

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke with local news and commentary for Thursday, October 10, 2024.

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Robert Wittenburg, Community Risk Manager for East Jefferson Fire Rescue (EJFR) sent out a press release: EJFR is pleased to announce recent state audits resulted in clean reports from the Washington State Auditor. The audits include critical assessments of accountability and financial recordkeeping by the district from January 2021 through December 2023. These audits are required of all publicly funded agencies in the state to protect the interests of the taxpaying public.

EJFR provides firefighting and emergency medical response to the residents of East Jefferson County, responding to more than 6,800 calls for service each year. The district is funded through two property tax levies that were approved by voters in 2022 with overwhelming public support. Fire Chief Bret Black said, "As a publicly funded organization, we are beholden to properly steward public funds. The state auditor's clean opinions validate that we continue to operate efficiently and transparently while providing the best service possible within our fiscal limitations."

The State Auditor praised EJFR staffs' positive attitude and assistance during the audit, noting that the dedication to communication made the audit run smoothly. In fact, the district has not received any negative findings in state audits over the last 20 years, which demonstrates the district's dedication to maintaining proper internal controls over its operations. (The audit reports are available for public review at <https://www.sao.wa.gov/>.)

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From the *Peninsula Daily News* this morning: A 66-year-old pedestrian, Lawrence Scherer, of Mukilteo, was critically injured during a hit-and-run near Sequim Tuesday night, according to a press release from Clallam County Fire District 3. Around 11:05pm an off-duty tow truck driver called 911 and reported that Scherer and another man were fighting on the roadway in the westbound lanes of Highway 101, near Simdars Road. Shortly after, Scherer, who was wearing dark clothes, was hit by a white truck while he was hunched over to pick up a clamping shovel, the [Sequim Gazette reported](#).

The vehicle was traveling at "a high rate of speed" and continued westbound after striking Scherer. The Sequim Police Department and Clallam County Fire District 3 (CCFD3) Battalion Chief Elliot Jones were the first on scene. Officers performed CPR until firefighters and paramedics arrived and stabilized Scherer. CCFD3 then coordinated with Life Flight to have Scherer airlifted to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. As of yesterday morning, Scherer's condition was unknown. Law enforcement has not seen the man who reportedly was fighting with Scherer, and they believe he got into a vehicle and drove off. Nothing else is known about the person driving the truck that hit Scherer.

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In the *Washington State Standard* there is an article about Ghost guns: U.S. Supreme Court justices Tuesday grappled with whether the Biden administration exceeded its authority when it set regulations for kits that can be assembled into untraceable firearms. A majority of justices seemed somewhat skeptical the rule was an overreach. In *Garland v. VanDerStok*, the nine justices were tasked with determining whether a rule issued by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives in 2022 overstepped in expanding the definition of "firearms" to include "ghost guns" under a federal firearms law.

Washington has its own ghost gun restrictions that are among the most comprehensive in the U.S. Attorney General Bob Ferguson joined Attorneys General from about 20 other states filing a brief in the Supreme Court case, registering support for the federal regulations, characterizing the rules as a “commonsense” step. (You can read more here: <https://washingtonstatestandard.com/2024/10/08/u-s-supreme-court-consider-biden-administration-regulation-of-ghost-guns/?emci=645dcf66-ee85-ef11-8474-6045bda8aae9&emdi=d44cdb8e-4c86-ef11-8474-6045bda8aae9&ceid=553235.>)

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And also in the *Washington State Standard* and other news outlets: a University of Washington professor received the Nobel Prize in chemistry for his work designing new proteins. David Baker, a professor of biochemistry at the University of Washington School of Medicine, received the prize for computational protein design, along with Demis Hassabis and John Jumper of Google DeepMind, in England, whose work with artificial intelligence helps predict the shape of proteins. Their work could help accelerate the creation of new medicines, expand options to break down plastic and other pollutants, or open opportunities to build new materials altogether. (what could possibly go wrong?)

(You can read more here: <https://washingtonstatestandard.com/2024/10/09/uw-professor-wins-nobel-prize-in-chemistry/?emci=989df00d-9f86-ef11-8474-6045bda8aae9&emdi=8239931e-1487-ef11-8474-6045bda8aae9&ceid=553235.>)

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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](mailto:news@kptz.org). This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.