

'TIPPED OVER'

Upbeat musician Dale Peterson, from Ocean Park, Wash., writes about global apocalypse

By PATRICK WEBB
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Dale Peterson has spent 70 years putting checkmarks on his bucket list.

The longtime musician and TV production member has written music, made a movie about an historic Northwest event and earned a patent from the U.S. government.

Now he has published a novel.

The Ocean Park resident is proudly marketing an imaginative work of fiction. "Tipped Over" is set in 2051, when the economy is collapsing and the super-rich live in ghettos protected by the military.

"It's not going to be a bestseller, ever," he said. "I write all the time, but I am not sure if I'm going to publish again." Gesturing to the paperback's cover which features the White House and its three lead characters. "I always wanted to write a book. I'm happy with it," he said. "It looks nice ... intriguing."

The book is available online through Kitsap Publishing in the Seattle area. Fellow musician Richard Thomasian of Astoria's online review noted it was "written from a very human and easily shared viewpoint."

Thomasian, who has played with Peterson, reported the story is "a direct and ruthless look at a possible future that may not be so far away."

Almost inevitably, the fictional drama features Seattle, where Peterson was born.

He and his brother and sister followed his father's military postings, which took them to Okinawa and Newfoundland. He spent his high school years in Iowa, but the greater Seattle area, specifically a family farm in Snohomish, was his longtime home base.

"I always had this pull back to the Northwest," he said, reflecting he was the ideal age to revel in the intensity of the Sixties' counterculture.

"In the 1960s, Seattle was 'hip,' the population of Seattle was on a par with the Haight-Ashbury and the Sunset Strip, with some good places in Portland," he said, smiling at the memory.

Well traveled

Peterson admits his path has taken some not-so-good turns. Years ago, he had a daughter; later he married, although his wife died.

Early in life, he trained as a journeyman mechanic with an uncle in Montana, then returned to Seattle. But a spell of heroin addiction and related complications landed him in jail for a year.



PATRICK WEBB PHOTOS

As a musician, the first thing Dale Peterson checks out when he goes for coffee at the Berry Patch in Ocean Park is the antique Wurlitzer juke box, complete with tunes from another era.

'IF YOU HAVE NEGATIVE THINGS IN YOUR LIFE ... LIKE REGRET, YOU HAVE ANGER AND THAT JUST HURTS YOU.'

— DALE PETERSON
WRITER AND MUSICIAN

Later, he went to Sacramento, overcame more drug issues, and later was able to put aside the "adversarial" relationships of his youth and spend more than a decade caring for his parents in their final years.

All the while, he developed his musical skills; as well as being a songwriter, he sings, plays guitar, bass, keyboards and drums.

Performing has taken him to Arkansas, Iowa,

"TIPPED OVER"

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www.kitsappublishing.com
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Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina, savoring gospel, blues, jazz, rock and country styles. Upset that he was once not allowed to take his bulky guitar on an airplane, he invented a collapsible guitar kit and successfully submitted it for a 1999 U.S. patent.

'Proud'

Working behind the scenes with film companies brought him back to the Seattle area and Klamath Falls, Oregon. The biggest highlight was being on a crew with filmmakers Otto Seiber and Russell Johnson during the 1980 Mount St. Helens eruption. Peterson was involved in creating a movie and wrote the title song, "Keeper of the Fire."

"The film got made and I am proud of it," he said, telling hair-raising stories of confrontations in the blast zone with law enforcement officials and smuggling undeveloped film out using devious means.

"Mount St. Helens was just amazing," he said. "The raw power. It sounded like a car without a muffler." Hauling heavy camera gear took all his strength. "The ash was like wet concrete."

Two versions appear on YouTube called "Mount St. Helens: Keeper of the Fire" and "The Eruption of Mt. St. Helens - 1980," both with Peterson featured in the credits

Still playing

Six years ago, he broke his wrist and found himself in Castle Rock, where he met his partner, Andrea.

"We bought a house at the beach and we are doing the 'happily-ever-after thing'" he smiled.

That includes playing as part of a four-member band called Just Us (a play on "justice"), which has performed in Astoria and Ocean Park.

The style is country rock, Peterson said. "We get together and have a good time and do what we want to do." The band plays 4 to 7 p.m. Sundays at the Astoria Moose Lodge. People do not have to be a member to attend

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