

May the Fourth be with you! Hello again. This is Derek Firenze with your local news and commentary for Thursday, May 4, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

On Monday, while celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month, the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution in support of decriminalizing entheogens – defined as the full spectrum of psychedelic plants, fungi, and natural materials (including but not limited to psilocybin mushrooms, ayahuasca, cacti containing mescaline, and iboga).

Thanks to the ongoing efforts of the Port Townsend Psychedelic Society the resolution was passed through with full support. The group previously worked to pass resolutions in favor of entheogens by the Jefferson County Board of Health in July of 2021 as well as the Port Townsend City Council in December of 2021. During meetings held on the matter, Commissioner Heidi Eisenhour noted that “we can be leaders on this horizon in not only in our county community but in the state by taking a stand for something that's right.” Commissioner Kate Dean added, “We're at the very beginning of a major shift in consciousness that the good work of folks here and others have been working on for years, have been fertilizing.”

Not only does the resolution request that the investigation, arrest, and prosecution of adults engaging in entheogen-related activities, when ingested out of view of the local public, should be among Jefferson County's lowest law enforcement priorities, but also requests that no county resources are used to assist in the enforcement of laws imposing criminal penalties for the safe planting, cultivating, purchasing, transporting, distributing, possessing, or using entheogens by adults when no dangerous activity is present. In addition, the resolution states support for decriminalization at the state and federal level with commissioners committing to add support for full decriminalization of entheogens to the agenda for the 2024 state legislative session.

Speaking of which, got grass? No, not *that* kind. Lawn owners ought to know that it's No Mow May! According to Bee City USA, lawns cover 40 million acres – or 2% – of land in the US, making them the single largest irrigated crop we grow. They also note that grass-only lawns lack floral resources and nesting sites for bees and are often treated with pesticides that harm bees and other invertebrates. During the month of May, the group encourages lawn owners to re-think the American lawn, taking a variety of forms like reducing mowing frequency or area mown, or even permanently converting lawn to a more diverse and natural landscape. Some of the side benefits of mowing less, year-round include: saving water while increasing drought tolerance as taller grass tends to have deeper roots and less water evaporates from the soil; reducing air and noise pollution from gas-powered lawn equipment; and saving time and money which can be used to invest in more native plants.

While adjusting mowing habits is a start, Bee City USA also encourages lawn-owners to protect the over 3,600 species of bees in the US by planting a variety of native plants that bloom consistently throughout the growing season, reducing or eliminating pesticides use, and spreading the word by educating friends, neighbors, and elected officials about pollinator conservation. For more information on how to best befriend bees, go to <https://beecityusa.org/no-mow-may/>.

Port Townsend has a new Indian restaurant – the only of its kind in town – and it's in a pretty unexpected place. Local woman Jag Nagra recently began serving homemade lunch specials at the Mobile Gas Station Market & Deli on the corner of Rainier Street and West Sims Way. I was skeptical about the gas station gastronomy until

I had a taste of their black chana daal. The black chickpeas, previously unheard of to me, were cooked with a textural nuance and an earthy heat that delighted my spicy Italiano al dente appetite. And it was served alongside a carboloard of rice and homemade naan – a buttery, garlicky flatbread.

Nagra was once the head chef in a university cafeteria and she combines that experience with her Indian heritage to create vegetarian and meat specials that she makes fresh daily. The market also offers various burritos with Indian twists that are easier to eat on the go, but Nagra's specials are worth finding somewhere to sit down with. Those curries, daals, and more are served up Monday through Friday from 11am to 6pm.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. This is Derek Firenze. Thanks for listening.