



The Longbranch Improvement Club: Annual Report to the Community

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

What is an Improvement Club? Many neighbors on the Key Peninsula have heard about The Longbranch Improvement Club (LIC), but don't know much about it. According to the original Articles of Incorporation, the club formed a corporation in 1921 to buy “Real Estate for the purpose of a Consolidated School, Athletic, and Picnic purposes and to encourage any activity for the betterment of Schools, Homemaking, Roads, Marketing, Dairy, Poultry and all its branches.”

According to Key Peninsula Historical Society & Museum, “Improvement clubs grew out of the Progressive Movement that swept the nation from the 1870s to the 1920s. Civic duty and improving the quality of life were to be based on new learning and technology. This was a national focus, and Teddy Roosevelt tasked communities to focus on rural improvement.” It is interesting to note that even the City of Tacoma had an improvement club at one time; a scattering of improvement clubs remain active today.

In the 1940s when School #328 was discontinued, the LIC assumed ownership of the former gymnasium building, built in 1934 as a WPA project during the Great Depression. The old Pierce County pier in Filucy Bay had been abandoned in the 1930s when “Mosquito Fleet” ferry service to Longbranch was discontinued. In 1959, members of the LIC, through agreements with Pierce County and Washington state, took over management and maintenance of the marina. They built a 168-foot pier and attached it to the old county dock.

Today, the LIC continues to be active on the Key Peninsula. The building and marina still serve in the spirit of the founders of the LIC. The marina is open to the public for use by local and visiting boaters. The clubhouse, now on the Register of National Historic Places, is used by the club for events and is available for rent. In addition, the local Fire District uses the field for helicopter evacuation practices, and the Parks District holds a Day Camp at the facility each summer.

During 2016, the LIC sponsored —

- A very successful community garage sale
- A lively Opening Day at the marina
- Three holiday weekend dances (well attended by neighbors and visiting boaters) to celebrate summer holidays
- And as part of the Farm Tour, the LIC organized the fabulous Fiber Arts event (vendors are already signing up for 2017)

Youth activities are a very important part of our mission. Members organized —

- *Trunk or Treat*, in conjunction with the Evergreen Elementary PTA – complete with a carnival, haunted house and over 34 open trunks (with so many ghouls & goblins flying about we lost count)
- *Kids ‘n’ Christmas*, a Toys for Tots event with Santa, more than 250 people, and 50 Girl Scouts providing crafts projects for the children
- Funding scholarships for two graduating Peninsula High School seniors
- Providing tuition money for the Evergreen Elementary school’s 5th grade Environmental Camp Program
- Sponsoring the Little Toasters Club at Evergreen Elementary
- Supporting the Children’s Home Society summer activities

Our LIC members are also hard at work preserving the historic Clubhouse. In 2016, a Pierce County Historic Preservation grant was awarded so that the clubhouse exterior could be painted, windows re-caulked, chimney repaired and new doors installed on the north and south sides of the auditorium. Work continues in 2017.

Preservation efforts also continue at the Longbranch Marina in order to comply with new Department of Natural Resources requirements. New pilings were installed during the first week of February 2017 and more improvements are ongoing.

In 2016, members of the LIC worked together to form The Longbranch Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. In affiliation with the LIC, it is focused on raising funds for the preservation of its historic structures, maintenance of the LIC grounds for public recreational use, preservation of the environment of Filucy Bay, support of scholarship programs and public school activities, and support of other community service organizations and activities. The Longbranch Foundation is excited to present our biennial fundraiser *Summer Fest On The South Key*, Saturday, August 12. It will be a fun-filled evening in Longbranch with a catered dinner, music, live and silent auctions featuring unique items and experiences, and a “Raise the Paddle” component. Proceeds from the event will support local scholarships and other Key Peninsula youth activities. Watch for more information.

Membership in the LIC is open to anyone living on the Key Peninsula. General meetings are held at the historic clubhouse on the third Wednesday of each month, alternating dessert or dinner potlucks starting at 6:30pm with a general meeting or educational program starting around 7:00pm. Need more? Visit www.licweb.org



The Longbranch
Improvement Club

BETTERING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1921