergartner Hanna Forseth walks to class Oct. 16. *Kamryn Minch, KP News*

meaningful if parents stop commuting out and workers and visitors are barred from entering... Our position, consistent with the Governor's Safe Start plan, is restrictions apply countywide based on countywide disease activity level."

The county 14-day case rate was 102 per 100,000 at that time, according to TPCHD, well above the "moderate risk" level of 75 and far beyond the target of under 25.

"We have gotten strong and very passionate opinions from both sides," PSD Board President Deborah Krishnadasan told the KP News. She said that PSD was one of the first school districts in Pierce

County to offer in-person teaching and that other districts, hoping to open in November, had come to learn from PSD.

"While we have seen Pierce County's numbers rise, our local area case numbers

remain significantly lower," Krishnadasan said. "The board supports the district's plan to follow the Department of Health decision tree guidance...while exercising caution in bringing our students back slowly."

"I have not been able to work because I have to stay home and take care of the kids now," said Lakebay resident Renée Harding, who has second-, third- and fifth-graders attending Evergreen Elementary School

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"PEOPLE WANT TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL, BUT THEY'RE ANGRY AT SCHOOL. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO WEAR MASKS, BUT THERE ARE ANTI-MASK PEOPLE. THEY JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO PROCESS IT."



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PUBLISHING BOARD: Sara Thompson, president, Bruce Macdonald, John Nichols, Frank Slater, Bob Wilkins

UNDERWRITTEN WITH SUPPORT FROM:

The Angel Guild

NewsMatch/Miami Foundation

Rotary Club of Gig Harbor

Member WNPA and INN

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INTO THE DARK TIMES

Here's What I Think About That

LISA BRYAN,
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

We are headed deeper into the forest with the darkest days ahead.

On my walk this chilly fall morning, my breath along with the dog's meets the cold and hangs suspended mid-air. It won't be long before the trees shed the rest of their leaves. Untended, growing wild along the roadside, the last deep red apples cling to their branches as if for dear life.

All of spring, summer and now well into autumn has been spent living with an unwelcome and untamed coronavirus that continues to disrupt nearly every aspect of our society. Infections are rising in this, our third wave of COVID-19 in Pierce County. Wishing otherwise won't make it go away.

The pandemic has broken vital connections. We miss the random encounters, the unexpected conversations, the joy of gathering. We've missed those opportunities at Key Pen Parks; the KP Livable Community Fair, comedy nights and the Winter Warm-up Craft Fair, all held at the KP Civic Center; the annual Logging Show that benefits KPCS Food Bank and Senior Center; the time-honored Memorial and Labor Day dances at the Longbranch Improvement Club; the Two Waters Art Walk in Key Center, and the grand KP Farm Tour — all traditions put on hold.

Other traditions suffer too.

My sister phoned the other day to make holiday plans. I just couldn't bring myself to say the words I needed to say: "We're staying home, within our safe bubble." It breaks my heart that I haven't seen my sister and family since last Christmas. And probably won't see them this one.

It's not easy. Nothing feels easy in this season, this pandemic, this onslaught of political vitriol. How many times have I gone back to the car to get the mask that I know I need to wear? The cold weather means fewer gatherings with friends socially distanced outside. Zoom meetings, yuck. And don't even mention haircuts.

We're all suffering from pandemic fatigue. And, like I said, we're in for another long stretch of isolation.

But what's always there, ready to give

hope, is the amazing community spirit and energy of the Key Peninsula. People out here take care of each other.

They volunteer at the food banks, they drive seniors to the doctor, they collect funds to pay for a funeral. They make sure kids have backpacks filled with food; they find resources for families and children struggling to make ends meet. They live down the road from

you, and even if you don't know their name, they seem to be ready to give what they can to help you and all the people around you.

This very newspaper is made possible by those kinds of people. Volunteers who are driven to make a good paper, a better story, a more interesting photo. And they do it for the love of the result: a newspaper the community can depend on for connection.

I can't count how many times people have rushed up to thank me for introducing them to some part or aspect of the KP they didn't know existed.

Last year, I received a call from a reader on the East Coast who summers on the KP and subscribes to keep her eye on what's going on here. She read the profile we published of Mary Mazur and wanted to meet her since they share a love of Chinese history. It was the same article our good friend Ted Ralston wrote and earned him a posthumous statewide award. Who knew how long a reach our newspaper has?

Every year, we enter a competition with other local papers conducted by the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association. This year, our staff earned 14 awards, including best-in-state feature writing and photography.

The awards confirm the value and appreciation readers give the paper. Last year, readers donated a record amount that ensured our continued success this year. But where it really paid off was in our ability to continue working uninterrupted in a crisis of epic proportions, continuing to publish with more pages, more color and more news about our community coping with crisis.

That kind of connection and support is more important now than ever before. Independent local newspapers are

struggling. Many have gone out of business or been gobbled up and homogenized by conglomerates. But our advertisers maintained their support for us and our independent, nonprofit model in the most uncertain of times, and our donors continued to give.

Now we're asking for

your support again.

Thanks to a consortium of foundations that recognize the vital role and value of local journalism, we are pleased that NewsMatch — a national matching-gift campaign — will again multiply the generosity of contributions to KP News beginning this month.

These are hard times and they affect each of us differently. But know that you are not alone and we really can do together what we could not achieve alone. Remember the compassion that feels so good goes both directions. Be gentle, be kind and keep the faith.



AND DON'T EVEN MENTION HAIRCUTS.



Your vote counts.

Take your ballot to a mailbox or dropbox today.

Key Peninsula locations: Purdy Fire Station; Lake Kathryn and Key Center Food Markets; and Home Park.

Let your voice be heard.

SCHOOLS FROM PAGE 1

online. “I have friends where both parents are working and they are struggling. They just don’t think it’s fair that you can go to Target and Costco and go to restaurants, but our children can’t go back to school.

“I just don’t like that this whole thing has affected kids so much,” she said. “They understand, but they don’t. People want to go back to school, but they’re angry at school. We’re supposed to wear masks, but there are anti-mask people. They just don’t know how to process it.”

Shelby Johnston has a first-grader at Evergreen who was grateful to be back in school.

“My daughter is really upset because she’s the kind of kid who really thrives on in-class teaching,” Johnston said. “When school closed in March, she turned into a totally different kid. She was very upset, very moody, not wanting to do school work or anything.

“I’m the Evergreen PTA president, so I see both sides,” she said. “I don’t really know who to be upset with. I understand the district is caught in the middle, I just wish they would make a decision and stick with it.”

“We found out how complicated it is and how many layers there are,” said Marci Cummings-Cohoe, a Vaughn Elementary School second grade teacher and union representative who is working on the next phase of reopening. “It’s not just teachers and students and parents. It’s the lunch ladies, the bus drivers, the paraeducators. It’s how to set up rooms to keep everyone safe.”

With distancing guidelines, classroom size is limited to 15. Typical K-1 classrooms have about 23 students. Because some families decided to continue with remote learning and others declined to enroll, most elementary schools were able to accommodate students who wanted to attend in person. In the future, if more students want to return and distancing guidelines remain as they are, that may be a challenge.

Enrollment in all public schools in Washington is down 2.8% this year; Pierce County’s overall enrollment decreased by about the same amount. Kindergarten numbers account for about a third of the decrease, according to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

PSD enrollment is down by 7% or 700 students this year, more than double the state and county average. Krishnadasan said that the decrease in kindergarten enrollment and an increase in the number of high school students enrolled in Running Start accounts for the majority of the loss, which will lead to about \$7 million less in state funding.

Read the TPCHD recommendation at www.tpchd.org/healthy-people/diseases/covid-19-information-for-schools ■

Local Students on Virtual School

KP News asked three KP kids to describe their online class experience this year.



ALLISON TAYLOR: ONLINE EVERGREEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FIFTH-GRADER

We have a morning meeting and then we have our specialist, except on Wednesdays, and then we do our math, and then we have recess, and then we do our English language arts or our reading stuff, and then there’s lunch recess, and then there’s independent work just to catch up on anything.

It’s pretty nice. Sometimes it’s kind of frustrating, but it’s not as bad as I thought it would be. Sometimes we have a question and we go to Zoom and wait a while, and by the time you’re on you can’t remember your question. I can’t do Zoom if my brother’s playing a game at the same time.

I think there are 20 something kids in class. You can’t really talk to each other except on Fridays at the meeting at the end of the day. Not many people come to it but kids are getting along because they can’t really talk to each other any other time. People are being frustrated with some things.

I’m trying my best. I like to go up to my neighbor’s a lot, I like to go up there pretty much every day and also I just like to go outside.

Right now I think I could do it for a couple more months. I miss my friends a lot and I wish that I could see them and that we were in person. The kindergartners and first graders are lucky because they get to be in actual school.



DYLAN SHIPMAN: ONLINE KEY PENINSULA MIDDLE SCHOOL EIGHTH-GRADER

It’s hard to say this early how the year is going. It’s obviously going to be different, but I wouldn’t say it’s going to be a bad different. I might even say it’s going to be a good different because this is going to teach us a lot of new stuff, both the teachers and the students.

It will never be the same online. It’s the equivalent of saying socialize when each of you guys has a box around your head. Some teachers will give us short breaks during Zoom to go get a drink or whatever, but they also turn the chat on and we can talk, we can talk about movies, we can talk about turtles, you know, just talk.

In Language Arts we have discussions sometimes that will go on for 20 minutes, 30 minutes, and we interact that way.

One of the longer discussions was on “would you rather be innocent and be happy because you don’t know anything that’s going on that’s bad, or would you rather not have any innocence and because of what is going on be sad and depressed?” The majority of people in that class said we should know some but we shouldn’t overload ourselves with news. My example actually was, “How are we supposed to fix problems if we’re so innocent we don’t know anything about them?”

The teachers are going out of their comfort zones, they’re taking extra time, they’re adapting, they’re being really understanding, and I feel like if they didn’t do all that our year would be very different.

Especially Band. The purpose of Band is to be a band family and to play together and it’s very, very different when you do that over Zoom. We’ve been playing as a whole ensemble for two years and then you put four walls around everyone and say, “play together” or “learn together.” It’s not the same, but it’s the best we can do so we’re going to do it.



GRACE NESBIT: ONLINE PENINSULA HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE

It’s a lot less fun when you’re not with your friends.

There are six core classes, then I have Zero Hour for band, and there’s Home Room on Wednesdays, so technically I have eight classes. Home Room is kind of weird; it’s a class that’s like a mind break for you in the middle of the week. So far, we’re doing getting-to-know-you exercises.

It’s definitely a lot more work than freshman year. I feel like the teachers have the mindset that since you’re at home they can give you twice the workload.

I’m just trying to go with the flow. Whatever gets thrown at me, I’m just going with it. I’d like the online formatting to be easier. With internet problems, some submissions don’t go through completely. I’m a good student but if things don’t go through, then you have a bunch of Fs in the gradebook. All the teachers understand because they’re struggling with it too.

I’ve seen some friends in person a few times, but otherwise it’s all social media and texting. That’s like all the socializing we can do.

Swim and water polo practice is definitely helping. We’re able to practice again, in pods. We’re six pods in three groups and the groups have different time slots. Just getting your mind off of school and getting back in the water feels so good.

I also just got accepted into the student leadership board for the Holocaust Museum in Seattle, so I think I’m going to be a lot busier but it’s definitely going to help me get my mind off school.

I think everyone’s just trying to get through this. I hope we’re back in school by March, at the latest. ■

Pandemic Fatigue Could Cause the Next Wave of COVID-19 Infections

Tired of dealing with this? You're not alone, and that's a problem.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Pierce County is in Phase 2 of reopening, but advancing to the next phase has stalled as coronavirus infections have risen for the third time, according to the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. While increased testing has accounted for an increase in cases, the infection rate remained relatively steady at 3.9% (at press time).

Another wave of COVID-19 over the winter could be more severe than those of last spring and summer because it would coincide with other seasonal viruses like the flu, according to a September report from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. More people could also be carrying the virus, causing it to spread more quickly.

More young people were infected recently in Pierce County than during the initial outbreak last spring: in mid-October, 21% of cases were in the 20-29 age group (13.6% of the county population) and 20.7% were in the 30-39 age group (13.4% of the population), higher than any other age group or infections in health care workers (10%). People of color have also been far more disproportionately affected, according to TPCHD.

Some experts attribute this shift to "pandemic fatigue," where part of the population that does not consider COVID-19 a threat do not take precautions to prevent it.

"Right now, most people are still removed from the consequences of getting COVID-19," wrote Carisa Parrish, co-director of pediatric medical psychology and an associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Johns Hopkins in an August study.

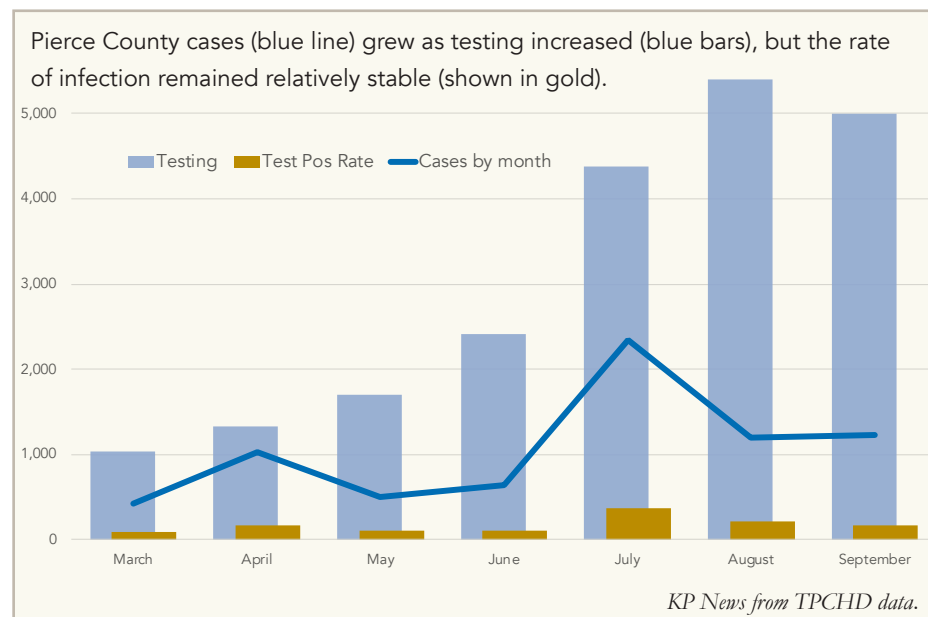
"The risk might not feel real to them if they don't know anyone who's sick with COVID-19. And, unfortunately, some people get a bit of a thrill from doing something risky and escaping consequences," she wrote.

According to Parrish and other experts, this increases the risk of a more deadly wave of the pandemic.

"Examples include the 1918 flu pandemic and the 2009 H1N1 flu epidemic. Both of these events began with a mild wave of infections in the spring, followed by another surge of cases in the fall," a September report from Johns Hopkins said. "People

are frustrated; cellphone data are showing decreased social distancing."

President Donald Trump has expressed skepticism about the severity of the disease, even after having contracted it, and about public restrictions to curtail its spread, like mandates to wear masks his administration has quashed, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Trump



administration officials confirmed they began shifting coronavirus policies at the end of August from preventing its spread to focusing on the most vulnerable groups while pushing to reopen schools and businesses, according to reports in The Washington Post and The New York Times.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told CNN on Sept. 21 that between 25% and 30% of the U.S. has a preexisting condition, like obesity, asthma or high blood pressure, that increases their risk of severe illness.

Approximately 20% of people who contract COVID-19 require hospitalization, according to the World Health Organization. By press time, at least 220,000 Americans had died from COVID-19, and as many as 75,000 remained ill with lingering effects, so-called "long hauler" patients, according to a peer-reviewed report in the Journal of the American Medical Association published in September.

What's unusual about the long haulers, according to the JAMA report, is that many initially had mild to moderate symptoms

that didn't require lengthy hospitalizations.

The U.S. accounts for 20% of total global COVID-19 fatalities, the most recorded deaths of any country, while having just 4.25% of the global population. The true number of American COVID-19 deaths is thought to exceed official death counts already, according to a September analysis of unexplained deaths in excess of normal

levels compiled by The New York Times. A September study from the CDC indicated that while seemingly less susceptible to it, children transmit the virus at a rate comparable to adults. The report said this doesn't mean schools or day care facilities need to close, but that "masks, disinfection and social distancing are needed... People who work in such facilities have to be careful and get tested if they think they may be infected."

Researchers from Utah and the CDC focused on three outbreaks in Salt Lake City child care facilities between April and July. They estimated the rate of spread at 25%, comparable to the spread in households with young children. Three of 12 infected children at one facility were asymptomatic, and one of them infected a parent who was later hospitalized.

In October, U.S. and Indian researchers published a study in the journal Science of 85,000 people with COVID-19 and 575,000 people they came in contact with, which found that children 17 and under contract and transmit the virus at rates similar to the rest of the population. Children age 5 to 17 passed the virus on to 18% of close contacts their same age. They also had the lowest death rate of any age cohort. ■

Lakebay Marina Negotiations Spin Heads

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

Lakebay Marina owner Mark Scott, in chronic default on his aquatics lease agreement with Washington State Department of Natural Resources, was notified in writing Oct. 20 the state will not issue a new lease with Scott. The tenant must remove all improvements and peaceably surrender the property to DNR by Sept. 7, 2021.

Once hopeful to acquire the historic but troubled Lakebay Marina & Resort, the nonprofit Recreational Boaters Association of Washington Marine Park Conservancy was unable to raise sufficient funds to close a \$1.24 million purchase to meet the Sept. 30 closing date.

The conservancy board offered Scott a \$25,000 increase in the sale price plus an additional deposit of \$25,000 in earnest money in exchange for a one-year extension of the closing date.

Scott countered with a price increase to \$3.135 million and an offer to extend closing four years and lease the marina to them with monthly payments. Unwilling to accept the steep price jump, RBAW was forced to let the contract expire Sept. 30.

RBAW had been working with the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office, the DNR and Washington State Parks on a grant funding strategy that conservancy Board President Bob Wise said "would have put us in excellent position to finance the purchase within the requested year extension. But not at more than double the original price."

Pierce County Council Member Derek Young confirmed that the chance to obtain a floating infrastructure grant with the state looked promising to reach the original price.

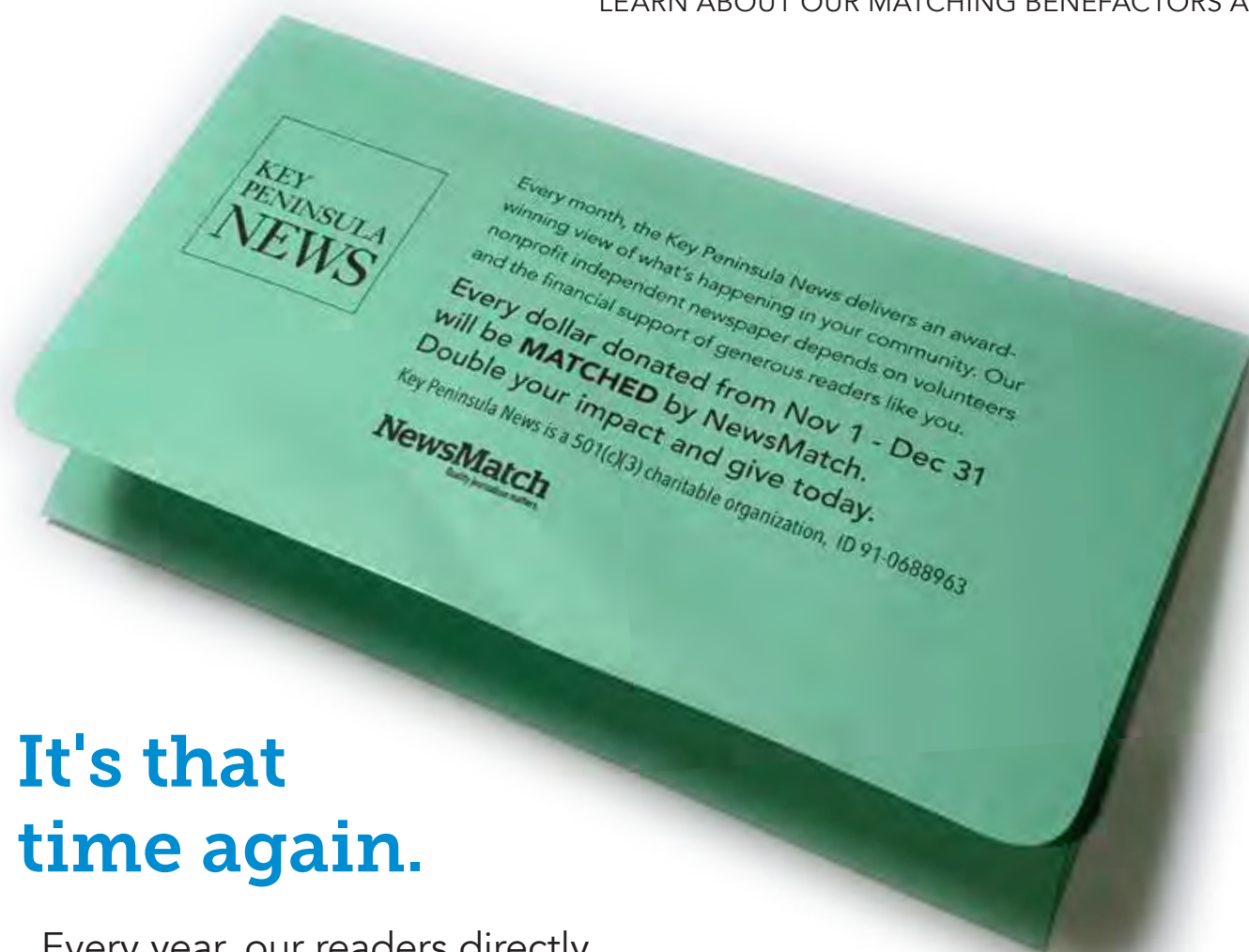
The Pierce County Council committed \$250,000 to help fund the acquisition and lawmakers from the 26th Legislative District secured an additional \$100,000 allocation from the 2020 Supplemental Capital Budget.

"COVID obviously put a crimp in their fundraising efforts but RBAW was feeling really good about the prospect of getting that grant," Young said. "They just needed additional time.

"The money (\$250,000) is still appropriated in our biennial budget, and I'm hoping that when the reality sets in that this is the best-case scenario for everyone, that Mr. Scott would return to the table," Young said. "I still hold out hope that something happens, but it's hard to say."

Owner Mark Scott declined to comment to KP News. ■

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It's that time again.

Every year, our readers directly contribute to the success of the Key Peninsula News. And year after year, we're thankful for the donations that keep the presses running, the awards we win, and the notes you send.

This has been a rough year for all of us, and some have had it tougher than others. If you can afford it, your contribution will benefit all of our community.

NewsMatch will match personal donations received before the end of December. It's money we depend on.

NewsMatch doubles the impact of your support of independent local news. It magnifies your gift and supports our mission of providing free, unbiased and independent news to everyone living on the Key Peninsula.

Enclosed in this edition you'll find the familiar green envelope. This year, it'll deliver TWICE the goodness. Thanks to you.



Ted Olinger

ANOTHER LAST WORD



A Remote Student

I came to Seattle in the spring of 1991 when I was 27 and somehow landed a part-time job tutoring teenagers.

There was no good reason for me to be doing that, other than I'd had experience editing for a big-time publisher in New York City before succumbing to the siren song of freelance writing, i.e., unemployment, which set me adrift across the globe until I washed ashore broke in Ballard.

But it turned out I had a knack for tutoring because I had been such a terrible student myself.

The kids were of all sorts from all over the city. Some were on scholarship struggling to graduate from hostile public schools; others were desperate diamonds from the best private academies, anxious to burn a little brighter than their peers.

I remember this one girl who would not do any kind of school work at all or much of anything else other than the usual things adults don't want teenagers to do. Her parents were determined to get her into some kind of college far away from her no-good lazy friends who were always trying to get her stoned or pregnant when she wasn't grounded and stinking up their nice house with her bad attitude. My assignment was to get her to write shining college application essays that would take her away from all that.

In our first meeting she arrived with an application question asking her to describe current events and their effect on society and herself.

She talked a lot and was quite boring because she was not at all interested in the assignment or me or anything other than filling our hour together with dead air so she could leave without doing any work. But I knew this move because I'd pulled it myself so many times, and I sat smiling and nodding and not being offended when she batted away my attempts to redirect her.

Her monologue eventually snaked itself around to some school dance and a fight that broke out over a necklace she was so proud of that featured a plastic Captain Picard action figure.

I interrupted her: "I love 'Star Trek.'"

She jumped to warp speed telling me about how she'd made this necklace with various significant characters and symbols from "Star Trek," how a person attempted to relieve her of it at the dance and the price that person had paid for this affront, along with the price she'd paid defending

herself. It took all of five minutes and she was beaming at the end of it.

"Write that," I said.

It was like I'd stunned her with her own phaser. "Ah, what?"

"It's a current event relevant to you and it's hilarious and you loved telling it," I said. "Write about that."

"Ooh-k," she said, and got up to leave.

"No, no, no. Now." I slid my legal pad in front of her. She looked at the blank page but didn't move, the classic deer caught in the headlights, or writer facing the firing squad of self-doubt.

"Start with, 'This girl tried to steal my captain from me,'" I said, and withdrew to another office.

Twenty-five minutes later she had 300 words. They weren't very good and were of course irrelevant to the assignment at hand. But I marked it up and gave her some suggestions and asked her to type it up for our next session.

Her parents were incensed. Writing about a necklace made of dolls was going to get her into college? They were paying good money for professional results. I should be fired forthwith.

My boss had some master's degrees in psychology, education and probably a bunch of other things. She'd worked for the FBI, been a college professor and was a private counselor for, I don't know, 30 years before starting her tutoring business.

She reminded the outraged parents that their daughter, who struggled to stay in school while staying off drugs and unpregnant, had completed a spontaneous writing assignment on demand. "Let's go with that," she told them.

We got through another draft of her story. It was a little better, a little funnier and a little more relevant. But mainly it made it easier to inch closer to what her college applications really wanted, and she was able to write a rough draft about her life at home.

I never saw her again. Her parents refused to pay our bill. They would tell everyone we were scammers. My corpse would be dumped in Lake Union.

I was still there a year later, meeting my 120th student or so, when I got a postcard from her. She was living somewhere cheap in town with some no-good lazy roommates, working at Costco and taking art classes, and just really thought I'd enjoy this card. It was the bridge of Capt. Picard's Enterprise with him and his crew. I asked my boss what this was all about. She read it, flipped it over to look at the bridge, then handed it back to me.

"She's saying thank you."

Ted Olinger lives in Vaughn.

Phyllis Henry

COAST TO COAST



Jump the Waves

The first time I swam in the Atlantic Ocean — actually, I never swam in the Atlantic Ocean or any other large body of water.

When I was 6 years old a bunch of relatives on my mother's side met in a park in Reinbeck, a small Iowa town near where I lived. My cousin provided me with a hand-me-down swimsuit, and I was ready to join my big sister and her friends in the swimming pool in the park. I jumped into the pool near them, descended in the water, floundered, wondered which way was up, and then saw my sister's hand floating in the water near my hand and grabbed it. She carried me to the shallow water, where I stayed. I never swam in that pool or any other pool during my almost 90 years.

Back to the Atlantic Ocean. Bill, my new husband — new to me; we'd both been married before and were in our 50s — learned to swim when he was 3 years old and he wanted me to share the pleasure he felt in the murk of the ocean.

As we stood in knee-high water he explained that the waves were really strong and could knock me over if I stood, but weren't a problem when I was swimming. I didn't know how to swim, so instead he talked about jumping the waves. I nodded and sort of listened to him while squishing my toes in the sandy Jersey Shore ocean bottom.

Slowly Bill led me out until we were in shoulder-high water. I felt really brave, knowing that I had mastered the ocean. As a wave rolled toward us, he lifted my hand and said, "Jump." I jumped, and the wave wrapped itself around me and flowed on to break on the shore. He said, "You've got to watch the waves. When one is coming, lift off from the ocean bottom a little." I had a lovely time; the sun was hot and the water was cool, and I was "swimming."

When he said he was going to swim for a bit and asked if I'd be OK, I assured him I'd be fine. As he started to leave I watched a big wave, the seventh, coming toward me and thought: I'd better get ready to jump. While I was thinking about jumping, the wave hit me, and I rolled head over feet, head under the water, until I was tossed up on the sandy beach. Bill helped me to stand, and I stood at the water's edge trying to spit the sand out of my mouth, cleaning the sand out of my ears, brushing it off my arms and legs, and then digging sand out of the front and crotch of my bathing suit.

Bill mumbled "sorry about that" platitudes, all the while trying not to laugh at me. The only way to get rid of the sand was to go back into the water. That I did, and spent a glorious day jumping the waves, and never again did the waves attack me.

Two weeks later while getting settled into our new home, Bill started feeding a big yellow feral cat. Each day he moved the food a bit closer to our back door until the cat got brave enough to come into the house to eat. Convinced the cat wanted to live with us, Bill closed the door.

The cat panicked, leaped onto the kitchen counter, over and under the bed, into the bathroom, frantic to escape. Then it leaped onto the back of the sofa and sprang toward the picture window, presuming, I guess, it was a way out. Instead it hung there a moment, its claws snagged in the lacy net curtains I had recently hung. Bill opened the door and the cat dropped from the curtain, ran to the door and was never seen by us again.

I wailed, "The curtains are ruined." Bill suggested maybe they could be repaired. I said they wouldn't look right if they were patched. Bill suggested we could buy new curtains. I said I didn't want new curtains. I wanted the ones we had. Bill suggested perhaps we didn't need curtains on that window. I said I refused to look out the window at the neighbor's house across the street.

With the same expression he had when I'd been rolled onto the beach, he said, "I guess you'd rather bitch." He was right. I didn't want a solution; I wanted to complain. I should have just jumped the wave, let it flow past me, and enjoyed the day. I've tried to apply that attitude to my life, and when I remember to do so, living is much easier.

Award-winning columnist Phyllis Henry lives in Gig Harbor.

Richard Gelinis

EMPIRICALLY YOURS



New Jersey Rats Discuss the Hindenburg

RAT 1 Hey kid, that popcorn is mine. Drop it.
RAT 2 (Drops popcorn in order to speak.) Whoa, you must be the oldest rat around and I've seen a lot of rats in New Jersey.

RAT 1 People come to this park, a monument to the Hindenburg dirigible disaster back on May 6, 1937. I was younger then, like you.
RAT 2 Who cares about that? I'm glad people come here and drop food. So what was the disaster anyhow?

RAT 1 Because the dirigible exploded while trying to land right here, when this was

a Naval Air Station, while the press was watching, filming and reporting live on the radio. The lifting agent, hydrogen gas, exploded, creating a huge fireball. Everyone remembers that 35 people died, but no one remembers that 62 passengers and crew survived. After the dirigible slowly settled to the ground, the survivors just walked away from the scene. A pity, really, since hydrogen has had a bad reputation ever since.

RAT 2 Well sure, because it explodes!

RAT 1 As do all fossil fuels, which are simply energy carriers: gasoline releases explosive vapors and methane (aka natural gas) that burn and explode. That's why they're useful. So we already know how to contain hydrogen as well as fossil fuels with minimal risks. One big advantage to using hydrogen as an energy carrier is that when you burn it to make electricity there's no carbon that would end up as CO₂ in the air.

RAT 2 You mean if you make it with some sort of renewable energy like electricity from wind or solar.

RAT 1 Yes! Another big advantage is that you can make it anywhere on Earth where there's renewable energy and water. You can use it directly or store it for the future. Storing electricity from a renewable source like wind or solar in the form of hydrogen neatly eliminates the concern that energy from some renewables can be intermittent since the sun doesn't shine at night and the wind doesn't always blow. Once you've got a tank of hydrogen, you can use it yourself or you can add it to an existing system of natural gas pipes if those are around, like in a city. Just sell it to 'em.

RAT 2 A city, like Newark?

RAT 1 Yes, just like Newark.

RAT 2 Like Jersey City?

RAT 1 Yes, and like Trenton, Princeton, Atlantic City and Hoboken.

RAT 2 Wow, I'm gonna make me some hydrogen and sell it to all those guys!

RAT 1 Sure, kid. Actually, there's a guy in Australia who is planning to sell hydrogen to Japan and South Korea. He's planning a 5-gigawatt solar and wind farm in Western Australia to generate the electricity that would be fed to a Siemens electrolysis (or water splitting) machine to make and capture the hydrogen.

RAT 2 Cool! Is Japan bigger than Hoboken?

RAT 1 Yes, kid. In fact, for over 50 years NASA has been making electricity in space by including little tanks of hydrogen and oxygen in spacecraft. After these gases are combined in a fuel cell, the end products are nothing but electricity and potable water which the astronauts can drink. You can

buy a Honda car that goes 336 miles on one tank of hydrogen fuel. In Japan, the big automakers like Toyota are investing in hydrogen fueling stations for cars. London has a fleet of hydrogen-powered buses.

RAT 2 OK, but how about other means of transportation? Air travel is responsible for 2% of all man-made emissions of CO₂. Who's got a hydrogen-powered airplane?

RAT 1 You're smarter than you look, kid. A company, ZeroAvia, is building a 19-passenger light aircraft with a 500-mile range powered by hydrogen. That would get you to Hoboken in style.

RAT 2 Say now, with a properly sized system of a renewable electricity source and a way to make and store hydrogen, a connection to the grid for a household becomes less and less necessary. Won't this annoy local electric utilities?

RAT 1 Yes, it might if it means that electricity grids can become smaller and even independent of very long high voltage wires. Yes, I suppose they may lose customers or become unnecessary in some cases.

RAT 2 I like grids. A cousin of mine chews on one in Passaic.

RAT 1 There is another way (the old-fashioned way) to make hydrogen. As an alternative to electrolysis, Bill Gross (the inventor, not the financier) and Bill Gates have a company called Heliogen that uses focused sunlight to create very high heat for industrial purposes. They can then make hydrogen by steam reformation rather than by burning fossil fuels. This is another path to a hydrogen economy, anywhere the sun shines.

RAT 2 Wow, so Bill Gates now controls the sun!

RAT 1 You catch on fast, kid. Hey kid, that apple core is mine, drop it.

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

Vicki Husted Biggs A SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE



What Matters Most: A Gentle Reminder

I have given up hoarding coffee beans as a coping strategy. It was harmless and somewhat effective, but I have moved on. Learning to bake a good cake from scratch is my new diversion in this time of extremes. None of us are alone in, or immune from, the consequential events of this year. Many people have suffered

losses, conflicts and stresses. Stories of people coping by taking up bread baking, binge watching TV shows or learning to can their new garden crops are legion as we navigate this national crisis. Anyone who ventures online has undoubtedly seen some amusing memes with commentary on the year 2020. Humor is a great way to deal with stress.

But even while enjoying your local newspaper, the stresses continue. Although currently in a season that beckons us to revel in the crisp fall air, relax by the fire and savor a hearty bowl of soup (with some of that bread we learned to bake), many are suffering anxiety, depression and the heartache of fractured relationships. People are separated by pandemic-enforced isolation, and often by political divide. People have suffered the loss of loved ones, loss of employment, loss of routine and structure, loss of health care, loss of social and emotional supports, and the loss of usual means of diversion. (I very much miss going to a weekend movie). We are awash in disorienting change and disheartened by expressions of ill will. We are exhausted and feel stripped of the comforts of mutual respect and kindness.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that reports of anxiety are up three times over last year's numbers. Teens are included in people reporting depression, increased substance abuse and suicidal thoughts. LGBTQ, ethnic and racial minorities are among the hardest hit communities for mental health stressors. In many minority communities, access to mental health services is limited in the best of times and is more difficult now. The toll on caregivers trying to balance work and family has grown and is reflected in their own increased health problems.

Many people have resorted to limiting exposure to news reports and social media, which are crowded with the constant blare of politicians, protests, counter-protests, and warnings and scare-tactics. The unrelenting barrage of polarizing noise attempting to influence our thoughts, votes and spending can be overwhelming.

As I spend time reflecting on these challenges, I keep circling back to the same conclusion. When we get right down to the nitty-gritty, through all of our losses, what we can't do without is each other — our people — those who love us and those whom we love. Family, family by choice, cousins, siblings, neighbors; all the people who fill our minds and hearts and memories. Relationships and love are

our nourishment.

Dr. Ira Byock, a well-known and respected voice in hospice and palliative care, wrote a bestselling book in 2004 entitled "The Four Things That Matter Most." The four things are represented in the statements:

"Please forgive me." "I forgive you." "Thank you," and "I love you."

The practice of expressing these sentiments aloud to our loved ones can protect and preserve our most valued possession — our relationships. Not only at the end of life, but in everyday life, these statements have the power to mend and nurture the ties we have with others. Letting go of grudges and toxic emotions frees us to remember who we are, access our best selves and reach out to others for mutual support. Dr. Byock wrote, "Whatever else we choose to do and be, we must be kind and generous with one another."

The Thanksgiving table may be different this year for many. The traditional winter holidays can be complicated and painful in the best of times, and could shape up to be an epic calamity for some. But the year 2020 will finally come to a close, thankfully. And, we can have some influence in how that plays out in our households by remembering the things that matter most.

Vicki Biggs is a longtime social worker. She lives in Home.

Joseph Pentheroudakis ON THE WING



The Magic of Dry Dock

It's not as though Herron Island is isolated from the rest of the world. After all, our ferry, the 11-car red-and-white M/V Charlie Wells, plies the three-quarters of a mile between the island and the mainland on a daily basis, braving all manner of weather and logging over 3,000 round trips each year.

In the 1960s, Herron Islanders considered a bridge to the mainland, but rejected it because of the complicated logistics and regulations, the price tag and perhaps the realization that the island would no longer be the same peaceful getaway.

As it happened, Herron Island is no longer simply an occasional weekend getaway. It is now home to a large number of year-round residents, in addition to the many vacationers and weekenders. While talk of a bridge does come up every once in a while, all of us, part- or full-time islanders, have adjusted to the rhythm of

CONTINUED PAGE 8

PENTHEROUDAKIS FROM PAGE 7

the ferry, even if we grumble at long lines on summer weekends.

After all, being fully dependent on water transportation is not so different from what life was like in Puget Sound in the late 1800s and the early part of the 20th century, before there were roads. Back then islands and coastal communities relied on the many privately-owned steamers, collectively nicknamed the Mosquito Fleet, which offered regular service to and from urban hubs like Olympia, Steilacoom, Tacoma and Seattle for mail, merchandise and passenger travel.

And yet there is a time every other year when something of a rite of passage tests our island resolve: It's the two to three weeks when the Charlie Wells is off to dry dock.

Every two years the U.S. Coast Guard mandates an out-of-water inspection and maintenance. On the appointed date the ferry is off to a shipyard, where it will also get a new paint job and facelift as needed. During that period, life on the island is like in the Mosquito Fleet days — but without the Mosquito Fleet.

Islanders mobilize. Those with boats offer rides to and from the mainland to islanders who commute to work. Mainlanders meet island kayakers at the ferry terminal to deliver fresh produce. Stocking up is a little like preparing for a three-week backpacking trip, and even though restocking is possible, if a little complicated, most of us manage to load up the pantry and the refrigerator.

Unless of course the fridge goes on the fritz, as happened to a neighbor during this year's dry dock, which meant waiting four days for a new part that the neighbor canoed across to the mainland to pick up. All was not lost, however: neighbors rallied and offered to keep perishables in their own refrigerators until the part arrived. It does take an island.

"I look at it as a game of 'Survivor,'" said Joyce Major, who recently moved to the island. "Enough coffee? Check. Enough chocolate? Nope: all eaten Week One. Power outage? Hope not — no generator!"

"Between COVID-19 and dry dock, my cat has been successful in teaching me how to take 64 naps a day," said longtime islander Janet Podell. "And did I get enough wine to last me through dry dock?" One does need to be prepared.

The island is enveloped in preternatural stillness when the ferry is away. By early fall the usual soundtrack of summer maintenance — lawn mowers, chainsaws, weed eaters, pressure washers — has faded away, but there is also very little car traffic. Apart from pickleball diehards, a group of walkers, and me riding laps around the island on my gravel bike, there is almost

no other outdoor activity.

I have been through three dry docks so far, having moved here full-time after being a weekender for several years, and I used to think that I just imagined the silence. But no, the soundlessness is almost palpable. Dave Weber, a neighbor who moved here with his wife Jenny a few months ago, put it best: "I've noticed it's like 'it-just-snowed' quiet," he said.

"We love the quietude of the island," said Geri Lambrecht, who lives here with her husband York and their two dogs, Remi and Cally. "We're on a pretty busy street, so we don't miss the traffic at all."

As I write this, the ferry and our crew just returned safely from this year's dry dock after an epic nine-hour journey on a day of gale force winds, heavy rain and record lightning and thunder. In these times of self-isolation, lockdowns and quarantines, having the Charlie Wells home is a source of comfort for all of us.

That, and the peace, tranquility and views out our front doors — in Lambrecht's words, it's all lovely and comforting.

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

Letters to the Editor

IN SUPPORT OF REPS. YOUNG AND CALDIER

I strongly recommend that we re-elect our two incumbent state representatives from the 26th Legislative District, Jesse Young and Michelle Caldier, in November to continue serving us in Olympia for the next two years.

Both Rep. Young and Rep. Caldier are strong advocates of our First and Second Amendment rights as well as defending our liberties, advocating for lower taxes, and authoring and cosponsoring effective legislation.

Rep. Young is the only member of the House to serve in leadership on two budget committees. As a member of the Transportation Committee, he cosponsored a bill to refinance the debt on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and freeze the toll at its current rate.

Rep. Young also serves on the Finance, Commerce & Gaming, and College & Workforce Development committees and has fought for upgraded infrastructure in the 26th LD, and for an increase in entrepreneurship and new jobs and incentivizing technology companies to build in or relocate to the 26th LD. He also was instrumental in helping to defeat the bump stock bill in the last legislative session.

Rep. Caldier serves on the Appropriations, Education, and Health Care & Wellness committees. She and several other Republicans, including Rep. Kelly Cham-

bers and Rep. Vicki Kraft, fought hard to defeat the sex-ed bill in the last legislative session, and were on the floor of the House in Olympia after 2 a.m. when this heinous legislation was passed into law by the Democratic majority. Voters will have a chance to repeal this law by voting to reject Referendum 90.

Rep. Caldier has also authored and cosponsored legislation to assist our citizens to have greater access to quality, affordable health care, and she is a proponent of a strong, locally-governed, state educational system.

Bruce Cook, Lakebay

ALGAE BLOOM IS DANGEROUS

I live on the shoreline of Burley Lagoon and I have been a witness to the events of the past two years where our lagoon life has been disrupted in the middle of summer by a pungent and toxic odor.

The description of it being a smell like rotten eggs (which it actually is), minimizes the significance of our exposures. The gases that produce that smell are dimethyl sulfide and sulfur dioxide—both of which can cause irritant effects in small doses, but can also be very toxic at high doses and especially when the exposure is 24 hours a day and 30 days in a row (or more).

For me, I had a headache for six weeks, but nobody knows how it is affecting the four small children at the end of my block who are having this exposure day and night for weeks. Not only can it make you sick, but it makes recreating at home or entertaining guests impossible. It is miserable to be outside.

As Puget Sounders we are all vested in the health of our marine ecosystems and these signs of stress are a message to us. Whether caused by fish pens in narrow straits in Puget Sound waters or the many sewage treatment plants that discharge into it or outflows of sewage from Canadian waters — all are contributing factors to "nutrient abundance," which gives the false impression they are good for the environment. To turn the tide, we must promote aquaculture practices that mitigate these negative consequences to shellfish — like removing nets to promote flushing of shallow waters and have a holistic action plan for Puget Sound to ensure a cascade of disruption is not occurring in other species.

Our planet is changing, our waters are warmer, and our obligation to protect our marine environment has never been more important. We are going to need to work together on a solution—because this could be the new norm.

Karen Bujacich McDonell, Gig Harbor

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OBITUARIES



Lindsey Curts Babich

Lindsey Babich, age 69, died peacefully Aug. 21.

She was born in 1951 in San Francisco, California. After attending the University of Puget Sound for two years, she worked in the nursery business until she met Randy Babich, who became her husband and best friend for 40 years.

Enamored with the spirit and excitement of Randy's commercial fishing profession, together they fished salmon, halibut and black cod in the frontier waters of Alaska, and she excelled at all jobs on the boat. Nobody could mend net or navigate a fishing vessel with more confidence and skill than Lindsey. She inspired other women to enter this unique occupation. She and Randy formed a successful company that specializes in making caviar from chum salmon eggs.

Lindsey's biggest passion was cooking and a number of times she prepared superb multicourse auction dinners for up to 250 people at a time. She adored her library of 120 cookbooks, her source for creative inspiration. She enjoyed her daily walks with the dogs around the many acres of the family home in Longbranch, and her husband's hobby of horticulture. Together the couple established a multi-acre ecosystem preserve.

Intelligent and witty, she could tell jokes for hours and it was not unusual to see a dozen fully captivated people sitting around her table after dinner in continuous laughter. Nobody could beat her at writing creative limericks or a game of chess. She loved sports and read at least one book a week.

She had a million-dollar smile and an infectious laugh. She loved her friends, many of whom said their lives were enriched by knowing her. She adhered to a course of action in life of kindness

and generosity with her time and love.

Lindsey is survived by her husband, Randy; daughter, Mackenzie Ball; two grandsons, Jackson and Robbie; sister, Barbara Nombalais; and niece, Jennine Christensen.

In memory of her love of animals, donations can be made in her name to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.



Phyllis A. Jardin

Devoted wife, mother, grandmother, sister and friend, Phyllis Jardin died Aug. 11 in Gig Harbor. She was 81 years old. Her energy made everyone around her feel cared for.

Phyllis lived at Lake Holiday for over 40 years and was a dedicated community volunteer. If it involved kids, she was ready to do what she could and to make it special. She organized many years of big Easter egg hunts. She especially loved being a lunch lady at Vaughn Elementary School.

She was a longtime volunteer at an annual fishing derby. She was always down at the Key Peninsula Sportsmen's Club bright and early to have breakfast ready for the fishermen. She did all the grocery shopping and ran the kitchen. She ran the bingo game at the clubhouse too, doing the shopping for the blackout prizes, drinks and snacks.

She was twice nominated for Key Peninsula Citizen of the Year Award.

A big Key Peninsula News fan, she read each new issue cover to cover. She sold ad space for the newspaper during its infancy in the late 1970s and early '80s.

Phyllis helped with social events after moving to assisted living and loved to participate with bingo, crafts and readers' theater. She enjoyed welcoming new residents to help them feel comfortable. She continued to attend her "Red Hats" lunches with old friends.

She was a prayer warrior and often prayed for others. Her love of God was a light that shined through her.

Phyllis was preceded in death by her husband of 52 years, Robert, who died in

2010. She and her family never stopped celebrating their wedding anniversary.

Phyllis loved to feed others. Thoughtful and helpful to everyone, she made her biggest impact on the students and families of the Key Peninsula. To contribute in her honor, please donate to Key Peninsula Community Services.

Current restrictions prevent gathering but the family is hopeful for a spring memorial.



Phillip A. Johnson

Phil Johnson died Sept. 23 in Lakebay, Washington at the age of 70 after a long battle with cancer. He was born Dec. 23, 1949 in Tacoma to Rogner and Edyth Johnson.

Phil graduated from Peninsula High School in 1968 and went on to manage the family business, Johnson Bulldozing, with his brother Dave. He enjoyed working on the Key Peninsula, building many log bulkheads in the area as well as doing other related bulldozing work.

Phil was a man who cherished family, was devoted to his friends and generous to his community. He spent numerous summers salmon fishing on the Columbia River with his closest friends and family, where many of his greatest memories were made and maintained.

He remained in good spirits throughout the good and bad. Phil always made time for someone who needed him. In his later years he made the most of it, never turned down a trip to the casino and remained active to the very end.

Phil is survived by his brother Dave; sister Esther Shulich; stepchildren Jason Marin and Jennifer Marin; his ex-wife and mother of his children, Dale Michaelson; as well as seven nephews and nieces. He was preceded in death by his brother, Robert, and his daughter, Hildi, both of Lakebay. A celebration of life will be announced at a later date when all will be welcome to attend and honor him.

Donations in Phil's name may be sent to the Pierce County Humane Society, 2608 Center Street, Tacoma WA 98409.

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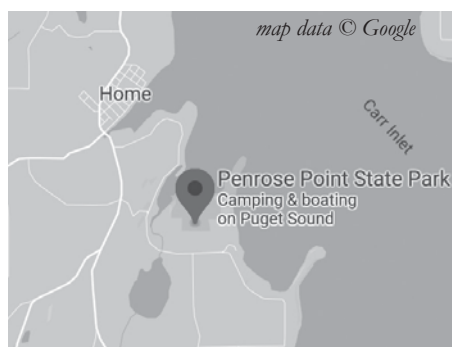
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Drowning at Penrose Point State Park

STAFF REPORT

A woman in her late 40s died by drowning in the saltwater pond at Penrose Point State Park in Lakebay Oct. 17. Her identity had not been made public by press time.

The Key Peninsula Fire Department was dispatched to Penrose at approximately 11:30 a.m. Volunteer Battalion Chief Anne Nesbit was the first to arrive, since she was in the area. Bystanders directed her to a tidal embayment a few hundred yards southeast of the main parking lot where they'd heard a woman calling for help.

The victim had been dragged out of the pond by her companion, who also called 911 and was yelling for help. Nesbit began CPR and was soon joined by other medics and the battalion chief on duty. The victim was transported to St. Anthony Hospital in Gig Harbor, where she was pronounced dead.

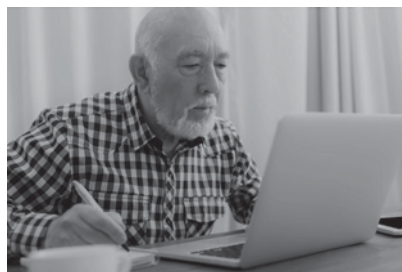
According to her companion, the two were throwing toys into the saltwater pond for their dogs to chase. The victim entered the pond to retrieve a toy and yelled to her companion that "she was struggling" and went under the surface. Her companion entered the water, pulled the victim out, and dialed 911 while yelling to other park visitors for help.

"The 911 caller did an amazing job of getting her companion to shore; she did everything right and was key in getting help quickly," said Nesbit, who is also the KPFDF public information officer. "No one out with their dogs, enjoying Penrose, expects the day to end in tragedy and loss. My heart goes out to the friends and family."

The pond is open to Puget Sound only at high tide. The surface warms up on sunny days, like Saturday Oct. 17, but it becomes rapidly deeper and colder just a few feet from shore. Exposure to cold water can quickly incapacitate even experienced swimmers with a shock response that causes uncontrollable gasping and inhalation of water and a sudden loss of blood pressure that can lead to death.

KPFDF offers free CPR, first aid, and other classes on how to respond to an emergency. For more information call 253-884-2222. ■

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Building an Elder-Friendly Key Peninsula

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Looking to enroll in or update your Medicare plan for 2021? The Mustard Seed Project is here to help!

Annual enrollment sessions are available at our office until December 7th with a SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Assistance) volunteer.

Schedule an appointment or ask questions by calling 253-884-9814.

**On-site appointments will follow safety protocols and walk-ins are currently unavailable during these times.*



The Mustard Seed Project
253 884-9814

www.themustardseedproject.org
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In September, Angel Guild awarded \$5,000 to

Key Peninsula Community Council

\$3,500

Pierce County Fire Protection District 16

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KP Council Hosted First Online Candidate Forum

Watch the recorded candidate forum at www.kpcouncil.org.

STAFF REPORT

Ten candidates for six local public offices ranging from the Washington State House of Representatives to Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer participated in a 90-minute candidate forum online hosted by the Key Peninsula Community Council Oct. 13.

The town hall-style meeting is traditionally conducted before standing room only crowds in the Whitmore Room at the KP Civic Center in Vaughn to give the community a chance to ask questions of elected officials and candidates running to replace them. But due to the pandemic, Lisa Larson, the council office manager, suggested an online forum.

“I started preparing for this months ago,” Larson said. She had watched a county-wide virtual town hall meeting over the summer that was fraught with technical and security issues, and didn’t want that to happen here. “I attended webinars and studied Zoom security for weeks to prepare,” she said.

The event was moderated by Gina Cabiddu, program manager of the Children’s Home Society of Washington-Key Peninsula Resource Center, with assistance from timekeeper Stefanie Warren of the KP Civic Center.

Participants included candidates for the two positions of 26th Legislative District representative, incumbents Rep. Michelle Caldier and Rep. Jesse Young and their respective challengers Joy Stanford and Carrie Hesch; incumbent Pierce County Executive Bruce Dammeier and challenger Larry Seaquist; candidates for Pierce County Sheriff Cyndie Fajardo and Ed Troyer; Congressman Derek Kilmer, whose opponent, Elizabeth Kreiselmaier, did not respond to an invitation to attend; and Assessor-Treasurer Mike Lonergan, who is running unopposed for a third term.

The candidates fielded about a dozen questions taken from approximately 40 submitted to the organizers in advance. They ranged from the impact of the pandemic-driven recession on property taxes to what office-holders would do about rising property crime on the KP, climate change and perennial traffic issues.

Over 200 hundred people registered to watch the Oct. 13 forum live, but a violent

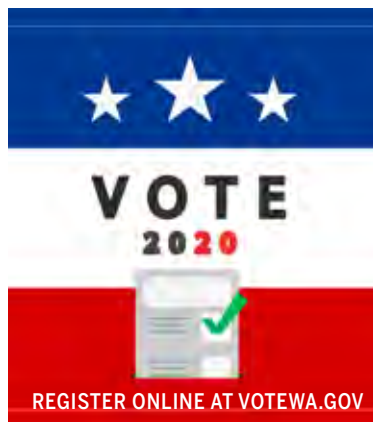
storm that day knocked out power to much of the KP and only about 70 people logged on. The event was also broadcast by KGHP FM while the online video was recorded by Cynthia Stewart of the Tacoma-Pierce County League of Women Voters. The KP Community Council has a link to the presentation on its website, and Larson encouraged the community to watch it.

“We did it for the community and it will be accessible to them for three months,” she said.

The power outage also forced the organizers to relocate from the Key Center office an hour before the event to the KP Civic Center, which has a generator so that it can act as an emergency shelter.

The forum was sponsored by the KP Community Council, the KP Business Association, the KP Civic Center Association and the KP News.

A link to a recording of the forum is at www.kpcouncil.org. ■



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David Dadisman's store in Home : Photo courtesy Key Peninsula Historical Museum

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Emilie Marchio's kindergarten class pledges allegiance to the flag with Principal Barabe via Zoom. *Kamryn Minch, KP News*

Vaughn Elementary Welcomes K-1 Back to School

Teacher adaptation, flexibility and patience meet children ready to learn one day at a time.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

Emilie Marchio, who has taught kindergarten at Vaughn Elementary School for six years, was delighted to welcome more than a dozen 5-year-olds to class. “I love it. As strange and weird as it is, I am grateful to be in class to see the light bulb moments,” she said.

“It was so wonderful to hear children’s voices from the playground again,” said Marci Cummings-Cohoe, who is in her own Vaughn classroom teaching second-grade remotely.

Vaughn Elementary opened Sept. 8 with a small number of high-needs students in its Options Program and developmental preschool. But adding three classes each of kindergarten and first-graders Sept. 28 more than quintupled the number of students.

Vaughn is one of three elementary schools in the district and the only one on the Key Peninsula with the Options Program, which serves high-needs students. They are primarily in a self-contained classroom and join regular classes as they are able.

Bringing the school’s youngest students back to the classroom took weeks of planning. Staff mapped out classrooms to see exactly how many students could fit and still satisfy the 6-foot distancing requirement. They planned how to greet and screen each student in the morning, how to move students from one place to another,

and how recess would work.

Principal Abbie Barabe communicated at length with parents, showing them pictures of classrooms to be sure they were comfortable with the safety measures the school had in place. She also emphasized how critical it is to keep students at home if they are sick.

“Parents were totally on board and ready to bring their kids to the classroom by the time school opened,” Barabe said. “The kids rock it. They totally get it. They are masked up, ready to go. They are patient.”

There are challenges. The first day it took 20 minutes to get all the students into the building. By the end of the week it was down to five.

Students spend the day with their classroom cohort. Lunch is served in the classroom. Specialist teachers come to them rather than having the class move to another room. The playground is marked into areas so that each class stays within a given space. Some Hula Hoop-sized areas are marked off so that students can take a “mask break” if they need one.

Kindergarten teacher Kate Chaffin said her kids are resilient and flexible, but also seem a bit more vigilant and worried than in the past.

“I find myself saying ‘Give yourself a

hug,’ ” she said, contrasting it to times in the past when a group hug might be in order.

Cummings-Cohoe said that online teaching has gone better than she had expected, though she looks forward to the day when students can return to the classroom. She is working to build relationships with her students, and they have also been able to build relationships with each other, often chatting before a Zoom class

starts. Reflecting on her experience with her own fifth- and seventh-grade children, she said “Kids are more resilient than we give them credit for. They strive past my limits.”

Lisa and Matt Mills are specialists at Vaughn, teaching music and STEM respectively. “We grew up here and we have both taught for 30 years. What has happened in the

last year has been a mind-bender,” Lisa said. “We walk between all these worlds,” Matt said. “We’re parents, though our kids have graduated. We have the needs of the school district and the board — that’s really our job description — we have the needs of our families, and we also have our fellow staff. And then there is what the health department requires. If you don’t get frustrated, it’s a very interesting problem to solve.”

Lisa said that immersing herself in learning how to teach virtually has improved her game. She is making every

minute count, rethinking how to teach music when, for the time being, singing is not allowed. She and Matt both teach from carts so that they can take lessons to each classroom. When it is time to teach online they go back to the classroom and teach from their carts in front of a camera, sometimes with just a 5-minute turnaround.

“I am teaching with ferocity,” Lisa said. “Teaching will never be the same.”

Matt has noticed that online classes have been a benefit for some students.

“When the class is on Zoom it’s more like a one-on-one experience for each student,” he said. “For some of those quiet kids, they say things they would never say in regular class.”

Barabe noted that of the students online, about 25% are not fully engaged — some

for psychosocial reasons and some due to poor internet access. She said she worries about those students who have not enrolled and whose families have not made plans to homeschool or participate in other online options.

Looking ahead Barabe said, “We could be faced with a challenge long term. We committed to the families that in January we would open the opportunity to come back in person. If distancing guidelines haven’t changed, I may not have enough room or enough teachers. If we could have 3 feet apart as a recommendation for desks in the classroom, we would have more access.” ■

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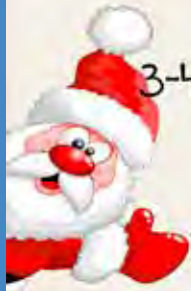


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<input type="checkbox"/> Bird's Nest	<input type="checkbox"/> Basket Ball Hoop
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<input type="checkbox"/> Dog	<input type="checkbox"/> A Bicycle Helmet
<input type="checkbox"/> Sea Shells	<input type="checkbox"/> Skateboard
<input type="checkbox"/> Walking Path	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Pinecones
<input type="checkbox"/> Really Tall Tree	<input type="checkbox"/> Giant Boulder
<input type="checkbox"/> An Eagle	<input type="checkbox"/> Mushrooms
<input type="checkbox"/> A Creek or Stream	<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Sign
<input type="checkbox"/> Small Speckled Stone	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Different Color Leaves

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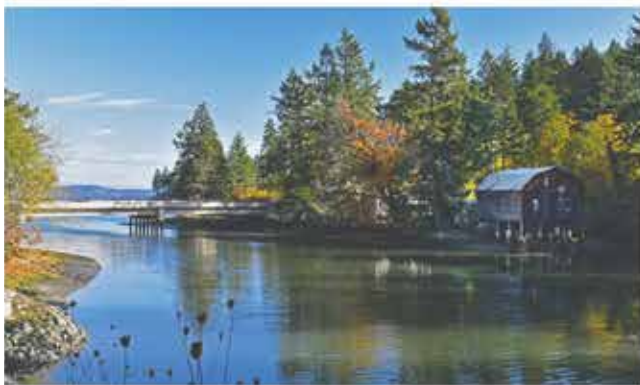


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Attorney General Bob Ferguson Sues Vape Company Juul

Ferguson asserts tens of thousands of violations of the Consumer Protection Act.

CALEB GALBREATH, KP NEWS

Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson filed a consumer protection lawsuit Sept. 2 against the e-cigarette company Juul, asserting that the company's products and marketing target underage consumers.

Filed in King County Superior Court, the lawsuit also alleges Juul deceived consumers about the addictiveness of their product. In a virtual news briefing Sept. 2, Ferguson said Juul did not make clear for some time that their products even included nicotine.

"Juul put profits before people," Ferguson said. "Pushing unfair and deceptive marketing strategies appealing to youth, the company fueled a staggering rise in vaping among teens."

Juul launched its products in 2015 and quickly became an industry giant, controlling more than 70% of the e-cigarette market share by the end of 2018, according to Ferguson's office. Ferguson

alleges this success was in part fueled by their marketing strategy.

Juul's advertisements have featured young models, bright color themes and sweet, fruity flavored products — all of which, the lawsuit asserts, subversively target young consumers. The lawsuit also highlights similarities in advertising between Juul and other big tobacco brands such as Camel and Kool, which have been punished in court for similar marketing practices.

The Pierce County Healthy Youth Survey showed an increase in e-cigarette use throughout grades six to 12 from 2016 to 2018. The largest uptick was in 12th-graders, who saw a 12% increase (from 18% to 30%) in vape use.

Peninsula High School Principal Joe Potts told the KP News the vast majority of his students are not smoking or using vaping products, but that this is an issue of concern nonetheless. Potts said vape products are expensive and some people resort to using homemade or second-hand vape juice.

"IT'S ANYONE'S GUESS WHAT'S IN THERE. AND WHATEVER'S IN THERE IS GOING IN YOUR LUNGS, IN YOUR BODY. AND THAT'S DEEPLY CONCERNING TO ME."

“It’s anyone’s guess what’s in there,” he said. “And whatever’s in there is going in your lungs, in your body. And that’s deeply concerning to me.”

Juul has repeatedly denied intentionally making their products appealing to minors, but former Juul co-founder James Monsees admitted in a congressional hearing in 2019 that the company had made mistakes. “We’ve made missteps,” Monsees said. “I understand the criticism of some of our past actions, but we moved on very quickly.”

Juul claims to vehemently oppose youth using their product and publicly supports raising the legal age for purchasing tobacco and vaping products to 21 nationwide. They also briefly offered an anti-vaping curriculum to schools in California but abandoned the effort after comparisons to similar attempts made by big tobacco companies.

The 2020 National Youth Tobacco Survey showed a noticeable drop in the use of vape products among high school and middle school students — from approximately 5.4 million in 2019 to 3.6 million in 2020. Juul lauded this dip in young consumers as a success.

Among the three types of vape devices (refillable, cartridge and disposable), cartridge vapes, like Juul, are still the most popular among minors, but disposable vape use rose by approximately 1,000% from 2019.

Sudden vaping-related illnesses have cropped up across the country, often resulting in hospitalization, weeks of close medical monitoring and permanent respiratory damage. Some cases have been fatal. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified a link between the vast majority of these cases to vitamin E acetate, a thickening agent found in some vaping products, especially those containing THC (tetrahydrocannabinol, the chemical responsible for most of marijuana’s psychoactive effects).

Potts said Peninsula School District is committed to keeping students healthy and offers addiction treatment for those who need it.

Ferguson said this lawsuit aims to force Juul to cease its unlawful marketing practices but comes with several punitive measures as well. The lawsuit asserts Juul failed to obtain the proper business license until 2018 and deems all prior sales unlawful. The suit requests disgorgement of all unlawful profits as well as a \$2,000 penalty for each violation of the Washington State Consumer Protection Act, which would include every sale made before Juul acquired proper licensing. ■

AWARDS FROM PAGE 1

fully shows the profound meaning behind their personalities and struggles.”

Design Editor Tim Heitzman won four awards, including second place in overall Ad Campaign for Glen Cove Repair and third place for KP Community Services. He won second and third place in the Newspaper House Ad category for imagery that was “unique and memorable,” according to the judges.

Associate Editor Ted Olinger won first place in the Personality Profile category for his profile of Phil Bauer (April 2019) and third place for his Lifestyle Feature Story “Homemade Parade Rides Again July 4” (July 2019).

“Ted Olinger’s profile subject comes alive for readers thanks to his conversational and compact storytelling style,” the judges said. “In a competitive category, Olinger’s writing stood out.”

The late Ted Ralston was posthumously awarded third place for his profile “Mary Mazur, Historian” (Sept. 2019).

Joseph Pentheroudakis won second place for a General Feature, “The Night Key Center Burned” (Feb. 2020). “This is old school journalism,” the judges said. “It requires not just the quick, dispassionate shorthand of a reporter, but the eloquent flair for drama of a true storyteller.”

Carolyn Wiley was rewarded for the third year in a row statewide, taking third place in Humorous Columns with “Devil’s Head Diary,” for her “very strong language skills and storytelling abilities.”

Executive Editor Lisa Bryan won first place for her Color Feature Photo of artist Tip Toland (Sept. 2019). “The photographer captures the intensity of the sculptor at work. An excellent photo perfectly composed and exposed.”

Richard Miller won first place for his Color Portrait of Mac Bryant (Nov. 2019). One judge said “this portrait of the young man and his dog drew me in and compelled me to do what I usually don’t do when judging photos — I read the story. Nice job!”

Miller and Pentheroudakis shared second place for their springtime Photo Essay on the back page Out & About (March 2020).

Chris Konieczny won third place for a Color Feature Photo of Dave Leger and his honeybees (May 2019). “Good feature photos show the emotions of a person in a moment,” the judges said. “The beekeeper is joyfully working with his bees. He is proud of the results of his care and effort.”

See the actual winning entries at keypennews.org ■



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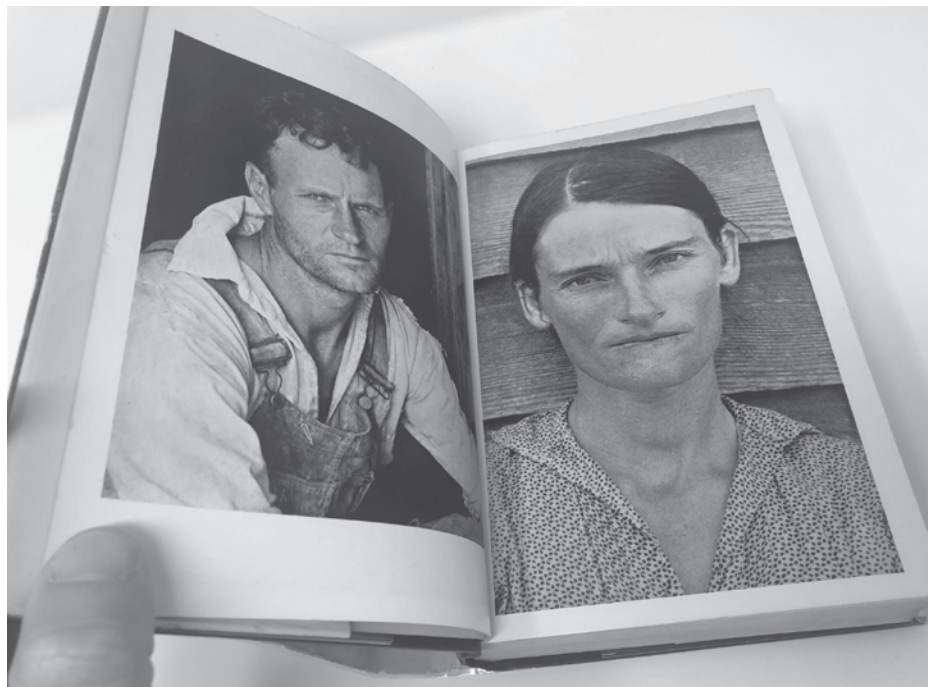
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A SOMETIMES HARSH, ALWAYS ENGROSSING, LOOK AT THREE SHARECROPPER FAMILIES IN THE SOUTH



Remembered History: 'Let Us Now Praise Famous Men'

Written by James Agee with photographs by Walker Evans

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

It seems an appropriate season to revisit the work of an author who wanted nothing but that his readers recognize the unexpected grace in people unlike themselves and offer them an unfamiliar mercy.

A commercial disaster when it was published, "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men" is considered one of the greatest American nonfiction works of the 20th century. James Agee became the foremost film critic of his day and wrote a couple of famous screenplays before succumbing to



KPReads

the effects of alcoholism in 1955 when he was 45. His novel "A Death in the Family" earned him a posthumous Pulitzer Prize in 1958.

I read "Let Us Now" the first time when I was 26 (the age of the author when he started writing it) and found it baffling and troubling. I sensed there was something missing — in me — that kept me from understanding.

This is no simple book, as Agee reminds us more than once, apologetically:

"For I must say to you, this is not a work of art or of entertainment, nor will I assume the obligations of the artist or entertainer, but it is a human effort which must require human co-operation."

In other words, it is an ordeal.

Agee was teamed up with a Farm Security Administration photographer, Walker Evans, by Fortune magazine in the summer of 1936 to document the lives of three white sharecropper families in Alabama in what was supposed to be an exposé about the effect of the New Deal, if any, on Southern poverty during the Great Depression.

Fortune got more than it bargained for: tens of thousands of words more. Agee refused to change anything and shopped the manuscript around to one publishing house after another until it was finally printed in 1941. It sold 600 copies and was remaindered.

Here is the problem: Agee suspects we are unworthy of reading his book, just as he suspects himself unworthy of writing it. He does not allow us to meet a single member of his families until a third of the way through, after we have overcome barricades of exposition, prose poetry, outlines of expectations, and his repeated challenges to go no further if we don't like what we've seen so far.

He tests us in this initiation ritual to ensure we are not there to "pry intimately into the lives of an undefended and appallingly

damaged group of human beings," and, more to the point, to transform us into something more than we are, as all good rituals do.

Only then does Agee begin to crack open the furnace of his forge to engulf us in searing portraits of people, places and moments in single paragraphs or even sentences that go on for pages. One gets a taste of what's to come looking at the faces in Walker's photographs at the beginning of the book, people who stare up from these pages with a mixture of resentment, longing and pride.

We are made to relive Agee's humiliation when a landlord farm owner stops the car he's riding in to call his tenants from his field to perform a traditional spiritual for his guests. The men, women and children stare straight ahead, and sing.

"None of these people has any sense, nor any initiative," says the landowner. "If they did, they wouldn't be farming on shares."

The landowners acquired their property buying up farms as they were foreclosed in the 1920s and '30s.

"Tell you the honest truth, they owe us a big debt," says another. "Now you just tell me, if you can, what would all those folks be doing if it wasn't for us?"

Agee describes the farm houses rented from the landowners they serve with the empirical intensity of a scientist desperate to understand what he observes. He inventories the contents of rooms, shelves and drawers, down to the odors, and analyzes how chairs, trunks and trinkets are arranged because "... this kind of spacing gives each object a full strength it would not otherwise have" and can tell us much about the hope, or lack of it, in the families who own them.

As a journalist, Agee can explain the competing qualities and prices of cotton seed, mules and men in a few sentences, but will take 14 pages to describe the unspoken impact of a thunderstorm on a family huddling in their rented shack as water streams through the roof at the end



James Agee, c. 1937 Walker Evans, collection of Smithsonian American Art Museum

of a cruel drought: "I have no right here, much as I want it, and could never earn it, and should I write of it, must defend it against my kind."

He describes parting from a 16-year-old girl, already married two years to a man older than her father. She's run twice but is being returned to the man, now working on a more distant plantation so she can't get away again so easily:

"The very most I could do was not show all I cared for her and what she was saying, and not to even try to do, or to indicate the good I wished I might do her and was so utterly helpless to do."

Agee was born in Tennessee in 1910 and though he wasn't rich, he was privileged and his talent took him far. He could not resist embracing people close to his own country and tried to prove with this work our need to do the same. The trouble came as he discovered how big a job that was. ■

The title comes from Ecclesiasticus 44:1 in the Old Testament, part of the Apocrypha or "Books which are not regarded as equal to the holy scriptures, and yet are profitable and good to read," according to Martin Luther. "Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us..."

All these were honored in their generations, and were the glory of their times...

And some there were, who have no memorial; who are perished as though they had never been...

But these were merciful men, whose righteousness hath not been forgotten.

With their seed shall remain a good inheritance, for their children are within the covenant."



Walker Evans c. 1937. Photo: Edwin Locke, Library of Congress

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The Hummingbird Cake

BARBARA VAN BOGART

I am rather new to the wonderful hummingbird cake, first created in Jamaica, where it was originally called the Doctor Bird cake (named after the island's national bird).

In 1968, the Jamaica Board of Tourism mailed press kits with the recipe for this cake, along with other local recipes, to the United States, where this marketing effort was aimed at enticing American consumers to visit the tropical island. While tourism may have picked up as a result of the media kits, the recipe for hummingbird cake languished in relative obscurity until 1978, when it was featured in the February issue of *Southern Living*. The cake won the Favorite Cake Award later that year at the Kentucky State Fair. *Southern Living* reported in 1990 that this recipe was the most requested in its history, and once you've tried it, you'll see why.

Chock full of chopped pecans, crushed pineapple, chopped bananas and spices, it's a three-layer delight, reminiscent of the moist and tender carrot cake, complete with cream cheese frosting. It's a perfect cake to serve year around, but especially wonderful in the fall, when we spend more time indoors anticipating the change of seasons and a focus on comfort foods. This is an easy to put together recipe, baked in 9-inch cake pans. Make sure to grease and flour the pans for ease in removing

the cake once it's out of the oven. Cool completely before frosting.

As described in the *Southern Living Community Cookbook*, a sheet cake is a dessert; a layer cake is an event. A hummingbird cake is a legend. I agree. And just maybe we will be dreaming of traveling to a tropical island, as Jamaica intended all those years ago.

CAKE:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla
- One 8-ounce can crushed pineapple, undrained
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 2 cups chopped bananas (about 3)

FROSTING:

- One 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup butter, softened
- One 16-ounce package powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350. Grease and flour three 9-inch round cake pans.



A SHEET CAKE IS A DESSERT;
A LAYER CAKE IS AN EVENT.
A HUMMINGBIRD CAKE IS A LEGEND.

Whisk together flour, soda, salt, sugar and cinnamon in large bowl. Add eggs and oil, stirring until dry ingredients are moistened; do not beat. Stir in 1½ teaspoons vanilla, pecans and bananas.

Pour batter equally into prepared pans. Gently tap pans on counter to remove air bubbles.

Bake at 350 for 25-30 minutes, until a wooden toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool pans on wire racks 10 minutes. Carefully remove from pans and cool completely on wire racks.

To prepare frosting, beat cream cheese and butter in a large bowl with electric mixer at medium speed until smooth. Gradually add powdered sugar, beating at low speed until light and fluffy. Stir in 1 teaspoon vanilla.

Spread frosting between layers and on top and sides of cake. Decorate top and sides with additional chopped pecans, if desired. Store in refrigerator, where it will keep for several days.

Enjoy. ■

A LITTLE TASTE OF HERON'S KEY

This recipe is brought to you by Heron's Key's own, Chef Jason.

Mediterranean Lamb with Apricots & Pistachios



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(Makes four servings)

INGREDIENTS

- Pinch of saffron threads
- 2 Tbsp almost boiling water
- 1 lb lamb leg, diced
- 1 & 1/2 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp ground allspice
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2-3 garlic cloves, chopped
- Scant 2 cups lamb or chicken stock
- 1 cinnamon stick, bruised
- 1/2 cup dried apricots, coarsely chopped
- 6 oz zucchini, sliced into half moons
- 4 oz cherry tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped
- Salt & pepper (to taste)
- 2 Tbsp pistachios, coarsely chopped
- Couscous, to serve

DIRECTIONS

Soak saffron threads in water. Let stand for at least 10 minutes. Trim fat or gristle from lamb and cut into 1 inch chunks. Mix flour and spices together and dredge lamb in the mixture. Reserve any remaining spiced flour. Heat oil in a large heavy-bottomed pan and cook onion and garlic until softened.

Add lamb and cook over high heat until browned on all sides. Sprinkle in reserved spiced flour and cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes, then remove from heat.

Gradually stir in stock, saffron, and its soaking liquid. Return to heat and bring to a boil. Add cinnamon stick and apricots, reduce heat and simmer for about an hour. Add zucchini and tomatoes and cook for an additional 15 minutes. Discard cinnamon stick. Stir in fresh cilantro and season with salt and pepper. Serve sprinkled with pistachios, accompanied by couscous.



The best wine to pair with this delicious dish? Follow us on Facebook to find out what Chef Jason recommends!

HERON'S KEY
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We'd love to feature a dish from your KP kitchen that friends and family ask for. Email the details to editor@keypennews.org with your phone number; we'll be in touch. (Don't worry, we do most of the writing.)



Cheryl Jones' Play to Learn brings friendly laughter, play and learning to kids onscreen. *Children's Museum of Tacoma/Zoom*

Virtual 'Play to Learn' for KP Kids

KRISA BRUEMMER, KP NEWS

In the pre-pandemic era, over the course of a year the Greentrike organization's Play to Learn outreach program served tens of thousands of people across 23 regional sites, including the Key Peninsula Civic Center in Vaughn. The grant-funded early childhood education program is now being offered virtually over Zoom, including thematic circle time, project-based activity time, pajama time and STEAM-focused lessons.

"It gives us such a safe way to interact with other kids when in-class preschool is not an ideal situation," said parent Taylor Rydell.

Since 2008, Play to Learn has offered cost-free, drop-in educational programs that encourage children and adults to play

and learn together.

"We're trying to design everything to support learning through engagement, fun and play," said Teacher and Program Coordinator Cheryl Jones. "It's child-led, child-centered, and our motto of honoring children and championing play is really how we try and show up at all times.

"We were so excited to be out on the KP," Jones said. "When my two older kids

were in preschool they had a teacher who was an institution out there on the KP, Andrea Jewell, and she was really my inspiration."

Before COVID-

19, the Play to Learn team would arrive at the civic center early to unload their van and set up art tables, a sensory station, an array of colorful carpets and large totes filled with blocks, balls, stuffed animals, books, toys, musical

instruments, bubbles and a giant rainbow parachute. Around lunchtime, they'd pack up and drive away, then return to do it all again a few days later.

Play to Learn looks very different online, but the children laugh, play and thrive there too.

"I've been so impressed by how the kids are learning to be in this (virtual) space. I've seen growth and progress," Jones said. "They love talking and dancing and being spotlighted. I've been so proud of the kids and how well they do."

In October, they delved into dinosaurs, emotions, fall leaves and geometry. In November, the focus will be on healthy bodies, insects and the jungle.

Jones, who has been with Play to

Learn since 2012, straddles a line between teacher and entertainer as she sings, dances and shares words of wisdom, holding the children's attention and facilitating their participation throughout each 30-minute Zoom session.

Standing in her home in front of a colorful, hanging quilt during a recent circle time, Jones looked into the eyes of the children through her camera

lens and said, "Even in this virtual friendship space we are practicing so many friendship skills. Learning how to listen to one another and pay attention to each other, and how to listen to me and pay attention to me, and take turns with what you want to say and what you want to share, those

"THAT REALLY STRONG SENSE OF YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY AND THOSE CONNECTIONS THAT YOU MAKE, THOSE FRIENDS THAT YOU MAKE IN THOSE NATURAL WAYS IS WHAT I MISS."

"KNOW THAT WHATEVER YOU'RE FEELING RIGHT NOW, IT WON'T BE A FOREVER FEELING. AND I LIKE YOU JUST THE WAY YOU ARE."

are all such good friendship skills that we're learning right now by sharing this fun time with one another."

During activity time, kids work on a project using supplies most families have at home. One week they made dinosaur masks, then sang a dinosaur song and danced, stomped around and roared into the screen as dinosaurs.

"My favorite part of the Play to Learn program is how much Amelia learns from their craft projects every week," said Meghan Callaway of Lakebay. "Her favorite thing so far has been the pajama parties. She loves to sing the brush your teeth song nightly now."

Although the virtual program has its success stories, Play to Learn is not reaching nearly as many families as it used to.

"We're reaching out virtually but for those folks who don't have access to the internet, they don't necessarily know," Program Director Charleen Balansay said. "The environment as much as the people in a child's life builds and nurtures their whole being, so that's the tough part. That's the hardest part. That really strong sense of your neighborhood community and those connections that you make, those friends that you make in those natural ways is what I miss."

"I miss hand stamps and the whole, full richness of the tactile. I even miss carrying boxes and the outlet of the physical activity to keep my bones from turning to dust," Jones said. "We all go through a lot of feelings in our day about what's going on in the world."

In a tone reminiscent of Mister Rogers, she added, "Know that whatever you're feeling right now, it won't be a forever feeling. And I like you just the way you are."

For more information, go to <https://play-tacoma.org/play-to-learn>. ■

Vaughn Man Killed by Falling Tree Limb

STAFF REPORT

Dale McCracken of the north Vaughn area was killed instantly by a falling tree limb during a wind storm the afternoon of Oct. 13. He was 30 years old.

According to Key Peninsula Fire Department, McCracken was clearing debris from his driveway at about 4 p.m., when he was struck in the head by a 7-foot branch, about 6 inches in diameter, fallen approximately 50 feet. He was found by his girlfriend.

McCracken's friends have organized a GoFundMe and a donation account at Sound Credit Union to help defray funeral expenses. ■

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ©Tim Knepp



When the Silver Salmon Return

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

Last month the silver salmon came to Glen Cove. Each year their arrival roughly coincides with the first great rainfalls of autumn, when the Pacific Ocean reminds us of its presence by sending us waves of wind and fog and darkness — and salmon.

Their energy matches that of the atmosphere. While leaves are torn from limbs and streams gouge their channels anew, carrying into the Sound rich accumulations of humus, salts and acids, bands of silver salmon gather near creek mouths to leap and splash before they spawn. It is a maelstrom of chemistry.

A fishing buddy and I paddled into the thick of them one morning. I think they are the most beautiful salmon, perfectly proportioned. There below a high bank crowned with madronas, the water green with algae and the reflections of trees, the fish flashed the silver of the open ocean, the silver of fog on ridges, and our metal canoe.

Though we cast for hours and often hit right where they had jumped, they struck neither flies nor lures. Other things occupied them, incredible transformations. Soon their backs would turn green and their bodies the red of vine maple leaves. They would leave saltwater for the last time to swim up Minter Creek, perhaps making it under the new State Route 302 bridge — rebuilt for their sake — to find gravel beds where they could lay their eggs and die.

It is hard to find a comparison for the extreme difference, to a salmon, between salt water and fresh. Maybe if you could step from Antarctica directly into the Sahara Desert you would get a similar total shock, but it wouldn't go much more than skin deep. For salmon the shock rattles every cell in their bodies.

Salt's constituent ions must be kept in fine balance in any animal's bloodstream for cells to maintain the correct pressure to operate. It's a narrow range. Last winter one of my close relatives nearly went into a coma because her sodium dropped by 20% — a minor fluctuation in most of life's

parameters, but this meant her husband found her unconscious in bed with her brain so swollen she cannot remember her days recovering in the hospital.

A salmon in salt water is surrounded by a fluid that has six times the salt concentration of its body tissues. We face nothing similar on land. Ions in fluids want to be in equilibrium, so diffusion constantly tries to force the water's salt through the salmon's gills and into its blood. As its blood is loaded with salt, its kidneys produce more urine, dehydrating it.

In fresh water the situation is no easier. The fluid surrounding the salmon essentially lacks salt, reversing the gradient. The water that enters the salmon's body acts to dilute its tissue concentrations of salt ions, causing its cells to swell, and the urine it produces to carry away excess water will inevitably have much-needed salt ions in it as well.

It is a Catch-22 in both environments. A salmon fights it by drinking constantly, several liters per day, in salt water, and not at all in fresh water. In salt water their kidneys produce highly concentrated urine while in fresh water they continuously discharge urine that is practically water.

An adaptation in their gills is even more incredible. Gills are essentially sheets of blood vessels exposed to the world at all times — the perfect sieve, in theory, through which salt ions should flood into or out of a salmon. Yet cells in salmon gills have special enzymes that actively carry salt ions against the gradient, holding the flux at bay like a bilge pump in a boat with holes. When a salmon moves from salt water to fresh water, these "pumps" reverse direction.

Salt is just one of many facets of water chemistry, and these changes are just part of a salmon's transformation as it prepares to cross the boundary. So significant are its body's changes that some scientists refer to them as a type of metamorphosis — as significant as that of an insect.

And so the silvers that were too busy metamorphosing to bother with my hooks have by now entered the world of fresh

water. The eggs they are laying will hatch in spring, and the young will know nothing of salt water for many moons. Most salmonids go to sea within months of hatching, whereas silvers stay in fresh water for at least a year. The young silvers will move with periodic storms, find pools to stake out tiny territories, calibrate themselves to the chemistry of the water around them — lucky to be in a relatively rural watershed — before the instinct to migrate finally takes them into the brackish water at the mouth of Minter Creek, where their first transformation will prepare them for life in the open ocean.

And in another year or three, with the storms they'll be back. ■

In 2001, 21 Northwest tribes joined the federal government in a lawsuit against Washington state to remove roadway culverts blocking salmon habitat, arguing that the state had a treaty obligation to preserve fish runs. The court agreed with the tribes and ruled in 2007 that the state was in violation of its obligations under the Stevens Treaties. These were a series of agreements made in 1854 and '55 where tribes gave up land in exchange for, among others, "the right of taking fish, at all usual and accustomed grounds and stations," a right which was reaffirmed in the historic 1974 Boldt decision.

In 2013, a U.S. District Court issued an injunction ordering the state to remove offending culverts by 2030. In 2016 the Ninth Circuit upheld the district court's decision and in 2018 the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed it.

Two culverts and a bridge identified as fish barriers on Minter Creek on SR-302 near 118th Avenue NW are being replaced as part of the state's effort to comply with the court order. The project will open 25 miles of upstream salmon habitat when completed in 2021. There are approximately 1,000 other similar barriers in the state to replace at an \$3 billion.



CIVIC CENTER CORNER

KP Civic Center Board of Directors

Please join us online at 7pm for the November 12 meeting to vote in our annual election via Zoom.

Contact the KPCCA office for Zoom meeting details:
office@kpciviccenter.org or 253-884-3456

Everyone over the age of 18 who lives or works on the Key Peninsula is encouraged to become a member of the Key Peninsula Civic Center Association. Attending the monthly Board of Directors meeting and expressing your interest are the only other requirements to join!

All KPCCA members are eligible for election to the Board of Directors and the Audit Committee.

Key Peninsula Civic Center is so grateful for all of the donations we've received in response to our Annual Appeal – over \$10,000 so far! THANK YOU!

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TOP LEFT First place in the KP Scarecrow Contest went to creators Christel and Brody Wheatman of Lakebay for "Ricky". **TOP CENTER** Sunset low rider. **TOP RIGHT** Bigfoot chases his own shadow. **CENTER** Scarecrows invaded all the way to Longbranch. **CENTER RIGHT** Minions and Gru take the high road in Key Center. **BOTTOM LEFT** Second place went to Sharla Schuller of Lakebay for Uncle Fester and Cousin Itt. **BOTTOM RIGHT** "Holey Moley" by Debbie and Annette from Sunnycrest Nursery won third place. *Photos: David Zeigler, KP News*