



# KEY PENINSULA NEWS



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THE VOICE OF THE KEY PENINSULA

April 2021 Vol. 48 No. 4

## Whiteman Cove Restoration Opposed by YMCA

The Seattle YMCA hired its own experts and advocates saving the lagoon by installing fish-friendly tide gates.

LISA BRYAN, KP NEWS

After eight years of research, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources informed stakeholders and neighbors in February of its final plan to return Whiteman Cove to a functioning estuary in order to comply with a 2013 federal injunction mandating state restoration of salmon habitat.

Located on the southwest coast of the Key Peninsula immediately south of Joemma Beach State Park, the cove provides sheltered waterfront access to numerous private homes and YMCA Camp Colman.

The DNR plan includes opening an 80-foot section in the berm, allowing changing tides to fill and drain the cove twice a day.

DNR will also construct a 100-foot long single-span bridge over the gap, at an estimated cost of \$1.9 million, to preserve public access to Camp Colman.

“We are trying to make this as amenable as possible to the YMCA and to the Whiteman Cove residents, so we are pursuing the bridge option, which would bridge the gap we create when we open the estuary,” said David Palazzi, DNR Aquatics Land Planning and Stewardship Section Manager, in an interview with KP News.

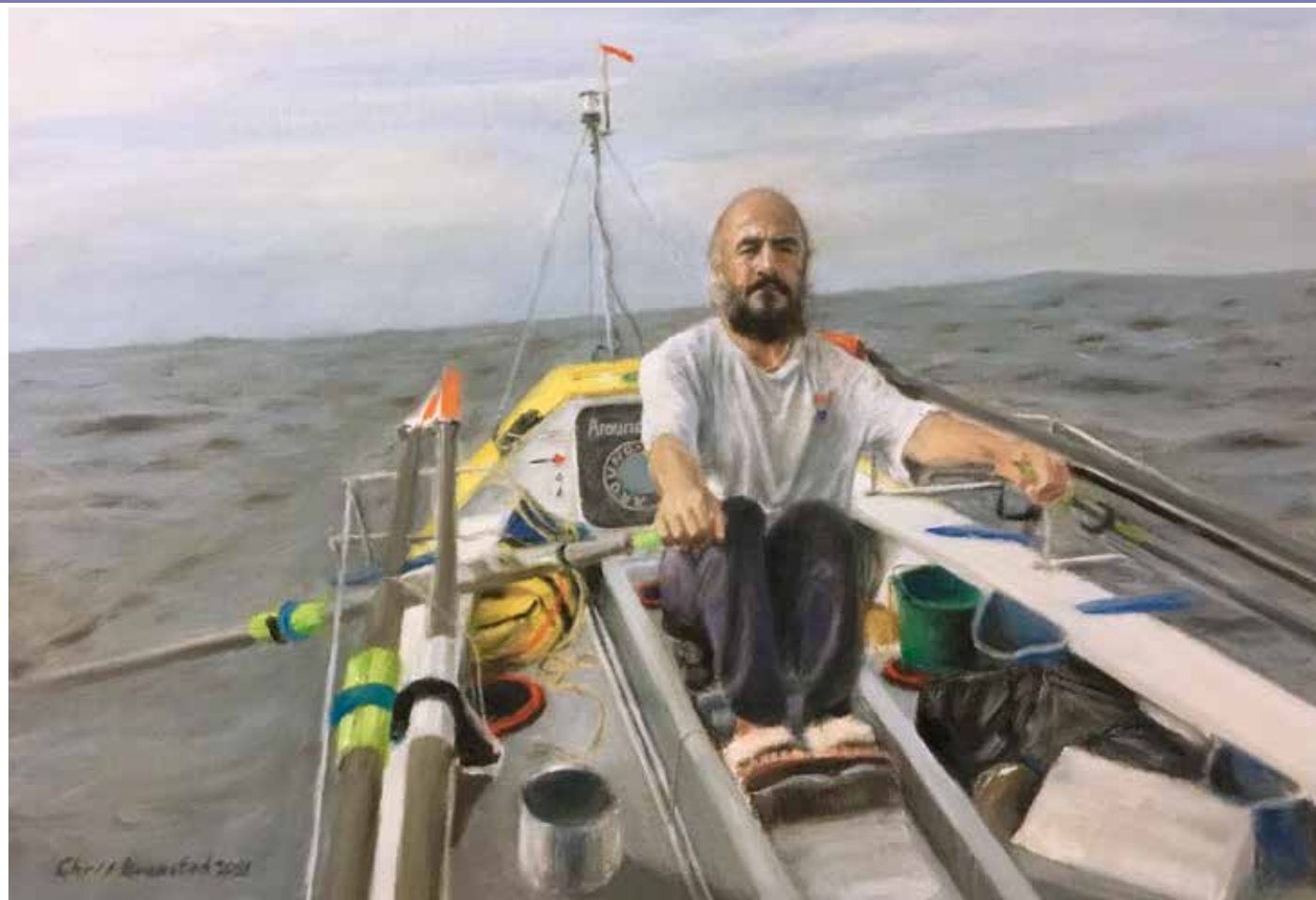
The decision did not sit well with the YMCA of Greater Seattle, which owns and operates Camp Colman, established in 1966.

“The Camp Colman experience is now in danger of being destroyed by the DNR proposal to breach the berm surrounding the lagoon to provide fish passage,” Seattle YMCA Senior Executive of Camping and Outdoor Leadership Meredith Cambre said in a YouTube video, one of several on the subject linked to its website.

“The resulting mud flat eliminates all water-based programming and activities in the protected environment the cove provides,” Cambre said.

Originally identified in 2013 by the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group,

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A true story so incredible it inspired an oil painting by local artist Chris Bronstad based on a self-portrait.

## Wauna Man Goes Solo Around the World – Again

The first person to circle the globe under his own power is at it again, with even more record-breaking touches.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

On the morning of April 22, 2021, Earth Day, Erden Eruç of Wauna, 59, plans to row a boat through San Francisco’s Golden Gate all the way to Hong Kong alone. It will be the first nonstop mainland-to-mainland crossing by rowboat, a journey of at least 7,800 nautical miles. He expects to take 10 months.

But he’ll just be getting started.

From Hong Kong, Eruç will bicycle to Tibet, where he will summit Mount Everest. He will then bike across the deserts and mountains of Xinjiang Province of northwest China to Kyrgyzstan and around the Caspian Sea through Kazakhstan to Georgia to climb Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in Russia and Europe. From there he will pedal on to Turkey, his homeland, and across Europe to the southwest corner of Portugal.

“There I will relaunch my rowboat

for Brazil or the Guianas,” Eruç said. “Approaching Brazil will be challenging with the currents, so the Guianas may be an easier landing. Then I need to work my way south to Aconcagua,” the tallest mountain outside Asia. “So, I have it planned that far. First I have to get across the Pacific.”

He is not as casual as he might sound. It’s just that he’s done this kind of thing before.

Eruç completed the first solo human-powered circumnavigation in 2012 after five years and 41,196 miles by rowboat, sea kayak, foot and bicycle, climbing three of

the six highest peaks on different continents along the way and setting 13 world records (he now has 16).

He wants to complete his goal of climbing the six highest summits on six continents, excluding Antarctica, the same way.

Eruç was born on Cyprus in 1961 and

grew up in Turkey. His father introduced him to mountaineering when he was 11. He received a master’s degree in mechanical engineering in 1986 at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, then went to Ohio State University where he got a second master’s in engineering mechanics.

In 1997, he was working in a software development lab in Washington, D.C., while earning an MBA at George Mason University. There was an unusual map on

the lab wall with the Pacific Ocean in the center and landmasses circling around

it. One day, Eruç found himself tracing a line with his finger from D.C. to Turkey, wondering if someone could make it all that way under their own power.

It became a quiet obsession.

“One of the books I read was by Göran

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“NOBODY REALLY KNOWS WHAT IT’S GOING TO BE, BUT I TOOK IT ONE JOURNEY AT A TIME.”



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## EPIC JOURNEYS

# Here's What I Think About That

LISA BRYAN,  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I spent a number of years as an early morning commuter into the city. Slipping into the stream with all the others in such a regular pattern, I noticed many of the same drivers in the same cars day after day. Some recognized me too. We acknowledged each other with a nod or a knowing smile. I sometimes wondered about the kind of work they did or what their lives were like. These were people I saw like clockwork on weekday mornings, but I would never know anything more about them.

If all I knew of the Key Peninsula were the driveways and mailboxes dotting the highway between work and home, it would barely scratch the surface of beginning to understand something of the people who live here. If I didn't know any better, I might be tempted to think of the KP as merely a bedroom community neighbor to other bigger, better, and more expensive places to live.

But stories emerge month after month that reveal the depth of talent, skill and experience of the fascinating characters and unique personalities that make the Key Peninsula what it really is: Extraordinary.

One prime example is this month's front page: Associate Editor Ted Olinger's "Wauna Man Goes Solo Around the World — Again" is an unforgettable story that transcends the pursuit of adventure and goes deep into the heart of the power of doing.

This is the story of dreams, and we saw an opportunity to use visual art to help communicate the unique nature of this inspiring story.

Erden Eruç of Wauna is a man of courage and resilience, a true world champion. He's the kind of person who deserves hero treatment and whose achievements we thought would be best conveyed by the thoughtful strokes of a paintbrush in the hands of a skilled artist.

There are faster methods to produce images, but certainly none more fitting.

I called local artist Chris Bronstad and swore him to secrecy before reading

Olinger's article to him aloud. He too was instantly captivated by the astonishing story, and said he would be honored to contribute in any way he could.

We didn't have much time and showed him the selfie Eruç provided for publication. One look and Bronstad launched into describing the strength of the image from an

artist's perspective. "This is a wonderful photo to work from. I think I can do it," he said. "Let me play around with it



a little and I'll let you know for sure."

What Bronstad looks forward to most of all now, having finished

the painting, is being able to read the article again as many times as he likes. "There is so much story there I could hardly begin to take it all in."

And with that, you have the backstory on the front page.

In our own epic journey, there is far more reason for hope than despair when it comes to bringing COVID-19 to heel. Vaccinations have ramped up with increased supply and delivery into arms. All of the people I've spoken with who are fully vaccinated said they were impressed by the speed and efficiency of the system after navigating the early challenges of scheduling an appointment.

The Key Peninsula's COVID-19 case rate is most likely lower than any other region in the county, but the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department tells us they can't say for sure because not everyone has been tested and we may have a lower testing rate than surrounding areas.

Continued vigilance by masking up in public, washing hands frequently, and maintaining appropriate social distancing will see us through until enough people are vaccinated. But we're still months away from finally

beating this thing.

For the first time in over a year a friend and I rode to the grocery store together in the same car. We may as well have been 16-year-old girls again. It felt fantastic to do something normal. One thing we agreed on is our plan to wear masks in public next winter, even if we are no longer required to do so. Cold and flu season this year was practically nonex-

istent. If given the choice between risking a simple cold or the seasonal flu, we decided for ourselves at least that masks are here to stay.

I'm ready to begin considering what a new normal might look like. And that in itself, feels very good. ■

[A PRIVATE NOTE FROM YOUR MOTHER]

*Honey, I know you're busy this time of year, and probably haven't had as much as a spare minute to call, but just wanted to let you know I have lots of good pictures of me ... if you can't find one.*

*Write a little something about me in your nicest 50 words and send in with my photo to [calendar@keypennews.org](mailto:calendar@keypennews.org)*

*Looking forward to seeing myself as part of [Moms We Love](https://www.keypennews.org) on [keypennews.org](https://www.keypennews.org)*

*It's free and your Mother would really appreciate it.*



**WAUNA MAN FROM PAGE 1**

Kropp, 'Ultimate High.' He bicycled from Sweden to Nepal in 1996 and climbed Everest." Kropp summited without Sherpas or oxygen just days after a storm killed eight climbers on the mountain, the deadliest climbing season in its history.

Eruç had moved to Seattle by 1999 and joined the Cascade Section of the American Alpine Club, where he met Kropp at a presentation the following year.

"I got to spend some time with him before the audience arrived and shared my ideas with him. He asked tough questions: 'When are you starting? Do you have sponsors?' I didn't have answers."

By then the dot-com bubble was bursting. "I was laid off with two master's degrees in engineering and an MBA, and was trying to figure out what the next step would be," Eruç said.

Then 9/11 happened and hiring freezes spread across the IT sector.

"Things fell apart for reasons outside of my control, and I felt lost," Eruç said. "So I thought maybe I should become a mountain guide." He took the wilderness first responder course as a first step. One week later, in September 2002, he met up with Kropp for their first climb together. It was at Frenchman's Coulee near Vantage, and Kropp died in an accident. "He fell and there was nothing I could do about it," Eruç said.

That was the turning point.

"I first thought of this idea to go around the Northern Hemisphere in '97," he said. "It evolved into a circumnavigation, where I would come back to where I started, and as of September 2002 five years had passed and I hadn't started. On the plane back from his



funeral I drew the world map on a napkin, the proverbial napkin, marked the highest summit on each continent and traced a line between and said 'I'm going to climb each one of these in Göran's memory.'"

But first he talked it over with his then fiancé, Nancy Board, an avid outdoorswoman and mental health professional. "I sat across the table from her and said I have to do this, and she said 'You will, you must,' and we never looked back."

Eruç cashed out his 401K, struggled to find sponsors, and did some training. He biked from Seattle to Alaska to summit

Mount McKinley and back in 2003, then bought a used ocean-going rowboat and took it alone from the Canary Islands to Guadeloupe in 2006. He also founded a nonprofit called Around-n-Over to attract sponsors to assist the communities he visited around the world, where he spoke about human-powered exploration at schools, clubs and civic events.

He launched his first circumnavigation from Bodega Bay, north of San Francisco, July 10, 2007, and reached the waters of Papua New Guinea, 5,514 nautical miles as the crow flies but after rowing 9,684 miles total in 312 days before being stopped by typhoon season. He and his boat were picked up by fishermen, who returned him to the same spot months later when conditions permitted, and he continued to Australia.

"Nancy met me there," he said, and they climbed Australia's highest peak, Mount Kosciuszko — "just a hill," he said, at 7,310 feet. Eruç then biked to Perth and met his rowboat for the next leg of the journey.

"I bypassed Everest and Elbrus for lack of funds," he said. "The international financial crisis in 2008 did not help and we already had a six-figure budget, so I went straight across to Africa."

Eruç thereby completed the first ever mainland-to-mainland solo row across the Indian Ocean, covering 5,086 nautical miles in 163 days, while becoming the first person to have rowed the three major oceans alone.

"In June of 2011, I was up Kilimanjaro, again with Nancy." He was also joined by his 79-year-old father and a dozen friends, who came to help with the efforts of Around-n-Over to build a classroom for the children of Arusha, at the foot of the mountain.

Eruç bicycled across Africa to Namibia and launched again. He covered 5,400 nautical miles in 154 days to reach Guiria, Venezuela, the longest distance covered

by human power on the Atlantic. He then rowed northwest to Cameron, Louisiana, completing the first non-stop row across the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico — 2,589 nautical miles in 67 days — making him the most experienced solo ocean rower alive.

He biked across the western U.S. to finish the circumnavigation at his starting point on Bodega Bay July 21, 2012, after taking breaks between each leg of the trip.

"Nobody really knows what it's going to be, but I took it one journey at a time," said his wife Nancy, who also serves on the board of Around-n-Over. "I kind of went through my own internal expedition to see how resilient I was. If he was up for this then I didn't want to look back on my life one day and say, 'Oh, I gave up too easily.'"

"I think back now about this and, you know, we've made it through Covid in a year," she said. "If you think about your coping mechanisms, it's really about taking it a day at a time and making choices on a daily basis. 'Today I'm going to do this, or this is what my life is now,' and before I knew it a year had gone by."

Eruç will set or break records crossing the Pacific this second time, some of which he already holds. The overall solo rowing record of 937 days was set by Peter Bird, who was lost at sea in 1996 trying to row from Vladivostok to California.

"Mine stands at 934 right now, so four days after I launch I'll take that over also. I carry Peter's logo on my rowboat." Eruç's last big row was from Monterey to Hawaii in summer 2016 to win the Great Pacific Race, which he did with Peter's son, Louis, who was a toddler when his father died. "We set the record for that route too, 54 days," Eruç said.

"When I do ocean crossings, I set daily goals: 30 miles downwind, 40, never 2,000

miles across the water. So when I get to that mile mark I have completed my task for the day. You do that every day, day after day, and you taste success. You are in this state of mind that allows you to press on because you are succeeding, you are making progress, you are in charge of your destiny as much as the oceans allow. So, carry on with gratitude. That's really the mindset out there," he said.

"Remember that saying, 'Beware of people who dream during the day,' from Lawrence of Arabia? When I talk to children, my message is

to acknowledge our dreams. Often we become the worst enemy of our own dreams. We find excuses, we find ways that this will not be possible because, like

our family, we know our own weaknesses and we fall victim to the same. But it is possible to grow, it is possible to change.

"When I had the idea of circumnavigation by human power it was such a big journey that I had to become the person who could establish world records and historic firsts. When I started, I had no such ambition. What, who, me? When we set ourselves such big goals, the steps that we take have to be commensurate. They have to be giant leaps and bounds. And each one of those steps becomes a journey in its own right.

"And as far as naysayers go, at each junction when I take the next step the naysayers don't show up. The only ones who matter are those who are standing by me and supporting me, and new faces will appear because they coalesce around the dream. It's not necessarily me, I am just the face, the engine, for the dream itself; what attracts them is the dream. As the dream moves, so do people."

Follow Erden Eruç's expedition at [www.around-n-over.org](http://www.around-n-over.org). and see more photos with story at [keypennews.org](http://keypennews.org) ■



Six Summits Project, Eruç's first circumnavigation completed in 2012. below: On the road in Australia and Eruç at sea. © Around-n-Over



## Generation Covid: Working Through the Pandemic

Essential workers of all kinds face the same challenge: staying healthy while doing the job.

KAMRYN MINCH, KP NEWS

Job security has been uncertain for many during the pandemic, but for those who have been able to continue working, navigating the various phases of restrictions and ever-changing guidelines has presented an extra set of challenges, especially for workers in positions that require face-to-face interactions.

Typically, comparing the jobs of a medical assistant and a Transportation Security Administration agent would be a stretch, but considering how closely each works with people every day, in the context of the pandemic they are next door neighbors when it comes to risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

Molly, 25, a Key Peninsula native and medical assistant for a family practice said, “We have a lengthy screening and check-in process before we let patients into the building. We also utilize telehealth or video visits for patients who are symptomatic. However, the risk is never zero. We do have close contact with co-workers throughout the day. We also have patients who are not fully truthful when it comes to their symptoms or exposures.”

Wyatt, 30, who also grew up on the KP and works as a TSA agent at SeaTac airport, said he wears a mask and social distances from co-workers as best he can, but social

distancing isn’t something he can do when he has to perform a pat down on passengers moving through security. It does help that the number of people traveling has decreased significantly. “I can be at a position at work and not see another passenger for hours,” he said.

One year after adjusting to the “new normal” imposed by the pandemic, the potential for another shift in normality looms as vaccines become more available. As restrictions are lifted for businesses and gatherings, guidelines for sanitation, social distancing and masks remain intact.

“I can’t say that these protocols are sustainable for everyone, however I believe they are necessary for the long-term,” Molly said. “It seems as though a lot of our population does not understand the severity



and the necessary steps needed to control the situation. I think the vaccine is a great opportunity for us to try and control the outbreak. Unfortunately, not everyone is as willing to get it as I am.”

Opinions about the vaccine vary, and while there are people like Molly who are optimistic about the effects the vaccine can have overall, there are others like Wyatt who approach the question of getting vaccinated with skepticism.

“If I were older, I would get it. But because I’m younger I don’t want to take

**“IF I WERE OLDER, I WOULD GET IT. BUT BECAUSE I’M YOUNGER I DON’T WANT TO TAKE THE CHANCE.”**

the chance ... you don’t know the side effects yet,” Wyatt said, adding that he worries that years from now he’ll see a television commercial

seeking out people for lawsuits against the companies producing vaccines because of possible unknown effects down the line.

As far as immediate effects go, Molly, who has received both doses of the vaccine, said “I think I was pretty fortunate when it comes to reactions. I got away with minor fatigue. I know they are warning people that reactions are pretty common, especially after the second dose.”

As with so many people at this point, pandemic fatigue is real for these two. After cancelling trips last year, Molly said she’s looking forward to traveling again. And Wyatt is most looking forward to being able to meet up with friends in public. The hurdle to a sense of normality is shrinking to a more achievable height every day, but there’s still some distance to go.

## ‘Lunch Ladies Extraordinaire’ Keep KP Kids Fed

Those devoted stalwarts of the cafeteria kitchens stood up to the pandemic.

KRISA BRUEMMER, KP NEWS

When classrooms closed across the state in March 2020, Peninsula School District’s many responsibilities to its students didn’t end, including feeding them. PSD had to adapt to deliver meals in the midst of the pandemic, a job that fell to a sometimes overlooked frontline workforce: the lunch ladies.

“They have had so many adjustments this year and have risen to the occasion each and every time to serve our wonderful community,” Minter Creek Elementary School Principal Todd Hering said of the Minter Creek kitchen staff. “In this difficult time, they stepped up and served our families and school and deserve much appreciation.”

At Vaughn Elementary School, kitchen manager Mindy Relaford, who is “Miss Mindy” to the kids, said, “Our job completely changed overnight. Because the USDA approved for all children under 18 anywhere to get free meals every day, one of the new things that we had to do was figure out how to feed them every day, not just Monday through Friday.”

Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the USDA allows school sites to serve free meals to all children 18 and under with increased flexibility, including delivery on bus routes as well as meal kits containing more than one day’s worth of food.

“I care about the kids so much that it was easy for me to come up with ideas to adapt,” said Relaford, who arrives each day at 7:30 a.m. to make 108 breakfasts. She and fellow lunch lady Tracey-Lee Van der Berk work together to prepare and deliver food inside the school building and stand outside for families to pick up bagged meals.

“It’s just me and her,” Relaford said. “We do, probably, 300 meals a day.”

Relaford said she is grateful to Katie Walters, general manager of PSD Nutrition Services for helping them adapt throughout the year, as well as the kitchen staff at Peninsula High that has assisted with food preparation, pre-portioning fruit and vegetables in cups and bags, and putting weekend meal kit bags together.

“At times it’s been slightly overwhelming, but we have a great director and she made things happen so quickly and so smoothly,” Relaford said. “The women who work at Peninsula High in that kitchen, because it’s our main production kitchen, have been

While they differed on their feelings about the vaccine, both Wyatt and Molly expressed a similar outlook on how people should behave post-vaccination.

“People should behave the same way they did before getting the vaccine by following the same guidelines to prevent spreading,” Wyatt said.

“This is not a cure-all vaccine. It does not guarantee you cannot spread this virus to anyone else,” Molly said. “It is to help protect yourself with hopes it results in herd immunity.” ■

### CDC GUIDELINES

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently released guidelines for fully vaccinated people, stating “We’re still learning how vaccines will affect the spread of COVID-19. After you’ve been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, you should keep taking precautions in public places like wearing a mask, staying six feet apart from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces until we know more.”

The CDC also stated that people who have been fully vaccinated may gather indoors without wearing masks.

Gathering with unvaccinated persons from one household at a time is also possible without masking up, though precautions still need to be taken around people who are at higher risk of severe COVID-19 illness.

The CDC recommends a 14-day quarantine if exposed to COVID-19 even after receiving the vaccine to prevent further spread, and getting tested if there are any symptoms.





Evergreen Elementary lunch ladies Debbie Ehrhardt (left) and Carmen Carter *Lisa Bryan, KP News*

paramount in making sure that everything has gone so smoothly for all of us out here on the KP. We never could've made it through this whole time without them."

In addition to figuring out how to feed kids on weekends and during school breaks, schedule changes and new regulations throughout the year further complicated the puzzle for Nutrition Services and local lunch ladies.

"We had no kids. Then we had kids. Then we had more kids added. Then we had more kids added," said Debbie Ehrhardt, who has been working as a team with Carmen Carter in Evergreen Elementary School's tiny, "two-butt kitchen" for over a decade, where they now prepare 150 to 200 meals each day. "We just roll with it. As long as the kids get fed, that's the most important thing."

Ehrhardt and Carter deliver bagged lunches in laundry baskets to each classroom door. Kids eat at their own desks, six feet apart.

"Every child gets their own brown bag and everything they need is in that brown bag," Ehrhardt said. "They get packages of ketchup or mustard or whatever and it goes in their paper sack, and the kitchen provides placemats so the teachers give each child a disposable sheet of parchment paper and the kids put their lunch on that."

Everything has become more portable, not just food but also equipment. Passing

out meals outside all year, including summer, the lunch ladies had to come up with creative ways to keep cold foods cool and hot foods warm. Some foods are harder to serve, like nachos, and are not easy to package and contain within a paper bag. Many of the kids' favorites, including Italian subs, chicken sandwiches, corn dogs and pizza, are easier.

"Ms. Deb and Ms. Carmen do so much more than just provide nutrition," Evergreen Principal Hugh Maxwell said. "They care deeply about all our students and families and always do whatever is required to make sure our kids' needs are met. They are loyal, dedicated, kind and dependable and Evergreen is so much better because of them."

Ehrhardt and Carter look forward to returning to a newly built Evergreen, currently under construction, next fall with a larger kitchen and offering kids more than one menu option per day.

"We do the best we can with what we're allowed to do. We love our job and we're glad to be here. We love our kids," Ehrhardt said. "They made us a sign that goes above our door that says 'Lunch Ladies Extraordinaire.'"

"The whole COVID-19 situation has been challenging but I think we're doing really awesome," Relaford said. "I think we've tackled it so well, all of us." ■

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## Meredith Browand

KEY ISSUES



### Back to School for the First Time

My two oldest children are 12 and 13, and until recently I had never cried at a school drop off; not the first day of preschool, not the start of full-day kindergarten, not when we moved to the Peninsula School District and they both started at a new school. I always looked at school like an adventure they were about to embark on and there's nothing sad about an adventure.

That all changed when I dropped our sixth grader off for his first day of in-person instruction last month. As he jumped out of the car, mask on and attestation form in hand, I was completely caught off guard when I started to tear up. I tried to keep it together but ended up crying the entire way home.

The last year of living through a global pandemic has been a lot. A lot of emotions, a lot of decisions, a lot of uncertainty and a lot of things lost. It all caught up with me as I drove away from our newly minted middle schooler standing in the socially distanced line in front of the building. What was different about this moment? Why was I suddenly so emotional?

I've watched for the past 12 months as our two sons got the hang of remote learning. I saw firsthand as teachers and students adapted on short notice and settled into learning in a virtual environment. We've mastered Schoology, Kami, Zoom, Google Docs, Slide Decks, Smart Music, and overcome more Wi-Fi failures than I can count. I watched as awkward middle school friendships developed in a Zoom breakout room and was shooed out of the room when it was their time to present. Virtual learning wasn't the same as in-person school but I liked having them at home. We got into a routine that I think we all enjoyed.

However, we welcomed the return to hybrid, in-person learning. We felt it was time to begin the transition back to traditional schooling. We were never under the assumption that it would be the same as when they left on March 12, 2020, but we believed being on campus again was important. Each day when I pick them up from school, they report

new things they're enjoying. Smaller class sizes are great! They saw an old friend for the first time in a year! The principals made them laugh on announcements! They met someone new in class! It was sunny and they could go outside after lunch! There's even a renewed sense of excitement about their schoolwork. The asynchronous learning days at home are focused and productive. We really couldn't ask for much more.

Who knows what September 2021 will bring? We'd love a return to full in-person school but the global pandemic has taught us to have measured expectations. Regardless of what is offered next year, our boys will be ready and we'll be grateful for every opportunity the school district offers.

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

## Dan Clouse

THE OTHER SIDE



### Dirty Work at the Roundabout

One summer afternoon my friend Stony and I were leaning against an old boom log in the oyster shell gravel, squinting out at the water, when out of the blue he said, "When you're at a roundabout, you're looking at a perfect example of the disenchantment of the world."

Max Weber's old phrase must have been a memory from Stony's student days 60 years ago at the University of Wisconsin. The flotsam that washes up on his mind's beach is more likely to be playing rhythm guitar in The Ardells with Steve Miller and Boz Scaggs, or hitchhiking from Amsterdam to India. But you never can tell with Stony; maybe he had read Weber's "Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (1905).

He was right about roundabouts though. An engineer's perfectly rational solution to the danger of intersections may be safer, but there's no enchantment in a roundabout.

Stony explained that only at a crossroads could the famous blues guitarist, singer and songwriter Robert Johnson have sold his soul to the Devil. "Everyone knows" that sometime around 1930 the aspiring musician summoned him at midnight near Clarksville, Mississippi, and the Devil showed up ready to deal.

"The old fellow limped up smoking a pipe and used a cane. He had a dog on a

leash in his other hand. Johnson hocked his soul to the Devil in exchange for being able to play the guitar better than anyone else. Papa Legba, as voodoo people call him, sure kept his end of the bargain. That night Robert Johnson walked away from the crossroads as the greatest blues artist of all time. But the Devil does not forget, and Johnson's day of reckoning came all too soon."

Stony has a way of putting thoughts in your mind. Maybe it's a contact high, but he got me thinking, "There's no Roundabout Blues. The blues and poetry and the Devil are only ever at the crossroads."

The Key Peninsula has Devil's Head. We've also got the Devil's Crossroads. Most drivers call it the Penrose turn-off. Maps mark it as Delano Road and 158th Avenue SW. But the Devil is always there, day or night.

That's because it has a three-way stop. In hoodoo numerology, three is Papa Legba's number. There's this world, the other world, and the trickster who has a foot in both. The cane makes three legs. Two-way stops are dangerous, and four-way stops are psychological experiments. Three-way stops are infernal.

How many times have I come up Delano Road heading for the urban amenities of Home only to discover that I had hellhounds on my trail at the Penrose Park crossroads?

I approach from the east on Delano. There is one stop sign for me, and one each for north and south on 158th. People coming from the west on Delano don't have to stop.

During the summer, there's often a Dodge Ram pulling a high-priced camper up the hill from the Bay Lake beaver dam. The big boy truck's left blinker is signaling Penrose Park as its vacation destination.

I stop at the stop sign to let him turn toward the park for a family weekend in the great outdoors.

He has the right of way but stops anyway, as if it were a normal crossroads with just two stop signs.

I wait for him to turn.

He waves me to cross the intersection. There is a scowl on pickup dad's face. His kids in the crew cab are asking, "Are we there yet, daddy?" for the 10th time since the Purdy Bridge.

I wait for him to realize he has a protected left turn. In vain, I point up to my stop sign.

After some more back-and-forth, he lunges forward belching a cloud of black

smoke from that 6.7-liter diesel. His jaw is set, and I can see he's thinking, "These damn yokel drivers out here!"

They say the Devil is in the details, and the detail is that we law-abiding yokels obey the unusual stop sign. It's the urban-values summer people up from Chehalis who would have me be a scofflaw and run the stop sign.

In the middle of the brinkmanship at the crossroads, I wonder what the Devil's going rate is for getting city slickers just to turn left.

Stony once observed, "Sometimes in life you're at the poker table with people who don't know what they don't know."

*Dan Clouse lives in Lakebay.*

## Joseph Pentheroudakis

ON THE WING



### Skeelos

It's a small terra cotta dog, a curio really, barely 6 inches high, sitting on its haunches, head tilted back and cocked to the side, one ear pointing up and the other sideways, the front legs so abstractly rendered you'd think the artist left them out. The whole thing is painted in a garish palette of blue, yellow, pink and green glazes, with a pink and blue bow tie and oversized yellow rings around the eyes that look like swimming goggles. A slightly demented grin completes the bizarre appearance.

The glaze has developed spiderweb cracks over the years, no surprise there since my parents got me the little dog sculpture at a crafts fair in Athens in the early '50s. Not what you'd call an objet d'art — although of course not even objets d'art are immune to the passage of time.

Other than being an odd but charming rendering of a dog, there is nothing remarkable about the piece, which, in an early stab at originality and wit, I had named Dog ("Skeelos" in Greek). As in, a dog named Dog. I later discovered the name was not witty or original at all, confirming that there is nothing new under the sun, although in fairness I wasn't even in grade school yet and I had given that name to an inanimate object, not a real living pet.

It was only a year or two ago that it suddenly hit me: Skeelos had been with me for almost seven decades now, a faithful companion, which was a little

shocking given my peripatetic nature that has caused many objects in my life to reach escape velocity and disappear, never to be seen again. I have moved more times that I care to count; I have upsized and downsized, packed and unpacked, loaded and unloaded boxes time and time again, editing with each move and jettisoning what I thought I no longer needed or cared to keep around. I did a bit of a mental doubletake when I realized that Skeelos had made it through all the purges and was still there, goggle eyes and all. Oddly, so had a soup spoon I picked up at my college cafeteria in 1969 that I had every intention to return, but is still in my silverware drawer after all these years.

Like old yellowed photos, these things from long ago are suffused with associations and personal meaning. But calling them old doesn't seem quite right. I mean, the glaze on Skeelos may have aged, but Skeelos himself hasn't. He's still in one piece, the grin unchanged, and while I may not remember exactly when he entered my life, once he did, he froze in time — and never left.

All I have to do is pick him up and I can see those moments when I'm getting him ready for yet another move, first to a new continent, then bouncing to so many places across this country, and now finally to a small island in the land of trees and water, I can see me carefully wrapping him in newsprint and putting him in a box labeled "fragile" that feels light as a feather since it's mostly newsprint enveloping a handful of delicate things. Then I take him out of the box and set him on a bookshelf, a nightstand, a dresser or a desk, where he will look more and more out of place and time as the world and my tastes change. But he just smiles, takes it all in and preserves that frozen bit of time.

And as I write this another realization hits me: Skeelos is also my center, the center that I haven't always acknowledged but that's been there regardless of how many times and places my need to roam has taken me. Skeelos is there, unchanged, in his improbable crazy quilt of colors, a grin that is perhaps more joyful than demented after all, an inanimate object that returns my stare and holds imprinted on its aging glaze so much of who I am but also who I used to be.

Not bad for a small, decades-old ceramic sculpture of an imaginative artist's idea of a dog in mid-century Athens.

*Joseph Pentheroudakis is an artist, historian and an avid birder who lives on Herron Island.*

## Dan Whitmarsh

WRITING BY FAITH



### Tearing Down to Build Again

The Lakebay Church is a mess. The church building is a mess, I mean. Not the people. The people are, all things considered, doing well. However, as I write this, the building is pretty torn up.

Fifty years ago, the men and women of the Lakebay Church pooled their resources and built a new sanctuary. It was intended as a space for worship, but was also built with the community in mind, to host weddings and funerals, concerts and other events. It served that purpose well.

Lately, however, it has been showing its age. The carpet is worn, the paint fading, the seating starting to crack. Five decades of use left it worn, musty and a little outdated.

In January, we embarked on a renovation project. Construction equipment fills a space more accustomed to singing and prayer. Splashes of paint samples mark the walls. Sawdust and audio wires litter the floor.

Soon enough, though, it will be beautiful again. With windows opening to maple trees, a high wooden ceiling soaring above, fresh carpet and seating, the space will come alive with singing and laughter. It will be ready to hold the tears of funerals, the energy of concerts, the joy of weddings. As the world moves into post-virus normal, this space will be ready.

The Christian story, like many religious traditions, holds room for messiness. Comfort and ease often give way to chaos and trouble. Our spiritual ancestors wandered through deserts as prisoners and pilgrims.

In April we Christians celebrate Easter, the day Jesus came from the grave announcing victory over sin and death forever. Prior to that glorious moment, even Jesus faced brutal assault, humiliation and death. Ugliness preceded glory in the work of healing and salvation.

Our building is in a state of deconstruction, just as our world has been torn apart by a pandemic, financial insecurity and political division. These barren places are a tearing down, a winnowing of the comfort we take for granted.

The deconstruction of desert places is difficult, but it is in those spaces where renewal happens. Before something new and beautiful can be built, the old must be torn down. It is hard, but it is necessary for there to be new life.

For me, our renovation project has become a metaphor for all that we've been through this past year. Old systems are falling apart. The dirty stains of history are being unmasked. Our nation has lost over half a million people to COVID-19, and counting. Financial stresses abound. Relationships are strained. Our physical and mental health has suffered. It has been a messy year for everybody.

In the midst of this messiness, with Easter upon us, I choose to believe that something new is being created. As winter gives way to spring, as deconstruction precedes recreation, so does struggle lead to glory. Old ways are passing away. A better world is yet to come.

It is easy to focus on the mess sometimes, which can lead to hopelessness and despair. We forget that chaos can also lead to better and brighter tomorrows. What appears as loss can eventually lead to gain. Remain vigilant but have hope, my friends. As the Psalmist wrote, sorrow may last a night, but joy comes in the morning. If we choose to step forward in faith, humility and love, a fresh spirit may just blow in and restore us to glory.

*Award-winning columnist Dan Whitmarsh is pastor at Lakebay Community Church.*

## Letter to the Editor

### POINT OF ORDER

I love the paper — from local news to opinion pieces and naturalist articles — and the fact that it has so much better editing than most local papers. Thank you for your wonderful work.

However, I couldn't help but notice in the latest edition a reference to a "crazy Buddhist koan," ("Naturalist's Notebook," March 2021).

I understand and appreciate that this phrasing was not meant in any way to be offensive. I would like to point out that it is unintentionally rude and unwittingly ostracizes those of us in the Buddhist community. It's not the reference to koan, but instead the choice to use the word "crazy" to describe them. I can't help but think that most readers would have a sudden pause while reading the article, much as I did, if the phrase were instead something along the lines of "some crazy Christian psalm."

*Kris Babish, Longbranch*

Letters to the editor must be signed and include a daytime phone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters are used on a space-available basis and will be edited for length and clarity. Mail to P.O. Box 3, Vaughn, WA 98394, or email to editor@keypennews.org.

### EXPAND BROADBAND

Your article "Broadband Survey Illuminates Digital Divide on Key Peninsula" (March 2021) did an excellent job highlighting the internet issues that face our community and are exacerbated by the pandemic. Reliable high-speed broadband is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity akin to a utility. It touches all of our lives economically, medically, and in terms of educational opportunity.

I am running to be on the board of Peninsula Light Co. to be an advocate for utilizing its existing infrastructures for public entities to run high-speed fiber optic cable as a public option, or a public-private cooperative.

In my 35 years on the KP, I have seen Pen Light improve its reliability through aggressive maintenance of its rights of way, expand its infrastructure through the addition of a new substation, greatly improve its communication and response time during power outages, and expand its service to include well services. These are excellent milestones we should foster and maintain.

I believe it is time for an expansion of Pen Light's mission to play a key support role in the expansion of broadband on the Key Peninsula. I would greatly appreciate your vote as ballots arrive March 29.

*Michael Cobey, Lakebay*



Give your Mom something *really* sweet this year.

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1928-29 Rugby with hand crank dump bed, owned by T.D. Mills: Photo courtesy Key Peninsula Historical Museum



## OBITUARIES



### Eric Leo Collins

Eric Leo Collins died from respiratory failure March 3, at home in Gig Harbor. As many know he only had one lung and it gave him 52 amazing years.

Born Feb. 11, 1969, to parents James and Patricia at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, he was welcomed into this world by brothers Mark and David and sister Mary.

Eric graduated from Wilson High School in Tacoma in 1988. During those years he played trumpet in the band and was active in the Boy Scouts, where he earned his Eagle Scout award. He went on to earn his certification in auto mechanics at Bates Technical College in Tacoma.

Eric met his future wife, Kathy Oliver, at Life Center Church in Tacoma in August 1998, where the couple still attended at the time of Eric's passing. Eric and Kathy were married at Fox Island Alliance Church June 19, 1999.

The couple loved to travel and often took road and day trips to some of their favorite places.

Eric had many interests. He was active in his church and enjoyed his Bible study group. He was creative with woodworking projects and made several items for Kathy, including a holder for her measuring cups and spoons and a bird feeder. He loved to play Santa at Christmas for his neighbors and their grandchildren, in addition to playing Santa for the residents of Life Manor, the assisted living home located at their church. Eric was heavily involved at the Key Peninsula Civic Center where, along with Kathy, he served on the board and volunteered for many fundraisers and events. His favorite fundraiser was the annual fireworks stand, which Eric and Kathy ran for several years.

Eric is survived by his wife, Kathy; father, James; and by his sister, Mary Matt. He was

preceded in death by his mother, Patricia, and brothers Mark and David Schuster. Eric was laid to rest at Haven of Rest Memorial Park in Gig Harbor at a graveside service March 12.

A date for a memorial service will be announced at a later time.



### Joyce Elaine Niemann

Joyce Elaine Niemann was born Sept. 18, 1929, to Elmer and Elsie Olson of Vaughn and died peacefully March 8 in the home where she was born.

Joyce graduated from Vaughn Union High School and shortly after married Charles Niemann Sr. on July 12, 1947. They lived away from Key Center for a few years but returned home to take over Sunnycrest Farm from her parents. They raised four children, Hereford cattle and made hay. They always kept the farm going strong and hosted many wonderful family gatherings.

Besides being a devoted wife and mother, Joyce worked many jobs over the years, including part owner and cook at the Key Center Café, as a cook at Vaughn Grade School, fish marker at the local hatchery, as librarian and a Pierce County election official. She also picked brush and huckleberries.

Joyce was very active in her community and loved by all. She was a charter member of Vaughn Community Church, part of the Ladies Aide Society, and later a charter member of Historic Vaughn Bay Church. She was a true historian of the KP, and a life member and president emeritus of the Key Peninsula Historical Society and Museum. She was treasurer of the Vaughn Bay Cemetery Board and a charter member of the Vaughn Garden Club. She loved flowers and at one point had over 100 roses growing on the farm. She could often be found in her garden or in the kitchen making delicious pies and other treats that she was famous for.

Joyce was preceded in death by her parents; her daughter Cheryl; husband

Charles (married 55 years); and three siblings. Joyce is survived by three children, Charles, Jr. (Vicki), Christopher and Noel, all of Vaughn; grandchildren Sam Baderdeen (Brenda), Dan Baderdeen (Paige) and Nicole Niemann-Carr (Tony); four great-grandsons; two great-great-grandchildren; sister Gail Sparks of California; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Nicole and Tony built their home next door to Grandma Joyce 17 years ago, farmed with her, and gradually began to take over operating the farm. When great-grandson Colton was born, Joyce's days became devoted to him.

Joyce will be buried at Vaughn Bay Cemetery. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Key Peninsula Historical Society or Vaughn Bay Cemetery.



### Sally Anne Niemann

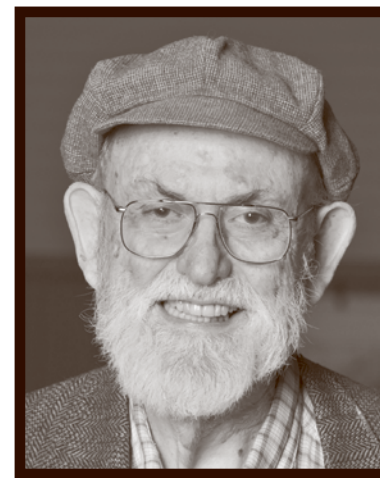
Sally Anne Niemann of Vaughn died March 14 in her home, with loved ones near. She was 66. Born to parents Ron and Margaret Mitchell in Tacoma, she spent most of her life in the Gig Harbor and Vaughn areas.

She enjoyed many camping trips, boating adventures, vacationing in Maui and Arizona, and spending time with her loving husband, family and close friends. She was also an incredible artist and belonged to a painting group for many years that she thoroughly enjoyed. Becoming a mother and grandmother was something she cherished. Sharing her life with her best friend and husband of 45 years was a blessing.

Sally is survived by her husband Michael; son Joey, his wife Sharon and their sons Evan and Jake; daughter Jaymee, her husband Tommy, and their children Thomas and Mabel.

A celebration of life will be scheduled at a later time.

Obituaries are printed as a service to community members. Limit to 300 words and provide high-resolution photographs. Submissions will be edited. Send to editor@keypennews.org.



### Edward Allen Taylor

Born in Pittsburgh Feb. 13, 1932, Ed Taylor died peacefully in his sleep at St. Anthony Hospital Feb. 25, having left the world a better place after his 89 years on the planet.

As a youth he joined the Coast Guard, where he completed his education in electronics. After an honorable discharge, he pursued a number of occupations until he discovered an aptitude for trading and developed a real estate business offering property services and investing. He opened his doors first in Everett and finally on the Key Peninsula, where he spent the rest of his life.

He loved his community and supported many projects including the Key Peninsula Civic Center where he served on the board for decades in several capacities, including a brief time at the helm of KP News in 1994. Ed served as a fire commissioner for Key Peninsula Fire District 16 and was an enthusiastic supporter of Key Pen Parks. He was especially proud of the dream he saw realized with the opening of Gateway Park, and rarely failed to delight in its popularity every time he drove past.

As the owner of Westwynd Motel and Apartments, Ed will be remembered for the many families he sheltered, providing short term emergency housing in time of crisis, after fire or severe weather had rendered them homeless.

Ed loved RV camping and belonged to a club for many years. He had a great sense of humor and was an excellent storyteller. One of his favorites was about the time he cleared an elevator by appearing to have a conversation with "something" in his briefcase.

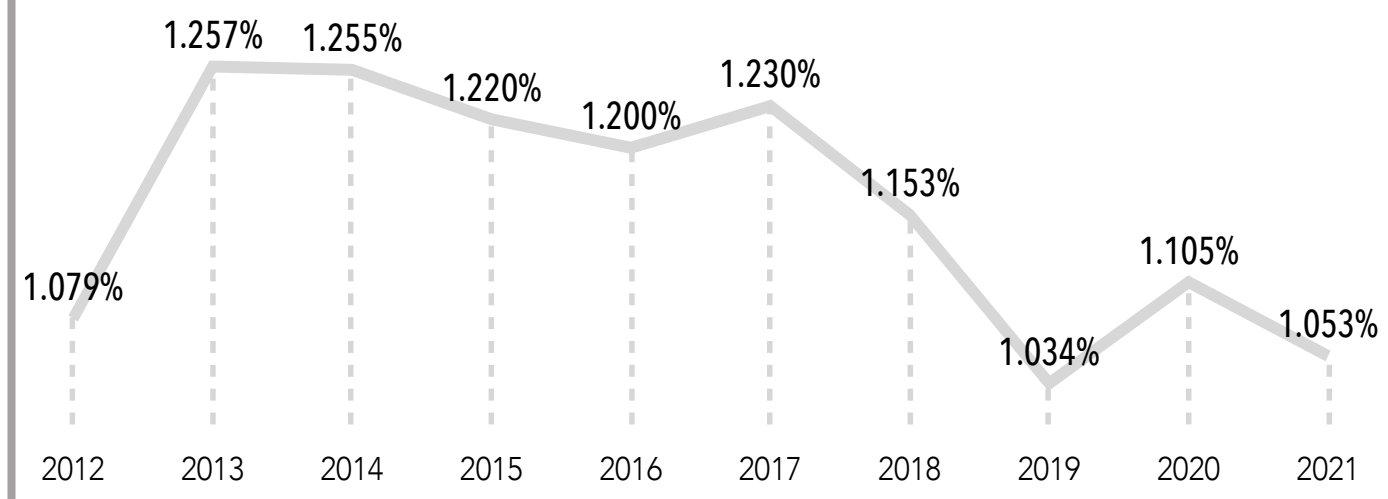
Ed is survived by his wife Lee Silvey of Gig Harbor; son Dick Taylor (Mindy) of Wauna; stepsons Brian Heaven (Liz) and Alan Heaven; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 40 years, Patricia Heaven, and son Brian Taylor.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Ed's honor to his beloved Key Peninsula Civic Center.



The 2021 mill rate approved by voters for the KP is lower than all but one of the last nine years, but rising property values have driven total costs to residents higher. *Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer's Office*



The same can be done to find the cost of individual charges. For example, in 2020 taxpayers started paying an additional \$0.79 per \$1,000 to fund the Peninsula School District 20-year \$198,550,000 school construction bond approved in 2019. For the hypothetical \$400,000 home, that would be 0.79 divided by 1,000 and multiplied by 400,000 for an annual cost of \$316, or \$26.33 per month.

Anyone can appeal their property tax assessment. Seniors earning less than \$45,708 per annum and individuals with disabilities may qualify for an exemption. For more information, go to [www.co.pierce.wa.us](http://www.co.pierce.wa.us). ■

**Pierce County Fire District 16  
Board of Fire Commissioners  
Vacancy Notice**

The Fire District has an immediate opening for a Fire Commissioner.

If you have interest in being considered to fill the vacancy, please submit a letter of interest by 4:30 PM on April 21, 2021 to [info@keypeninsulafire.org](mailto:info@keypeninsulafire.org)

*Individuals must reside in, or own property within the District.*

## The Season of Our Discontent: Property Tax Time

Initial payments are due in April. Some KP residents are in for an ugly surprise.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

The property tax rate on the Key Peninsula fell for tax year 2020, payable in 2021, but most residents will owe more because of rising property values and a surprise revaluation of certain properties.

Home prices on the KP rose 14% in 2020, reaching an average assessed value of approximately \$400,000. But according to the Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer's Office, taxes will only increase by 3.5 to 5%.

The average tax rate on the KP increased 9% in 2019 while property values rose only 7.5%. The Legislature raised the maximum local school district

**KP HOME PRICES ROSE 14% IN 2020, REACHING AN AVERAGE ASSESSED VALUE OF APPROXIMATELY \$400,000.**

enrichment levy that year from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per \$1,000 of property value, an aftershock of the state Supreme Court McCleary Decision that mandated more state funding for public schools.

Ordinarily, an increase in property value does not necessarily mean a drastic change in property tax, according to the assessor-treasurer's office. The state Constitution limits the total of all non-voter approved property tax rates to 1% of assessed value per year on a given property, plus tax resulting from any new construction on the property.

But there is no limit on voter-approved ballot levy taxes.

The value of residential properties in Pierce County on average went up 8.8% in 2020, but mobile home owners will be hit much harder. The assessor undervalued mobile homes by an average of 25% in recent years, according to Pierce County

Assessor-Treasurer Mike Lonergan, and owners will need to make up the difference.

The average Pierce County property tax rate, including voter-approved levies, is now 1.19%, the highest in Washington. The state average is 0.93%; the national average is 1.07%.

Taxes on real estate account for about 30 percent of all state and local tax revenues. Schools make up 59.6% of the bill. County government, including the road district, adds another 21% on average, and fire districts an additional 11%. The tax

also pays for parks, libraries, the Port of Tacoma, and flood control. Flat fees for conservation, noxious weed control and surface water management are also added.

Property tax is a real estate ad valorem tax ("according to the value") considered to be regressive by many economists. It is determined by multiplying property value by the combined rate of all taxing districts where the property is located.

The amount of tax payable is usually expressed as a dollar amount of tax per \$1,000 of assessed value. That is called the mill rate or millage, a word that derives from the Latin word "millesimum," meaning "thousandth part" (1/1000). One mill is \$.001 of the amount it's applied to.

Millage rates are listed as Tax Code Area rates on individual property listings on the assessor's website. To convert millage to dollars, divide the mill rate by 1,000 and multiply by the property's taxable value.

For example, a house assessed at \$400,000 on the Key Peninsula has a 2020

mill rate of 10.527863 for taxes payable in 2021. This is the total of all government taxes and voter approved levies per \$1,000 of taxable value. Divide the mill rate by 1,000 to get 0.010527863. Multiply that by \$400,000 to get \$4,211.15. Add to that perhaps \$140 in fees for weed control, surface water, etc., and the result is an approximate effective tax rate of 1.08%.

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"I held my breath," said 5-year-old Mira Bothwell of Longbranch. *Lisa Bryan, KP News*

## In the Land of the Swamp Lanterns

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

On a slanting boardwalk over a forested swamp, I pause. It's not just Pacific wrens singing these days. Song sparrows and towhees fire off their songs. Salmonberry thickets stand with their bare brown stalks in black muck, yet they are somehow already spangled with magenta blossoms.

It's "Just-spring," like e e cummings said, "when the world is mud-luscious."

We call this boardwalk the Troll Bridge. On either side, a wild scaffold of downed trees and ferns and brush sits upon mud of a depth no one I know has ever dared to test. And straight through it, as if mud were a spotless workshop for the preparation of brilliant colors, come the swamp lanterns, their massive tropical leaves surrounding a neon inflorescence that just about glows in the shade.

These swamp plants boast the largest leaves of any native plant on the Key Peninsula. They are also the Pacific Northwest's only member of the arum family, which includes calla lilies and peace lilies. An arum can often be recognized by its upright flowering spike, called a spadix, surrounded by a brightly colored leaf called a spathe.

Yet you might know swamp lanterns as skunk cabbage. Not only do they shine — they stink. It's another common trait of arums. Ours exude certain foul hydrocarbons along with a compound called indole

also found in feces and dead bodies.

The blooms around me are flecked with small black insects like shavings of iron on magnets. They are *Pelecomalium testaceum*, a rove beetle with no common name. These half-centimeter earwig-shaped beetles are skunk cabbage's primary and perhaps only pollinator. I watch them dig into the tiny flowers. Specks of pollen cling to their dark bodies.

Many beetles respond to stench. They are right at home in dirt and dung and decay. Yet others are attracted to flowers. In a relatively simple experiment, researchers at the University of Washington set out to determine what sensory cue brings *Pelecomalium testaceum* to our arum — if it is the brilliant swamp lantern or the redolent skunk cabbage that attracts them.

The first trial presented the beetles with two clear, sealed dishes, one with a green leaf and the other with a yellow spathe. The beetles ignored both.

Color alone did not attract the beetles. The second trial presented the beetles with a green leaf and a yellow spathe hidden in a green leaf. This time, some of the beetles landed on the leaf holding the hidden spathe.

Odor did attract the beetles. But in a third trial, in which a spathe in a vase was added as an option, many more beetles landed on the undisguised spathe than had landed on the hidden spathe, suggesting that it's

not just scent that attracts the beetles but a combination of scent and color.

This reminds me of some beautiful research described by Niko Tinbergen in his book "Curious Naturalists," in which dozens of butterflies were released into a gauze enclosure festooned with small paper squares of many colors. His team wanted to know which colors were most attractive. But in an entire day of observation, the butterflies visited none. One of the team members suggested they try scent instead. They cleared out the paper squares and brought in rags soaked in flower perfumes. The butterflies grew agitated, walked in circles, drummed their antennae — but they did not go to the rags. One landed on a researcher's blue shirt.

A eureka moment was had. The scent activated the butterflies to go looking for color. As Tinbergen puts it, their "internal mood" was altered from one state to another — their eyes were always capable of seeing colorful flowers, but it took scent to unlock their meaning. I wonder if it's a similar story with the rove beetles.

If it is, we as people sure could identify with them. Ever step into a marsh, feel the water coming into your shoe — and feel everything in your head go out your ears in favor of an "internal mood" begging you not to fall, to find safe ground?

Safe ground: another word for "untouched by mud"?

### MISSION FOR KIDS

Pull on your mud boots, kids, it's time to measure swamp lanterns! What's that? You've never heard of a swamp lantern? Well you know, a skunk cabbage? *Lysichiton americanus*? The big green swamp plant with weird yellow flowers and a lot of funny names? Yeah, that one! What would you call it? So anyway, I want nothing more than to know about the longest and widest skunk cabbage leaf on the entire Key Peninsula. I want to crown a royal champion skunk cabbage leaf. Grab a tape measure and send me your measurements at [nature@keypennews.org](mailto:nature@keypennews.org)

## Into the WILD

EXPLORING WITH THE KP NATURE GUIDE

Spring isn't just a profusion of beautiful perfumes, and all this mud has me thinking of the end of Gary Snyder's poem about a river, "The Flowing," where he ends up drifting through "a thick vomiting outward sighing" — through the river's mouth. That's the swamp all right. It's where all the rain and debris and sludge gathers and mixes, rife with earwig-like beetles and gorgeous flowers that smell like death.

Yet if I stand for a moment and let that mud seep into my shoe, open every one of my senses to the swamp, maybe do a simple experiment or two, I see that even here transformations are occurring, pollinations, shifts in animal moods that create the conditions for life as we know it.

Snyder writes of sparkling headwaters of mountain streams that leap between temples "making Rocks of water, Water out of rocks." It's no different here. Everything has the capacity to change according to circumstance, just as water changes when confronted with obstacles, just as our own reactions to water change according to how it flows. Which came first: flower or pollinator, scent or vision, earth or water — or mud? The more you watch the grand dance, the harder it is to tell who has the lead. ■





## ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

# The Longbranch Improvement Club: Our First Hundred Years.

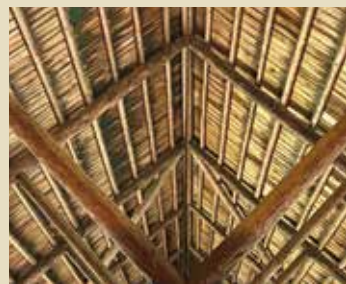
*Through thick and thin, we're still here, working to improve our community.*

The year 2020 was far from stellar and we shared in the challenges. Despite a few disappointments, we achieved great successes due to member dedication to volunteer service and the community where we live.

**Membership.** In 2020, nearly all meetings were via Zoom, ensuring operational continuity and limited social interaction. Membership dipped by 10% to 242 and volunteer service hours dropped 44% since most activities and events were cancelled to meet pandemic restrictions. A new category of Community Service – Helping Others – was added to encourage members to assist local nonprofit organizations.

We look forward to the return of in-person meetings as pandemic restrictions are lifted, and we can again welcome you to monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of the month beginning at 6:30 pm.

**Preservation.** During 2020, we completed an engineering evaluation of the clubhouse roof structural trusses and purlins. We were pleased to learn the roof can carry additional weight, allowing the addition of a frame structure and energy-efficient



insulation over the existing shake roof. As part of this project, the concrete buttresses were X-rayed to determine existence and size of steel rebar, and a professional lumber grader evaluated wood quality in the vintage hand-hewn framing elements. At year end, a project manager was engaged to oversee the entire project and an architect selected to design

the new roof. It may take years to finalize a design, obtain preservation approvals and select a contractor – all after we secure funding for such an ambitious undertaking. We are proud of and committed to our stewardship, preservation and renovation efforts, both short- and long-term.

Community rentals of the clubhouse for private events were very limited in 2020; however, we hosted a number of drive-through Covid testing events in our parking lot and saw increased public use of our trail system and grounds.

Lighting and irrigation were added around the new Longbranch sign and our main sign was completely refurbished.

**Community Events.** Perhaps the most significant impact from the pandemic was a year without social events. Popular club events, from “Sud-n-Spuds” to “Opening Day,” Memorial and Labor Day weekend dances and Fiber Arts, were put on hold. Thankfully, we were able to host drive-thru “Trunk-or-Treat” and “Kids-n-Christmas,” and our resourceful volunteers were able to put together a successful “Super Sale” for The Longbranch Foundation from sheer grit and determination.

Instead of the beloved usual Christmas events with swags, wreaths and two-story decorated tree, we created a new holiday tradition with Christmas lights on the clubhouse and around the sign that welcomes people to Longbranch. The community expressed their appreciation for this extra bit of cheer during the dark and strange winter.



**Celebrate our Centennial.** To commemorate the LIC’s 100-year anniversary in 2021, many events are planned. Scheduling will depend on evolving public health recommendations. As pandemic restrictions on gatherings are hopefully relaxed, we’ll publish the details here and on our website.

**Longbranch Marina.** Boating activity last year was a real bright spot. For the first time in a decade, all permanent moorage was filled. In an unexpected 25% increase from last year, we hosted 927 guest moorage visits. We upgraded public safety by replacing marina security cameras and emergency boarding ladders. The planning and permitting process is underway to add a pumpout



station, replace three finger piers, expand moorage slips and install a restroom.

The Marina is open to the public daily from 8 to 8 in summer and 10 to 5 in winter. Stop by and enjoy the view from our covered pavilion.

**Join us and become an Improver.** We invite every person living, visiting or doing business on the Key Peninsula to join the LIC and work with us to continue making our community a better place. Especially for this

year, we sincerely thank our members and volunteers who worked hard under very trying circumstances to continue im-

proving life for us all. **Thank you so much!**

[www.licweb.org](http://www.licweb.org) [www.thelongbranchfoundation.org](http://www.thelongbranchfoundation.org)



April 2021  
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keypenparks.com




## Peninsula School District Selects New Superintendent

**Bahr has decades of experience in the classroom, in administration and in developing new curricula.**

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

The Peninsula School District board of directors unanimously voted to hire Krestin Bahr as superintendent during a live-streamed special meeting March 19. Bahr, superintendent of Eatonville School District since 2013, will succeed Dr. Art Jarvis, who has served as interim PSD superintendent since 2018, when he steps down July 1.

The PSD board sought input on its search for a new superintendent last fall, asking parents and community members to participate in surveys asking what qualities they wanted in their next district leader.

PSD also hired the executive search firm NW Leadership Associates in October to find candidates for the position. Twenty-nine applications were winnowed to five semi-finalists interviewed March 13. The two finalists, Bahr and South Kitsap School District Superintendent Tim Winter, returned for a full day of interviews with board and staff, in addition to an interview with the public.

Board Chair David Olson said they would have felt fortunate to work with either finalist. Winter was well-known and liked by many in the community. He taught at Peninsula High School and served as its principal for seven years before leaving to become superintendent of Clarkston and later South Kitsap School Districts.

“We ultimately chose the candidate with a proven track record of transformative and inspiring leadership, leading to greater outcomes for students and growth opportunities for staff,” Olson stated in a press release. “Krestin Bahr is very aware of and committed to bringing our community together to build a vision and strategic plan that grows an educational environment, which prepares all students for life beyond the Peninsula School District.”

Bahr graduated from Pacific Lutheran University 35 years ago and spent more than a decade as a science teacher with the Tacoma School District, first in what was then junior high and then in high school. “I was hired as the ninth-grade health and science teacher. But really, I think I got the job because I said I would coach gymnastics and put on the school play,” she said during her introductory comments at the public interview. “I spent 10 years in middle schools really understanding teaching and learning. I found out I didn’t know much



Aimee Gordan

when I got out of school,” she said.

Bahr taught AP biology, physics and chemistry at the high school level. She received grants to work on vertical integration of curriculum; with that work she got excited about leadership and sought further training.

Her first administrative job was assistant principal of a middle school. “I went from being a beloved teacher to being responsible for discipline,” she said. She went on to serve as a middle school principal and then took on other leadership roles in the TSD. She completed her superintendent certification in 2011.

As superintendent of Eatonville School District she implemented changes including new STEM programs, expanding career and technical education options, and creating outdoor learning opportunities through partnerships. She served as president of the Washington Association of School Administrators last year and is co-chair of the WASA Women in Leadership Committee. She is also a member of the governing board of the School Superintendents Association.

During her public interview, Bahr was asked about repairing relationships with those who have lost trust in the district. “Trust is built over time. What I know about repairing anything is that relationships matter, and it takes work. Meet me. Let’s get to know each other. I am a leader that listens and partners with families,” she said. “The pandemic has been a challenge, but it is also an opportunity. Let’s not waste that. Leading during chaos and uncertainty demands that leaders are vulnerable enough to speak the truth, and we will need to do things differently.”

She said her commitment to PSD is for nine or 10 years. “I want to move to Peninsula. I am not a superintendent who will come here and want to leave in three years. I fall in love with people. It’s the benefit. It’s my passion. I don’t come and go.” ■

### Appreciate Your Parks Saturday, April 24

Bring gloves, clippers, rakes, garden tools and enthusiasm! To register, email [veronica@keypenparks.com](mailto:veronica@keypenparks.com)



**Come check out StoryWalk** at Gateway Park from April 15 – May 15 near the splashpad. The featured story is *The Big Umbrella* by Amy June Bates.





## THE LONGBRANCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL UPDATE:

# Creating a Better Community

*2020 started like a normal year.*

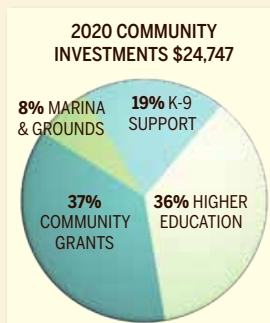
We invested in Evergreen Elementary with support to the fifth grade Camp Seymour experience, established a pencil kitty for teachers and “After-hours” scholarships for students who could not afford \$20 to attend. We set aside money for six higher education scholarships, and granted a generous donation to FB4K.

Then the world changed. And our community’s needs changed too.

Created in 2016 to invest in our South Key community, The Longbranch Foundation (TLF) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization, qualified for grants and donor tax benefits. Managed and staffed by volunteers, we’re affiliated with the Longbranch Improvement Club (LIC) but are a separate organization.

Our mission is to *inspire collaboration and generosity* through charitable causes including historic preservation, environmental and safety upgrades at the Longbranch Marina, enhanced nature trails, support for local nonprofits and more. Our biggest focus

remains centered on our students through programs and scholarships.



With donations totaling \$26,716 in 2020, we were able to offer new types of program support such as food cards for needy families; art supplies for kindergarteners; and a web page to collect donations for KP nonprofits. Our incredible volunteers turned our biennial fundraiser, Super Sale, into mini-sales with proceeds of \$5,434 going into a reserve account for LIC building preservation. Program support, shown here, totaled \$24,747 and restricted reserves ended the year with \$102,042.

For more details on these programs and grants to partnering community organizations, visit our website at [mytlf.org](http://mytlf.org)

Your continued support helps improve our community, for today and tomorrow. When we say I Love My KP, we’re saying it for all of us.



## THE LONGBRANCH FOUNDATION

INVESTING IN THE SOUTH KEY COMMUNITY

WWW.LONGBRANCHFOUNDATION.ORG PO BOX 111 LAKEBAY WA 98349

## New ‘Old Tech’ Homebuilding Comes to the KP

Remember those Lego houses you used to build as a kid? They’ve come a long way.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

The Key Peninsula is no stranger to the work of dreams, innovation and unconventional thinking, and the latest example is a new house built on Rocky Bay.

The 2,000-square-foot three-bedroom, two-bath home is a simple rectangle with a flat, single pitch roof, but is in no way simplistic.

It’s made of insulated concrete forms — foam blocks locked together and then filled with concrete — to create 14-inch thick exterior walls that are naturally insulated against weather and sound, and have a seismic rating that dwarfs comparable structures.

The owner, Key Peninsula resident Terence King, runs Macnak Construction, the company that built the house. He founded the company in 2008 and until recently has done mostly federal contracts for the Department of Defense.

That’s how the idea for this house originated.

“DOD was looking for an antiterrorism force protection building that could meet its blast-frag resistance requirements — a blast within 40 feet of a building that preserves the occupants,” King said. “What we were building at that time were steel stud buildings” wrapped in a second wall; essentially two buildings. “Those were very expensive, and we still had to insulate them,” he said.

“So we started looking for a product that was faster to build that still met the requirements, but that was more energy

efficient. ICF was 50 years old and had been written off, but because of the advances in foam and the lining plastics, the forms had come far enough along that a lot of the early issues were solved.”

“These are essentially big, foam Lego blocks,” said Mitch Baltazar, IT director and residential project manager for Macnak. “A team of three guys can stack a 2,000 square foot house within a week, tie in the rebar, pour the concrete in a few hours and you’ve got solid walls.” Because of the strength of the outer walls, there is no need for interior load-bearing walls, further simplifying design and construction, and reducing cost.

“The big benefit is this is a 100-year wall as opposed to a 30-year wall you’d get with wood,” he said. “You’ve got 3 inches of foam, the center portion can be up to 8 inches of concrete, with rebar for strength, and then you’ve got another 3 inches of foam on the other side. Then there’s a vapor barrier on the outside to seal it off.” Interior drywall and exterior siding can then be attached directly to the foam surface.

“There are no organic materials in it, it’s completely recyclable, it can go through a flood — you can have the thing underwater, it’s not going to mold, it’s not going to break down,” King said. “You can’t hear cars go by, you can’t hear planes; you could be in a thunderstorm and not even know it.”

The Rocky Bay property is a secluded waterfront lot but also right on State Route-302, which made it almost ideal for ICF construction.

“One of the issues is the lot isn’t that deep,” Baltazar said. “With a traditional stick-built home there you’d be battling the road noise, but with ICF not only is it thermally efficient, the sound proofing makes the interior dead silent.”

King and his company started experimenting with different approaches to ICF in 2015 and have completed seven private projects, including custom homes, shops and industrial buildings. They plan to start more projects with the client, designer and contractor working together from the beginning.

In the meantime, King plans to do some landscaping and buy some paddle boards, and to keep the Rocky Bay house as a nightly rental starting this summer. ■



Ted Olinger, KP News





Chris Konieczny, KP News

**WHITEMAN FROM PAGE 1**

DNR considers Whiteman Cove one of the top restoration opportunities in South Sound.

DNR anticipates the project would cause significant changes to the Whiteman Cove environment: higher water to occur only during king tide and other extreme events; lower water levels most of the time; at minimum level 30% of the time; water commonly below existing docks; increased habitat quality and complexity; improved water quality; and potential short-term impacts to aquaculture.

DNR presented multiple restoration options in meetings with stakeholders in January 2019, including the Seattle YMCA, Whiteman Cove Homeowners Association, the Squaxin Island Tribe, Seattle Shellfish Partners, Joemma Beach State Park and the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group.

Palazzi told the stakeholders that all four options in the Whiteman Cove Feasibility Study were evaluated. The gap-and-bridge option was chosen as the most feasible and likely to comply with a 2013 federal court injunction requiring the state to replace or repair any culvert on state land impeding fish passage. The restoration project is slated for completion in 2023.

The Seattle YMCA is lobbying legislators in Olympia to exclude the restoration project from the 2021-22 state capital budget, stating in “a call to action” on its website:

“Whiteman Cove is not a culvert and not part of the federal injunction that the DNR is required to comply with,” adding that the DNR also failed to include “viable options that support both enhanced fish passage as well as preservation of critical environmental education, water safety and recreational programs of Camp Colman.”

Anchor QEA is consultant to DNR on the Whiteman Cove Restoration. At the request of the Seattle YMCA, Anchor QEA also worked with Kleinschmidt R2, consultants hired by Seattle YMCA, to evaluate a new “fish friendly” tide gate option. It was determined that its tide gate-culvert and weir option cannot be engineered to meet the requirements of the injunction or be eligible for the needed hydrological permit.

Palazzi told KP News he understands that competing interests ensure the estuary restoration option won't please everyone but, “We don't get to see things like this very often, so we're looking forward to a successful recovery that supports critical habitat for salmon recovery and ultimately the Southern Resident Orca as well.”

The YMCA of Greater Seattle did not respond to multiple requests for comment by KP News. ■

Whiteman Cove was originally a shallow 29-acre estuary protected by a natural sandspit with tidewater flowing in and out through a channel at the northwest corner. In 1962, the state Department of Fisheries converted the estuary into a salt-water lagoon for rearing young salmon. The channel was filled and two large culverts with mechanisms to control the flow of tidal water — so called tide gates — were installed. A roadway was constructed over the filled entrance and sandspit and is now the primary access to Camp Colman. Sometime after 1970, Fisheries discontinued using Whiteman Cove as a salmon rearing facility. The tide gates are inoperable.

In 2001, 21 Northwest Washington tribes asked the U.S. District Court to find that Washington had a treaty-based duty to preserve fish runs. The court ruled in 2007 that the right of taking fish by the tribes in exchange for millions of acres of their land stipulated in the Stevens Treaties of 1854-55, and affirmed by the Boldt Decision of 1974, required the state to repair or replace culverts on state land that harmed fish passage, reducing the number of fish otherwise available for tribal harvest.

In 2013, the court issued an injunction ordering the state to speed up the process and replace culverts with the worst impacts on fish habitat by 2030. In 2016 the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the district court injunction. Attorney General Bob Ferguson appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld the 9th Circuit ruling in 2018 in a 4-4 decision in what is often referred to as “the culvert case.”

**NEW TUESDAY/THURSDAY SCHEDULE**

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**VAUGHN NORTH TUE/THUR MORNING**

- 9:00 Vaughn Elementary School
- 9:02 Wright Bliss Rd NW @ Olson Dr NW
- 9:03 Wright Bliss Road @ 104th St Ct NW
- 9:05 4 Corners gas station @ SR 302
- 9:08 SR 302 @150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 9:09 SR 302 @ 140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 9:11 SR 302 @ Charboneau Construction
- 9:14 Cost Less Pharmacy/Lake Kathryn Village
- 9:21 Purdy Park & Ride

**EVERGREEN NORTH TUE/THUR MORNING**

- 9:00 Evergreen Elementary School
- 9:04 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 9:05 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @ 193rd Ave
- 9:10 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 9:11 Home Gas Station @ KP Hwy N
- 9:14 167th Ave Ct NW @ KP Hwy N
- 9:15 Volunteer Park
- 9:18 Food Market in Key Center
- 9:19 KP Hwy N @ Minterwood Dr NW
- 9:26 Lake Kathryn Village/Cost Less Pharmacy
- 9:32 Purdy Park & Ride

**PURDY SOUTH TUE/THUR AFTERNOON**

- 4:42 Purdy Park & Ride
- 4:49 Lake Kathryn Village/Cost Less Pharmacy
- 4:52 SR 302 @ Windermere Realty, 118th Ave
- 4:54 SR 302 @ 140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 4:56 SR 302 @150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 4:58 4 Corners gas station @ SR 302
- 5:00 Wright Bliss Road @ 104th St Ct NW
- 5:01 Wright Bliss Road @ Olson Dr NW
- 5:03 Food Market in Key Center
- 5:06 Volunteer Park
- 5:07 167th Ave Ct NW @ KP Hwy N
- 5:10 Home Gas Station @ KP Hwy N
- 5:11 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 5:16 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 5:17 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @ 193rd Ave
- 5:21 Evergreen Elementary School

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# THE GREATER ALARM

**FIRE DISTRICT NO.16 NEWSLETTER**

**SPRING 2021**

**MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF**



I believe it is safe for me to speak for all of us here at Fire District No. 16, 2020 was one chaotic year. Even with all the chaos, I am very proud of how the District managed through the COVID pandemic. The District adjusted to new ways of doing business, including moving to virtual sessions on Zoom and wrestling through new personal protective equipment. Most of all, I am proud that we remained purposeful about providing the community with the best possible emergency services we could.

This year will continue to be busy. The Board of Fire Commissioners adopted a set of organizational goals for this year that set expectations high. These goals have multiple objectives and key results, which will keep us all focused throughout the year.

While we have made many improvements to our staffing, deployment, and administrative processes, the District continues to have limited depth in our core services. The District's staffing and deployment support our ability to handle one major emergency (with minor automatic aid) or two minor emergencies at the same time. Unfortunately, the District continues its long history of receiving "incident clusters," where we receive two to four incidents back to back or within a short time.

Within the goals set by the District's Board of Fire Commissioners is the plan to ask the community to support a lid lift on the Regular Fire Levy. The last lid lift was six years ago, and today the Regular Fire Levy has dropped to \$1.24 per thousand from the \$1.50 authorized under the RCW. These funds will be used to hire additional career firefighters, add volunteer firefighters, replace apparatus, improve training props, replace aging safety equipment, and increase reserves to an appropriate level. The current discussion is to have this measure in front of the community in August.

In addition to the lid lift, the Fire Commissioners have asked Staff to start the planning process for a potential Capital Facilities Bond. This planning process may replace the Key Center Fire Station and place a District facility on Herron Island. The planning process will take time and involve many from the community. The District does not believe the planning process will be complete until 2022 or 2023.

As always, it is my highest privilege to serve as your Fire Chief. While it has only been a short two years, I remain excited about the positive impacts the District is making, the progress that is occurring, and the responsible planning that is underway.

I look forward to seeing you all while I am out and about in our great community.

Stay safe!  
Chief Morrow

**SOME NEW.....SOME USED!**

Over the last year, the District has made a substantial investment in its fleet's maintenance and repair. Assistant Chief Wolverton has built positive relationships with service vendors, utilized new technology to track our fleet usage and costs, and has worked towards updating the fleet with both new and used units. All actions that will maximize the long-term public investment in the District's fleet.



Later this year, the District will take delivery of three new Medic units, our primary response units. Thanks to a substantial donation from the Ruth Bramhall Estate, the District was able to place a new water rescue tow unit in service. Finally, Chief Wolverton brokered deals on a used Engine and used Rescue, allowing the District to surplus some apparatus that dates back to the mid-1980s.

**COMMON HEART ATTACK WARNING SIGNS**

Are you familiar with the signs and symptoms of a possible heart attack? While they may differ for men and women, the most common are chest discomfort that lasts for several minutes, pain that radiates into one or both arms, the neck, back, or jaw, shortness of breath, and nausea or vomiting.

If you are experiencing these signs or symptoms, call 911 immediately. Time is critical in these situations, and it is best to be transported to the hospital by ambulance instead of your private car.



Learn more at [Heart.org/HeartAttack](http://Heart.org/HeartAttack).  
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**HELP US HELP YOU THROUGH COMMUNITY CONNECT**

The District recently expanded its pre-planning tool to include Community Connect. Community Connect allows anyone within the District's service area to sign up and provide lifesaving information ahead of an emergency. Please take a look at the District's Community Connect page via this link or by accessing the QR code.  
<https://www.communityconnect.io/info/wa-keypeninsula>





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## All PSD Schools Open to In-Person Teaching

High schools reopen one year after pandemic closure.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

A year after its abrupt closure, Peninsula School District schools are now open to all students who want to attend in-person classes. Peninsula, Gig Harbor and Henderson Bay high schools, the last to open, welcomed students in mid-March.

Health guidelines require physical distancing, masks and health attestations, but the district has been working with those requirements since it opened its doors to high-needs students at the beginning of the school year. Kindergartners and first-graders returned Sept. 28; second-graders Jan. 19; third-, fourth- and fifth-graders Feb. 4; and middle school students Feb. 25.

PSD Superintendent Art Jarvis called the effort a labor of love. PHS Principal Joe Potts said the counselors deserved gold medals for their work in creating a master schedule. Staff has worked on the logistics of welcoming students into the building, passing in hallways, and how to manage lunch time, learning from the experience of the grades that returned before

**"WE WANT DESPERATELY TO HAVE OUR STUDENTS BACK."**

Beloate and Epstein will teach both in-person and virtual classes to accommodate PHS students who have chosen to stay virtual. Beloate will teach drama production as a combined virtual and in-person class.

PHS special education teachers Wendy Christiansen and Joelle Rickard have been teaching their 22 students in-person since early fall. "Preparation for reopening has been stressful, but the joy of in-person contact makes all the difference in the world. It is what gets me up in the morning," Christiansen said. "Our special education students are so looking forward to being with their peers. And this gives them the chance to be the leaders. They have it down," she said, speaking of the mitigation procedures they have practiced over the last six months.

"Kids have been craving some normalcy," said Carys Bice, a parent of a 2020 graduate, a junior and a freshman. Her son, who also plays football and as a junior is well established, has fared well. But her daughter, a freshman, did not have those connections.

"She is really excited to be returning in person," Bice said. She and her husband

both work full-time and have not been able to supply the support and structure the school can offer once it is open again.

Junior Jake Bice said that virtual classes had gone better than he expected, especially as technical glitches were resolved. But he said most students are excited to be getting back to the building. "It will be good to see friends and to have the in-person contact with teachers."

There are still unknowns, and that has made both students and teachers nervous. "We don't know what we don't know — how things might be different, adjusting teaching and expectations," Beloate said. "In my class we talk about the habits of mind, and one of those habits is thinking flexibly. I try to model that."

According to middle school parent Tina McKail, that has not been a problem at Key Peninsula Middle School. "It has been fantastic. He is so happy," she said of her son. "He doesn't mind the mask — he'll do whatever it takes. It has been uplifting."

"It has been such a gift in a strange way," said Beloate, who has taught for 29 years including nine at PHS. "All of us have learned. I think about the phrase 'growing pains' — it's hard, but you come out the other side."

Because the reopening took place about a month into the second semester, staff built a schedule that took into account the teachers and students who planned to remain virtual through the rest of the year; they continued with the same classes and those returning to in-person classes continued with the same teachers but using the hybrid schedule.

Kara Beloate teaches English, theater, and dance at PHS. "I am ready, but there will be things that come up that we will have to roll with. But what overrides that is my excitement to be here with the kids, that relationship, meeting them for the first time live. I have never even seen some of their faces," she said.

Joel Epstein, who teaches precalculus, said it can be difficult to assess how well students understand when using Zoom and he is looking forward to seeing them in person.

Joel Epstein, who teaches precalculus, said it can be difficult to assess how well students understand when using Zoom and he is looking forward to seeing them in person.

Bice said he views the challenges this way: "It will be cool — nothing like this has ever happened before." ■



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**Perennially Yours**

Hostas, hydrangeas and hellebores rise to the top.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

For many a practical Key Peninsula gardener, this is the time to focus on the vegetable garden — planting seeds, nurturing starts — but this is also a time when the more fanciful aspects of gardening can make life just a little better. And perennials can literally be both front and center.

Unlike annuals, which last for only a year, perennials live for at least three years and may thrive for more than 10. Some die back completely until a seemingly miraculous reincarnation the following season, and some continue to grow and change above ground all year long. The possibilities are endless.

Garden designers Taylor Reed and Cheryl Painter think of perennials as the bones and structure of the garden. “They may cost more up front, but you come out ahead in the long run. They add

color and texture to the garden through all seasons and brighten up the grayest of days. Plus, life is busy, and it’s nice to know you don’t have to redo your garden every year,” Reed said.

Claudia Loy, who advised many gardeners when she owned Sunnycrest Nursery, thinks of perennials as the understory of a garden, with trees and shrubs forming the backbone. “They are an investment that pays off year-round,” she said.

“In the spring you see them come to life again, then they flower and then you can enjoy the foliage. If you plan right, there is always something there.”

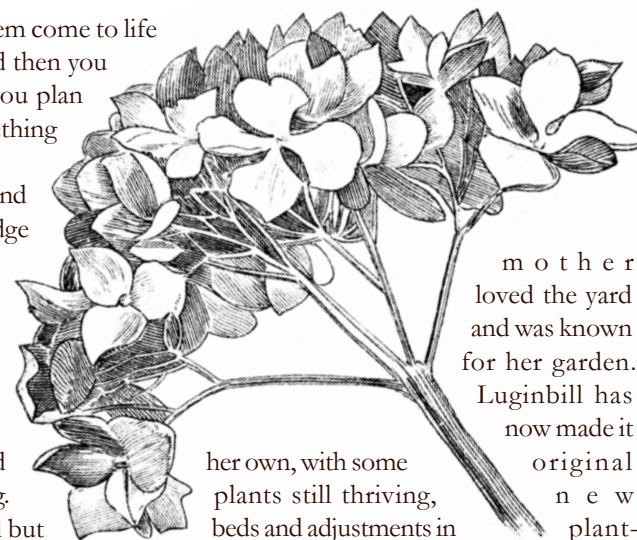
Ann Lovejoy, a gardener and writer who lives on Bainbridge Island, wrote in her book “American Mixed Border,” “For me, a garden is not something to have but something to do. My relationship with my garden, like that with my husband and my children, is ongoing. Gardens are never finished but always in the making.”

Leila Luginbill, who moved to her mother’s old house in Home with her husband

when they retired, embodies that philosophy. The site has history. Her grandmother, Leila Edmonds, one of

four daughters of George and Sylvia Allen, who helped found Home, had once lived next door. Luginbill remembers visiting her and working in the vegetable garden, bordered by a field of ubiquitous blackberries. Her parents built their house when they moved from Indiana after retirement. Luginbill and her husband, both teachers, lived in Rocky Bay until they moved to Home 10 years ago. Her

**KPGardens**



mother loved the yard and was known for her garden. Luginbill has now made it her own, with some original plants still thriving, new beds and adjustments in plantings as water flow has made

some of the yard boggier.

“Perennials are the way to go. Their blooms can be fleeting. They come up, bloom, and die back. But then the next year, there they are again,” Luginbill said. She is inspired by the innumerable plant catalogs she gets, but also visits nurseries and farmers markets to see what is blooming. She will fall in love with a plant and then figure out a place to put it. “Shop in all seasons,” she said.

Everyone has favorites. Reed and Painter love to incorporate ericas and callunas — both are heathers — into their plans. Peonies, they say, can be a low-maintenance substitute for roses. Hellebores announce that spring is coming, alliums are at their peak in the summer, and echinaceas will last through the fall. Loy loves hostas and hydrangeas, which both do well in our climate.

With so much to choose from, where does a gardener start? Lovejoy recommends looking at gardens in the neighborhood for inspiration. “Just knock on the door or leave a note if you see something you really like,” she said. And using a local independent nursery can help assure that what you purchase will thrive in your location. Loy recommends visiting botanical gardens, especially the Bellevue Botanical Garden and Heronswood in Kingston.

And, says Lovejoy, don’t be afraid to make mistakes. Perennials can always be dug up and moved. And if a plant dies, “It’s not the worst thing that can happen.” ■







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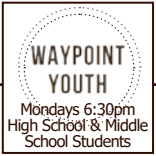
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"... WE CAN MAKE AMERICA WHAT AMERICA MUST BECOME ..."

# Gazing Into 'The Fire Next Time' by James Baldwin

The groundbreaking fiction writer was also one of the loudest and clearest voices of the Civil Rights Movement.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

The main branch of the New York City library at Fifth Avenue straddling 41st and 42nd Streets is one of the most famous public temples of knowledge in the United States. Even if you're just a regular person looking for information or inspiration, all you have to do is walk in and ask. It is that white-marble Beaux Arts landmark with those two lions, Patience on the left, Fortitude on the right, whose pillared building and park take up an entire city block.

I spent most of my senior year as an undergraduate in her research rooms and all of my lunch hours with random academics, artists and vagrants sitting on her front steps consuming the old sandwiches and cold coffee sold by street vendors. I felt I belonged there, which is why I was continually offended when the same Black security guards stopped me at the door every day every time going in and coming out without looking me in the eye to search my body and book bag, and finding nothing then ignored me without even the contemptuous courtesy of waving me on.

James Baldwin described a different experience as a Black boy in New York City.

"I was 13 and was crossing Fifth Avenue on my way to the 42nd Street library, and the cop in the middle of the street muttered as I passed him, 'Why don't you n----- stay uptown where you belong?'"

Born in Harlem in 1924, Baldwin grew up poor, gay and devoutly Christian. He wrote 20 books and many more essays, poems and plays. His voice evokes Old Testament-scale suffering unleashed for being the wrong color, loving the wrong person, or making the wrong choice, even if it's the only one. But there is also sometimes the chance for redemption in our same unholy streets, bars and bedrooms. Whatever his subject, he inevitably empathizes with "the other."

In "The Fire Next Time," white people are "the other." His argument runs through

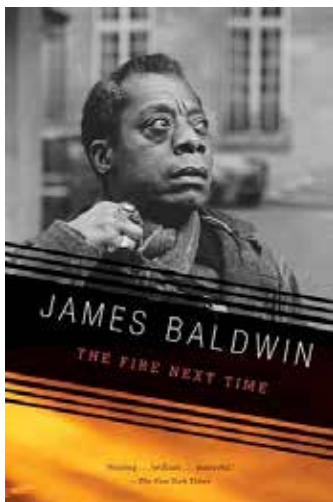
these pages like a live wire, and the shock is deeper than a casual reader may be prepared to bear.

It's a deceptively slim volume of just two essays: a letter to his 15-year-old nephew on the 100th anniversary of Emancipation and a longer piece called "Down at the Cross," which was first published in two oversized editions of The New Yorker in 1963. It also got Baldwin on the cover of Time magazine, which called him a major voice of the Civil Rights Movement.

White liberals of the day embraced him as a prophet who could finally tell them "what Black Americans want." Black activists attacked him for being too understanding of what we now call systemic racism.

After the briefest preamble in the first essay, Baldwin advises his nephew on growing up Black in America: "There is no reason for you to try to become like white people and there is no basis whatever for their impertinent assumption that they must accept you. The really terrible thing, old buddy, is that you must accept them. ... They are trapped in a history which they do not understand; and until they understand it, they cannot be released from it."

Baldwin contends that a large part of America thinks that if only Black people could be more like white people, we'd all get along.



those advances reinvigorated a backlash of violent mistrust as dangerous to democracy now as in his day.

But Baldwin not only looks the problem in the eye, he is also prepared to solve it, telling his nephew:

"And if the word integration means anything, this is what it means: that we, with love, shall force our brothers to see themselves as they are, to cease fleeing from reality and begin to change it. For this is your home, my friend, do not be driven from it; great men have done great things here, and will again, and we can make America what America must become."

When confronted by Black nationalists, like his friend Malcolm X, who accused him of being too ready to forgive a nation's sins, Baldwin wrote: "In short, we, the Black and white, deeply need each other here if we are really to become a nation — if we are really, that is, to achieve our identity, our maturity, as men and women. To create one nation has proved to be a hideously difficult task; there is certainly no need now to create two, one Black and one white.

"If we do not now dare everything, the fulfilment of that prophecy, re-created from the Bible in song by a slave, is upon us: 'God gave Noah the rainbow sign, No more water, the fire next time!'"

"The Fire Next Time" by James Baldwin, published 1963 by Dial Press, 124 pages.

James Baldwin was born in New York City August 2, 1924, and lived there most of his life. He was a prolific writer and a seminal voice in the Civil Rights and Gay Liberation Movements, earning numerous honors, including a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1954, and was made a Commander in the National Order of the Legion of Honor in 1986. Baldwin's unfinished memoir, "Remember This House," about his friendships with Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., was made into a documentary called "I Am Not Your Negro" in 2016 that was nominated for an Academy Award. A screen adaptation of his novel "If Beale Street Could Talk" won that award two years later.

Baldwin left the U.S. in 1970 for Saint-Paul-de-Vence in the south of France where, he said, he felt more at home as a gay, Black man. He died there of stomach cancer Dec. 1, 1987. He was 63 years old.

**"TO CREATE ONE NATION HAS PROVED TO BE A HIDEOUSLY DIFFICULT TASK; THERE IS CERTAINLY NO NEED NOW TO CREATE TWO, ONE BLACK AND ONE WHITE."**

"And this assumption — which, for example, makes the solution to the Negro problem depend on the speed with which

Negroes accept and adopt white standards — is revealed in all kinds of striking ways, from Bobby Kennedy's assurance that a Negro can become President in 40 years to the unfortunate tone of warm congratulation with which so many liberals address their Negro equals."

These words are all the more striking now, half a century later, when we have had a Black president and now have a Black vice president. Kennedy argued that these kinds of triumphs would prove that the power of racism in the U.S. had ended. The reality is

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## Food is Love

ANN-MARIE UGLES

Food is love. Food is history. Food is a story.

Most families have recipes passed down from preceding generations. It's not because they are gourmet or have exotic ingredients; they can be simple or laborious. What they have in common is a timeline filled with memories, like families that relish the joyful task of making Christmas tamales with, of course, plenty of extra for everyone to take some home.

I have a dear friend who loves dim sum as much as I do. Years ago, she gave me her mother's recipe for dim sum dough. It's very simple and a lot of work, but that's not the point. Decades later, after eating all over Seattle's Chinatown, chasing down new dim sum places, as well as making our own dim sum feasts together, we still glorify in these little packages of Chinese delight.

In Shanghai, we toured with abandon the miles of old alleyways filled with food stalls and were saddened to see them disappearing, as a whole community was displaced through gentrification. There was such a food history, gone to the next generation, stinky tofu and all.

Our family has two recipes that are stars at many of our celebrations. They are both unique cultural treasures that are easy to prepare.

The ceviche comes from my husband Herald's Latin American family. Ceviche in Ecuador is like stew — every family has its own version. This recipe calls for cooked shrimp, making it more palatable for those who shy away from the “raw” seafood ordinarily cooked by the citric acid of lime juice. The other ingredient, a staple in his stepmother's country of Peru, is popcorn. It sounds crazy, but a few kernels of popcorn dropped into the lemony juices and spooned up with a succulent shrimp are a wild explosion of flavor that is unique.



### Ecuadorian Shrimp Ceviche

3 pounds medium shrimp, peeled and deveined  
 1 large white onion, slivered  
 10 lemons, juiced and 1 tablespoon zest  
 1 large tomato, diced  
 1 cup parsley, finely chopped  
 ⅓ cup ketchup  
 3 tablespoons olive oil  
 salt, pepper and hot sauce to taste  
 unbuttered, unseasoned popped corn  
 Bring 1½ cups of water to a boil. Add shrimp and cook for 5 minutes. Do not overcook. When done, strain to reserve shrimp water. Chill shrimp. In a glass bowl stir in shrimp water, lemon juice, zest, ketchup, oil, hot sauce, and salt and pepper. Add the rest of the ingredients and stir to combine. Cover with plastic wrap and chill until ready to serve.

Meanwhile, pop a large bowl of air-popped or old-fashioned popped popcorn. Don't add butter or seasonings.

Dish up ceviche in a bowl with a fair amount of juice. Serve with a small bowl of popcorn on the side. To eat, drop in a few kernels of popcorn into the ceviche, so the popcorn absorbs a little of the juices. Adding too much popcorn at a time will have a disappointing, soggy effect.

This second recipe, Kraut Kuchens, comes from my childhood. My neighbors in Walla Walla were a large German family, and as I was treated like another sibling, often lost in the mix, this recipe by Mary Jo Hartzheim was handed down to me.

### Kraut Kuchens

1 pound ground pork and ½ pound ground beef  
 1 cup onion, diced  
 1 cup celery, diced  
 2 to 3 cups of good sauerkraut like Steinfelds, drained and squeezed dry  
 16 Rhodes Frozen Dinner Rolls, or your favorite dinner roll recipe  
 1 egg and 2 tablespoons water for egg wash  
 Preheat oven to 350. While yeast dough rises, make the filling. Brown ground meat and reserve to paper towel. Remove excess fat, leaving 1 tablespoon to sauté veggies, cooking halfway through, leaving them still crisp. Add back the meat and season to taste. Add sauerkraut, stir to combine and heat through.

Next, roll golf-ball sized dough balls on a floured board into oblongs. Put 1 large spoonful of filling into center of dough. Bring four corners together like an envelope, using a finger of egg wash to help seal. Place kuchens seam side down on a greased cookie sheet and brush with egg wash. Bake 25 minutes. Serve with sour cream and mustard. Makes 16. ■





Bressette with his pride and joy 1974 VW camper van named "Rosemarie." *Richard Miller*

## Ed Bressette: Renaissance Man

From solar panels and weather balloons to facilities director at Camp Seymour: Yes, he can.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

Ed Bressette wants to make his little corner of the world a better place. That desire made him a lifelong learner. It led him to a career at the YMCA. It is why he's fascinated by alternative energy. And it has made him a beloved figure in his community.

He grew up in a small town near Saratoga Springs, New York. Poor hearing and mild dyslexia marked him as a poor student.

He was bullied and told at school that he would never amount to anything. That, he said, ultimately made him stronger.

"You cannot tell me I can't do something. I will go out of my way to prove that I can do anything that I put my mind to."

His parents were supportive, and he often worked alongside them — his mother a talented seamstress and father a VW mechanic. He worked with a local

carpenter. The family moved to Gig Harbor in 1988 when Bressette was a senior in high school to be closer to his mother's parents.

He hoped to study mechanical engineering, but he couldn't get the financial aid he needed.

He worked in construction and as a boat builder. He discovered country dancing and met his future wife, Dana, a horticulturist with an interest in native plants, at a dance in Tacoma. They camped, hiked and continued to go to dances, sometimes

at the Key Peninsula Civic Center. Less than a year later, in 1993, they married and moved to a place on Lackey Road.

Ed applied for a job at YMCA Camp Seymour as a technician, for \$6.10 an hour — he knew he could earn money with side jobs, but he wanted a steady paycheck.

Later, they purchased 6 acres in Lakebay and Ed designed a house with high ceilings to make the 1,100 square feet feel roomier.

They discovered the cost of getting power to the site was prohibitive. "Why pay that for the privilege of paying an electric bill for the rest of my life?"

Ed said. He found a solar system in the Little Nickel — his chief source for building materials in pre-internet days — and decided to go off grid.

Ed knew nothing about solar panels. He went to the library, talked to people who had experience, and drew analogies from his knowledge of cars. The solar system powered his tools, and works well to this day. He went on to form a small non-profit to help others install systems.

"Everything new I learn is like a language," Ed said. "Once you learn a few languages, learning the next one is easy. I can take what I learned with my hands and a new problem is like another problem with variations. Plus, you learn from your mistakes."

Ed is known for his inability to say no to someone in need of repairs. It may be a

single mother with a failed heating system, the coffee machine at Close to Home Espresso where he meets with a regular

group most mornings, or the brakes on his daughter-in-law's Beetle.

When his son, Sky, was in middle school Ed worked with Richard Miller, Sky's science teacher, building, launching and predicting the flight pattern of helium weather balloons with cameras and tracking devices. Ed's living room was covered with equipment for five years. The two also established a nonprofit to bring more science activities to local schools.

"Ed is a Renaissance man. If I were going to go across country and I wanted someone that could help me out of any jam, it would be him," Miller said. "I'd take him over some of the Ph.D.s I have been around. No guile, no ego, no drama. He has a heart of gold."

A few years ago, Ed bought a 1974 VW

"HE IS SO GIFTED, AND WHAT HE MAY NOT KNOW, HE STUDIES AND SOON DISCOVERS."

"I WILL GO OUT OF MY WAY TO PROVE THAT I CAN DO ANYTHING THAT I PUT MY MIND TO."



camper van. He rebuilt it with solar panels to power his cooler and lights. On their last road trip to Oklahoma, investigating Dana's midwestern family roots, Ed didn't have the tools he needed when the car broke down. They were towed to a local garage where, he said, "I was able to teach the young mechanic a few things and the mechanic let me use his tools."

Recently he returned to sewing. He designed and constructed his own lightweight backpacking gear, customized to accommodate his equipment. He thinks it may turn into a quasi-retirement business. And he's been making masks of his own design, using a fabric he says has better than N95's filtering capacity.

Aside from a few years in the for-profit construction business — a time he described as miserable — Ed spent his working career at the YMCA. He spent four years at the Tacoma branch before returning to Camp Seymour, where he was the property manager for 13 years. He was part of its transformation from a camp with 12 cabins with cold water to an environmentally focused state-of-the-art destination.

In late 2019, Ed was promoted to facilities director for the entire Pierce-Kitsap County YMCA. Four months later COVID-19

reared its head. Programs and buildings closed for six months.

YMCA President and CEO Charlie Davis said that Ed has been a lifeline. "He has literally saved the Y millions of dollars repairing and solving very complex problems, but even more than the repair itself is his keen ability to see the problem before it reaches a critical stage. He is so gifted, and what he may not know, he studies and soon discovers. Even now, we are operating with a very small team of loyal staff. Ed travels from Sumner to Silverdale on a daily basis to help solve problems. I cannot imagine our Y without him. He literally is keeping us afloat," he said.

Ed said he's been thinking a lot about biases lately.

When acquaintances complain that current lumber or fuel prices are due to the current administration, he shakes his head. "I learned a lot about the supply chain during the pandemic. It is way more complicated.

"I have learned there are multiple ways to fix things and there are multiple ways to run things in life," he said. "We need to be more accepting of all. We all bleed blood, it's all red. If you look at the history of wars it is because people get all riled up about their thoughts being right." ■



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# Introducing an easier way to celebrate Mother's Day

We've created a new, free **Moms We Love** feature on [keypennews.org](http://keypennews.org) to commemorate our wonderful mothers. The section is filled with pictures of Moms accompanied by your loving words.

Gather your thoughts, focus your emotions and check your spelling on 50 words about your Mom. Add a clear and flattering photo and email to [calendar@keypennews.org](mailto:calendar@keypennews.org). It's painless, free and you won't have to take off your shirt to show your undying love.

[KP News reserves the right to edit all submissions]

## CIVIC CENTER CORNER



The Key Peninsula Civic Center Association was incorporated on April 10, 1956. Led by then-president O.S. (Ollie) Whitmore, the civic center was originally part of the Vaughn Union High School. For the last 65 years this vintage facility has been lovingly maintained by community volunteers and managed by a dedicated board of directors.

Happy 65th Anniversary to the Key Peninsula Civic Center!



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**TOP LEFT** One of the first trilliums of the season. *Anna Brones* **TOP RIGHT** A Great Blue Heron, one of a nesting pair near a marshy pond in Vaughn. *Christine McKail* **MID LEFT** This juvenile male Anna's hummingbird has between 1,000 to 1,500 feathers, the least of any bird. *Christine McKail* **MID RIGHT** Daffodils herald spring in Home. *Lisa Bryan, KP News* **LOWER LEFT** A couple enjoys sunset along Case Inlet. *Steve West* **LOWER RIGHT** Spring rainbow north of the mainland Herron Island ferry landing. *Ed Johnson, KP News*