

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

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It's been four months since we had any significant rainfall around here, and the forests, fields, lawns, gardens – even the resident deer – seem parched. Well, tomorrow late morning, according to the national weather service, rain will fall, with amounts on Friday night of between 1/4 and 1/2 inches. Rain will continue off and on for days to come with the possible exception of Sunday. The dust and smoke will wash away and we'll settle into a familiar pattern of wet weather with shorter daylight hours. Dig out your boots and rain gear. Summer's really over.

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And another indication that a new season is upon us will be evident in the next few days when registered voters receive mail-in ballots. Ballots must be postmarked or delivered to an official dropbox by 8pm on November 8, election day. You can register to vote until 8pm on Election Day, but after October 31, online registrations will no longer be accepted. After that you must do so in person at a county auditor's office.

There are federal, state and local positions to fill and voters in Jefferson County will vote on Proposition 1 – a vote to merge two fire districts, and Clallam County votes for its Director of Community Development. You should have received two voter's pamphlets, one for Washington State elections and the second for local contests. If you don't have copies, you can pick them up at your local library.

According the website Governing.com. the move to Washington's all-mail voting became final in 2011. Oregon was the first state to legalize it in 2000 and both states have a host of safeguards against fraud and are considered well-protected against foreign interference. The states stand as examples of how efficient and safe mail-in balloting can be.

On October 31 at noon and 5pm, tune in KPTZ's *Attention Please!* with host Steve Evans as he revisits a conversation he had in the run-up to the 2020 election with Jefferson County Auditor Rose Ann Carroll and Elections Coordinator Quinn Grewell about how the integrity of our mail-in elections in Washington State are assured.

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Along with ballots, property assessments are being sent out right about now. Many home owners will experience sticker shock as property values in the region have risen by 23-24% since 2021. However, assessors point out, that there are many factors that go into your tax bill and that taxes are will not rise in proportion to assessments. Some, they say, may even go down. Wouldn't that be a nice change?

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For those who enjoy their hummingbirds, it's interesting to note that naturalists have discovered that some female hummers have mutated their coloring to look like males. It's believed that this is a defense against being attacked because male hummingbirds don't get picked on so much. A study cited in the Royal Society's publication in Britain studied white-necked jacobin hummingbirds whose males have a flashy bright blue head, iridescent green back, and a white stomach and tail. They found a percentage of females have somehow developed this coloring and it does protect them. The study also noted that the males know the difference when mating season comes around.

If the Anna's hummingbird, most common in this part of the west coast, is making these adaptations, none of us amateur bird-watchers would notice, as most of us are just happy to see these tiny, speedy birds for a few seconds and assume that the bright glowing magenta and green guys are, in fact, the guys. Now, like so many common assumptions, we might have to think again.

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The Commanding Officer's Museum at Fort Worden is an historic home that is often overlooked by locals, but it's well worth a visit. It's open from 11-4 Thursday through Sunday. This weekend would be a good time to visit, since the museum closes for the season on October 30.

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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 reach us at [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). I'm Ann Katzenbach. Enjoy the rain – it's our best resource.