

Softball season wraps up

Softball fall tournaments are drawing to a close at Volunteer Park. The U.S. Specialty Sports Association will present final events in October and November at Volunteer Park and O'Callahan's Pub.

The public is welcome to watch the games and enjoy the fun, as follows:

Oct. 27-28, O'Callahan's "Full Moon" Halloween Bash III, a USSSA co-ed tournament that included 18 teams last year. On Saturday, the teams play in costume.

Nov. 10-11, 5th Annual Tri-Fetica with three areas of emphasis: pool, darts, softball. This is a nonsanctioned-co-ed event with eight teams played on ball fields and at O'Callahan's.

Nov. 17-18 is O'Callahan's Turkey Trot II, a USSSA co-ed event that is "a lot of fun, with weird rules for this tournament," says tournament director Gary Helt.

The 23rd annual Mud Bowl was held Sept. 5-16. The co-ed event had about 18 teams from as far away as Monroe. According to KP Metro Park Director Scott Gallacher, this clean and sober tournament has more campers at Volunteer Park than any other event of the year. Nine of the 18 teams were from the GH/KP Peninsula area with Chafey Homes defeating Hy-Iu-Hee-Hee for the championship. Results for Key Peninsula teams were: Division B: Walkabouts 4th and Team Aro 5th; Division D: Lakebay Roofing 2nd and Laddy & The Ringers 3rd.

KP artists recognized

Several Key Peninsula artists won awards at the Puyallup Fair art show.

Chris Bronstad received a fourth place prize, and Jeanne Crider, Marcia Horan, and Beverly Pedersen received honorable mentions in the competition.

Youth orchestra provides broad opportunities

By Jeanette Brown
Special to KP News

Key Peninsula resident Paula Vander Poel is the new executive director at Peninsula Youth Orchestra Association. Vander Poel moved to Lakebay from Bonney Lake with her family four years ago. And yes, she is Dutch — coming from the Amsterdam area.



VANDER POEL

"Land reclaimed from the sea" is the meaning of the name, according to Vander Poel, and she and her family enjoy living near the water. She knows how developmentally important music is for children, and began her relationship with the Gig Harbor-based string orchestra when she enrolled her youngest daughter, Kristine, now 12, in the program.

Kristine had fallen in love with the violin and pretty soon all three of Vander Poel's children were playing: Ashley, 15, plays the cello and Luke, 13, plays the viola. Vander Poel soon found herself volunteering for the organization.

"I would sit in on the classes and it was just natural for me to help," she says. "When the executive director position came open this past April, I put in my application, interviewed and accepted this paid position."

Vander Poel, who grew up in the Milwaukee and Green Bay areas of Wisconsin, attended Ambassador College in Texas, then a four-year program in Pasadena, Calif., graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1990. Her major was theology and she minored in German. College is where

PYO details

Scholarships are offered through a confidential application based on need.

PYO is currently enrolling and will accept students into October. Midseason registration will be held Jan. 15-Feb. 15. The organization may be contacted by phone at 534-5384 or e-mail to info@harborpyo.org. The office is located at Harbor Covenant Church, 5601 Gustafson in Gig Harbor, and is open Thursdays from 4 to 6 p.m.

she met her husband; the couple wed in September 1990 after graduation.

She says she always had an interest in music. The new position allows Vander Poel, who home schools all three of her children, to work from home. She has also set up a mini-office at the rehearsal location at Harbor Covenant Church, so she can assist parents and work at that location. All PYO's instructors are state certified, making it easy for home-schoolers to document credit, and this past year the group also started offering high school credit.

The career move seemed like a natural fit for several reasons. "I love the orchestra," Vander Poel says. "I want to see it progress and expand. It's easy to promote something I believe in so strongly."

No. 1 on the agenda is to make sure that those in the local community are aware of the program.

"We have at least three concerts per year and another goal is to add to our free concert mailing list," she says.

Vander Poel tells a story about an early experience she had at PYO when she was sitting in on her daughter's class: "Mrs. Epperson seemed to envelop the kids. They loved her



Photo by Karina Whitmarsh

Camille Walther waits for her turn to play during the recent Peninsula Youth Orchestra auditions. See more photos online at www.keypennews.com.

grandmotherly energy and excitement for kids and music. She teaches them from the very beginning, 20 or so in a class, how to hold an instrument — not to let your wrist touch and keep your shoulder under the violin, how to hold the bow. Mrs. Epperson is a professional cellist, so she always has funny little comments about how the cellists have more fun — the violins, violas and basses always counter that strongly. Anyway, as we are sitting in class, my older two children picked up on what was being taught and the following year decided that they all wanted to be involved."

Vander Poel stepped into her new position as the PYO is entering its 10th year. The nonprofit organization was started in 1998 by Paul and Karen Pew to provide local students with string instruction, something they found missing in public schools. Now students come from as far away as Port Orchard and Puyallup to participate.

PYO offers string instruction and opportunities to perform throughout the school year for all four orchestras and is one of the only youth orchestras to offer instruction to total beginners as well as more advanced students. In addition, every summer the PYO runs a weeklong string camp.

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