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KPFD Rejects ILA with Morrow, Approves New Chief Search, Suspends Interim Chief Wolverton

Fire commissioners took multiple significant actions in a single meeting Dec. 14.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

The Key Peninsula Fire District board of fire commissioners unexpectedly voted to put Assistant Fire Chief Hal Wolverton on paid administrative leave during its biweekly meeting Dec. 14.

After emerging from an executive session near the end of the meeting, Chair Stan Moffett said the commissioners had just received “discrimination complaints against” Wolverton and that he would be removed from duty immediately pending the outcome of an investigation.

Moffett stressed this was not a punitive action but part of a process just beginning. He also stressed there was no connection with the transition in leadership or chief search.

Division Chief Jason Learned was made the new interim chief Dec. 15. He has been with KPFD for 14

“I WANT THE CREW TO KNOW THAT THIS WAS A SUDDEN CHANGE FOR EVERYBODY, AND THEY’VE GOT TO KNOW THAT WE’RE STILL GOING TO MOVE FORWARD.”

years and was promoted to division chief in August 2020. He had been responsible for training and medical services oversight, which went to Captain Robert Bosch.

Wolverton had been appointed interim chief Nov. 23 after Fire Chief Morrow resigned to take the top job at Central Pierce Fire & Rescue in Spanaway Dec. 1.

Wolverton served in the role previously

Division Chief Jason Learned is new interim chief. *Garrett Morrow*



between the resignation of Fire Chief Guy Allen and the arrival of Morrow, from January to April 2019. He has been with KPFD for 31 years and never been the subject of disciplinary action.

Earlier in the meeting, the board voted to begin a search for a new fire chief using The Prothman Company, the same executive search firm that found Morrow.

Instead of hiring a new chief, the fire commissioners had considered entering an interlocal agreement (ILA) with Central Pierce that could have allowed Morrow to continue his duties as chief for KPFD while also running the other district, as a potential cost-saving measure.

Moffett told KP News he could provide no details about the allegations against Wolverton but did say the investigation

would be conducted by a third party and “take as long as it takes.” He also said it was “possible” that an ILA with Central Pierce and Morrow would be reconsidered.

“The fire service is a very expensive operation to run and as we progress it’s going to get more and more expensive,” Moffett told KP News before the meeting. “Administration is very, very costly ... There’s no reason at all why we couldn’t go out and contract for administration from another district. That doesn’t mean that we’d be merging. That doesn’t mean we’d be consolidating.”

Immediately prior to his suspension, Wolverton told KP News, “No one should notice a change in the continuity of service just because we had a change in leadership. When you call 911, you will get a response. The boots on the ground are still doing their job. I want the crew to know that this was a sudden change for everybody, and they’ve got to know that we’re still going to move forward.”

Three fire stations on the KP are staffed 24/7, he said: there are two-person medic

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Library corner after crash Nov. 30. *Bart Wolfe*

Historic Vaughn Library Hall Damaged by Car Crash

Despite the setback, the last standing 19th century meeting place on the KP is coming back to life thanks to the community it was built to serve.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

The 1893 Vaughn Library Hall located at the corner of Hall and Van Slyke Road NW sustained substantial damage the night of Nov. 30 when a car smashed into a corner of the building. The driver fled, leaving behind a half empty bottle of liquor, an undriveable vehicle, and thousands of dollars of more work to be done to the only surviving building of its kind on the Key Peninsula.

When contacted the next day by Pierce County deputies, the car owner said it must have been taken from her residence while she was absent.

The hall is the last remaining of many such structures that once dotted the KP, built by volunteer community members for meetings, dances, celebrations and church services. The hall was donated to the KP Historical Society & Museum in 2016 and has been under restoration since 2019.

“It’s the biggest artifact in our collection,”

said society board member Judy Mills. “The history out here is deep.”

“You can see what happened: When the guy came down the road, he hit the curb and that lifted him up, and that’s why he sailed up and planted himself into the wall,” said board member and project manager Bart Wolfe, a retired forensic architect with expertise in historic restoration.

“Of course, the driver had to hit the corner we’ve been working on the hardest,” he said. “Just hours before we got hit,

we finished the outside. Now we have to replace all the siding again. This is all new, but it’s an exact match to the original with compound mitered outside corners.”

The affected room was a 1926 addition built to house the growing library, which had previously occupied just a corner of the multifaceted hall.

The restoration has been a largely volunteer effort, but the more difficult work is

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“OF COURSE, THE DRIVER HAD TO HIT THE CORNER WE’VE BEEN WORKING ON THE HARDEST.”



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Lisa Bryan's column, What I Think About That will return in February

VAUGHN LIBRARY FROM PAGE 1

done by general contractor Chuck West Construction.

“I do what the volunteers can’t,” West said. “Anything structural that has to be inspected.”

The damage is repairable but will take time and \$4,000 to \$10,000 in labor and materials, according to Wolfe and West. The building was not insured since the county considers it “unoccupied” under construction. “We could have contractor’s insurance during construction, but we simply can’t afford it,” Wolfe said.

West and his crew have been working on the project from the beginning.

“I’d done a couple of other restoration projects in the area, including the Glencove Hotel and a couple of older homes,” West said. “We work together with the historic landmark group to make sure the things we do meet their requirements. We tend to have to try to recreate some of the wood-work to match, so there’s a lot of running wood through the planer, the router, trying to match the face of the board that’s already there, because you can’t buy that anymore. All of the windows are exact replicas.”

The hall began as a dance floor built by Vaughn residents on land owned by Alfred and Mary Jeanette Van Slyke to celebrate the Fourth of July in 1889, a few months before Washington became a state. The land was later deeded for \$1 to the new Vaughn Bay Public Library Association after walls and a roof were added in 1893.

The iconic tower is part of the original structure, but its purpose remains a mystery. “The tower had a pole sticking out the top,” Wolfe said. “We know it wasn’t a flag pole and the tower didn’t have a bell in it or anything. We think it was a landmark because people in the early days all came in by boat. If you hadn’t been here before, you’d need a landmark.”

“The tower was open to the weather originally,” said Paul Michaels, Wolfe’s co-project manager. “We found a metal pan in the bottom that would drain out the front.”

In 1956, the library housed in the 1926 extension became part of the Pierce County Library System and was moved to the Vaughn Union High School, which later became the KP Civic Center, in the same space now occupied by the historical society museum. In 1957, the hall was sold by the Vaughn Bay Library Public Association for \$600 to Harmon Van Slyke, Sr., a descendant of the early settler, and was a private home until the death of its last occupant, Jerry Wolniewicz, Alfred Van Slyke’s grandson, in 2012.

In 2016, Wolniewicz’s sister, Donna Docken, donated the building to the



Bart Wolfe describes how joinery in the library wall that stood straight for a century was forced out of alignment by the crash. *Ted Olinger, KP News*

historical society.

Harmon had divided the main meeting room into living spaces with a lowered ceiling, and all the windows were resized and replaced.

“But luckily, they just covered the original (interior) siding with quarter-inch Masonite,” Wolfe said. “As we peeled all that back, here we have the original colors on the original tongue and groove bead board. The original light fixtures were still there above the artificial ceiling, so we’re going to be able to reuse those fixtures.”

As volunteers cleared out the residential interior walls and detritus of decades, they made a discovery

among the remains of another addition and stage built in 1910 on the southeast side of the building.

“Behind the stage were the original dressing rooms, and in the dressing rooms there is graffiti,” Wolfe said. “Things that say ‘the class of 1937 presents’ with the name of the play, who the people were to play those characters, and for a lot of our old timers those names mean something. We even have a photo of some kids standing on the stage. All that will be displayed.”

One of the last major challenges will be restoring the floor, which will mean replacing or repairing pieces in a pine sea of interconnecting geometric patterns installed over an older subfloor likely added when the library addition and kitchen were added in 1926.

“I found a reference to a similar floor calling it a ‘picture frame pattern,’” Michaels

said. “The flooring is 1×3 tongue and groove Douglas fir, probably milled by a local company.”

“We have a wonderful local contractor who can match these unusual-sized planks and patterns in the floor,” Wolfe said. “When I talked to him, I said, ‘I want you to be able to remove the dirt but not the history,’ and he said, ‘I know exactly what you’re talking about,’ so I think that’s going to work.

“What I love about this is that these (builders) were not architects and engineers. These were farmers, but the quality of the work they did was really lovely. They were building it for

themselves; what I call vernacular architecture. You could see they really cared about the way it looked, the way it came out, and that’s what we love too.”

The KP Historical Society plans to reopen the hall to the community, the inheritors of the residents who built it, for events of up to 200 people within the next two years, Wolfe said.

“We’re always looking for more volunteers,” said Cathy Williams, the society’s president, whether to work on the hall, on other projects or in the museum. “We’re always interviewing older residents, preserving family stories, scanning and archiving photos.”

For more information on the Vaughn Library Hall restoration, go to www.keypen-insulamuseum.org.

Joseph Pentheroudakis contributed to this report. ■



Under construction c. 1893. *KP Historical Society*

VAUGHN LIBRARY HALL

1887 Van Slyke family arrives in Vaughn from Yates Center, Kansas.

1889 The Bowery, a dance floor decorated with tree boughs, is built that spring on Alfred Van Slyke’s property. Harry and Julia Coblentz, friends of the Van Slykes, arrive in Vaughn and purchase land from Van Slyke; including the future library site.

1892 Vaughn Bay Public Library Association is formed; library is located at the general store and post office.

1894 The Coblentzes deed parcel to the library association for \$1. Construction of a one-room combined meeting and library hall on the former dance floor site, which may have begun in 1893, is completed.

1910 Hall is expanded with the addition of a stage and dressing rooms.

1926 A separate room is added for the library, which has outgrown its corner of the meeting hall. The library now has its own entry. A kitchen is added and a basement is dug.

1956 Library moves to the high school in Vaughn (now KP Civic Center), becomes part of the Pierce County library system. Many books are left in the old hall.

1957 Vaughn Bay Public Library Association quitclaims the property to Harmon Van Slyke, Sr. for \$600. The hall is converted to a private residence, but the original structure remains unchanged.

2012 Harmon Van Slyke’s grandson and last occupant of the house, Jerry Wolniewicz, dies. Wolniewicz’s sister Donna Docken inherits the property.

2015 Docken offers to donate the property to the KP Historical Society.

2016 KPHS board (Judy Mills, president) accepts the donation. Cleanup begins.

2017 Pierce County Council unanimously adds the hall to the county’s Register of Historic Places.

2018 Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation unanimously designates the hall a Historic Building.

2019 Building permit obtained; restoration work begins.

Sources: R.T. Arledge, “Early Days of the Key Peninsula,” Pierce County archives, Key Peninsula Historical Society.

FIRE CHIEF FROM PAGE 1

crews at Wauna and Longbranch, and an engine crew of two to four firefighters in Home together with a battalion chief. Volunteers respond to the stations in Key Center and at Four Corners to staff extra engines or water tenders as needed.

“Our medical calls are still 80% to 90% of our calls, so those medic units go out first and then if there’s a fire, they go with the engine,” said Public Information Officer Anne Nesbit. “Right now, 44 (Wauna) is the busiest station. The engine is at Home because it’s kind of in the middle of the peninsula, and it’s mostly manpower support; they’ll go to backup the medic unit.”

Wolverton had also been taking over a hiring process begun by Morrow, bringing on five new career personnel in January.

“We started with seven but two didn’t make the cut, so that dropped us down to five,” Wolverton said. “Our plan is in February to start another hiring process for at least another two.”

Expanding the staff will not mean expanding services but filling holes in the schedule. “This is geared for relief for the line that we have now to address some overtime issues,” Nesbit said. “Right now, we’re not going to deploy any new rigs, it’s just another person on the shift.”

The new hires include two current KP firefighter volunteers, she said.

“We’re going to start another hiring process as soon as we can” to fill the last two positions, Wolverton said. “I just wanted to let the dust settle a little bit here. I’ve got a lot going on before we can think about starting another process.”

The department will also be getting three new ambulances starting in January that should be in service by the end of February. They will replace three rigs that will be sold “basically for salvage,” Nesbit said.

Wolverton said he would not apply for the top job. ■

KPFD Buys Second Key Center Real Estate Parcel

The fire department may have a brand new headquarters in a few years.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

The Key Peninsula Fire District closed on its second piece of Key Center real estate Dec. 15, agreeing to pay \$1.2 million for the property known historically as the Olson estate: the residence between Sound Credit Union and Sunnycrest Nursery on KP Highway NW, plus the pasture behind



KPFD now owns the Olson estate home and pasture and the former O’Callahan’s property on the corner but building new facilities there will take years, and perhaps a public vote.

Apple Maps and KP News

it, with an eye toward building a new headquarters and fire training facility.

The district also purchased the former site of O’Callahan’s (aka Buck’s and Reed’s) restaurant at the intersection of KP Highway NW and Olson Drive NW in November for \$950,000.

“The board began talking about this whole issue about five years ago,” said Fire Commission Chair Stan Moffett. “We understood at that time our headquarters facility was past the point where it can be remodeled. We talked to the Citizens Advisory Panel, we looked at all the inadequacies and problems there, and we decided at that point that we wanted to move forward in looking at developing a new facility.”

The Olson estate became available over the last year, as did the O’Callahan property toward the end of summer.

“We looked at that and decided we needed to get that as well,” Moffett said. “At that

point in time, we were looking at building a larger facility, a large administrative office with community meeting rooms, a large training area, and possibly even a clinic.”

The commissioners plan to lease out both properties through a management company in the short term while figuring out what kind of facility, if any, to build.

“It’s not legal for us to get into the building investment business,” Moffett said. “However, what we have done in buying a piece of property for future use for the fire department, with an interim situation of having the opportunity to lease it out

to offset the investment, is perfectly legal. It has to do with the intent.”

Over the past six months the district has been working with Rice, Fergus, Miller — the same Bremerton architecture firm that designed The Mustard Seed Project in Key Center — to come up with a facilities plan. “Once we have that report we’ll need to

make some decisions on what we actually want to price out to do,” Moffett said. “We would not be in a position to start moving any dirt on anything for probably 46 to 60 months out.”

Moffett said he understood why there may be frustration in the community about the department buying commercial property in Key Center, especially after voters raised their own taxes by passing a 6-year fire levy lid lift in August, but there is also some misinformation out there.

“We pay property tax on all the property we have, so they’re not going to be taken off the tax rolls,” he said. “The loan we made is for about 1.8% and there’s no penalty for early payoff. So, if we decide that we don’t want to do any of this, we’re going to sell those properties and repay the loan.”

Commissioner Shawn Jensen said he was sympathetic to community skepticism.

“I understand their feelings about it right after the levy,” he said. “I’m pretty tax averse myself and generally don’t like them. But in my mind the local taxing districts are where you get the best bang for your bucks. If it makes sense for our community, it’s not like we’re sending money elsewhere.

“But with regard to the timing of the thing; it’s unfortunate but that’s just when the parcels became available,” he said. “And if we got a couple years down the road and the community is dead set against doing anything there, we always have the option of putting those parcels right back on the market and letting them go.”

If a new facility is built, whether or not it will go to a public vote for funding depends on the price tag.

“If we’re getting into the 10, 12 million dollar range, in all probability we’d have to go out for a public voted bond,” Moffett said. “If we were going to do something more modest, in the neighborhood of five, six, seven million, there’s a good possibility we could do a loan.”

He pointed out that the current headquarters, Station 46, would then be available to sell.

“The credit union is planning on doing some things; my understanding is in the next 18 to 24 months,” Moffett said. “With their new buildings and 46 across the street being redeveloped or torn down or whatever the case might be, then we’d start having a nice little business district right in downtown Key Center.”

Editor’s note: The Olson estate property was incorrectly identified in our December edition article, “Interim Fire Chief Appointed as District Faces Major Expansion Decisions.” We regret the error. ■

“WE WOULD NOT BE IN A POSITION TO START MOVING ANY DIRT ON ANYTHING FOR PROBABLY 46 TO 60 MONTHS OUT.”

“WE PAY PROPERTY TAX ON ALL THE PROPERTY WE HAVE.”

The Blue House on the Highway

Part of an original homestead, the Olson estate has been sold to KPFD for possible development.

JOSEPH PENTHEROUDAKIS, KP NEWS

Key Center can be a busy place, and unless one is an old-timer or paying close attention it's easy to miss the blue house on the west side of the road, on a slope between Sunnycrest Nursery and Sound Credit Union. The Key Peninsula Fire Department purchased the property and the adjacent pasture, a total of about 4 acres, from the estate of Don and Shirley Olson on Dec. 15 as part of a possible expansion plan. (See "KPFD Buys Second Key Center Real Estate Parcel," in this edition.)

The name Key Peninsula was the winning entry in a contest sponsored almost 100 years ago, in 1931, by local businessmen eager to come up with an identity for their remote but unnamed outpost of a community. The commercial hub was Key Center, at the intersection of the Longbranch-Gig Harbor Road that ran the length of the peninsula and the road that wound its way over the hill connecting Glen Cove on the east and Vaughn Bay to the west.

If you name it, they will come; that was the hope. And they did.

Today Key Center is the closest thing to a town center on the KP. Stores and services, eateries and health care providers, a bank and a nursery, a barber and a library, a fire station and a thrift store all line the short stretch of the Key Peninsula Highway as it emerges from under the shadows of sky-high evergreens.

Don died in 2011, Shirley in 2020. They built the house in 1953, and it was where their daughters Donna, Claudia, Darcie and Debby would grow up.

Don was born in 1927 in what would later become Key Center. His Swedish-born grandfather Andrew Olson had filed a homestead claim in 1888 to farm 145 acres west of today's highway. Sunnycrest Farm on Olson Drive is part of the original homestead.

Don and Shirley met in high school and married in 1947. Shirley was born in Longbranch to George and Minnie Rickert, also in 1927. Her grandfather August Rickert and grandmother Hulda had emigrated from Germany in 1883. After a few years in Wisconsin and Minnesota, the family moved to Longbranch in 1901. By the 1920s, Shirley's grandparents,

parents, aunts and uncles all owned property at the south end of the peninsula. The section of the highway south of Filucy Bay was known as Rickert Road to the locals.

The move from remote and rural Longbranch to the Olson family's turf in Key Center agreed with Shirley, her daughter Claudia Loy said. Don and Shirley rented

for a while near Key Center, and in 1952 bought the land next to the highway from Don's father Elmer.

"My mother loved living there," Loy said. "She could see whatever was going on. She was raised at the end of the road in Longbranch and was ready to begin a life that wasn't as rural and remote. She loved having the store across the street, the fire department, the library. She never wanted to be anywhere else."

There were a few more houses on that block in the early years. Loy remembered Charlie Wells, who would later become captain of the Herron Island ferry, and his sons Joe and Mike; the family eventually moved to the island. There was no lack of neighbor kids for the girls to play with, in addition to their many cousins and friends. "We used to roller skate on the highway," Donna Summerhays remembers. "Can you imagine? I'm afraid to even cross that road now."

Shirley loved to entertain and joining the Rickerts and the Olsons meant plenty of aunts, uncles and cousins to invite for dinner and parties. "Our house wasn't big, but it was bigger than that of most other relatives, so we had big parties," Loy said. "But with so many of us around being related, we joked that we had to go off the peninsula to find a husband."

And then there were the dance parties at the civic center and in Longbranch. "Our parents and a group of their friends always went," Summerhays said. "On Halloween they all went in the same costume theme. We grew up as kids going to dances at the Longbranch hall, sleeping on the benches there. Claudia and I are great schottische and polka dancers."

Don was one of the first volunteer firefighters when District 16, the first fire district on the peninsula, was organized in 1952. He would go on to serve as the department's second volunteer chief from 1955 to 1957, succeeding Earle Knapp.

Don was one of the first responders in the early morning hours of Feb. 4, 1970, when a fire engulfed Dominic's grocery store and Ken Brones' hardware and lumber store, burning the buildings to the ground. He was awakened by the roar of the flames across the road.

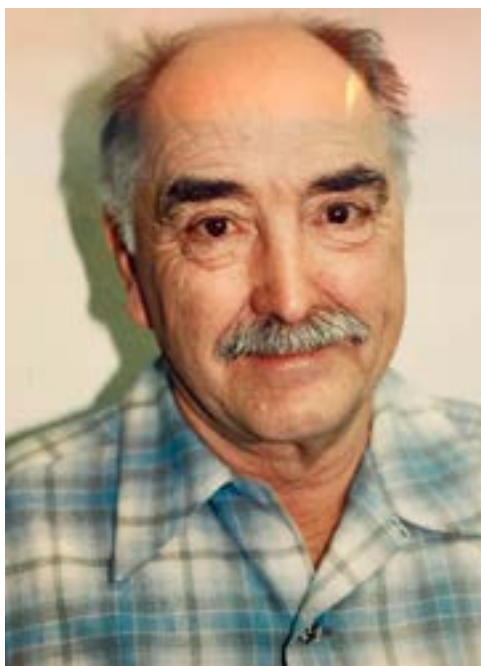
Key Center was reborn from the ashes, resuming the trajectory it was set on in the 1930s. More businesses sprouted along the west side of the highway. Around 1982 Claudia and her husband Dale Loy bought the nursery that Isamu "Sam" Momi had run for a few years north of the Olson house and started Sunnycrest Nursery. Don put up the building "once he was sure

we were serious," Claudia said. The Loy family sold the business about four years ago.

With the sale of the Olson property the face of Key Center will almost certainly be transformed once again, perhaps in time to mark the 100 years since the naming of the peninsula and the birth of its business district.

And throw a huge dance party with schottisches and polkas. ■

WITH THE SALE OF THE OLSON PROPERTY, THE FACE OF KEY CENTER WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE TRANSFORMED ONCE AGAIN.



Don Olson was one of the first volunteer firefighters when District 16 was organized in 1952 and served until the 1970s. He was the volunteer chief from 1955-57. *Key Peninsula Fire Department*

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Rion Tisino

GUEST COLUMNIST



Being Diversity

First, I'd like to let everyone know that I am only exercising my First Amendment rights here. I am not discussing this subject from a scholarly perspective but as a civic-minded parent with a master's degree in social work who has tried to help his community and who, I hope, has a decent level of common sense.

I have owned property on the Key Peninsula for over 14 years. It took me 13 years to let my middle child have a chance to learn in the Peninsula School District. I remember a principal telling me, "Rion, if you want diversity, you have to be it."

In the fall of 2021, I was excited that my daughter would be one of the first students to attend the new Evergreen Elementary. As we waited in line with other families to take our first tour of the school, I could see and hear the microaggressions from folk and the discomfited staff during their interactions with me, whom some might call "an intense Black man."

Sadly, my daughter is not finishing her last elementary grade at that school.

I moved to the KP to make a positive change, but I am starting to ask myself, why am I here?

Will I put my son in this school district where he may suffer emotionally because other parents fail to teach their children about loving people for the content of their character and not the color of their skin? It's not fair for him to be made an outsider when both parents have master's degrees and are law-abiding citizens.

When we talk about Critical Race Theory, what are we talking about? We are talking about an academic framework created in the 1970s primarily by the civil rights lawyer and scholar Derrick Bell to identify, describe and examine social, cultural and legal issues affected by and contributing to racism. CRT is grounded in what is called Critical Theory created by Max Horkheimer, whose goal was to develop an intellectual system to critique and change societies.

To my knowledge, CRT is not studied outside of graduate level courses and certainly not in PSD. But radicals have turned it into an all-purpose punching bag to undermine any heartfelt effort by our public schools to teach our children about their history and their country and their place in both, so that no child will feel ashamed of who they are.

That's why I was so discouraged when I heard about our school board president

describing his participation in the equity, diversity and inclusion committee to ensure "our school district is not just focused on one or two sub-entities but that we are making sure all our students — special ed, homeless, autistic kids, dyslexic kids — that they all have the equal opportunity to be successful, not just one subgroup." ("Candidates Visit KP Voters in Virtual Forum," KP News, Nov. 2021)

If that is not culturally incompetent, then what is?

Racism is not just the concern of one or two unnamed sub-entities — it concerns everyone. So-called colorblindness is not the opposite of racism, it's just blindness.

All of the children our school board president lumped together need different kinds of support, including mental health services, to be successful. Being treated like they belong with all of us instead of as "a subgroup" would be a good start.

The first ships carrying enslaved Black people to America landed in Jamestown, Virginia as early as 1619. The Emancipation Proclamation went into effect Jan. 1, 1863, but did not reach the South until 1865. Blacks were freed after the Civil War, but don't forget about the vigilante groups that formed, like the slave patrols and the KKK, and the Jim Crow laws that started in 1877, the continuation of structural racism against Black Americans.

We started our own communities, not bothering anyone, even had our own Black Wall Street in Oklahoma, but that was burned down in 1921. There was legal education inequality until 1954, segregation until 1964, voter rights suppression until 1965, and housing discrimination remained legal until the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

With that kind of history, is it a surprise that inequities in health care, in the justice system, in generational wealth, in opportunity, persist?

People are not born racist, it starts in the home from an ecological perspective (see Person in Environment Theory) and is reinforced by stereotyping, fear and defensiveness. It also has to do with privilege, by which I mean the privilege of not having to confront the reality of discrimination every day because of what you look like.

How would a more inclusive approach to history and to equity benefit PSD? It would help all of us understand the complex issues we all face, overcome our anxieties about them, and give us a sense of accountability and, believe it or not, community.

I tried working with this district for many years, but I got tired of excuses. People talk about what they've done or what they want, but has anyone talked to the students about what they want?

I disseminated a confidential survey to students at Peninsula High School last month to find out. One student suggested: "Race and ethnicities are important because people should know your backgrounds and should respect your skin color and your racial background."

What has kept me out here on the Key Peninsula is understanding my place in history so that it doesn't repeat itself. I am "being the diversity." But I am beginning to think the KP is not for me and my family.

No stranger looks at me and thinks, "role model." No one wants to be like me, even though I wear three-piece suits, work hard, volunteer and set good examples for folk. But if I didn't have to do all that, work four times as hard, I would be what society sees me as.

Rion Tisino lives in Longbranch.

Dan Clouse

THE OTHER SIDE



Fear of Missing Out

Mark Zuckerberg was in first grade when a business school professor coined the expression "fear of missing out" 30 years ago. The researcher noticed how people struggle to choose when they are afraid of not picking the best product.

It was a mid-20th century retail revolution for shoppers to have so many choices.

You know a cliché has hit the big time when it turns into an acronym. Who doesn't know that FOMO refers to a common anxiety nowadays?

Three decades of FOMO later, with our always-on, always-connected devices always in our hands, FOMO has morphed into a vague, broader fear. Now we're afraid that everyone we follow on social media is more beautiful, has cooler stuff, and is having way more fun than we are.

Of course, there's nothing new about envy or the competitive instinct in humans. Cain murdered Abel in a fit of jealousy, and the Tenth Commandment forbids coveting our neighbor's property. When I was a boy, 60 years ago, my parents called the neighbors' conspicuous consumption "keeping up with the Joneses."

News junkies hate it when you hear a breaking story before them, and cutting-edge influencers have always already heard the latest hit song and tried the newest fusion food truck.

You might say FOMO is just an algorithmically enhanced version of an old human weakness.

But how ironic. In 2021, it's hard to read a blog, a newspaper feed or an online maga-

zine on my mobile device without running across an article about how the internet is distracting me from What Really Matters. The scolding is full of hand-wringing about our virtual substitutes for real life.

No doubt, you've seen that too and tsk-tsked about Instagram pictures of food you can't eat, people's Moscow troll farm Facebook 'friends', and all the funny memes forwarded instead of laughing together around a real table with real life humorists. It's a long list, and you've probably intuited most of it, even without reading the articles.

People say, "Disconnect. You're missing out on life."

I don't know any of these concerned folks IRL (in real life). Nope, their caring advice comes to me through the very same connected devices that feed the FOMO beast.

"OK, Boomer," the wise guy Millennial says. "It's been a long time since Timothy Leary's 'turn on, tune in, drop out.'"

"Dude," I'm hip enough to respond, "check your attitude at the door. Hanging around here like you rent the place, go back to your avocado toast at Starbucks."

We are distracted these days, and sure, there's a lot of virtual reality in our lives. I mean, does your phone's weekly screen-time report feel like an accusation to you, too?

All those empty carbs of online time! You don't have to know much more German than "kindergarten" to think of the word "ersatz." If not, the everyday English expression "second-hand" says it just fine.

The well-intentioned refrain of advice to unplug makes you worry that while you're online, you really are missing out on something better — but it's not online. It's not other people's enviable lives that you're missing. It's your own life.

Another irony is that the term FOMO itself is only online. Like emojis and the written but never pronounced sibling graphemes, IMHO, LOL, YOLO, TMI, ICYMI and WTF, those generational passwords in all-caps, FOMO doesn't exist outside the internet.

Maybe it is time to put away the phone and computer for a day or two. Turn off, tune out, drop in. Stop to notice the life flowing around you, the river Heraclitus once said you couldn't step into twice.

When you get really mellowed out through meditation (or, if you prefer, something stronger), you realize that there is also a retrospective version of FOMO. That is the still un-acronymized RHHMO, "regret for having missed out." That's the feeling you get when you look back and recall all the things you might have done but didn't do.

In 1969, were you in the mud at Woodstock or did you hear Led Zeppelin rattle the neighborhood windows at Green Lake?

Did you spend enough time with your children when they were little?

Did you run that marathon or climb Mount Rainier?

Looking back at the forks in the road you did take and at all the other forks you didn't, it's obvious there was plenty of life that just got missed. The key word is an old one: regret. The roads you took are always fewer than the infinite number of diverging roads not taken in Robert Frost's yellow wood. And that has made all the difference.

"Tell me what you regret, and I'll tell you who you are" is a wake-up call for drowsy septuagenarians. We understand all too well the line in Randall Jarrell's poem, "the ways we miss our lives is life."

But wait. Before you go, just a second. Let me show you a picture of my grandson Jack on Instagram. Let's see ... where is it? I know it's here somewhere. You should see how many likes he has.

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

Grace Nesbit
GUEST COLUMNIST



Learning Prejudice

At the Holocaust Center for Humanity in Seattle there is a student leadership board for students from all over Washington who learn about the Holocaust and related issues, such as genocide, antisemitism and prejudice. I am proud to say that this is my second year on the board.

What I have learned there suggests our society is moving backward.

One of the common themes in Holocaust education is preventing mass genocide from happening again. However, all around the world genocides have recently occurred or are occurring: Xinjiang, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Syria, Myanmar and in many other places.

How many of those have you heard of? Maybe one or two?

We in America have tunnel vision, which filters out every problem that doesn't affect us.

A recent lesson presented to the student leadership board was based on antisemitism and anti-Judaism. You may wonder what the difference is between the two. Anti-Judaism is the opposition to Judaism as a religion and to those who practice it. Antisemitism is the prejudice against, or hatred of Jews.

It's also part of the false narrative that Judaism, like Islam, is a race rather than a religion.

A common theme in all history educa-

tion is that history repeats itself. That is exactly what happened in Jewish history. It all began in 587 BCE when Judaea fell to the Babylonians and the Jews became stateless. They lived in exile wandering from state to state but nobody wanted them. And whenever something bad would happen, the Jews would be blamed.

Who else would you blame besides people that had no home?

For example, Jesus was a Jew killed by Romans, giving birth to Christianity. In the sixth century, laws were enacted protecting Christians from Jewish contamination, excluding Jews from most occupations. At various times from the 1100s to the 1500s, Jews had to wear yellow ribbons to signify they were Jewish and had to live in separate areas that became known as ghettos.

Lies were also spread about blood libels, the false allegation that Jews used the blood of non-Jewish (Christian) children for ritual purposes. And that Jews caused the plague or Black Death.

Sound familiar?

When Hitler came to power in the 20th century, Jews wore yellow stars, were again forced to live in ghettos, and a mass genocide killed over six million of them and five million more innocents in what we now call the Holocaust.

What about this proves that history doesn't repeat?

Let's examine the social media influence that plagues society today. Misinformation, fearmongering, and preying on the uneducated and the inexperienced still rules the day. Who is one to believe? Cable news? Facebook? Twitter? What responsible news outlet would repeat a statement about COVID-19 being the "China virus"?

What responsible person would believe it?

It blows my mind that people still say the Holocaust wasn't real. But I have met survivors, heard them tell their stories, and witnessed their passing and how it affects the community. And that is why it is so important to continue to listen for the lost voices of history.

Recently, people have worn yellow Stars of David to express their opposition to coronavirus vaccines. Jim Walsh, one of our state representatives (R-Aberdeen), was seen wearing one, saying, "In the current context, we're all Jews."

First, Judaism is a religion, not a race. The Jews of Nazi Germany were forced to wear yellow stars to show that they were beneath the "pure blooded Germans," and they were slaughtered for it.

Walsh also wrote, "It's an echo from history." So, does that mean everyone who thinks wearing a yellow star is acceptable believes they're going to be victims

of genocide?

A civilized people cannot allow history to be falsified for any reason. The history of the Holocaust is real, and it is an insult to the millions of lives lost and to every survivor, and to all of us who care about the Holocaust, about history, about each other.

But what can we do? There's not much that a 16-year-old posts on her Instagram that adults are going to believe.

"Your facts are wrong," I'm told.

"You don't know what you're saying."

"You're too young to understand."

As we grow up, we're told to act like adults, but we're treated like children. Listening to each other has become a lost art. Young people have something to say. We are aware. Let's learn from each other. How can my generation be "the future" when nobody wants to listen now?

Grace Nesbit is a junior at Peninsula High School. She lives in Lakebay.

Carolyn Wiley
DEVIL'S HEAD DIARY



My 2022 New Year's Resolution

I, Carolyn Wiley, being of questionably sound mind, resolve to make no New Year's Resolutions — not this year, next year or ever again.

If I don't have the time or energy to make the change in 24 hours, why prolong the agonizing effort? I have better things to do than take guilt trips about unmet expectations inspired by a rash of empty promises made to myself.

I do acknowledge areas of deficiency. But if self-improvement was easy, do you think I would still be fretting about those ingrained, sloppy, inconsiderate habits that were the target of resolutions made 50 years ago?

Yes, I oughta get back to the weight loss regimen, but there are still several pounds of gift chocolates that need to be consumed. Plus, a recent article reported that the average adult American has added a bit more than 20 pounds during the homebound and close-to-kitchen COVID-19 era. Having attained that average, I may as well go with the flow until there is better info about the extent of distancing due to the Omicron variant. Weight loss is relegated to the back burner.

Yes, I oughta get and keep my house in order, but I indulge in amusements that are time consuming, messy and create clutter. I like cooking, quilting and crafting, and I may want to break out the paints and silkscreens again. And, according to my-one-and-only, my housekeeping is better than any burglar

alarm. If anyone breaks in, they will say, "Jeeze, I'm too late! The place has already been ransacked."

Yes, I oughta restore my neglected garden, but there are 1,001 excuses for "not today, maybe tomorrow." Wouldn't it be an act of futility to turn over a new leaf before raking up the carpet of leaves that smothers lawns and flowerbeds?

Yes, I oughta resolve to be kinder in general, less caustic in my comments, and more polite, but I am too old, crabby and pragmatic to tackle the impossible. That type of resolution is just too grandiose to be realistic. Some people regard resolutions as serious promises, but so often within weeks the promise is too mundane to be remembered, or the individual decides they have already attained sainthood by trying, so there is no need for further improvement.

For the rest of us, the process of identifying character flaws isn't a bad exercise, but do you really need to make a public announcement and produce a list? How about just recognizing that self-improvement can be disruptive and is a long, slow process best achieved through baby steps?

One of my near and dear daughters shared a bit of wisdom on the subject: "Be like the I-5 and never stop working on yourself no matter how inconvenient it is for everyone else."

Since few people have mastered the art of keeping New Year's Resolutions, why not avoid adding one more step on the "I oughta (fill-in-the-blank)" aspirational flight of stairs to self-improvement?

However, now that I have finally figured it out and have a handle on the resolution conundrum, I'm ready to offer my services and start making New Year's Resolutions for other people.

It is a bit late to help you out this year, but by the end of 2022 I will be up and running and ready to assist you in identifying your quirks, shortcomings, and areas needing improvement so you can most effectively make and publicize your New Year's Resolutions. (This service includes no supportive follow-up once resolutions are codified. Further, all secrets will be published in full in my future columns.)

Award-winning humorist Carolyn Wiley lives in Longbranch.

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KP Institution and Leader of the Band, Dr. William Roes Retires, Sort Of

Dr. Roes has been keeping the peninsula alive and humming over four decades.

KRISA BRUEMMER, KP NEWS

After over 40 years practicing medicine on the Key Peninsula, Dr. William Roes is entering a phase of semi-retirement.

Starting Dec. 30, Roes will cut back to approximately two days a week for home visits to patients qualifying through Medicare, special projects, filling in at the Community Health Care (CHC) clinic in Key Center and seeing patients at the future Mustard Seed Project homes.

"I'm not really retiring," he said. "I'm just getting out of the way and letting somebody else have all the fun that I've had. I envision this could go on for a few more years."

In December 2020, Roes sold the solo private practice he'd operated since 1993 to CHC, a network of clinics based in Pierce County (See "Key Medical Center Plans for New Owner," KP News, Dec. 2020).

Roes grew up on a ranch "25 miles out of town" in Wyoming, earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Washington, then attended medical school at the University of Nevada College of Medical Sciences and Washington University in St. Louis. He first came to the KP in 1977 as a resident in training from Tacoma Family Medicine.

"It was kind of a circuitous route to get here," Roes said. "It's just where I was meant to be, I think."

Roes had wanted to be a teacher but the summer before his final year at UW he decided to cram his schedule with

pre-med classes. After graduation, he walked around Capitol Hill saying, "I want a job in a hospital," until Virginia Mason hired him as a surgical orderly. The next day, Roes was in an operating room with a patient having gallbladder surgery.

"It was total immersion," Roes said. "It was a fascinating, wonderful job and I learned so much."

After a year at Virginia Mason, Roes was

"I'M JUST GETTING OUT OF THE WAY AND LETTING SOMEBODY ELSE HAVE ALL THE FUN THAT I'VE HAD. I ENVISION THIS COULD GO ON FOR A FEW MORE YEARS."

invited to interview for the University of Nevada's new two-year medical program. Nevada had an arrangement with Wyoming, where there were no medical schools.

"I thought, I'm going to make a name for myself," Roes said. "They'd never taken anybody from Wyoming and there weren't a whole lot of people applying from Wyoming, so I went down there wearing my cowboy hat and my cowboy boots (and) a suede jacket."

After Nevada, Roes completed medical school in Missouri where he worked at student-staffed St. Louis City Hospital No. 1. He later worked at the KP clinic

throughout his residency at Tacoma Family Medicine, then joined the practice while continuing obstetrics and delivery at Tacoma General and St. Joseph Medical Center.

"It was a wonderful way to build a practice as a young doctor because you've got the mom, you've got the baby, and you've got the kids and ultimately you've got the dad and then you've got the cousins and the neighbors — so it grew quickly," he said. "And then we just kind of grew old together."



Lisa Bryan, KP News

Roes delivered over 360 babies and took photos of each one. "I've always enjoyed pulling those pictures out when they come in with their (own) kids."

Roes said his absolute least favorite thing is when someone comes in saying they feel like someone is sitting on their chest. "We've had two or three people with cardiac arrests

in the office," he said. One patient returned years later, thanking

them for saving his life. Others died. "If you've got chest pain, call 911. Don't drive yourself to the office," he said.

The pandemic has been exceptionally difficult for his clinic. "As a business it was a challenge. For us to try to find ways to care for people," he said. "Also, what it's done to seniors, that's been heartbreaking."

Early in the pandemic, Roes went into a 102-year-old patient's home to administer a COVID-19 test wearing a Tyvek painter's suit and mask from Harbor Freight tool supply. Since then, several of his patients have died from COVID-19. His staff members who chose not to be vaccinated lost their jobs. "It's become very political and I hate that," Roes said.

In his semi-retirement, Roes hopes to return to his longstanding passion for

medical mission work in Honduras. Clinic of Angels is in a small village where "there's a fair number of congenital defects and one of them is kids with six fingers ... It's very bad culturally; people look at it like that baby's cursed," Roes said.

"I've done some surgical things down there that I'd never do up here because

there's always somebody that's got a lot more training, more skills. But if you're

the only one there, people are looking at you like, 'You're my chance.'"

Roes also looks forward to spending more time working on his classic cars, a 1968 Mustang and '60 Ranchero, playing trombone, tuba, trumpet — "whatever the band needs" — with the Down Home Band, and writing. His KP News column "To Your Health" ran for 20 years.

"There's just a ton of things that I coulda, shoulda, woulda," he said. "I haven't been fishing for 100 years. I used to like to fish."

Despite his primary residence being across the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, Roes plans to stay connected to the KP.

"It's just fun. There are so many wonderful people here," he said. "I've reserved a spot at the Mustard Seed — one of the rooms — but I don't need it quite yet." ■

"IT'S JUST WHERE I WAS MEANT TO BE, I THINK."

KP Property Crime Update

Pandemic, bail reform and recent law enforcement reforms have all had impacts on how calls are handled.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

There is a strong feeling among residents that property crime rates are rising on the Key Peninsula and that law enforcement appears to be unwilling or unable to apprehend and detain suspects.

Home resident Kelly Gamble, who started the Facebook KP Crime Watch page several years ago, said that property crime is on the rise. "Everyone seems to know who the bad guys are. If you sit at the Home store for an hour, you'll see many drug deals. They are blatant because they can't be arrested for a non-violent crime," she said.

Jenn Lettelier, who has lived in Home for four years, has noticed a big increase in theft and vandalism in the last two years. Neighbors have had car windows broken. "To me that means it was someone on drugs and really desperate," she said. "If you leave stuff out here someone is going to steal it."

"I am not prone to rhetoric, but there is a creeping sense of lawlessness that we are all living with right now," said Pierce County Prosecutor Mary Robnett.

"I share the perception that crime is up. But I am cognizant that there is a lot more chatter about it on social media and 24/7 wall-to-wall coverage on TV about crime all over the country."

Crime statistics show no significant change in the Peninsula District, which includes both Gig Harbor and the Key Peninsula, over the last five years according to Darren Moss, the Pierce County Sheriff's Department communications director. Calls to the department from the area are at their usual number of about 500 to 600 a month.

For the county as a whole, crime rates are at normal or slightly lower levels compared to the five-year average, with the exceptions of commercial robberies (up 26%), vehicle prowls (up 16%) and vehicle theft (up 44%). Vehicle theft on the Key Peninsula is up 34%.

Robnett said that pandemic-related health concerns for both inmates and staff limited bookings to Class A felonies, domestic violence and DUI arrests. For those offenses, charges are filed, and the suspect is booked and arraigned the next day. All other cases are sent to her office as out-of-custody referrals where suspects are not jailed; the office reviews the case and decides what charges to file, if any.

COVID-19 closed the courts from spring of 2020 until this fall. "When the courts reopened, we had 1,300 out-of-custody cases to file," Robnett said. "By the end of the year all of the cases will be filed and for our office there is no more Covid backlog." "The biggest stressor on law enforcement in our state right now has been shutting down jails," Moss said. "If they actually get into the jail, it might deter them a little more."

Bail reform also led to less incarceration. Bail has a disproportionate effect on people with low incomes and the intention was to require bail only for those at flight risk or who present a risk to the community. As a result, Robnett said, more people are being released on their own recognizance.

Recent legislation, House Bills 1054 and 1310, changed how law enforcement officers could respond to calls, leading to complaints that their "hands were tied."

Moss said the main impact of HB 1054, which places restrictions on certain tactics, including neck restraints and vehicular pursuits, is that law enforcement cannot pursue vehicles for offenses other than vehicular assault, vehicular homicide or driving under the influence. "Auto theft is going crazy," Moss said. "People get good at it and steal over and over. We can't chase a car because it is

stolen, so it's easier to get away and if they are caught, they can't get booked."

Robnett was critical of HB 1310, which adopted a statewide de-escalation standard and limited the use of force only

to protect against an imminent threat of serious physical injury or death to the officer or another person. It

also limited use of force to situations when there was probable cause to make an arrest. She said the intent of the legislation was laudable, but that the law did not clearly define force. The Pierce County Sheriff's definition of force includes touch and strong language.

In addition, in the early stages of an investigation, before all the facts are gathered, officers are working at the level of reasonable suspicion and not probable cause. Officers could not detain or restrain suspects in that situation.

Rep. Roger Goodman (D-Kirkland), chair of the House Public Safety Committee, said he has met with stakeholders up and down the I-5 corridor to get feedback about what needs to be changed.

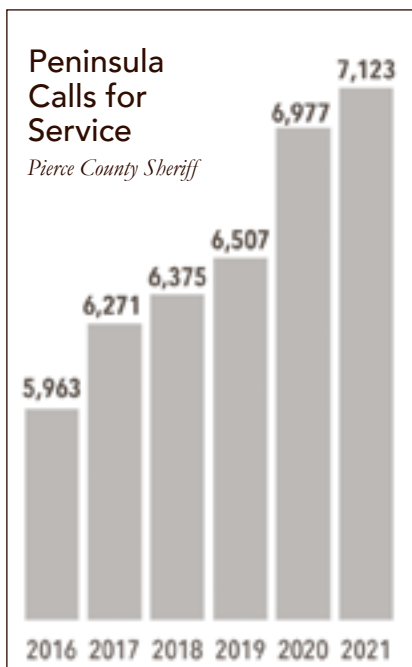
"They are all saying the same thing," he said. "It is about being able to help people in mental health crisis and protect children and respond to serious crimes. We need to provide both the police and the public with the certainty they need as to how these laws work."

Goodman said that he is considering changing the standard for use of force from probable cause to reasonable suspicion when police are investigating violent offenses, especially domestic violence. "We want officers to be able to restrain parties before they figure out who did what to whom."

Noting that last year two of three on-the-job deaths of officers took place during car chases, he said he does not plan to make changes in the language around vehicular pursuits.

Moss said that of the calls the Sheriff's Department receives, only 1% are for violent crimes. "The biggest thing I would tell people right now, is that the numbers are just numbers and overall, the world is not coming to an end and the Sheriff's Department is not going away," Moss said. "We are still responding to calls, doing our job, going out to find people who are committing crimes." ■

"WE ARE STILL RESPONDING TO CALLS, DOING OUR JOB, GOING OUT TO FIND PEOPLE WHO ARE COMMITTING CRIMES."



VEHICLE THEFT ON THE KEY PENINSULA IS UP 34%.

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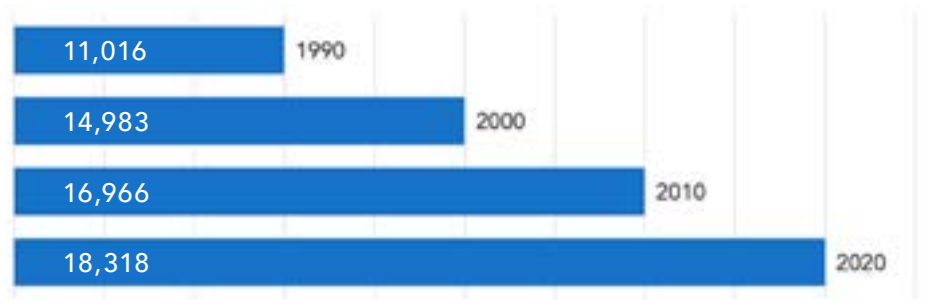
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1934 Model A in Vaughn snow : Photo courtesy Key Peninsula Historical Museum



2020 Census Shows Growth on the KP

The mostly white population became slightly more diverse over the last decade.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

As the population of the Key Peninsula has grown, so have complaints of terrible traffic and new construction. But the rate of increase over the last 10 years is comparable to that of the country, and only about half that of Pierce County as a whole.

Results from the 2020 decennial census data used for legislative redistricting were released in August. The population with breakdown by race and status of Hispanic or non-Hispanic provides a window into who lives on the peninsula and what has changed over the last decade.

The overall population of the KP grew 8% from 16,966 in 2010 to 18,318 in 2020. By comparison, the population of the United States grew 7.4%, Washington state 14.6%, and Pierce County 15.8%.

The Key Peninsula is more diverse than it was 10 years ago but is still whiter than the country or the county overall.

In 2010, the population was nearly 90% white. Last year that number fell to 83%, comparable to rural states like Idaho, Iowa and Wyoming. The population of the U.S. is 62.7% white; Pierce County is 64.6%.

Of the non-white population on the Key Peninsula, 11% are two or more races. For those identifying as single race, 314 (1.7%) are Asian, 227 (1.2%) are American Indian or Alaska Native, 159 (0.9%) are Black, 78 (0.4%) are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Three hundred and twenty-six individuals (1.8%) self-identify as “other.”

The Hispanic population on the KP is 1,221 (6.1%). Hispanics make up 18.6% of the population of the country, 13.1% of Washington state and 12.1% of Pierce County. The Hispanic population has only been counted on the census since 1970.

Hispanic origin refers to the heritage, nationality, lineage or country of birth of the person or family before arriving in the U.S. People identifying as Hispanic may be of any race. Latino was added to the Census in 2000 as an ethnicity.

The constitution mandates that the population be counted every 10 years. The results affect the number of representatives in Congress and how federal, state and

local funds are allocated for programs and services including hospitals, fire departments, transportation systems, and school lunch programs.

The race data collected by the Census follows U.S. Office of Management and Budget guidelines and is based on self-identification. People may choose to report more than one race group. People of any race may be of any ethnic origin. According to the Census website, “The racial categories included in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. In addition, it is recognized that the categories of the race item include racial and national origin or sociocultural groups.”

A 1995 memo from the OMB reviewed why statistics on race and ethnicity are collected. “Such data have been used to study changes in the social, demographic, health, and economic characteristics of various groups in our population. Federal data collections, through censuses, surveys, and administrative records, have provided an historical record of the nation’s population diversity and its changing social attitudes and policy concerns. Since the 1960s, data on race and ethnicity have been used extensively in civil rights monitoring and enforcement covering areas such as employment, voting rights, housing and mortgage lending, health care services and educational opportunities. These legislatively-based priorities created the need among federal agencies for compatible, nonduplicative data for the specific population groups that historically had suffered discrimination and differential treatment on the basis of their race or ethnicity.”

Race and ethnicity are social constructs and not based on science, according to the National Geographic Society. The concept of race defines people by physical characteristics or genetic ancestry but has no basis in biology. In other words, at a genetic level, humans are far more alike than different from each other. ■

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Into the
WILD
EXPLORING WITH THE
KP NATURE GUIDE

On a Ramble, Raven-watching in the New Year

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

Let's take a ramble. Let's head through this soggy pasture and aim for the woods.

Think of all we've seen in the last year on the KP, the encounters with deer and moths, the record heat, the mysterious beaver scat, the roving bands of berry-hunting birds. Pay attention to the natural world and you'll never be bored or alone. What will this new year bring?

What will this ramble bring? In a low spot I see that moles have been in an ecstasy of mound-building. Walking through them reminds me of skiing moguls. Then, atop one mound is something orange. Scat. What? Am I becoming the scat man? Orange scat? It has to be coyote scat, by the looks of it, and I can only imagine what the coyote was up to when it chose to squat here, what message it wanted to send. To the moles or to me?

I like the word ramble for these explorations. I slip through an old fence and enter the woods. To call them hikes would be to confine them to pathways with starts and ends. It would focus the attention on me. A ramble isn't exactly aimless but it's freeform and fluid and never complete. It circles and stoops. It can have more stillness than movement.

My goal this year is to keep on rambling. There has been a windstorm and the ground is littered with branches the atmosphere chose to prune. Lichens and mosses that once lived high above are available for study. A raven calls beyond the deeper woods. And here is a 6-foot branch planted straight into the ground like a javelin. I pull it out — its

tip is 10 inches deep — then put it back.

Questions surround me, tangled webs of them. Some can only be answered here. From which tree did this javelin fall? How long will it remain upright in the ground? I scan the trees above. Instead of seeing a fresh scar where the branch was torn free, I see hundreds, thousands of javelins sprouting from trunks at odd angles.

Other questions can be approached by looking elsewhere. The raven is calling again, a resonant quork that rattles the forest. For a full minute I wait. Suddenly the raven chases through the octopus-shaped patch of sky above. It vanishes. These ravens! I'd give anything to know what they're up to when I see them. They're always up to something.

For nine years I've been paying attention to a pair of ravens that live nearby. I still can't find their nest. At the beginning of that time ravens were a rarity around here. But in the last few years, particularly around Key Center, they have become almost commonplace. A few months ago, I saw a loose line of them go past and counted 10 in all. Why here? Why now?

I go to the literature. I read the reports of a brotherhood of raven-watchers who have spent years of their lives trekking through the woods and recording every glimpsed detail of ravens' lives in Minnesota, Maine, Germany, Alaska. But ravens like remote places. They are generalists best suited to landscapes with a wide range of food options, meaning steep terrain. And they are crafty. In legends from here to the Russian Far East, they create the world by playing tricks, bringing light and losing it

again, duping those around them. Biologists have a heck of a time keeping up.

Painstakingly our understanding of raven society grows. One biologist spent years on their vocalizations, emerging with a dictionary of calls and situations in which they are used. Other biologists have focused on the interactions between mated pairs, which mate for life and can live for decades, and bands of unmated juveniles. Pairs claim a territory and defend it, while juveniles roam far and wide. Pairs tend to hunt smaller prey and guard the berries and seeds that ripen in their domains, while bands of juveniles muscle resident pairs off large animal carcasses and human dumps, acting as scavengers. The raven brain has been compared to that of a 3-year-old human. They use tools and solve problems and learn not just from other ravens but from other species.

Watch a raven and you'll know that our collective research has only scratched the surface of what they're up to. You'll see swagger, a loose handling of time, nonchalant freedom. I've seen them play chase and catch with scraps of paper. I've seen them do full barrel rolls. They are constantly poking, prodding, learning, adapting, the perfect reminder that life is situated in place. A raven here is not a raven anywhere; it is dependent on its surroundings.

That's the ramble: trying to see the context as much as the thing itself.

Back in college I soaked up the words of John Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts: "All things are one thing, and one thing is all things ... It is advisable to look from the tide pool to the stars and then back to the tide pool

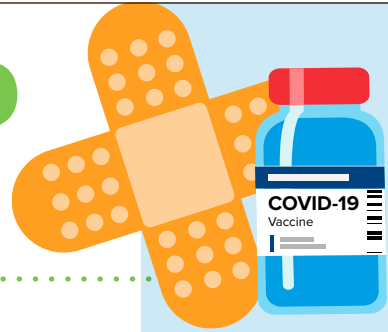
again." In hindsight I see why it spoke to me so — to hear as a young person that everything matters, no matter how small, is a huge comfort.

Lately I'm not thinking quite so big. Thom van Dooren, who writes about extinction, says the idea that "everything is connected to everything will not help us here. Rather, everything is connected to something, which is connected to something else. While we may all ultimately be connected to one another, the specificity and proximity of connections matters ... Life and death happen inside those relationships."

Where you happen to be born, who your parents are, what friends you find — that's the stuff of life and death. It's easy for me to resolve to keep exploring this year, to say wow, look how cool ravens are. The more daring resolve I hope to carry is a deep acceptance that I'll never get the bird's-eye view. Life is a tangled web of specific relationships on the small peninsula we share. Why that particular mole hill, out of all of them, coyote? It's okay if the question is never fully answered. Just by asking it, I join the web.

One of my son's books, which tells of ravens picking on exhausted mountain climbers high on Denali, even jauntily landing atop Denali's peak, ends with the line, "Above the wings of Raven, the only view is heaven." Maybe that's so. As far as I can tell, in this life we'll never get that view. We'll be rambling somewhere far below raven, our view half-blocked by trees that will scatter their limbs in every stiff breeze. ■

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COLD, DARK, GRITTY AND WET, THE RAZOR CLAM HUNT CONTINUES. TASTE WHY IT'S MORE POPULAR THAN EVER



Mom's Fried Razor Clams

BRAD SHERMAN

When I was young, say about 65 years ago, our family enjoyed digging for razor clams on Washington's beaches every time the tide was sufficiently low. In those days there were perhaps 30 brave souls populating the beach and the shallow frigid surf at 4 a.m. in search of the delectable mollusks. I remember as we approached the beach, the lanterns and flashlights of our fellow clammers would give off an otherworldly glow as they floated by like giant, slow moving fireflies, the light bouncing off the wet sand, diffused by the morning mist.

And so, the four of us intrepid, shivering, often whining children would venture with our parents to gather our bounty for a feast. It was usually pretty miserable at the start but always ended joyously.

Everything was different in those days. The clams had a chance.

No clam guns, just a shovel. We would spot a siphon hole in the sand and start digging furiously from about eight inches away to make sure we didn't damage the clam. After digging down a foot or so from all sides, we would dive in with our hands, furiously excavating deeper and scooping

away the water as it quickly backfilled our efforts. Then, if we were lucky, we would feel the clam shell.

The advantage constantly shifted from clam to digger and back again, and the clams would often prevail. They have nature on their side. As you are up to your armpits in wet sand, the tide rolls in and time runs out. If they can resist your pulling for long

enough, the next wave will cover and deter all but the most devoted clammers.

Which brings me to my mother. She would never give up on getting her clam even as the tide covered her. She was tough, and my god that water was cold. We howled with laughter as she was nearly submerged by incoming water, her face smashed against the sand and her right arm as far down the hole as she could reach. Then we

cheered as she rose triumphantly, drenched with saltwater, seaweed and sand, smiling as she held up a clam that was maybe three inches long. Oh, what fun we had!

Then we would clean the clams. This took seemingly forever because with six of us and a limit that was somewhere around

26 (not sure about the exact number), we are talking about a lot of clams. Then we would eat. And eat. Of course, when you dig clams, you have to keep all sizes, so many of them were actually very small, but still, we are talking about major glut-tony here. They were oh so good!

The following is mom's recipe as I remember it and as I have tried to replicate many times.

MOM'S FRIED CLAMS

To feed four hungry people or serve as a nice appetizer for more.

Ingredients

- 2 pounds shelled razor clams. Save nectar for chowder and remove excess moisture with paper towels
- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon paprika (sweet, not smoked)
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper or to taste
- ½ teaspoon black pepper or to taste
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups panko bread crumbs. Mom used crushed saltine crackers but panko gives extra crispiness.
- 3 tablespoons canola oil plus 3 tablespoons unsalted butter for frying, or more as needed

Steps

Heat oven to warm or lowest setting. Put a paper towel-lined cookie sheet in oven.

Thoroughly mix dry ingredients 2-8 in a plastic or paper bag. Add clams and give the bag a good shake to coat.

Beat eggs in a wide, shallow bowl.

Put a large frying pan on medium high heat. Add oil and butter.

When oil and butter are hot but not smoking, dip clams, one at a time, into beaten eggs then drop into panko and coat completely, then carefully place into pan. Repeat until pan is full but do not crowd.

Cook clams just until they are a nice golden brown, then flip. It's usually about three or four minutes per side. Try not to disturb until ready to flip.

Lightly salt cooked clams and place on cookie sheet in warm oven. Good quality sea salt makes a difference here. I use Maldon Sea Salt Flakes.

Repeat until all are cooked. Serve with a slice of lemon, crusty bread, a nice salad like Caesar or better yet, homemade coleslaw, maybe some wine or beer, and enjoy with family and friends. ■



Brad and Mom at the beach.
Sherman family



A bright sign of progress installed Dec. 14. *Lisa Bryan, KP News*

Two Years and Still Waiting for 2 Margaritas

STAFF REPORT

Almost nothing went according to plan for 2 Margaritas owners Ricardo Sahagun and Edgar Anaya, the cousins and business partners who purchased the former site of Lulu's Homeport Restaurant and Lounge on the KP Highway in Home in January 2020. Sahagun told KP News they are hopeful and currently on track for opening in March or April 2022.

The original plan called for a complete remodel of the building and reopening within six months. COVID-19 turned those plans upside down, with one delay after another, from nearly every angle.

Restaurants have been particularly hard-hit by the pandemic. The cousins own and operate four other well-established restaurants, two in neighboring Mason County and two in Kitsap, that positioned them somewhat better to weather the crisis. Challenges in the supply chain continue.

"This has been something none of us have ever experienced before," Sahagun said. "It's been a struggle to get product. Everything is out. Even (restaurant supplier) Sysco doesn't have enough drivers. The meat prices skyrocketed, and everything is jumping up, like ridiculously, at double and triple the prices. Basically, we get what we can, not what we need."

The staff of the new 2 Margaritas are already well into training, spread around within the other family restaurant locations in preparation for opening on the KP this spring.

While Sahagun said there are a couple of things left to finish, like the long-delayed master business licensing from the state, a liquor license and landscaping. For now, he takes heart in the addition of two big neon signs as exciting progress to begin the new year. ■

County Homeless Point-In-Time Count Seeks Volunteers

STAFF REPORT

Pierce County is seeking volunteers for its 2022 Homeless Point-In-Time Count Jan. 27 and 28. According to the county, the PIT count provides data to review trends, plan programs and gather information to better serve the community and is an important tool to evaluate the impact of homelessness on both individuals and the county.

Volunteers must register online, be over

18 years old, have access to a smart phone and commit to attend a virtual training session. Volunteer opportunities are limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no unsheltered survey conducted in 2021. Pierce County will resume unsheltered surveys in the upcoming count.

For more information, go to PIT count at www.piercecountywa.gov. ■

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Local Scouts Welcome New Leadership and Rechartered Cubs

Scouts develop life skills, outdoor expertise and camaraderie while supporting the community.

KRISA BRUEMMER, KP NEWS

After nearly two years of challenges brought on by the pandemic, including the loss of a local program for younger Scouts, Scout Troop 220 and Cub Scout Pack 222 are back together again, meeting weekly at the Key Peninsula Civic Center under new leadership.

Amy Turk stepped up as Cubmaster Nov. 2 and began rebuilding Pack 222. She applied to recharter the younger group in December 2021, officially registering them with Scouts BSA, formerly known as Boy Scouts.

There were 48 Cub Scouts pre-pandemic, but “after Covid, nobody responded to come back, so essentially the pack was nonexistent,” Turk said, whose nephew began his BSA journey in Pack 222 and is now a member of the troop. “I didn’t want to see Cub Scouting die on the Key Peninsula

because then the troop would fade away and there wouldn’t be any Scouting out here.”

Pack 222 includes children from kindergarten through fifth grade who rank up with age, changing dens depending on their grade in school. In sixth grade, they enter Troop 220 and rank up through adventures, or requirements, earning merit badges while working toward Scouting’s highest rank, Eagle Scout.

Without a pack, “the troop will die off because the kids will age out and if nothing is feeding into the troop, there won’t be a troop anymore,” Turk said. “I think with Covid, it made it very clear that being around people is important for our mental health.”

Turk said Troop 220 has a strong sense of community, with kids and families there for each other in times of need. Modifying activities to meet current guidelines and regulations, the group has stayed active and met regularly throughout the pandemic. They helped with the flag ceremony on Memorial Day at Vaughn Cemetery, completed a 22-mile hike on Sept.

11 from Cle Elum to North Bend, held fundraising car washes and popcorn sales, and gave back to the community with the Scouting For Food Drive. Troop

220’s new Scoutmaster, Diana Smith, is planning a snow camping adventure. “They have some fun things planned and they’re planning more because things have kind of gotten stale,” Turk said.

Turk originally encouraged her nephew, who has lived with her for five years, to join the Scouts because of the morals and values the program instills, as well as the leadership opportunities and adventures.

“Scouting is a way to make boys and girls better people,” said Nicholas Keeney, 14, Star Scout. “It’s also a great way to make friends.”

Although the Scouts are not a religious organization, they adhere to a moral code known as The Scout Law and recite the Scout Oath at each meeting.

“A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, all the things that you want your child to learn, and to have, to be a good human,” Turk said. “For me, that’s kind of the point of Scouting, to have these kids be able to go to an organization that is upholding a set ideal of morals and values.”

“Scouting is not easy but through the tough parts you learn how to be a leader and teach others, how to do first aid and save others, how to do various outdoor activities and skills, and so much more,” said Eagle Scout and Assistant Scoutmaster Robert Quill, 21, who has been with Troop 220 for 10 years and says he looks forward to another 10. “I have hiked over mountains and looked across Washington and along the coast and saw an almost endless ocean, participated in contests of Scouting skill and led the troop in numerous events, all while spending time doing service projects and giving back to the community.”

After the Cub Scouts program went co-ed in 2018, the Boy Scouts organization changed its name to BSA and began welcoming girls in 2019.



The next generation of Scouts meet at KPCC weekly (maskless for photo). Amy Turk

“They meet together but as far as outings and campouts, they’re going to be separate for that and there has to be a female Scoutmaster,” Turk said.

There have been between five and 10 kids at each Cub Scout meeting since Turk began working to rebuild Pack 222 in November.

“We are starting out very small but if we don’t rebuild the pack, then scouting on the KP will die out when the kids in the troop age out,” Turk said. “That would be so unfortunate as I believe Scouting is really valuable to kids, their families and the community in so many ways.”

Contact bsapack222@gmail.com or kptroop220@gmail.com. ■

“IF WE DON’T REBUILD THE PACK, THEN SCOUTING ON THE KP WILL DIE OUT WHEN THE KIDS IN THE TROOP AGE OUT.”

Getting ready to hike 10 miles out to Dungeness Spit to earn the Hiking Merit Badge. Amy Turk





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RAVAGES OF WAR ON AN ANCIENT PERSIAN EMPIRE



TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Some of my teenaged relatives enlisted after 9/11.

One became a Marine and deployed to Afghanistan. He did convoy duty or was behind the wire, on base. When he came home, he had nothing but contempt for the Afghan people. They were stupid and smelly and lived in dirt houses.

He spent his second tour outside the wire as a sniper hunting the enemy. He did well but was different when he came back. The Afghans were dignified, resilient; the average American could never endure what they can, he said.

When his hitch was up, he didn't reenlist.

The name "Afghanistan" has hung like a storm cloud over our horizon for 20 years, though it's been closer for some as it fades into our collective memory. Listening to my cousin back then made me realize I didn't know nearly enough about it, like I wasn't doing my bit.

I read half a dozen books over the years: contemporary military accounts; travelers' tales from the 1930s; a history of the British Empire's invasion and bloody retreat in the 19th century, shockingly like our own, including the journal of a soldier's wife who lived through it; and a bit of the Koran for reference.

But "A Thousand Splendid Suns" stands alone as monumental testimony to what ordinary Afghans experienced over generations of war.

The story begins at the end of the monarchy period in the 1960s when the country, while poor, was peaceful, and the diverse population coexisted in relative prosperity. The lives of two women, Mariam and Laila, unknown to each other

Remembering Afghanistan:

'A Thousand Splendid Suns' by Khaled Hosseini

The 2007 novel illuminates the lives of ordinary Afghans over four decades of war through a single family's story.

and born a generation apart in Herat and Kabul, slowly intertwine in succeeding years, showing us how relationships formed by love or necessity are governed by society, and the rules that everyone must follow — especially women.

Years succeed gracefully against the backdrop of one national conflict after another, from coups to communism to the Soviet invasion to the rise of the Taliban and, finally, the American invasion. The writing touches on these things lightly, discreetly; it is the effect of violence, not the act, that merits attention. We are deftly led through kitchens, streets, countryside and souls; moments are evoked by a look, a word, a silence. But the foreground is always the family and the demands on Mariam and Laila to keep theirs whole in the face of cruel setbacks and abuse at the hands of soldiers, strangers, and husbands.

But they endure.

Arrested for leaving her home without a male escort, even in a burka Laila finds no protection as she is interrogated by a police officer preserving "order."

"Laila almost laughed. She was stunned that he'd used that word in the face of all the Mujahideen factions had done — the murders, the lootings, the rapes, the tortures, the executions, the bombings, the tens of thousands of rockets they had fired at each other, heedless of all the innocent people who would die in the crossfire. Order."

For all its unblinking gaze into the experience of civilians in war, this novel is no litany of suffering. It is a tale of love, from intractable familial love to unfathomable romantic love. Mariam personifies the thought on

a sleepless night, watching snow fall in Kabul during a lull in shelling.

"Seasons had come and gone; presidents had been inaugurated and murdered; an empire had been defeated; old wars had ended and new ones had broken out. But Mariam hardly noticed, hardly cared ... the past held only this wisdom: that love was a damaging mistake, and its accomplice, hope, a treacherous illusion. And whenever those

twin poisonous flowers began to sprout ... Mariam uprooted them and ditched them before they took hold."

But when two new flowers unexpectedly sprout in her life, Laila and her infant daughter, Mariam realizes "it is God who planted them. And it is His will that you should tend them," even as the snow continues unendingly.

That is probably the best way to describe this book: an unexpected flower growing amid chaos, just as its people bloom in a society at war with itself. ■



THE AUTHOR: KHALED HOSSEINI

Khaled Hosseini was born in Kabul and emigrated to the United States in 1980 with his parents as political refugees when he was 15. The family of diplomats and teachers struggled on welfare as Hosseini completed his education and became a physician. He is the author of the bestselling novels "The Kite Runner," "And the Mountains Echoed," and an illustrated children's book about refugees called "Sea Prayer." Proceeds from this book go to the UN Refugee Relief Agency and the Khaled Hosseini Foundation, a nonprofit he founded to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

THE NAME: AFGHANISTAN

The origin of the name "Afghanistan" is unknown. The suffix "-istan" comes from the Persian root word for "land," and forms the name of seven different Asian nations once part of a third century Persian empire. The word "Abgân" was used at that time to describe an eastern tribe near the mountains of the Hindu Kush. It may have come from the ancient Sanskrit word "Ashvaken" for "horsemen," as the people of the country were known for their riding skills. Or it may have derived from a more ancient Sumerian word, "Ab-bar-Gan," or "high country." Or an old Uzbek word, "Avagan," said to mean "original." For the two millennia preceding the 19th century the land had been known as Khorasan, ancient Persian for "from where the sun arrives." The people who lived there, a dozen or more distinct ethnic groups, called themselves "the fighters."

100 Years of History.

The Longbranch Improvement Club directed development of the first Longbranch-Steilacoom car ferry, the "Elk." Service began in May of 1922. South KP residents now had "a way out" through Steilacoom in addition to a foot passenger connection to the street car and Portland-Seattle train.



The LIC's clubhouse was WPA-built in the 1930s as a gymnasium for School #328. When the school closed in the 1940s it became Longbranch's community hall and has been our home for over 70 years. In 1987 it was listed in the National Registry of Historic Places.



Photos courtesy of KP Historical Society

For more information on our history and how to join, visit us at licweb.org



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Christy Dalby

Rotary Club Dedicates Peace Pole at Evergreen Elementary

CAROLYN WILEY, KP NEWS

“May Peace Prevail on Earth” was the message celebrating the installation of Peace Poles at Evergreen Elementary School Dec. 10. The phrase is posted on the monument in eight different languages: Lushootseed (the first nations language of the Key Peninsula and environs), English, Norwegian, Croatian, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Yoruba (of West Africa).

The purpose of the Peace Pole Project is to serve as a reminder “to think, speak and act in the spirit of peace and harmony.” Since the first poles were erected in Japan in 1983, there have been over 200,000 installed in 200 countries around the world at public gathering places.

The Evergreen dedication date was Peace Day in Norway, the day the Nobel Peace Prize is celebrated.

Evergreen Principal Hugh Maxwell introduced student Aedan Underwood, who led the assembled group in the Pledge of Allegiance and then introduced Bob Anderson, who has been an advocate for the Peace Pole Project since 2001.

Anderson represented Rotary Club North and the Rotary Club of Gig Harbor; he also chairs Rotary’s Sister Cities program. He announced that the Key Peninsula and Gig Harbor had established Sister City partnerships with Bodø in Norway and Brač in Croatia to promote cultural and student exchanges, economic development, green industry, and philanthropy.

Lise Kristiansen, honorary Norwegian consul to the state of Alaska, spoke to the value of building international under-

standing through partnerships with communities in other countries. Her son, Espen Kristiansen, addressed the heritage links between the KP Peninsula, Gig Harbor and Norwegian area of Bodø.

The monument inspired Evergreen fourth-grade teachers Robyn Enders and Alena Shepard to ask students about their understanding of the peace pole at the entrance of their school.

Fourth-grader Piper Schumann said, “In my opinion, peace is very outspoken and free; free of all violence and rage. Our generation is going through tough times. Children all over the world are adapting to the changes that affect us all. Peace will cure the world.”

As a complement to the peace pole, students decided to express their thoughts through art. “This is how the rock garden idea came to be,” Enders said. “Students decorated rocks to place around the base of the pole depicting images and words that expressed ideas of peace. As more students and their families add to the garden, it will serve as a collective reminder of Evergreen’s commitment to promote peace in our school, community and families.” ■



NEW FALL/WINTER SCHEDULE

Welcome aboard! FREE KP BUS CONNECTS

VAUGHN TUE/THUR MORNING

- 8:55 Vaughn Elementary School
- 9:01 Wright Bliss Rd NW @Olson Dr NW
- 9:02 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct NW
- 9:03 Union 76 @SR 302/4 Corners
- 9:06 SR 302 @150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 9:08 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 9:10 SR 302 @Charboneau Construction
- 9:13 Lake Kathryn Village
- 9:19 Purdy Park & Ride

VAUGHN WEDNESDAY MORNING

- 9:50 Vaughn Elementary School
- 9:51 Wright Bliss Rd NW @Olson Dr NW
- 9:52 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct NW
- 9:54 Union 76 @SR 302/4 Corners
- 9:57 SR 302 @150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 9:58 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 10:00 SR 302 @Charboneau Construction
- 10:03 Lake Kathryn Village
- 10:09 Purdy Park & Ride

EVERGREEN TUE/THUR MORNING

- 8:50 Evergreen Elementary School
- 8:59 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 9:00 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 9:05 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 9:06 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 9:09 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 9:13 Food Market in Key Center
- 9:15 KP Hwy N @Minterwood Dr NW
- 9:21 Lake Kathryn Village
- 9:29 Purdy Park & Ride

EVERGREEN WEDNESDAY MORNING

- 9:50 Evergreen Elementary School
- 9:54 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 9:55 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 10:00 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 10:01 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 10:04 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 10:08 Food Market in Key Center
- 10:10 KP Hwy N @Minterwood Dr NW
- 10:16 Lake Kathryn Village
- 10:24 Purdy Park & Ride

TUE/WED/THUR AFTERNOON

- 4:42 Purdy Park & Ride
- 4:47 Lake Kathryn Village
- 4:50 SR 302 @Windermere Realty
- 4:52 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 4:53 SR 302 @150th/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 4:55 4 Corners gas station @SR 302
- 4:57 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct
- 4:58 Wright Bliss Road @Olson Dr
- 5:00 Food Market in Key Center
- 5:01 KP Hwy @84th NW Red Barn
- 5:04 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 5:08 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 5:10 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 5:13 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 5:14 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 5:18 Evergreen Elementary School
- 5:29 KP Hwy @84th NW Red Barn
- 5:34 SR302 @140th NW Lake of the Woods
- 5:36 SR302 @150th Lake Holiday bus shed
- 5:48 Purdy Park & Ride



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And these three staffers make sure everything's just right.



Jeff Browand

Meredith Browand

Originally from the Midwest, Meredith relocated to Washington in 2006 when her husband Jeff accepted a position with Alaska Airlines. It was only a matter of weeks before snowcapped mountains, the glistening Sound and towering evergreens quickly replaced cornfields, fireflies and flatland for miles as her definition of "home."

Upon arriving in Washington, Meredith taught for three years on the Key Peninsula at both Evergreen and Minter Creek elementary schools.

Since she stopped teaching to stay home with her children, Meredith has become an engaged activist for a variety of social justice causes, with most of her work being dedicated to gun violence prevention and education issues. Working to pass universal background checks in Washington in 2014 remains one of the proudest efforts of her life.

Meredith is a longtime columnist for the Key Peninsula News, writing "Key Issues" several times a year. She has recently accepted the staff position of calendar editor and looks forward to serving the newspaper in a new way.

Meredith lives in Purdy with her husband Jeff, sons John and Pete, and daughter Molly. They also live with two hilarious and ridiculous pugs, Hank and Pearl. Meredith is an avid baseball fan, loves to travel, and always enjoys a good joke.



Lisa Bryan KP News

Linda Grubaugh

Born in Pennsylvania, Linda grew up in New York, Alaska, California, Wyoming and New Mexico as her father worked construction around the country. The family wound up in Washington when he went to work on the Mayfield Dam near Mossyrock.

Linda graduated from Mossyrock High School and spent two years at Centralia College before starting her working life as a title clerk in a car dealership where she became the bookkeeper. She lived in cities from college through 2006 and didn't like it. She and her husband, Frank, spent two and a half years searching for country property from Snohomish to Lewis county and enjoyed every minute of looking. They bought land on the KP in 2001 and built a home here in 2006.

Linda was hired as bookkeeper for the Key Peninsula News two years ago, bringing professional experience and care to our financials.

She enjoys reading novels and nonfiction about the outdoors, as camping is a favorite activity of the Grubaughs. They just bought a travel trailer so they can camp year round but will miss the tent. They have a large, blended family including her two daughters and his two, plus six grandchildren. Teddy, shown above, is the latest addition to the family,



Tina McKail, KP News

Dave Stave

Dave Stave is a board member and proofreader for Key Peninsula News. In 2005, Dave and his wife Alberta moved here from Eastern Oregon and built a house. Dave spent a 29 years as a newspaper editor and writer in Redmond and La Grande, Oregon.

After his newspaper career, Dave spent 14 years as a part-time English and journalism instructor at Ashford University, retiring in 2019.

Dave grew up in Mount Vernon, 60 miles north of Seattle, and graduated from high school there in 1962. He attended Multnomah and Cascade College, graduating in 1967 with a bachelor's degree in English.

Drafted into the U.S. Army, he did his basic training at what is now Joint Base Lewis McChord and served in South Vietnam, assisting Army chaplains assigned to an Army construction battalion, building roads and bridges.

After being discharged in 1969, Dave returned to Portland where he worked in the office of a mining equipment company. At a church east of Portland, he met Alberta Hill, whom he married in 1972.

Dave and Alberta then moved south to Nevada where Dave attended and graduated from the University of Nevada-Reno in 1975 with a master's degree in journalism.

Join us for our annual meeting, where we will announce and welcome new Board members. In person or by Zoom, call 253 884-4440 for link info. Voting ballots are available at KPCS, 17015 9th St. Ct NW, Lakebay

Annual Meeting February 2 at 5 pm

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KP 10-Year-old Wins Gig Harbor Music Olympics Event

The young pianist looks forward to writing her own music.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Longbranch resident Ava Tisino, 10, won a first place trophy for mastery of the piano in her category at the annual Gig Harbor Music Teachers Association Music Olympics Nov. 20 at Harbor Covenant Church.

Ava also received a medal commemorating her induction into the association's 2021 Hall of Fame for going "above and beyond in knowing all the Music Olympics requirements," the association said, though she competed in only a few.

The annual competition draws approximately 150 piano students each year, testing their knowledge of and ability in rhythm, scales, chords, arpeggios, performance and theory. Each category of the competition is determined by the student's age and years studying.

"I started playing when I was 8 years old," Ava told the KP News after winning her event. "The reason I wanted to play is whenever I sat down at my gramma's grand piano at her house, I always had a touch with the piano."

In just two years, Ava has mastered a number of pieces and learned to sight-read music, something Mozart accomplished after four years of study, when he was 7.

"My favorite piece is 'Firefly,'" she said. "When you play it, you fly through the keys and you play legato, and that's my favorite way to play."

Legato refers to playing the piano in a smooth, flowing manner, without breaks between notes.

Ava's winning performance was "The Three-Legged Witch," which she chose in honor of Halloween.

Unlike legato, the Dennis Alexander piece features mostly staccato work, performed with each note sharply separated from the others while shifting from 2/4 to 3/4 time to evoke the witch dancing on three legs, including her broom.

"I don't write my own songs just yet, but I'm really good at just listening to a



Ava Tisino with instructor Tien-Li Holdych. *Rion Tisino*

song and figuring out the notes," Ava said.

She also offered advice for anyone thinking about picking up an instrument.

"If you want to learn to play, you should definitely follow what you want to do. The piano to me is a way to express my feel-

ings because I'm just flying through the keys playing what I want.

"I have a keyboard for now, but I will get a real piano soon," she said.

"Ava is a wonderful student to teach," said her instructor, Tien-Li Holdych. "She is hard-working and truly enjoys playing the piano. I love that when I assign her several pieces to practice, Ava will come back the following week with twice as many pieces that she practiced on her own for fun."

Holdych has been a member of the Gig Harbor Music Teachers Association since 2006 and has chaired several events over the years such as the Young Artists Competition, Master Classes and Music Olympics. ■



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TOP LEFT John Yaggi of Fell Rite Timber Falling on his way to the 2nd Annual Christmas Parade in Home after installing 26,000 lights, totaling 2½ miles of string, to light up his '94 Kenwood and 518 Cat Skidder. *Ed Johnson, KP News* **TOP RIGHT** Santa Claus fights fire for KPFD in his off season. *Tina McKail, KP News* **INSET** Appearing as the Grinch, Stacey Davenport raises money for local families at Christmas. *Tina McKail, KP News* **MIDDLE** Santa and the Mrs. ride Key Peninsula Fire's Santa sleigh. *Anne Nesbit* **LOWER LEFT** A feast of color complete with icicles hanging courtesy of Boehme & Sons Logging. *Tina McKail, KP News* **LOWER RIGHT** Caterpillar fans all the way to Ohio enjoyed photos of Yaggi's lights. *Tina McKail, KP News*