

For 91.9 FM KPTZ Port Townsend, I'm Diane Urbani de la Paz with news and commentary for January 31, 2023.

Jefferson County Public Health recorded 18 new cases of COVID-19 this past week, and the risk of COVID-19 transmission in public has lowered now to moderate level. That's based on a two-week case rate of 137 per 100,000 people. The public health staff, however, estimate that one in 10 COVID-19 cases in Jefferson County were actually reported to them last week. At that rate, the numbers could be as high as 180 new COVID-19 infections.

I've seen a bit more mask-wearing at the grocery store and on public transit, which does my heart good, not to mention the rest of my body. And the people who watch over our public health continue to recommend that everyone wear a well-fitting, high-quality mask in public indoor settings. Dr. Allison Berry, health officer for Jefferson and Clallam counties, takes questions from KPTZ listeners during her briefing this coming Monday, February 6, at 9:45 in the morning. That's when she's on the air. To send her a question about COVID-19 or another public health concern, email contactus@KPTZ.org. The deadline to do this is high noon on Friday. That's contactus@kptz.org.

In business news, the Take Five art gallery in the Flagship Building with the Port Townsend Marine Science Center, is changing its name. The gallery, which showcases artists from around town and around the world, will now be named after its owner, Mara Ringer. Mara's Gallery has an upstairs room where she wants to have Tuesday night gatherings for acoustic musicians, and even record nights where people bring their LPs and play them. The gallery opened almost two years ago – in the midst of COVID-19. Mara said, "I started on the fly, but I'm still here." She added that she is, "working out the kinks. And there's a lot of kinks." The art at Mara's Gallery includes paintings by locals such as Gary Peterson and Bill Nesmith, alongside South American artist Carlos Barria-Navarro. Mara also consigns fine art work. Mara's Gallery is open Thursday through Sunday in the Flagship Building, that's next to Tyler Street Plaza on Water Street.

The Nest, the community coffee house in uptown Port Townsend, is in full swing now after opening on January 20. Beverages, board games, and space for relaxing are what's happening there, in the former dental office at 1119 Lawrence Street – that's about a block from the Port Townsend Public Library and across the street. Kelli Parcher, executive director of OWL360, the organization that opened the Nest, says that everybody is welcome. The place has expanded its hours, to be open Wednesdays through Sundays, morning till evening, with coffee breaks. More about the Nest is found on its Facebook page, by using the search terms "The Nest Port Townsend." For those who don't use Facebook, there's a website, <https://www.owl360.org/> – that's o-w-l 360 dot org.

Washington's National Park Fund, which raises money for programs at Olympic, Mount Rainier, and North Cascades national parks, has bestowed \$1.1 million dollars to those three places. That amount sets a record, according to the *Seattle Times*. This money will fund more than three dozen projects in the state's three national parks. Olympic has received some \$386,000 dollars to fund programs including the development of a Native Conservation Corps program by youth members of the Quileute Tribe, the Terminus glacier memorial project, the Adventures in Your Big Backyard youth program, and elk monitoring in the Hoh Rain Forest.

Olympic National Park, which marks its 85th anniversary this year, spans 1,441 square miles, from the rainforests to the Pacific coast and up to those mountain peaks.

KPTZ brings you local news at noon and five Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. This is Diane Urbani de la Paz. Thanks for listening, and take care of yourself and each other.