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THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE KEY PENINSULA

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KP Historical Society Receives Major Grant for Restoration Project

Thanks to local volunteers, there is light at the end of the tunnel for preserving a Key Peninsula gem.

VICKI BIGGS, KP NEWS

The Vaughn Library Hall restoration project is on track for completion within its five-year plan thanks to an \$83,000 grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust received by the Key Peninsula Historical Society in August.

Built in 1893, it is the last remaining meeting hall on the Key Peninsula.

After being excluded from participation in the Vaughn Horticultural Society — an organization to promote agriculture business on the Key Peninsula — a group of women founded the Vaughn library at the hall in 1894. No men were permitted on the board. The hall became part of the Pierce County Library system in 1946.

The extensive restoration of the historic building began in 2016 after it was donated to the KP Historical Society by Donna Docken. Project manager Bart Wolfe expects the building to be open for limited public use by December. As previously reported by the Key Peninsula News, the project received historic building status by the county and state. The restoration has been supported by grants and private donations. (See “Historic Vaughn Library Hall Restoration,” March 2023.)

Work on the project has been done largely by volunteers.

“At first, the object was to keep the building from falling into further decay and serve as a storage building for the historical society,” said Judy Mills, KPHS president emerita.

Volunteers met weekly for over five years, clearing and hauling countless loads of trash, finally uncovering the treasure hiding in plain sight obscured by years of use and neglect.



Martha Nicolas fast at it while her husband looks on. *Tina McKail, KP News*

LOGGERS DOING THEIR THING AT THE PENINSULA LOGGING SHOW & FESTIVAL



Hailee Phelps receives a congratulatory hug from Martha after competing in her first bucking competition. *Tina McKail, KP News*

The newly rebranded “Peninsula Logging Show & Festival” held at the Port Orchard Airport Aug. 19 was attended by nearly 5,000, according to organizer Stephanie Brooks.

The 34-year tradition celebrating the early days of the Key Peninsula was originally the brainchild of local Loretta Jaggi to help raise money to support the local food bank.

The new show gave proceeds from the event to Key Peninsula’s Food Backpack 4 Kids and the KP Little League.



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COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL

Here's What I Think About That

LISA BRYAN
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Monday morning Aug. 14 began like any other day. Rolled out of bed at 5:30, grabbed my robe, made my way to the kitchen for coffee, then slid back into bed with my husband to read the latest news on my phone. I know it sounds like a terrible way to begin the day but reading "the paper" in the morning is my lifelong habit.

Right around 6 a.m., we lost our internet connection. Was it our Wi-Fi? Maybe the modem? The weather was clear. In place of signal strength bars, an SOS flashed on my cell phone. Sure enough, CenturyLink's internet was down. We've been on Verizon Wireless for years but don't get a strong enough signal inside our house without Wi-Fi to connect to the internet, make calls, or send text messages. So, I picked up our landline to call another early riser to see if his internet was working. Our landline was dead.

I quickly dressed and drove up to the Longbranch Improvement Club and tried making a call on my cell from its big open field. Nope. Call failed.

No landline and no cellular service. The same thing happened three months ago: a simultaneous outage of both CenturyLink and Verizon. What was going on?

In the past, even when the electricity was out due to a storm or because a truck took out a power pole, KP residents could still make calls from their landline with an old plug-in phone that required no external electricity. With this failure in August, as well as the previous outage May 17, landlines were rendered useless.

The fire danger was very high and an excessive heat warning was in place that day, with expected high temps in the mid-90s. And yet for most of us, there was no way to call 911 for medical aid or to report a fire.

Astound (formerly Wave) customers were blissfully unaware there was any problem that day. Telephone, cable and internet service was normal. Starlink? No problem. By most accounts, AT&T cell service worked fine and the

same was true for Comcast broadband customers.

However, the majority of homes on Key Peninsula are serviced by CenturyLink.

The outage lasted 16 hours. During that time, residents with a CenturyLink landline and/or Verizon Wireless could not make a call to 911 for help in an emergency. The post office relies on an internet connection as well. They remained open to let people pick up their mail, but no other business could be conducted or packages mailed out that day.

After talking with KP Fire Chief Nick Swinhart, I learned that the extent of the outage and potential for danger was worse than I imagined.

There was nothing unusual across the Kitsap County line where he lives in Port Orchard,

but when the Chief arrived at Key Center headquarters at 7 a.m.

he discovered it had no internet and no phone because all of their phones are internet-based. He later learned there was no internet or phone service at any of the KP stations.

"You can't make a call to report it," Swinhart said. "You can't check telecoms for updates on the internet or communicate or text with anyone in the district," he said. "It kind of reminds us how dependent we've become on technology."

It really rattled him as a fire chief, and he knew it troubled his staff as well, "to think that people could have needed emergency help for hours and hours and had no way to call."

In a statement provided to Key Peninsula Fire District several days after the outage by Lumen's Western Washington Central Offices, spokesperson Jeffrey Parker wrote that although the company could not go into details about the incident:

"The Pierce County outage ... was the result of a cut fiber and subse-

quent copper theft. Service has been restored, and we're grateful to our customers for their patience throughout the event."

The fire district still received emergency calls via South Sound 911 from KP residents who used other communication service providers; however, those calls came through for dispatch over

VHF radios that run simultaneously to the individual cell phones typically used for dispatch now.

In a statement to KP News, U.S. Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-6th) said, "Every Washingtonian needs access to dependable communication services, especially during emergencies. The recent disruption highlights a need to take a holistic look at the



AND YET FOR MOST OF US, THERE WAS NO WAY TO CALL 911 FOR MEDICAL AID OR TO REPORT A FIRE.

broader issues — like strengthening the security and resilience of our communications

network. While the federal government is already working to improve connectivity across our regions, I'm committed to securing the tools leaders on the Key Peninsula need to keep communities safe, including resources to protect our communications and infrastructure."

The internet is not just something we use to stream movies or play games. It is essential to practically every business, school and individual in this now not-so-new digital world.

If it's this easy for copper thieves to disrupt the communication systems, we have bigger problems than we know. Something has to change. We deserve better.

For now, the message is clear: If you cannot call 911 but need assistance immediately, you are on your own.

It doesn't take a natural disaster to effectively wipe out communications. Talk to your neighbors and make a plan because we may need each other far more than we realized. ■

The 2023 Annual Key Peninsula Art Walk Marches on for Eighth Year

What began as a modest promotion of local artists has become a community celebration of art complete with food, drink and music.

LAUREN TRENCH, KP NEWS

Clear skies and warm sunshine welcomed residents of the Key Peninsula to the eighth annual Key Center Art Walk Wednesday evening, Aug. 2. Sponsored by the Two Waters Arts Alliance, the Art Walk brought together 47 artists and vendors, transforming Key Center into a vibrant showcase of creativity.

TWAA is a nonprofit organization founded in 2001 to support artists and foster creativity on the Key Peninsula. TWAA volunteers had their hands full this year for the annual Art Walk, which featured three stages with live entertainment, local artists and writers, beer, wine, food, and displays from local nonprofit organizations.

Adria Hanson, a local artist and previous TWAA volunteer participated in the Art Walk for the third time. Hanson, who offers art classes to the community, had an area set up for children to make their own paintings complete with glitter and vibrant watercolors. Hanson said she looks forward each year to the outpouring of people who share a common love of art.

“You see so many different people that love art. It’s like your whole life is based on art — mine is,” she said before a curtain of glitter fell to the ground from a little girl finishing her art piece.

Children laughed and chased each other among the azaleas at Sunnycrest Nursery Florist & Décor where many of the vendors were set up, including woodcraft artist Gordon Myers.

Myers, with the company of his wife of “62 years last month,” spoke to guests about his unique wooden birdhouses. It was their second year selling creatively shaped birdhouses made of cedar and redwood at the Art Walk. What started as a hobby turned into a small business venture with each piece taking anywhere from a day to a few days to complete.

“I think that the community feel of everybody is just so friendly,” Myers said. “All of our neighbors come by and say, ‘Hi.’ I love it.”

Kirstin Grant, a regular patron of Sunnycrest and attendee of the Art Walk, enjoyed the overall splendor of the day while her husband held a conversation nearby.

“I love it,” she said. “I love the band. It’s so much fun. You want to keep watching people enjoy all this walking around and being with each other.”



The beer tent was a popular last stop after the art walk. *Lauren Trench, KP News*



Pianist Mark Runions plays with Bill Stewart. *Lauren Trench, KP News*

The Capitol Draft Bar was new to the Art Walk this year, providing an additional stage behind Capitol Lumber and offering local beers and ciders on tap. The Key Center Corral, Sunnycrest and Capitol Lumber provided enough room for seven local musicians and groups to offer a wide variety of music.

“It’s been busy and steady — I think it’s been great. I’ve had more traffic than I had last year,” said TWAA volunteer Patty



Artist Gordon Meyers and his birdhouses. *Tina McKail, KP News*

Finnigan.

Stefanie Warren, this year’s event coordinator, had positive things to say about the event and all the participation from everyone involved.

“Although the committee officially put

me in charge this year, Art Walk is planned and executed by a very dedicated group of volunteers who put their heart and soul into sharing art in all its many expressions with the Key Peninsula community. It’s a tremendous labor of love.” ■

Local Rescue Volunteer to Return to Ukraine for Third Time

The retired long-haul truck driver has spent months shuttling supplies to besieged areas and getting abandoned animals out.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Tom Bates of Lakebay, 69, returned home June 23 after nine months of rescuing animals and delivering food and medical supplies as a volunteer to the battlefronts of Ukraine. He arrived for the first time just a month after the Russian invasion began Feb. 24, 2022. He plans to return for a third time in October.

“It has taken a while for me to re-adjust to living without air raid sirens and explosions, but home is always the place to recuperate,” he said. “I’m one of the lucky ones. I have a home that is safe from war.”

Gretchen Roosevelt, his wife of 29 years, has been on a journey of her own with him gone.

“We’re in communication a lot; I’m not really worried about him,” she said. “Certainly there’s a price to pay, but emotionally it’s OK for me. I’m not alone in the house and I also have a pretty tight circle of friends I see a lot.”

“I do have people say, ‘He could do animal rescue here,’ but not like he can do there. He’s making a difference in a different place on a different scale. It’s been a life-changing experience for all of us.”

After working with different organizations at the beginning of the war, Bates is now part of a small team called K9 Rescue International, a UK-based charitable foundation with Ukrainian NGO status, which makes dealing with bureaucracy and border guards easier.

Bates works with two other volunteers on occasion but is mostly on his own, he said. No one gets paid anything.

“I pay my own transportation, I pay for all my expenses, food, fuel, housing,” he said. “A very good hotel might be \$20 a night, a good meal \$3 to \$6; fuel is the big one,” at about \$5.50 a gallon for diesel. “Then again, the income over there is not even close to ours.”

Bates spent the beginning of the war hauling donated pet food and supplies from Poland across Ukraine and moving injured, endangered or abandoned animals to safer places. He has rescued dogs, cats, raptors, owls and farm animals.

But now the need for the kind of support he can deliver has become more generalized.

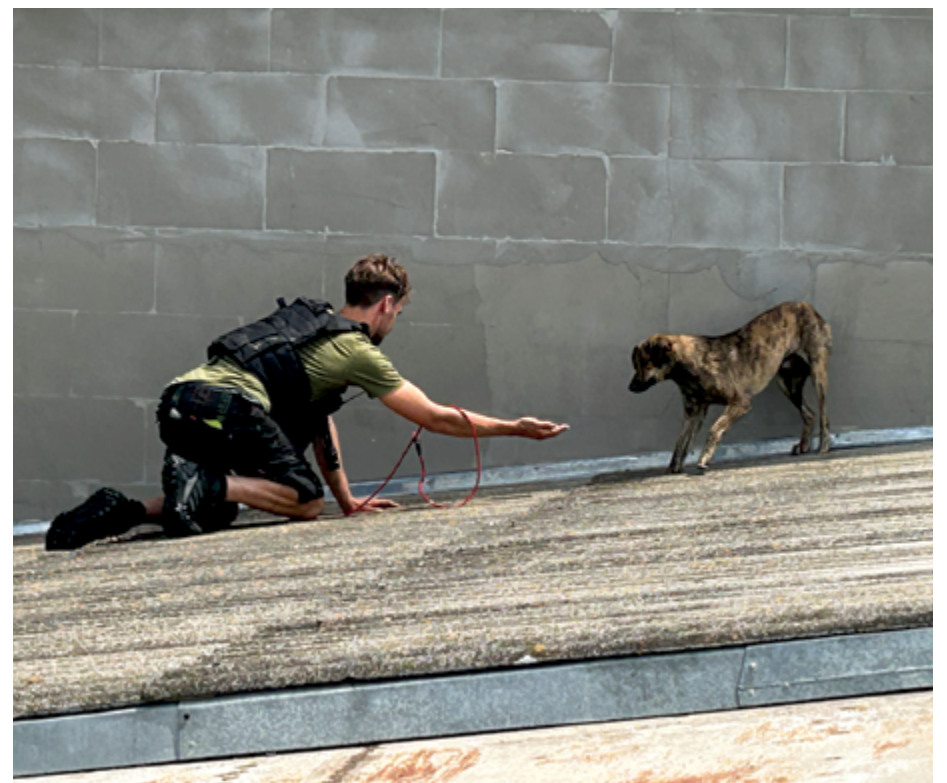
“It’s hard to describe the system, it’s



Tom Bates came home with a refugee, a street cat named Bobby Reznick. “His favorite toy is a lightbulb.” *Tom Bates*



Dog on a roof in the Kherson flood. *Tom Bates*



Yannick Bogge tries to lure a dog off a roof during the Kherson flood. *Tom Bates*

pretty organic,” he said. “You meet people, they decide whether you’re a good person or not, and after a while, you’re part of a rescue community, like



On the boat in Kherson flood, K9 International Rescue volunteers (left to right), Freja Mille Que from Denmark, Yannick Bogge from Germany and Tom Bates from Lakebay. *Tom Bates*

an underground railroad. I get four tons of dog and cat food a month from one supplier and medical supplies from another one. We're working with an orphanage; food, clothing, toys. One place wanted to donate 12 generators, and I mean generators of the size to run a hospital. I couldn't do that, but I knew who could, who to trust."

Bates drives about 10,000 kilometers (about 6200 miles) a month. He has a few regular stops and warehouses between Kyiv, where donations arrive, and the Donetsk region in the east.

"I travel around to Dnipro, along the Dnieper River, to Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Bakhmut when we could. There's a lot of action on that eastern front."

Something that's not talked about, he said, are the many foreign volunteer soldiers in the country, paying their own way, buying their own supplies, and getting what support they can from people like Bates.

"They are from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland," he said. "For a while, I thought, 'This is great, everybody's here to support Ukraine.' Not true. They are here to kill Russians. The war could be anywhere, they would be there just the same. Getting even."

K9's van broke down in mid-May, stranding the organization until it could raise the \$4,000 needed to repair it. While waiting on that, Russian forces blew up the critical Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant dam under their control June 6, flooding cities and towns Bates regularly visited.



The delivery van Bates rented and then bought with donations needs repair or replacement. *Tom Bates*

"My last ten days were spent in Kherson with the flood, doing evacuations. I always stayed at the same guest house, which was near the river, but when I got there that day the river was just half a block away," he said.

"We purchased an inflatable boat and met up with some people who had engines and went out and rescued animals off of roofs," he said. "Got about a dozen. I know river boating and currents; there were quite a few rescuers who ended up needing rescuing."

Bates said he thought the mood of the general population across the country was good.

"The youth of Ukraine is going to define that country very soon. They are ready to join the EU, they are ready

"YOU MEET PEOPLE, THEY DECIDE WHETHER YOU'RE A GOOD PERSON OR NOT, AND AFTER A WHILE, YOU'RE PART OF A RESCUE COMMUNITY, LIKE AN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD."

to change their political structure, end corruption. ... There are all kinds of indications that they must know something we don't know, or what we're all assuming is true: that they're going to prevail," he said.

"However, I'm shocked when I get to places like Bakhmut and see what the hell the Russians are doing to the population. The citizens there, they all look like they just came out of a coal mine.

They're just black from soot and debris, can't get clean water. And they're stubborn as hell, that's why they're still there. I ask them, 'You want to come with me, evacuate?' But that's as far it goes.

"I got to know families there, their kids, their dogs. And then, what happened to them? They're just gone. Did they evacuate, did they get caught in the shelling,



Freja Mille Que comforts a successful rescue. *Tom Bates*

all these people who were digging in for the long haul? I want to go back to Bakhmut after it's been liberated and find out. Or maybe I don't. I don't know. I've met soldiers that have asked for this or that, and then I don't hear from them anymore. I don't know. Did they make it? I don't know."

Near the end of August, Bates learned that his van had broken down again, perhaps permanently.

"K9 Rescue International is without transportation and it isn't possible for us to replace it," he said. "Our funds are depleted but our warehouse is full. We can't make any giant things occur, but we can do the things we do. And the fact is we're still there, which a lot of organizations are not. There are still some very determined people that are going to stick it out with us. But I'm not a fundraiser; I'm a doer."

For more information, go to <https://k9rescue.international>. ■

Meredith Broward
KEY ISSUES



The Heat is Here

July 4, 2023, was the hottest recorded day on Earth. I just happened to be in Phoenix, Arizona, attending a baseball tournament for my son where the daily temperature reached 115 degrees. It was the hottest I have ever been, and I was just standing in the shade watching him play baseball. To prepare for a tournament under these conditions I rented a shade tent and cooler, purchased fans and misters, packed cooling towels and sun hats, and ensured all of us were well hydrated and lathered in sunscreen.

But as we spent the week in Phoenix I became painfully aware that not everyone had access to the same essential comforts as my family. Cooling shelters were reportedly full and had to turn individuals away. We saw unhoused people huddling under freeways during the height of daytime temperatures. Local news stations were encouraging residents without access to reliable air conditioning to seek daytime shelter in other locations.

Our short time dealing with the heat in Phoenix is a very small example of how climate change is affecting the world in different ways. My family was able to access everything we needed to be safe, comfortable and healthy while others suffered under the same conditions. We weren't more worthy; we simply had the means to control the situation we were in.

In 2021 the Environmental Protection Agency released a report showing that "the most severe harms from climate change fall disproportionately upon underserved communities who are least able to prepare for, and recover from, heat waves, poor air quality, flooding, and other impacts." Socially vulnerable populations are the most affected while simultaneously having the fewest resources to combat the effects of climate change such as extreme heat.

Climate change and climate disasters can take many forms. The Pacific Northwest has battled wildfires, flooding, mudslides and prolonged drought in recent years. These are all linked to climate change, and they all dispropor-

tionately affect marginalized groups and the socially vulnerable.

As wildfires fill our late summer skies with smoke, and the air quality index steadily rises, we're all encouraged to stay indoors. Most of us can follow those guidelines, patiently wait for the skies to clear, and then go on with our daily lives. But it isn't so simple for many others. Researchers at the University of Washington and The Nature Conservancy have found that 12 million

people in the United States are considered socially vulnerable to wildfires and a single extreme fire event

would be devastating to their existence.

Specifically, "In the case of Native Americans, historically forced relocation onto reservations — mostly rural, remote areas that are more prone to wildfires — combined with greater levels of vulnerability due to socioeconomic barriers make it especially hard for these communities to recover after a large wildfire." Do I deserve to recover from a potential wildfire quicker than those in marginalized groups that are disproportionately affected by the threat? Or do I simply have access to more resources and live in a lower-risk area?

As climate change continues to impact our lives it will require all of us to advocate for marginalized groups in ways that boost equity and bring light to gaps in resources. No one deserves to suffer, regardless of their place or position in the world.

Meredith Broward is a mother and activist who lives in Purdy.

Dan Whitmarsh
WRITING BY FAITH



From Montana With Love

We gathered at the Lakebay Church in late July to celebrate the life of our friend Howard Johnson (see "One Dead, One Injured After Fire Destroys KP Home," KP News, Aug. 2023). Among all the tributes and memories, we heard many stories of the lives Howard touched through his kindness and generosity. His life made a difference in this world.

Howard was born in the backwoods of northwest Montana, between Libby and a little town called the Yaak. Most

people have never heard of it, but it is the same town my father called home as a child, an area where I spent many happy days as a teenager roaming the woods, stalking elk and fishing the Kootenai River.

Both Howard and my father eventually left Montana for Washington. Howard moved to Auburn and then the Key Peninsula while my father moved to Rosedale and later Seattle, with a few stops in between. These two Montana boys never met until I became Howard's pastor and made the connection, but when they got together they often talked about growing up in the deep forest of the Rocky Mountain foothills.

Howard's life was marked by hardship, much of it self-inflicted. Hard living and hard drinking led to suffering and pain. Libby's legacy of asbestos production scarred his lungs and made his breathing difficult. Howard and his wife Diane lost a son to drowning and they knew profound grief. Eventually, he found sobriety and he and Diane found hope in their love for Jesus. From that place, they began to give back.

Since his death, I have heard from people up and down the Key Peninsula whose lives were touched by Howard's compassion. He led recovery groups and was a supportive ear to people battling addiction. He provided food to hungry families and prayed for everyone he met. He had an impish grin and was an encourager who never spoke a critical word. He sought out people on the margins of life and loved them in simple and practical ways. The overflow crowd at his funeral was a testimony to his influence in our community.

My father's life took a different path, but he left a similar legacy. He was always ready to offer a helping hand to people in need. He sat with people in their darkest moments, offering encouragement or a silent space to process their pain. In his retirement, he started visiting the King County jail, building friendships with inmates to support their rehabilitation. When he passed away five years ago, we heard from countless people around the world who told of the ways Dad touched their lives.

When I stood to speak at my father's funeral, I remarked on the way this little boy from Montana left such a huge mark on the world. When I welcomed everybody to Howard's funeral last month, I said that he would have been a little

surprised at all the accolades. He was, after all, just a simple man who tried to do good by all he met. I think neither one of these Montana boys realized the difference they made to those around them.

Whether we are aware of it or not, we all have an impact on the world. Sometimes it is tempting to think our little lives don't count for much, but every word spoken, every act of kindness, our very way of being changes and influences the world around us. It may feel like we are not doing much, but it all counts. Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God being made up of seemingly small and insignificant things: yeast, mustard seed, children. Over time, he said, these small tokens move the world.

Both my father and Howard remind me that we can all make a difference far greater than we will ever understand.

**OVER TIME, HE SAID, THESE SMALL
TOKENS MOVE THE WORLD.**

A meal shared with a stranger, a kind word offered to a neighbor, a prayer for some-

body locked in grief, a listening ear, an encouraging smile: they can all change somebody's life. Years ago, two Montana boys figured that out, and we are all the better for it. May we continue their legacy and be a blessing to the world around us.

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

Dan Clouse
THE OTHER SIDE



Concentrated Wit, or the World in a Sentence

If, as the Bard informs, brevity is the soul of wit, what could be wittier than a one-liner?

President Calvin Coolidge was a typically taciturn Vermonter. Not for "Silent Cal" the word salads we've been served by presidents these days.

Once at a Washington, D.C., dinner party, the society matron seated next to the "Pride of Plymouth Notch" tried to pry more conversation out of him than his usual monosyllables. She goaded Coolidge, saying, "I made a bet with someone that I could get more than two words out of you."

His retort was, "You lose."
The one-word comeback is very rare. "Are you underestimating me?"

“Impossible.”
Why are these short ripostes so appealing?

Besides the humor, no doubt it is the brevity. Long-windedness is the soul of boredom.

We admire the spontaneity of the perfect, quick comeback. Most of us see an opening for one in conversation, and then, dang it, can't quite find the right words in the milliseconds available. When we think of the perfect line later, the French, who have a term for everything from baguette to rosé to ménage à trois, call this an esprit de l'escalier, or staircase wit.

It's just not fair the way witty people get to skip the stairs, and their quips are never too late.

Short, pithy comebacks have been popular since pith was invented in the Fertile Crescent or wherever a long time ago.

Plutarch tells the story of Diogenes, who was called a cynic, the word for dog since the Greeks didn't see fit to use the perfectly good three-letter English word.

Diogenes lived on the street, like a stray mongrel. Apparently, he'd become an Athenian tourist attraction. Once, the flea-bitten, dumpster-diving, homeless philosopher was visited at his sidewalk address by The Most Important Man In The World.

“I am Alexander the Great.”
“I am Diogenes, the dog.”
“The dog?”
“I lick the kind, bark at the greedy, and bite fools.”
“What can I do for you?”
“Stop shading me. Get out of my sunlight.”

As in the days of Stalin, there were dangerous political jokes during the

reign of Caesar Augustus. In one joke, a country fellow from the Roman equivalent of Shelton wanders into the imperial capital. There's a buzz on the street because the yokel is a dead ringer for Caesar himself. Word reaches Augustus, who has his double brought before him.

The emperor commands, “Tell me, young man. Was your mother ever in Rome?”

“No,” replied the hick, “but my father was — often.” The story doesn't say what happened to the smart aleck.

What we've learned to call a mic drop adds to the last-word effect of comebacks. The one-liner has a finality that is like few other things in this life.

Groucho, himself a divinity in the Pantheon of Wit, left a party saying, “I've had a wonderful evening, but this wasn't it.”

Mark Twain, another member of the One-Liner Hall of Fame, nailed the pause before the zinger with a surprise last word, “Familiarity breeds contempt — and children.”

Winston Churchill was another titan of the last word.

Nancy Astor, exasperated with the no less ugly than cantankerous Churchill at a country house party, exclaimed in exasperation, “If I were your wife, I would put poison in your coffee!”

To which Churchill famously responded, “And if I were your husband, I would drink it.”

Unlike a Super Bowl, or a Marvel superhero movie, or the last number in pi, Groucho and Churchill had the last word.

There are sequels to comebacks, though.

The Internet Age offers dozens of websites that assemble lists of witty sayings, most beginning with a large, round number and a superlative, “The 100 Greatest...” Nothing new except for the medium: Bartlett's Familiar Quotations has been full of one-liners since its first edition in 1855, and we're on the 19th now. They naturally accumulate in endless lists.

There are entire books of short sayings. One of the best-known is La Rochefoucauld's Maxims. The bracing effect of reading his book before going to sleep, absorbing misanthropy like “Old people are fond of giving good advice; it consoles them for no longer being capable of setting a bad example,” and, “In the adversity of even our best friends, we always find something not wholly displeasing,” is the equivalent of using hydrogen peroxide as a mouthwash. You are ready for bed, disinfected of naïve illusions, but with a lingering, bitter taste in your mouth. You thought you were going to bed, but were put in your place instead.

It may be a French thing. Pascal's Pensée 646 is, “If all men knew what others say of them, there would not be four friends in the world.” I bet there aren't any Optimist Clubs in Paris.

I prefer Dorothy Parker's wit, and who doesn't? It's acid enough but smoothed by hilarious wordplay. Often, the joke is in the unexpected last word in the quip.

In case you forgot, Parker reminds us that, just as with one-liners, “brevity is the soul of lingerie.”

When challenged to use “horticulture” in a sentence, she offered, “You

can lead a horticulture, but you can't make her think.”

In 18th century France, Joseph Joubert spent a lifetime polishing aphorisms that he kept in notebooks but never published. He was a perfectionist who tried “to put a whole book in a page, a whole page in a sentence, and that sentence in one word.”

A whole book in a word! Now that's an ambition for anyone who's ever tried to come up with a one-liner.

You're probably thinking, what if the writer of this column had boiled the whole thing down to one entertaining sentence?

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

Richard Gelinis
EMPIRICALLY YOURS



A Letter to My Children

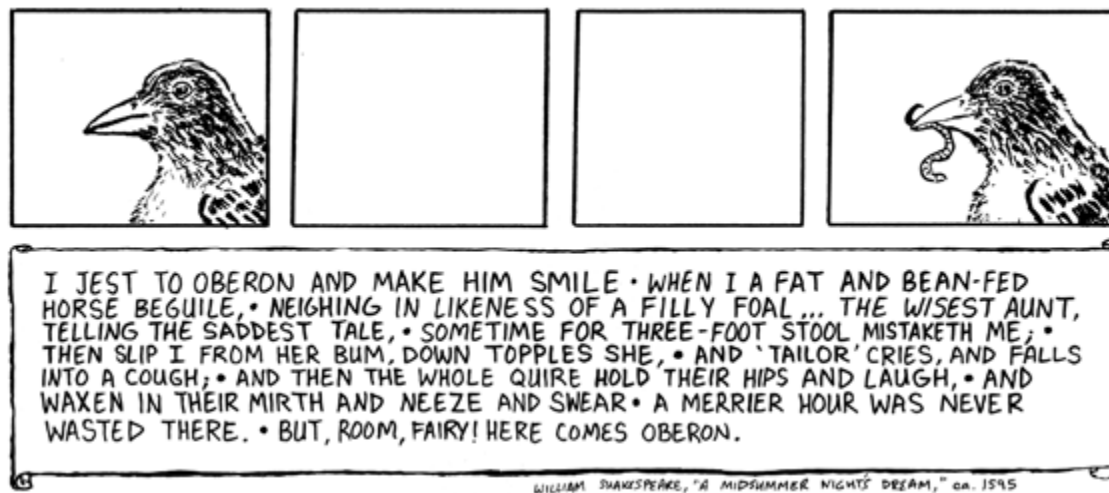
Dear Liz and Sam,

It was wonderful seeing you and your kids at the family reunion last month. We're still finding specks of glitter and tiny beads amid the chalk drawings on the deck, where they did craft projects with their Grandma Sara. I guess I'll put away the beach gear. The weather was nearly perfect while you were here, but in the future I'm afraid that we will have to cope with extreme weather where you live in Austin and Los Angeles as well as here in the Pacific Northwest. If you ever wish to move up here, we will support you, even though Washington state may not be a perfect oasis

CONTINUED PAGE 8

THE ONE-WORD COMEBACK IS VERY RARE.

José Alaniz WE LIVE HERE: ROBIN GOODFELLOW



either. Here's what worries me:

While it was seasonably warm here in July, there were deadly heat waves and new record high temperatures around the world. The global average temperature then was nearly 1.5 degrees Celsius above the historical average in the pre-industrial mid-1800s. My worry is that this is a sign of the new normal, or worse, a tipping point after which the consequences of extreme weather including heat, drought, unmanageable fires, flooding, and food and water shortages will be much more frequent.

What worries me about tipping points is that if Earth's climate changes too fast we humans and other animals and plants may not be able to adapt quickly enough to survive. Or to think about this another way, the rate of climate change may be more important

... IF EARTH'S CLIMATE CHANGES TOO FAST WE HUMANS AND OTHER ANIMALS AND PLANTS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO ADAPT QUICKLY ENOUGH TO SURVIVE.

to control than the ultimate peak level. This means that the next degree rise in temperature (next year) may be more critical than the last degree in temperature rise (way in the future).

Examples of extreme weather are reported almost daily but the underlying cause is the continuing increase in heat-trapping gases like carbon dioxide and methane with which we pollute the Earth's atmosphere. As measured at the carbon dioxide observatory on top of Mauna Loa in Hawaii, the level of this greenhouse gas in the world's air increased another 1% from July 2022 to July 2023.

Doesn't sound like much, does it? A few years ago the rate of increase was half that amount. This means that all the climate change mitigation we've done so far hasn't stopped the flow of these gases into the air. We also tend to forget what's worse, that 90% of this carbon dioxide is promptly absorbed by the ocean.

Yes, most of the accumulating heat as well as the polluting carbon dioxide are

absorbed by the world's oceans. The heat drives the global El Niño weather pattern, while the absorbed carbon dioxide makes sea water more acidic. Warmer, more acidic sea water is leading to dire effects on sea life. Obvious examples are the bleaching and death of corals and crustaceans such as crabs as sea water reaches Jacuzzi temperatures. I'm glad our granddaughters had no trouble finding the tiny crabs on the beach this year, but Dungeness crab may never return to South Puget Sound. Crabs, unlike the rest of us, just can't get climate insurance.

Well, we can still get insurance in Washington state, but Florida and parts of California are becoming uninsurable.

Insurance companies simply can't raise rates high enough to make a profit after years of enormous losses, due to extreme weather events

such as hurricanes or wildfires. Insurers in other states including Texas, Illinois, Kentucky, Colorado, Tennessee, Arkansas and Missouri, recently posted billion-dollar losses from extreme weather events.

Insurance companies gripe about the costs they face such as rising construction prices, the reinsurance premiums they must pay, lawsuits by unhappy customers and complex state regulations. But the emerging picture is that most of us are still largely in denial about the consequences of climate change. What this means for our family is that the cost of your homeowners insurance may be going up. So far, ours has not. But if pressures or risk in Austin or Los Angeles make you think about moving north, please come here. Liz, I miss those kale salads you make. I think the neighbor's house is still for sale.

Love, Dad

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

Letter to the Editor

HERE'S WHAT I THINK ABOUT THAT

We need more stories like the one Lisa Bryan wrote about Larry the young duckling in the August edition (Picking Up and Letting Go, Aug. 2023) I personally feel like most news reported these days is negative and makes my heart feel troubled. I do believe "we" as a society have

lost respect or kinship toward each other, which is exactly why enjoyed the article about Larry. The type of tolerance and compassion exhibited is something, as she said, that should be extended to all living things. Maybe stories like these could be the start to such a revolution!

Nicholas Howard, Gig Harbor

OBITUARIES



Asheley Michelle McCleary

Asheley Michelle McCleary, DVM, of Vaughn, Washington, age 46, passed away Aug. 3, 2023, in the loving arms of her husband. Asheley will be remembered for her loyalty, honesty and drive. She was a devoted mother and pioneer of Dutch Shepherd breeding in America.

Born in Orlando, Florida, Asheley distinguished herself as a bright, even overeager, student. At age 20 she received a degree in microbiology from Georgia Tech. During veterinary school at Iowa State, she found Dana V. Kelterhof, the Dutch Shepherd who became her soul mate and the founding mother of a breeding program that would stretch 16 years and produce 29 litters and 198 puppies, earning hundreds of confirmation, agility and working titles.

As a veterinarian in Salt Lake City, Utah, Asheley specialized in canine reproduction. She became known for her "amazingly high" success rate when performing surgical artificial insemination. She inspired several veterinary technicians to become veterinarians.

Asheley will be remembered for her devotion, for going all in on every relationship and always choosing to help others. She touched many more lives than she knew.

An outstanding endurance athlete who loved the outdoors, Asheley once entered an endurance snowshoe race on a whim and finished second female overall, beating both the sunrise and several professional racers with ice crystals streaked across her face. At that time she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She pushed her husband Josh to go back to school and supported him as he became an engineer. He, along with enduring support from her father and mother, supported her when she had to leave her jobs due to lack of accommodations for her MS. They moved to Washington in 2015. Their son Orion was born in 2020.

Her Dutch Shepherd breeding program

was known for providing high-quality working dogs with strong drive and good social stability. Versatile and good thinkers, her dogs started numerous police K9 and search and rescue programs. She had a remarkable sense of ethics and duty.

A lifelong high-achiever, she was devastated when her MS progressed to overwhelming fatigue that no longer allowed her to keep up with life. She suffered from depression. Yet she put on a loving face. She made it through the bad days to give the good days to her friends and family. Orion flooded her life with joy.

Close friends and family offered these remembrances of her character: "She was an extraordinary woman, so devoted to others." "She was stronger than anyone knew." "She was, in many respects, fearless." "She loved you with her whole heart, didn't hold anything back, ever."

She is survived by her husband Joshua, son Orion, mother Angela Lane, father Thomas Lane, grandmother Emily Blanca, sister and brother-in-law Kimberly and Andrew Dreslin, and nieces Lane, Linnea and Lolly Dreslin.



Sean Hansen

Sean Justin Hansen of Vaughn died peacefully at St. Anthony Hospital in Gig Harbor July 19, 2023, following complications of Crohn's disease. He was 50 years old.

He was born in Mayville, North Dakota. After relocating to Idaho for a time, his family moved to the Key Peninsula where Sean attended Peninsula High School.

Sean was a deeply private person. When his health permitted, he enjoyed doing yard work, messing around with his car and taking his dog for rides. He will be greatly missed.

He is survived by his parents, Wayne and Gay Hansen; brothers Todd, Troy and Wayne Jr.; sister Lari Ann; and his faithful little dog, "Bean."

A celebration of Sean's life will be held Sept. 2 at 4 p.m. at his parents' home in Vaughn.

AmeriCorps Members Leave Their Mark on Sound View Camp

The team of members from across the country spent six weeks doing beautification and environmental improvements on a beloved KP summer camp.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

You may remember the first few words of the intro to a popular MTV reality show: “This is the true story of seven strangers, picked to live in a house, work together ...”

What seems like a reality show episode is the real world for seven members of the AmeriCorps Summer of Service.

AmeriCorps, created in 1993, is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans a year in public service through a variety of volunteer work programs. Its mission is “to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.”

The group of out-of-towners ranging from 18 to 21 years old, some fresh out of high school, lived together at the Sound View Camp over the summer doing beautification projects and making environmental enhancements to the campground.

Mature beyond their years, these seven: Elias Rodriguez (Oregon), Ianna Parsons (West Virginia), Sarah Corey (Virginia), Mohamed Kamara (Maryland), Abi Velasquez (Florida), Teddy Jouret (Massachusetts) and Darnell Crumity (Tacoma) spent six weeks together — eight, if you count two weeks of training in Colorado — learning true life lessons.

So why would these young adults give up their summer break, travel across the country, live with strangers, and volunteer six days a week to improve a place they’ve never been before and will likely never see again?

“To develop ourselves, and show ourselves that we’re strong and capable,” said Kamara, who plans on attending the University of Maryland. “You learn to push yourself and see parts of yourself you’ve never seen before.”

They braved the mud and tides to dismantle a floating dock, including taking out 96 rubber tires that were slowly releasing toxins into Carr Inlet. Some of the wood will be reclaimed to build picnic tables and benches. They removed 28 black contractor-sized bags full of the invasive flowering ground cover vinca minor, commonly known as periwinkle, from overtaking a good chunk of the property. They hiked around the 92-acre camp mapping out where other invasive plants are taking root and tracking it all on an app. They cleared and developed an accessible pathway they named the Bison Loop. They designed, sanded, sealed and



AmeriCorps Volunteer Darnell Crumity of Tacoma at work in the shop. *Teddy Jouret*

stained more than 30 wooden signs and installed them across the campgrounds. And not to mention they spent two hours a day with campers teaching them about the local habitat.

“I want this ecosystem to thrive, and we can do that by inspiring a new generation to care about the environment,” said Parsons, who left a full-time job back home for the AmeriCorps experience.

This rustic campground, owned and operated by the Presbytery of Olympia, is in its fifth year hosting AmeriCorps teams. Their work helps revitalize the grounds, protected by the Nisqually Land Trust.

“Just about everywhere you go here you’ll see the mark AmeriCorps has left on this campground,” said Jouret, who is studying anthropology and communications at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. “It’s astounding how much the organization has helped this place.”

Besides the daily grind of manual labor, the team spent a few hours together each day doing team-building exercises and some sort of physical activity. At night

they spent an hour doing what they called “sharing life stories” to learn about each other.

“Not everyone has the same background in life,” Crumity said. “You have to learn how to adapt, how you talk to people who may be different than you.”

Parsons agreed. “We all grew up differently, but I think that’s what makes us mesh so well.”

Velasquez said there’s the occasional conflict or tension but that the group has come a long way in how it handles that and takes care of each other.

Eating together was an important part of the social experience. The team worked in pairs to cook dinner for the group, but they were quick to point out it was not Top Ramen or boxed mac and cheese. “We get real bougie,” Corey said. On the menu for their final Sunday night at the camp: General Tso’s Chicken.

Kamara said he’d learned so much about responsibility and holding himself accountable. Before his service in AmeriCorps Kamara stayed up until 4 a.m. and

woke up at 3 p.m. During his stay at Sound View, he was going to bed before 10 p.m. so he could be up by 6:30 a.m. to start a 10 to 12-hour workday.

“This experience has changed the trajectory of my life,” he said. “It challenged me and without challenges, we can’t grow as people.”

AmeriCorps members get an education award at the end of their service that can be applied to their schooling. For this eight-week stint, the members will get \$1,500. Some of their universities will match it. Travel costs, housing and food are all paid for by AmeriCorps.

The team left the camp Aug. 4 and headed back to their home states a few days later. Nearly everyone said they’ll miss the cooler Pacific Northwest summers. What won’t they miss? The wasps.

Corey said, “They seem angrier here,” adding she got stung by one a day earlier.

“Personally, I would love to stay at Sound View longer,” Parsons said. “This is probably the most impactful and best thing I’ve done in my life.” ■



Fiber Arts Show to Feature Margo Macdonald

The Vaughn tapestry artist and painter will display her work at the Longbranch Improvement Club Oct. 7 as part of the Farm Tour.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

Margo Macdonald's art is rooted in her experience of place, a quality that will be on display at this year's 16th annual Fiber Arts Show. Macdonald, a Vaughn painter and weaver with deep ties to the Key Peninsula, is the featured artist.

Her pieces start on a field trip where she captures images with a digital camera and sketches. Her decision about whether the final work will be painted or woven depends on which medium will best capture the color, movement and detail.

The process of creating a painting is very different from that of creating a tapestry. "With tapestry," she said, "most of the design decisions are done in advance and the piece grows from bottom to top. The painted image changes in unpredictable ways, and is not finished until the painter declares it over."

Several years ago Macdonald started a series of tapestries featuring rivers and she has completed at least 16, each accompanied by a brief narrative. "What I want you to feel when you see the tapestries is that this is a real place on a river with history and consequences," she said. They are about three feet high and three feet wide and take months to complete.

This year she embarked on another project: iconic Key Peninsula images including the Lakebay Marina, the Purdy Bridge, and Drive Thru Feed. The pieces are much smaller, can be completed in a few weeks, and gave her a bit of a break, she said.

Recent events may lead to a new direction in her work. A year and a half ago when driving to Taos for a memorial service, she and her husband were near Ghost Ranch — where Georgia O'Keefe lived and worked — and they saw a fire in the distance. Macdonald took a picture and the image stuck with her. "It was a beautiful landscape and even the fire



The most familiar sight of all: crossing the Purdy Bridge and coming home to Key Peninsula. *Tina McKail, KP News*



Drive Thru Feed at Four Corners. *Tina McKail, KP News*



At home in her studio, Macdonald weaves a a tapestry on her loom. *Tina McKail, KP News*



Madronas. Tina McKail, KP News

was beautiful. Scary. Devastating. Climate change. Burning forever,” she said.

That image is the basis for the tapestry she will be working on at the Fiber Arts Show and she anticipates it may be the beginning of a new series.

Two other fires have had an impact on her. The Sourdough Fire near Diablo Lake in the North Cascades hit close to home. Diablo was a regular stop when the family took trips to Winthrop. The fire that destroyed the city of Lahaina was particularly heartbreaking. She feels close to Maui, where the family has had property since 1977.

Along with a possible shift in subject matter Macdonald is experimenting with form. One of her newest pieces is not a straightforward image but rather a series of connected images woven in vertical segments. “It is about memory,” Macdonald said. She is contemplating using that form to express the impact of the Maui fire.

“My daughter Maggie pushed me about this,” Macdonald said. “She said you always create these beautiful images. But there is so much more you could say.”

Macdonald’s work is in both private and public collections, including the Seattle Arts Commission and the Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital. Over the past decade, she has been part of group exhibitions all over the country. She is currently in the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art Spotlight juried show, which runs until Sept. 24, and she will have work in a tapestry show at the Jansen Center in Lynden from late October through December.

Raised in flat dry spaces — she was born in west Texas and then moved to Calgary in Alberta when she was 9 — Macdonald came to crave water and



The Lakebay Marina on Mayo Cove.

Tina McKail, KP News

mountains. That craving brought her to the Pacific Northwest for college at the University of Puget Sound. Her growing interest in art took her to the Rhode Island School of Design for a year. She knew, though, that she did not want to stay on the East Coast, and “there was a boyfriend I was missing,” she said.

She returned to UPS, completed a degree in art education, and married that boyfriend, Bruce Macdonald. They built a home in Vaughn more than 30 years ago, where they raised their daughters, Katie and Maggie. When the girls were young Macdonald discovered weaving. Painting could be messy, she said. Weaving could be set aside at a moment’s notice if necessary. She taught art at Charles Wright Academy in Tacoma from 2003 until 2010.

In 2001 she founded Two Waters Arts Alliance with fellow artist Kathy Bauer. Although she is no longer on the board she continues to help coordinate events. This year she helped organize the Two Waters annual juried show, coordinated



The artist at work. Tina McKail, KP News



“With tapestry ... the piece grows from the bottom up.” Tina McKail, KP News

the artists at the Art Walk, and had her own booth.

“I had too many irons in the fire this year,” Macdonald said. “Next year I plan to wander around, drink some beer, and

enjoy the show.”

Macdonald, along with many other artists and craftsmen, will be at the Longbranch Improvement Club from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 7. ■



Triple threat (l to r): Preston "White Beckett" (for his hair), Peyton "Big Beckett," and Paxton "Mean Beckett." *Tina McKail, KP News*

The Brothers Beckett: Local Wrestlers Earn National Recognition

Peyton, Preston and Paxton Beckett recently won the Triple Crown for Washington state youth wrestling – for the second time.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

Learning how to wrestle isn't easy. Learning three styles of wrestling is tough. Excelling at all three seems near impossible.

For brothers Peyton, Preston and Paxton Beckett, they're making it look easy. The trio claimed the coveted Washington state Triple Crown, earned by wrestlers who win all three wrestling disciplines — folkstyle, freestyle and Greco-Roman — in the same year. And it's the second time they've done it, having taken the titles in 2021.

Folkstyle is the traditional style of wrestling people are most accustomed to in the United States, freestyle uses more creative and explosive moves, and Greco-Roman focuses more on upper body moves and holds.

The three train with the Northwest Washington Wrestling Club in Bremerton. While folkstyle helps get the Beckett brothers ready for high school and college wrestling, it's freestyle and Greco-Roman that'll help them train for international competitions, possibly even the Olympics.

Though all under 13, they all got started wrestling around the same time six years ago. Their dad, Justin, got them into it after he grew up in the sport. Amber, the boys' mother, met Justin while they were in high school in Idaho. She was "appalled" after she first saw Justin wrestle in school and swore if she and her future husband ever had kids, they'd never

be allowed to wrestle.

She's now one of wrestling's biggest fans and the Key Peninsula couple have three of the best young wrestlers in the country.

There are the 9-year-old twins, Preston and Paxton, fourth graders at Minter Creek Elementary. Paxton has seen the most success on the mat, claiming his first national Triple Crown title with USA Wrestling earlier this year in the 77-pound class. Called "Mean Beckett" because of his aggressiveness and dominance on the mat, he has an incredible 90-3 record (as of July), winning half of his matches by pinfall. "He's so focused," said Justin. "When Paxton does anything he does it at 100%."

Preston is one minute older but about 10 pounds lighter than Paxton. "He has a very go-with-the-flow personality and does his own thing out on the mat," his dad said. "With him, you just have to buy a ticket and see what happens." Nicknamed "White Beckett" by his coaches for his platinum blonde hair, Preston recently placed in the Top 6 in all three events at the national level and boasts a 62-7 record.

Then there's big brother Peyton, called "Big Beckett." The 12-year-old, who is starting seventh grade this month at Key Peninsula Middle School, is the most subdued of the brothers. He has a mix of the aggressiveness and go-with-the-flow mentality of his younger brothers. In addition to his club success, where he has a 58-9 record and recently placed in the Top 6 at the national level, Peyton won

the regional championship in his weight class (98 pounds) for KPMS last school year and looks to repeat this upcoming season.

The Beckett brothers win so often at various tournaments across the country that their parents have a new rule: medals can only be displayed in their bedrooms for one year before they are bagged up and put in the garage. They have a place in their house reserved for trophies and plaques.

With a combined record of 210 wins and only 19 losses, the boys admit the big problem with their success is they haven't learned how to lose.

"Sometimes we kind of throw a fit," Preston said. His dad quickly jumped in, laughing: "There's no 'kind of' about it."

Amber says Paxton gets the most down after a rare loss, because of the three brothers he takes the sport the most seriously.

Justin tries to help them ease into it by comparing wins and losses to life experiences. "Even though you work as hard as you possibly can work, you might not win. That's OK," he said. "You're not defined by winning, you're defined by how you react to losing."

"They've matured quite a bit through the sport, but there's still room to grow," Amber said.

Even with all the wins, the boys stay humble at school, rarely talking about their wrestling success unless someone asks about it. They also don't bring aggressiveness from the mat

onto school grounds.

But at home, it's a different story.

Having three skilled wrestlers under the same roof changes the dynamic of roughhousing.

Like most brotherly bouts, they evolve from gentle horseplay to hard-hitting action. Peyton says it's usually he and Paxton doing the fighting, while Preston plays peacemaker. "But (Preston) is also the one who starts most of our fights," Peyton said. It's typical brother stuff and while there is internal competitiveness among the three, there's also obvious love and support.

They do almost everything together: practice four nights a week together, manage their diets together, do schoolwork together, and explore the country together. The brothers travel yearly to tournaments in Iowa, Oklahoma, Utah, Nevada and Oregon, not to mention across Washington. Paxton is set to compete at a tournament later this year in Pennsylvania and was invited to his first international event in Estonia next spring.

All three love driving to tournaments because they know the way there is all business, and the way back home is all pleasure. After having to watch their diets pre-tournament to stay underweight, win or lose, all three get to indulge in a post-tournament ice cream bender.

But Justin offers an extra incentive to his boys: "Winners get sprinkles." ■

NATURALIST'S NOTEBOOK

Barred Owls and Ant Marathons Across the Key Peninsula Woods

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

Last month my wife was attacked while running near our home in Lakebay.

It was dusk. She had just left the paved county road for a forest road when she felt something grab her hair and yank upward. Then came a sharp rap to the top of her skull. She screamed and sprinted. In a split second the assailant vanished.

Strangely, wasps flashed through her mind. But it didn't seem right. Now deeper in the woods, she faced the choice of running back to the county road, past the place where she had been attacked, or a much longer loop through rapidly darkening forest. She chose the forest.

This time she saw it. A silent shape on outstretched wings passed directly over her head. It banked and came back toward her. She screamed again and dashed back to the road.

The owl did not follow.

Now we joke about running with bike helmets. We invent odd hypotheses: my wife's ponytail looked like a scampering

**Into the
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squirrel; her stride was light enough to sound like a rabbit's leaps. Or maybe she entered the scene just as the owl was ready to swoop on some

carefully stalked prey, and the owl was just fed up with oblivious people.

Perhaps that last one isn't so far from the truth. Though it is rare, barred owls are known to swoop on people. It happened to a friend of mine in the Washington Park Arboretum. That they seldom draw blood, considering the damage they could do with beak and talons, seems to me pretty good proof that their goal is to frighten rather than fight. Kind of like most bears.

Barred owls, native to eastern North America, were first detected in western Washington in 1973 and have since flooded every forested habitat. I see them regularly at Gateway Park and at the Rocky Creek Conservation Area. If you're in dense woodland, especially if water is around, barred owls are likely nearby. They perch in deep shade on tree limbs close to the trunk. They become



Though rare, barred owls are known to swoop on people. *Tina McKail, KP News*

active at dusk.

Lately they have grown infamous for tangling with and besting their close cousin, the spotted owl, which has been a figurehead for old-growth forest conservation since the bitter Nineties. Spotted owls, already confined to remnant patches of old-growth in the Cascades and Olympics, and far more specialized in their habits, have lost out wherever barred owls have appeared. Interestingly, barred owls made it to the Pacific Northwest on their own, hopscotching across the Midwest and Canada as forest fire suppression and tree-planting around human settlement created landscapes with the big, cavity-filled trees they need to nest and hunt.

Now a federal experiment is underway to cull barred owls in the remaining spotted owl strongholds. This has provided rich fodder for armchair ethicists: certain individuals of one species are being killed in order to save another species from disappearing entirely. It makes me ask: What is natural? What is just? Who is the arbiter? No matter how you slice it, people are at the root. Logging pushed spotted owls to the brink, and settlement ushered barred owls into new terrain.

Attacks like the one on my wife may



Thatch ant anthill. Or mountain? *Chris Rurik, KP News*

be another pickle created by our intensifying land use. Find a barred owl and it may seem impassive, but if you act too curious it will leave. They don't like to be around people. Shrinking patches of forest with more roads means more places where a barred owl, on the wrong day, might cross paths with an unsuspecting person.

On a Thatch Ant Superhighway

Well, it is September and harvestmen sit on squash leaves in my garden. In the bent-grass field edges, speedwell and beggarticks cheerily bloom, confounding the feeling I have been carrying that

summer's sun has long since baked every ounce of new flowering from the Earth.

On a walk in the woods, my son and I find an ant superhighway. They are thatch ants. This is the species that creates mounds of fir needles and twigs that can grow to three feet tall — often seen along quiet Key Peninsula roads through dry forest.

The ant trail crosses ours then runs along its edge for a good 530 feet. The ants, burnt red and black, run in both directions. Seeing one that carries a white morsel of food, we follow it. As it runs it bumps into ants coming the other way. At first this is funny. But it happens far too often to be an accident.

Ants live in a world of pheromones. The ants that first surveyed this superhighway also paved it with a trail of pheromones to guide their nestmates to what must be a food-rich patch of forest. When ants bump into each other, quick as a snap of your fingers, they tap antennae and gain a good sense of what lies ahead. For identification, not only of their species but their particular nest, they wear complex mixes of heavy pheromones like badges. To call for reinforcement in case of attack, they use volatile pheromones that disperse quickly. This species sprays formic acid.

Ants aren't blind but they obey chemical signals over visual information. Experiments have shown again and again that ants deprived of their ability to sense pheromones behave as if completely lost. Vision alone cannot come close to sustaining their highly coordinated lifestyle.

Next we measure the ant's speed. It completes an 8-foot dash in 50 seconds. For a quarter-inch ant, that's 7.6 body-lengths per second. For us, that would be like running 15 miles per hour, a full sprint. These ants are traveling 25,000 body lengths each way. For us — our scribbled math spits out a beautiful answer — that would be a little over 26 miles, a marathon each way.

So, a sprinted marathon to find the day's food and a sprinted marathon back, this time carrying a load for your family. And it's quite a family. Thatch ants can have as many as 40,000 workers in a nest. ■

Bluesman Doug MacLeod Returns to Play the KP Oct. 4

The multi-award-winning singer-songwriter is coming back because "I just so enjoyed being there." And now he's here to help.

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

Doug MacLeod first picked up a guitar in 1960 or '61.

"I wish I could say it was a great artistic vision, but I wanted to get girls," he said.

Since then he has written over 300 songs, recorded 39 albums, and won seven Blues Music Awards, including best acoustic artist and album: the highest honors given to blues artists. He doesn't sing anyone else's music, but plenty of others record and win awards with his songs, from James Armstrong and Eva Cassidy to Tabby Thomas and Joe Louis Walker.

The Longbranch Improvement Club will host the bluesman Oct. 4 when he plays the Key Peninsula for an LIC fundraiser.

Don Swensen, owner of the former Blend Wine Shop in Key Center, invited MacLeod to play after an absence of some years. Swensen first met MacLeod at the Gig Harbor Folk Festival 20 years ago.

"When I took over Blend, I invited him to come do a show," Swensen said. "He agreed, and we had him there at least three or four times. When I was thinking of trying to bring world-class music back to the KP, my first thought was Doug."

"I remember playing the first time at Blend and how nice those people were, how nice the audience was, and I just so enjoyed being there," MacLeod said. "Don and I kept in touch all these years."

MacLeod was born in New York City in 1946 but his family moved around until they wound up in St. Louis, Missouri, where he played bass in a very good high school band.

"We actually backed up Chuck Berry one night," he said. "It was a real successful show, and this pretty, pretty girl in this mini skirt — and you know back in those days, that's what's goin' on — high heels, high hair, she comes up to me and says, 'Are you in the band?' and I said 'Yeah, I'm the bass player,' and then she goes down to the guitar player, and he already has five or six gals with him, and this fool is the ugliest guy on the planet. So I became a guitar player."

It was also in St. Louis where he first heard the blues.

"My dear friend Stevie took me, I think we listened to Eugene Neal, and I felt right away that I could belong there," he said. "Here I was in a rough part of town with people that didn't have the same advantages that I had, and I felt their joy of living and the laughter. It was so important to me, the band was laughing, the people were laughing and drinking and dancing. I just said to myself, 'Maybe this is



Doug MacLeod on stage in Europe. *Theo Looijmans*

how you get through life.'"

MacLeod was about 16 then, he said. As a young boy, he had been sexually abused by a woman and a man for years. "I came up with a chip on my shoulder, a hurt, anger," he said. "I blacked out the first eight years of my life. When you're a kid, you're able to forget things that are terrible. But I had that feeling inside. I couldn't exactly understand why."

He also had a crippling stutter. "I couldn't speak two or three words, it was so bad," he said. "I became very, very quiet."

But that didn't keep him away from music. Instead, it pushed him toward it.

After high school, MacLeod joined the Navy, but he never got a ship. "I spent four years fixing radars in Norfolk, Virginia," he said. That gave him a chance to learn new music by playing with local bands.

"I thought I could play the blues because I'd heard it," he said. "I could play Robert Johnson songs, Blind Blake songs, Charlie Paton songs. There was a big folk scene then, and I thought 'The coffee house hippies are going to think I'm cool.'"

MacLeod got good enough that one day he decided to try singing.

"I sang and this voice came out, and this voice doesn't stutter. Playing the guitar helped me get my voice where I could speak."

One night MacLeod played a show that included a one-eyed blues singer named Ernest Banks.

"He didn't think I was cool at all," MacLeod said. "He knew I had some talent, and he knew I was coming from an honest place, but he made sure that I knew blues was about being honest. He said, 'Never play a note you don't believe and never sing about what you don't know about. You got to write, sing, play and entertain, and then maybe I'll call you a bluesman.'"

He kept working, he kept playing, and he hung out with blues players on their turf.

"I was nervous, I was scared," he said. "I realized that if one white guy didn't come out of those Virginia woods, nobody would miss him. There was an eeriness to it. But you know what made it happen is I was just being honest about the music, and I think they picked up on that, and the audience did too. They were all Black people, but they saw me as a young man who identifies with this music and wants to learn.

"I was so fortunate. These bluesmen that I hung out with, they accepted me. It was a different culture, a different time. It was not like it is today."

It was a very important time in his life.

"I remember one night, I got done playing

with George Harmonica Smith, he came up to me and he said, 'Dub' — that's what he called me — 'Dub, you sure sound like B.B. King.' I said, 'Well, thank you, George,' and he said, 'That's not a compliment. Let's put Dub out there and see what happens with Dub.'"

MacLeod drilled down, writing, playing and singing, and examining his own life, his own character, where he had come from, and what he had survived.

"There is something about blues, the simplicity of it, that draws you to it, and then all of a sudden you realize it's a deceptively simple music," he said. "Maybe it's three chords, four, on the outside five, and sometimes it's just one chord, but there's a message being sent that I think goes somewhere inside that's beyond language. It's deeper than song lyrics. I think it reaches you on some level that we don't really understand."

One night in the late 1960s or early '70s, he went to see George Benson play at a small club in Boston.

"I started talking with him and I noticed that he had a Solidbody Guild guitar, like a rock n' roll guy, and he usually played a big body like a Gibson 400, and he was getting the same sound out of that Solidbody guitar. I said to him, 'How did you do that?' And he said the guitar is just the instrument, the sound is inside your head, and you will go after your sound on any instrument that you got."

That goes for singing and writing too, MacLeod said.

He's working on a new album now, teaching when he can, and spending time with his wife, Jesse. "The first advice I give my students is get a partner with health insurance," he said. "We've been married 44 years and for a musician that ain't bad."

He also spends time with his son Tom, 32, who survived a bout of melanoma on his face that cost him his voice for years, and nearly cost him his life. "He's now in Nashville, and he is singing and writing," MacLeod said. "He beat that cancer, and maybe that's the greatest thing about my family: that he's alive and well and starting to make his life as a musician."

MacLeod said he'd been as tough on his son as his mentors were on him.

"I'd say, 'You ain't got it yet, you ain't got it yet.' And then a couple years ago he played, and I said, 'You got it now, you just go ahead and play.'"

"The thing of it is, as a musician, as an artist, you have to be true to what you have, to the gift that you were given, and that takes a long time, that takes a long, long time to take a hold of that and say, 'This is me.' " ■

Higgins, Leavengood Set the Pace for Seahawks XC Teams

The Olympia Invitational Sept. 9 kicks off cross-country season at PHS with some of the best runners in the region and they come from Peninsula High School.

EDDIE MACSALKA, KP NEWS

The Peninsula Seahawks boys and girls cross-country teams returned to the trails last month, getting a head start on the fall sports season.

Both teams are looking to build off momentum gained last year.

“Every season we want to take a step forward,” said Tyler Nugent, PHS’s long-time cross-country, track and field coach. “That starts with all the work they put in over the summer so they can build up the strength to handle some of these hard workouts we’re doing.”

The girls return four of their five runners from last year’s team that took sixth place at the 3A Washington State Cross-Country Championships, seniors Cecily Albrecht and Lola Sweet, and juniors Hailey Howard and Elektra Higgins. Nugent expects the team, and all four girls, to place even better this year since each has run at the state level twice before.

Big things are expected from Higgins this season. She didn’t take distance running seriously until she got to high school and has seen consistent success through her first two years, finishing seventh at the state championships her freshman year and ninth last season. Her accomplishments landed her on the 2022 All-South Sound Conference first team. The incoming junior is targeting a top-five this season. Her personal best running the 5-kilometer (3.1 miles) race is 18:19 and she’s trying to trim that to 18 minutes flat this year. If that sounds tough, she already cut it by 19 seconds from the year before.

Higgins has gone through some health issues over the last six months, dealing with an iron deficiency during track season and starting this cross-country season with knee pain. She’s been wearing braces on both legs to stabilize her kneecaps. It didn’t seem to affect her over the summer when she placed second at the White Pass Cross Country Camp and Clinic.

It’s the top camp in the state for long-distance runners, according to Nugent.

“Elektra is an incredible athlete and drives everyone around her to be better,” said her boys teammate and returning state qualifier Cooper Leavengood.



Peninsula High School Junior Elektra Higgins and Senior Cooper Leavengood. Tina McKail, KP News

“I RACE AGAINST A PHANTOM OF MYSELF; MY PREVIOUS BEST (TIME) IS THE GHOST RUNNER RIGHT NEXT TO ME.”

Leavengood himself finished last season on the All-SSC second team and is coming off a top-100 performance at the state championships. Not exactly the performance he was hoping for.

“I was blessed with an opportunity to go to state,” he said. “But I was also blessed with the opportunity to be humbled. Those are some amazing athletes.” Leavengood’s goal is to return to the state meet and place in the Top 20. But maybe even more ambitious, he wants to cut a minute off his personal best time of 16:59.

“He’s putting in the work at quite a higher level than he ever has before,” Nugent said. “If anyone could improve that much, it would be Cooper.”

To get there, Leavengood is increasing the mileage and intensity of his workouts and mixes in Brazilian jiu-jitsu classes. He also puts a lot of pressure on himself on the track.

“I race against a phantom of myself; my previous best (time) is the ghost runner right next to me,” he said.

Both Nugent and Leavengood mentioned they expect big things from senior Gavin Hendrickson. This is only Hendrickson’s second year as a distance runner and Nugent thinks he’ll be one of

the team’s top three runners. The coach also called out sophomores Ben Johnson and Ben Caseley for making huge leaps in their off-season training. The boys haven’t qualified for state competition as a team for a few years, and Leavengood thinks they have the squad to pull it off this season.

Nugent, a 2001 graduate of PHS, is in his eighth year leading the school’s cross-country program, and 15th year total coaching the sport. Races this month include the Olympia Invitational (Sept. 9), Schmel 4K (Sept. 14), Fort Steila-coom Invitational (Sept. 16), SK SPSL 5K (Sept. 22) and John Payne Invitational (Sept. 30). ■



Volunteers (l to r), Diane Jackman (seated), Joe Dervaes, Frank Shirley, Don Young, Ken Wassum, Bart Wolfe, Paul Michaels, Rick Thompson, Judy Mills (seated). *Vicki Biggs, KP News*

RESTORATION FROM PAGE 1

As work progressed, so did the vision for the building. The hall had been used as a library, a voting station, for high school play productions, dances, churches and youth group meetings before it became a private residence in 1957. As the volunteers uncovered layers of outdated building materials, abandoned furnishings and equipment, the building seemed to speak to the group.

“When we first put in the windows, this building had eyes on the world again,” said volunteer Jerry Wolniewicz.

Glimpses of early peninsula life on the edge of a bay began to come alive to the group. There is graffiti on the wall behind the old stage written by members of a high school play in the 1920s. The group now envisions a continuance of that life with current peninsula residents using the building in similar ways. “I feel that the walls are talking to us many times,” Mills said.

A driving force in the restoration endeavor, Mills said she would like to see the building open for school field trips with hands-on experiences for the students such as washing clothes on a washboard or with a wringer washer, or writing with a quill and ink instead of a ballpoint pen.

That vision includes creating another museum space in the basement of the building. Currently, the basement is filled with vintage machinery of all sorts, once used by residents in their daily lives. Extending the display area would provide a more complete picture of the hard work and self-sufficiency of pioneer families.

The completion of the Cushman Dam brought electricity to the Key Peninsula in 1927. Before that year, lighting in the hall was provided by large tanks of pressured gasoline in the basement, connected by tubing to sconces along the walls upstairs. “These were similar to Coleman lanterns, lit

by a mantle,” said Paul Michaels, co-manager of the project. In 1927, the lighting changed to electricity, a much safer mode.

Photographs, personal histories and meeting minutes were used to facilitate the return of the building to its original state. “The building was not completed by professionals, but by farmers and loggers in the area, volunteering their time in the interest of the community; we want to maintain that sense of the building,” said Michaels. “The front corner of the building was sitting on a round of Doug fir and rock — there was no foundation,” said Ken Wassum.

Volunteers like Frank Shirley, Diane Jackman, Ken Wassum and many others have worked faithfully on the project, just as in times past when community members spent countless hours on the original building. Today’s volunteers are sometimes connected by family history in the community, like Jackman, who said her family members are pioneer descendants to the seventh generation.

“I would ride over to this building on my bike as a kid,” she said.

Frank Shirley, 90, sometimes rows across Vaughn Bay from his home to join the work.

Wolfe also credits the interest and goodwill of community contractors, providing the project with expertise in specialty areas. “They get excited about this one project.” He said the new grant will likely allow the group to complete the work in the hall. The original floors will be refinished, and the painting, wallpapering and rebuilding of the kitchen will be appropriate to the original structure, along with furniture and some landscaping.

“Embracing restoration is an important piece of local history,” he said. The building will continue to have needs, and work will be ongoing, but it will function at least in a limited fashion by the end of the year, Wolfe said. ■



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Peninsula Schools Implement New Restricted Cell Phone Policy

Access to electronic devices will be prohibited during school hours except at lunchtime. So far, most parents are grateful.

SARA THOMPSON, KP NEWS

When students return to school in September they will find a new set of rules concerning the use of cell phones and other devices, including smartwatches.

The new policy, passed at the July 27 Peninsula School District board meeting, states that telecommunication devices can be accessed only before and after the regular school day and during the student's lunch break unless an emergency exists involving imminent physical danger or a school administrator authorizes the student to use the device. Use on buses and at events after school hours will be allowed.

"Coming out of the pandemic we'd seen an increase in poor behavior with regards to cell phones and social media," said Kris Hagel, digital media communications coordinator for the Peninsula School District.

"Everyone was complaining — teachers, parents, administrators," he said. At all high schools and middle schools, students were buried in their devices, responding to constant notifications, not paying attention in the classroom or hallways. One desperate parent told him they were considering inpatient treatment for addictive behavior.

"We have been a permissive district compared to others," Hagel said. "We believe fundamentally that students need to learn appropriate behavior on social media

and cell phones in the vicinity of caring adults. But we can't make progress if we can't get kids off the devices to start with."

The policy also addresses the appropriate use of devices. It prohibits using them at any time in a manner that poses a threat to academic integrity, disrupts the learning environment, or violates the privacy rights of others. Any possession, sharing, or viewing of sexually explicit material is prohibited at any time on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, or on school buses.

District staff developed the policy beginning with a template from the Washington State School Directors' Association and sought input from the board and school administrators. ASB presidents from both Gig Harbor and Peninsula High and student representatives to the school board met with the board to give feedback.

"It was a great conversation with our student leaders," said PSD board president Natalie Wimberly. "They really understood the issues. They don't want this distraction in the classroom."

Student leaders are planning assemblies and a video to help their peers understand the problem. Wimberly said that the board is looking forward to working with students from Henderson Bay as well.

Wimberly said that she has had more feedback from parents since the policy was made public than at any time since

the numerous debates around Covid regulations and that it has been overwhelmingly positive.

Parents, Wimberly said, were concerned about safety and wanted assurance that they would not lose the function of tracking apps during the school day or that they could reach their children in case of emergencies. For this reason, the policy requires that devices are not accessed, but they do not have to be turned off.

"Our goal is to build responsible digital citizens," She said. "It's not about eliminating the technology but teaching students how to use it and at the appropriate time."

PHS initiated a cell phone use policy after spring break in 2023.

"Cell phones had become all-consuming, and we noticed a huge rise in a lack of focus from students in the classroom," said PHS Assistant Principal Danielle O'Leary. "The school administration and staff leadership team designed a cell phone policy to provide a concrete, consistent policy for our students."

Students were hesitant and frustrated at first, O'Leary said. Some students struggled with the new rules, especially for the first few weeks. But soon the frustration dissipated. There were fewer distractions in the classrooms and there were no more

interruptions from teachers asking students to put away their devices. "Ninety-nine percent of parents said thank you," she said.

The new electronic device rule was approved alongside policies on digital citizenship and media literacy, electronic resources, and internet safety. The digital citizenship and media literacy policy, Hagel said, formalizes much of what teachers are already doing — incorporating lessons into regular classroom work.

The new policies come at a time when there is increasing awareness of the potential hazards of social media on young people. The 2023 U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health stated that up to 95% of youth ages 13 to 17 say they use a social media platform, with more than a third reporting almost constant use.

"While social media may have benefits for some children and adolescents, there are ample indicators that social media can also have a profound risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents," the report said. It cited studies showing teens who spent more than three hours a day on social media had double the risk of poor mental health outcomes and that limiting that exposure resulted in benefits. ■

"WE CAN'T MAKE PROGRESS IF WE CAN'T GET KIDS OFF THE DEVICES TO START WITH."

Washington State Provides Donation Portal for Maui Wildfire Relief

STAFF REPORT

The Office of the Secretary of State operates a secure online system for the public to make donations to verified relief organizations, including those now assisting survivors, first responders and residents of a 3 1/2 square mile wildfire that destroyed thousands of homes and businesses in the town of Lahaina and other parts of the island.

At press time at least 114 people were known to have died in the fire and hundreds more remained missing.

"The disaster that has affected so much of Maui has astonished and saddened people throughout Washington," Secretary of State Steve Hobbs said. "There

is a deep desire to help, and this secure donations portal provides a pathway for Washingtonians' generosity to benefit causes that are on the ground and doing good work."

Many residents of the Key Peninsula have family connections to Hawaii and reached out to KP News asking for help.

The Disaster Relief Center website, at <https://give.wa.gov/cfd/Disaster-Relief-Center>, aids crisis-relief charities "during periods of natural or humanitarian disasters that exceed a region's capacity to provide help." It has been used for organizations that work with the victims of mass shootings and international aid groups responding to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. ■



Tacoma-based Washington Task Force 1 FEMA Urban Search and Rescue in Lahaina.

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Teaching An Old Dog New Tricks Was Easier Than I Thought

BARBARA VAN BOGART

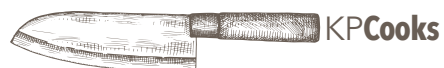
I am a cook who generally stays in her lane — keeping with the old tried and true recipes that have held me in good stead for decades, continue to work well, and have become second nature to make. It hasn't been necessary to alter to any significant degree how and what I cook, but rather to adapt to a little more variety and a little less quantity as the years have flown by. For this, I thank decent genes and some good luck.

Recently, a friend of ours had emergency surgery to remove his gallbladder, necessitating a 180-degree turn for him and his wife in what he can and should be eating, per his physician. They are a midwestern couple, used to throwback meat and potato meals, with a nice dessert at the end as a reward for a clean plate. Suddenly, meal planning took on a new life.

They learned because the gallbladder is an integral part of our digestive systems. Without it, things like fats and sugars should be consumed in much smaller quantities, if at all, to have a happy gut.

Because we see these friends frequently and were invited to their home for dinner a few weeks after he was discharged from the hospital, and because low-fat and low-sugar meals have generally not been part of my repertoire, I embarked on a search for an appropriate dessert I could contribute to the dinner, while respecting those necessary dietary changes.

While I'm not a dietician, these recipes fit the bill and we had an amazing evening celebrating his recovery.



Below are recipes for an appetizer, salad, main course and dessert, all perfect for a diet requiring these general restrictions.

A complete, tasty and easy-to-make meal that even this old dog loved.

Mango Salsa (bonus — it's vegan!)

- 2 large ripe mangos, diced small
- 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and finely diced
- ¼ large red onion, finely diced
- 1 medium jalapeño, seeds removed and finely diced
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- Pinch of salt
- Juice of one lime

Place all ingredients in a medium mixing bowl and gently toss. Enjoy right away with tortilla chips or let it rest for half an hour so the ingredients can better get acquainted. Leftovers can be stored in the refrigerator for five to six days.

Chopped Asian Salad with Creamy Peanut Dressing

- 4 cups shredded cabbage (red or green, or a combination of the two)
 - 1 red bell pepper, seeded and diced
 - 1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and diced
 - 1 cup shredded carrots
 - 1 cup celery, sliced thin
 - 1/3 cup cilantro, minced
 - ½ cup scallions, minced
 - ½ cup roasted peanuts
- For the dressing:

- 3 tablespoons creamy natural peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon chili paste (optional)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Warm water to thin (optional)

Combine salad ingredients in a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together dressing ingredients, adding warm water a little at a time if you prefer a thinner consistency.

Drizzle dressing over salad and toss well to combine. Adjust seasonings if needed. Serves four.

Cashew Chicken

- 1½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 1-inch cubes
 - 1 tablespoon cornstarch
 - Coarse salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 6 garlic cloves, minced
 - 8 scallions, white and green parts separated, each cut into 1-inch pieces
 - 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
 - 6 tablespoons hoisin sauce
 - ¾ cup raw cashews, toasted
- White or brown rice for serving
- In a medium bowl, toss the chicken with the cornstarch until coated. Season with a little salt and pepper.
- In a large nonstick skillet, heat one tablespoon olive oil over medium-high

heat. Cook half the chicken, tossing often, until browned, about 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

Add the remaining olive oil and chicken to the skillet, along with the garlic and white parts of the scallions. Cook, tossing often until chicken is browned, 3 or 4 minutes. Return the first batch of chicken to the pan, add the vinegar and cook until evaporated, about 30 seconds.

Add the hoisin sauce and ¼ cup water, tossing until the chicken is cooked through, about 1 minute. Stir in the scallion greens and cashews. Serve immediately with white or brown rice. Serves four.

Dream Whip Dessert

- 2 envelopes Dream Whip
- 2¾ cups cold skim milk, divided
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 packages sugar-free/fat-free vanilla pudding mix

Beat two packages Dream Whip, 1 cup cold milk and 1 teaspoon vanilla in a large bowl for six minutes. Do not underbeat.

Add the remaining milk and dry pudding mixes, beating on low speed until blended. Then beat for two minutes at high speed, stopping occasionally to scrape the bottom and sides of bowl. Chill for four hours.

Variations: Add toasted coconut, skipping the vanilla but adding coconut flavoring; chocolate pudding or banana-flavored pudding can also be substituted. This can also be the filling in a graham cracker crust for pie. Serves eight. ■

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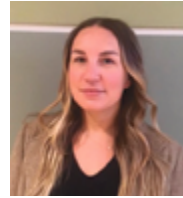
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Weather: Boring Small Talk or a Unifying Language That Will Save Us All?

KAMRYN MINCH

I recently overheard someone giving a small sermon about how they no longer wish to entertain “small talk.”

Initially, I understood the sentiment and even quietly cheered for their bold statement because, yes! Why should we allow ourselves the pleasure of debating our half-baked theories of the universe with a store clerk or the mailman? After all, time and personal boundaries are but constructs of the human psyche! However, despite the passion and fervor this person had for their declaration, I thought it was curious the only example they gave of the kind of small talk they would “straight up walk away from” would be about the weather.

There was a time in my life when I too considered the weather to be a boring and generally meaningless topic of conversation. But these days, seeing how my work as a gardener involves being outside with the elements, I tend to pay a great deal of attention to the forecast. And much to the dismay of others, probably, I struggle to not bring it up during most interactions.

But the topic of weather can be as engaging as any other because it encompasses so much more than just the daily highs and lows, overcast or clear skies. It’s the first thing we notice when we walk out the door and one of the many ways the seasons communicate with us. It’s a subtle language, but one that is an inseparable component of the whole. And if we all knew how to converse about it like that, then it would be the furthest thing from small talk.

As I write this, we are going through a heat wave. Luckily it’s the only one we’ve endured all summer (fingers crossed) and thankfully nothing like what we dealt with last year. The general consensus now is that each of these days is “gonna be a hot one” and “to stay cool.” Naturally, I’m gonna stay cool, because I am cool, but while I am outside and fully immersed in a hot summer day, I go into it wondering how many snakes and lizards I will end up spooking while they are out sunning themselves on rock faces, or sometimes camouflaged among some dry leaves.

Will I come across irritable bumble bees, or are they sitting out the heat letting mud daubers, honey bees, and hoverflies seamlessly pick up the pollination slack? This question can usually be answered by finding



“The webs of summer seem to know just where I’ll be.” *Kamryn Minch*

the nearest patch of fragrant herbs in bloom.

If we’re looking at a day above 85 degrees, I know my tomatoes aren’t going to be happy (ironic for a “heat-loving” crop), and neither will any other plant for that matter since that’s about the temperature when they stop photosynthesizing to conserve water. On these days, the air always feels a little thicker. A sensation that can easily be remedied by tasting the

tang of the first ripe huckleberries.

Despite the late summer inferno, an occasional breeze carries a distinct chill indicative of autumn’s return. Similarly, the drawn-out shift in seasons can be observed in native plants like the osoberry, which enters senescence as early as it came to life in late winter. This season a concerning majority seem to have wrapped up far sooner than last, a result of our prolonged drought, I’m sure.



Where the plant kingdom generally begins to slow down as the sun sinks south for the winter, the animals enter a reproductive relay. Spiders most noticeably burst into action spinning webs between branches, trees, and any space my face passes through on a regular basis. Coupled with the blaring heat, this is especially irritating.

Yep, that’s a hot day in August.

The technical term for observing this sequence of events is called phenology, which is the study of cyclical and seasonal natural phenomena, particularly in relation to climate and animal life. I’m not a formal student, but in the past few years of being more immersed in natural cycles, I’ve come to see that there is definitely a rhythm to life that I had been oblivious to for most of mine. This makes me wonder if there’s more significance to the weather being our

SPIDERS MOST NOTICEABLY BURST INTO ACTION SPINNING WEBS BETWEEN BRANCHES, TREES, AND ANY SPACE MY FACE PASSES THROUGH ON A REGULAR BASIS.

general go-to for brief conversations with one another.

Perhaps exchanging thoughts about the weather is a collective habit passed down through our history. In the modern era, the majority of us spend a decent portion of our time indoors. That wasn’t the case for the thousands of years humans have spent getting to this point. Being out in the elements and living with the seasons probably meant more people knew how to interpret seasonal trends and how to share their insights as a common courtesy or a lively debate.

While today those insights might come out more as simple observations like, “It’s gonna be a hot one,” we continue the verbal tradition while not knowing there may be something deeper we’re missing in the conversation. By dismissing the mere mention of weather as meaningless small talk, perhaps we ignore the potential for forging a deeper connection not just with each other but with the world around us, where we live as inseparable components of the whole.

Yup, told you I’m cool. ■

‘Chief Seattle and the Town That Took His Name’ by David S. Buerge

TED OLINGER, KP NEWS

A year ago in September, I wrote about a few books in these pages that I thought our community might read and asked for suggestions for those many titles I certainly missed.

One that came in over the transom was David Buerge’s “Chief Seattle,” the result of 20 years of research. My first thought was, “Really? What could be left to reveal about this mythic figure?” But I was familiar with the work of the author and suspected there was more going on here than I realized.

“You folks observe the changers who have come to this land,” Seattle said to his people during negotiations for a treaty on the shores of Port Elliott (sic), now called Mukilteo, in 1855.

“And our progeny will watch and learn from them now, those who will come after us, our children. And they will become just the same as the changers who have come here to us on this land. You folks observe them well.”

The “changers” referred to Dukeiba’l, the creator, according to Buerge. Seattle compared the American settlers to that mythic being so his people might “grasp the cataclysmic changes they faced.”

His name is an Anglicized approximation of the Lushootseed *siʔaʔ*, also spelled as Sealth, Seathl, or See-ahth, later called a chief by the Americans for their convenience. He is thought to have been born in the 1780s on Blake Island and lived, astoundingly, until 1866. His parents were high-born among their peoples, the Suquamish and Duwamish, but it was rumored that his paternal grandmother had been captured in war and enslaved, which was considered a stain on Seattle’s reputation that, Buerge argues, honed his ambition.

Seattle was a big man, nearly six feet tall, and strong. French traders of the Hudson’s Bay Company at Fort Nisqually called him “Le Gros,” the big guy. He tolerated no insults, exacted unambiguous revenge on anyone who crossed him, and early on became a feared fighter by both defending against and attacking rival groups, capturing slaves of his own.

At the same time, Seattle reinforced his standing by arranging marriages with those rivals, and he did the same thing when white people began to appear in numbers (including at least one Black man). The warrior chief chose accommo-

dation over resistance to the newcomers.

This was exactly what the territorial governor, Isaac Stevens, and the United States government did not want. As the U.S. Army and settlers fought against Indigenous people in the East, “the racial script written in violence defined white-native relations throughout the West,” Buerge writes. “On Puget Sound, the looming chaos shocked those who had hoped for better.”

In 1854, Stevens began work on treaties with the peoples living around the Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Pacific coast to open the territory to more colonization. There were no tribes as we understand them before 1855 when Stevens combined villages by river drainage to create them for expediency.

“Congress expected Indians to be placed on few reservations far from white settlements,” he said. The pressure to create treaties came from the federal Donation Land Claim Act and the rush of settlers to Oregon Territory, creating clashes between Indians and new settlers.

But his agents who negotiated the treaties warned him it was a mistake because, even then, at least some white people perceived the gap between culture and language was too vast for such a simplistic bridge. Stevens negotiated with help from George Gibbs, a lawyer and ethnologist who had visited as many of the Native people as he could before the treaties, and had a better understanding of the culture than Stevens. Stevens initially wanted to establish one reservation at Tulalip for all Native groups west of the Cascades, but the Indians were so alarmed he scuttled the idea. He also heard from many settlers who were dependent on Indians and wanted to ensure they would still be available to provide labor and goods.

But on Christmas Eve that year Stevens met with South Sound groups at Medicine Creek, “a haunt of supernatural powers associated with death in the Nisqually estuary,” Buerge writes, and three days later a treaty was signed giving up 2 1/2 million acres for \$150,000 and — crucially — “access to traditional hunting and fishing grounds.”

The Nisqually Chief Leschi said the proposed reservations were too small and poor to support the people. He was an upriver Indian with horse herds and

fruit trees and did not want to live near salt water. The Snohomish refused to live anywhere near the Suquamish. In a separate negotiation, the Makah said they had no intention of becoming farmers or reorganizing their society to accommodate the American legal system.

Seattle was not present and did not sign the Medicine Creek Treaty. He did sign the Treaty of Point Elliott Jan. 22, 1855, at Mukilteo on Port Gardner Bay, where Stevens treated with the “Duwamish and allied tribes,” groups from Lake Washington, Sammamish Lake, Lake Union, downtown Seattle, and the Duwamish, Black, Green, and White Rivers.

But Seattle interrupted the public recitation of the treaty to say, “The Great Chief above who made the country made it for all and perhaps he would not be pleased at their taking pay for it.”

Buerge argues there were conflicting interpretations about what these ceremonies and treaties meant. “Some argue that the terms were not explicable in the (Chinook) Jargon, leaving native leaders unsure of details.” Words written or spoken in English had to be translated into Chinook and then into Lushootseed, a necessity wholly unsuited for such

complex documents.

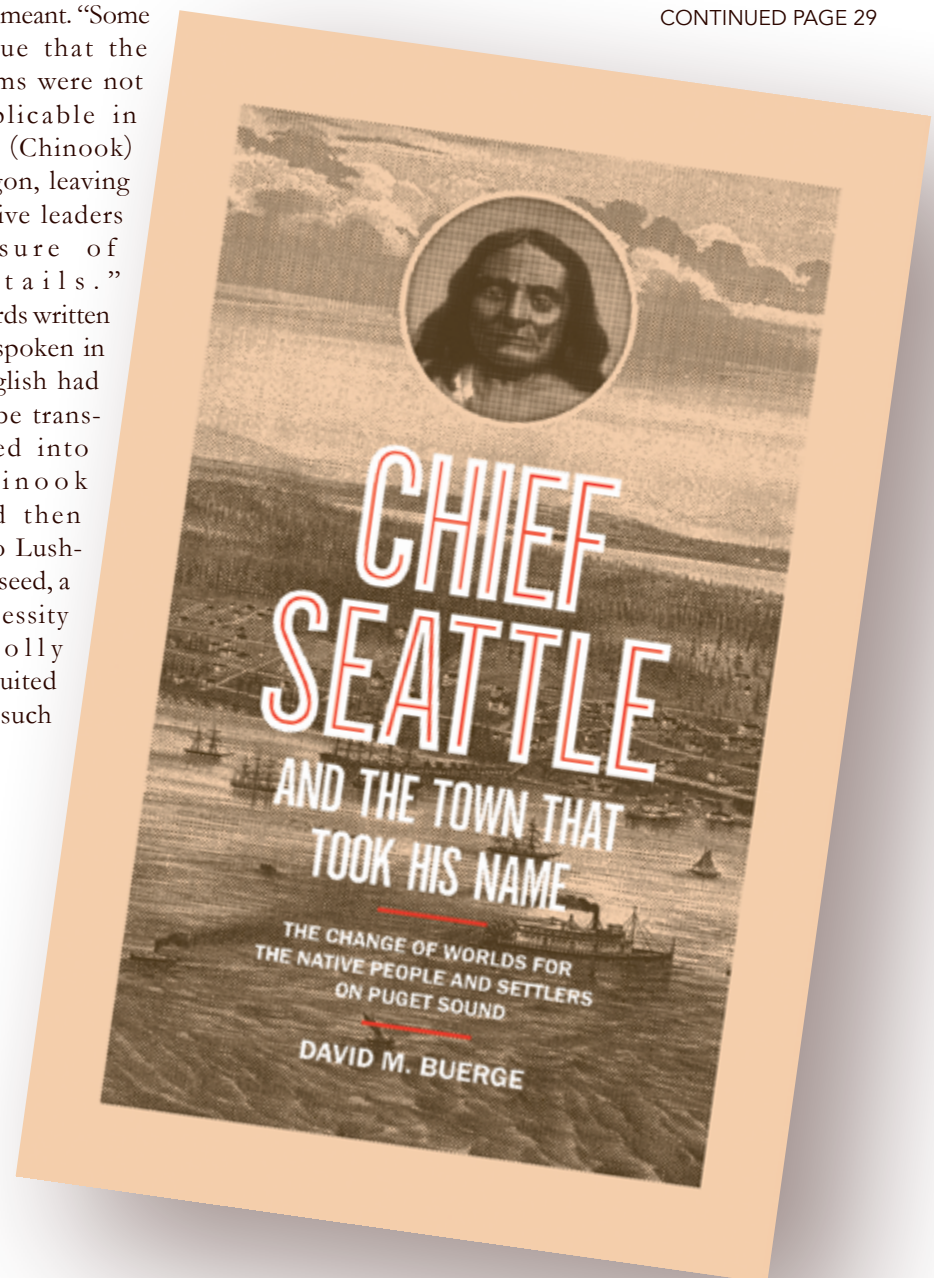
Many leaders thought signing treaties was the beginning of negotiations, not the end; some signatories were enraged because “they had given their names but not their land.”

Violence followed. By September, war had spread from the Yakima Valley to Puget Sound and raged until March 1856. The U.S. Army and local militias fought the Nisqually, Muckleshoot, Puyallup, Yakama and Klickitat, among others, while northern Haida and Tlingit raiders took advantage of the mayhem to conduct raids in their enormous seagoing canoes and grappled with the U.S. Navy.

Seattle kept his people out of the fighting.

He’d made his mark on the Port Elliott treaty, securing land for the Suquamish but holding out for more for the Duwamish. He did not want to give up their ancestral home at “the crossing

CONTINUED PAGE 29





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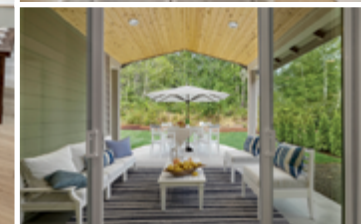
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Sep 1 Washington Old Time Fiddlers Association 3:30 – 6 p.m., Crandall Center. All fiddlers, banjos, mandolins, guitars, string basses welcome.

Sep 2 Bird Walks 8:30 a.m., rain or shine. Meet nature guide Chris Rurik at Gateway Park pavilion.

Sep 2 Gig Harbor Art Walk 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Downtown Gig Harbor. Celebrating creativity in the Harbor. Ebbtide Gallery, Gallery Row and Waters Edge Gallery.

Sep 2 - 4 Blackberry Festival Bremerton Boardwalk and downtown Bremerton. Over 150 vendors, bands, food and drink, and more.

Sep 4 Bingo! 1 – 2 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project.

Sep 5 Gig Harbor Literary Society 6 p.m., Harbor History Museum. "The Many Daughters of Afong Moy" by Jamie Ford.

Sep 6 Key Pen Book Club: An Hour of Coffee and Conversation 10:30 a.m., Key Center Library. "The Midnight Library" by Matt Haig.

Sep 6 Cribbage Club 2 – 4 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Everyone welcome, no experience required.

Sep 7 Waterfront Farmers Market 1 – 6 p.m., Skansie Brothers Park. Vendors, kids' activities, live entertainment.

Sep 9 Harbor Hounds 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Skansie Brothers Park. Sponsored by Rotary Club of Gig Harbor Midday. Dog walk, vendors, food trucks, dog agility course, fun contests.

Sep 9 Urban Meadows 10 – 11 a.m., WSU Extension Pierce County Master Gardener Program. Gig Harbor Demonstration Garden at Sehmel Homestead Park.

Sep 12 TacomaProBono Legal Aid 1 – 3 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Free civil legal help.

Sep 14 Waterfront Farmers Market 1 – 6 p.m., Skansie Brothers Park. Vendors, kids' activities, live entertainment.

Sep 15 Baby Lounge 12 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. A gathering for connection with other parents.

Sep 16 Youth Gardening Workshop: Fall Harvest and Scarecrows 10:30 a.m., Gig Harbor Demonstration Garden at Sehmel Homestead Park. Registration required.

Sep 16 Intro to Fall Mushroom Hunting in the PNW 3 p.m., Key Center Library. Presented by Puget Sound Mycological Society Past President Marian Maxwell.

Sep 19 Hootenanny 2 – 4 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Folksong sing and play along.

Sep 19 Maker Fun - Drop in Art and Science for Kids 3:30 – 5 p.m., Key Center Library. Drop in art and science for kids.

Sep 20 Cribbage Club 2 – 4 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Everyone is welcome, no experience required.

Sep 23 Container Planting Classes 10 – 11 a.m., WSU Extension Pierce County Master Gardener Program. Gig Harbor Demonstration Garden at Sehmel Homestead Park.

Sep 26 Baby Story Time 10:15 – 11 a.m., Key Center Library. For families with young children ages 0-2.

Sep 26 Open Mic Cafe 2 – 5 p.m., Crandall Center at The Mustard Seed Project. Art, music, poetry. Open to the public.

Sep 27 Family Story Time 10:30 – 11 a.m., Key Center Library. For families with young children.

Sep 27 Youth Night 6:30 p.m., Peninsula Life Church. All youth are welcome.

Sep 28 Tales at the Boatshop 10:30 a.m., Gig Harbor BoatShop. Nautical storytelling for children.

Sep 28 KP Book Club 11 a.m., KP Historical Society. "West with Giraffes" by Lynda Rutledge.

Sep 30 Korean Chuseok Festival 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Skansie Brothers Park. Third annual festival celebrating the traditional Korean holiday.

Sep 30 - Oct 1 Community Litter Drop Off Event 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Drop off locations: Lake Kathryn Village, Longbranch Improvement Club, 64th Street and KPH. Tires at 64th only.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Monday Al-Anon Keys to Sanity 5 p.m., KP fire station. Family group.

Monday Yoga at the Civic Center 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. Schedule classes online at the civic center website.

M-W Yoga at the Civic Center 9:30 - 10:30 a.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center. Schedule classes online at the civic center website.

M-W SAIL 3:30 p.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440. Flexibility and balance for those over 60.

M-W-F SAIL 10 a.m., The Mustard Seed Project, 253-884-9814. Stay Active and Independent for Life.

M-F REFIT/REV+FLOW Workout Mon 7 p.m., Fri 9:30 a.m., WayPoint South, heartfitwp@gmail.com. Women's free fitness classes.

M-F Tai Ji Quan 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project. Exercise training program for improving balance and preventing falls.

T-W-Th REFIT/REV+FLOW Workout Tue and Wed 5:30/6:15 p.m.; Thu 9:30/10:30 a.m., WayPoint North, heartfitwp@gmail.com. Women's free fitness classes.

T-TH Toddler Indoor Park 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center in the gym.

T-TH Tai Chi 9:45 a.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

T-TH-SA SAIL 8:30 a.m., KP Community Services, 253-884-4440. Flexibility and balance for those over 60.

T-SA KP Historical Museum 1 – 4 p.m. Open hours through November.

Wednesday No Tears Tech Help 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Key Center Library. Call for an appointment 253-548-3309. Starts Sept. 13.

Wednesday Gentle Yoga for Older Adults 11:15 a.m., The Mustard Seed Project, 253-884-9814.

Thursday County Council District 7 Constituent Office Hours 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., Councilmember Robyn Denson and her staff. Contact 253-798-6654 for information.

Thursday Senior Bingo 1 p.m., first and third Thursdays, KP Community Services, 253-884-4440.

Thursday KP Toastmasters 8 a.m., WayPoint Church, 425-243-2618.

Friday Skate Night 6 – 9 p.m., Key Peninsula Civic Center, kindergartent-eighth grade.

Saturday Eddon Boatyard Tours 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Gig Harbor BoatShop.

Saturday Community Boat Restoration Program 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Gig Harbor BoatShop. Call (253) 857-9344 to register.

Sunday WayPoint Community

Dinners 6 p.m. Free community dinners at WayPoint North and WayPoint South churches.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

26th LD Democrats First Thursdays, 6:30 p.m., Meeting locations vary, check 26d.org for monthly updates.

Caregiver Support Group Third Mondays, 2 p.m., The Mustard Seed Project.

Key Peninsula Advisory Commission Fourth Thursdays, 5:30 p.m. piercecountywa.gov/5937

KP Business Association Luncheon, third Fridays, noon at El Sombrero. kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com

KP Business Association Business meeting, first Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m., All Around Gutters in Key Center. kpbusinessassociation@gmail.com

KP Community Council Second Wednesdays on Zoom, 6:30 p.m. keypencouncil@gmail.com

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

KP Civic Center Association Board meeting, second Thursdays, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Whitmore Room, KP Civic Center, 253-884-3456.

KP Democrats Third Monday, 7 p.m., Home fire station, johnpatrick@aol.com, 253-432-4256.

KP Emergency Prep Third Thursday, 7 p.m., KP Civic Center. September's topic: Three months of food storage. eprep@kpciviccenter.org

KP Fire Regular Board Meeting Second and fourth Tuesdays, 5 p.m. in-person and on Zoom, keypeninsulafire.org, 253-884-2222.

KP Historical Society First Tuesdays, 11 a.m. at museum, kphsmuseum@gmail.com.

KP Lions Club First and third Wednesdays, 6 p.m. Potluck at Key Center fire station, 253-525-0802, keypeninsulalions@outlook.com.

Key Pen Parks Board of Commissioners Meeting, second Mondays, 7 p.m., Home fire station, 253-884-9240.

KP Veterans First and third Mondays, 7 – 8 p.m., KP Lutheran Church, 253-884-2626.

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

Longbranch Improvement Club Third Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Longbranch Improvement Club, 253-200-0308 or licweb.org.

Peninsula Emergency Preparedness Coalition Second Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m., check pep-c.org for meeting location.

Peninsula School District Board Meeting Fourth Thursdays, 6 – 7:30 p.m., 253-530-1000.

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department Tues and Thurs, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Key Center Corral. Call 253-432-4948 for the schedule; Air Quality, Triple P, COVID-19, General HD, Water/Wells and Healthy Housing advice.

KP READS FROM PAGE 26

over place,” buried now beneath the modern Seattle waterfront somewhere north of the Duwamish River. He was an ally of local booster David Swinson “Doc” Maynard; he protected settlers from ambush and attack; and whenever there was a serious issue he took his canoe upsound to meet the governor face to face.

In August 1856, Stevens agreed to larger reservations for the more bellicose tribes. East of the Cascades, the war continued long after Stevens enlarged the Puyallup Reservation and created reservations for the Nisqually and what later became known as the Muckleshoot (the Green and White River Indians, Upper Puyallup and Duwamish). Their descendants remain proud to this day, considering their forbears to be warriors in a just cause.

In 1858, a broken and destitute Leschi was hanged after two trials in what was later found to be an act of judicial murder. In 1974, the Boldt decision affirmed Indigenous rights “to traditional fishing

grounds” for the first time since the treaty recognizing them was signed 120 years earlier. In 1994, Judge Edward Rafeedie affirmed shellfish treaty rights but, as with “traditional hunting,” there have been no gathering rights cases. Rafeedie wrote: “A treaty is not a grant of rights to the Indians, but a grant of rights from them.”

Unlike almost everyone else at the time, Seattle left little of what he said or thought on paper, except for the famous speech he delivered at Point Elliott in 1855 that has since been co-opted as a call to action by environmentalists. But it wasn't written down at the time and what was later remembered by Seattle and others, particularly his contemporary Henry Smith, was embellished over decades into something else.

Buerge writes that Seattle's real speech ended with a warning: “Be just and deal kindly with my people for the dead are not altogether powerless.”

Seattle was saying that all action has consequences, if not in this life, then in the next.

“In Seattle's vivid and compelling image, the native living and the dead are one,” Buerge writes. “Americans might think they could buy and sell the land, he argues, but it could only be shared, not possessed; at death, the land would possess them as it has untold generations of native people.”

Seattle's old friend Maynard persuaded his neighbors to rename their settlement from Duwamps to Seattle, and convinced the territorial government to let Seattle take over his father's longhouse on Agate Pass, known as “Old Man House.” Many villages had an “Old Man House,” because there was a long line of headmen associated with the house or village.

But despite Seattle's diplomacy, his Duwamish do not have federal recognition to this day or a right to their traditional fishing grounds, among other things. The Duwamish Tribal Organization does not meet the criteria for a “tribe,” according to the U.S. government, as over 500 recognized tribes do. There are hundreds of Duwamish descendants at Muckleshoot, Suquamish and Tulalip.

They know who they are. ■



Meet the Candidates

2023 Key Peninsula Candidates Forum

**September 12
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Key Pen Parks

Commissioner, Position 5
KIP CLINTON (I)

KP Fire District 16

Commissioner, Position 5
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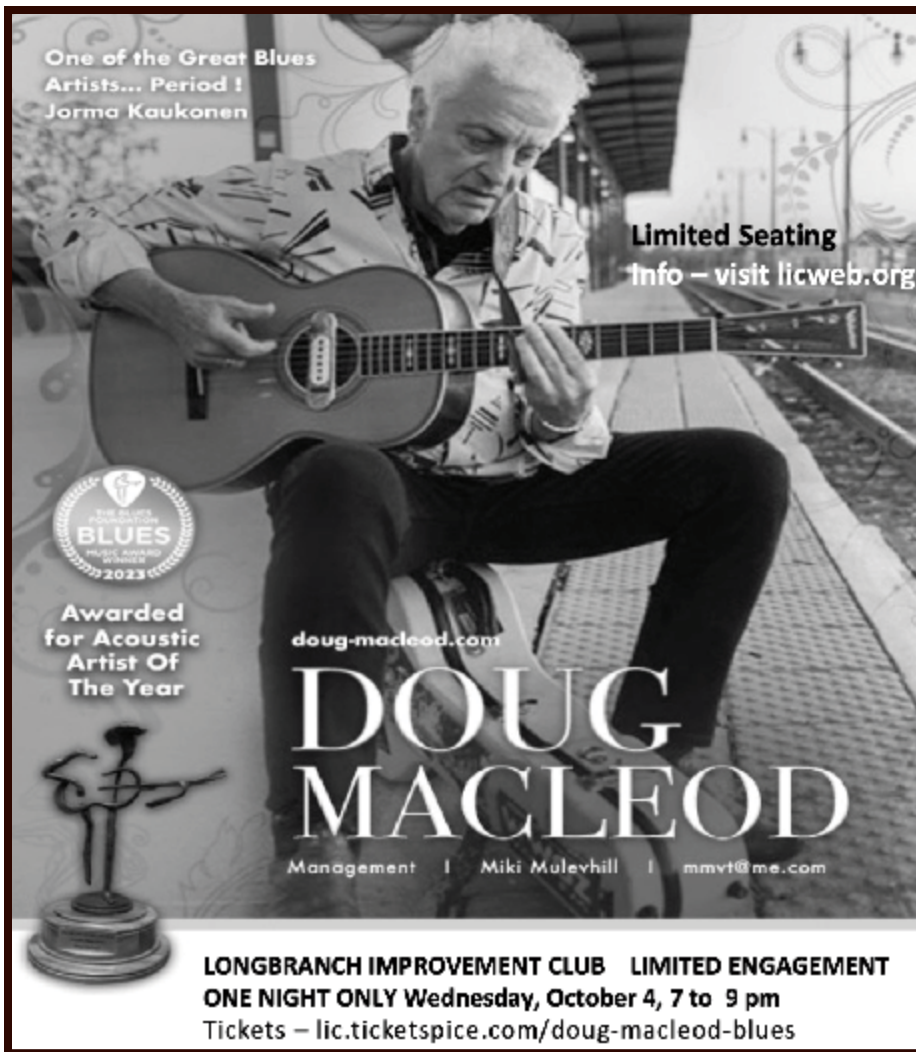
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TOP LEFT: Lola, 9, lays it down in the sack race during the Peninsula Logging Show & Festival Aug. 19. *Tina McKail, KP News*

TOP RIGHT: Loggers buck head-to-head at the logging show. *Tina McKail, KP News*

CENTER RIGHT: Naturalist and KP contributor Chris Rurik delivers a "Green Drinks" talk at Two Fox Winery sponsored by Gig Harbor Land Conservation Fund Aug. 20, addressing what private landowners can do to protect the environment. *Lucy Zhou*

BOTTOM LEFT: The kids recruited some extra muscle to beat the loggers at tug of war. *Tina McKail, KP News*

BOTTOM RIGHT: A familiar sight was a welcome stop at Art Walk Aug. 2. *Tina McKail, KP News*