

In Port Townsend, this is Diane Urbani de la Paz with local news and commentary for Thursday, January 5, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM and KPTZ.org.

The Washington State Department of Commerce is extending the application deadline for Olympic Peninsula Small Business BOOST assistance. This is a program providing grants to businesses, startups, and nonprofits for free services: from legal to marketing to bookkeeping setup. The deadline to apply is now January 13, a week from Friday. The application details are found at the EDC Team Jefferson website (<https://www.edteamjefferson.org/>).

The Port Townsend Marine Science Center announces it will soon turn loose Sylvia, the giant pacific octopus. So the marine science center aquarium is opening this weekend, for fans to come visit the three-year-old creature. The aquarium, on the dock at Fort Worden State Park, will be open from noon until 5:00 Saturday and Sunday. Sylvia was collected in June 2020, in the marine science center's light trap at the fort pier, as a well-developed paralarvae, just starting to transition from floating in the water column to a benthic juvenile traveling across the sea floor. Now the octopus is a grownup, about ready to find another one with whom to mate. The exact timing of Sylvia's release back into the wild will depend on permits, weather, and other conditions. Meantime the Marine Science Center has been raising another giant pacific octopus since last July. After five months of growth, the youngster is about the size of a strawberry.

On the housing for humans front, the *Peninsula Daily News* reports the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners are supporting homeless services and affordable housing. This past Tuesday, commissioners Greg Brotherton, Heidi Eisenhour, and Kate Dean approved housing fund board recommendations, and sent \$778,500 to a variety of organizations. They include the Olympic Community Action Programs (OlyCAP), Habitat for Humanity of East Jefferson County, Bayside Housing and Services; the Community Build group that constructs tiny homes, and the OWL 360 youth program. According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, OlyCAP is receiving \$320,000 to keep managing the Caswell Brown Village off Mill Road, along with the shelter at the American Legion and the Haines Street Cottages.

OWL360 is preparing to open The Nest, a community coffee house in Uptown Port Townsend. The nonprofit operation, whose organizers plan to launch this month, is set to be a hangout space, with beverages, game nights, open mics, music, arts, and a media room. The space at 1119 Lawrence Street is near the Port Townsend Library. Information and videos about The Nest and its umbrella organization, OWL360, is found on Facebook with the search terms "The Nest Port Townsend". There's also a website (<https://www.owl360.org/>).

In other housing news, the 28th annual Gingerbread Contest, which brought about 20 elaborate, edible structures to the Port Townsend Library in December, has reached its final chapter. Judge Max Grover chose the winners, including the Jaynes family, including Syd and Ivan Jaynes, ages 9 and 6, for their gingerbread PT Whoville. It won the prize for most creative construction. Doctor Don Halquist and his superhero students at Salish Coast Elementary won the 12 and under category with the gingerbread Kindness Express. Zella Mack came out on top in the literary category with the Little March House from Little Women. The Housing for All prize went to Viki Sontag, Kate Shinhofen, and David Berrian for their entry titled Everyone Belongs Housing.

And the people's choice prize is bestowed upon the creation titled Farm Fresh, by Margie McDonald and Denise Winter.

KPTZ brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and five p.m., and Saturday at noon on 91.9 FM and KPTZ.org. We welcome input at news@kptz.org. I'm Diane Urbani de la Paz. Thanks for listening.