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THE VOICE OF THE KEY PENINSULA

August 2020 Vol. 47 No. 8

PSD Adopts Remote Learning for Fall 2020

Almost all local students will attend school online for the short term.

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

The Peninsula School Board voted 4-1 to open schools without students Sept. 8, approving the Remote Learning 2.0 plan proposed by Superintendent Art Jarvis. Director Natalie Wimberley cast the lone No vote at the July 23 board meeting.

The plan calls for almost all students to begin the 2020-21 school year with a full remote learning model and to bring students back for in-person learning later this year if possible. Some high-need students may return to classrooms before then.

Held at district administrative offices where directors and the superintendent met in person, masked and socially distanced, the board meeting was live-streamed on both Facebook and YouTube. Remote presentations from district personnel were followed by a lengthy series of public comments made via Zoom. Letters and emails previously sent to the board were read aloud. The meeting lasted well over four hours before going into executive session following the vote.

Well over 1,000 comments were made online during the meeting ranging from support to accusations of indifference for the well-being of children.

Jarvis said district administrators, staff and teachers invested an immense amount of time and effort into creating a plan for two education platforms: On-site, in-person

"ONE THING WE DO KNOW IS THAT REMOTE LEARNING IN THE UPCOMING YEAR IS NOT THE SAME AS LAST SPRING."

learning and a full-time remote learning and teaching system. The original plan had been to implement both platforms with the September opening of school, but local and state COVID-19 infection rates now exceed those of April.

At the same time, hospitalizations and fatalities attributed to COVID-19 began to decrease in June, while more and younger

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Census Deadline Extended to Oct. 31

Every person matters in the official count but Key Peninsula lags in response rate. For every household not counted, the state could lose up to \$580,000.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

The 2020 U.S. Census survey started in March and the response rate from the Key Peninsula is significantly lower than it is in the rest of the Tacoma census area.

While more than two-thirds of households in Pierce County had responded by July 15, the response rate from the three census tracts on the KP was between 43 and 52%.

One explanation may be the way residents receive the survey.

"We mail to where people live, not where they receive their mail," said Toby Nelson, a Census Bureau spokesman. Residents received surveys if they had mail delivered to their homes and were asked to complete the survey and return it or do it online.

Residents with post office boxes did not receive census forms. Census workers were supposed to deliver forms to their front doors between mid-March and mid-April, but the pandemic disrupted that plan, suspended after only two days with 10% of households reached.

The operation started again in June and has now been completed. Anyone not receiving the survey can respond online or by phone. The census form included a 12-digit identification number, but that number is not required to complete the survey.

A 1978 law prevents any information identifiable to an individual from being released except to that individual or heir for 72 years.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on timing and deadlines this year, especially for those operations involving in-person field activities. The deadline for self-response was moved from July 31 to Oct 31. The Update Leave operation, which delivered surveys to those households without a physical mailing address, was delayed by two months. Counting the homeless, which involves collecting data through service providers, where people may gather and at other outdoor locations, was rescheduled from late March to mid-September.

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KPFD Firefighter Todd Vanscoyk wraps following a training exercise. Photo: Garrett Morrow

Full-time Staffing Starts at Longbranch Fire Station

KPFD is improving response times, creating a new officer corps and asking voters to renew a levy on August 4.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

The Key Peninsula Fire District will assign two career firefighter/EMTs to the Longbranch Fire Station 24 hours a day starting in August, according to Fire Chief Dustin Morrow.

Up to now, volunteers have responded from the station, located at 4215 Key Peninsula Highway SW, opposite the Longbranch Improvement Club.

"Passing the EMS levy last year helped out our staffing situation," Morrow said, allowing the department to hire an additional three firefighter/EMTs. "This will really improve our response times on the south end."

When the station is staffed, at least seven and as many as 10 career personnel will be on duty on the KP at all times, up from five when he started in April 2019, Morrow said. Morrow and Assistant Chief Hal Wolverton also share the role of duty chief, each being on call every other day, 365 days a year, to respond to any incident.

Volunteer firefighters will also begin responding out of the Key Center fire station in August for the first time in recent memory.

"Right now, if we get two calls, we depend on mutual aid (from neighboring departments)," Morrow said.

The district will also reinstitute the rank of captain on the KP with the intention of associating individual officers with specific stations to build relationships in the communities they serve.

"Our neighborhoods have different needs and we need to be out there more," Morrow said. "On the south end, for example, where we have an older population, we should be talking to people about preventing falls and injuries at home."

Morrow also wants new officers to handle more administrative and regulatory tasks, to groom them for management as well as leadership.

"We used to lose people because there was no room for advancement," Morrow said. "I went to the fire commissioners and we decided to promote three lieutenants to captain, to work at their own stations, get them out in the community and give them more internal responsibility. That gives us three new lieutenants. And that gives us the opportunity and time to train them, develop them and provide a viable career

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KEY PENINSULA NEWS

253-884-4699

www.keypennews.org

www.facebook.com/KeyPenNews

editor@keypennews.org

PO Box 3, Vaughn, WA 98394

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Lisa Bryan

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Ted Olinger

STAFF CONTRIBUTORS: Matthew Dean,
Caleb Galbreath, Joseph
Pentheroudakis, Chris Rurik, Megan
Schowalter, Dave Stave, Sara
Thompson

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER: Ed Johnson

CONTRIBUTORS: Meredith Browand,
Richard Gelinis, Rob Vajko

WEBMASTER: Chris Konieczny

FACEBOOK: Joseph Pentheroudakis

LAYOUT: Caleb Galbreath

OPERATIONS MANAGER / DESIGN EDITOR:
Tim Heitzman

BOOKKEEPER: Linda Grubaugh

AD SALES: Deanna Hunter
sales@keypennews.org

DISTRIBUTION: James Allyn, Phil Bauer,
Anna Brones, Norm Brones,
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PUBLISHING BOARD: Sara Thompson,
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Here's What I Think About That

LISA BRYAN,
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Everything has changed. Again.

Pierce County is failing to meet the goals for Phase 2 reopening.

The desired 14-day average number of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people should be under 25; that's the number the state Department of Health defines as "low-disease activity." Under 25 cases is manageable when combined with adequate and timely testing, plus contact tracing to alert others who may have been exposed.

Pierce County's 14-day average July 26 was 134 cases.

Casting blame, public shaming and denial are all forms of coping when things go wrong. But after the righteous indignation comes the awareness that who or what caused the problem doesn't matter.

In a situation report on COVID-19 transmission across Washington State from the Institute for Disease Modeling, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Microsoft and the DOH in mid-July, "Washington State is in the early stages of an exponential statewide outbreak that has zero chance of being reversed without changes to our collective behavior and policies to support that change."

The idea that Pierce County will be able to advance to Phase 3 is a cruel joke. Until it does, the doors to the Key Center Library will remain closed. The long awaited splashpad at Gateway Park? It's ready for a grand opening blast of watery fun for kids and families, but the chance of that happening before summer's end is slim.

Peninsula Schools will begin the school year with remote learning. The spread of COVID-19 presents unacceptable health risks to safely reopen classrooms this fall. We have more cases now than when schools closed in March.

The school board agonized over the impact on student health and the welfare of their families, but as the largest employer on the Gig Harbor and Key Peninsulas, it also had a duty to protect the health and welfare of the community.

The district held small classes for groups of up to five special needs students for just a week in mid-July, until one participant at Peninsula High School tested positive for COVID-19. The school followed all

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction guidelines, but now this small group and their close contacts will need to quarantine for 14 days and be monitored for COVID-19 symptoms, the district said in a July 26 statement.

That classrooms will not reopen could hardly be more devastating to working parents, who like so many others in districts throughout Washington must scramble to manage or pay for basic childcare.

Many parents have shared their fears and challenges after surviving last spring, juggling work and managing kids at home. Even when one parent is at home, supporting their children and helping them through this new way of learning is difficult. For others, it is untenable, literally forcing some to leave the workforce with the knowledge their job may not be waiting for them when they are able to return.

The television news is not helpful with cameras focused on capturing the most dramatic images. It's difficult not to fall into despair over now familiar scenes of city streets filled with mostly peaceful protestors for social justice, while others incite violence that undermines the cause.

After the last five months of operating in a relative state of shock and rolling waves of grief, we are all exhausted. I suppose it was little wonder that the easing of restrictions that began June 5 saw us so ready to be done with it all that we forgot all our social distancing measures. It is hard to break old habits. I may never stop extending my hand for a shake or beginning an embrace.

Wearing masks has increased with the state mandate. In the early days of the pandemic, masks and even basic social distancing measures somehow became so politicized that compliance equaled capitulation for some, causing arguments and actual fights between ordinary people in ordinary places. Over a mask.

We cannot control external events, we

cannot even control our own emotions, but we can control how we respond to them. Blaming and shaming others is not a survival strategy. Setting a goal and

Marching toward it, is. If that means wearing a mask everywhere, helping a family with children, or calling for social justice, reconciliation and solutions, that is what we must do. No disease or social ill was ever cured by treating the symptoms — it had to be stopped in its tracks.

We decide how this story will end.



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Stay safe.

[thanks to CHI Franciscan]



Longbranch Fire Station No. 49 is ready for occupancy. Photos: Caleb Galbreath, KP News

FIRE DEPARTMENT FROM PAGE 1

path here on the Key Peninsula. That way, in 10 years or so, we'll be able to promote from within for the higher ranks."

Promotion evaluations were administered in July. The successful candidates will be announced in late July or early August, according to Morrow.

The KPFD also recruits heavily from its volunteers, who are products of one of the most popular and successful training programs in the region, he said.

"Many departments have volunteers in all kinds of support roles, like driving a tender or doing air supply. Here we train and use them as full-on firefighters and EMTs — they are meant to work side-by-side with career personnel and step into those roles. It's hard to get that kind of experience, and we attract a lot of talent because of it," Morrow said.

"Everybody here is either an EMT or paramedic on the crew side and we have some volunteer EMTs as well," he said. About 80 percent of KP emergency calls are medical, which is consistent across the fire service.

In August 2019, KP voters approved a permanent levy to fund emergency medical services. The new levy has the same rate as the two-year levy it replaced, charging property owners 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. But as the value goes up and down, the rate of collection fluctuates.

The department must regularly report its EMS spending to the public, which can change the levy by referendum.

KPFD is asking voters to renew a separate levy Aug. 4 for its maintenance and operations.

"The levy that we ran in 2019 was focused specifically around our EMS operations, the medical side of our house. This levy is our fire side of the house," Morrow said.

The M&O levy pays for salaries, training, administration and repairs. Unlike other funding for the district, the M&O levy requires a specific financial goal. "We don't get to ask for 35 cents per \$1,000, we have to come out and say a dollar amount," Morrow said. "Then that number, depending on the community's assessed value, sets the millage rate."

The 2020 levy would maintain the \$800,000 per year target of the last two M&O levies passed in 2012 and 2016. Although the amount requested remains the same, rising property values have decreased the approximate taxation rate by about 35 percent. KPFD decided not to ask for an increase.

"Although our fire district could use additional funding, we feel like this is not the right time to ask the community that question," Morrow said, citing the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. "We're going to work within what we have."



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State Budget Sinks as Virus Rate Soars

COVID-19 is making inroads over most of Washington, as it is over most of the U.S.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

A June 17 Washington State revenue forecast projected an \$8.8 billion drop in tax collections over the next three years. Gov. Jay Inslee canceled pay raises the same day for some state employees and ordered repeating one day furloughs for 40,000 others, or about 80% of general government employees.

Inslee said he would call a special session of the Legislature to revise the budget before the end of the year.

He also put the brakes on reopening Washington and mandated that face masks be worn in public even with social distancing starting June 26 to curtail the resurgence of the coronavirus.

“COVID-19 has hit our state hard and our economy has taken a severe hit as a result,” Inslee said in a statement.

The forecast estimated a \$4.5 billion drop in revenues for the current two-year budget cycle ending in 2021 and an additional \$4.3 billion drop for the next biennium.

The current budget is about \$53 billion with \$3 billion in reserves.

“The impact of lost economic activity from the COVID crisis will extend for many years,” according to the budget forecast.

More than 1.2 million people in Washington have applied for unemployment benefits since the start of the pandemic, according to the Employment Security Department. The unemployment rate rose from 7.6% in 2019 to a record 15.4% in April, then dropped to 14.8% in May (the most recent figure available at press time).

The \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act signed into law by President Trump on March 27 — the largest stimulus bill in U.S. history — allowed states to extend unemployment benefits to workers who are usually ineligible, including an additional \$600 a week, together with aid and loans to mitigate the impact of business closures.

The \$600 payments are supposed to end July 31, but Washington state will pay only through the week ending July 25, according to the ESD. Weekly benefits range from \$201 to \$844, depending on the recipient’s base year earnings.

The Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act passed by the U.S. House of Representatives May 15 would

deliver an additional \$3 trillion in aid to the country.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said the act was “dead on arrival” in the Senate, calling it a “liberal wish list.” Congress was due to return from recess to take up the measure July 20.

The HEROES Act includes a second stimulus check, debt relief, student loan forgiveness, hazard pay, six more months of COVID-19 unemployment benefits, housing and food assistance, \$1 trillion in aid earmarked for first responders, health workers, teachers and others at risk of losing jobs due to state budget cuts, and bailouts for states and the U.S. Postal Service.

The Act also updates the federal government’s new Paycheck Protection Program, eliminating the requirement that small businesses use 75% of the aid for payroll or pay it back as a loan. Many business owners couldn’t

use the money for payroll since employees didn’t want to return to work because they were making more from the enhanced unemployment benefits.

Steve Lerch, the Washington State revenue forecaster, said it is unlikely the economy will recover fully until there’s a COVID-19 vaccine or therapy, which would allow people to return to their pre-pandemic work and spending habits.

New COVID-19 cases peaked in April when social distancing “flattened the curve” in Washington, but new cases are now appearing at a higher rate across the region and in Pierce County, according to the Washington Department of Health and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.

“It is very disheartening to see these numbers go up,” said John Wiesman, the Secretary of Health. “People are working so hard in the public health and health care setting to try and avoid this.”

The spread of the virus in Washington now exceeds what it was when schools were closed March 11. Less than six months into the pandemic, there have been 41,090 cases of COVID-19 in the state and 1,426 deaths, a mortality rate of 3.47% (at press time).

The DOH released a statement in May saying its count of COVID-19 related deaths is not exact. It released a revised report July 14, saying “Approximately 89% of the deaths among lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases also reference COVID-19 on the death certificate. An additional 4% have been determined not to be COVID-19 related and have been removed from the dashboard count. The remaining 7% are pending or the death certificate is unclear and requires further examination and review. Our data dashboard represents approximately 96% (89% plus 7%) of all deaths to lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases.”

According to the DOH, the rate of new COVID-19 cases in Washington was 102.1 per 100,000 in the first two weeks of July, well over the state goal of 25. The number of individuals tested per each new case was 19.1, below the goal of 50. The percent testing positive was 5.2; the state goal is 2%.

At the same time, just 3.1% of hospital beds across the state were occupied by COVID-19 patients, well under the critical ceiling of 10%.

“We have seen an uptick in cases over the last several days and so far, we are not seeing any specific source,” the DOH said at the end of June. “Very few attended a demonstration. This tells us people are going out and about and are not taking precautions.”

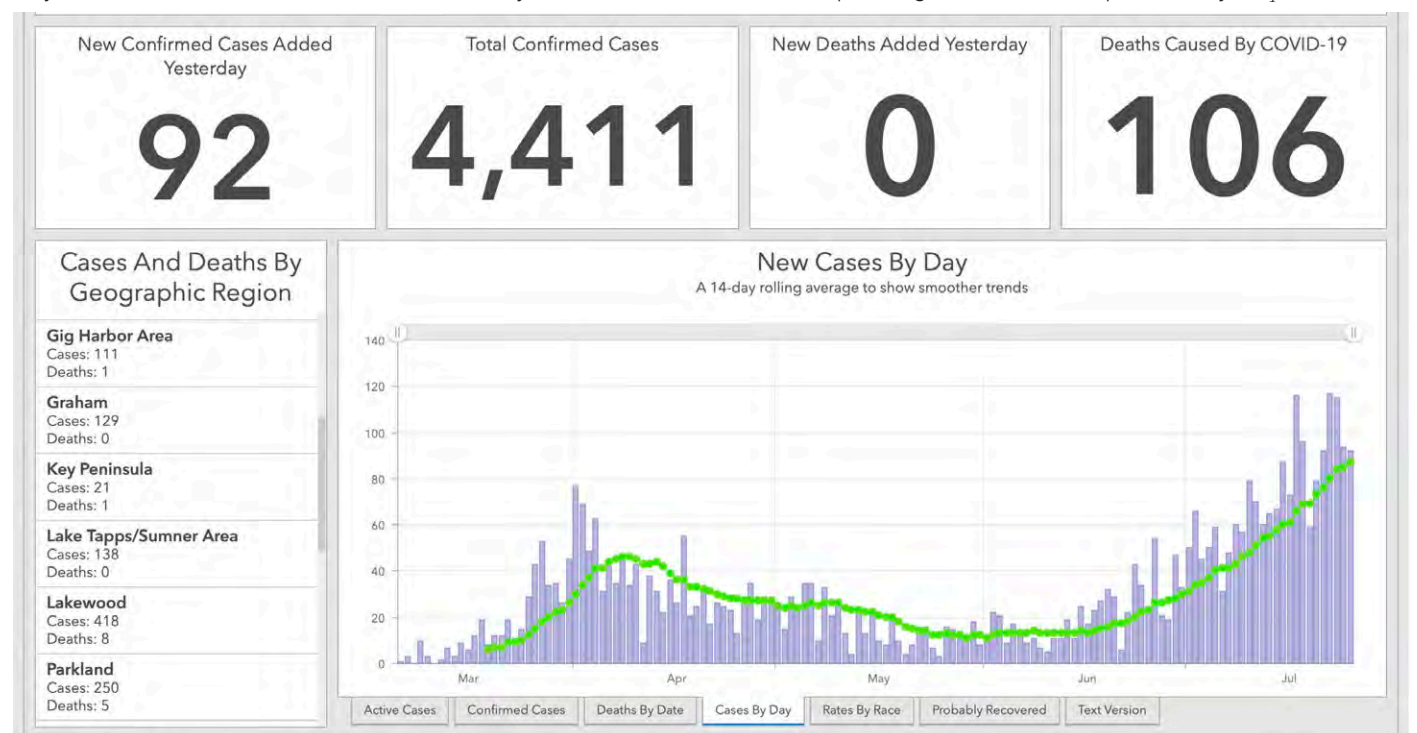
COVID-19 is hitting people of color harder than whites in Washington: the infection rate is three times higher for Black people, five times higher for Latinos, and six times higher for Native Americans, Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, according to the DOH.

The new surge of cases has also struck younger people. Perhaps as a result of that, daily fatalities from COVID-19 decreased from a high in May of 2,700 to a low of 212 on July 5. The daily average for the first week of July was 512.

But according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the lower rate could be a result of a lag time of up to three weeks between increased infection and fatality rates.

“VERY FEW ATTENDED A DEMONSTRATION. THIS TELLS US PEOPLE ARE GOING OUT AND ABOUT AND ARE NOT TAKING PRECAUTIONS.”

Stay informed with information on the Pierce County COVID-19 Dashboard at www.tpchd.org where cases are updated daily. *Graphic: TPCHD*



CENSUS FROM PAGE 1

In-person interviews of non-responders were delayed by three months.

Enumerators, the workers who conduct the interviews, will begin outreach Aug. 11, but Pierce County is one of 12 areas in the country where the process was launched July 23, to test and refine the process.

According to Nelson, if no one is reached by the enumerators, which is the case in about 1% of all dwellings, a statistical method is used to complete the census. That process could take until the end of the year. The final apportionment count will be delivered April 30, 2021.

The Constitution requires the population to be counted every 10 years. The results affect the number of representatives in Congress and how federal, state and local funds are allocated for hospitals, fire departments, transportation systems, school lunch programs and other critical programs and services. Business owners rely on census results to make decisions, such as where to open new stores, restaurants, factories or offices, and where to expand operations.

According to the Washington State Office of Financial Management, for every 100 households missed in the 2020 count, the state could lose up to \$5.8 million.

KP Fire Chief Dustin Morrow said the fire district uses grants to help pay for projects such as the exhaust ventilation systems in the stations and powered lift cots for ambulances. “When we apply and subsequently are awarded these grant funds, a local match is required. The dollar amount of the match is based upon the population served. This information comes from the census,” he said.

The district also needs an accurate population count for planning purposes. They are in the process of creating a comprehensive strategic plan and an emergency response policy. “Both of these processes, once complete, will inform the Board of Fire Commissioners and the public on the short-, mid- and long-term needs of emergency services on the Key Peninsula. Having a clear understanding of our population will again be critical information to have as we complete this work,” Morrow said.

The census also affects school funding. “An accurate count of the Key Peninsula is important for us as a metric to get an equitable share of our tax dollars back into the community,” said Peninsula School District board member Chuck West. “We have grown so much, and we need services and infrastructure improvements to keep up with the demand. We need to count everyone.”

The census can be completed online at 2020census.gov or by phone at 800-330-2020. The deadline is Oct. 31.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Census Bureau



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE US CENSUS

The first U.S. Census, in 1790, required delivery via horseback. The data consisted of the name of each head of household, the number of white males, number of free white females, other free persons, and slaves. The population was 3.9 million. The current population is about 330 million, according to the Census Bureau.

More questions were added during the 1800s about age and country of origin. Categories for race were limited to white, black and mulatto. In 1850, free persons were listed individually instead of by family. Slaves were listed as numbers, not names, by owner. In 1870, race categories were expanded to include Chinese, which encompassed all east Asians, and American Indians. Questions were also added about education, literacy, profession and place of birth.

In 1930, the racial classification changed. Whenever a person had any fraction of white ancestry, he or she was to be reported as white. For the first and only time, “Mexican” was listed as a race. In 1940, all households answered 16 questions. A sample of additional households received a long form with questions regarding socioeconomic information. That methodology continued through the 2000 census.

In 1970, for the first time, households were allowed to self-report. Until then, all surveys were collected by enumerators.

In 2010, the census bureau innovated again. All households answered just 10 questions. Rather than survey one household in six for more detailed information via a long form, the Census Bureau used the data collected by the American Community Survey, sent to about 3.5 million people each year since 2005.

The 2020 census questions are identical to those of 2010. The U.S. Supreme Court did not allow adding a question about citizenship. Those opposed to adding the question feared that it would have a negative impact on the willingness of some to complete the census. The court ruled that executive branch officials must “offer genuine justifications for important decisions, reasons that can be scrutinized by courts and the interested public,” and said the explanation offered by the Trump administration for adding the question “appears to have been contrived.”

Gender on the 2020 form is simply male or female and is self-identified. If the household includes a spouse or non-married partner, they are asked to identify as same-sex or opposite-sex. Some LGBTQ advocates want to add additional questions about gender and identity to better identify needed resources.

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Richard Gelinas
EMPIRICALLY YOURS



A Reply from the Coronavirus

Thanks for your congratulations on my success. Sorry about my tardy reply to your letter (KP News, May 2020), but I've been so busy lately, what with over 11 million COVID-19 cases and over 500,000 deaths around the world. In the U.S. alone there are over three million cases with 135,000 deaths. At the rate I'm going, get ready for four million by the fall.

Hmm — that's more than 1% of everyone in America.

By now everybody knows my symptoms — dry cough, fever, impaired breathing — and how I spread from one person to another, by breathing or touching little moisture droplets that hang in the air or on a surface after an infected person sneezes or coughs. I am astonished at your inability to follow the commonsense advice to wear a face mask, wash your hands often and stay 6 feet away from other people.

If everybody wore face masks, I'm told my infection rate would be cut at least in half in a couple months. As a professional pathogen, I've got to tell you that as a thinking species, your behavior is not only irrational, it's self-destructive. I can fill a room with infectious droplets at least for a while after one good sneeze from an infected person. Don't you realize that 20% of all COVID-19 cases make people sick enough to require oxygen or hospital care and that the U.S. fatality rate is 4.6%?

What do you not get about this?

The U.S. testing rate is eighth in the world. Certainly nothing you can be proud of and rather embarrassing for a country of your size and wealth IMHO. And as I spread, keeping up with tests is just going to get harder.

How about if we add a few million school kids to the mix, huh? Don't forget the teachers and staff and their families. Looks like I'll be meeting all of them soon.

OK, OK, I am aware that your vaccines against me are moving faster through the clinical trial process than I thought. I am particularly annoyed by the progress of the RNA vaccines. These are proving so safe and effective that they have graduated into very large placebo-controlled trials with 30,000 subjects. While these trials may continue for over a year, some results will be available this fall.

China has a vaccine they deemed to be safe after an early test and immediately rolled it out to soldiers in the Chinese Army. If you want a quick vaccination against me right now, simply go to China and join the Army! Or I suppose you could volunteer for one of the large trials.

But it's the emerging antiviral drugs that really scare me: the drugs that specifically inhibit my growth inside your lovely lung cells. There's one, Remdesivir, that targets my ability to copy my genes and thus grow. Hospitals are using this against me now. I suspect even better (I mean worse for me) versions are coming. Much worse for me is a drug that will block my ability to mature my proteins — a protease inhibitor. The structure of an inhibitor of my protease was recently published and this is the basis of a new drug.

When a cocktail of these drugs that work by different methods is made into a pill, it could be extremely effective against me. I can say this with some confidence because such a drug cocktail was devised against the human immunodeficiency virus that largely prevents AIDS.

But I am confident that even with all your vaccines, masks and drugs I'll be with you for a long time, probably forever in one form or another. I'm digging into parts of the world that have poor health care systems, like Africa, South America and Asia. Look how hard it has been to eradicate the last cases of polio, even though you've tried. Ironic, isn't it, that once you recognize a pathogen like me, and you have the supplies and drugs to block infection, like polio in Pakistan, your efforts are thwarted by religious extremists and politicians.

Good thing that doesn't happen in your country, right?

I'll still be around because when changes or mutations occur to my set of genes, I can keep them when they are beneficial to me. Meaning: I evolve! While you're watching!

A tiny change in my spike protein lets me replicate myself faster after I infect a person and allows me to spread faster. But this change does not lead to any increase in severity of disease. This little change has spread all over the world, since early spring, simply because my new form spreads from person to person faster than my original form.

How about that? I don't want to be more lethal — that's a dead-end for a virus (just look at Ebola, which historically, at least, burns out in confined outbreaks). But I

do want to be more transmissible, so that you can spread more copies of me faster.

Gotta get back to work. Stay in touch, especially after someone coughs!

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.

Rob Vajko
KEYTHOUGHTS



The Unheard Voices of the Great Divide

This country is probably more divided today than it has been since the Civil War. Ten minutes on Facebook is enough to make it clear that we just aren't getting along. Donald Trump's election to the presidency, although certainly not the beginning of the great divide, did a lot to widen it.

The COVID-19 virus, rather than uniting us in a fight against a common enemy, drove us further apart. The proponents of continued stay-at-home orders are accusing those who are pushing for the country to open up again of not valuing life, especially the lives of the elderly. Meanwhile those who argue that we should reopen accuse those who want to continue stay-at-home of not caring about a rise in suicide, depression, child abuse, spousal abuse and unemployment, and of not caring about the small business owners who cannot weather these troubled times.

Each accuses the other of selecting only the news that supports their narrative — we call anything that doesn't support it “fake news” (I'm getting so tired of that expression). Both sides accuse the other of not listening to the experts when, in fact, the experts can't seem to agree on a whole lot right now, so ultimately it means each side believing those that support their bias.

What might seem strange at first is the fact that the stay-at-home states are predominantly Democratic while the “get back to business” states are predominantly Republican. This compounds the problem, making it seem this issue is more political than anything else. Time will tell who was right, though I suspect neither side will admit that they were wrong no matter the outcome.

The November election looms on the horizon and, as in 2016, the Democrats

are forecasting a sweeping victory.

I believe that they are, once again, in for a surprise.

First of all, let me say clearly that I do not like Trump as a person. His insulting tweets and broad generalizations are not fitting for anyone, much less for someone who holds the high office of President of the United States. He hasn't made America great — he's made America look petty and immature. Whether his policies have helped the economy and the American people is a question for another time.

In the 2016 election, few of us could imagine Trump winning the presidency. Even Republicans who desperately wanted to make sure that Hillary Clinton did not get into office were dubious. He was just too crass and uncouth to be a viable candidate for the White House.

When he did in fact win, I believe that even the majority of Republicans were shocked. The media, the polls, the Facebook posts had all pointed to a Clinton win.

What went wrong then is what's going to go wrong again this time around, and that is because a large percentage of those who will vote for Trump are part of a silent majority. Trump won the 2016 election with the votes of those who do not live in the big cities, who do not spend their time on Facebook, and who do not tweet and who are, thus, largely unheard.

Republicans are by and large the party of rural areas. Democrats inversely are the party of the cities. What this means is that those who tend to favor the liberal agenda have a platform that the conservative party doesn't. Rural America doesn't have the time or the inclination to attend big rallies or meet to discuss their political views. They tend to live in less densely populated areas for a reason. They require more travel time to get anywhere. They tend to get up early and go to bed late in order to run their farms or businesses. Rural voters also tend to have more traditional views, perhaps attend church at a higher rate than voters in the city, and tend to favor the more conservative Republican agenda.

In this digital age where we all seem to think that we need to shout louder, tweet more often, post more posts on Facebook to set everyone else right, these rural voters are just quietly sitting unheard until it's time for vote.

More than ever, we simply are not

listening to each other. The great divide is getting wider and it just might cost the Democrats the presidency, again. Just because the rural conservatives aren't making a lot of noise doesn't mean their voices won't be heard in November.

Whoever wants to win the 2020 election has to start winning — or earning — the votes of those who are silently sitting at home in the evening, away from the city lights, watching “Jeopardy.”

Rob Vajko lives near Wauna.



Meredith Browand
KEY ISSUES

Vote for Your Future

When I turned 18, I told my dad I was never going to miss an election. Not a general, primary or special election. I grew up with parents that took their civic responsibilities seriously and I guess the apple didn't fall far from the tree. At the time, it seemed like that's what every adult did. You voted in every election. Every time there is an opportunity to cast a ballot, you show up.

In hindsight, I can see now that my 18-year-old self didn't quite understand the reality of voting in this country. I didn't know that there are all types of ways the vote is suppressed. I didn't understand the barriers to voting for some. I didn't see that it wasn't always easy. But now I do.

If you know any 18-year-olds, you know that this is a time of great transition and not all have voting on the top of their to-do lists like I did 25 years ago. But that doesn't mean their voices and their votes aren't important. From 1972-2012, 18 to 29-year-old citizens turned out at a rate between 15 and 20 percent lower than those 30 years and older. We must do better.

I don't think this is a “them versus us” issue when it comes to increasing turnout amongst young voters. I'm way past the 18 to 29-year-old demographic but I certainly think our community will be better represented with a stronger turnout from this age group.

As of May 31, there are only 7,593 registered voters in the 26th Legislative District aged 18 to 24. It's obvious we're missing a big section of eligible young voters here.

What can we do? If you know of any young and unregistered voters, you can encourage them to register before the upcoming general election in November. They can register online, by mail or in person. They can even show up in person on Election Day to register!

Seventeen-year-olds who turn 18 by Election Day can also register early to ensure they are on the rolls when it's time to vote. If you don't know any young voters personally, you can still help with increasing their ranks by donating to or volunteering for organizations such as Rock the Vote and the Youth Voter Movement.

But just registering young voters will simply never be enough. We need to encourage young voter turnout by ensuring the candidates and issues are relevant to their lives.

Young voters often report that their top issues are economic inequality and security, climate change and civil rights. Are these priorities reflected in our candidates' beliefs and the party platforms? If not, we must do better and demand more. It's the responsibility of all voters, not just young voters, to make sure our candidates are being challenged on issues that include the priorities of the youngest voting demographic.

We can't just expect these voters to turn out if their priorities aren't anywhere on the ballot. Our community will be stronger if we can increase young voter turnout and reflect their values in our elected representatives.

And if you happen to be wondering if I've missed an election in the past 25 years, the answer is no. Not yet.

Meredith Browand is a mother and an activist who lives in Purdy.



Joseph Pentheroudakis
ON THE WING

The Everlasting U.S. Census

In the 1880 census Charles Pack, the first settler on Herron Island, was recorded as living on Ketron Island.

Ketron is a small island on the opposite side of the Sound, across from Steilacoom. Having spent a lot of time researching Pack, I scratched my head. What would he be doing on Ketron? There was no other mention of him on Ketron, and county records always show him on Herron Island.

I kept staring at that census page. The page is obviously the clean copy of the enumerator's field notes, complete with fancy calligraphy so in the end I decided that the clerk copying the worksheet just mistook “Herron” for “Ketron.” If the copying was done anywhere in the south Sound — Steilacoom, Tacoma or Olympia, say — the copier probably knew of Ketron, but not of Herron. Add some bad handwriting on the part of the enumerator and it's not hard to see how the copier might

have misread the notes.

Fast-forward 140 years.

I was out washing my truck one Sunday afternoon in front of my place on Herron Island when a woman in a little blue Honda drove up and asked me if I knew where Vancouver Street was. I was puzzled. No such street on the island, I told her. She looked at me as if I was lying; I pointed out that I'd been on the island for over 20 years and I knew all its street names. Vancouver isn't one of them.

“How about Cove Street?” she asked.

Um, no, no such name either.

She thought for a few seconds. “Is there a Ketron Island or something like that around here?” she asked.

Why yes, I replied, there is, but that's on the other side of the Sound, over by Steilacoom. I'm thinking, how could she possibly have ended up on Herron if she was supposed to be on Ketron?

She had an iPad on the passenger seat showing a map of Herron, so I said that if she zoomed out I could show her where Ketron was.

“I'm with the Census,” she said, “and I'm not allowed to mess with the map.”

I knew that census workers would be visiting the island in the coming weeks, so that didn't surprise me. By then she was getting a bit nervous, acting almost as if she was afraid of me. I didn't realize I looked that wild; sure, I hadn't shaved in days and was in my beat-up yardwork clothes, but I'm always nice to intruders, I mean, visitors.

She finally decided it was time to move on. I showed her how to get back to our ferry and she was on her way, probably quietly fuming at whoever gave her directions to the wrong location.

And yes, Vancouver and Cove are indeed street names on Ketron.

Pity the poor census worker, when a 140-year-old mistake refuses to die.

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



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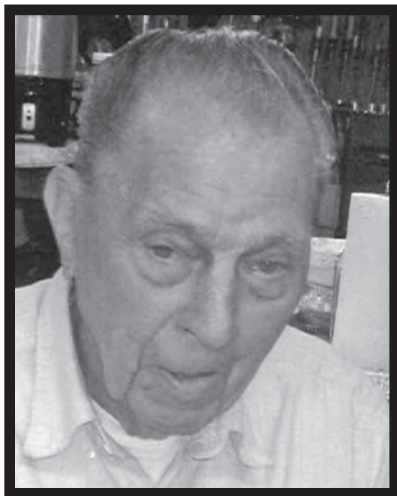


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Ralph and Howard Kinsgbury. Photo courtesy Key Peninsula Historical Museum

OBITUARIES



Elvin Ernest Floberg

Elvin Floberg of Lakebay died at home June 16, three miles from the place he was born Nov. 26, 1925. He was 94 years old.

He attended grade school in Longbranch and Lakebay, and graduated from Vaughn Union High School.

Elvin enlisted in the U.S. Army in January 1944 and was honorably discharged May 7, 1946. He served as a combat infantryman and a military policeman. His decorations and citations include the European African-Middle Eastern Service Medal, Occupation of Germany, Good Conduct Medal and Presidential Unit Citation.

After returning home, he joined the Evergreen Workers Union for Huckleberry Pickers, where he was a general laborer.

Elvin spent many hours building Volunteer Park in Lakebay. He was a hard worker with a can-do attitude and would help anyone who asked. He was a wonderful and caring brother, son, friend and neighbor who will be dearly missed.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Guttorm Floberg from Lillehammer, Norway, and Julie Jensine Alexanderson from Hvaler, Norway; brothers George, Richard, Ray and Jay; sisters Hilda Market and Irene Wooldridge; and his niece Marilyn Strand.

Elvin is survived by nieces and nephews Joyce Olson, Roxyanne Wooldridge, James Wooldridge, Jack and Gail Wooldridge, Robert Floberg, Linda Floberg, Allen Floberg and Carl Floberg, in addition to many great and great-great nieces and nephews.



Thomas Michael Maroney

Thomas Michael "Mike" Maroney of Lakebay, formerly of Helena, Montana, died July 2 at the age of 81. He was diagnosed with malignant brain cancer in March 2020. Mike was cared for and passed away peacefully at home with family at his bedside.

Mike was meticulous with his work and loved his tools. He worked with his hands and was able to fix most anything. He held various jobs, mostly as an electrician. Mike proudly served several hundred hours as a Salvation Army Disaster Services volunteer. He taught several community CPR, First Aid and Disaster classes. He was present at numerous natural disasters from Hawaii to Alaska. Mike was an exalted ruler of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Hell Gate Lodge No. 383 from 1983 to 1984. He was a senior chaplain with the International Alliance of Community Chaplains. Mike was a Navy veteran who served with the fleet tug sailors on the U.S.S. Munsee.

Mike had a contagious ear-to-ear smile. He enjoyed cooking, fly-tying, fishing and hunting. He was happiest when doing his Salvation Army volunteer disaster work, cooking with his extended Chamorro family, and visiting with friends. Those who knew Mike understood he knew no strangers.

Mike was preceded in death by his parents, Mary Louis LaFleur and Albert Edwin Maroney, and his two sisters, Billy-Lou Sweeney and Leslie-Carol Spomer.

He leaves behind his wife of 43 years, Sandy; siblings Georgia Steir (Jan), Richard Hanson, Paula Froehner (Terri) and Bill Hanson (Patty); children, Patrick Cameron (Xesia), Margaret Cameron (Dave), Erin Sorbo (Ken), Shane Maroney

(Felicia) and 10 grandchildren, along with especially close friends Julian Quintanilla, Mike Cyrus and Ron Timblin, in addition to numerous nieces, nephews and friends who will miss him dearly.

A celebration of life is planned, pending COVID-19 gathering restrictions. Mike requested cremation at Edwards Memorial Funeral Home.



Jeffrey Keith Moxon

Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to parents Harold and Mary Moxon, the third of five children, Jeffrey Keith Moxon, of Gig Harbor, died at home May 26 surrounded by loved ones after a battle with cancer. He was 67 years old.

Jeff was gifted at making mischief with his best friend and brother Kevin, which ultimately landed them both in the U.S. Army. After discharge, Jeff and Kevin lived their best life by hitchhiking around the country and settled for several months on the Colorado River just below the Imperial Dam with a group of like-minded individuals (hippies). He often reflected on those times as some of his happiest memories.

He made his way to Washington where he met his first wife Kay, the mother of his five girls. He was living in an apartment next to the Ray and Gene's Tavern in Tacoma, where she tended bar. Jeff went on to marry the mother of his boys, his second wife Lori, with whom he also shared two grandchildren.

Jeff had a fantastic sense of humor, infectious laugh and genuine smile. He enjoyed music, especially Bob Dylan and Neil Young. He loved the simple things in life found in nature and animals. He cherished his family and took great pride in his children and grandchildren who knew him as Papa Jeff.

With his degree in HVAC from Bates Technical College, Jeff worked as an environmental maintenance director at various care and assisted living facilities where he made friends with staff, residents and families alike.

Jeff's favorite pastimes were being with family, golfing, enjoying the beach along the Purdy Spit, playing guitar, savoring whiskey, and time he could spend with the people he loved.

Preceded in death by his parents, Harold and Mary, Jeff is survived by his brothers Bruce and Kevin (Charmaine); his sisters Ethelanne (Sam) and Charlotte (Charlie); his lifelong friend and former wife Kay; stepmom to his daughters and mother of his boys Lori; his children Kelly, Kristin, Karly, Kassie, Katie (Garry), Cody and Tanner (Amelia), 11 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild, 4 nieces and nephews, and an honorary daughter.

Animals were important to Jeff. Donations in his honor to the Humane Society or any animal rescue organization will make a difference.

A celebration of life will be scheduled at a later date. For notification of the event, please email Karly at Karlosmanna@hotmail.com or call 253-439-9962.

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When local activities resume, the calendar will show even more including photos for events and organizations. Ads from our loyal newspaper advertisers will be included, so you won't miss anything online. We're even planning a classified section!

And there are lots more community-news features coming later this year.

Thanks to a grant from Rotary Club of Gig Harbor, the website development has been made possible.

Next time you have an itch to see the latest news, pictures and "What's Open," hit www.keypennews.org for everything that's printed here, plus so much more.



REMOTE LEARNING FROM PAGE 1

people (ages 40 and under) are becoming infected and remaining ill longer, according to the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.

Members of the school board expressed conflicted feelings about adopting the remote learning plan, some having stated in a meeting the week prior their preference to fully reopen in September.

According to members David Olson and Natalie Wimberley, the school board faced making the decision in the absence of mandates or consistent statements from state leadership, health department officials, or the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction on whether returning to classrooms would be safe for children, staff and families this fall.

Dr. Anthony Chen, director of the TPCHD, said in a statement to superintendents: "Based on the COVID-19 disease activity in Pierce County and our region, I do not feel it is safe to open schools in September for traditional classroom learning," but fell short of issuing a mandate.

"Ours is not a world of production and machines. Ours is a universe of personal touches and interactions," Jarvis said. "Kindergarten hugs and runny noses are but two in a list of hundreds of normal happenings each day."

After conducting a district-wide survey, nearly 71% of 4,270 respondents said they wanted to return to in-person learning while approximately 22% were undecided. Of those undecided, many preferred to have full remote learning provided by PSD staff.

Jarvis said there are clear indications many families are weighing whether it is safe yet for children to return to a school setting. Direct concerns about child safety, as well as concerns about children being asymptomatic carriers, raise significant questions about whether schools can provide the necessary level of safety.

"PSD is the largest employer in the community and recent surges in the virus have translated into extraordinary levels of concern and anxiety in the staff," Jarvis said.

"One thing we do know is that remote learning in the upcoming year is not the same as last spring, which was an emergency contingency learning plan we were forced into by the pandemic," said Kris Hagel the PSD executive director of digital learning.

PSD will email a Remote Learning 2.0 Guidebook for students, families and staff Aug. 5 about how teaching online will work in the fall, saying it is not simply a matter of uploading curriculum but of continuing to engage and support students as much as possible.

The guidebook will also be posted to the PSD website and print copies will be available upon request.

"This is not going to be like it was," said one Key Peninsula elementary school teacher, who declined to be identified for this article. "We spent a lot of time learning what to do while we were doing it; now, we've got that part down. It will be hard for everyone but it can work."

In a July 24 statement to PSD families, the district said: "We recognize these are unprecedented times and decisions about how to navigate school during the pandemic may represent relief for some and significant disappointment and hardship for others.

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Local beer makes local friends.

CALEB GALBREATH, KP NEWS

Washington is for beer lovers. The state produces more hops — an integral ingredient for brewing beer — than any state, with well over four times as much acreage in hop production than the closest competitor.

Washington is home to some of the most decorated breweries in the country and holds third place for most breweries by state.

But not every part of Washington is as saturated with breweries as Seattle or Tacoma. Mason County has only two breweries, one of which has no taproom.

The other is Bent Bine Brew Co. in Belfair, and they don't mind being the only kid on the block.

Bent Bine is owned and operated by the Masbruch family, brothers Tod and Tim, and Tim's wife Colleen. While they've been in business since 2017, Tim has been brewing beer long before their brewery opened its doors.

Tim said he's always been a fan of beer, but learned how to brew from a friend in Montana in 1986. He's been making

beer ever since.

"I got into home-brewing, like a lot of people, because I was interested in the way beer was made," Tim said. "I wanted to learn more about the process, and making the beer myself was a fun way to do that."

Tim started experimenting, trying to find new flavors and creating his own small batch recipes. What started as a hobby turned into a full-blown passion.

Slowly, a seed started to grow and before long the idea of opening a brewery took root. "What started as a kind of dream became reality almost overnight," Colleen said. "It wasn't until we were picking names and looking for a location that it really hit, that this was really happening."

The Masbruchs had intended to open the brewery in Key Center, but none of their options could host both the brewery production line and a taproom.

By the time they'd settled on a location in Belfair, they had settled on a new name as well. The original name, Vaughn Bay Brewing, was gone. But not forgotten.

"When you're this excited about something you tell everyone you meet about it. Well, we'd told everyone about Vaughn Bay Brewing," Colleen said. "The name got out there and even after we changed the name, we still had people looking for Vaughn Bay Brewing."

Vaughn Bay Brewing even showed up on Google Maps, but instead of directing beer enthusiasts to the brewery in Belfair, it sent them to Tim and Colleen's home in Vaughn. The issue has since been resolved, but Colleen said they still get the occasional unexpected visitor.

There are a number of unique advantages to Bent Bine's location. The brewery sits on Highway 3, a major thoroughfare connecting Belfair, Bremerton and the Hood Canal. Tim says the traffic brings a lot of new customers each week.

A more inadvertent advantage comes

from their neighbor, Mason County Sheriff's North Precinct.

"Other bars in town talk about some of the folks who come in looking to make trouble," Colleen said. "They know better than to come here."

It's a gentle reminder to everyone coming to Bent Bine to behave themselves and part of what allows the brewery to be so family friendly. "People feel comfortable bringing their kids because they feel safe there," she said.

Being the only brewery with a taproom in the county isn't bad for business either, Tim said. But it does come with its own challenges.

Because there's never been a significant presence of craft breweries in the area, many locals don't understand the difference between a mass-brewed beer, like Budweiser, and the craft beers at Bent Bine.

"Beer culture and knowledge is a lot more common in places with an abundance of breweries," Tim said. "People ask: Why should I pay \$6 for a pint of your beer when I can get a Bud for \$3?"

He sees this as an opportunity to educate people about the dedication and attention to detail that makes craft beer so popular. But the real key is finding what a person likes in the beer they already drink and introducing them to a craft beer that will appeal to those things.

"If a person tries the wrong beer, of course it will turn them off craft beer," Colleen said. "We have to be experts on all things beer so we can find the beer they're going to love, even if they don't know what that is."

Colleen believes there is a beer lover in almost everyone; some people just need the

right beer to help them realize it. Finding the right beer for someone means you have to connect with people, and for the Masbruchs, that's just as important as the beer itself.

Kristi Mabbott, a regular at Bent Bine, said that even if you come by yourself, you can always find a friend here.

"Tim and Colleen really try to get to know everyone who comes in," Mabbott said. "It's like a family."

Colleen said the sense of community they've nurtured has paid off since the beginning of the pandemic shutdowns. Despite having the taproom closed prior to phased re-openings, she said customers were still supporting them with curbside growler fill-ups and keg orders.

"There have been some scary days since the start of COVID," Tim said. "But people have shown their support of the vision we have for this place and that's given us the courage to keep going."

Mason County was able to enter Phase 3 earlier than most counties, which has allowed Bent Bine to open its doors in ways most breweries can't yet. The brewery has adapted the taproom to meet social-distancing guidance.

Tim said the brewery has a responsibility to make it as safe as possible for people to visit but that people's need for social interaction is important as well. The American Psychological Association reported that feelings of loneliness and isolation are increasing in the U.S. and these often have negative impacts on one's physical and mental health.

It's still unclear when it will be safe to fully reopen but with the recent spike in COVID-19 cases around the country, Tim and Colleen are worried that might not be for some time.

"We're looking forward to the day when we have live music and people can bring their dogs in again," Colleen said.



"PEOPLE HAVE SHOWN THEIR SUPPORT OF THE VISION WE HAVE FOR THIS PLACE AND THAT'S GIVEN US THE COURAGE TO KEEP GOING."

Above: Bent Bine Brew Co. owners Tim and Colleen Marsbruch. Photos: Caleb Galbreath, KP News



Brynn Rydell Featured in Virtual Art Studio Tour

The local artist transforms glass beads into works of art.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

“It went systemic. It took my whole mind, body and soul. Nothing could interfere with the concentration of it.”

That is how Brynn Rydell described her first experience making glass beads more than two decades ago.

She never looked back and will be one of the local artists featured in virtual studio tours by Two Waters Arts Alliance this month. When pandemic restrictions led to cancellation of its annual Art Walk, TWAA worked with nine local artists to film interviews and tours of their studios. TWAA and the Mustard Seed Project will post the videos, expected to be about ten minutes long, on their Facebook pages and websites in August.

Raised in Lakewood, Brynn came to Gig Harbor to work at the Tides Tavern in its early days. When she met her husband, Harry, they decided to live on the Key Peninsula 40 years ago. After missing out on their first choice of a place in Longbranch, Harry found a 60-year-old home in Vaughn.

“It wasn’t livable, so we spent three months fixing it up and we’ve been fixing it up ever since,” Brynn said. “You can tell it was built 100 years ago, and you can tell they were drinking beer and barn raising on a Sunday.”

Brynn was no newcomer to the KP. Her grandparents owned waterfront with a cabin near what is now Joemma State Park. “The beach was my Shangri-La,” she said. The accommodations at the property, without water or power, were initially two tugboat pilot houses.

Harry, a surveyor for Manke Lumber, still commutes to Shelton. Brynn stayed at home to raise their sons. “I knew when the kids started elementary school that I had made the right choice,” she said. “Within three days you knew who had a stay-at-home mom, who came from a broken family, and who had been raised in preschool. Preschool has come a long way since then, though.”

“I have always dabbled in art. I can’t draw myself out of a paper bag, but I have always been busy with my hands,” she said. “I have done weaving, knitting, crocheting, building lamps out of driftwood. All the knobs in my kitchen are from agates and petrified wood we tumbled when we were kids. I can’t be normal.”

Brynn began volunteering in classrooms and also teaching art to fifth-graders along-

side tapestry artist Margo Macdonald at Vaughn Elementary School as part of a pilot project for the school district. When Brynn's eldest son, Garth, was at Key Peninsula Middle School, she applied for a job as a paraeducator there and continued to work in the classroom for 16 years.

“I was really in my sons’ lives when I started working in the schools,” she said.

“They couldn’t get away with anything.” Garth now lives on the Key Peninsula with his wife and two daughters and his brother, Marshall, lives in Gig Harbor.

Jan Buday, a glass jewelry artist, worked with Brynn at KPMS and suggested they learn about glass beads. Brynn said her first reaction was, “You mean weave them, string them? Been there done that.” Then Jan said, “No.” I said, “Molten glass?” She said, “Yeah.” And I said, “Sign me up.”

“At first it was like rubbing your head and patting your tummy, learning to turn the mandrill one way and turn the glass on the mandrill another and at the same time watching this 1,900-degree flame that you are working in and trying to keep everything from falling into your lap. It took some concentration. After a few months I could play music and sing.”

“Then one day,” she said, “Margo said she needed three necklaces for a school auction. She gave me three months to figure out how to do it.”

Macdonald said, “I’m a good nudger. Brynn has a strong sense of design and color.”

Buday recalled those early days. “Brynn and I took workshops together and we decided to go out on our own and create jewelry to sell. I worked with Japanese braiding as a vessel for my glass beads. Brynn went her way with creative and artistic uses of silver and other metals. Her work is superb.”

A cancer diagnosis a year ago slowed Brynn down. “Chemotherapy and radiation put me on a couch.” She is recovering, but her energy is still a problem and she hasn’t been able to make beads. A single bead, she said, can take 45 minutes. And the glass wine stoppers she makes take 90. Working in silver and copper, which are less energy intensive, has helped to channel her drive to create.

Brynn is the great-granddaughter of Thea and Andrew Foss, who founded Foss Launch and Tug in 1889. Foss Waterway, in

Tacoma, was named in honor of Thea, and she is the inspiration for Tugboat Annie. A short film about her, “Finding Thea,” was released in 2006.

Tugs remain a part of the Brynn’s life. In 2009 she bought Joe, the last wooden hull tug built by Foss Launch and Tug. Launched in 1942, it was named Joe Foss but renamed Little Toot when it was sold in 1972. Eventually, it was purchased by Robin and Kae Paterson of Gig Harbor (Robin was president of the International Retired Tugboat Association) and renamed Joe.

When the Patersons were ready to sell they knew Brynn was interested. Brynn asked her sons if they wanted the boat — purchasing it would mean selling her life insurance policy. They didn’t hesitate. The tug, moored at the Longbranch Marina, now plies south Puget

Sound, occasionally for an overnight, but most often for a dinner cruise.

Brynn published a portfolio of her work in 2007, “Tugs: My Journey in Glass.” In it she wrote, “I’ve lived over half my life doing the usual things that one does in life and pretty much stayed out of trouble. I married, raised boys, various dogs, cats, birds, turtles, gerbils and injured animals. I’ve had various jobs through my younger years ... too numerous to name, besides who cares. Now I play with molten glass and silver. Wonderful books to read, fabulous beaches to walk, good wine to share with friends, group dinners with all of us wonderful cooks. And of course my wonderful boys. They keep me laughing and sprouting more gray hair. Living life and hopeful for the future.”

Right: Intricate “peapod” pearl pendant. Below: Rydell captured in her studio. Photos: Ted Olinger, KP News



COVID-19 Lockdown Cost-Benefit: Is the Cure Worse than the Disease?

The data behind the cost of the pandemic tells a surprising story.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

As the second quarter of 2020 came to a close, scientists and economists surveyed the impact of SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19, on the health and economy of the United States.

Stay-at-home orders in Washington state and elsewhere have been blamed by residents, elected officials and media alike for inflicting unnecessary damage on communities while doing little to mitigate the effects of a disease that, judging by popular resistance to social distancing and face masks, many consider harmless.

The numbers tell a different story.

According to a study titled “The Effect of Large-Scale Anti-Contagion Policies on the COVID-19 Pandemic,” published in the July 2020 edition of the peer-reviewed journal Nature, international researchers analyzed containment efforts around the world and concluded that stay-at-home orders prevented about 60 million coronavirus infections in the U.S.

The report compared infection rates before and after public health

WITH ESTIMATES OF LIVES SAVED AND MONEY LOST, THE PRICE OF LOCKDOWN POLICIES CAN BE SEEN OR AT LEAST ESTIMATED.

measures were imposed, like business closings and travel bans. They concluded that the six countries in the study prevented 62 million test-confirmed infections. But since most people don't get tested, the researchers estimated the actual number to be about 530 million in the six countries, extrapolating an additional 4.8 million diagnosed infections and 60 million actual infections in the U.S. from known rates of infection.

There were over 3,300,000 confirmed coronavirus infections in the U.S. at press time (mid-July), according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Researchers at the University of Cambridge published a study May 2 suggesting there is no absolute trade-off between health and the economy in developed countries, and that the price of inaction could be far higher than a lockdown. A second study from the Dornsife School of Public Health at Drexel University, also published in May, came to the same conclusion using a different methodology.

These reports provide a starting point for a very rough cost-benefit analysis of nationwide lockdowns.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis of the U.S. Department of Commerce anticipates a 10% drop in value of the gross domestic product in the first six months of 2020.

The GDP usually moves in fractions of a percentage point, but it dropped 8.4% in the fourth quarter of 2008, heralding the Great Recession.

The current cash value of the GDP, according to the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank, is just over \$22.3 trillion.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates the value of a statistical human life (VSL) at \$10 million when determining the affordability of government regulations or projects. (Other agencies use VSLs ranging from \$5 to \$11 million.) For example, the cost of a warning label on a product is weighed against the number of fatalities that product could cause without a warning. If the cost in lives lost exceeds the cost of labeling, the EPA recommends approving the regulation for labeling.

The U.S. COVID-19 mortality rate in mid-July was 4.07% of those testing positive for it, according to the Johns Hopkins University of Medicine. There is controversy over how those deaths are counted — more

than 135,000 at press time — but the CDC, the National Institutes of Health and the Wash-

ington State Department of Health have all said that COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. are likely undercounted.

With estimates of lives saved and money lost in the U.S., the price of lockdown policies can be seen or at least estimated:

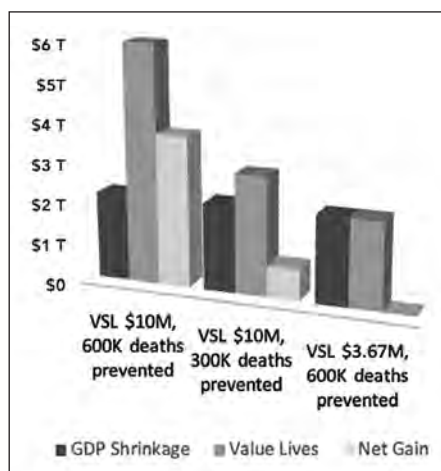
1. According to the report in Nature, lockdowns in the U.S. prevented 60 million novel coronavirus infections. Assuming a less dramatic U.S. COVID-19 mortality rate of just 1% for ease of calculation, that translates to 600,000 lives saved.

2. If GDP did indeed shrink by 10% during the lockdown, according to the Federal Reserve that is a loss of \$2.2 trillion from the national economy.

3. If the EPA values a human life at \$10 million, saving 600,000 lives saved the economy \$6 trillion for a net gain of \$3.8 trillion by preventing the loss of wealth and productivity and reducing hospitalizations, while keeping survivors and their families out of poverty due to lingering effects of the disease and attendant medical bills.

4. If the Nature report is wrong and only 30 million infections were prevented, that translates to 300,000 lives and \$3 trillion saved, yielding a net gain of \$800 billion.

5. If a human life is discounted to just \$3,670,000, at 600,000 lives saved the U.S. breaks even.



And that is assuming a mortality rate less than one-quarter of the current estimate.

While this is an oversimplification that does not account for the age or quality of individual lives saved, on the macroeconomic scale lockdowns appear to pay for themselves.

But that is small comfort to anyone losing their livelihood because of them, or for children kept out of school, or the unquantified human cost of addiction, depression and suicide because of a lockdown. Those variables are left out of this equation.

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Left: Poison ivy. *Adobe Stock* Blooming Foxglove catches light along the forest edge. *Photo: Kevin McKeon*

Toxic Plants in the Garden and Beyond

What perils lurk in the foliage? More than you might think.



SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

The list of plants that can harm you, your child or your pet is enough to strike terror into any heart. Hemlock was famously used to execute Socrates. Deadly nightshade, mistaken for edible berries, has killed unwitting foragers. Bittersweet nightshade with its clusters of tempting red berries is less toxic but common on the Key Peninsula. The rash from poison oak has tortured many an unsuspecting hiker. But plants like rhododendrons, daffodils, daphne — how much of a danger do these garden stalwarts pose?

Dr. Erica Liebelt, executive and medical director of the nonprofit Washington Poison Center, said that most plants are not as toxic as you might think. But some basic knowledge and precautions can prevent ill effects.

Liebelt said that calls about plant toxicity are common, particularly for children 12 and under. Most serious toxic exposures, though, are to adults who are foraging and have confused edible plants with toxic ones.

Recent calls to WAPC included a woman who ate a fall crocus, thinking it was a wild onion and had nausea and abdominal pain

within an hour. One family ate young leaves from foxglove, thinking they were enjoying a salad of dandelion greens. The entire plant contains digitalis, which

has been used for centuries to treat heart failure and rhythm problems, but in toxic doses it will cause a slow heart rate, nausea, vomiting and even death. Poison hemlock and water hemlock, probably the most poisonous of plants that grow on the KP, can be confused with wild parsley and wild parsnip. Though deaths have occurred with accidental ingestion, Liebelt has not heard of any since she joined the WAPC in 2016.

The toxins that plants produce are part of their defense system. Rooted in place, they are not able to run from predators. They have evolved protective measures such as thorns, thick bark, stinging hairs and indigestible leaves to thwart their natural enemies. They also have developed toxins to protect themselves from fungi, insects and other animals.

Toxins are often in all parts of the plant but may be more concentrated in one part than others, and sometimes how much is present will vary with how young or mature the plant part is. Young leaves or immature fruit often have higher levels of toxin than when they are mature. And some plants have edible fruit but toxic leaves or stems.

Liebelt thinks about plants in terms of what part of the body is affected by their toxins.

Foxglove, larkspur, lily of the valley and oleander all affect the heart. Other plant toxins affect the nervous system by either blocking or over-stimulating transmission of signals to the nerves. Hemlock, unrelated to the Western hemlock tree, kills by causing respiratory paralysis. The toxin from nectar in azalea and rhododendron flowers can cause sleepiness and stomach irritation.

Many plants affect the gastrointestinal system, causing nausea, vomiting and sometimes diarrhea. Daffodil, tulip, hyacinth and iris bulbs can all cause stomach upset, though their toxicity is considered to be mild.

Author Amy Stewart described what she calls botanical crime families in her book “Wicked Plants: The Weed that Killed Lincoln’s Mother and Other Botanical Atrocities.” The nightshade family that includes deadly nightshade also includes tomatoes, potatoes, peppers and eggplants. Pierce County Master Gardener Dale Skrivanich said it is important to remember that the leaves and stems of tomato and potato plants (and potatoes that have turned green) contain a toxin that can make you sick. The



A patch of poison hemlock about to bloom along the roadside.

Photo: Sara Thompson, KP News

carrot family encompasses plants that are staples in any kitchen — carrots, parsnips, dill, parsley, but also some of the most toxic — hemlock (again, no relation to the tree), and giant hogweed.

Liebelt said that it is hard to depend on lists of plants as those lists are never complete. The WAPC welcomes calls if there is any concern about exposure. If you know the names of plants in your garden or home it can help clarify the risk. And for children prevention is preferred. “Look don’t lick. Admire don’t pick” is the WAPC mantra.

Poison information is available at WAPC 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 800-222-1222.

The Bat's Superpowers and COVID-19

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

Been thinking about bats. I've been going out on the beach after dusk to spend time with them. As a kid, I threw rocks and watched them pick up my projectiles with their echolocation. They would veer to investigate and then let the rocks fall.

Now I just watch. In the near dark, distanced from other people but not from the world of waves and insects and barely visible bats that skitter like moths above, I'm goosebumps deep in a sense of night and flight and the pandemic.

I'm at the feet of a different universe.

I've been spending time with bats because it's likely the coronavirus behind COVID-19 developed among bats before it moved, possibly through a secondary host, to humans. Bats have been tied to SARS and MERS as well.

A naturalist hates to fear anything in nature. We have been trained in the art of relationships and taught that coexistence can be had even with danger. If I'm going to change my feelings about bats, I'm going to do it by understanding as much as I can about them first.

It is hard to study bats. One of my friends on the peninsula remembers a bat researcher visiting and teaching her to catch them for study by putting rocks into pantyhose and firing the pantyhose into the air. Most bats catch their prey by netting it with their wing or tail membranes then snagging it with their claws. The pantyhose caught their claws.

Ten species are found around Puget Sound. Some of them migrate, some hibernate; some form medium-sized roosts, others roost alone. They use hollow trees, cracks in bark, streambanks, caves, barns, attics. They eat all manner of flying insects. Yet our basic knowledge of their lives is wildly incomplete. One of the most commonly seen bats in Washington is the little brown bat, *Myotis lucifugus*, and we do not know where it migrates to spend the winter.

Worldwide there are 1,400 species of bats, representing a fifth of all mammals — flight unlocks a lot of possibilities. Flight

has led to other advantages as well.

Bats have long impressed physiologists. Flight is the most physically demanding activity in any mammal. While our own most intense activities might double or triple our metabolic rate, and a running rodent's might rise sevenfold, a flying lactating female bat's metabolic rate can be 15 times higher than her base rate.

When a body churns through food and energy so quickly, you would expect a fast accrual of damage from the toxins that are a byproduct of metabolism. You would expect bats, as the cost of flight, to have short lifespans. Yet they can live up to 40 years, the longest lifespan proportional to their size of any mammal.

Not only that, bats routinely survive viruses like Ebola without symptoms. They have been shown to survive rabies. An old classmate of mine, Cara Brook, is at the head of new research that suggests why.

Flight is so demanding at the cellular level that bats have developed what she calls a "perpetually primed antiviral system." The exact strategy depends on the species, but their bodies work to stitch DNA back together, create proteins that interrupt the life cycles of viruses, and constantly warn their cells to guard against toxins. In most mammals, such a system would leave tissues so constantly inflamed

that death would soon

follow. Bats compensate in a number of ways, including dropping some of the genes responsible for inflammation. They've hit a sweet spot. Their superpower may be flight, but it is only possible because of an equally super-powerful immune system.

The side effect of this is that they are very resistant to viruses. When a virus enters a population of bats, Brook's research shows, the virus compensates for being less deadly — faced as it is with an immune system no other mammal can boast — by evolving to transmit more quickly. So when the virus transfers from bats to another mammal, it



The big brown bat is one of the most common bats in Washington. Photo: Peter Paquet

is primed to wreak fast havoc.

On the other hand, the very capability that makes them reservoirs for powerful viruses also makes bats powerful eliminators of disease. Flight requires tons of energy, and insect-eating bats eat about 50% of their body weight each night.

A lactating female may eat more than her whole body weight.

Each night. That's a lot of moths and mosquitoes. Bats significantly slow insect-borne diseases in people and insect-caused damage to agriculture.

Further, researchers are beginning to do genetic research on bats to better understand how their immune systems deal with viruses. This could lead to novel treatments. It will also help us work out how and why deadly diseases emerge and the strategies that will give bats what they need to live their lives without coming into contact with humans.

That's really the rub. You cannot cast a fearful eye on bats without casting a far more critical eye on the human history that has tended to splinter their habitats and destroy their natural food webs. Bats may carry viruses, but we are going out of our way to create conditions for their transmission.

It's hard as a naturalist not to look at the big picture — not to feel it in your goosebumps. Bats skitter above me. I'm jealous of flight, and there's a dangerous thrill to being out in the night. It's like I'm at the limits of where humans should go.

All of us in the global ecosystem have superpowers that are the double edges of the proverbial sword. By spending time with bats we'll better understand their superpowers as well as our own. We'll learn to have a relationship with danger, to respect it — to know the boundaries beyond which we're asking for a sword fight.

BATS OF THE KP AND BEYOND

The Basics

Order: Chiroptera

Eight species are likely to live around the Key Peninsula: big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), California myotis (*Myotis californicus*), hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), long-legged myotis (*Myotis volans*), silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*), western long-eared myotis (*Myotis evotis*), Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*).

Identification

Bats are nearly impossible to identify visually in flight. But new technology can analyze recordings of a bat's echolocation calls to identify the species, even though many calls are beyond the range of human hearing.

Seasonal Habits

Bats are most active in late spring, summer and fall, when insects are abundant. Most of our species migrate elsewhere for the winter. A few, such as the long-legged myotis, hibernate within 100 miles of their summering grounds. Recently, however, naturalists have discovered that others actually emerge to forage on calm winter evenings, including the silver-haired bat and California myotis. Observations of bats in winter should be noted.

Bat Vocabulary

Patagium: the wing membrane, stretched between arm and finger bones.

Hibernaculum: a roost where bats hibernate during the winter.

Magnetoreception: bats' ability to use Earth's magnetic field to tell north from south.

Flittermouse: an old English word for bat.

Fossil Record

Bats are rare in the fossil record. One of the oldest examples is from the Green River Formation in Wyoming, dating to the Eocene about 50 million years ago. This early bat had short wings, long hind limbs and a claw on every digit, suggesting it was just as adept at scrambling around trees as flying. Its small ear suggests that early bats developed flight before they developed echolocation.

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Peninsula School District Receives Approval for Naval Cadet Program

The junior officer program will expose students to the rigors of training and demands of service, and could provide a boost to those entering the service.

MATTHEW DEAN, KP NEWS

The Peninsula School District is moving forward with plans to offer the Navy National Defense Cadet Corps (NNDCC) program at Peninsula High School in 2021.

The Peninsula NNDCC was given the go-ahead from the Navy in April after an evaluation process. "We showed how we can meet expectations for space, scheduling, instructors, and serve the number of students required to maintain the program," said Erin O'Neill, executive director of College, Career and Life Readiness at PSD.

The Navy supplies curriculum and some equipment for the Corps, but instructor salaries and operational expenses are paid for by the school. PSD hopes to control expenses where they can by working with existing resources.

"We have started partnering with other established units as well as our Navy NDCC area manager," O'Neill said. "This will help in the acquisition of uniforms and equipment as our neighboring units acquire new ones from the Navy." PSD leaders are also seeking to take advantage of the strong military presence in the Puget Sound.

"We are hoping to interact with all of our local military partners so that students can see careers in action," she said.

Establishing a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program of some kind in the district has been one of the main goals of recently-elected school board member Natalie Wimberley.

"It's something that I felt was missing when we came here," Wimberley said in a 2019 KP News interview. PSD's press release describes Wimberley as a "key member" of the effort to bring NNDCC to PHS.

"The cadet corps will provide our students with opportunities to lead our community through a variety of ceremonial and volunteer events, exemplifying the values of service and belonging to something greater than the sum of its parts," Wimberley said in a statement.

The NNDCC focuses on topics similar to those of other training programs: physical fitness, drill, ceremony and service branch-related instruction. Course subjects include oceanography, naval history and seamanship. Instructors are retired Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard personnel certified by a Navy board. NNDCC members who choose to pursue a Navy career are eligible for pay increases depending on their number of years in the program. The cadet corps' senior naval science instructor can also nominate up to three students for consideration for the U.S. Naval Academy.

NNDCC will be available to high school students 14 and over and is currently scheduled to begin in the 2021-22 school year. The program will offer four course levels; PSD will start with the first level and add another each year. Between 50 and 100 students are expected in the initial year. The program will be hosted at PHS, but will be open to all eligible students within the district.

The NNDCC was established in 2011 for schools that do not qualify to offer Naval JROTC. The programs are functionally identical, but NNDCC programs are funded by the host school rather than by the Department of Defense. Although the NNDCC funding comes primarily from the school district, opening the program also gives PSD a chance of convert to a full-fledged NJROTC and obtain more extensive government backing.

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Moore Park		CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED		
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Rocky Creek Conserv. Area	OPEN					
Maple Hollow Park	OPEN	Water access is OPEN, Restrooms are CLOSED.				
Taylor Bay		Water access is OPEN				

OPEN facilities subject to social distancing. Don't stand in groups. Keep 6 feet between people who are not from your household. Cyclists note: 6 feet is a little over an adult bike length.

Effective June 15, 2020: This chart will be updated on our Facebook page and at www.keypenparks.com

As the COVID-19 situation evolves, we are monitoring directions from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department for best-practice recommendations for parks and recreation response.

We'll keep our www.keypenparks.com website and Facebook page current with park or office closures, event cancellations or postponements, and other park-related notices as they occur. We are not taking shelter reservations at this time.

We're hoping to offer Cinema Under the Stars later in the summer. Stay safe — we are all waiting for Phase 4 to lift restrictions.

' BELOVED ' IS A GHOST STORY ABOUT A HAUNTED PEOPLE — US

An American Classic Whose Time Has Come Again

Morrison's eloquent portrait of slavery and its legacy takes on renewed importance as the country struggles to answer questions about itself.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Sometime in 1987, I think, I accidentally got to hear Toni Morrison read at a private gathering.

I was a neophyte assistant at a large publisher in New York City. A sympathetic editor had offered me her invitation to an "informal conversation" she couldn't attend arranged between some publishing bigwigs and famous writers at the Plaza Hotel on Fifth Avenue.

There were a few dozen attendees, including Morrison, Barbara Tuchman, Jimmy Breslin and some other big names. I didn't speak to anyone and no one spoke to me, other than the hostess, who questioned me intently about my invitation.

I was shunted to a side table too close to the dais where the writers held forth. I saw them all in profile as audience members asked questions and the discussion roamed from politics to the economy to the state of literacy in the United States.

Morrison sat silently through most of it, at ease, even regal. She was one of two women on the platform and, though I can't remember, I'd be surprised if she wasn't the only Black person in the room.

She had won just two national awards 10 years earlier and a few minor honors since. Her books were taught in some high schools and banned in others for her frank language and unblinking look at racism

America's first lady of letters, Toni Morrison, died at 88 in August 2019. Photo: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders



and its work. She had just published her fifth novel, "Beloved," that year and was about to win a Pulitzer for it. In another five years, Morrison would become the second American woman and first African American to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature. She wrote another six novels, works of nonfiction and critical essays in a shining career spanning six decades.

I've forgotten whatever it was someone finally asked her, but I remember her answer.

She talked about food. Why she wrote about it, the role it played in her stories, the sensuous power it evoked. And then she read us an example from her book.

Biscuits burning on a wood stove in front of hungry children, a pocket full of stolen pig knuckles, a sack of fresh-hulled peas left on a porch for a starving family. And then what had to be endured to get

their food and what they had to put out of their minds

to consume it, like the sight of a slave scooping butter out of the churn to rub on his face, trying to fathom a crime he witnessed but couldn't stop.

Her serene delivery was unnerving, as if these images were the most natural thing in the world.

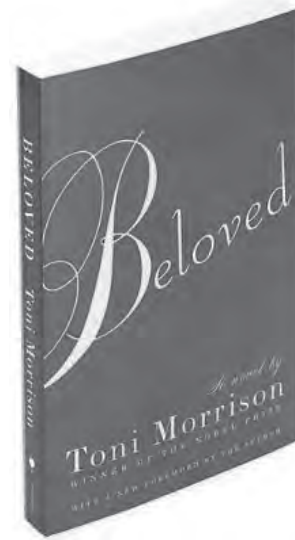
In her book, they are.

"Beloved" is a ghost story about a haunted people — us.

Straddling decades across the Civil War and the river between free Ohio and slave Kentucky, it's a story told in small pieces that gracefully gather weight as they come together through the present and "rememory" of its characters, and the occasional omniscient voice that gives life to the land and its memories too. Powerful images of the landscape, water, seasons and smells elevate the ordinary with the symbolic force of dreams.

The character, Beloved, is the ghost of an infant killed by her mother to prevent her capture by slave hunters. In the world Morrison builds, it's normal, if terrifying, to live in a house possessed by the enraged spirit of that murdered child. The residents simply endure one incomprehensible event after another as part of lives spent in slavery, in hiding, and finally — though never entirely — in freedom.

"You know as well as I do that people who die bad don't stay in the ground,"



says one. "Jesus Christ himself didn't."

But any haunting pales in the firelight of evil done by humans, mostly white men, and both shed light on their lives even as some threaten to snuff them out. We visit that house and the roads to it over and over again, moving forward and back through time, but we are never lost because of the firm, soft hand of the author who leads us there, and because everything she shows us is uncomfortably familiar. Every American is part of that haunted family, and the ghost is no longer a child.

After shunning the house for years, the community finally comes together to confront what is happening there after Ella, a neighbor, decides a reckoning is overdue. "As long as the ghost showed out from its ghostly place — shaking stuff, crying, smashing and such — Ella respected it. But if it took flesh and came in her world, well, the shoe was on the other foot. She didn't mind a little communication between the two worlds, but this was an invasion.

"Shall we pray?" asked the women.

"Uh huh," said Ella. "First. Then we got to get down to business."

Driven from the house, we follow Beloved down to the river behind it, a highway to another life in every sense of the word. On the muddy banks, her "footprints come and go, come and go. They are so familiar. Should a child, an adult place his feet in them, they will fit. Take them out and they disappear again as though nobody ever walked there."

Only then does Morrison drop our hand to let us see what we already know in a new way.

"Beloved" and her other novels are banned to this day in school districts across the country

because of Morrison's firm grip leading us through the fields and forges of slave labor and all that was reaped. One district bleated that it could not expose students to such literature out of context. One would think a classroom is the first, last and best place for a student to get that context.

Defending herself, Morrison once defended another banned book.

"The brilliance of 'Huckleberry Finn' is that it is the argument it raises," she wrote. Calls to ban it for its language were "a purist yet elementary kind of censorship designed to appease adults rather than educate children."

As to her own work, Morrison was unapologetic.

"Certain kinds of trauma visited on peoples are so deep, so cruel, that unlike money, unlike vengeance, even unlike justice, or rights, or the goodwill of others, only writers can translate such trauma and turn sorrow into meaning, sharpening the moral imagination."

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Albert Sorenson, the first rural route carrier for Lakebay in 1909. Courtesy: KP Historical Society

The Key Peninsula's Peculiar Postal History

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

Physical addresses and postal confusion have been troublesome on the Key Peninsula for years. The Lakebay post office, 98349, is located in the unincorporated town of Home. The Vaughn post office, 98394, is located in Key Center, virtually surrounded by businesses with mailing addresses of Lakebay 98349. The vast majority of Wauna residents have a Gig Harbor address despite the existence of the Wauna post office, 98395. Finally, far-flung Longbranch, with no post office at all, proudly retains both its historic name and ZIP code of 98351.

To understand addresses on the Key Peninsula requires a look into the history of its settlement by men equipped with surveyor rods and chains. Mail was vital to early settlers. Postal sorting and storing were first done on boats, in private homes and inside general stores as each settlement sought to establish postal service.

The Lakebay Post Office

Originally operating out of Henry Tiedman's home 100 yards south of the Lakebay dock, "Lake Bay, Wash" became the first official U.S. post office on the Key Peninsula in 1882. The name was later shortened to "Lakebay." By 1894, mail arrived by steamer from Tacoma. In April 1909, the Lakebay RFD (Rural Free Delivery) service was established. Mail was carried by horse and buggy over a distance of 26 miles.

By 1958, the Lakebay post office was moved to Home, just northwest of the Home Bridge on Von Geldern Cove to provide greater accessibility and more space. The only caveat was that the post office retain its Lakebay name.

The Home Post Office

There are various accounts of the short-lived Home post office. Most attributed the abrupt closure of the post office to the activities of the Home colonists. The Home Colony, as it was first known, was considered a radical socialist settlement sowing seeds of discontent with numerous publications on the politics of the day, labor struggles, women's rights, religious commentary, sexual matters and birth control. The political climate following the assassination of President McKinley Sept. 6, 1901, by a sworn anarchist, coupled with complaints about the Home post mistress (who was accused of distributing lewd publications), led to the permanent closure of the Home post office by April 1902. Mail service was absorbed by Lakebay, a mere 2 miles south on Mayo Cove.

The Vaughn Post Office

The early Vaughn postmasters were storekeepers using space within their stores on Vaughn Bay for postal business starting in 1888. In the earliest days, Vaughn mail was transported by horseback to and from the Elgin post office (originally Minter), but later steamers traveled from Tacoma to Vaughn several times each week. Low tides often prevented the steamers from reaching the dock, so the young Nellie Van Slyke assisted her postmaster father Alfred by rowing out past the sand spit through strong currents to carry mail to and from the boats. By 1954, the Vaughn post office was promoted to third class, a distinction based on the amount of money earned at post offices around the county. The Vaughn post office relocated to Key Center in 2001.

The Wauna Post Office

Originally the "Springfield P.O.," established in 1890, the office was later moved and renamed the Wauna P.O. in 1906. It was housed in the general store built on the Key Peninsula side of the Purdy Spit in 1905 by Mrs. Mary Frances White and her husband, William, who also operated the nearby Wauna Lodge. The post office functioned in the same location under three generations of White family postmasters until at least 1974. By 1982, the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Despite an impassioned effort to save the historic structure, the building was removed from the National Register and demolished in 2006. The current Wauna post office was built in 1990 at Lake Kathryn Village.

The Longbranch Post Office

Mail was first sorted on Ernest Shellgren's boat, the Monte Cristo, moored on Filucy Bay in 1891. Four years later, the operation was moved to Shellgren's store near the site of the current Longbranch wharf. By 1960, Miss Ellen Shellgren retired as the longest-serving postmaster in the state and the post office was converted to a rural station of Lakebay in 1965. None of the original buildings survived. The Longbranch Mercantile, which served as the last outgoing postal drop in Longbranch, was demolished in 2007.

Historical Attempts at Name Change

Numerous documented attempts to change the name of the Lakebay post office to Home, the unincorporated town in which it resides, all ended in failure. Nearing the centennial celebration of the Lakebay post office in 1982, a fierce battle, worthy of coverage in multiple newspapers, was waged between petitioners from Home vs. defenders of Lakebay over a requested name change. Letters to the editor and high-ranking politicians were filled with passionate arguments for and against. Notable pioneer family names appeared on petitions and in correspondence representing both sides.

Ultimately, it was the "Postal Service area" argument that trumped physical location, which explains why the post office in Home remains the Lakebay post office today, serving the communities of Longbranch, Lakebay, Herron Island, Home and northward into Key Center toward Glencove.

Editor's note: Special thanks to Judy Mills and the KP Historical Society for assistance researching this article.

Neither Snow, Rain, Heat nor Pandemic

Long-time Longbranch rural mail carrier goes the distance.

MEGAN SCHOWALTER, KP NEWS

Theresa Gano has been a rural mail carrier on the Key Peninsula for 23 years. What started out as a part-time job while tutoring students and raising her three daughters developed into a lifelong career committed to community building and connection.

When asked about the secret to her success, Gano replied, "I love my job, that's a start."

While delivering mail last month, she met a family that was biking along the road together. Unexpectedly, the family stopped to say "Hello Mail Lady!"

While not everyone in Longbranch knows her by name, her friendly smiling face and upbeat attitude are well-known and loved in the neighborhood.

Marcy Sparks, who retired from the postal service as a city carrier in Federal Way appreciates the value Gano brings as a rural carrier. She said city carriers and rural mail carriers are so different that each has their own union.

Sparks said that while city carriers wear uniforms, walk or drive USPS vehicles and are paid hourly, rural carriers use their own vehicles, their wages are calculated differently and they aren't compensated for any extra time it takes to complete their route.

"That means every time Theresa goes down a long driveway to leave a package that doesn't fit into a mailbox instead of leaving a notice in the box to pick it up at the post office, she's not paid for the extra time it takes," Sparks said. "If she stops to check on someone, that's her personal time she's giving up out of the kindness of her heart."

Longbranch resident Lynn Larson recalled the epic snow and ice storm of 2019.

"I couldn't believe it when she drove down my steep driveway in the snow," Larson said. "Theresa said she was almost done; she had been delivering the mail for 12 hours, but wasn't sure if she could deliver the next day because she was worried about getting stuck."

A neighbor of the late Louise Ragains, a fiercely self-reliant widow who lived alone into her mid-90s,



Theresa Gano delivers smiles along with the daily mail. Photo: Lisa Bryan, KP News

Larson said that Theresa not only noticed something was wrong, “but took her lunch breaks with Louise for a time – just to make sure the elderly woman at least ate lunch – while also keeping her company,” she said.

“It’s so nice to work in my neighborhood and serve my friends and my neighbors,” Gano said.

Gano prides herself in doing good work. The love she has for her community remains constant but her time as a rural carrier has not been without challenges.

“Without a doubt, the biggest challenge through my whole career would be the COVID-19 pandemic,” she said.

As an essential worker during the pandemic, Gano and her colleagues have been working hard to deliver an increased number of parcels, including personal medications and groceries. “The volume is so huge it’s like Christmas every day,” she said.

Postal delivery routes and routines are usually expected to fluctuate with the seasons. But with the increased mail volume Gano has dealt with variable work schedules, longer hours, and as many as two to three additional trips a day to restock her vehicle.

“It’s been a lot of added pressure and stress,” she said, “but we’ve got to do what we’ve got to do.”

Despite the added demands, Gano has continued to prioritize community check-ins, especially among people with higher health risks or who are more isolated from the community.

“I have been really good about checking in on our elderly,” Gano said. If someone has not been getting their mail, Gano will stop by during her off-hours to make sure they are OK.

“You have to keep your eyes open and

check in on them often,” she said.

Gano said she recently visited a customer she was concerned about. “I had my mask on and we stood nearly 20 feet apart.”

Although it was a brief encounter, they had the chance to ask each other how they were doing and shared a mask-covered smile. “I like to make people feel good and important, because they are,” Gano said.



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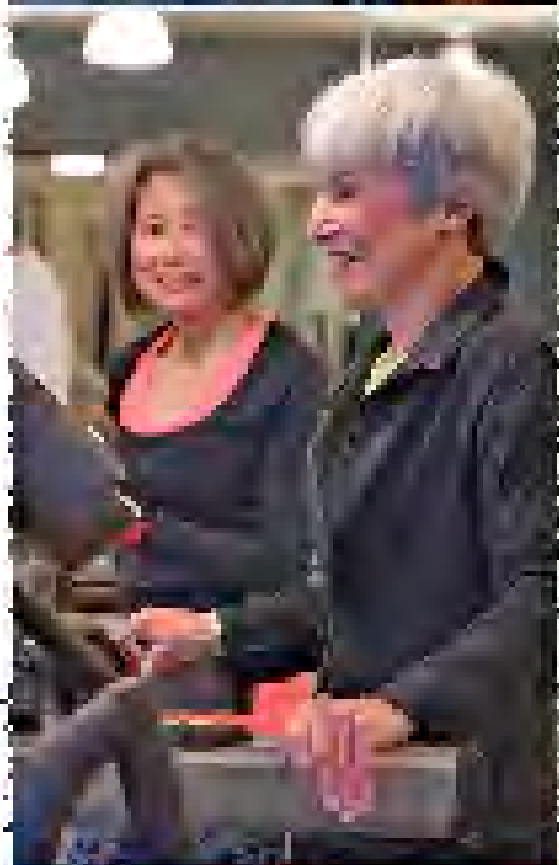


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What's Your Favorite Comfort Food?

KACE UGLES

When feeling stressed, as a lot of us are these days, many turn to favorite comfort foods, like grilled cheese and tomato soup, mashed potatoes and gravy, fried chicken. Mine is macaroni and cheese, and since it is crabbing season, I love putting two of my favorite ingredients, crab and cheese, together in these two recipes.

When I was growing up, my neighbor Kevin was an avid fisherman. Unfortunately for him, his family didn't like seafood. His bad luck was our good luck as he would often knock on our door with 10 or more crabs and we would use crab in everything until it was gone and he knocked on our door with more.

My grandma's macaroni and cheese is so simple; put together like traditional scalloped potatoes, it is easy to modify. My mom and sister love putting homegrown tomatoes in theirs. Are you a bacon lover? Or are you all about the veggie life? You can plug in your favorite item — the possibilities are limited only by your imagination. Take this recipe and run with it. I know that would be what my grandma Mary would have wanted.

Grandma Mary's Mac & Cheese with crab

Ingredients: 4 cups uncooked elbow macaroni (cook and drain), about 2 cups whole milk, 2 packages Kraft Deli Deluxe American cheese slices (do not substitute

for other cheese slices), about ½ cup flour, 1 yellow onion, diced small and divided, 1 stick butter divided into 8 tablespoons, salt and pepper to taste and 2 cups lump crab meat. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and spray lasagna pan and foil to cover.

To assemble: Spread a layer of cooked noodles to cover the bottom of the pan. Next, sprinkle onion, saving enough for two more layers. Do the same thing with the flour and then salt and pepper. Next, break up two tablespoons of the butter into smaller sizes and spread evenly. Repeat for the next two levels. Finally, cover with ½ pieces of cheese slices. As a kid I loved making the ½ cheese slice triangles fit across the layer like the game Tetras. Add a few more pieces to cover any gaps.

Repeat the next two layers with a little less pasta and add 1 cup of crab or other add-in after the butter layer. The last layer is only pasta and cheese. Lift a piece of cheese from the top and pour milk halfway up pan so you can just barely see it through the noodles. Cover with foil and put a cookie sheet below for spillage. Bake for 40 minutes and remove foil. Bake another 10 minutes until golden brown and bubbling at the edges.

Mom's Crab Soufflé

Ingredients: ¼ cup butter, 3 tablespoons flour, 1 cup whole milk, bay leaf, celery salt, kosher salt, white pepper, cayenne,

fresh nutmeg, 4 eggs, divided, 1 cup Monterey Jack cheese, grated, cream of tartar, 1 cup lump crab meat, soufflé or spring form pan and foil and tape.

In a saucepan make a roux with butter and flour over medium heat. Separately, heat 1 cup whole milk seasoned with a bay leaf and pinches of celery salt, kosher salt, white pepper and cayenne. Mix seasoned milk with roux and continue cooking for 5 more minutes, creating a béchamel sauce. Let cool.

In the meantime, spray soufflé pan or spring form pan and foil collar. Make collar by folding a piece of foil that is the circumference of your pan with a few more inches to overlap. Secure collar by folding tape in a circle or use double-sided tape and put between overlapping foil section. If still not secure, tape from outside and put pan in a bigger pan for water bath.

Making sure béchamel sauce is not too hot, add 4 egg yolks one at a time and heat almost to a boil. Add 1 cup grated Monterey Jack cheese and stir until thick and creamy. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Fold in crab, trying not to break up lumps.

Beat egg whites with ⅛ teaspoon cream of tartar until stiff and fold into soufflé mixture, being careful not to over mix.

Put soufflé into larger pan and place in preheated oven on middle shelf and add water to larger pan to go halfway up soufflé pan. Bake 325 degrees for 45 minutes. Serve at once with a side of seasoned greens.

A LITTLE TASTE OF HERON'S KEY

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

Ora King Salmon Croquettes



(Makes 2, 3oz croquettes with 2oz gherkin remoulade)

INGREDIENTS

Croquette Mix

- 6oz Ora King salmon
- 1 Tbsp thinly sliced green onion
- 1 Tbsp brunoise celery
- 1 Tbsp brunoise red bell pepper
- 1 tsp minced fresh dill
- .25 tsp kosher salt
- Pinch of white pepper
- 1 egg white

Dredge

- 3 eggs whipped
- 1 cup panko

Remoulade

- 2 Tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 tsp diced gherkins
- .5 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp thinly sliced green onion
- .25 tsp tarragon
- .5 tsp minced capers

DIRECTIONS

Steam Ora King salmon and flake gently. Carefully incorporate all ingredients ensuring the salmon is flaky and not pate consistency. With a two-inch mold, form two, 3oz croquettes. Dip croquettes in whipped egg, then cover with panko. Pan fry in oil until golden brown on both sides, then transfer to oven until a temp of 145° is met. Serve with a side of remoulade.



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

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TOP A paddleboarder sets course for Eagle Island. *Photo: Caleb Galbreath, KP News* **MIDDLE LEFT** A scaled-back Fourth of July Parade in Home, where roughly a third of the participants wore masks. *Photo: Ed Johnson, KP News* **MIDDLE RIGHT** A young pup named Gypsy explores her new world. *Photo: Tina McKail* **LOWER LEFT** A gorgeous roadster tours the parade route. *Photo: Ed Johnson, KP News* **LOWER RIGHT** A dahlia appears to float on air at Historic Far-away. *Photo: Caleb Galbreath, KP News*

