

Script 4/8

You're listening to KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. This is Lily Haight WITH what's new in this week's Port Townsend Leader.

As of April 7th, there were 8,384 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Washington, with a total of 372 deaths in the state. Jefferson County now has 27 confirmed cases.

Governor Jay Inslee announced on April 6 all schools will be closed for the rest of the school year. Local schools were instructed on March 30th to begin providing continuous learning opportunities to students.

Local manufacturers in Port Townsend have begun making face shields and masks for healthcare workers. Gwendolyn Tracy, owner of Fine Yacht Interiors at Port Townsend's Boat Haven, partnered with Steve Sullivan to prototype their own face shield pattern. On Friday, with a group of other local volunteers, they made 150 masks and delivered them to Jefferson Healthcare.

Their designs have been made open-sourced, in the hopes that other manufacturers in town will begin making masks and face shields for healthcare workers and for individuals.

On April 3, the CDC and the state Department of Health recommended that all citizens wear cloth masks when in public. But Jefferson County's Public Health Officer Tom Locke said the masks should not be used to replace social distancing measures.

Not only that, but members of the public should wear cloth masks that are handmade, instead of purchasing medical masks which need to be saved for healthcare workers due to the global shortage in personal protective equipment.

Betsy Stowater, a 66-year-old Port Townsend resident said she had never felt as sick as she did when she came down with the coronavirus. In March, Stowater was the tenth patient to be diagnosed with coronavirus in Jefferson County. She described experiencing symptoms like fever, chills and aches, as well as extreme shortness of breath, exhaustion and the loss of taste and smell. But beyond the physical symptoms, she also experienced the fear and loneliness of contracting the virus and being in quarantine.

Now, she is on the road to recovery and hopes to encourage others to reach out and talk if they are diagnosed with coronavirus. Read Betsy's full story in this week's Leader.

While many blood drives have been canceled to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, blood banks are still in need of donations.

Three Jefferson County blood drives were canceled at the Elks Lodge, the Community Methodist Church and the Port Ludlow Community Church.

But potential donors are being asked to continue donating blood by appointment at permanent blood centers.

The closest Bloodworks NW center to Jefferson County is in Silverdale at 3230 NW Randall Way.

Appointments can be made through Bloodworks NW's website at bloodworksnw.org.

Donating blood is an activity that is exempt from the governor's "stay home, stay healthy" order and encouraged by the state.

60% of Bloodworks NW's donations usually came from mobile drives and, after a shortage this month, levels are returning closer to normal as more people are making appointments at blood centers.

The Leader is celebrating National Poetry Month by publishing poems by local writers in each weekly edition of the paper this April. Check out this week's poems on page 17 of the paper. If you want to submit a poem to be printed, email lhaight@ptleader.com.

For these stories and more, check out this week's edition of the Leader on newsstands AND ONLINE now. This is LEADER NEWS REPORTER Lily Haight, on KPTZ 91.9 FM.