

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, January 28, 2021.

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Jefferson County reported four new cases of COVID-19 yesterday, bringing the total to 290, all attributed to local exposure from family members. This reflects a steady increase, with 28 cases added in the last two weeks. Nineteen people are now awaiting test results. During the pandemic 22 county residents have been hospitalized, but there are no such cases at present, although 11 active cases are now in isolation.

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The Port Townsend and Chimacum School Districts, each with a leadership vacancy at the top, will see the results of a joint superintendent search next week, as the finalists for both jobs will meet the public in a series of online community forums. The community forums will take place from Monday through Thursday at 3pm.

Three candidates are up for both positions, while the fourth, who will appear on Tuesday, is exclusive to Port Townsend. The candidates' names are currently undisclosed, but will be announced the day prior to the forums on both districts' web and Facebook pages. The online meeting link will also be supplied at that time.

After the community meetings both school boards will continue to check references until making final offers to the candidates. If the same candidate is the first choice of both districts there could be some competition for that candidate, according to Port Townsend School spokesperson Sara Rubenstein.

This school year both districts have employed acting superintendents: Sandy Gessner-Crabtree is in Port Townsend while David Engle, who retired from the Port Townsend district in 2016, is at Chimacum.

There is no set schedule for the final announcement. Presumably, both of the new superintendents will be in place for the next school year.

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Actress Cloris Leachman died this week, after a long career in television and movies. As she was eulogized around the world, Port Townsend residents recalled her local connection. Leachman was the special guest at the 2009 Port Townsend Film Festival, where she made quite an impression. In a post on the festival's Facebook page yesterday Leachman was remembered as a "zany guest:" Delighting film patrons, singing karaoke at Sirens pub, and serenading people on the piano at a party.

Leachman returned to Port Townsend in 2013 to visit family, where she was observed in restaurants eating food off of other customer's plates. Those people were too shocked to react – or perhaps they were giving some latitude to a famous, yet zany actress.

In two articles published by the Peninsula Daily News during her visits she was more interested in discussing the cuteness of the old ferry or the importance of hugging than the fine points of her career.

As for the Film Festival, it is sponsoring the Women and Film Festival from April 23 to May 2, which includes 15 films and interviews, experienced virtually. The next iteration of the annual festival is planned for September 23 through October 3, and will most likely incorporate the streaming format.

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Even as vaccination appointments are at a halt due to a vaccine shortage, the county is looking for volunteers to help establish a mass community event, once the doses are available. Department of Emergency Management Director Willie Bence told commissioners this week of the need to recruit active licensed professionals with a wide range of training, including MDs, RNs and EMTs, along with those who are no longer active but possess the needed skills. If you meet the criteria and are available, please email [jcdem@co.jefferson.wa.us](mailto:jcdem@co.jefferson.wa.us).

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During this week's meeting of county elected officials and department directors, each department provided updates, priorities, and important legislation for 2021. Topics covered included cyber security, tax levy date changes for the junior taxing districts, new case management systems for the courts, homeless solutions, streamlining jury selection management, regionalization of public health, establishing an elected coroner in the county, solid waste contract for recycling, negotiations with the UFCW and Teamsters, the new x-ray machine in the jail, and a strong focus on technology in the treasurer's office. The meetings are held quarterly, and are designed to make sure that each department knows what the other is doing.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org).

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.