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DNR Plans Timber Harvest in Key Central Forest

Public input may help preserve a few special places along specific trails within the 110 acres of trees slated to come down.

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

At the Key Pen Parks commissioner meeting held via Zoom April 11, forest managers from the Department of Natural Resources presented its plan to harvest 110 acres of timber from the Key Central Forest. The 480-acre forest is located between the Key Peninsula Highway on the east and Wright-Bliss Road to the west and has been under long-term lease to Key Pen Parks since 2011.

The complete harvest plan includes over 300 acres of forested state trust land from five units that comprise DNR's School Timber Sale. Approximately 200 acres of the harvest will come from three units located in Belfair.

"One of the things Key Pen Parks can do better is to share that Key Central Forest, along with 360 Trails, are working forests," said Executive Director Tracey Perkosky. "Key Pen Parks manages the land for recreational purposes, but DNR is the land owner."

AdobeStock

CONTINUED PAGE 2



Eruç's vessel at anchor under Mayon Volcano in Legazpi, Philippines. Erden Eruç

KP Man Completes First Solo Row from U.S. to Asia

And he may have set his 18th world record on the first leg of his second solo trip around the world.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Solo circumnavigator Erden Eruç of Wauna, 60, made landfall at Legazpi City in the Philippines March 24, becoming the first person to row from North America to Asia after launching from Crescent City, Calif., June 22, with brief stops in Hawaii and Guam, on the first leg of his second human-powered trip alone around the world.

Eruç was headed to Hong Kong and points west across Asia and Europe, but adverse weather significantly slowed his progress across the Pacific. After stopping to make repairs in Hawaii he was forced south to Guam and planned to head from there to Singapore, before having to divert to the Philippines.

He rowed approximately 7,800 miles over 239 days, or about 33 miles a day.

"I am feeling well," he said in an April 1 webcast from Legazpi hosted by Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants Productions and Ocean Recovery Alliance, one of his expedition sponsors. "My goal was not to get to Hong Kong; it is to get to the base of Everest by human power ... I've reached the Philippines, I am safe, I will wait out the typhoon season."

After reaching mainland Asia, Eruç plans

to bicycle to and summit Mount Everest in the fall of 2023, then bike west across central Asia around the top of the Caspian Sea to Georgia to climb Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in Europe. From there he will pedal south to Turkey, his homeland, and west across Europe to rejoin his rowboat in Portugal. He will then row to Brazil and bike southwest across the continent to Argentina and summit Aconcagua, the tallest mountain in South America, then bike and kayak north back to Crescent City, completing his second human-powered circumnavigation

after climbing the last of the highest mountains on six continents, a goal he set with his first circumnavigation in 2012.

Eruç finished that journey after five years and 41,153 miles. He became the first person to row across three oceans; the first to row from Australia to Africa; the first to cross any ocean from the southern to northern hemisphere; and he has rowed further across the Atlantic than anyone else.

"After I launched from Crescent City, I added two Guinness world records to my registered 15 records," he said. "The overall days at sea that I rowed, including two-person rows, is now a Guinness world

record. It's 1,168. I think they will probably assign me the first crossing from North America to Asia as well. I may end up with 18 world records."

"It's just been wonderful how people respond and react," said Nancy Board, Eruç's wife. After Guam, where he was welcomed by the governor, "he was heading to Indonesia — he couldn't get to China — so he started heading south and he had to divert to the Philippines. Now he's got a whole new group of people in this town that he showed up in. There's always somebody no matter how remote of a country or city we need help in; somebody shows up.

"In this world where there is so much pain and suffering, so much going on, these are the kind of stories nobody knows about and really should be told," she said.

Eruç rows alone and without any support vessels, though he gets detailed weather and current models from his land crew. His ocean rowboat is 24 feet long and weighs about 2,000 pounds empty. Underway he eats freeze-dried food, nuts and chocolate protein bars. He recommends "the big

Costco unsalted dry roasted nuts. They didn't last long. I need to bring more of those with me for the South China Sea."

The solar-powered water maker makes two gallons a day, which is about what he

CONTINUED PAGE 3

"IN THIS WORLD WHERE THERE IS SO MUCH PAIN AND SUFFERING, SO MUCH GOING ON, THESE ARE THE KIND OF STORIES NOBODY KNOWS ABOUT AND REALLY SHOULD BE TOLD."

"THE OCEAN IS IN CHARGE. I DO MY BEST AND DESTINY WILL REVEAL ITSELF."

KEY PENINSULA NEWS

253-884-4699

www.keypennews.org

www.facebook.com/KeyPenNews
PO Box 3, Vaughn WA 98394

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Lisa Bryan
editor@keypennews.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Ted Olinger

STAFF CONTRIBUTORS: Krisa Bruemmer,
Ed Johnson, Tina McKail,
Joseph Pentheroudakis, Chris Rurik,
Dave Stave, Sara Thompson,
Carolyn Wiley

CONTRIBUTORS:

José Alaniz, Dan Clouse,
Richard Gelinas, Mark Michel

CALENDAR EDITOR: Meredith Browand
calendar@keypennews.org

SOCIAL MEDIA: Joseph Pentheroudakis

OPERATIONS MANAGER / DESIGN EDITOR:
Tim Heitzman

BOOKKEEPER: Linda Grubaugh

AD SALES: Deanna Hunter
sales@keypennews.org

DISTRIBUTION: Anna Brones, Norm
Brones, Bill Dietz, Bruce Macdonald,
Jay Stewart, Bob Wilkins

PUBLISHING BOARD: Sara Thompson,
president, Michele Gorman, Bruce
Macdonald, Jeff Minch, Herb O'Niell,
Dave Stave, Bob Wilkins

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TIMBER HARVEST FROM PAGE 1

Forested state trust lands are held in perpetuity to provide revenue for specific beneficiaries, such as schools, counties and critical local services.

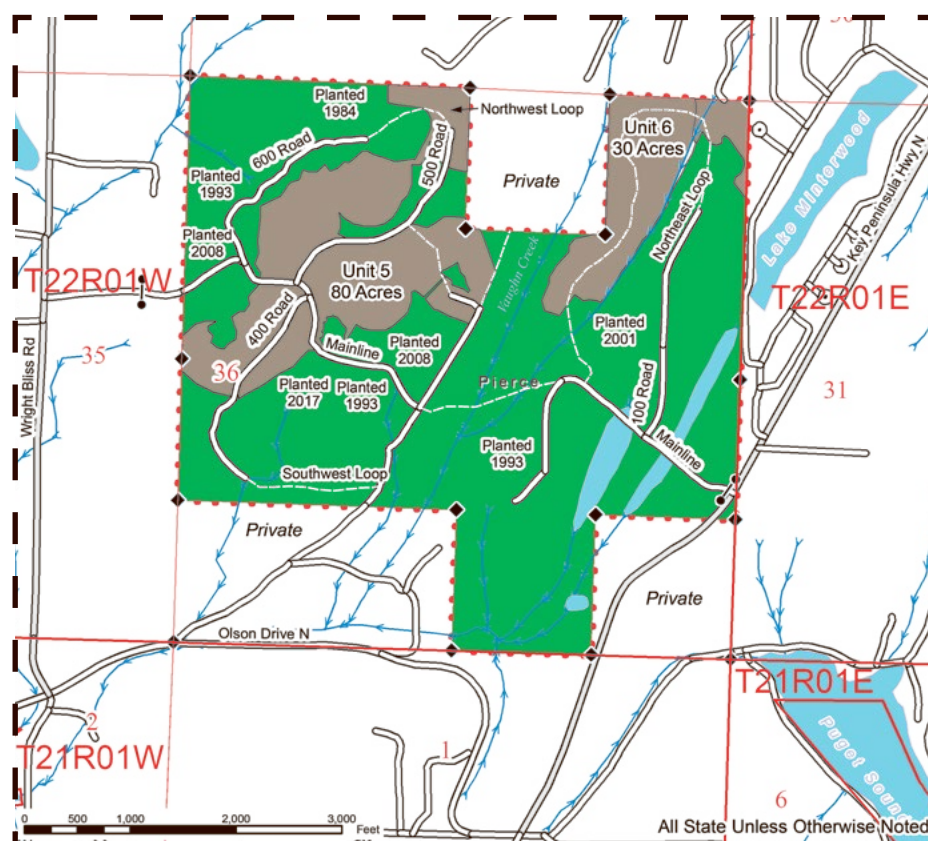
Public outreach is underway. DNR mailed fact sheets to 55 adjacent neighbors with maps of the harvest areas, general timelines, management practices and the fiducial responsibilities it has protecting and managing over 2 million acres of forested state trust lands.

The appraisal, permitting and the State Environmental Project Assessment process is scheduled to occur from October to November 2022.

“Every individual in Washington state has the opportunity to comment on the SEPA and my contact information is available to hear opposition or any concerns,” said Belfair Unit Manager Allyn Cole, who leads the project.

In December 2022, the proposal will go to the board of DNR for approval before the timber sale is put up for auction in January 2023. Key Pen Parks will see an impact to its lease between February 2023 and October of 2024, when harvest operations are scheduled to take place. After that comes managing vegetation in 2025 and tree replanting in 2026.

A working draft of Key Central Forest identifies proposed cutting zones in light brown and units of earlier replanting in green. DNR



Cole said portions of Key Central Forest were harvested and replanted in 1984, 1993, 2001, 2008 and 2017. He said this will be the last entry into this area until the earliest planting in 1984 matures.

“It’ll be quite a long time before we’re back in here again for actual timber removal,” he said. “Silviculture activities will exist — plantings, surveys, pre-commercial thinning operations — and those are still occurring within the other units across the landscape there.”

Commissioner Shawn Jensen said, “Some people hear the words ‘tree harvest’ and they think ‘clear cutting’ and

I don’t know what particular type of harvest you’re going to be doing, or whether you’re going to leave some trees up so the trail experi-

ence doesn’t lose its character altogether.”

Cole said he used to work in the Capitol Forest, which has a heavy recreation community. He invited user groups to come out and look at a trail to identify areas that have “many cool jumps, bends or something neat they like ... or this picnic bench for shade. I can leave trees around there to preserve those areas and would appreciate that communication.”

Commissioner Ed Robison asked, “During the time they are actually

performing the timber harvest, will we have to close the whole area to the public?”

Nathan McReynolds, DNR South Sound District Manager said he and Perkosky have discussed the subject and are thinking of proposing that the trailhead in the Northwest Loop should be closed when Unit 5 is harvested. Once that is completed, they would close the Northeast Loop when Unit 6 is harvested.

Commissioner Linda Parry asked if they intended to reopen the Northwest Loop after harvest “even though you haven’t done any of the cleanup or replanting?”

“The cleanup of the trail is a contractual obligation,” Cole said. A clause in the contract requires that as soon as the equipment is within 200 feet of any location on the trail, that has to be rebuilt within two weeks. In addition, “We have our own DNR recreation clause where there is no slash and a few other items,” he said. “And we’ll work with Tracey (Perkosky) to get the trails back into as close to the original condition.”

Commissioner Parry said, “As far as the trust beneficiary goes, yes, it benefits schools but this park benefits our local community in so many ways. I just want to make sure the public has the opportunity to know what’s coming.”

South Sound District Manager Nathan McReynolds said that fish streams like Vaughn Creek will have buffers the width and height that a tree will grow in 100 years, plus a half-tree length. On top of that they plan to leave eight trees per acre. “We also protect wetlands,” McReynolds said. “If they’re less than an acre they’ll get a 100-foot buffer. If more than an acre then they’ll get that creek-side buffer, which is a tree-length and a half. There’s a lot of protections in place.”

Commissioner and Board Chair Mark Michel said, “I think it’s incumbent on us as commissioners to present to the public that this is a working forest still and that we have the benefit of using it for very little cost. The cost we have to bear is the logging.”

“In the meantime, enjoy the trails, animals, trees and all that Mother Nature has to offer at Key Central Forest,” Perkosky said. ■

Correction: The original version of “Longbranch Cemetery Poised to Expand” (April 2022) cited inaccurate dates. The Longbranch Cemetery Association has been operating for 117 years, not 60 as originally reported. We regret the error.

ERDUN FROM PAGE 1

needs to drink, to rehydrate food, and to rinse salt off his body and clothing. “Salt water desiccates and dries the skin,” he said. “You need to constantly rinse it to reduce the itching. It’s quite a battle against the elements out there.”

Eruç webcasts during his journey about the amount of plastic litter at sea as an ambassador for Ocean Recovery Alliance, a nonprofit based in Hong Kong devoted to improving the health of the oceans.

“After I left California, I could see plastic pollution on the water, a Styrofoam cup here, a plastic bit there, a fender that got loose, maybe once a week,” he said. “And then as I got further across, closer to the Philippines, past Guam, I started seeing it every day, then every hour as the concentration of the plastic pollution started

increasing. All of these windward facing islands (in the Philippines) have their beaches covered with debris that comes across the ocean from afar.”

Eruç plans to bicycle from Legazpi to Subic Bay or San Fernando on the west side of Luzon Island in January, where he will relaunch his rowboat and head to mainland Asia.

“If I cannot make Vietnam, it will be the Malay Peninsula,” he said. “If I cannot make that, it will be the archipelago south of Singapore. If I am carried that far south, I may have to drop anchor and wait until May or so until the monsoons start reversing, the currents start reversing. So, the ocean is in charge. I do my best and destiny will reveal itself.”

Follow Eruç’s progress at www.erdeneruc.com/erdens-blog. ■



(map) In nine months, Eruç rowed from Crescent City, California to Legazpi City, Philippines. Map data ©2022 Google, INEGI (middle) Erden Eruç hoists the Philippine pennant on arrival, delivered by the local kayak club. (lower) Eruç was escorted to anchorage by a fleet of local sailors and kayakers. John Gochenouer



Nancy Board and her buddy, “Buddy.” Tina McKail, KP News

The Adventurer’s North Star

What’s it like to be married to Erden Eruç, a man who propels himself across oceans and continents, climbing mountains around the world under his own power?

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

Nancy Board is an extraordinarily self-reliant woman focused on wellbeing. She loves her life and the man she shares it with in Wauna, and maintains an abiding faith that somehow, someday, everything will be all right.

As a girl from a small town in southeastern Michigan, she used to sit out in her backyard in the evenings and look up at the sky. She told herself, “There’s a big world out there and I’ve got to get out of this town.”

Education was her ticket. She went to a local university and earned her degree in social work but wanted more. A guidance counselor encouraged her to apply for a graduate program at a prestigious university with one of the best schools in social work. Funding from the National Institute of Mental Health paid for her first semester when she started but her mother worried about money.

“I told her, ‘Mom, I’ll figure it out. Where

there is a will there’s a way. Let me just get there.’”

She studied economics, public policy and social issues. She chose a track of family therapy and behavioral medicine and was trained to work as a social worker in a primary healthcare setting. There she learned the significance of combining mental health and primary into one.

Board worked in a hospital setting, an alcohol and drug program, and with kids and families and discovered she was really good at it. For many years she operated a private practice in St. Louis.

Eventually Board got the chance to move to Chicago to work in large corporations that had employee assistance programs. It opened national and global opportunities and is the work she has done for the last 25 years, culminating in her co-founding the nonprofit Global Women 4 Wellbeing.

CONTINUED PAGE 4

“IT WAS STRESSFUL AT FIRST, LEARNING HOW TO DO IT, BUT ROCK CLIMBING BECAME A GREAT STRESS RELEASE FOR ME.”

ADVENTURER'S WIFE FROM PAGE 3

She was doing consulting work for the U.S. Postal Service when she met Erden Eruç. He was a software engineer who had just moved from Washington, D.C. to Seattle. He was in Chicago for his employer working on a big software project for USPS and walked into her office one day.

And then her whole life changed.

"There I am, totally content," Board said. "I'm having a ball living in Chicago. I've got a great apartment and I'm living the life."

"We both had been married once before," she said. "I was just out of a longer-term relationship six months before and decided I would never, ever get married again. I was done."

She flew out to Seattle for the first time in early September, where the water and mountains worked their magic.

Back in Chicago she questioned herself.

"Long distance relationship? That stinks," Board said.

"Erden was much

more direct about it. He told me, 'If we're going to give this a try, we need to be together. Chicago is a great city but it's really flat.'"

She moved to Seattle to give it a go. She could always move back.

But she didn't. That was 2001. She became a mountain climber.

"I was, as they say in the Midwest, 'a flatlander,'" she said. "I kept saying, 'How do you know all the names of these mountains?' I had no concept whatsoever that mountains had names, that people knew what they were, that people climbed multiple peaks. Not part of my life at all."

Board played competitive volleyball nearly all her life but had never hiked or climbed mountains. But she learned. Within no time she knew every peak here and around the world. She got involved with some women climbers who taught her how to rock climb, really scramble and hike.

"That's what I enjoy," she said. "I've been on glaciers, and I've had crampons on my feet, but I wasn't interested in big technical stuff like that. But I found I really enjoyed rock."

Eruç had been a rock climber for many years. "Yosemite, big walls and stuff like that," Board said. Once she started rock climbing, she was hooked.

Board conquered her fear of heights thanks to a patient friend.

"People can only teach you so much about how to climb and how to be safe in climbing. But once I found what I call

'how to dance on the rock,' oh my God, it was like ballet. Suddenly I trusted my body. I trusted my footwork. I understood how to move. I had to learn from the core, from my own center of gravity."

Once she did that, the fear went away and she started stretching herself and leading harder and harder climbs. Her whole world became a 3-foot radius and she found it meditative.

"It was stressful at first, learning how to do it, but rock climbing became a great stress release for me. I'm glad I stuck with it because I really enjoyed it. I don't do it much anymore."

From 2009 until fall 2013, home base was Australia. In 2010, on Eruç's first solo circumnavigation, he bicycled across the country. For a time, she thought it would be great to ride with him for four to six months. "But honestly, I had a career that I loved and opportunities to travel overseas and I thought why would I give this up?

It's money, number one. It allows us to do this expedition. Who gets to have that kind of a chance?"

They are a team. They moved to Wauna in August 2017.

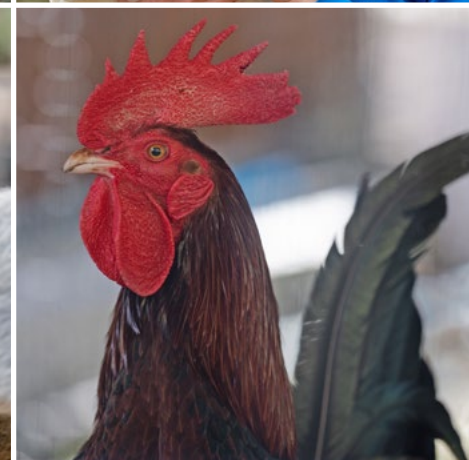
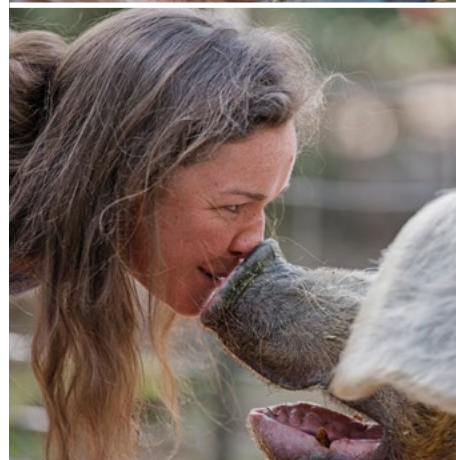
The longest they have been apart is 344 days when Eruç crossed the Pacific the first time, between 2007 and 2008.

"While he was gone those 11 months, I thought if he is going to challenge himself, I'm going to challenge myself too. I changed. I grew, I did things, I became more resilient and I don't have to look back on my life and say I gave up too soon," she said. "We do these things kind of simultaneously."

"People seem to think it is really hard or they think that I'm lonely or whatever because I hear that a lot. People ask, 'Don't you worry?' And I say, 'No, I'm not wired that way and if I worried, I'd be a mental case.'"

"I love my life. I love my independence. I love being alone. He does too. He enjoys it out on the boat. When he comes back home, it takes a little while. He's very conscious of coming back into what has been my space. He's been really respectful of that. It's different and then we adjust to 'our space again.' And when he leaves I go through a similar adjustment. It takes a couple of weeks.

"I'm sitting here now with you today and I say, 'He's going to be home in 10 days.' Ten months ago, that wasn't the case. I go through emotional feelings when he leaves; it's more of an adjustment. And when he comes home it's more, 'Gosh, that wasn't so bad.' " ■



All photos Tina McKail, KP News

Local Farm Animal Rescue Organization Saves Lives

KRISA BRUEMMER, KP NEWS

Since its inception in 2017, Heartwood Haven, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and registered charity on the Key Peninsula, has rescued more than 1,400 farm animals suffering from cruelty and neglect, including pigs, goats, sheep, chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys. After healing and rehabilitation on the 2.5-acre Key Peninsula property, over 1,000 animals have been successfully adopted out, while animals who are not candidates for adoption receive care living out their natural lives at Heartwood Haven.

The sanctuary, co-founded by Executive Director Kate Tsyrlkevich and her wife, Director of Operations Hope Hilman, currently houses 15 pigs, about 30 chickens, 20 ducks, eight turkeys, two dogs and three cats.

All the roosters are former cockfighters. Their first was Porter, that Tsyrlkevich would take for walks around the neighborhood after he was rescued from a cockfighting ring in another state.

"Typically, what happens is they're all euthanized," Tsyrlkevich said. "Here they get to die with dignity."

Once rescued, recovering cockfighters must be housed separately because they

might be traumatized, scared and aggressive. One of their roosters self-mutilates due to post-traumatic stress.

"What happens in cockfighting is that those roosters are mutilated, they're drugged with testosterone and steroids and methamphetamines and various uppers to make them aggressive, to make them want to fight," Tsyrlkevich said. "They're trained up with trauma, like hitting them with different things, objects to make them more fearful and lash out, so that brings out the fight or flight response in them."

Non-egg laying chickens, bred to grow huge for the meat industry, require specialized care and sometimes have heart problems.

"All the animals that come here from factory farms, they're all sick," Tsyrlkevich said. "They all have diseases and need antibiotics and they have respiratory illnesses; it's gross."

"A lot of farmers will tell you that you have to butcher (turkeys and chickens) when they're young to put them out of their misery, otherwise they're going to be so overweight they can't walk," she said. "But I have them here. They're 4 years old. It's

"IF I WORRIED, I'D BE A MENTAL CASE."

"TYPICALLY, WHAT HAPPENS IS THEY'RE ALL EUTHANIZED."



"We don't call them hogs; we call them big pigs." Tina McKail, KP News

all about diet, exercise, friends, sunshine."

Running an animal rescue organization was not always the plan, but for Tsyklevich, who grew up on a farm in Moldova in the former USSR, it makes sense as the culmination of her experiences.

"There were lots of stray dogs and neglected animals. I would save my lunch for them and go feed, like, the mama dogs that had puppies that needed extra food," she said. "I was always the kid who took the classroom hamster or rat home for the weekend."

Before committing to Heartwood Haven full-time, Tsyklevich worked at a vet clinic, taught community college classes, and was an assistant aquarist and researcher with a background in biological sciences, environmental sciences and oceanography.

Tsyklevich and Hilman are vegan and part of their mission is to spread compassion through education, including an Animal Friends blog series, tours inviting visitors to pet a pig or cuddle a chicken, and events such as pig painting with a visiting artist. The co-founders work with other sanctuaries and local advocacy organizations and estimate over nine million people have been touched by their work.

Learning that farm animals in most shelter systems are sent to auction propelled Heartwood Haven's mission forward, leading them to focus on the highest-risk animals.

"Animals that go to auction, especially for pigs, it's very likely that they're going to be purchased and slaughtered," Tsyklevich said. "If a cat or dog was picked up for being stray or coming from a cruelty situation and animal control sent them off to auction where they're likely to be butchered for food, people would be outraged."

Nine giant pigs that can grow to 900 pounds live at the sanctuary. Among the longest-standing residents are 500-pound seniors Ethel and Lucy, a trickster with a spicy personality.

"We don't call them hogs; we call them big pigs," Tsyklevich said. "Hogs, you typically think they're going to turn into bacon."

One of their six mini pigs, 200-pound Ruby, couldn't walk when she was rescued but is now thriving despite ongoing limited mobility and has become a social media star as an ambassador of her species.

"We have a lot of pigs here who, the owners were doing drugs and selling drugs and so there's drug related murders; they end up going to jail," Tsyklevich said. "So, these pigs are abandoned."

In a recent rescue of three abandoned pigs, two had not had water or food for over 30 days.

Tsyklevich said pigs are among the smartest animals on Earth, with an IQ of a 5-year-old child. They have a designated bathroom area, decorate their houses and even give gifts, such as leftover food, trash or branches they've collected.

"Breeders tell people they'll make good indoor pets. But they'll destroy the house, they'll start biting you, they get bored," she said. "Take your kid, lock them in a room, lock them inside — it's the exact same thing."

Heartwood Haven works with animal control agencies on cruelty, neglect and abandonment cases, resulting in hundreds of new intakes and adoptions each year.

They have an avian vet and a pig vet, but for spaying and other surgeries, Tsyklevich drives to Oregon State University towing

a trailer that can fit 15 big pigs.

"The daily care for all these animals is minimum six hours a day," Tsyklevich said. "A lot of them are old and arthritic and have special needs and are on medication. They all have different nutritional requirements, fencing requirements, housing requirements, predator-proofing requirements, space requirements."

Tsyklevich and Hilman are contacted every day about animals in desperate situations, sometimes even receiving threats like, "I'll shoot this pig today if you don't come." But until they can adopt out more animals or relocate to larger property, Heartwood Haven does not have the capacity to accept owner-surrendered animals, even in cases with "really, really, really sad stories that jerk at your heartstrings," Tsyklevich said.

"All the animals who stay here for a while, they all have their individual personalities," she said. "When they pass away, you have to cry about it and be sad and upset and remember we're doing it for them. That's what kind of fuels you to keep going, just thinking that I made their life better; I can make some other lives better too."

For more information visit heartwoodhaven.org. ■

"ALL THE ANIMALS WHO STAY HERE FOR A WHILE, THEY ALL HAVE THEIR INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITIES,"

Dan Clouse THE OTHER SIDE



Procrastination, Pencils and Plumbago

The procrastinator's spirit animal is the crow.

Back in fourth century Armenia, as the story goes, a wicked crow looked up and wheedled a Roman centurion named Expeditus into putting off converting to Christianity, cawing what sounded like the Latin word for tomorrow, "cras." Being a future saint and all, Expeditus procrastinated no more, stomped on the devil in black feathers at his feet, and received an expeditious baptism.

And the favorite writing utensil of writers who put the cras in procrastinate? The pencil, of course, since you can always postpone writing projects by sharpening all your pencils first. "Sharpening your pencils" has become a cliché for what people do when they perform absurdly long warm-up rituals before getting down to work.

If I'd logged all the hours I spent sharpening my pencils before writing, procrastinating would easily add up to double the time I spent putting pen to paper.

Friends marvel at how I get so many things like pencil sharpening done and still look so rested. It's quite simple: anyone can do any amount of work, provided it's not the work he's supposed to be doing at that moment, as described in Robert Benchley's groundbreaking 1930 psychological treatise "How To Get Things Done."

But before I start this column, the cliché about pencil sharpening reminds me that Henry David Thoreau wore many hats, including pencil maker — if indeed there is such a hat. There is an entry in his 1842 Journal that begins: "I have been making pencils all day, and then at evening walked to see an old schoolmate..."

Making pencils all day?

But Thoreau did make pencils. In fact, his family made the finest pencils in America for 20 years, and when he wasn't talking to birds or gazing at clouds or chiding us about just not getting it, he worked in the business for most of his adult life. You can see J. Thoreau and Co. pencils on display at the Smithsonian Institution, and someone bought one on eBay a couple of years ago for \$1,800.

When a Harvard classmate wrote asking what Thoreau had been up to since leaving Cambridge, he listed these occupations: "I am a Schoolmaster — a Private Tutor, a Surveyor — a Gardener, a Farmer — a Painter, I mean a House Painter, a Carpenter,

a Mason, a Day-Laborer, a Pencil-Maker, a Glass-paper Maker, a Writer, and sometimes a bad Poet." Many hats, indeed. He must have been putting off deciding what he wanted to be when he grew up.

It's not hard to imagine Thoreau here on the Key Peninsula.

He'd fit right in, probably with a cabin by Bay Lake, which is just about the size of Walden Pond. I can see him on the shoulder of the road walking toward Home since he wouldn't care to own a car.

Our KP eccentric's conversation out in the drizzle at the Lakebay post office parking lot would be off-beat, too, and full of cranky wisdom like, "If you don't like my clothes, I don't want your paycheck." Or, "Look at those gas prices! You work a whole day every week just to buy gas to drive to work." The same ideas, just not as pithy as the lines in Walden, "Beware of all new enterprises that require new clothes," and "We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us."

But while I'm getting set up to write, I keep going back to Thoreau making pencils. He was no slacker, some days churning out 3,000 words and gluing together the cedar halves of five dozen pencils.

Okay, call me a pencil-sharpener, not a pencil-maker.

Oh, and did I forget to mention that Henry David invented the two production processes that made the Thoreau pencils better than the competition?

Graphite is the carbon compound in pencil leads, and the Thoreau pencil business had grown out of an uncle's accidental discovery of a New Hampshire graphite outcrop (in those days called plumbago). The plumbago (not something you get from eating too much fruit) was very pure, almost perfect for pencil leads. However, minute impurities in it made the sharpened point scratchy. H.D. invented a mill that sorted out the very smallest particles of ground graphite from everything else. When glued with a binder in split wood barrels, this superfine dust made a superior pencil lead.

After Henry discovered that by mixing fine potter's clay with the graphite dust he could vary the hardness of the leads, the deluxe Thoreau pencil in hard, medium, and soft was born.

By the end of the 1850s, the American pencil market was dominated by Faber's even better pencils from Germany, and the Thoreau family abandoned pencil production to concentrate on dealing bulk plumbago to city newspapers using the new electrotype printing technology.

Pencils and Thoreau. Someday I really ought to write about them.

But for now, it's time to stop sharpening and put pencil to paper for the KP News.

First though, I need to straighten up the clutter on this desk.

Dan Clouse is an award-winning columnist. He lives in Lakebay.

Joseph Pentheroudakis ON THE WING



1968

The train pulled into the Hauptbahnhof, Munich's central station, just before noon. It was Wednesday, Aug. 21, 1968, a balmy day under a deep-blue sky, and I was on the first leg of my slow, back-roads way from Greece to Chicago, where I would be starting college in the fall. I had decided to take the scenic route: by train from Athens to Paris via Munich, on to London to visit family, then by bus from London down to the port of Southampton. There I would board the M/S Aurelia, a small but sleek liner chartered by the Council of Student Travel to ferry students across the Atlantic between Southampton and New York. From there, I would catch a TWA flight to Chicago.

But on that sunny day at the Hauptbahnhof all of that lay in the future. The first thing I needed to do before getting on the connecting train to Paris was wire my parents that I had made it safely, as they had made me promise. As I looked for the telegraph office, I passed a newsstand where a small crowd was gathered, staring in silence at the half-page headline in a special edition of the Münchner Merkur, the city's daily: "Sowjets überfallen die CSSR/Panzertruppen besetzen Prag" ("Soviets invade Czechoslovakia/Tank troops occupy Prague."). I picked up a copy.

We knew that was coming. The government of Alexander Dubček in Czechoslovakia, then in the sphere of the U.S.S.R., had come to power earlier that year promising reform and offering a plan for democratic socialism, a program that Dubček later called "socialism with a human face." That was not empty rhetoric: those reforms were slowly being implemented, leading to a period of liberalization that we knew as the Prague Spring.

The Soviet Union wasn't about to allow a state on its side of the Iron Curtain to rock the boat. Reforms challenging the repressive totalitarianism of Soviet communist orthodoxy did not sit well with Moscow or, for that matter, the hardliners in Czechoslovakia. In the early morning hours of Aug. 21, Soviet tanks and troops from Poland, East Germany, Bulgaria and Hungary rolled into Prague. In a statement from the Soviet government's official press agency Tass reported in the New York Times, Moscow claimed that the intervention had been

carried out at the request of "party and Government leaders of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic" and that "nobody will ever be allowed to wrest a single link from the community of Socialist states."

Over 100 Czechs were killed in the first days of the invasion. A dream also died; Czechoslovakia's seven-month experiment in a freer society was over. For many of us in our teens, that was yet another nail in the coffin of innocence. The violent racist response to the struggle for civil rights; the ever-escalating Vietnam war; the assassination in April of Martin Luther King and of Robert Kennedy almost exactly two months later; and, in Greece, the military coup that had overthrown the democratically elected government, installing a junta that would stay in power for seven years. Those were some of the watershed events that defined our coming of age. It was a world where the gap between ideals and reality was widening into a chasm that threatened to swallow our hopes.

But we fought back.

I was due to land in Chicago Sept. 7, a week after the tumultuous Democratic National Convention was held in that city. The convention had sparked protests and violent clashes between Mayor Richard M. Daley's police and thousands of people of my generation demanding an end to the Vietnam war. "The whole world is watching," they chanted, as the police attacked them with tear gas and bludgeoned them with clubs and the butts of their rifles. I was still in London while this was happening, glued to the television, slack-jawed and shaken but also rooting for the protesters. From Soviet tanks rolling into Prague to the violent attacks in Chicago: this trip was literally starting out with a bang.

The crossing from Southampton to New York on the seriously underpowered Aurelia, maximum speed 20 knots, lasted a full seven days, as I remember. Almost all the passengers were my age, most of them Americans returning home after a summer or a school year abroad. We had no access to the news, and in any case I was busy trying to adapt my very good classroom English to the real world, sometimes with hilarious results. A bottle of Greek ouzo intended for a relative in New York I had never met was consumed to the last drop one night. I haven't gone near the stuff since.

About a day out of New York we came within AM radio range, and suddenly transistor radios were pulled out of backpacks and suitcases and tuned to a chorus of American stations. For many those were the sounds, the music and the words of home. I felt a bit left out, but I also had to pinch myself: this was it, I was in America

and this was what America sounded like, even though for the most part I had no idea what the announcers or DJs were saying.

Then the next day, as we made our way into the bay and up the Hudson toward our assigned pier, there was Miss Liberty herself, made small by the distance, but we knew that was an illusion.

We all cheered. We were home.

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



Mark Michel
GUEST COLUMNIST

A Rerun of History

Passing through Check Point Charlie into East Berlin prior to 1990 was like Dorothy waking up back in Kansas in the final scene from the 1939 film “The Wizard of Oz.”

West Berlin, like most western liberal democracies, was like “Oz” without the flying monkeys, thriving and vibrant. Nearly everything was available. It was “half a city” in the middle of Russian-controlled and influenced East Germany and Berlin. By contrast, East Berlin seemed only muted, gritty shades of black and white. The economy was repressed and commodities were scarce. Late in 1989 that all changed.

In November of that year, I was a junior Air Force officer stationed in Germany. My mother and brother came to visit. Driving to Berlin, we stopped at a small West German town near the border with East Germany. The Berlin Wall was being dismantled and East Germans were coming to West Germany for the first time since Russia gained control of the East in 1949.

The small town was having a market festival. I’ll never forget seeing an older man carrying bananas and other fruit, drool and juice dripping from his sparsely-toothed

mouth as he tasted pineapple — likely for the first time in at least 50 years. He was laughing, looking around and talking to himself like a toddler stealing candy or ice cream. He was wearing a well-worn, dark gray suit jacket. We watched in amused awe as he loaded his new-found treasure into his two-door Trabant, happily jabbering away.

The westbound lanes were thick with cars from East-bloc car companies, mostly Škodas or Trabants, nearly all with identical body styles. Most were a dingy-cream or tan color. In my mind, that man with the pineapple was a living version of the black and white East Germany receiving the first brush strokes of full color.

In addition to the gray tones of the buildings in East Berlin, the store shelves were not fully stocked. I remember seeing a tea kettle and dishware in a store-front window. I asked a store clerk where I could find them in the store. She replied that even though the items were displayed, that didn’t mean they had any to sell.

Why East Germany felt so cold and gray even though it touched the West is beyond me. It likely had to do with a stagnant economy and repressive government painting life in black and white. Fast forward to today.

I find it odd “The Wizard of Oz” came out the same year Hitler invaded Poland. I find it frightening that in 2022, the cycle of state-run media supporting false narratives is being used to justify Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. It’s chillingly ironic Putin is calling Ukrainian officials “Nazis.” Russia’s state-run disinformation networks are effective. They have the capability of building unshakable foundations of false, alternative realities. Russians believe the propaganda over their children in Ukraine when being told of Russian bombing.

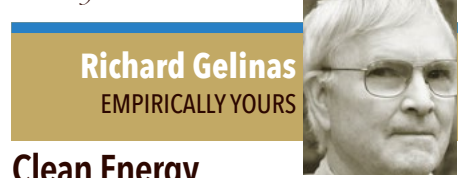
Within a media bubble, objective facts and reality are being overpowered by the volume of disinformation. Ukrainians are bravely fighting back; not only militarily, but

also with information. The Ukrainian people, along with intelligent, open-minded Russians, are hungry for the complete depiction of the cause, reality and brutality of the war. Ukraine is desperately trying to preserve the full-color of a fledgling democracy in which open, objective, supportable information thrives.

While Ukrainians are fighting and dying to protect their democracy, I worry we’ve become complacent about protecting our own. We’re far too quick to lock into narratives we’d like to believe are true — despite the evidence undermining them. Our information should have objective support. If it doesn’t — if it demonstrates a reckless disregard for the truth — we have the freedom and really the obligation to question the source.

In the infancy of unlimited, easily-accessible information and disinformation, I feel the very least I can do to preserve our democracy is keep an open mind, a watchful eye for unsupported fabrications and change the channel once in a while. After all, I like the taste of pineapple and life here in Oz.

Mark Michel is a commercial airline pilot and Key Pen Parks commissioner. He lives in Lakebay.



Richard Gelinas
EMPIRICALLY YOURS

Clean Energy Deep in the Earth

Sounds too good to be true, doesn’t it? But what if there is a way to just ditch the coal and switch over the turbines to hot water from the ground?

Quaise Energy, a startup company that emerged from MIT recently, has persuaded venture capitalists that it has devised a way to spin the turbines in typical coal plants by using extremely hot water pumped from holes drilled miles deep into the Earth’s

crust. If we are to drastically reduce our dependence on CO2-generating fossil fuels, this sounds interesting. Here’s their pitch, as I understand it:

The plan is to use conventional drilling methods to go down a mile or two but then to go very deep by using very high-power millimeter wave energy made in a gyrotron. I think of this device as a distant cousin to a maser, which is a distant cousin of the more familiar laser. This form of energy can be focused into a beam so that it will vaporize rocks and make a miles-deep hole, forming a tube with vitrified walls. Paul Woskov, a research engineer at MIT’s Plasma Science and Fusion Center, realized he was onto something when he accidentally used this method to burn a hole in the wall of his lab.

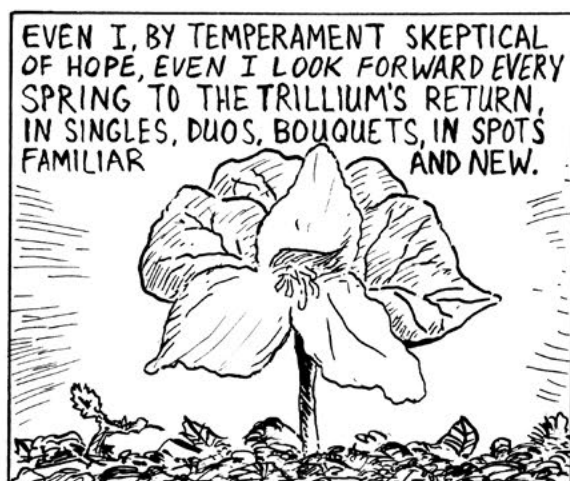
Quaise believes it is feasible to drill much deeper than conventional steel pipe-based methods and reach depths of 10 to 15 miles. At these depths, the rock is quite hot, usefully hot: 500 to 1,000 degrees Celsius. Quaise says that after drilling, inject cold water down (in one pipe) and extremely hot water would come up to the surface (in another pipe). They speculate that (eventually) these wells can be drilled in only a few months and each well could generate 50 to perhaps 100 megawatts of recoverable energy.

At that rate, a few such wells could completely substitute for coal or natural gas in even a large generation plant that can produce up to a billion megawatts of power.

Imagine, if hot water could substitute for coal or gas in a typical electricity generating plant, it would mean that the existing turbines, the generators, the grid hook-up and the jobs could all stay. If there were no fossil fuels, there’s no need for carbon capture and sequestration, and no toxic ash accumulates. Quaise estimates that the wholesale electricity price from such a refueled plant would be 1 to 3 cents per kilowatt hour, compared to coal’s 3 cents per hour.

CONTINUED PAGE 9

José Alaniz WE LIVE HERE: OSTARA



GELINAS FROM PAGE 7

Rock hot enough to rejuvenate a coal or gas plant is everywhere under the surface of our planet if you simply go deep enough. This approach to geothermal energy is like wind and solar energy because it's available to people everywhere, it's carbon-free, renewable and scalable. Unlike wind and solar, geothermal ought to provide continuous, uninterrupted energy like today's nuclear fission plants, but with no radioactive waste. Indeed, the heat in the Earth's crust is itself derived from slow fission of mildly radioactive minerals. Who knew we're all sitting on top of a benign fission reactor we call Earth?

Quaise Energy is a development-phase start-up company, not a government project, and they are forthright about the challenges they face. Can they really drill to depths of 10 to 15 miles if that's what it takes? Will the heat source remain stable? Can they actually deliver useful amounts of super-hot water back up to a turbine? What will the lifetime of the entire system be?

Quaise admits these are challenges, but they believe they will complete a prototype of the drilling machines within two years, and in two more years dig miles-deep boreholes, and finally build or retrofit a fossil-fueled power plant by 2028.

Conventional renewable energy sources like hydroelectric, wind and solar are unable to scale to the amounts that will be needed by about 2050, or about 20 terawatts per year (one terawatt is 1 trillion watts). Today the U.S. consumes about 4 terawatt hours of electricity per year, but as we electrify more industry and transportation, the need for electricity could increase fivefold by 2050.

More conventional geothermal energy already exists, where near-surface water heated by geysers or volcanic activity makes steam to run generators. These plants are usually located near geologic faults or volcanoes. The oil and gas industry is getting interested in geothermal energy since they have a large workforce with the relevant skills. While helpful, the amount of energy recoverable from surface-level geothermal sources is limited by how rare these sites are around the world.

To me, a fundamental attraction of geothermal power, if it is successful, is that it ought to lead to a reinvention of how we generate electricity, shifting the rewards away from today's fossil fuel establishment and institutions with vastly less geopolitics. How would Vlad the Invader pay for his next military adventure if Russia had no customers for its oil and gas?

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



"Sarah and Nan," charcoal on paper. *Chris Bronstad*

Portraits for Ukraine

A local artist is using his talent to help refugees half a world away.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Chris Bronstad is painting for Ukraine. The retired Key Peninsula Middle School teacher and local artist, who lives in Vaughn, spent the last few years concentrating on his award-winning artwork. Since the invasion of Ukraine, however, he has been concerned with the plight of millions of refugees and learning about local relief organizations helping them.

"I read about Empact Northwest, which is based in Kingston, and a local person who went to help," Bronstad said. (See "Local Relief Worker Back From Ukraine," April 2020.)

"I had the notion I wanted to do something," he said. "I'm just horrified by what's going on over there; everybody is. I felt that I could generate some funds and donate them all. There is such a need. So, I gave it a whirl."

Bronstad posted an offer on his Facebook

page: He would paint or draw a portrait from a photograph for a reduced price to generate funds supporting Ukrainian refugees.

"I'm working on my fifth portrait at the moment," he said, just one month into the project. He's done three of people and two of dogs, working in charcoal, pastel or oil paint.

"I'm just finishing up a portrait of a dog in oils; it's going to Tennessee," he said. "I talk with interested parties about media, so I can create something that people really like, and they're contributing to what I'm trying to."

Bronstad charges \$200 to \$300 for an unframed 11-by-14 to 18-by-24 inch charcoal drawing. He can usually produce a portrait from a live model in three or four hours but working from photographs allows him to create a more finished and strikingly detailed product that takes about twice as long to complete.

"That crispness is part of my style, I

guess," he said. "I do everything entirely by eye — it's all freehand — so it takes time."

Bronstad uses charcoal pencils and a variety of brushes to draw figures and fill in the shading.

"I'll do an initial drawing with a No. 2 pencil and erase and correct as I'm working, but for quite a number of years I've done portraits using ground up charcoal dust," he said. "I will take a sand block and get some dust and end up using that as a palette and work to get the modeling, how the light is affecting the image. That's when it begins to come to life. I generally start with the eyes of the subject, so they can keep an eye on me as I work."

As of press time he's donated \$2,000 to Empact Northwest, World Central Kitchen and UNICEF.

"I've also definitely wanted to funnel some money to concerns that are rescuing animals," he said. "There are concerns in Poland and in Romania that are driving into the region where they can get to and rescuing animals. It's hard to see any footage of Ukrainian refugees where you don't see them carrying a pet. It's heartbreaking."

Bronstad retired in 2018 after 28 years of teaching, the last 17 of those at Key Peninsula Middle School.

He is a veteran of many art shows and contests. In 2011, a portrait of his daughter won a place in the Art Renewal Center's annual salon, a prestigious competition that included entries from 69 countries. That portrait, "The Dreamer," is now on display at the ARC museum in New Jersey.

"I have a number of works yet to do; I have no idea how long I'm going to do this," he said. "One of my hopes is that what I'm doing will also maybe inspire other people to come up with some ideas on how to help out. The need is going to be there for some time to come."

Chris Bronstad can be found on Facebook. ■

Bronstad with "Gunner."



Letters to the Editor

HELLO KEY PENINSULA NEWS

I am enclosing a check for \$30 for another year's subscription. I am a very old woman who lived my happiest years on that peninsula. The newspaper gets down here in good condition — even after many people have read it! Probably they will move up there! I live on the plains of Texas. Wind always blowing. But my son wanted me to be close to him in my old years.

Thank you!

Carol Eineichner, Shallowater, Texas

REGARDING "AN IMMODEST PROPOSAL" (CAROLYN WILEY, KP NEWS, APRIL 2022)

Thank you for having the courage to publish Carolyn Wiley's best column, ever. I'm still laughing.

Marcia Harris, Lakebay

LETTER FROM KPFD VOLUNTEERS

It is important for the public to understand why Key Peninsula volunteer firefighters have been outspoken at recent board of commissioner meetings. Volunteers are all citizens who live on the Key Peninsula and are tax-paying residents. We are concerned that the board approved the spending of monies without paying attention to what it was being spent on and that this lack of attention has negatively affected Fire District 16.

The purchase of the commercial and residential properties in Key Center was well underway and planned before the last levy vote in August. We feel that this goal should have been openly shared with the public. Instead, the board and the past fire chief stated that the property purchase was being "explored." Since the purchase, the board has not demonstrated full understanding, awareness or knowledge regarding the property purchase, lack of inspections and lack of disclosure statements, among other items. They allowed the past administration carte blanche and it appears turned a blind eye. Currently the district is paying the price, quite literally, in the form of roof leakage repairs and overage costs due to this lack of attention.

We want the public to know that the previous administration was not vested in the volunteer program. In fact, decisions made set the corps up for failure and has had a negative impact on response capability for members. A conscious decision was made in November 2021 by administrators not to fund budget requests for a 2022 Volunteer Academy to help with attrition, the purchase of personal protection equipment specific to powered air purifying respirator devices

— although it was promised — or scanners to help with communication. In addition, over the past three years the volunteer corps was not actively included in district training evolutions.

During the pandemic your volunteers were able to run two successful volunteer academies and continued training to be the best that they could be. While the world relied on their first responders, your volunteers were not afforded the same personal protective equipment as the career staff. Yet the response expectations were the same.

Your fire district was founded by volunteers and your current volunteer corps is struggling now because of decisions made over the last three years. Your volunteer battalion is 14 strong and consists of firefighters, EMTs, tender operators and chaplains. There is nothing we love more than serving our community and supporting our fire department and career firefighters. We take pride in being one of the best volunteer programs in the county. We are also proud that your local volunteers get hired to be career firefighters — their roots are and always will be Key Peninsula. We are proud that from our line of career firefighters, 13 were hired from our own volunteer ranks.

We are also very hopeful and look forward to our new chief, Nick Swinhart, and the direction he takes the district. What we want, however, is for our board of fire commissioners to be accountable for the positions they were elected to and to fulfill their fiscal responsibility to the KP community. We are fearful that their lack of fiscal attention, transparency and a blind eye to the spending of the past administration has put Fire District 16 in a position that is beyond what our tax base can support.

The Key Peninsula Volunteer Fire Firefighter Association

Write for the KP News

Put on your journalist hat and write news for your community newspaper. As a paid news reporter, you'll work with our editorial team, see your byline in print, earn a little income and the respect of friends and neighbors.

Email 3 news samples to editor@keypennews.org

Also hiring: graphic artist with solid InDesign layout skills

OBITUARIES



LuElla Irene Heitzman

On April 11, LuElla went to be with her Lord after being diagnosed with congestive heart and kidney failure.

Born LuElla Meyer Oct. 2, 1925, she grew up on a farm near Emery, South Dakota with seven siblings. When her high school sweetheart, Dayton Heitzman, returned home from service in the Army Air Corps to attend his grandfather's funeral in 1944, they married, spending their honeymoon in the caboose of a troop train. While he served on sea rescue missions out of Cuba, they lived in Virginia Beach and Fort Lauderdale.

After his discharge, they returned to the family farm but after a few South Dakota winters moved west. Dayton studied civil engineering, working for the highway department as a materials inspection engineer.

While raising three children, LuElla worked in restaurants, retail and sales. Named national employee of the year for managing a Farrell's restaurant, she won her first trip to Hawaii. She loved to travel, visiting Japan, Europe and Mexico.

LuElla was loved for her quick and uncanny sense of humor, even in her last days. An avid walker, she loved reading, basking in the sunshine, studying the Bible and listening to gospel hymns.

After Dayton passed away in April 1984, LuElla lived independently before moving to Longbranch in 2019 to live with her daughter Christine and son-in-law Jeffrey.

She is survived by children Tim Heitzman and Christine Tritt (Jeffrey); grandchildren Sam and Max Tritt of Tacoma; sister Jeanine Scharich of Oregon. She was preceded in death by husband Dayton; son Dan; sisters Leona, Edna, Lillian and Amanda; and brothers Bud and Reuben.

Many thanks to the staff who so lovingly cared for her at St. Anthony Hospital in Gig Harbor during her final month. Psalm 73:25-26

William Scott

William "Bill" Scott passed into the arms of Jesus, surrounded by his loving family, March 31, at Tacoma General Hospital. His father was Douglas E. Scott, one of the last heroes of World War II, who died at age 90. His mother, Elizabeth G. Scott, passed away six months after her 100th birthday.

Raised in Kapowsin, Bill attended Bethel High School.

Bill and his wife, Lucy, married for almost 62 years, moved to the Key Peninsula in 1972. They cleared the land and built their family home where they raised their two sons, Dan (Traci) and Bob (Julie).

Survived by Lucy, the couple was blessed with nine grandchildren: Mellisa, Gideon, Meggin, Leeya, Zeke, Gabe, Nicki, Laura and Becky. From those nine, they were also blessed with 13 great-grandchildren and one more on the way.

Bill always thanked God for his life and the family God gave him.

Services for Bill will be held at Discovery Baptist Church in Gig Harbor May 14 at 2 p.m. The family invites you to join them in celebration of Bill's life.

In March, \$4,817 awarded to:

\$1,000 to Evergreen
Elementary School

\$3,000 to KP Cooperative
Preschool

\$817 to Vaughn Preschool



Open 10 to 4 Thur-Sat hours may change
Key Center Corral 253 884-9333

Key Peninsula Fire Department Hires New Chief

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Dominick “Nick” Swinhart was hired as the new chief for KP Fire District 16 by the board of fire commissioners at their biweekly meeting April 12. He will start the job May 16, succeeding Fire Chief Dustin Morrow, who left the district Dec. 1 after two-and-a-half years to run West Pierce Fire & Rescue.

Swinhart, 52, has been in the fire service 33 years. He was fire chief of the Camas-Washougal Fire Department for almost 11 years until resigning in March. He simultaneously served as chief of a neighboring fire district for three years. He has a bachelor’s degree in EMS management and is a graduate of the National Fire Academy’s Executive Fire Officer Program.

“We’re very pleased that Nick accepted our offer and wants to come here,” said Fire Commission Chair Stan Moffett. “We had a very good array of applicants and the six finalists we went through and panel-interviewed were all very good candidates. There were several reasons we picked Nick: he has been a fire chief for 10 years, he wants to be here, he’s very well educated, that comes across when talking with him, and I think that was something that separated him from the others.”

Moffett said the board was also impressed by Swinhart’s administrative experience combining the two fire departments of Camas and Washougal, though it was not the deciding factor.

“He was there and involved when they put the Camas fire department together with Washougal,” Moffett said. “Camas basically being a city with mostly a career staff, Washougal basically being a district with mostly volunteers. That’s another thing we wanted — somebody that had that experience because we’re a combination department and that’s very important to us.”

“That (merging) was not why we chose him, however if something like that should come to fruition — and this is just speculation — in the next five, six, seven, eight years (for KPFD 16), that experience would be very good for us,” he said.

“I think the most important thing is we’ve got a lot of healing to do within our district; we’ve had a lot of things go on in the last eight, nine months. We need to get all our personnel issues resolved and put behind us,” Moffett said.

The department has experienced controversy in recent months after two large real estate purchases in Key Center that caught the public by surprise; by investigations into allegations of inappropriate personnel behavior; and substantial equipment and overtime expenses, all during unexpected changes in department leadership.

(See “KPFD Confronts Budget Crunch and Skeptical Residents,” March 2022, and

“Assistant Fire Chief Wolverton Exonerated, Returned to Duty,” April 2022.)

The KP fire-fighters union also had members on the interview panels, said IAFF Local 3152 President Lt. Doug Gelsleichter.

“We are in support of the chief that the commissioners selected, and we have confidence that he’ll do good for the community and the KP fire department,” Gelsleichter said. “(Swinhart) had good labor relations with Local 2444, which is the Clark County professional firefighters union. We did have a couple of concerns, and we actually met with him, and he cleared them up.”

“There are a lot of challenges the organization is facing but none of them are insurmountable,” Swinhart said. “I think that with a few key things being addressed I fully expect this organization can come back around in its relationship with the community and with itself that is a lot better than what they’ve been dealing with in the recent past.” ■

Meet the New Boss

KPFD Fire Chief Dominick “Nick” Swinhart will start work May 16 unless he can find a place to live on the KP sooner.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Nick Swinhart grew up in Montesano. “As a paid firefighter I started in Raymond in 1992, but I started before that in 1989 as a volunteer in Grays Harbor. Most of my career was spent at the Aberdeen fire department as a paramedic and firefighter,” he said. “But I was also in the volunteer fire department in Montesano. It was just something to do, for fun.”

Swinhart had planned on becoming a teacher, but instead went to EMT class, then paramedic school at Tacoma Community College, and was hired by Aberdeen.

“In Aberdeen in particular it’s very chal-



Fire Chief Dominick Swinhart. KPFD

lenging,” he said. “It’s a very high call volume department, very high poverty level, lots of issues with drugs and alcohol and homelessness. It was a tough place to work but intermixed with that of course was a lot of happiness. I delivered my first baby there. You have years and years of just terrible stuff where you think can’t do this job anymore and all of a sudden you have something so joyous as delivering a baby, and it sort of has the effect of wiping all the bad stuff away and gives you a little more gas in the tank.”

Swinhart has delivered three babies in his career.

He went back to school to get a bachelor’s degree in EMS management from The George Washington University distance learning program based in D.C., and after almost 15 years in Aberdeen Swinhart became fire chief of Watertown, South Dakota in 2009.

“I never thought of winding up in South Dakota, but it was a great opportunity, great people, I loved going out there,” he said. “Our coverage area was 650 square miles. We got stuff like silo fires and corn field fires, and they are very dangerous. And it floods. You get the rivers backing up from ice dams during the spring thaw and that water’s got nowhere to go except out into the neighborhoods.”

After Swinhart’s first daughter was born, the family wanted to be closer to home in Washington (he has two daughters, 8 and 11).

“My parents and family, they’re all still in the Grays Harbor, Thurston County area, so we started looking for ways to get back out this way,” he said.

In 2011, Swinhart became fire chief of Camas. After merging with Washougal, he had a staff of 68 paid personnel and 20 volunteers. He also did a fire chief sharing job with East County Fire & Rescue.

After many changes in the local government, Swinhart said he started thinking

about getting even closer to home.

“It’s a different environment down there right now,” he said. “Camas has had a lot of overhauls of leadership at the upper echelons. They’ve had four different mayors in the past two-and-a-half years, they’re getting ready to hire their sixth city administrator in the last 10 years.”

The timing seemed right for him to move on.

“When I saw the posting for Key Peninsula, what struck me is I immediately thought it looks like they wrote that for me,” he said. “Someone who had experience running combination fire department agencies, somebody who had experience as a chief officer in larger organizations, somebody with experience doing strategic planning and operational deployment operations, experience in budgeting, and in working in smaller communities as well.”

And it’s just an hour for his brother and parents to come visit.

“I’m hopeful this will be my last home. I would like to put in maybe another eight years, and it would sure be nice if this was the last place to do it,” he said.

Swinhart plans to start work May 16. “One of the first things that needs to be done is I need to be taking a deep dive

into the budget,” he said. “I need to understand where the money

is coming in from, how much, and where it’s been going out to. In visiting with members of the community as part of the hiring process, that was a constant that I got back from people. They want that transparency, and I don’t understand enough about everything that’s been going on to know whether there’s truly been a lack of transparency, but what’s important is that the community feels that is the case and that needs to be addressed.

“Those communication issues are also things that we need to work on internally within the organization too,” he said. “There’s a lot of relationship building and repair that I think is going to be key to moving this department forward. If we can address some of those big issues, a lot of other stuff will fall into place on its own. It’s not going to be overnight. It will be a huge first step.”

In a last word directly addressing KP residents, Swinhart said “If anybody knows of houses to rent, let me know.” ■

“IF ANYBODY KNOWS OF HOUSES TO RENT, LET ME KNOW.”



New elder homes take shape on the hill above Key Center. Ed Johnson, KP News

Mustard Seed Project Receives Major Grant

And it came from a man who used to dress up as Santa Claus.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Six months after breaking ground on the first assisted-living homes for elders on the Key Peninsula — a dream that took over a decade to launch — the Mustard Seed Project received the largest donation in its 16-year history to help complete it.

The William A. Looney Family Foundation awarded TMSP a \$3 million grant in April to develop the new campus in Key Center, expand support services for KP elders, and to provide a reserve fund for residents in need once they have moved into the new homes.

“It’s pretty amazing, we’re very grateful,” said Executive Director Eric Blegen.

“It doesn’t eliminate

our need to continue to fundraise and all that, but it gives us some great startup funding for these programs so that we can get them going quickly.”

The grant will fund the many moving parts of three separate programs, Blegen said: reducing social isolation for elders (\$1,100,000) by expanding programs like the existing “Santa for Seniors” events to bring elders together; creating a connected campus between the assisted living homes and TMSP offices at the Crandall Center (\$1,150,000); and creating a fund to provide a home for life for elders in need (\$750,000).

“It gives us the funds to really develop the campus,” Blegen said. “It’s about 6 acres on both sides of the road with the Crandall Center. We’ll have ADA accessible trails on both sides, and something really innovative: a playground designed for adults. Aside from the fun and fitness aspect, it’s also an opportunity for visiting kids and grandkids to hang out together

on the playground.”

TMSP had also long planned for extensive gardens, a vision which is now within reach.

“This covers the cost for raised beds and a greenhouse,” Blegen said. “One of the things I’m excited about too is the residents and the staff and all of us could help grow a fair amount of the food for the meals for residents. We’re going to have a composting system that will recycle food waste and use it in the garden beds and have a whole cycle in place for the residents.

“A core element of the Green House Project model (upon which TMSP homes and management are based) is that our elders need to feel useful. Most people want to continue to contribute if they can, and the garden is a way for people to do that,” he said.

The final component of the grant may be the most critical, even in a plan designed to meet critical needs.

“We have 30% of the beds reserved for low income folks, but if all those beds are full and a resident spends down their assets, what happens to them? We don’t want to make them leave

— ever. This fund will help those people bridge the gap between running out of their own funds and a Medicaid bed becoming available,” Blegen said.

“It’s not enough for an endowment and we want to be able to use the principal as needed, but if we do that well and

this is a story that people understand — that people can get into that situation and need that help — then over the long-term that should encourage others to add back

to the fund with bequests and donations, so that we can grow it over time.”

The Looney foundation first contacted TMSP in 2017.

“We have a pretty deep relationship with the Looney Foundation,” said Marion Sharp, TMSP fund development director. “The main thing that they are interested in is doing things that help foster Bill Looney’s dream of reducing isolation for older people.

“It all started with visiting his mother at a nursing home and discovering how many other people were there on Christmas Day, and lonesome. He started coming as Santa, and he really wanted that to be a movement.”

Looney died in 2015. His estate attorney and longtime friend, Pam Yee, started working for him in the 1990s, she said.

“I got hooked up with Mustard Seed a few years ago. Bill was a realtor and he owned 20, 25 properties out there I was selling off. I visited with Bill’s wife and a couple of board members and thought, oh my gosh, Bill would’ve been all over this place.”

She said Looney started visiting his mom’s nursing home dressed as Santa when he saw the effect his attention had.

“Bill would don his Santa suit and go to his mom’s — his mom lived to 99 —

and the whole group there came to life. To have people who hadn’t even spoken

for six months get all excited and say, ‘Thanks Santa,’ that’s incredible,” Yee said. “He

put that Santa suit on once and walked down the streets of Seattle handing out Hershey bars; I thought we were going to be arrested.”

Looney created the William A. Looney Family Foundation to spread “Santa for Seniors” to as many elder organizations as possible, and to help keep them running.

“He never wanted anybody to forget the forgotten, and that’s what he really felt about seniors,” Yee said.

“We orchestrated getting the Santa for Seniors going at Mustard Seed,” Yee said. “We started out pretty small, just replacing their freezer in that kitchen, getting the place cleaned (in the Crandall Center). But just what they were able to do with not a lot was astounding. You know, we give cash, but if you don’t have people to implement your plan for the cash, it doesn’t do a lot.

“These people know what they’re doing at the Mustard Seed,” she said. “Eric and Marion are just fantastic. They work so hard.”

Yee asked TMSP to submit a grant request to create new programs and finish the new homes and grounds. “I said, ‘OK, we’re going to give you a big grant, I’m talking millions now. And Bill would be all in supporting this.’”

The new assisted living homes for KP elders are scheduled to open in November.

“I can’t wait to see the building when it’s done,” Yee said. ■

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NATURALIST'S NOTEBOOK

Yellowlegs wading *Chris Rurik* Honeysuckle *Chris Rurik* Newt *Tina McKail, KP News*

Into the
WILD
EXPLORING WITH THE
KP NATURE GUIDE

Watch for Yellowlegs, Honeysuckle and More

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

Listen for the loud “klee-klee-klee” call of greater yellowlegs in estuaries and flooded fields. This shorebird passes through the Key Peninsula during spring and fall migrations. Watch it strut through shallow water with swagger as it searches for invertebrates. I’ve had good luck finding them at the undeveloped Haley State Park lagoon.

Among all the wild blooms of May, a patch of western trumpet honeysuckle makes me especially happy. The bright orange tubes of these flowers — beloved by hummingbirds and nectar-sucking kids — emerge from one of our only native vines. I know of one honeysuckle vine that has climbed a 20-foot dogwood tree. The two flower together, creating a fountain of white stars and orange spray. Look for honeysuckle in open forests. Rocky Creek Conservation Area has an impressive concentration of them.

On May 15 around 9 p.m., the moon will rise a dark red shadow of itself in full lunar eclipse. It will still be low over the horizon when the eclipse ends around 11 p.m. Choose a vantage with a full view to the east.

Watch for butterflies and early dragonflies, yes, but also watch for day-flying moths. A few species of moth prefer daytime, like the bumblebee-mimicking clearwing moth. Around fragrant shrubs like oceanspray keep your eyes open for my personal favorite, *Adela septentrionella*, a species of long-horn fairy moth without a common name. It is quite small. On its black wings are two white stripes and seven white dots. Most notably, its antennae are ridiculously long, more than twice as long as the moth itself.

ASK THE KP NATURE GUIDE: SALAMANDERS AND NEWTS

Q: What is the difference between a salamander and a newt? Which do we see around here? — Several readers ask.

A: It’s kind of a trick question. Newts are a type of salamander but distinct enough to warrant their own name. Like all salamanders, newts have four short legs sticking out from a sinuous body, a long tail, a blunt nose, and a reliance on damp places, as they are thin-skinned amphibians. Unlike typical salamanders, however, their skin is rough and grainy rather than smooth and shiny, and they lack the vertical rib lines called costal grooves.

The single species of newt here, rough-skinned newt, is brown on top and bright orange below. It is far more commonly encountered than its salamander cousins; its extreme toxicity allows it to wander around in broad daylight without fear of predators. It can be found in forests or stagnant water. Its aquatic form has a flattened, eel-like tail.

Several species of salamanders are possible residents of the Key Peninsula. All are secretive. They are best found by going out on a rainy spring night with a flashlight when they may be on the loose. Otherwise, they like to hide out in decaying stumps, rodent burrows and loose bark.

My most recent salamander encounter might offer as good a strategy for finding them as any. I was in a brushy area where several months before I had cut a downed tree into firewood. I noticed a piece of firewood I had left behind and went down to retrieve it. Underneath was a long-toed salamander, the first I had ever seen, its dark

shining sides speckled with white. You never know. Next time you cut firewood, try leaving one behind.

Where have you found salamanders on the Key Peninsula? I want to hear. Salamanders are sensitive to environmental disturbance. There are several species that may be here or may not.

At least 13 species of salamander live in Washington, including several species of torrent salamander, a family of small salamanders that exist only in the Pacific Northwest, and the coastal giant salamander, which can push 14 inches in length.

Salamanders can regenerate lost limbs. Some, like Cope’s giant salamander in the Olympic Mountains, almost never metamorphose into adults but opt to reproduce as aquatic larvae. Speaking of aquatic larvae, which breathe through external gills spread like fans behind their heads, salamanders have all kinds of different lungs. Some have richly folded lungs like us, while others have almost no lungs at all, breathing instead through their skin or blood vessels in their mouths.

ON THE TRAIL OF THE ELUSIVE SHREW-MOLE

Since we’re on the topic of elusive critters, I need to tell you about the shrew-mole. It’s real and it’s here. Squat and black-furred, with tiny, hooded eyes and a long snout, it looks like a shrew but is in fact a mole, the smallest of our three species. Its front feet are only moderately elongated and look scaly and translucent, almost reptilian. Its tail is fat and sprouted with thick hairs.

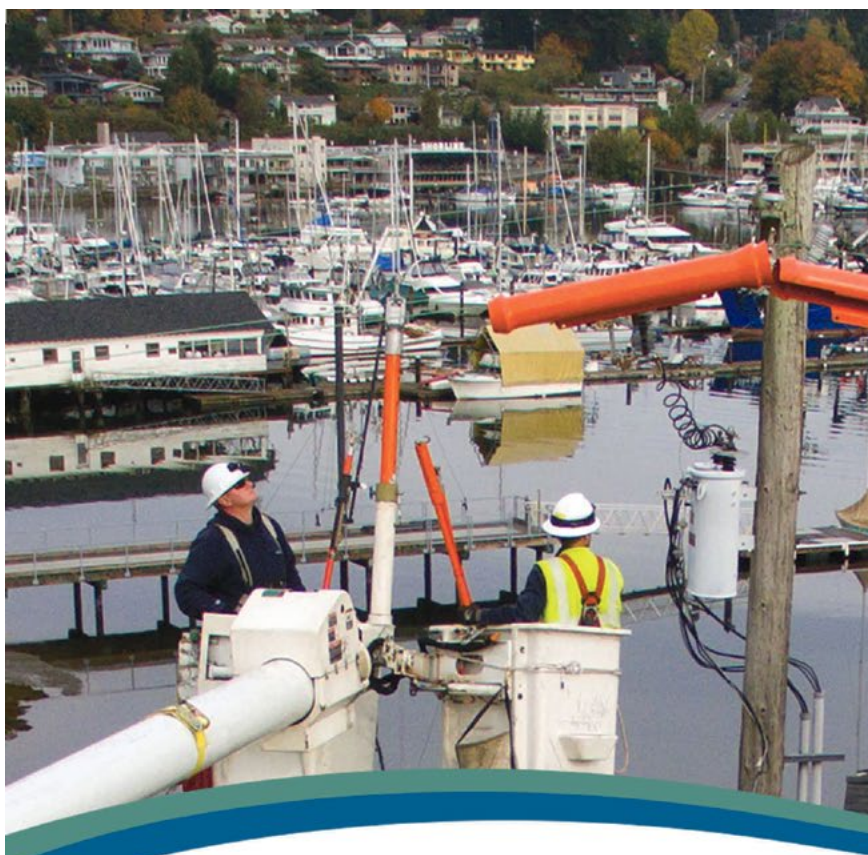
It is just one of a long list of strange animals named for combinations of other animals — see also tiger beetle, dogfish,

kangaroo rat, mule deer, deer mouse.

The shrew-mole seems to be completely blind. It travels in loose bands through shaded ravines of salmonberry and maple leaf litter where thick accumulations of humus give cover to its tunnels and runways. Both shrews and moles have famously rabid metabolisms, and the shrew-mole is no exception, burning through a diet of earthworms and insect larvae.

“Probably 99% of a shrew-mole’s active life is spent in a ceaseless quest for food,” wrote two University of Washington researchers in 1942 in what remains the most in-depth study of the shrew-mole. They describe how it raps its prehensile nose three times — forward, left, right — between each scuttling step it takes, so that its movement is a constant frenzied search for the food it cannot see. It climbs low shrubs and can swim with “astonishing” speed. Every 10 minutes or so it takes a power nap.

Captive specimens die within hours if not given food. Which makes me think. At every moment, through every month of the year, in the rain-soaked silence of long nights when we’re all gabbing and sleeping, the shrew-mole is out there in our local ravines on its ceaseless quest. It’s been out there for many thousands of years. Sometimes the chain of life can seem so fragile, linked by moments that depend on chance encounters. It is comforting to think that a blind creature that can neither stockpile nor survive long without food has everything it needs here, at every hour of the year, to satiate its hunger. The land just has that much life in it. ■



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Tina McKail, KP News

Flower Stand Woes and Rewards

Even self-service flower sales became harder during the pandemic.

CAROLYN WILEY, KP NEWS

Most people who drive the section of Key Peninsula Highway between Home and Whiteman Road get a lift from seeing the white picket fence, the blossom-filled yard and the little flower stand on the side of the road. There is usually an array of bouquets and, when in season, there may also be fresh produce. The stand works on the honor system. One-stop-shoppers can grab a bouquet and leave their payment in the little locked cash box on the stand.

Who is the person who grows and assembles the bouquets? Why does this person go to so much work to make the property a visual treat for all who pass by?

Tedi Spiering, who moved with her husband Harold to the KP in 2005.

“I always have had a love for flowers, number one. I got that from my mother, aunts and grandmothers,” Spiering said. “They were always putzing around in the yard. Because I was always connected with my elders, I just learned so much about gardening and the necessity for food in your yard, because you never know when bad times are going to come.”

Spiering said the house had belonged to her aunt, Jessie Westrom, born in 1906 to Nellie and Peter McKay of Lakebay. Jessie married another lifelong KP resident, Andy Westrom, and they purchased the property in the early 1940s.

After the house was remodeled and updated in 2005, the Spierings became permanent KP residents. Because of the time she had spent with her aunt and other family members, Spiering considered Lakebay her childhood neighborhood.

Although Jessie Westrom had been known for her gardening, the garden became less well tended due to her own advancing age and the responsibilities of providing care

for her mother, Nellie McKay, and later for her husband until his death in 1991.

“When we moved here the yard was sort of a blank canvas, so I just started planting flowers,” Spiering said. “People would stop and ask, ‘Do you sell flowers?’”

“I would tell them no but often would give them a bouquet; otherwise, the flowers would just be cut, thrown on the ground, and put in the mulching pile.”

One day her husband told her, “I’m gonna build you a stand so you can sell flowers.”

Spiering didn’t know if he was trying to help or just wanted to get some of the vases of flowers out of the house. “Anyway, he built it, I painted it and began putting flowers out, maybe several bouquets two to three days a week. Then it just took off.”

She only asks for \$3 to \$5 per bouquet, Spiering uses the income from flower sales to purchase dirt and fertilizer and yet she donates the rest to local food banks.

Spiering said there are always people who take bouquets and don’t pay, or pay for one bouquet and take three. “However, in the first year of Covid it became bad, to the point of being aggressive. Some days, all the bouquets are taken, without even a dollar going into the little locked cash box.”

However, Spiering said, “There are a lot of good people out there. Some people take flowers and leave an IOU. Because non-payment had become a such problem, I put up a sign and posted all the IOU’S as reminders. One day a man came by, tore them all down, and insisted on paying for all of them.”

When Spiering mentioned her frustrations to a friend and said she was considering no longer offering flowers to the public, the friend posted a message about the situation on Facebook. Several respondents suggested installing surveillance cameras and posting photos of the

offenders, but Spiering is reluctant to go to that extreme. Some messages have been especially heartwarming, and several people have stopped by to offer support in person.

A couple of people told her, “I want to give you some money to compensate for the people who didn’t pay because I don’t want you to stop.” One person offered to help weed her yard.

Another came to her door with cash in hand and said, “I want to apologize. Over the course of a couple of years I have taken flowers with the intent to come back to pay; this should cover what I have taken. I have learned a valuable lesson from you.” ■



KAMRYN MINCH

I was out working in the garden the other day (what else is new?), crawling under some rhododendrons, thankful it’s not yet spider web season, and gently scraping my hand rake along the top layer of leaves, getting the bed ready for the spring tradition of spreading a nice, 3-inch thick layer of mulch.

Mulching is defined as “material spread around or over a plant to enrich or insulate the soil.” It’s also good for suppressing weeds, retaining moisture and preventing erosion. Different textures and colors of mulch, such as wood chips and beauty bark, can be seen applied in both parking lots and residential gardens. In my family it is customary to apply a fine, dark mulch.

Spreading mulch had always made sense to me, if only to make the yard look nice and orderly. But there I was, after a few hours of getting the gardens prepared for the traditional spread, covered in dirt, getting smacked by rhody leaves, when I looked down at the soil my rake had exposed and noticed there were no weeds, the dirt was moist, and threads of fungus had already been hard at work breaking down the debris.

This little observation of mine got me thinking: Why am I redoing what the garden has already done for itself?

I’m certainly not the first person to have the radical revelation that we should mulch our gardens with leaves. Or, at the very least, not bother to rake them out.

There’s been a movement in recent years to educate gardeners and homeowners about the benefits of “leaving the leaves” to create landscapes that are climate-resilient and to preserve biodiversity.

Allowing the fallen layer of leaves to remain in place during the autumn and winter helps to prevent erosion and acts as protection for the tender crowns of perennials and hibernating insects. As the

weather warms up, the leaves regulate soil temperature, preserve moisture during droughts, and feed the soil organisms that recycle the nutrient in the leaves back to the plants.

Nutrient cycling is a particularly compelling component for why we want to allow leaves to remain in the flower beds year round. Leaves contain basic nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, as well as trace minerals that the plants have taken up through their roots from the depths of the subsoil.

Once decomposed, the old foliage not only ends up feeding the plants again, but also contributes to the structure and health of the entire soil ecosystem. Forests are a great example of how effective the system is.

I’ll admit that decomposing leaves are not a particularly appealing aesthetic but finding other ways to utilize the organic material elsewhere within the landscape should be considered before sending it off in a yard waste bin. One way to do this is to build a compost pile. Leaves take about one year to break down on their own, or three to six months with regular turning.

I’m very much on board with the ecological benefits that come with leaving the leaves. Nevertheless, what was particularly appealing about my initial observation while raking the garden bed is that the work had already been done for me. The mulching, that is. And as someone who is interested in developing a more laissez faire approach to flower bed maintenance, leaves as mulch is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to solutions for cultivating a low-input landscape.

Taking cues from natural processes has also inspired new ways to approach how we plant and maintain our gardens. Landscape designers who specialize in creating naturalistic planting schemes have learned to organize beds in such a way that yearly input ends up being minimal because the

plant communities they’ve created do the work for them.

Landscape designer Roy Diblik, in his book “The Know Maintenance Perennial Garden,” talks about the nature of perennials, stating “Many perennials do best in lean soils relatively low in organic matter, and what organic matter there is develops in the soil from all the plant parts that fall to the ground each year.” Some plants also prefer drier conditions, so regular applications of mulch coupled with regular irrigation can end up inhibiting growth and rotting the crown of the plant.

He also points out how in America we tend to space perennials too far from one another, fearing overcrowding, when in reality plants prefer to be close because that is how they tend to grow naturally. The dense foliage ends up mulching the soil, preventing weeds and retaining moisture the same as an application of a wood mulch. And this is a wonderful piece of information for us gardeners to have because what once could be characterized as a chronic plant addiction can now be justified as the cultivation of living mulch. “I don’t have a problem — the exposed soil has a problem!”

For the sake of continuity, I removed the rest of the leaves from the garden bed and hauled them to the compost. As I collected the pitch fork and wheelbarrow to begin chipping away at the pile of delivered, commercial mulch, I was ruminating on the guilt I felt for having disturbed the precious and fragile ecological process taking place right in my garden. But as I began to load up forks of the super fine, soft, fluffy shredded mulch, I had a moment of reprieve, thinking maybe this mulch won’t be so bad. The garden beds will look fresh and the plants get all the same benefits of decomposing organic material. And then I saw the little bits and pieces of plastic in the fresh mulch.

I’m leaving my leaves next year. ■

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Tina McKail, KP News

KPCCA Fundraiser and Great Brick Reveal Celebrate 66th Anniversary

STAFF REPORT

Held in honor of its official date of incorporation, April 10, 1956, the Key Peninsula Civic Center Association unveiled its newly installed brick path near the entrance of the civic center during an event dubbed “The Great Brick Reveal” to community members gathered in Vaughn April 10.

The personalized bricks, purchased and engraved through the company Fundraising Brick, brought in around \$9,000 from the sale of 78 bricks purchased by local residents, organizations and businesses.

“I was really excited to see some of the older families, like the Olsons. Some of the Olson sisters were there,” KPCCA Board and Executive Committee member Rachel Newhouse said. “We got to hear a lot of stories about back when the center was a school and how it came into the hands of the community and some of how it’s been run since then.”

KPCCA honored its founders by listing their surnames on two large bricks. The last surviving founder, Wally Cornman, is now 96 years old and recently moved to a retirement center in Gig Harbor.

The personalized bricks are engraved with dedications to family, friends and pets, quotes from well-known locals, and memorials for Ted Ralston and Joanna Gormly, Eric Leo Collins and other beloved

friends who have passed away.

“Our brick thanks those who laid the way for a great community asset,” Margo Macdonald of Vaughn said. It reads: “To those before us to those yet to come, our appreciation and gratitude for the civic center.”

There are bricks with inside jokes, such as “Mindy Rowland The Pink Dog” and pieces of advice: “If you want something you’ve never had, then you have to do something you have never done.”

“In my opinion, the corporate logo bricks turned out the most spectacular,” KPCCA Operations Manager Stefanie Warren said. “The Purdy Cost Less brick and KP Suicide Prevention Coalition brick look really great.”

Newhouse said the Great Brick Reveal event was a nice way to come together in a small way as a community.

“That was part of the purpose of the brick sale,” she said. “It was kind of born out of the depths of the pandemic and thinking how can we stay engaged with our community and also do a little fundraising because we had to cancel all of our fundraising events.”

KPCCA plans to sell more personalized bricks later this year.

“I’m hoping that installation is there, you know, close to forever,” Newhouse said. “I’d like to make sure that everyone is as represented as possible.” ■



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THE INDISPENSABLE NOVEL OF THE PUTIN ERA

Russia Goes Medieval: Sorokin's 'Day of the Oprichnik'

JOSÉ ALANIZ

Since time immemorial, writers in Russia have had the most forceful, penetrating and far-reaching responses to what was happening in their country — for those willing to listen, anyway.

Today, with war raging for a second month in Ukraine, with Vladimir Putin's maniacal plans to "denazify" a country he denies has any right to exist, overturning the European and world order, we can do a lot worse than turn to contemporary Russian literature for some understanding as to how all this came to be.

For this purpose, in my college teaching on today's Russia I have often turned to Vladimir Sorokin. No one explains Putin — the ideology as much as the man — as uproariously, unflinchingly and insightfully as he does.

Sorokin was born in 1955, part of what some sociologists call "the last Soviet generation" — the cohort that grew up under communism in its stagnant phase and were already adults when the USSR finally fell in 1991. During this late Soviet era, the conceptualist Sorokin wrote brilliant but intensely obscene works with no hope of publication. In the free-market 1990s, he remained a cult writer, admired but little known beyond literary circles.

That changed in 2002, when the state charged Sorokin under an anti-pornography statute for a scene in one of his novels, "Blue Lard" (1997), which depicted a clone of Stalin having sex with a man. A pro-Kremlin youth group protested the author for denigrating Russian culture. They organized a rally in front of the Bolshoi Theater, during which they dumped copies of Sorokin's books into a giant toilet that bore the inscription "Monument to the Classic of Marginal Russian Literature, Vladimir Sorokin."

All charges were eventually dropped, but the scandal so incensed Sorokin that he reinvented himself as one of the country's most successful and controversial authors, with novels like the oddly prophetic, anti-Putin "Day of the Oprichnik" (2006). This is the book I give my students as the best window on Putinism, the contagion that came to infect Russia with the current president's rise to power in 2000, but which as Sorokin demonstrates is actually a very old Russian malady. "Day of the Oprichnik" is the indispensable novel of the Putin era, almost psychoanalytic in its dissection of power's neuroses.

A dystopian satirical vision that mashes up

ancient with current, the work depicts a future Russia where a new tsar reigns, a great wall divides East from West, citizens long ago burned their passports (everywhere else is inferior to Russia, after all) and the patriarchal norms and dress of the Middle Ages hold sway.

The plot follows Komiaga, a state enforcer, over the course of a day as he tortures, kills and persecutes the tsar's enemies, raping their wives for good measure. All this is told through his own point of view in highly stylized, pseudo-antiquated Russian (recalling the psychopathic Alex DeLarge's first-person narrative from "A Clockwork Orange" (1962) by Anthony Burgess).

Komiaga belongs to the "oprichniki," an elite, secretive order of assassins created in the 16th century by Tsar Ivan IV (aka Ivan the Terrible). The oprichniki were real figures from Russian history, but Sorokin inserts them into a near-future sci-fi Russia where they communicate on "mobilos" (cell phones) and drive "mercedovs" (souped-up Mercedes). The late Jamey Gambrell's remarkable translation of the novel preserves a sense of Sorokin's arch satirical wordplay, much of it derived from contemporary Russian slang.

Like a psychologist, Sorokin sheds light on the mentality of a people besotted with dreams of global super-power conquest, lapping up their government's propaganda as if it were God's truth, but in reality trapped in a squalid authoritarian hell-hole.

Sound familiar?

In one scene, Komiaga stands before a vendor's display and muses on the "superiority" of having only two choices for each consumer product: "His Majesty's father, the late Nikolai Platonovich, had a good idea: liquidate all the foreign supermarkets and replace them with Russian kiosks. And put two types of each thing in every kiosk, so the people have a choice. A wise decision, profound. Because our God-bearing people should choose from two things, not from three or thirty-three. Choosing one of two things creates spiritual calm, people are imbued with certainty in the future, superfluous fuss and bother is avoided, and consequently — everyone is satisfied. And when a people such as ours is satisfied, great deeds may be accomplished."



Since the sanctions imposed by Western governments after Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, many imported goods have disappeared from Russian shelves, replaced by domestic products. The state has passed laws which forbid gay "propaganda" and causing offense to religious believers (2013), and offensive language in the arts and media (2014). Just this year the state made it illegal to call

the Ukraine war a war or in effect to protest Putin, while alternative media voices have all but vanished. Confrontation with the West has reached peak levels — never more so than since February. Sorokin uncannily predicted all of this.

A rumination on the reverence for power and the deep insecurity vis-à-vis the West in Russian culture, a frontal assault on Putin-era top-down governance, "Day of the Oprichnik" struck a chord. Some in the Russian religious far right have even praised Sorokin, taking his ultra-violent satire as a real prescription for the nation.

Reading "Day of the Oprichnik," I'm often reminded of a recurring image in the work of the late Russian cartoonist Slava Sysoev, who spent time in a Soviet prison camp in the 1980s for his antigovernment drawings. The image shows a huge nuclear missile driven by a decrepit peasant in a horse-drawn cart. "This is Russia," the cartoon seems to say, "a starving third-world country with a first-world arsenal, obsessed with proving its might."

Let us all hope the fever breaks soon — first and foremost for Ukraine, only the latest victim of what Sorokin calls a very Russian mentality. ■

"Day of the Oprichnik" by Vladimir Sorokin 2006, translated by Jamey Gambrell and published 2011 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 208 pages.

Sorokin has written 11 novels, 13 plays, numerous short stories and screenplays, and the libretto for Leonid Desyatnikov's "The Children of Rosenthal," the first opera commissioned by the Bolshoi Theater in 25 years. His books have been translated into 30 languages. He won the Andrei Bely and the Maxim Gorky prizes, and both the NOS Annual Literature Prize and the Bolshaya Kniga prize. He lives in Moscow.

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PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO EAT ARE ALWAYS THE BEST PEOPLE. – JULIA CHILD

Simple Spring Party Food

ANN-MARIE UGLES

The past two years of Covid isolation have left many of us out of practice when it comes to socializing and hosting guests. Like our weather at times, dark clouds, rain, sun breaks, maybe a rainbow, the Covid lifespan has felt like one of our Northwest spring days. Seeing familiar faces and catching up with dear friends is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. The food is the colorful arcing conveyance to a wonderful time.

To encourage you to take those hesitant steps back into society, here are a few of my favorite recipes that honor the spring season and would be perfect for a potluck, luncheon or small gathering. Save yourself some stress and make these mostly in advance, assembling them before guests arrive. Enjoy!

Peanut Butter and Jelly Scallops

Sounds a little crazy but this easy seafood recipe has its origins in Thai chicken satay, and all the flavors blend nicely together.

First comes the fresh pickled cucumbers. Slice a cucumber into disks that can hold the scallop but not so big that they overwhelm the dish. The brine is made up of 1 cup rice wine vinegar, 2 tablespoons sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 tablespoon dried dill and 1 tablespoon olive oil. Mix the brine and add the cucumbers. Put in more vinegar to cover cucumbers if needed. Chill.

Next, make a peanut butter sauce with any nut butter without added sugar. In a microwavable bowl mix 4 tablespoons nut butter, 2 tablespoons butter, 2 tablespoons white wine, 1 tablespoon soy sauce, 1 tablespoon oil and 1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar. Microwave for 45 seconds. Add ¼ to ½ of a cup of coconut milk, mix and set aside.

To cook scallops, pat dry with a paper towel and sear on a hot skillet with 1 tablespoon butter and 1 tablespoon olive oil for 2 minutes on each side. Place warm scallops in peanut sauce and chill.

Lastly, to make jam, cook 3 slices of bacon, crumble and set aside. With 2

tablespoons of bacon grease or 2 tablespoons olive oil, sauté 2 cloves of garlic, thinly sliced, 1 habanero pepper, and 2 tablespoons shallots or green onions, finely minced. Cook for 3 minutes over medium heat. Add 2 cups of fresh strawberries (if the berries are tart, you can add 2 tablespoons sugar) and cook for 10 more minutes. Slightly mash strawberries and add bacon to the pan. Turn the heat to medium low and cook until thick.

To assemble, drain cucumbers well and set out on a platter as a base or place on a cracker if you like. Top cucumber with cold scallop and add a dollop of warm bacon jam, heated slightly in the microwave. This strawberry bacon jam also works well on deviled eggs and the scallops can be substituted with shrimp or chicken.

Oysters Rockefeller

Many variations of this classic all feature the versatile vegetable of spinach with a rich hollandaise-like sauce. My version takes out a lot of the calories. The oysters can be shucked, cutting the muscle and left in the boat side of the shell. Place on a rock salt- or crumpled foil-lined cookie sheet to keep them from tipping over.

You can also put them on the grill, boat

side down and the heat will steam open the oyster. Pop off the top of the shell and put on a tray to load up the toppings and then return the oysters to the grill.

When oysters are not available in the shell, I often use jarred oysters and put them in a custard cup or an empty oyster shell. If the oysters are larger, you can cut them in half to fit. We make this so often I have a bag of old oyster shells that I clean, sanitize and reuse just for this dish.

Frozen spinach is a little easier to use than fresh. Thaw, squeeze dry and season with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, 1 teaspoon nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste. Place 1 tablespoon of spinach on top of the oyster. Cover with 1 tablespoon of hollandaise.

When cooking for large gatherings, I like to use McCormick's Hollandaise Sauce and vegan butter, or you can make a simple blender hollandaise with 3 egg yolks, 2 tablespoons of fresh squeezed lemon juice and a dash of cayenne or Tabasco. Blend quickly off and on. Melt ½ cup butter in the microwave until almost boiling, pour into the blender slowly and blend for 30 seconds.

Spoon hollandaise over spinach and top with a good pinch of grated Parmesan cheese. Put oysters back on the grill



AdobeStock

(if you used it) or put your baking sheet in a 375° F oven until the cheese is golden brown, about 10 to 15 minutes. Serve with your favorite hot sauce and a fresh lemon wedge.

Smoked Salmon Dip

Disguised as a cheesecake, this dip has a wow factor and is awesome for a potluck, feeding plenty with six good sized wedges.

First, make a cracker crust by combining one sleeve of saltine crackers, crushed fine with 4 tablespoons of melted butter. Press into a 9-inch pie pan and chill for at least an hour.

For the filling, beat 12 ounces of softened cream cheese, 2 eggs, 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice, 2 dashes of Tabasco and 1 teaspoon of seafood seasoning. Next, blend in 4 ounces of finely chopped smoked salmon, including any liquid. Pour into the pie crust and bake in a 350 F preheated oven for 30 minutes.

For topping, blend 1 cup of sour cream, 1 egg, salt and white pepper to taste. Spread topping on baked pie and return to the oven for 10 more minutes. Chill pie and when ready to serve, garnish with sliced cucumbers and cherry tomatoes. ■

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- 9:00 Vaughn Elementary School
- 9:03 Wright Bliss Rd NW @Olson Dr NW
- 9:04 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct NW
- 9:06 Union 76 @SR 302/4 Corners
- 9:09 SR 302 @150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 9:12 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 9:15 SR 302 @Charboneau Construction
- 9:19 Lake Kathryn Village
- 9:25 Purdy Park & Ride

VAUGHN WEDNESDAY MORNING

- 10:00 Vaughn Elementary School
- 10:03 Wright Bliss Rd NW @Olson Dr NW
- 10:04 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct NW
- 10:06 Union 76 @SR 302/4 Corners
- 10:09 SR 302 @150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 10:12 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 10:15 SR 302 @Charboneau Construction
- 10:19 Lake Kathryn Village
- 10:25 Purdy Park & Ride

EVERGREEN TUE/THUR MORNING

- 9:00 Evergreen Elementary School
- 9:05 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 9:07 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 9:13 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 9:14 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 9:20 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 9:22 Food Market in Key Center
- 9:25 KP Hwy N @Minterwood Dr NW
- 9:33 Lake Kathryn Village
- 9:40 Purdy Park & Ride

EVERGREEN WEDNESDAY MORNING

- 10:00 Evergreen Elementary School
- 10:05 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 10:07 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 10:13 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 10:14 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 10:20 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 10:22 Food Market in Key Center
- 10:25 KP Hwy N @Minterwood Dr NW
- 10:33 Lake Kathryn Village
- 10:40 Purdy Park & Ride



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TUE/WED/THUR AFTERNOON

- 4:42 Purdy Park & Ride
- 4:47 Lake Kathryn Village
- 4:50 SR 302 @Windermere Realty
- 4:52 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 4:53 SR 302 @150th/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 4:55 4 Corners gas station @SR 302
- 4:57 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct
- 4:58 Wright Bliss Road @Olson Dr
- 5:00 Food Market in Key Center
- 5:04 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 5:08 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 5:10 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 5:13 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 5:14 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 5:18 Evergreen Elementary School



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Key Peninsula Community Connection

Peninsula School District 401 Newsletter - May 2022



Dreaming Together for the Future of Peninsula Schools

I invite you to join us as we begin to set a new course for the Peninsula School District. Our goal this spring is to create a strategic plan that will guide all of our actions and decisions over the next five years.

Leading this work is our school board. They have set the foundation of the new strategic plan, including a vision, mission, values, and goals.

But this is really just a starting point.

We are inviting all staff members, parents, students, community leaders and other interested members of the public to contribute their thoughts, ideas and hopes – so that we can effectively plan for the future of our students. As a resident of the Key Peninsula, your involvement is very important.

You can read about the strategic plan on our website (psd401.net/about-us/strategic-plan-2022-2026) and share your ideas using ThoughtExchange.

This is an online communications tool that allows people to share thoughts confidentially so that all voices are heard and all divergent views can come to light.

ThoughtExchange is not a survey tool, rather, it engages interaction as people respond anonymously with other participants.

Feedback collected will be shared with the school board and the district's leadership who will create action steps to achieve our goals. The final version of the strategic plan will incorporate this feedback and then be shared with the public next month.

I hope you consider taking part in our strategic planning process to help shape and guide the future direction for the Peninsula School District.

Sincerely,

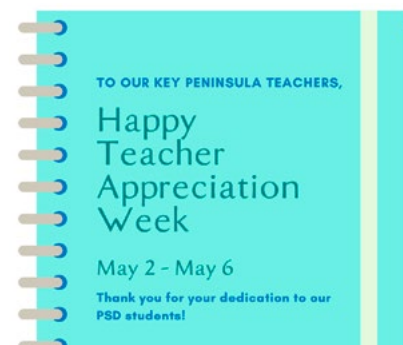
Krestin Bahr
Superintendent



Minter Creek Elementary School students pose in their green outfits after constructing leperchaun traps.

Upcoming Dates and Events

- May 2 - May 6
Teacher Appreciation Week
- Monday, May 30
Memorial Day, no school
- Saturday, June 11 - 10 a.m.
Key Peninsula Middle School Construction Tour
- Saturday, June 18
1:30 p.m. PHS Graduation at the Tacoma Dome
- Tuesday, June 21
Last Day of School, enjoy your summer!



PSD Hosts KPMS Construction Tour



An aerial photo of KPMS's progress. - Sky-Pix Aerial Photography, April 7, 2022.

PSD's Director of Capital Projects, Patrick Gillespie, will host a construction progress tour of Key Peninsula Middle School at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 11. Meet in front of KPMS rain or shine! All community members are welcome to attend.

Interested in the progress PSD is making on our school construction projects? Visit our website at www.psd401.net to see aerial photos, videos, progress updates and more!

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

To add your event or find the latest details,
visit www.keypennews.org/calendar

May 1 & 15 Spring Training -

Practical Training for Real Life! 4 p.m. Panel discussion and Q & A, dinner and childcare, free with registration. Call WayPoint Church 253-853-7878.

May 3 & 10 Harbor WildWatch

Training. If you have a passion for the life in the Salish Sea this free training is for you. harborwildwatch.org

May 6 Coffee and Connection

at Tom Taylor YMCA 11:30 a.m. Join us building relationships over a cup of coffee and some sweet treats.

May 7 Livable Community Fair

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free family fun inside and out. KP Civic Center.

May 10 TacomaProBono

Housing Help. Answers about eviction prevention, legal protections for tenants, apply for rental/utility assistance. 10 a.m.

May 15 Harbor WildWatch Beach field trip 11 a.m. at the Fox Island Sand Spit. harborwildwatch.org.

May 19 Key Pen Book Club

at 11 a.m. "The Doctors Blackwell: How Two Pioneering Sisters Brought Medicine to Women and Women to Medicine" by Janice P. Nimura. KP History Museum. kathryn.schneider2@gmail.com

May 20 Gig Harbor Rotary

Star Awards celebrate 2021 honorees Kaitlin Pifer, Melissa Oman and Dr. Sara Thompson for contributions to their communities. Canterwood Golf and Country Club, tickets \$45; Angela Mattison-Lindbom 253-514-5032

May 21 360 Trails Raffle

Ride Fundraising ride for maintenance of 360 Trails at Gateway Park. Registration required. Check in 9:30 a.m.; Ride starts 10 a.m.; raffle drawing at noon. Register at bit.ly/37biqu

May 28 Longbranch Cemetery

Annual Meeting 11 a.m. Join us with your gardening tools in hand to tidy the grounds for Memorial Day. Annual meeting at KPFD Longbranch Station at noon. longbranchcemetery@gmail.com

June 3 Coffee and Connection

at Tom Taylor YMCA 11:30 a.m.

June 11 Key Peninsula Middle

School Construction Tour 10 a.m. Patrick Gillespie will lead a tour to high-light construction progress and the next phase of the school's capital project. All community members welcome. communications@psd401.net

WEEKLY EVENTS

M-W-F through May 20 **Community Swim** at Easter Seals Camp Stand By Me. imayfield@wa.easterseals.com.

M-W-F **SAIL** (Stay Active and Independent for Life) 10 to 11 a.m. Call 253-884-9814

Wednesdays **Gentle Yoga for Older Adults** 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Call The Mustard Seed Project at 253-884-9814.

Thursdays **Fresh Express Mobile Market** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Key Peninsula Community Services in Lakebay.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

26th Legislative District Democrats. First Thursdays 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. 26thdemocrats@gmail.com

Key Peninsula Advisory Commission. Third Wednesday 6:30 p.m. Verify details at pierce-countywa.gov/5937/Key-Peninsula-Advisory-Commission.

KP Business Association Third Fridays noon to 1 p.m. El Sombrero. gina.cabiddu@chs-wa.org

KP Citizens Against Crime. Third Thursdays 7 to 8:30 p.m. Key Center fire station.

KP Civic Center Association board. Second Thursdays 7 to 8:30 p.m. Whitmore Room, KP Civic Center. 253-884-3456

KP Democrats. Third Mondays, 6 p.m. Home Fire Station, johnpatkelly@aol.com, 253-432-4256

KP Fire Commission 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 5 p.m. on Zoom. Home Fire Station, keypeninsula-fire.org, 253-884-2222

KP Lions Club. First and third Wednesdays 7 p.m. on Zoom. 253-853-2721 keypeninsulions@outlook.com

KP Parks Commission. Second Mondays 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Volunteer Park office. 253-884-9240

KP Toastmasters. Thursdays 8 to 9 a.m. Way-Point Church, 12719 134th Ave NW. keypeninsula-toastmasters@gmail.com

KP Veterans. First and third Mondays 7 to 8 p.m. KP Lutheran Church, 4213 Lackey Road NW. Ray Flowers 253-884-2626

Lakebay Fuchsia Society. First Thursdays 7 p.m. KP Civic Center, Whitmore Room, KP Civic Center. Myvanwy Shirley, 253-884-2283

Longbranch Improvement Club monthly meeting. Third Wednesdays 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Longbranch Improvement Club. 253-200-0308

Peninsula Emergency Preparedness Coalition. Second Wednesdays 6 p.m. on Zoom. 6ftwav@gmail.com, 253-720-0662

Peninsula School District board meeting at Swiftwater Elementary School. May 26 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. 253-530-1000

Suicide Prevention Coalition Survivors Support Group. Second Tuesday 9 a.m., Heron's Key, hope4you.org



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TOP LEFT Peninsula Cooperative preschoolers consider the merits of firefighting as a career. *Key Peninsula Fire Department* **TOP CENTER** The Peninsula High School Hawks water polo team remained undefeated in April. *Anne Nesbit* **TOP RIGHT** South Head resident Bald Eagles Mike and Millie. *Mark Sharley* **MIDDLE** A banner spring day on Von Geldern Cove. *Jim Bellamy* **LOWER LEFT** Ready and waiting at Camp Seymour. *George Hovany* **LOWER RIGHT** Western Pond Turtle. *Tina McKail, KP News* **BOTTOM LEFT** Faith Mathis of Key Peninsula Cooperative homeschool preschool was the top fundraiser for its trike-a-thon, earning a ride in a fire engine. *Key Peninsula Fire Department* **BOTTOM CENTER** Cottontail. *Tina McKail, KP News*