

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Ann Katzenbach with local news for March 4, 2022.

Jefferson County's indoor mask order will be lifted next Friday, March 11. But there are still new COVID-19 cases and you are urged to wear masks in public places. As of yesterday, the county reports 6 more cases of COVID-19, bringing the total to 3,088. The case rate has seen a steady decline from 1,068.65 at the end of January to 525 in mid February. The rate of infection remains three times higher in those who are unvaccinated under 65 and four times higher for older folk.

Plastics are bad for the planet, but Styrofoam is one of the worst because it can so easily break apart into tiny pieces that do not decompose. Jefferson County cannot recycle Styrofoam, but twice a month, you can deliver unwanted Styrofoam to Fort Worden where a volunteer group, the Port Townsend StyroCyclers will store it for monthly transport to Kent. The Styrofoam must be clean, white and rigid with all labels and tape removed. They also take packing peanuts of all colors and types. These must be delivered in well-secured separate bags. and protected from animals, insects, and moisture.

Lots of organizations are helping with this effort. Thanks to the Fort Worden PDA, the Styrofoam is packed and stored at the Putnam bunker, then delivered to Kent once a month, thanks to OlyCAP and Northwest Harvest Food Bank trucks. Take your clean Styrofoam to Putnam Bunker from 10am-noon on the second Monday and fourth Saturday of the month. The bunker is near Alexander's Loop. Please park in the middle of the street and not on the grass. The email contact is PTStyroCyclers@gmail.com and more information is on their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/PortTownsendStyrofoam/>). This is a big volunteer effort. Thanks to everyone involved!

On this past Wednesday afternoon, the Marine Science Center held a gathering to mark the successful completion of phase one of its long-range plan that will include having all its aquariums and offices and store at Flagship Landing, 1001 Water Street. The store is now open on the ground floor. Janine Boire, executive director, told the audience assembled outdoors by the harbor that when the Center asked donors to help with the down payment on the Flagship property, they raised a half a million dollars in 10 days! More donations will be needed for the next phase that bring the aquariums to Flagship Landing. This will take about five years. The museum at Fort Worden will not move and the aquariums on the pier will remain for the time being.

Many people in the city and county see the Marine Science Center as a synergistic organization. City manager John Mauro and county commissioner Kate Dean both spoke about a vision for the future. Dean asked, "How can we live here without harm. How can we manage the eco system for everyone?" The Marine Science Center that started out as a small-but-dynamic educational project under the leadership of Libby Palmer and Judy D'Amore today is headed up by a team of skillful planners and fund-raisers who are adding interest to Port Townsend's downtown while educating the public about the ecology of the marine environment.

And here's a good piece of marine news! The J Pod of local Orca whales has welcomed a new calf into the Southern Resident Orca family. The youngster is in good physical condition and the first calf to be born to the pod since 2020.

And that's it for today's local news. KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5pm Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. I'm Ann Katzenbach. Thanks for listening. Have a great weekend!