

This is 91.9 FM KPTZ Port Townsend, I'm Diane Urbani de la Paz with news and commentary for Thursday, the 9th of March.

On Wednesday which was International Women's Day, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell delivered a speech on the Senate floor in support of the Women's Health Protection Act. This bill, which would codify the standard set by Roe v. Wade and guarantee the right to access an abortion, was reintroduced by Cantwell and 46 of her colleagues Wednesday afternoon. In her speech, Cantwell, a Democrat, shared stories from across Washington state. The senator said, "Abortion clinics in Washington are facing rising caseloads and rising costs. Planned Parenthood in Spokane reported that in January, their clinic saw a 75% increase in the number of Idaho patients who were traveling across the line to get abortions. Physicians are rightly concerned that they could be arrested or sued for providing reproductive care to patients from abortion-restrictive states, and pregnant women have it worst of all – if they go to a reproductive clinic for whatever reason, they can face a gauntlet of protestors... We even have had health care officials tell us that Washingtonians trying to get access to [abortion medication] have had to go to four different pharmacies, only to find it was not available." Cantwell added that, "Employers are starting to avoid these abortion-restrictive states. I recently spoke to the co-founder of a successful aviation company who is building a new facility. He told me point blank he won't consider locating in a state that doesn't provide reproductive freedom."

In happier news, the first Clallam County poet laureate has been named: Jaiden Dokken, a local writer, cidermaker, and artist. Dokken, who uses the pronouns they and them, will read a selection of their poems at the poet laureate inauguration event next month. Dokken grew up in Sequim and has returned to live there as an adult. In their poetry, they write about experiences unique to the North Olympic Peninsula. Dokken's writing has been published in journals and magazines, and they're an editor and reader for Perennial Press. The inauguration of the new poet laureate will be an in-person and livestreamed Zoom event at 6:00 on Tuesday evening, the 18th of April, at the Port Angeles Main Library. Everyone is invited to this party, cohosted by the North Olympic Library System.

Dokken will pursue the goals of the Clallam County Poet Laureate program to bring communities together, through poetry. Dokken said, "I'm most eager to draw in the people who are absolutely convinced they do not like poetry. I know many folks that haven't ever been exposed to a branch of poetry that resonates with them. But just like other art forms poetry is not bound by a singular style. So if sonnets are not your thing, no worries! And for those of you who are already in love or at least in like with poetry, I truly look forward to growing this community together." To find out more, visit the North Olympic Library System website (<https://www.nols.org/poet/>).

Center Valley Animal Rescue in Quilcene has announced it will be open again to the public on weekends. The center is on 32 acres of property first purchased for the organization nearly two decades ago. Now a variety of animals live there, and the crew cares for adoptable pets as well as wildlife needing rehabilitation and release. Center Valley Animal Rescue will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 11am until 3:00 so visitors are invited to take a guided tour. The place is located at 11900 Center Road, about 40 minutes from downtown Port Townsend. Visitors must first check in at the office inside the main building. Details about animal adoption, and ways to support the nonprofit operation are found at <https://centervalleyanimalrescue.org/>. There will be a new volunteer orientation this very Saturday at noon, and the website has information about that as well (<https://centervalleyanimalrescue.org/event/new-volunteer-orientation/>).

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.