

Hello, this is Nhatt Nichols with your news and commentary for Wednesday, July 31, 2024 brought to you by the Jefferson County *Beacon* for KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington

In our first story, Quimper Sound is downsizing to uptown. Owner James Schultz took over the business in 2018, when it was located in the “Under Town,” part of downtown Port Townsend. Shortly thereafter, Schultz moved the store up onto Water Street. Now, he’s being forced to elevate again to Uptown in the previous location of Bear Root Apothecary across the street from Aldrich’s Market. Leaving the thriving tourist traffic of Water Street is not an easy choice. The building that houses Quimper Sound’s Water Street location recently sold, and the new owners have made it difficult to stay. Schultz said, “The offer that I received was one with a dramatic increase in monthly rent and only a one-year extension offer, which in a retail business with inventory is ridiculous.”

The new location comes with additional drawbacks. The shop will be dramatically smaller, moving from 2,250 square feet down to 1,400. This required Schultz to reduce inventory by 50% with a blowout sale in the record department. Additionally, he had to let go of two people from part-time positions and reduce the hours to three days a week for in-store shopping. Now that he’s losing the foot traffic of downtown, the record store will only be open Friday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm. The guitar side of the business will be by appointment Monday through Wednesday, giving Schultz time to process online orders for his custom guitars.

One of the benefits of the new location is a backroom where those guitars will be displayed in a humidity-controlled environment next to an 8x8 modular vocal booth. Another upside to Uptown is the culture shift those few blocks bring. Instead of the fast pace of tourism, Schultz sees the more laid-back local vibe as a good thing. Schultz said he felt more at ease there than in the tourist district of downtown, and that he looks forward to some sanity. To welcome the neighborhood to the new location, Schultz is having a soft-open on Friday, August 2, starting at 11am.

In our next story, Quilcene Skatepark Project is stoked to receive top ranking. Quilcene has been targeted to receive up to \$900,000 to build a new skatepark. Local skater and Catkin Coffee Roastery & Cafe owner Brady MacDonald has been working with a team of friends for over a year to develop the idea, with a big victory in sight. A new funding program in Washington State called the Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities (COAF) grant program provides money to buy land and develop or renovate outdoor athletic facilities serving youth and local communities.

The Quilcene skate park project is ranked #2 in the western region to receive these funds. MacDonald said, “With our ranking, we were led to believe that we can be pretty optimistic about the project getting funded, but we won’t know until October.” As the COAF program only began in 2024, MacDonald said there is no clear answer as to whether funds will be spread out to everyone who made it through the initial application acceptance or given entirely to the first person in line with whatever’s left over to the second. Of the almost \$2 million available in this region for the first year of the grant program, the only project ranked higher is asking for the full \$1.2 million allowed. If that project is fully funded, it would leave the Quilcene skate park somewhat short.

According to MacDonald, the earliest they could begin building, assuming that they are funded, is in the summer of 2025. MacDonald began attending the Quilcene and Brinnon Connections meetings in 2022. At those meetings, he participated in a funding discussion about the county’s COVID relief money, which it had received from the American Rescue Plan Act. The skaters quickly received 150 signatures from students at the

local school, encouraging those funds to go towards a new skatepark. While they initially asked for a much larger amount, the project received \$20,000 to start the design process. They plan to add elements of timber and wood, incorporating details like artful sculptural elements.

MacDonald said, “We talked about representing the forest and the rivers to the tidelands, having elements that represent the special geography of this landscape and why it’s been such an important place for humans for thousands of years. It will be fun to get into making this really Quilcene and speak to this place specifically.”

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