

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, February 22, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

The meteorologists had said there was a low chance for snow, but they've been proven wrong. Snow descended on the North Olympic Peninsula last night and temperatures promise to get colder. Predictions drop as low as the high teens on both Thursday and Friday and there may be more snow!

In Port Townsend, OlyCAP operates an overnight shelter for adults in the lower levels of the American Legion Hall at 209-A Monroe Street, open from 4pm to 8am. And the Jefferson Interfaith Action Coalition operates a warming center from 8:30am to 12:30pm at the Marine Park Community Building in Pope Marine Park.

Sequim provides an overnight warming center at St. Luke's Episcopal Church at 525 North Fifth Avenue, with soup, warm drinks, and blankets. The warming center is not a full shelter since it does not meet fire code for beds.

In Port Angeles, Serenity House offers a 24-hour warming shelter when temperatures drop below 32 degrees Fahrenheit (as they will in the next couple of days). The adult shelter is located at 2321 West 18th Street with cots, meals, showers, and laundry service.

Please, stay warm.

In a David versus Goliath challenge, the Port Townsend School District may take on big tech in the courts. The *PT Leader* reported that Seattle Public Schools sued the tech giants behind TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat this past January, claiming the social media companies are substantially contributing to the mental health crisis among America's youth by targeting young people, designing algorithms to maximize kids' use of the apps, putting profits over the mental health of children, and more. They were joined by the Kent School District.

The Port Townsend School District's board of directors met February 2, discussing whether or not to join the lawsuit. This is not the first time the school district would take on corporate giants. In 2022, the Port Townsend School District joined a lawsuit against the e-cigarette companies Juul and Altria. The result was a settlement with thousands of lawsuits for reportedly \$1.2 billion.

Superintendent Linda Rosenbury said during the February meeting, "There's research to show that social media companies' actions related to social media platforms are contributing to the mental health crisis, and excessive and problematic use of social media is harmful to children's mental, behavioral, and emotional health." Franz Law Group, the firm that had previously litigated in the lawsuit against Juul and Altria, will advocate for the school districts, but prospects on success appear dim. There is lack of legal precedent and that may hurt their chances. However, Rosenbury said, "There's no financial risk to the district, but there will be approximately 25 hours of staff time required." A decision by the district's board of directors to join or not join the suit will be made in one of the next two meetings, which occur the first and third Thursday of each month.

Thanks to DNA testing, the identity behind a woman's foot discovered at the mouth of the Elwa River in December 2021 has been solved. Jerilyn Lorraine Smith 68, of Sequim, had been missing since January 7, 2018.

It was thought she died by jumping off the Elwha River Road Bridge and into the Elwha River west of Port Angeles. Speaking to the *Peninsula Daily News*, Brian King, Clallam County Sheriff, said that Smith had a history of depression and suicidal thoughts. She served as the Sequim-Dungeness Chamber of Commerce's office administrator for 17 years, was the 2009 Sequim Irrigation Festival grand marshal, and remembered for her buoyant personality.

The DNA testing was conducted by Othram, a Texas-based forensics company. One of the surviving family members voluntarily provided a DNA sample which was sent to Orthram Labs for comparison. Shortly hereafter, the Labs confirmed the the foot belonged to Smith. Family said Smith grew up on a farm loving animals and helping around the farm and that some of her hobbies through her life included watching old movies, playing board games, drawing, writing, and playing pickle ball.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Casey Dolan and I thank you for listening.