

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke with local news and commentary for Tuesday, July 16, 2024.

A wildfire that burned two acres outside Port Angeles on Saturday has been contained. Your weekly reminder that the entire state as well as Clallam and Jefferson Counties have now set the wildfire danger level to HIGH. Check with your local jurisdiction for a list of outdoor burning restrictions and please use common sense.

From the *PT Leader*: As Zinnia Blatchley wrapped up her freshman year at Port Townsend High School, she also learned that she'd placed third in the Washington State High School Photography Contest, under the category of "animals" for her snapshot of her cat, Ray, peeking his head out from a pile of leaves. Blatchley said, "My dad calls him 'Sugar Ray Leonard, because he's always hitting people.'"

Seattle-based Jones Soda company also selected her award-winning photo to appear on their soda bottle labels. Blatchley also won a \$100 prize in the state high school photography contest, which is sponsored by Kenmore Camera. David Egeler, a career and technical education media teacher for PTHS, noted that just 10 of the photos to receive awards in the contest are selected to appear on Jones Soda bottles. While neither Egeler nor Blatchley know when Ray's photo will grace local grocery shelves, she's already received a six-pack with her cat's face on the bottles from Jones Soda.

PTHS students have been entering the Kenmore Camera-sponsored contest since well before Egeler began teaching at the school five years ago – possibly as far back as the early 2000s – but Blatchley is the first PTHS student photographer to place as a finalist. You can see Zinnia's picture and read the article in the *PT Leader* here: <https://www.ptleader.com/stories/pths-freshmans-photo-to-appear-on-jones-soda-bottles,173077?>

From the *Peninsula Daily News*: The Spruce Goose draws pilots from around the Northwest and nationwide for its great pie and menu, and locals love it as well for its beautiful setting next to the airport's runway, the view of the mountains, and for a sense of community since the 1960s. For 25 years, owners Chris Cray and Andrea Raymor raised the Spruce Goose's reputation for great food and friendly atmosphere. When they decided to sell the cafe last year, they wanted to make sure it was in the care of people who were capable and trustworthy. They didn't have to look far.

On July 1, waitresses Kathryn McKenney, her sister Vanessa McKenney, and cook Ashley Owen added businesswoman to their titles when they became the owners of the Spruce Goose. All three grew up in Port Townsend. Cray and Raymor said the McKenneys and Owen know the customers by name, the menu inside and out, and embody a positive attitude that – along with the food – keeps people coming back. The McKenneys and Owen understood they are not simply taking over a business, being trusted with stewarding a beloved local institution.

Kathryn and Vanessa McKenney began waitressing at the Spruce Goose in 2020. Their roles will expand to include management tasks like payroll, monitoring inventory and ordering supplies and overseeing daily operations. Owen, who was hired as a dishwasher in October 2013 and quickly advanced to cook, said she was happy to remain in charge of the small, two-person kitchen. As the mom of two school-age children, Owen said balancing motherhood and work is still "a work in progress." Owen makes the Spruce Goose's famous pies

from a recipe that originated with Ila Bishop, who owned the cafe in the 1970s. Bishop passed it down to her daughter, Jean Sather, who then gave it to Cray and Raymor when they purchased the cafe in 1999.

Loyal patrons needn't worry about big changes, however, because none are planned. The menu will remain the same. The model planes hanging from the ceiling will stay. Some of the tweaks they had been considering, Vanessa McKinney said, came from customers. Among them are being open on Mondays – the Spruce Goose, 310 Airport Road, is currently open Wednesday through Saturday from 8am to 4pm – extending the closing time by an hour, and allowing dogs on the outside deck. And they had already made their first hire: the McKenneys' mother, Erin Hubbard, who will be working for her daughters as a waitress. "So far, so good," Hubbard said.

Raymor and Cray have not completely left the Spruce Goose: they are mentoring the young women on how to run a business and providing hands-on assistance when needed. Letting go of the Spruce Goose was challenging for Cray and Raymor, as well. They said family obligations prompted their decision to sell the business. Cray said, "It's bittersweet, it's like my family here." They are not second-guessing their decision, however. Raymor said, "We know it's in the right hands, and it stayed in the community – that was important to us."

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