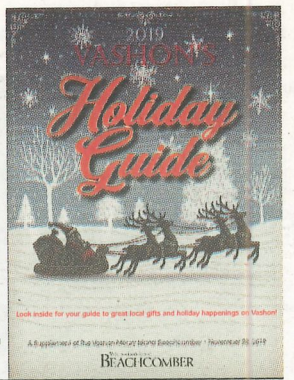


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Hospital
district
officials
study Lopez
and Orcas
island clinics

BY KEVIN OPSAHL

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When islander Eric Pryne was running for a seat on the proposed public hospital district board of commissioners, he called up some commissioners on other islands and asked, "OK, what am I getting myself into?"

Since that time, islanders voted overwhelmingly to establish a hospital district and now, Pryne finds himself preparing to be one of five commissioners responsible for overseeing health care services, as hospital districts are mandated to do by statute. As Pryne prepares, he is armed with a wealth of knowledge about other island hospital districts, particularly Orcas and Lopez's.

"In fact, even before the election, I went through the first couple of months of minutes from Orcas and Lopez commission meetings and made a list of things that they did in the first couple of months," Pryne said. "It's a pretty daunting list of what needs to be done. We need to essentially create a tiny government from scratch and we can look at their experience and their actions on how to do that."

Pryne and another soon-to-be commissioner, Tom Langland, say Orcas and Lopez are case studies for how Vashon-Maury Island's commissioners should set up and run its hospital district.

"We can learn a lot from them," Pryne said.

Langland said learning from what other hospital districts are doing is "a huge part of getting started."

"If somebody's got a working model of what we need going, it

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In new book, islander unveils a vanished world



ELIZABETH SHEPHERD PHOTO

BY ELIZABETH SHEPHERD

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At the age of 81, islander Martin Koenig can now see his life's work and passion before him, encapsulated in a 144-page, large-format hard-cover art book with two accompanying music CDs.

The new book, "Sound Portraits From Bulgaria: A Journey Into a Vanished World 1966-1979," published by Smithsonian Folkways, has been more than 50 years in the making. Koenig will

share the book with islanders at a launch party at 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8, at Open Space & Community. The afternoon will include a presentation of films and photographs that are featured in the book by Koenig.

On a recent rainy afternoon, Koenig welcomed a visitor to his Vashon home and thumbed through the handsome and heavy tome, filled with scholarly essays and Koenig's striking photographs depicting the ancient but vibrant folk music traditions of Bulgarian villagers.

A bespectacled man who looks younger than his years and still speaks with more than a trace of his native New York accent, Koenig marveled at his good fortune in being able to hold such a book in his hands.

He was grateful, he said, that the publisher had shown "tremendous generosity and tremendous trust" in allowing him to have creative control in all aspects of the book.

"Sound Portraits From Bulgaria" has already been celebrated around the world, in

vaulted settings.

It launched in September with an accompanying exhibition of Koenig's photographs at the Bulgarian National Art Gallery, in Sofia — a whirlwind of recognition that included a private audience for Koenig with the president of Bulgaria, Roumen Radev, who awarded him a presidential medal for his 50 years of work championing Bulgarian traditional music and dance.

These honors were followed

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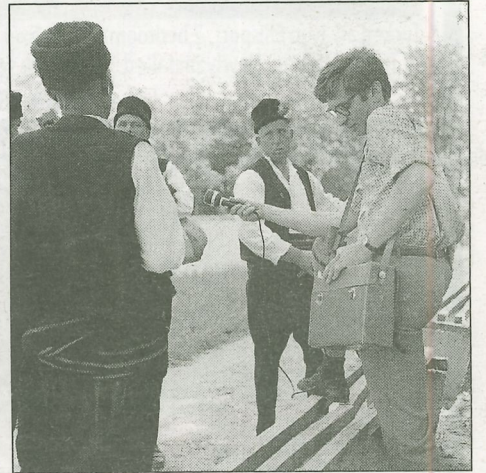


PHOTO COURTESY MARTIN KOENIG

Martin Koenig, recording musicians at a folk festival in Bulgaria, in 1967.

At his home, Koenig shows off his new book, published by Smithsonian Folkways, which includes two discs of music he recorded in Bulgaria in the 1960s and 70s.

Teen council teaches students about relationships and health

BY MARIE KOLTCHAK

For The Beachcomber

How do you empower adolescents to navigate health, sexuality and relationship issues? On Vashon, you call in the teenagers.

On a recent evening, in a comfortable and informal office space, 10 high school students

broke into small groups and took turns citing facts on opioids in front of fellow Vashon Teen Council members. Relaxed and focused, they offered each other feedback as they polished short presentations designed to provide information to their peers quickly and efficiently the following school day.

"We want to de-stigmatize the idea of getting help in an overdose or drug-related emergency. People should know they won't get in trouble for calling 9-1-1," said Lucas Schoenberg, a returning council member.

In 2016, Vashon Island's domestic violence response and awareness organization,

The Dignity Opportunity Voice Empowerment Project (DOVE), launched the Vashon Teen Council (VTC), a peer-to-peer education program based on Planned Parenthood's award-winning, nationally recognized model. VTC receives funding from the

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World: Koenig book examines Bulgarian culture

by events at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, the Hristo Botev School and Hristo Botev Academy in New York City and Washington, D.C., respectively, and the Princeton Public Library in New Jersey.

And as the book launch rolls out, more events are planned for 2020, at such venues as the Northwest Folklife Festival and the Thessaloniki PhotoBiennale, in Greece, as well as presentations in San Diego, Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

But it all started long ago and far away, in a place that Koenig describes as now being “completely gone.”

In 1966, as a 27-year-old, Koenig made his first trip to Bulgaria, armed with letters of recommendation from anthropologist Margaret Mead and folklorist Alan Lomax, determined to study the folk dances of rural communities throughout the country.

Koenig described himself in those days as “a young enthusiast who was smitten by this music and dance form,” who at the time worked teaching Balkan folk

The book

To find out more about the book, visit tinyurl.com/tc7ddcw. To read a review of the book and sample some of Koenig’s recordings, visit tinyurl.com/ut6dnyg. To make a reservation to attend the Dec. 8 launch event for the book on Vashon, visit openspacevashon.com/events. Books will be available for sale at the event, with payments of cash or checks only accepted.

dance at Barnard College and Sarah Lawrence College.

“The dancing was so vital and the music was so intense, it spoke to me in a very deep way,” he said. “It hooked me.”

As he traveled, absorbing the culture and speaking with the people he encountered, Koenig became even more captivated by the authentic and old, yet very much alive, music he heard all around him.

The hypnotic sounds of the Bulgarian bagpipe, ecstatic and drone-centric singing, and odd-metered rapid-fire dances he observed painted a vivid picture of a multi-faceted culture that sat at the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East, he said.

Toting heavy audio equipment and cameras, he captured as much music as he could and took photographs not only of the singers and dancers but also those going about their daily lives in villages throughout the country.

He returned more than a half dozen times until 1979, documenting this traditional culture, providing a vivid, first-hand account of joyous rituals, celebrations and festivals.

Almost immediately, Koenig’s work was seen as revelatory.

One of his recordings, made in a rural classroom in 1968, is the haunting folk tune “Izlel e Delyu,” as sung by Valya Balkanska. In 1977, this recording was chosen by Carl Sagan to be included on the famed Golden Record that sits inside the Voyager spacecraft, currently hurdling at 40,000 miles per hour outside our solar system.

Koenig’s visits to Bulgaria took place at the beginning of his lifelong work as a supporter of community-based traditional arts and an authority on European ethnic dance traditions. During the course of his career, Koenig co-founded the Balkan Arts Center, now named the Center for Traditional Music and Dance, in New York, and also conducted field research under the aegis of the Smithsonian Institution and other institutions. On Vashon, he is known for bringing acclaimed Balkan musicians to local audiences and teaching islanders the fancy footwork of the folk dances he has long studied.

Looking back on the pivotal years when he first visited Bulgaria, Koenig said he found a “society that had stood still there for many years.”

“I thought I had fresh eyes being a foreigner,” he explained, “and I took photographs that other photographers didn’t take because they thought it would be there forever.”

Koenig, as an outsider, sensed otherwise. He said he soon realized, even as he documented the agrarian

lifestyle and culture, that he was in the midst of a society in rapid transition.

Time has proved Koenig right.

According to the United Nations, Bulgaria today is actually the world’s fastest shrinking nation. Its population — almost 9 million at the end of the 1980s— has now shrunk to approximately 7 million people and is expected to dwindle to less than 6 million by 2050.

The country’s population implosion — and the exodus of Bulgarians from the countryside to cities — posed one of the biggest obstacles to publishing “Sound Portraits from Bulgaria,” Koenig said.

To publish the book, the Smithsonian required that he embark on the impossible task of returning to Bulgaria to seek authorization from the artists or heirs of the many people he had recorded playing music in the 1960s and 70s.

Koenig said he was saved, in the end, by two Bulgarians he had met in the course of his work and had maintained contact with over the years. One was Gena Traykova, a filmmaker who is currently the head of news at Bulgarian TV; the other was Ivaylo Gogov, a young man Koenig had helped when he visited the U.S. years ago. Leaning on the skills of these two old friends, Koenig located 69 contacts for the 81 people he had recorded, including 11 musicians who were still alive.

Traveling back to Bulgaria to share his photographs and recordings with these people — who saw their dead relatives or themselves as much younger people in the images — was very moving, he said.

But it was also sad, according to Koenig, who said that many of the grandchildren of the people he recorded no longer knew the traditional songs and dances that had flourished for centuries before they were born.

“I went back to the same villages,” he said. “Some had 800 residents [in the 1960s], now there are 80.”

The exodus in Bulgaria and the subsequent loss of cultural traditions reminded Koenig of the world’s current migration crisis.

“They’re not leaving because they want to,” he said. “They leave because they have to.”

PLACES OF WORSHIP ON OUR ISLAND

Burton Community Church

ALL ARE WELCOME
Kindness, Gratitude, Love and Community!
Worship 11 am
463-9977
www.burtonchurch.org

Catholic Church St. John Vianney

Mass—Saturdays at 5:00 p.m.
Sundays 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
Pastor: Fr. David Mayovsky
16100 115th Avenue SW,
Vashon WA 98070
OFFICE 567-4149
www.stjohnvianneyvashon.com

Vashon Island Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Diversity, Freedom of Belief, Enrichment of Spirit
Sunday at 9:45 a.m. — September to June
Religious Exploration for toddlers — 8th Grade
Lewis Hall
(Behind Burton Community Church)
23905 Vashon Hwy SW
Info: www.VIUF.org

Bethel Church

14736 Bethel Lane SW
10a.m. Sunday Service
You're Invited!
We have mid-week groups for kids (AWANA), teens and adults
www.bethel-efc.org
Office: (206) 567-4255

Vashon Friends Worship Group (Quakers)

10 am Meeting for Silent Worship in members' homes.
Call for Location
567-5279 463-5255

Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit

Reverend Dr. Sarah Colvin, Rector
The Rev. Ann Sanderson, Priest Assoc.
Sundays — 8:00 a.m. & 10:15 a.m.
Church School & Religious Exploration 9:00 a.m.
Thursday Mid-week Eucharist - 12:00 p.m. — 1:00 p.m.
Child Care
15420 Vashon Hwy SW 567-4488
www.holyspiritvashon.org

Vashon Island Community Church

9318 SW Cemetery Road
Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
(Children welcome, nursery available)
Midweek groups for adults, youth, women & Men
Office Phone 463-3940
Pastors:
Mike Ivaska and Tyler Winters
For more info: www.vashonchurch.com

Havurat Ee Shalom

Serving Vashon's Jewish community
Torah study: 9:30 a.m. Saturday mornings.
15401 Westside Highway SW
PO Box 89, Vashon 98070
www.vashonhavurah.org

Vashon Lutheran Church

Bible Discussion 9:15 a.m.
Holy Communion Worship 10:30 a.m.
Rev. Joel Kutzke, D.Min., Pastor
463-2655
18623 Vashon Hwy. SW (1/2 mile south of Vashon)
www.vashonlutheranchurch.org/

Vashon Presbyterian Church

Sunday Worship 10am
17708 Vashon Hwy (center of town)
Pastor Leigh Weber
Church Office Hours
Monday— Thursday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
463-2010
www.vashonpreschurch.org

Calvary Full Gospel Church at Lisabeula

13107 SW 220th St.
Worship 10:30 a.m.—Evening Worship TBD
Thursday Bible Study 7:00 p.m.
Call for location
Saturday Prayer 7:30 p.m.
Pastor Steve Sears
463-2567

Vashon United Methodist Church

17928 Vashon Hwy SW
(one block south of downtown)
Pastor: Rev. Paul Mitchell
Sunday Service & Children's Table 10:00 a.m.
Tues. Men's Coffee 10:00 a.m. • Wed: Adult Bible Study 10:30 a.m.
Office open Tues, Wed, Fri, 9 a.m. — 1 p.m.
463-9804
www.vashonmethodist.org
office@vashonmethodist.org

Our Vashon Island Community warmly invites you and your family to worship with them.