

This is KPTZ 91.9FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Nigel O'Shea bringing you news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* for Wednesday, February 5, 2025.

The Central Committee of the Jefferson County Democrats has selected three nominees for the Board of County Commissioners to consider to replace Sheriff Joe Nole: Brett Anglin, Art Frank, and Andy Pernsteiner. Nole's appointed replacement will serve until an election is held in November 2025. The winner of that race will serve out the remainder of the current term. The position will then be on the ballot again in 2026.

Though there has been a 7% decrease in American farms between 2017 and 2022, there has also been a steady increase in sustainable and community gardening in America. While the decrease in farms is alarming for our food systems, Food Bank Growers (FBG) are part of the silver lining, donating 100% of the food they grow and glean to food banks, schools, senior centers, volunteers, and more. Port Townsend-based, they have gardens at every school in Port Townsend, offer all-age-friendly regenerative workshops, and are currently bolstering their Ecological Committee. FBG adopted its first garden in 2012 at Port Townsend Mountain View Commons; they now have fourteen gardens. Belle said, "Pause for a moment. Feel the air you breathe and observe the world around you. The plants exchanging oxygen with you and the water sustaining your body remind you that you belong to this Earth. Across generations, humans have nurtured the land, and now it's our turn. By growing gardens in schools, we can cultivate not only food but also stronger, healthier, and more resilient future generations."

Each school garden has an FBG garden manager and a school-appointed garden co-coordinator who tends and teaches the children. The FBG offers action and resources to the student participants, providing important resources to combat suicide, the second leading cause of death amongst 10 to 14 year-olds according to the Nation Institute of Mental Health. With massive physical, emotional, and academic benefits to gardening, these school gardens are raising generations of land stewards along the crops, 30% of which are donated to the school's cafeteria. The Food Bank Growers website is full of resources, volunteer opportunities, donations, and maps of all the FBG gardens. More information can be found at <https://www.foodbankgrowers.org/>.

Reporting by Angela Downs

Flyers and zines proliferate around Jefferson County with a warning of "Dollar Store Danger". Quimper Resiliency Network (QRN), an activist organization publishing the materials, was founded in response to construction on the future Dollar Tree located in Port Hadlock. Construction on the Dollar Tree is slated to be completed sometime in the middle of February, according to Josh Gass, the general contractor working on the project. Hannah Welch, one of QRN's founding members, said, "That is not the solution for what any community really needs. There was a Dollar Store in town when I was a kid and it didn't last, so I'm hopeful maybe this one won't last. But in the current state, it doesn't feel like enough just to have hope."

The zine published by QRN takes aim at various issues surrounding dollar stores including lead poisoning, resource extraction, low wages, and more. Much of its facts and statistics come from a report from 2022 by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) entitled "The Dollar Store Invasion". One of the core arguments against dollar stores is the extraction of resources from local communities. "A dollar store contributes only half to a third of the economic contributions of a local business," QRN writes. They cite how studies consistently show

that for every dollar spent at a local business, 45 to 60 cents remains in the community, while chain stores contribute only 14 to 30 cents. Still, everyone agrees on the desperate demand for more local, affordable goods.

Welch said, “There is a specific need in this place to have access to affordable products. “Letting these corporate powers that have no accountability to the community be the ones to provide that is not the way to move forward.” Instead, QRN wants to encourage more creative solutions like a pop-up free store and an online community resource inventory to educate people on the abundance that’s already available locally. Welch said, “This place that I love and care about so deeply is on the precipice of change, and it’s either going to become a little more radical and start creating systems that are of the people, for the people, or it’s going to be subsumed into these structures that are failing.” If you’d like to voice your own concerns about the incoming Dollar Tree there is a survey link included in the written *Beacon* article, or email QuimperResiliencyNetwork@gmail.com.

Reporting by Derek Firenze

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5 Tuesday through Thursday, partnering on Wednesday to bring you stories from the *Jefferson County Beacon*. This is Nigel O’Shea. Thanks for listening.