

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, January 12, 2021.

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What is perhaps Port Townsend's longest running family owned business changed hands on January 1, but with no visible change to its operation expected, according to both the buyer and the seller. Don's Pharmacy on Water Street, which has operated under two generations of the Hoglund family, was purchased by Patrick O'Donnell, who owns several pharmacies along with a prescription business that services long term care facilities on the Olympic Peninsula.

Don Hoglund Junior, who has served as chief pharmacist and store manager for his entire professional career, told KPTZ there will be no staff or inventory changes for the time being. The name "Don's Pharmacy" will continue, and Hoglund will work as a part time pharmacist. Not having to juggle that duty with managing the store will make it a lot more enjoyable, he said. Hoglund said the new owners took over at the beginning of the year as it would provide a smooth transition for tax purposes. Don Hoglund Senior started the business in 1961. He died in 1977 and the pharmacy was operated by his widow until Don Junior graduated from pharmacy school. At that time, he took over the pharmacy which he has run for 37 years.

Hoglund said that O'Donnell approached him a few years ago about purchasing the business, but chose to make this move now because to would take a sizable investment to modernize the pharmacy and upgrade its compounding practice to meet new requirements. At 61, he didn't have the energy to start a process that would take several years for a return. Mindful of his family's community ties, he did not want to sell to a chain operation, and felt that O'Donnell, also an independent pharmacist, would continue that connection. Aside from his occasional shifts, Hoglund expects to spend time on personal and family issues.

With no official announcement, gossip rules with much of it centering around the soda fountain. A comment on the Port Townsend Community Facebook page asked whether the new owner of Don's Pharmacy is more than likely tearing out the soda fountain to expand the pharmacy?" and suggested a letter writing campaign to ask the new owner to reconsider. The post drew 40 comments, expressing sadness and outrage about the possible action.

In response, Hoglund said the fountain wasn't especially profitable, as he could not charge prices to adequately cover his costs. Without the fountain, he said, his overall profits have improved. Soda fountains inside pharmacies were once commonplace, and is an often cited example of the good old days. But there is the notion that soda, burgers and ice cream are not health foods, and including them in a pharmacy setting is counterintuitive.

O'Donnell was not able to provide details of the purchase to KPTZ by air time. In a short email he said that he wanted to finalize the sales process before making an official announcement and noted that "news sure travels fast in Port Townsend." "As far as the fountain goes, no decision has been made," he wrote. "Obviously with the COVID situation the way it is, it will remain closed for now."

In the meantime, people will continue tap-tap tapping away on their smartphones, whining about the good old days.

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As for our local COVID-17 numbers, four new cases and one death were reported over the weekend. The total is now 257 cases with forty people awaiting test results. That is likely to change, so for the absolute latest

numbers refer to the Jefferson County Department of Health Website or the Jefferson County Government Facebook page.

The county has reported 32 cases in 11 days. If this trend holds we'll see 90 cases in January, compared to 58 for all of December.

During his weekly briefing of the county commissioners Health Officer Dr. Tom Locke said that Jefferson Healthcare received a third Pfizer vaccine shipment on Friday, which allows them to start scheduling appointments for the 1-B priority group beginning on January 18. He said he's hopeful we'll get another shipment of the Pfizer vaccine this week which would then give us even more leeway but such allotments are unpredictable.

The plan calls for injecting 7,000 people in the next phase, beginning with those over age 85 and working down the list, according to the county's official Facebook page.

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These days people who receive a call from an unfamiliar number don't answer or even check who called. According to Dr. Locke we need to amend that behavior: Answer the phone when it rings, or check your voicemail. Contact tracers have been calling and missing people. They are not calling back and their caller ID does not indicate it is Jefferson County.

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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.