

the Olympia News

Thurston County's Community Weekly

The Weather . . . Three to five day forecast for Western Washington, Friday through Sunday: Mostly fair and dry. Highs—70's and low 80's inland, overnight lows in the 50's. 60's at beach.

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by Dorris Hensel

Name a group of citizens in Thurston County involved in their community and the names of Carolyn Dobbs or Russell Fox will likely be on the list.

Odds are that either Fox or Dobbs will have been the chairman of whatever group it was. The two Evergreen State College faculty members believe in citizen involvement and they practice what they preach.

In the years since they have been teaching at TESC, the husband and wife team have given freely of their personal time.

Dobbs came to TESC in 1971. Fox was employed as a staff planner of the Cooper Point Association for six months in 1972 before joining the Evergreen staff later that year.

When they married the couple

decided Carolyn would continue to use her maiden name. She was already well-established in her field, environmental studies. "It just seemed easier," Fox said.

Their students benefit from a built in experiential program combining study and practical application. So far Dobbs has concentrated on environmental studies and land use planning, Fox on human and community resources.

Under their direction, local communities have benefitted from studies made by Evergreen students.

Former Fox and Dobbs students are filling the planning departments of southwest Washington after graduation. John Hubbard is now the Tumwater Planner; Jim Kramer administers the State Environmental Policy Act for Thurston County Regional Planning. Tom Clingman also works in regional planning, Jackie

Geppert is on the regional planning council.

Three of Mason County planners are former students. Grays Harbor planner Gordon White is from the college and both the Poulsbo and Yakima planners also are TESC alumni.

"They do exceptionally well," Dobbs said. Only a few of the duo's students have not been employed later in environmental planning, land use or human and community resource studies.

Fox and Dobbs believe through education people can become a force behind their concerns, but they have to be made aware of what they can do.

Unfortunately, on local concerns, the citizen is often caught in the middle, Dobbs said. There is frequently no governmental structure at the level where the problem exists.

"City jurisdictions do not always respond to neighborhood problems," she said. She believes authority should be given to smaller levels of government.

Neither Fox nor Dobbs believe in centralizing everything. "As a product of the rural south, I'm not in favor of too much governmental control," Dobbs said.

This is shown by her attitude toward

the Thurston County Agriculture District Amendment, which she chaired.

The comprehensive plan amendment was designed to preserve Thurston County farm land.

Although Dobbs thinks a few people nationally, are getting almost total control of a great natural resource, she was not for forcing the amendment on Thurston County farmers who did not wish to have their land put into an agriculture district. She felt the voluntary clause was right for this area at this time.

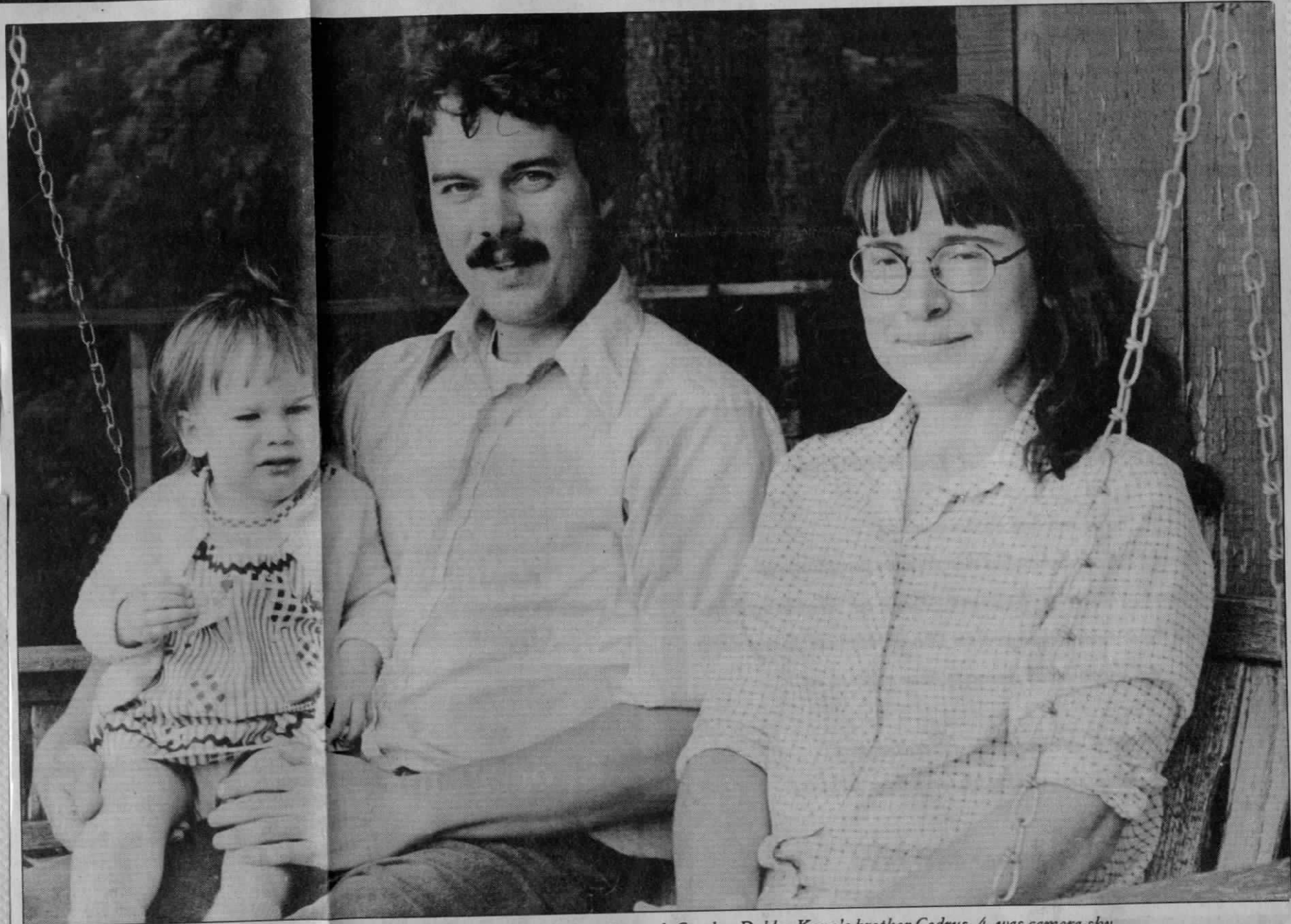
"I don't think the farmers in this area really want a strong restrictive ordinance."

Saving agricultural land has to be taken, "a step at a time," she says. It did give the people of the county a chance to think about preservation of agricultural land.

Fox has a reputation as a conciliator. He served on the Human Services Advisory Council for three years from 1976-78. He also was vice-chairman, with Don Daniels, for the Site Plan Review Ordinance in 1978.

In addition, Fox has retained his interest in the Cooper Point Association, serving either on the

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Two-year-old Kena sits on the porch swing with her "active" parents, Russ Fox and Carolyn Dobbs. Kena's brother Cedrus, 4, was camera-shy

Talk about people getting involved!

. . . a couple getting involved

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board or in an advisory capacity since he was on the staff in 1972.

Fox never starts a job by looking at the end results first. He goes "far enough back to find common ground." He looks for things on which the committees can agree and then works from that point toward specific goals.

Right now he is putting together a newsletter for the Planning Association of Washington, located at Cheney. He feels that will keep him busy for several years.

In between times, the two community workers have had Cedrus, 4, and Kena, 2.

Having the children has slowed their activities some, but not much.

In their "leisure time" they look after 75 chickens, three goats, a 750-pound brood sow, 10 Toulouse geese, 15 New Zealand rabbits, two llamas and two hives of bees.

The family also has two dogs and a pedigreed Burmese cat.

As far as possible, self-sufficiency is their aim. They smoke their own hams, and bacon; can and freeze their own vegetables. Dobbs said she cans 19 or 20 cases of vegetables a year.

Their food bill is not high but upkeep on the animals is.

"It may not be much of a saving, but it seems healthier—and things taste better," Dobbs said.

Fox and Dobbs are involved with their life, involved with their community. Their major worry is that people will decide what happens in the community is beyond their control.

Up to now, a narrow segment of people has made decisions on community investments, yet everyone has an emotional investment in a community.

To de-mystify the process so that citizens will participate in decisions that affect people—that is the goal of Carolyn Dobbs and Russell Fox.