

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend Washington. I'm Ann Katzenbach with local news and commentary for today, November 3, 2022.

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5 days until Election Day. As of last night, 11,909 ballots have been returned to the County Auditor, which is 43.3% of the ballots out there. Of those ballots, 183 have been challenged. In Clallam County, 21,326 ballots have been returned, 37.3% of the ballots that are out there, and 315 have been challenged. You can check the status of your ballot on the State website at <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/research/ballot-return-statistics.aspx> - just click on the appropriate county.

Alan Lynn, the Clallam County Republican Party's election integrity committee chair, said there is a nonpartisan group of people across the county scheduled to watch election boxes, sometimes for hours at a time. They are looking for abnormal behavior. There is concern that these observations are somewhat intimidating, but there is no law against observation or photography from a distance. The observation of voters in Clallam County is mild compared to what is going on in Arizona's Maricopa County where people wearing masks and carrying guns have been moved back to 75 feet from voting places and authorities have required them not to shout or talk to voters.

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Jefferson County Superior Court Judge Keith Harper has resigned his post in the middle of his third term. He has served since 2012. According to the *Leader*, Harper says there are a number of reasons for his departure but was not specific. Harper was born and raised in Port Townsend, practiced law here for many years, and the list of his community service activities is long and impressive. Along with Richard Wojt who recently passed away, Harper has given much of his life to public service.

On Wednesday Harper handed down a ruling that will have long-ranging effects on the peninsula's forestry industry. He ruled against the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) who had authorized two timber sales in Jefferson County. Harper ruled in favor of two plaintiffs: the Center for Sustainable Economy (CSE) and Save the Olympic Peninsula (STOP) who claimed DNR had violated the state Environmental Policy Act by failing to consider the impacts of climate change from these sales. According to the *Peninsula Daily News*,

Ron Richards, chair of STOP, said, "This decision is going to force a big change in how DNR operates. They're going to have to think before they cut, which they haven't been doing at the county level. Logging is the number 1 emitter of carbon in Jefferson County."

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*National Geographic* and many other environmental publications have long concluded that almost every species in the ocean has been affected by plastic pollution and that it's harming important ecosystems. As plastic breaks down into ever-smaller pieces it also enters the marine food chain, being ingested in everything from whales to turtles to tiny plankton.

As I noted last week, here in Port Townsend, plastic pollution is being addressed by a new enterprise, PT Potential. Their mission is to develop and implement small-scale decentralized technologies that take responsibility for plastic right here in Jefferson County. The work was begun by young men and women who have already created what appears to be a strong base for this enterprise. They want to take recyclable plastic, shred it, and make useful products that the community can and use or sell. There is an excellent YouTube video about their work and their goals ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKAMdyLa\\_7k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKAMdyLa_7k)).

They've already invested their own money in this project but are launching a campaign to raise capital. If you watch their video you might be inspired to help out. It is a true community project.

<https://ptpotential.mystrikingly.com/> is where you can start to help: volunteer, donate, be inspired.

You can also help just by washing and saving your number 2, 4 and 5 plastic containers along with any plastic lids and to The Marine Science Center on the first Saturday of the month) between 2 and 4pm or to The Food Coop on the 3rd Saturday between 2 and 4.

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And that's it for today's news. 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5pm, Monday through Friday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. I'm Ann Katzenbach. Don't forget to vote.