

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM. I'm Jim Burke, with local news for Jefferson and Clallam counties for Tuesday, December 6, 2022.

Six months after announcing his plans to retire and sell the Rose Theatre, Rocky Friedman said Sunday he has found the ideal buyers of the movie house. George Marie and her partner Michael D'Alessandro of Port Townsend will take ownership in five weeks, according to an article in yesterday's *Peninsula Daily News*. Rocky Friedman, who has run the Rose for 30 years, said, "They are smart, they're sharp, they love movies, they're absolutely committed to Port Townsend. They're good people at heart. As patrons of the Rose, and as members ... I can absolutely assure you, you're going to be in wonderful hands." Voice quavering, he admitted he was nervous about breaking the news. Friedman chose to do it at a free screening Sunday for members of the Rose Theatre, of *Ball of Fire* starring Barbara Stanwyck and Gary Cooper.

The popcorn-munching patrons stopped to cheer and clap as Marie and D'Alessandro came forward. Marie was quoted in the article, saying, "I don't know what to say after that. Thank you so much, Rocky. I found out the night before the announcement was made last May, because one of the employees here told me that Rocky was selling the Rose. He kept it under his hat; kept it completely a secret.

"I said: 'Let's buy it.' And he [referring to her partner, Michael] laughed. And I said, 'No, I'm serious. Let's buy it.' We immediately knew that this is an absolute treasure in our community. This is the heart. The Rose is the heart of our community." Marie continued, assuring the audience that she and her family are "100 percent committed to this town, and 100 percent committed to stewarding the Rose so that it can last for generations to come."

George Marie and Michael D'Alessandro and their three children moved to Port Townsend from Portland, Oregon, eight years ago.

She said, "We're so honored to become part of this beautiful thing that Rocky has built, that [building owners] Phil Johnson and Sandy Johnson helped build, and the community has helped build."

Friedman told the audience on Sunday that he'd received about 30 offers from prospective buyers. The qualities he was seeking, he said, were QUOTE "bursting with energy and fresh ideas, and yet not on Medicare."

D'Alessandro, for his part, simply thanked the people in the theater for making an independent cinema possible on the North Olympic Peninsula.

In Jefferson County, the two-week COVID-19 case rate was 206 but is now 383 per 100,000 people – nearly doubled in one week. And the only difference was: Thanksgiving. One person is currently hospitalized. 106 new cases were added this week (more than double last week's for a total of 6,394 cases. And the Triple-Demic is here, all across the country. The CDC reports that flu hospitalizations are at a 10-year high and nearly all states are seeing high or very high flu activity ahead of the typical flu season peak of mid-January. RSV cases are peaking in some areas, especially the Southern US, and COVID-19 hospitalizations are on the rise among the elderly.

She didn't speak at the BOCC meeting yesterday, but if you've been listening, you might have heard Dr. Allison Berry in your head with the usual reminders: Get a flu shot and a COVID-19 bi-valent booster, wear a mask in public indoor settings, wash your hands often, and perhaps avoid large gatherings until the numbers of cases of all three things – flu, RSV and COVID-19 – drop again.

(Submit your Public Health questions to Dr. Allison Berry and Willie Bence by emailing contactus@kptz.org by Friday, December 16 at noon, to be answered the following Monday, December 19.
Order Home Covid tests from: <https://www.sayyescovidhometest.org>)

Last evening, during a regularly scheduled business meeting of the Port Townsend City Council, there was a public comment period, and perhaps a dozen people spoke in favor of allowing Kevin Mason's Racoon Lodge to continue to exist and stand as an example of the artistic sensibilities of the people of Port Townsend. There were some technical arguments for it as well as heartfelt pleas for its preservation, and more than one person expressed the absurdity of even discussing it while there are more important matters to discuss. Also, more than one citizen came back to the podium more than once, flouting the rules of the City Council limit on comments but still making some cogent points.

Afterward, City Manager John Mauro indicated again, as he has a few times in the past few weeks, that he hopes for an amicable solution. And several people expressed their own opinions that the added structure was sound as well, partly based on the fact that the entire thing was still intact after the catastrophic November wind storm, so there is no hazard to life or property.

So, my opinion – which is mine alone – and does not necessarily reflect the views of the management of KPTZ radio, is that the Racoon Lodge should be allowed to stand, and the city could have someone simply inspect that large stump every five years to make sure it's still strong enough to continue to hold up Kevin Mason's art piece. This inspection could be conducted by a City Arborist, which should be a job position in the City Government of Tree City, USA.

I just got word from Carrie Hite, Director of Parks and Recreation Strategy, that they have an arborist on contract to assist with any tree issues. So please disregard what I just said.

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