

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with local news and commentary for Friday, June 7, 2024.

The City of Port Townsend has sent out an update on that water main that broke under the Mountain View campus last week. The 2.5-inch pipe failed under approximately 100 PSI of pressure, which began flooding the boiler room and adjacent electrical panel. Staff responded immediately, but by the time the valve was shut off, the water had already done significant damage. Power and water have since been restored to the campus, and the various organizations there are back in operation, but pool operations have been suspended indefinitely as the pool boiler is being fixed and the pool cannot be heated. According to the YMCA, the pool, showers, and locker rooms will remain closed, but the front desk and gymnasium are now open and youth enrichment programs are back in session. The city currently estimates that repairs will come to around \$100,000.

The *Peninsula Daily News* reports that a troop of sea lions has begun hanging out at Point Hudson. Unfortunately, sea lions can cause significant damage to or even sink float docks, which are not constructed to support the concentrated loads created when three or four 700-pound sea lions lounge on them. They can block people from mooring their vessels, their poop can create a smelly slipping hazard and their barking is loud and incessant.

In addition, though sea lions generally leave humans alone, they have been known to attack if threatened, frightened, or provoked – which is particularly worrisome given this weekend's Race to Alaska. The Northwest Maritime's event will attract thousands of people to Port Townsend's waterfront and potentially create unwelcome human-sea lion encounters.

So, the Port and Northwest Maritime have already attempted a sea lion diversion, tying an inflatable orca to a floating dock in the hope that the sea lions would think it was a predator and be scared away. Unfortunately, the ruse didn't work: apparently sea lions are not particularly compliant when it comes to removing them from places they want to be.

The port and Northwest Maritime are now contemplating their next move. Among the approved non-lethal methods to discourage sea lions are installing low-voltage electrified mats that shock but don't harm them; buzzing the sea lions with low-flying drones; shooting them with water hoses, water guns like Super Soakers, and sling shots using nonlethal projectiles like rubber bullets; and setting off firecrackers and bird bangers. The port and Northwest Maritime have reached out to the Port Townsend Marine Science Center for advice about how to get the sea lions off the float. But in the meantime, if you're heading to the docks this weekend to watch the Race, be warned: these guys not only have very large teeth but they also carry diseases that can transfer to humans, so don't squeeze up close and try to get a selfie. Remember: if the sea lions notice you, you're too close.

This weekend not only marks the beginning of the Race to Alaska, but on Saturday, Port Townsend Pride will be celebrating from 11am until 4pm at Pope Marine Park downtown and on Water Street. In addition, THE RUCKUS, the celebratory send-off for Race To Alaska sailors, will also be taking place in Pope Marine Park at 2pm.

Sadly, the *Kitsap Sun* reports that Poulsbo's efforts to support Pride Month were vandalized last weekend for the second year in a row. Last year, rainbow flags were stolen from Front Street in Poulsbo, and then this year, sometime before 4am on Saturday, five banners hung the previous night on poles through the city's downtown district were slashed, according to Poulsbo's Police Chief Ron Harding. The city is currently investigating the vandalism, and the police have surveillance footage of the suspect. The crime is being investigated as a felony, due to the value of the damaged banners. Harding asked the community to share any information they have regarding the vandalism with the Poulsbo Police Department. He added that the vandalism could potentially be charged as a hate crime.

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 Diane Walker. Thank you for listening.