

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with with local news and commentary for Thursday, July 15, 2021.

This just in, in an announcement from the Northwest Maritime Center: This year's Wooden Boat Festival is expected to take place, in person, September 10 through 12, at Point Hudson Marina, barring a major surge in COVID-19 cases. The program echoes that of years past: Big boats, small boats, presentations, sale items, and kids building toy boats are among the activities that will be part of this year's gathering. The event provides something from everyone on the boat spectrum; boat owners, those in the market, craftspeople and woodworkers, music enthusiasts and curiosity seekers. And the music is open to the public. Past festivals have drawn over 30,000 people. We'll see if COVID-19 concerns puts a damper on this, or if people are champing at the bit to go look at the pretty boats. Tickets go on sale August 7 on the Northwest Maritime Center web site (<https://nwmaritime.org/>). Earlybird pricing and the chance to win prizes continues through August 21.

Jefferson County Commissioner Kate Dean returned from a National Association of Counties meeting in Washington DC held last week, finding that it was quite different from one she attended a few years back during the Trump administration. The convention was sponsored by the National Association of Counties, which represents some 5,000 local governments in all 50 states, operating as a nonpartisan entity that lobbies the Federal government about the needs of small municipalities and how relationships work on a local level. Dean said that it was gratifying to see people in a position of power who understood the issues facing local governments as three of the speakers - Vice President Kamala Harris, Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Marcia Fudge - all began their political careers on the county level and understand what it's like to be making critical decisions.

Those in the Biden administration have respect for local governance and its process, contrasting with the Trump administration, which held these values in low regard. The information is more sound. Dean said at a previous meeting presidential aide Kellyanne Conway was positioned as the "drug czar," but Dean felt she had a better understanding about opiod addiction than what Conway was presenting. Dean, who is a Democrat, acknowledged that her political leanings affect her judgement, but said that many of the issues facing county governments - specifically infrastructure - are not political. While the current infrastructure bill is tied up in congress, county officials of both parties recognize the Federal Government's obligation to maintain the country's roads and culverts. As an illustration, Dean said that a majority of attendees at last week's conference belong to the Republican party, and are frustrated with Congress' inability to promise the needed infrastructure report. Dean finds value in attending national conferences. The attendance cost to Jefferson County is minimal, she said, as much of the support comes from grant funding and coalitions with other counties.

The local maritime community is reeling from the death of Stan Cummings, the Northwest Maritime Center's former director who was essential in the construction of the agency's Port Townsend headquarters. Cummings, 76, died on Tuesday from injuries sustained in a July 5 bicycle accident. Jefferson County District 2 commissioner Heidi Eisenhour, who worked at the Maritime Center prior to her election to the board last year, said that Cummings was a steady and hardworking leader for the Northwest Maritime Center at a critical time who always had a twinkle in his eye and an inquiring mind. Eisenhour said the key to his contribution as the NWMC leader was that he came in at a critical time and kept the finish line in view until successful completion of construction. Her tenure on the organization's staff did not overlap with Cummings but he was a constant supporter and always a phone call away to answer questions, she said.

After water samples were found to contain elevated levels of the marine biotoxin that causes Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning, the Washington State Department of Health has closed Discovery Bay beaches to the harvesting of all shellfish species. Danger signs have been posted at public access points warning people not to consume shellfish from this area. Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning can cause gastrointestinal illness, which is caused by eating shellfish contaminated with toxins from the naturally occurring marine plankton Dinophysis. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. The onset of symptoms can range from one-half to four hours after consumption. If mild symptoms occur, call your health care provider and Jefferson County Public Health. For severe reactions call 911. Additional information regarding DSP can be found in the transcript of today's news at

www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Shellfish/RecreationalShellfish/Illnesses/Biotoxins/DiarrheticShellfishPoisoning.

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.

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.