

Anderson Island: A Moated Community

It's the "Island Way" to wave at oncoming vehicles, pedestrians and bicycle riders. Here's a little more about island culture.

People may think living on an island is a romantic idea with a laid-back lifestyle. It can be! Self sufficiency is key. The ferry fees and schedule can make living here expensive and inconvenient if you need mainland services regularly. However, if you can plan ahead a little and have the means, living on a little green island surrounded by sparkling water and snow-capped mountain views can be a relaxing bit of heaven on earth. We're 20 minutes to Steilacoom, 30 to Tacoma, 45 to Olympia, 60 to Seattle (barring construction, accidents and bad weather). With no stop-lights, lots of deer, very little hustle or bustle, this moated community may be just what you're looking for.

Anderson Island is unincorporated Pierce County with a year round population of about 2,000. A portion of the island is a homeowners association called the **Riviera Community Club** (www.RivieraCommunityClub.com). Most of the properties listed are in the Riv. Within the Riv there are parks supported by members' annual dues and a restaurant open to the public. Riviera home owners dues pay for Riv amenities and water from community wells. There is an associate Riv membership if one plays a lot of golf and doesn't live in the Riv.

Camping: One question that comes up often is, "May I camp on my Riviera lot?" The answer is, "No." There is a nice campground for Riviera members and their guests with hookups, septic disposal, tent areas, bathrooms with showers and covered picnic shelters. Please see the Riviera website for daily and monthly rates and reservations.

In addition there are also Anderson Island parks for everyone to use and we vote to tax ourselves to maintain and obtain island parks. (www.AndersonIslandParks.org)

We love boats! There are three lakes (stocked with bass and trout):

- Josephine- no gas motors allowed. Kayaks, canoes, sail and peddle power as well as electric motors are OK. This lake is completely within Riviera jurisdiction.
- Florence- gas motors are allowed. The southern edge is Riviera. The northern boasts an island park called the Old Swimmin' Hole, a popular destination on hot summer days.
- Pine- children's fishing only, stocked by the Riviera.

Surrounded by salt water, we love fishing and crabbing, too.

There is a nominal fee to use the boat launch at the Riv's salt water marina. The docks are in place from about May 1 to October 1. Riv members may keep a boat moored on the dock at the marina for a limited time. There is moorage available to the public from Oro Bay Properties in Oro Bay for an annual fee. (OBP is not affiliated with Oro Bay Yacht Club.) Oro Bay is the home of Oro Bay Yacht Club and out-stations for Bremerton Yacht Club and Tacoma Yacht Club.

Security: Pierce County Sheriff Deputies patrol at will. I am a member of the Volunteer Island Patrol. We have two vehicles and patrol at various times of day and night with no regular schedule. We are the "eyes and ears" of the PCSD. We are not armed and will not confront anyone. We take calls on a cell phone (253-970-5403) that is staffed 24/7. Islanders are encouraged to be aware, take down license plate numbers of suspicious vehicles prowling neighborhoods and let us know. Because we have a central phone, we can put pieces together from one neighborhood to another or more than one observation and come up with a pattern which we then call in to the PCSD. VIP also conducts house checks. If a home owner is going to be gone awhile, they execute an affidavit of access allowing us to trespass on their property. We go to the home regularly and walk around, noting anything obvious like broken windows or screens pried off. We then call the homeowner with the information.

What little crime we have tends to be domestic violence, burglary and vandalism. Islanders really keep their eyes open for their neighbors.

Pierce County Ferry: I could write a book about this! For years I commuted on the 6:30 a.m. to either McNeil Island or Olympia. Got home on the 6:30 p.m. Riding the boat during that 20 minutes is pretty darn relaxing if you want to unwind from the day or it could drive you nuts. It's all in your attitude. I got a lot of reading done. Go to Pierce County ferry website for schedule, fees and to purchase ferry tickets from home.

Island businesses: Island General Store, equipment rental center, coffee shop, restaurant, propane and concrete batch plant. The general store has a little bit of everything. If they don't have it, you don't need it! They have DVD rentals, a post office contract station, fuel, a deli. The coffee shop next door also sells food items.

There are several home-based businesses as well. There are B&Bs, general contractors, piano teachers, hair salons and people with shops for welding, automotive, small engine repair, etc.

Purchase an island phone book for a complete list of businesses. The historical society publishes the book. They also have a lovely gift shop at the **Johnson Farm Museum** (www.AndersonIslandHS.org). The gift shop is open weekends from April to December. The phone book is available either at the Museum Gift Shop or the Island General Store.

Library: The Pierce County Library serves us as an outreach branch. Librarians come every Wednesday with the books we've ordered online and other media available to check out.

School: The island elementary school is part of the Steilacoom Historical School district. (www.Steilacoom.k12.wa.us) The school is K-5.

Medical service: Our fabulous volunteer firefighters are mostly all EMTs. We vote to tax ourselves for our fire department. We have a rapid response fireboat for medical transport to Steilacoom. Airlift NW sells an annual household policy for helicopter medical evacuation (highly recommended).

Power outages: Tanner Electric Cooperative supplies our power and we are all members of this rural electric cooperative. Because we live in the trees--and trees fall over in wind and rain and sometimes just because--the power goes out from time to time. Tanner linemen live on the island and fix problems immediately. Tanner has a hotline and a website to keep us informed and they are very good at customer service.

Telephone, Internet & TV: Our telephone system is provided by CenturyLink. Internet is also from CenturyLink and is DSL. CenturyLink bundles DirecTV or you can subscribe to Dish Network separately. Satellite TV works only if your property has a clear view of the southern sky. Sometimes your, or your neighbor's, trees are in the way. Hughes Net is another option for TV and Internet, but you still have to have a clear view of the southern sky. Cell phone service varies depending on the provider and the location.

Volunteer opportunities: There are many, many volunteer organizations including the Community Club, the Historical Society, the volunteer firefighters, the Volunteer Island Patrol, etc. The Island Association publishes a monthly newsletter. There are five churches (Catholic, Lutheran, two nondenominational and Mormon). We have Muslim, Jewish and Wiccan neighbors. It is a delightfully diverse population! You can be as involved as you want to be or you can hide in the woods.

Things to do: There are classes offered in dance, yoga and art. The Historical Society sponsors five lectures a year that are fun and interesting. They also have a salmon bake over the 4th of July weekend and an apple squeeze in early October. The Community Club's annual fundraiser is Island Fair on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend complete with parade, carnival, quilt raffle, auction and food. The elementary school's booster club holds events. The firefighters host a pancake breakfast the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. There's a quilting group, a line dancing group, youth groups (Young Life, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts), several musical groups from folk to rock to jazz, the Red Hats and a non-profit fitness center. The American Legion has a post here. There's something for everyone. If there's something you have an interest in that's not represented, form a committee and get it started! We islanders are self-sufficient, friendly and encouraging. Don't forget to wave!

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