

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* for June 3, 2020.

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The number of confirmed coronavirus cases remains at 31 c in Jefferson County after a new case was confirmed June 1st. As the county moved into Phase 2 of the governor's "Safe Start" reopening plan, Public Health Officer Tom Locke emphasized the importance of wearing cloth masks in public places. His masking directive requires all citizens to wear face coverings when they cannot maintain 6-foot physical distance, in both outdoor and indoor public spaces. The governor announced on May 29th that all employees who do not work alone in an office will be required to wear masks and that their employers must provide them with masks. In the United States, more than 100,000 people have died as the case count rises above 1.8 million. In Washington, there are now more than 21,000 confirmed cases and 1,124 deaths.

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Ripples of a national uprising were felt in Port Townsend as more than 100 people gathered Saturday, May 30 to protest against police brutality.

The protest was one of many across the country that occurred over the weekend in response to the police killing of George Floyd, a black man from Minneapolis.

At the protest in front of the Safeway on Sim's Way, more than 100 people gathered over a span of four hours holding signs that said, "Black Lives Matter," and "George Floyd."

Protesters stood spread out from one another, wearing masks and chanting as people driving by honked their car horns in support.

The event organizer, Sean Vinson, said he was surprised that so many people showed up for the protest. He had created a post on Facebook just the day before announcing the event.

Vinson grew up in Quilcene and now lives and works in Port Townsend. He said he has experienced racial discrimination here in his home and wanted his voice to be heard.

"There's been a lot of covert racism going on in this community for a long time," he said.

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Chimacum students are getting a little extra in the lunch bags delivered every day to bus stops near their homes. Along with a breakfast and lunch — and shelf-stable meals for the weekends — they get a loaf of locally grown, milled and baked bread, thanks to a \$4,120 grant from the Jefferson County Foundation for the Community Wellness Project's Neighbor Loaves program.

These days, a bus driver and two aides deliver almost 4,000 meals each week to anyone up to age 18 in the Chimacum and Port Townsend school districts. The idea of adding bread to the delivered-food mix was the brainchild of Crystie Kisler of Finnriver Farms and Shelby Smith of the Community Wellness Project.

The Washington State University's Bread Lab was recruited to find the perfect bread recipe — one that was healthy, but that kids would actually like.

Using whole wheat, grown and milled at Finnriver Farm, they developed a super squishy bread that was similar enough to white bread for kids.

Pan D'Amore bakery makes fifty of the loaves a day — 250 a week — which are taken to Chimacum schools and sent out with bus drivers on their routes to distribute with the lunch bags.

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The Fort Worden Public Development Authority is facing an existential financial threat as hospitality revenue across the U.S. plunges. The fort is projecting losses close to \$4 million through August, chief financial officer Diane Moody said.

Today the fort is operating on a skeleton crew of eight full-time equivalent employees, as opposed to a usual work force of 175 during the peak summer season.

Without a cash infusion the Fort Worden Public Development Authority (PDA) will be out of money and unable to continue operations by July, Moody said.

For now survival depends on the completion of the Maker's Square capital project, which is planned to resume construction this week and finish in about three months.

The current PDA business model is focused on three main components: overnight lodging for leisure and business travel, renting facilities for events like conferences or meetings, and food services.

PDA executive director Dave Robison said all three revenue streams came to a screeching halt in March alongside the rest of Port Townsend's tourist industry with non-essential travel and dine-in restaurant seating prohibited by the governor's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order.

A path forward first requires facing the immediate financial crisis and securing funds to keep the lights on. To help in this effort and plan the financial recovery, the PDA has signed a consultant contract with David Timmons, former Port Townsend city manager.

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The Leader has a new editor. Brian Kelly is a 30-year veteran of the news industry, and has lived in the Pacific Northwest since 1988. For seven years, Kelly was the editor of the Snoqualmie Valley Record in east King County. He then returned to the reporter ranks and worked for the Seattle Times, followed by the Everett Daily Herald, which was owned at that time by the Washington Post Company. He left the Everett Daily Herald in 2006 to become editor of the South Whidbey Record on Whidbey Island. After seven years with the Whidbey Record, he took the helm as editor of the Bainbridge Island Review.

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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.