

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, March 11, 2021.

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As of this morning, Jefferson County has not reported a new case of COVID-19 for nine days. Thirty seven people are awaiting test results. Jefferson Healthcare's vaccination station is operating at full swing, in a flurry of activity in a parking lot borrowed from Manresa Castle. I passed through there the other day, and can report that the process is efficient and transparent. The volunteer staffs – a combination of medical staff and community members – whisked us through the line and answered every question before we thought to ask.

The hospital has also streamlined the process, allowing patients direct access to vaccine scheduling rather than requiring them to filter through the "When is it My Turn?" online utility (<https://jeffersonhealthcare.org/covid-19-vaccine/>). Posting the appointment link directly to the website will simplify the appointment process and allow eligible individuals to check back for an appointment at their convenience. According to its website, the hospital is implementing this change now because nearly all 65+ residents of our community have been notified and future eligibility tiers will be based on occupation and risk group and not strictly on age. Those calling in must still screen themselves through the state's Phase Finder utility.

The breakthrough has been the regular, predictable supply of vaccine. The hospital was able to work through the "When is it my turn?" notification list at a very rapid pace once vaccine was provided to our community on a consistent basis. Going forward, the appointment schedule will be updated on Friday afternoons and be based on vaccine availability. The hospital has already contacted everyone over 65 who signed up to receive availability notifications. Anyone who signed up and did not receive a notification is encouraged to go to the above website and schedule their vaccine appointment directly.

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The Port of Port Townsend has taken the big social networking leap with the establishment of a new Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Port-of-Port-Townsend-109197717548583>). The page, which went online this month, has three purposes, according to the Port's Executive Director Eron Berg: Making people aware of the fun stuff going on at the port, informing a wider local audience about port issues, and connecting with the tourist community.

And while many government pages have a designated social networking chief, Berg is managing the posts himself. He doesn't expect that it will take a lot of time. He's done this before, having run the Facebook page for his previous employer, the City of Sedro Wooley. Berg told KPTZ that people have a lot of affection for the port, expecting that some of the page's content will originate from the public. Right now the page has just 60 likes and 94 followers, but that will change once the word gets out.

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Derek Kilmer, who represents Jefferson County in congress, this week issued a statement in support of revitalized gun legislation. He recalled some forward motion in 2019, when the house passed the Bipartisan Background Checks Act and the Enhanced Background Checks Act, requiring background checks on firearms sales, closing dangerous loopholes like the Charleston loophole, and ensuring domestic abusers and other dangerous individuals cannot access guns. He said these bills – like so many others – died in the Senate due to partisan obstruction and special interest lobbying, but there is a chance to pass them in this congress as the Senate has changed leadership. These reforms are overdue especially since an overwhelming majority of Americans are already in favor of universal background checks, according to his statement. He encourages

everyone who supports this effort to add their name to an online petition posted on his congressional website ([https://act.myngp.com/Forms/6510116693150273024?midqs=pS-fl2QPSumS24Z3EBMwDA==&gpsid=50\\_115\\_17825&ms=em21\\_210310\\_GunVln\\_adv\\_gq\\_act\\_DK\\_ettx&rcode=em21\\_210310\\_GunVln\\_adv\\_gq\\_act\\_DK\\_ettx&utm\\_campaign=em21\\_210310\\_GunVln\\_adv\\_gq\\_act\\_DK\\_ettx&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=dkil](https://act.myngp.com/Forms/6510116693150273024?midqs=pS-fl2QPSumS24Z3EBMwDA==&gpsid=50_115_17825&ms=em21_210310_GunVln_adv_gq_act_DK_ettx&rcode=em21_210310_GunVln_adv_gq_act_DK_ettx&utm_campaign=em21_210310_GunVln_adv_gq_act_DK_ettx&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dkil)).

We might be lulled into a sense of security due to no recent school shootings. But there has been no recent school.. Once this pandemic is over, Kilmer wants our children and grownups to be excited about going to school, visiting the mall, attending church, and going out to other public places without fearing for their safety.

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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.