

Hello again! This is Derek Firenze with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, October 2, 2024 beamed in from the *Jefferson County Beacon* for KPTZ 91.9FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

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On September 22, 150 people rallied in front of the gates of Naval Magazine Indian Island in solidarity with Palestine and against arms transfers to Israel. Located just ten miles southeast of downtown Port Townsend, Indian Island is the largest weapons depot on the West Coast, housing a deep-water ammunition pier, providing munitions to US Navy vessels leaving the Pacific Northwest headed to the Middle East. People representing Clallam, King, Kitsap, and Jefferson Counties demonstrated their opposition to this complicity in the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the recent wave of bombings in Lebanon with speakers, signs, and actions.

Zumi Lane, a Lummi tribal member, opened the event with a traditional song, speaking about the connections between colonialism, genocide, and ecocide, both on Turtle Island – the Native name for North America – and in Palestine. Describing the 70,000 tons of bombs dropped on the Gaza Strip – the most densely populated area on Earth – Lane stated, “we are all standing here today because this is the worst thing we have ever witnessed, let alone funded with our tax dollars.”

Aria Fani, a professor at the University of Washington, spoke about his late friend, 26-year-old Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, who was killed by an Israeli sniper earlier this month. Fani asked that her death continue animating the fight, saying, “This is not just a fight for Palestinians; this is a fight for all that gives life, for all that breathes.”

While most remained in the public park, a group of 15 people walked to the main gates, leaving baby shoes and signs as a symbol of solidarity with the Palestinian children affected by the violence. No arrests were made, but the event has drawn further attention to the role of Indian Island in supplying weapons to the Middle East.

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In other news, after a hiatus, the Jefferson Clemente Course has returned, partnering with OWL360, to offer accredited humanities classes to young adults facing economic hardship. The Clemente Course, part of a national program, offers six-month classes in art, philosophy, literature, history, and critical thinking, all accredited by Bard College. They also cover the costs involved, even including childcare, textbooks, and transportation, to remove barriers to education. John Pierce, chair of the Clemente board, emphasized the importance of the programs in providing a humanities education to people who can otherwise not afford it. He also noted that the Jefferson Clemente Course is the only rural one in the country.

This year’s program theme is ‘Threshold’ and will provide classes in art, philosophy, literature, art history, American history, critical thinking, and writing, exploring the theme of crossing through a threshold. Dana Wier, the new academic director for the program, said they chose the theme as it relates to both unique personal experiences, while also being broad enough to be universally understood.

Generations of students have benefited from the course, including city council member Amy Howard. Howard shared her experience, stating, “The Clemente course offered me a transformative educational experience at a crucial time in my life, as I felt lost and uncertain about my potential. Having recently been homeless and struggling with substance use, I was apprehensive about my ability to engage with learning. However, the course’s engaging subjects and supportive environment helped me rediscover my capacity for critical thought and valid expression of my ideas.”

Though focused on people aged 18-30, anyone who feels they would benefit from the Clemente Course is encouraged to apply. You can request an application by visiting The Nest in Uptown Port Townsend, or by

emailing [jeffcoclemente@gmail.com](mailto:jeffcoclemente@gmail.com). There will also be an information session at The Nest on October 10 from 5 to 7:30pm where people can learn about all of the resources available through OWL360, including the Clemente Course.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5 Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturdays, partnering on Wednesday to bring you stories from [jeffcobeacon.com](http://jeffcobeacon.com). You can submit ideas to the Beacon through [info@jeffcobeacon.com](mailto:info@jeffcobeacon.com). This is Derek Firenze. Thanks for listening.