

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, July 19, 2022.

Yesterday was the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners Meeting and Dr. Allison Berry, Public Health Officer for Jefferson and Clallam Counties said again, as she said last week, that when it comes to BA-5, it seems to get by many who have had previous infections and even those who are fully vaccinated and boosted. She refers to this as "immune escape."

This particular strain is very much an airborne virus and so, indoors, unmasked, distancing of six feet is not enough. In fact, going inside to eat food is a great way to spread the virus and she says that if you're having a wedding or a party that the food should be consumed in an outdoor setting whenever possible. Dr. Berry said that we no longer need to be concerned about the food itself or surfaces as everyone was at the beginning of the pandemic, because it is an airborne virus. Hand washing is still a good idea for a number of reasons, but don't worry about take-out food, or things you bring home from the store. The folks in the kitchen at the restaurant working together without masks are likely to pass the virus to each other, but not to your food.

In Jefferson County the two-week case rate is 712 per hundred thousand, a slight increase over last week. No one is currently hospitalized, for a total of 138 hospitalizations. 138 new cases were added this week for a total of 5,035 cases. No deaths this week so 30 people have died due to COVID-19 in Jefferson County since the pandemic began (<https://www.clallam.net/Coronavirus/>).

In Clallam County the two-week case rate is 567 per hundred thousand. 259 new cases, so the total cases now stand at 14,243. Three people are currently hospitalized, and there have been 117 deaths in Clallam County since the pandemic began (<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/1429/COVID-19>).

A candidate for Jefferson County commissioner was injured last week when her motorcycle was hit by a driver in a Kia Sportage SUV on Highway 104 just south of Port Gamble. Marcia Kelbon, one of three candidates in the race for the District 3 Jefferson County Commissioner position, was injured in the collision and taken to St. Michael's Medical Center in Silverdale for treatment.

The crash was reported just after 3:30pm Tuesday, July 12 just west of Striebels Corner, a busy three-way intersection where traffic to and from the Kingston Ferry Terminal splits toward the Hood Canal or Bremerton. The Washington State Patrol said the wreck was due to the driver of the Kia failing to yield the right of way and driving into oncoming traffic. The Kia driver, a 37-year-old Poulsbo woman, will be charged with failure to yield, according to the Washington State Patrol. Kelbon was riding a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and was heading west before the collision. The Kia was going east, and after the driver struck Kelbon's Harley motorcycle, the Harley then hit a Mercedes that was also going east. Kelbon came down on the yellow line in the center of the highway, according to State Patrol.

The driver of the Mercedes, a 64-year-old Port Townsend man, was not hurt in the collision. The Kia driver was also uninjured. Kelbon, appearing the following night in a candidate forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Jefferson County, briefly recounted the wreck at the start of the online event. "I want to first start with an apology," Kelbon told viewers. "I was in a motorcycle accident yesterday with a partially collapsed lung and four broken ribs and a concussion," she added. "So if I'm a little off the mark tonight, I'm gonna try my best because I committed to do(ing) this." Kelbon participated in the 90-minute forum until the end.

The Candidate Forums from last week, which included candidates for Jefferson County Sheriff, State assembly positions, and the District 3 County Commissioner are all linked here: <https://kptz.org/2022/07/13/local-election-forums-2022-august-primary/>. They include full video which has been provided by the League of Women Voters of Jefferson County.

On Sunday, there was a hit-and-run accident between a minivan and a cyclist just outside town. Just after 9:30am a woman on a bicycle was hit by a minivan, a Green Ford Windstar that was eastbound on State Route 20 at Old Fort Townsend Road. The Washington State Patrol in their report said the pedal cyclist was riding in the same direction on the shoulder of State Route 20. The driver of the minivan drove onto the shoulder and struck the cyclist with the right side view mirror and the right side of the van. The cyclist was knocked into the ditch next to the highway.

The driver of the minivan left the scene and continued into Port Townsend. The driver and van were located in a parking lot by the Port Townsend Police. The driver, a 58-year-old woman from Port Townsend was alleged by police to be intoxicated and was charged with DUI, hit and run injury, driving with wheels off roadway, and no insurance. The hit and run victim, the bicyclist, a 48-year-old woman from Coupeville, was taken by ambulance to St. Michaels Medical Center in Silverdale. Nothing further has been reported about her condition.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five Monday through Thursday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.