

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Ann Katzenbach with local news and commentary for today, May 20, 2022.

The rate of COVID-19 infections in the county keeps rising. 25 new cases were reported yesterday and there are currently 211 active cases in isolation. The current rate is 774 per 100,000. If you have a positive test and symptoms, call Jefferson Healthcare's nurse consult line at 360-385-3094 before visiting the Emergency Room or the Express Clinic. You can order at-home covid tests at <https://sayyescovidhometest.org/>. You will receive 5 test kits in the mail in a day or two.

Last week, I experienced a COVID-19 exposure at a time and place when I should have been wearing a mask, but was not. I spent a long week waiting for symptoms or a positive test. It appears I was very lucky. This is stressful. We are still in a epidemic. Be smart, think of others, and please wear a mask inside public places.

Apparently Jefferson County is no longer a sleepy place where people don't need to lock their doors. Three weeks ago, a contractor who lives uptown locked his truck and went into his house. Later, his wife parked her car, leaving her keys and her purse in it. A thief, walking the streets, saw the purse, ransacked the car and found the key to the truck that was kept in the car. He stole the purse and the truck. He was then in possession of a credit card which he used the credit card at three businesses, charging over \$1,000 worth of merchandise. Then he got on the evening ferry and left town. The truck has not been found and the man has not been apprehended.

At the Green Eyeshade, his credit card with a woman's name, was questioned, but the thief said she was his mother and no more questions were asked. At Phoenix Rising, they also wondered about the card, but did nothing. And the staff at the Henery's Hardware store noticed him – a big, imposing man wearing a large mask.

The case is still under investigation so the police department cannot give many details, but the victims are informed and have shared information with KPTZ.

Port Townsend Chief of Police, Thomas Olson, responded to an inquiry from KPTZ. He said, "These types of thefts and car prowls are crimes of opportunity. This type of thief goes from town to town looking for open doors and unsecured items of value. This type of property crime is occurring all over the Olympic Peninsula and Puget Sound." He goes on to say, "Our department is not currently staffed at the level that we would like it to be, so it's the eyes and ears of our community that will stop or reduce these types of crime. My officers can't be everywhere but the community can. Lock cars. Secure any valuables in the trunk out of sight. A good prowler can break a window, take your property, and be out of the area in less than 10 seconds." Sergeant Jason Greenspan adds that night-time lighting is a deterrent to thieves. Surveillance cameras are inexpensive and a big help if a thief is apprehended.

According to the Port Townsend *Leader*, the City Council has voted unanimously to approve an ordinance that will make streateries a long-term addition to the landscape, but they will not be permitted downtown. There are several steps that applicants will have to take in order to get approval and their number will be limited, so the process will take time. Meanwhile, the council is allowing current outdoor dining set-ups to remain in place through 2022. Feedback from the community brought out critics of the streateries who say that they hinder other businesses, are unattractive, and eliminate parking places. But by 2023 when streateries are better regulated and confined to areas outside downtown, the situation may improve. Stay tuned.

And just a quick report on yesterday's pet parade. There were lots of small and large dogs, two extraordinary dogs with three legs, a few cats, 4 chickens, 2 ducks, two horses, few guinea pigs and rabbits, one pony, and great costumes. There were no goats or llamas,

And that's it for today's news. KPTZ- 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five pm, Monday through Friday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through news at KPTZ.org. Have a great Rhody weekend!