SCENE

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HEALTH ▪ ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT ▪ HOUSEHOLD TIPS

Experimental hatchery awaits returns

By Fred Obee
Leader Staff Writer

Cheri Scalf and Tom Jay talk outside the Salmon Creek hatchery shed. The hatchery was built by volunteers and is run by volunteers with the assistance and expertise of state fisheries biologists.
— Photo by Fred Obee

Tom Jay's well-broken-in truck bounces over dirt tire tracks separated by three-foot-tall grass, climbing a hill that falls away to Discovery Bay.

Ahead, past a gate that swings across the road, is an outpost in the struggle that symbolizes Jay's spiritual attachment to the great fish of the Pacific — the salmon. It's a small hatchery, fashioned from volunteer labor and fed by a pond where little cutthroat trout rise to break the still surface.

The truck bounces to a stop and Jay clambers out. Swinging the gate open, he leads the way to the small shed where tiny chum salmon are hatched and fed until they are big enough to survive in salt water.

"Our learning curve has been a sharp one," Jay said, stopping outside the shed and casting a glance at the familiar surroundings. "But we're getting to the level of our competency."

The fish hatched here are summer chum, "the lazy guys," Jay calls them, because they won't leap large obstructions the way other salmon will and because they lay their eggs soon after entering Salmon Creek.

Volunteers began the hatchery program, Jay said, because nearly all of the chum runs from Salmon Creek to Hood Canal are in poor shape. Chimacum Creek's chum salmon run is all but extinct. Six fish were counted there in the last six years. On the Big Quilcene River, chum salmon have the attention of a team of federal, state and local officials that is formulating plans to boost fish counts there.

On Salmon Creek, which pours into Discovery Bay, only 200 fish now return, down from thousands which once thronged to the narrow course just short decades ago.

"This is the first time the state and local people cooperated to do stock restoration," Jay said, and he hopes the effort can be duplicated in many of the intricate watersheds up and down Puget Sound.

Getting state permission to allow volunteers to hatch eggs from a precariously low salmon stock was not easy, Jay said. Some fisheries officials worried a critical mistake by the relatively untrained workers could wipe out the run entirely.

"There's some concern from people who manage the chum stock," Jay admitted, but he said other state fisheries technicians remain highly supportive of the project.

"We have to do right," Jay said, adding that the efforts of this volunteer group will go a long way toward supporting future projects managed by local volunteers.

"This is a new way of working," Jay said. "It's to their credit they have allowed us to do this. We feel honored and we feel a high sense of responsibility."

That feeling was underscored early this year when the hatchery suffered its first major setback. The intake from the small pond, which feeds oxygen-rich freshwater to salmon eggs and fingerlings, became plugged with leaves and thousands of fish died.

As a result, only 2,000 fish were released this year, about a fifth of what the volunteers usually set free. The problem added to concerns of some state officials about volunteer hatchery management, Jay said. Talks are scheduled in the near future to discuss the hatchery program and to look at ways it can be improved.

"We're just going to talk through it," Jay said. "We're always trying to make it better."

As bad the accident was, Jay said, enough fish still were released to come close to the number that would hatch naturally in a bad year. And, Jay said, the good years the hatchery has had and will have should more than make up for a one-time problem.

> "Our learning curve has been a sharp one, but we're getting to the level of our competency."
>
> —*Tom Jay*

Opening the door to the tiny shed, Jay shows the simple system volunteers have devised. Cool, filtered water from the pond pours through a stack of trays where eggs are hatched. Small tubs standing side by side provide a place where tiny salmon are fed.

"The idea is build this run back up to 2,000 to 4,000 fish," Jay said. Once that level is reached, "we can do the same thing on Chimacum Creek."

When everything functions properly, the hatchery logs a 95 percent survival rate, from egg to fingerling. That's a huge improvement over what happens in the wild, Jay said. Allowing the fish to grow bigger before release, first in hatchery tanks and then in saltwater pens, also increases the odds of the small fish growing to adulthood.

The door to the hatchery creaks open, and Cheri Scalf, a volunteer on the project, enters the shed-roofed room. Scalf was raised in the area, knows what has been lost and is convinced of the positive impact the volunteers can have.

"I grew up here from the time I was 8, and I remember when the streams were full of salmon — and I'm not that old," Scalf said, breaking into a grin. When she read about the fish hatchery project in The Leader, she thought "This is my home territory," and she called to see if she could help. She's been with the hatchery ever since.

"My mom lives down the road so it's easy to stop by," Scalf said. "It feels so good to be doing something rather than complaining. And it's a good group of people."

Eggs are supplied by state fisheries officials, who capture wild salmon returning to the creek and artificially spawn them. Care is taken to allow a large number of the fish to spawn naturally, too, so the run's survival isn't threatened by human meddling.

After laboring for two years on the project, this summer will be the first that hatchery-reared fish

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Hatchery volunteer Tom Jay explains how chum salmon eggs are hatched inside the tiny shed on a tributary of Salmon Creek. Hatchery workers are expecting their first fish to return this year.

— Photo By Fred Obee

Hatchery: Waiting for first fish to return

–Continued from Page D 1

return to Salmon Creek. If returns are good and talks with state officials show increasing confidence in the project, Scalf said the volunteers would like to gather more eggs and release more fish so improvements can come faster.

"If we're successful, we'll put ourselves out of business," Scalf said.

Everyone involved in the hatchery is hoping for big success so the volunteer work can win approval for similar projects on other creeks and streams.

Jay, an accomplished writer and sculptor, has portrayed salmon in his art as the soul of the watershed. A stream barren of spawners represents a world out of whack, unbalanced and unhealthy. The little hatchery at Salmon Creek moves beyond the metaphor and brings the belief to ground-level, shovel-turning reality.

"Our commitment from the group is 10 years," Jay said, swinging the hatchery door shut and clicking the padlock. "We're going to keep doing this for at least another eight years."

Workshop sponsored by 'For Our Kids' slated

The Jefferson County Community Network (JCCN) presents a series of "For Our Kids" community workshops for parents, kids and anyone else who wants to be a part of preparing and carrying out a collective vision for raising safe and healthy children in Jefferson County.

JCCN is a network of 13 parents and citizens who have joined 10 agency representatives to develop better ways to help families

programs and projects desired in their own communities.

The next workshops are:

- Chimacum: Wednesday, June 7 at 7 p.m., Tri-Area Community Center;
- Port Townsend: Thursday, June 8 at 7 p.m.; Port Townsend Community Center;
- Quilcene: Saturday, June 10 at 10 a.m., Quilcene Community Center.

Board members of JCCN in-

Many beautiful Rhododendrons were displayed at the Rhododendron Flower Show May 19-21 at Fort Worden State Park. The winners are:

Section I: Species - Class 1A (1) Berg; Class 3 (2) Kint, (3) Kint; Class 3A (1) Helliesen, (2) J. Sinclair; Class 5 (1) Berg (2) J. Sinclair, (3) J. Sinclair; Honorable Mention J. Sinclair and Lindeman; Class 8 (1) M. Sinclair; Class 10 (1) Lindeman, (2) Lindeman, (3) Skerbeck; Class 13 (1) J. Sinclair, (2) Skerbeck; Class 14 (1) Skerbeck, (2) J. Sinclair; Class 14A (3) J. Sinclair; Class 14B(1) J. Sinclair; Class 15 (1) J. Sinclair, (1) J. Sinclair, (3) Berg; Hon. Mention J. Sinclair; Class 16 Spray (1) J. Sinclair, (2) J. Sinclair, (3) A. Brandon; Class 16A Truss (2) J. Sinclair, (2) Skerbeck; Hon. Mention M. Sinclair; Class 17 (2) J. Sinclair; (3) Helliesen; Hon. Mention Skerbeck; Class 17A (1) Berg, (1) Berg.

Red Hybrids - Section 1 (1) Prussing, (2) Hauke, (3) Kint, Hon. Mention J. Sinclair; Section 2 (1) J. Sinclair, (2) Berg; Section 3 (2) T. Thomas, (3) Olesen, (3) Anderson, Hon. Mention Olesen; Section 4 (1) Veal, (2) T. Thomas (3) Skerbeck, Hon. Mention Lindeman; Section 5 (1) Savold; Section 6 (1) Skerbeck, (2) Olesen, (3) M. Sinclair; Section 7 (1) Prussing, (2) J. Sinclair, Hon. Mention Kint; Section 8 (1) Skerbeck, (2) Olesen, (3) Skerbeck; Section 9 (2) Berg, (3) Prussing; Section 10 (2) Stockman; Section 11 (1) Olesen, (3) Hurd.

Pink Hybrids - Section 1 (1) Olesen, (2) Helliesen; Section 2 (1) Buhler, (2) Choyce; Novice (1) Buhler, (1) Choyce; Section 3 (1) Olesen, (2) Sinclair Veal, Hon. Mention Skerl Section 4 (1) M. Sinclair Veal, (3) Thomas; Section Olesen, (3) Helliesen; Sect (1) Olesen, (2) Skerbeck, (Sinclair; Section 7 (1) Bu (2) Olesen, (3) Prussing, N (1) Buhler; Section 8 (1 Sinclair, (2) M. Sinclair Stockman; Section 9 (1) S man, (2) Berg, (3) M. Sinc Section 10 (1) Olesen, (2) E don; Section 11 (1) Oleser Skerbeck, (3) Skerbeck; Se 12 (1) J. Sinclair, (2) Skerl Section 13 (1) Breitspreche Brandon, (3) Olesen, Hon. I tion M. Sinclair; Section 1 Anderson, (2) Helliesen, Olesen; Section 15 (1 Sinclair, (2) Berg, (3) Berg, Mention Skerbeck; Sectio (1) Olesen, (2) Stockman; tion 17 (1) J. Sinclair, (2) mas, (3) Kint; Section 18 Lindeman, (2) Skerbeck, Thomas; Section 19 (2) Doo (3) Berg; Section 20 Lindeman, (2) Skerbeck, (Sinclair; Section 21 (1) Tho (2) Olesen, (3) Berg; Sectio (1) Anderson, (2) J. Sinclai J. Sinclair.

Purple and Laven Hybrids - Section 1 (1) Ole (2) Leady, (3) Skerbeck; Sec 2 (1) Berg, (2) Olesen, Lindeman; Section 3 Helliesen, (2) Stockman, Olesen; Section 4 (1) Skerb (2) Stockman, (3) Veal; Sec 5 (1) Olesen, (2) Doot Novice (2) Buhler; Sectio (1) J. Sinclair, (2) Bran (2) Olesen, (3) Berg, (3) B don, Hon. Mention K Section 7 (1) J. Sinclair, Olesen, (3) Stockman; Sect 8 (1) J. Sinclair, Breitsprecher; Section 9

Geoducks: A rare

By Elaine Paul
Leader Contributing Writer

Anyone visiting the Pacific Northwest has a rare treat in store if he can meet someone who lives along Discovery Bay. This is one home of a huge marine shellfish called a geoduck (pronounced gooey-duck).

To get a geoduck, the digger must wait until a very low tide. Then, when he finds the clam's two-holed neck, he grabs hold of it and starts digging with his other hand or with an empty tin can.

After a while, as he goes deeper and deeper, the tide begins to fill the hole. It is a contest between himself, the clam and the in-rushing tide.

He must be careful not to cut the neck or he will probably never find the body of the shellfish. It can be resting five feet or more below the surface of the sand.

Geoducks are scarce. If a person finds one, he has the adventure of his life. The duck isn't like a razor clam that digs faster than the digger. He doesn't have to get below the clam to prev its escape. The geoduck is going anywhere. Only its n is moving, trying to pull b into its body.

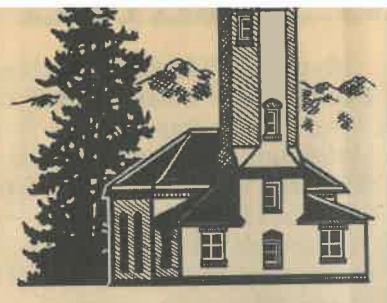
As he digs down, the geodu hunter must get down on stomach in the wet sand, c tinue holding on to the ne and dig and bail as he go Naturally he must be willing get pretty grubby.

If the geoduck is deeper th the man is tall, he must hav buddy to hold his feet as upends himself over the hole a buddy he can trust!

Once the digger reaches t shell, he must release the su tion around it and lift the ge duck out of the hole by its no thickened neck. He tosses it in a bucket with one other duc usually all that he and his h have had time to dig during t low tide.

Up in the beach cabin, l host rinses the geoduck und the faucet. He pours boili water over the skin of the ne and peels it off. Then he grir the neck to make clam fritte

Skookum: Swap time



Skookum plans for clean up

The three Rs of solid waste reduction are REDUCE, REUSE and RECYCLE. In Europe more emphasis has been placed on reducing waste by reusing materials rather than post-consumer recycling, because these methods tend to consume fewer resources and less energy.

As a means of focusing more attention on reuse, the Jefferson County Solid Waste Advisory committee (SWAC) has organized another cash-free reuse fair patterned on the successful event held last October. County residents are encouraged to pass on usable items they no longer need, for the use by others in the community who will be pleased to provide them with a good home.

Saturday, June 17, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. and Sunday, June 18, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. volunteers will be located on the grassy area behind the Horticulture Building at the County Fairgrounds to log in items and organize them into groups such as hardware and furniture. Residents can browse and take away their newfound treasures between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on both days. There will no charge for either dropping off or taking away items and no limit on quantities. Yes, there is such a thing as a free lunch, or at least a free lunchbox! However, residents should come prepared, as the volunteers will be unable to tag items for later pickup, and will not be able to assist with the loading or transporting of large objects.

The following list indicates the types of items that SWAC officials have determined to

See **SKOOKUM**, Page D 2

Looking Back

100 years ago (June 7, 1895)

- The Morning Leader reports that "rumors abound" that a railroad company is interested in "the Queen City" of Seattle.
- "It is reported on good authority