

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

This is an important historical date. On this day in 1972 five burglars were arrested at the Watergate Apartments in Washington DC, setting off a chain of political events that still resonates today. A few hours earlier and about ten miles to the northeast, I graduated from high school.

Jefferson County reported one new case of COVID-19 yesterday, a woman in her twenties. The total is now 440. Eleven cases are in isolation, with 34 test results pending. The added case is part of an influx of new cases this week. We've had 23 in June so far, compared with 15 in May at the same time of the month. These new numbers have changed our status, placing us in the moderate risk category. This "upgrade" occurs just when it seemed we were inching toward re-emergence. It's a reminder that we still need to take precautionary measures and wear masks in potentially dangerous situations. This isn't easy, as people have different interpretations of what "potentially dangerous" is.

The aftershocks from a Tuesday night explosion in Port Hadlock continue. A 46-year-old man, a long-time area resident, lost an arm after accidentally igniting a homemade explosive. According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, detectives found evidence of manufacturing explosives such as handmade pipe bombs and improvised explosive devices within the outbuilding. At least three different explosive devices were found, but it wasn't known as of Wednesday if they were charged or not. Detectives expect to forward charges to the Jefferson County prosecutor's office upon completing the investigation. Potential charges include manufacturing explosives and arson, with the arson charge stemming from that fact that someone else – the man's granddaughter – was injured as a result of the explosions, according to the paper. Jefferson Sheriff Joe Nole told KPTZ that the investigation continues and will not proceed until the victim – or the alleged perpetrator according to your point of view – can be interviewed. He is recovering at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle and was listed in critical condition Wednesday afternoon.

While the local media has reported the bare facts of the story, social networking has accused the man of being everything from a budding terrorist to a stupid redneck. Here's where we remind you to not pass judgement at least until the guy has a chance to speak for himself. And preliminary investigations have found that any terrorist connection or intention is unlikely. Perhaps he was just preparing for a bang-up Fourth of July, just two weeks from Sunday. Nole said his office will increase safety messaging in anticipation of the holidays, mindful that many people still like to make a big bang this time of year.

As for local fireworks, they are not allowed for sale or discharge within the Port Townsend city limits, and there are no plans for a large scale community fireworks display. The traditional fireworks was cancelled for the past two years due to COVID-19, and the 2019 display was a less exiting but way safer laser show. Fireworks are allowed in the county with safety restrictions that are, to some people, open to interpretation. Nevertheless, Tuesday's bomb violates these restrictions, regardless of that interpretation. State restrictions outline specific dates and times when it is legal to purchase or discharged from June 28 through July Fourth. For these times go to the Washington State Patrol web site (<https://www.wsp.wa.gov/fireworks/>). In past years the Chimacum

School Booster Club has operated several fireworks stands. We were unable to track down whether this is happening this year.

Jefferson County Commissioners met this morning to discuss a proposal to temporarily relocate a homeless encampment from the county fairgrounds to a site on Cape George Road. This is a complicated story with a lot of moving parts, with an in-depth report published in yesterday's Port Townsend *Leader*. In short, the eviction moratorium expires at the end of the month – in 13 days. Commissioner Greg Brotherton proposed the site, which he said is an imperfect yet immediate solution. Commissioners Heidi Eisenhour and Kate Dean feel more data is needed before making the move. Brotherton is expected to present this data at today's meeting, and some action may be taken.

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.