

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Ann Katzenbach with local news for today, April 29, 2022.

Jefferson County Public Health continues to show a high rate of COVID-19 infection. The risk of transmission is highest in public, indoor places. Currently one person is hospitalized. For more information go to <https://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/202/Public-Health>.

The ferry system announces that the Seattle-Bainbridge route recently reached 95% reliability and the run was moved from trial service to fully restored for a short time. However, the ferry Yakima was damaged by a dislodged anchor yesterday and the run has gone back on alternate service. This situation is temporary, but don't count on normal service quite yet. The Yakima damage has also affected the San Juan Island route and new reservations have been suspended until at least Sunday, with no-show fees waived. Existing reservation holders will be prioritized on a first-come, first-served basis.

On a positive note, 14 new terminal employees have completed orientation and training earlier this month and are now working throughout the system.

And in case you might have forgotten, today is the deadline for first property tax payments. Taxpayers should write their property tax account number on their check or money order. Cash should not be sent through the mail.

If you're out and about this weekend, you're likely to see some of your neighbors dressed as they might have been in 1975. And what a lot of clothes they did wear! The Victorian Festival is back and will take people on walks around town to historic landmarks on tours starting at 1pm on Saturday and Sunday. Members of Key City Public Theatre will take the part of 19th century townspeople, providing insights into what life was once like in this Victorian Seaport.

And in more downtown news, American Cruise Lines renews its 7-night cruises from Seattle starting tomorrow. Port Townsend is the sixth stop on their itinerary through the Puget Sound, so there will be a lot more people here next Thursday and for many Thursdays to come.

And another public health issue has come to the fore. Giardia is a tiny parasite that causes the diarrheal disease giardiasis. Giardia is found on surfaces or in soil, food, or water that has been contaminated with feces from infected people or animals. It is highly contagious and common in western Washington. In a recent letter to the *Leader*, Bonnie Masi, a local physical therapist who pays attention to her pets and to the state of the environment is very concerned about the increasing rate of giardia in the local deer herd. She writes, "I pick up deer droppings from my yard, and it appears the giardia is getting worse and worse each week. There is no mistaking the loose, slightly slimy, greenish blobs that smell very different – much more pungently awful than

usual.” When I spoke to her on the phone, she explained that she cleans her yard of deer droppings every day and she keeps track. She says that in 4 months, the infection rate, judging from what she finds in her yard, has gone from 35% to 85%. Giardia robs the body of nutrients and weakens the immune system. Many of the local deer look unhealthy and under nourished. Many have mange. Masi suspects that most of the fawns who are born this spring will be born with giardia.

The deer suffer along with other animals and we humans. Deer cannot go to the doctor. It doesn't take much calculating to see that pets or children who play in places where deer have grazed or bedded down are at more and more at risk. Masi has written to local officials. City manager, John Mauro, got back to her with the assurance that the deer problem would be addressed in 2023. Masi does not feel reassured. This is not a problem that will go away or stay static.

Anyone who suspects their pet might be sick should have it tested. Jennifer Britton at Hadlock Veterinary Clinic, says that pets can be treated successfully, the sooner the better. The disease is not usually fatal, but it's not pleasant for anyone involved.

And that's it for today's 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 and have a wonderful weekend.