

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with your local news and commentary for Friday, December 29, 2023.

From *The PT Leader*: As of yesterday, December 28, law enforcement was asking residents or anyone passing through the area of Old Gardiner Road, near the bridge, to report anything that seemed suspicious, as they attempted to locate a suspect of multiple crimes, 40-year-old Sequim resident David R. Burgess, who had fled across both Clallam and Jefferson counties. Burgess was taken into custody by deputies in the 1900 block of Palo Alto Road at about 8pm last night. After a brief foot pursuit, he surrendered to deputies after being given warnings of intended Taser deployment if he did not comply.

According to public statements issued by the Clallam County Sheriff's Office, deputies were dispatched on December 23 to respond to a report of an assault in Sequim, and as a result of their investigation, they issued probable cause for his arrest for assault in the second degree, due to domestic violence and for felony harassment, including threats to kill. Although Clallam County Sheriff's deputies were unable to locate Burgess at that time after he'd fled the scene, a subsequent report of an arson in Sequim on December 27 led them to receive witness statements that Burgess had set that house on fire, while it was occupied, along with setting fire to a vehicle outside the residence, before he fled again into the woods. The occupant of the house escaped the residence unharmed, but first responders found the house fully engulfed in flames. The Clallam County and Jefferson County sheriffs' offices had jointly attempted to apprehend Burgess, utilizing K-9 trackers and heat-sensing drone technology, but they couldn't locate him yesterday until 8pm when they issued a statement that they had apprehended him.

Also from *The PT Leader*: Artists and musicians started "First Night" to celebrate New Year's Eve in Boston in December of 1975, and in the 21st century, Port Townsend was finally treated to "First Night" festivities, with the Jefferson County Historical Society conducting the all-ages occasion for more than a decade, after which The Production Alliance incorporated it into its season of events in 2021. According to Danny Milholland, director of operations for The Production Alliance, the original "First Night" in Boston sought to de-emphasize alcohol, in favor of focusing on live, interactive, and multicultural performances instead. But what excites him most about the extravaganza is that it represents an opportunity to combine longstanding and beloved local traditions with untested new activities.

By the way, this reporter actually participated in a First Night in Boston about 1985. I was one of the signs of the zodiac. Milholland said, "Every year, we do the Lantern Parade, which is at 7pm on Madison Street this year. The First Night Circus is at 3pm and 5pm at the American Legion Hall... This year, we're also adding an actual fire pit to Madison Street, to see how that affects the feel and the aesthetic of the proceedings. We're also consolidating a majority of our revels to Madison Street, to concentrate that community energy."

Although Madison Street, between Water and Washington Streets, will host a dense enough collection of "First Night" events to require closing it to vehicle traffic from 9am to 10pm. there will still be enough festivities to fill not only the American Legion Hall (on 209 Monroe Street) but also the Jefferson County Museum of Art and History (on 540 Water Street) and the Key City Public Theatre (on 419 Washington Street) from 3pm to 8pm this Sunday, December 31. Milholland appreciates seeing all sorts of disparate activities brought together under the umbrella of "First Night," to the point that he even touts the diversity of the occasion's local food vendors, including High Country Doughnuts, Java Gypsy, Vegetari, Rufina Garay's Food Love, and what he described as the "highly anticipated Cape Cleare Salmon Cart."

And, Monday January 1 there will be a New Years COLD PLUNGE at Fort Worden Beach between the pier for the Marine Science Center and the campground kitchen. Karyn Stillwell will lead the plunge with the warm up beforehand at 11am. This reporter has been known to do this and will be there (right after the Jim B. Show!)

A programming note: yhe Board of County Commissioners Public Health Report will be on Tuesday, January 2 at 9:45am. Dr. Allison Berry and possibly Director of Emergency Management Willie Bence will report to the Commissioners and our radio audience.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.