

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, December 31, 2025.

I'm Nigel O'Shea and usually you would hear me relaying news from the most recent edition of the Jefferson County *Beacon*. But today it's my privilege to deliver a New Year's message. First and foremost, I want to thank everyone who has supported the *Beacon* in 2025. To our readers and those who have given financially this last year, thank you for supporting our simple promise: to bring honest local news to our community for free, and to have that news be written by local reporters and contributors who are paid a living wage for their work.

To our community partner KPTZ, thank you for supporting our shared mission of community media, and the idea that the health and wellbeing of our friends and neighbors is reliant on the conveyance of true information delivered in a timely fashion.

News is ephemeral, which means it changes; news gets corrected when new information comes to light. While the *Beacon* may not always get it right, we will always correct the record to reflect the truth. This is a foundation of trust we want to build. This is perhaps the trust that has been lost in our current world of embattled information systems. With social media becoming the common delivery system for news, true, provable information can now fall into the same value category as misinformation or even lies and disinformation. To our largest social media companies this is all just the raw ore of content: truth and lies, equally capable of being melded and refined into something of value; that value, plainly, being the revenue generated by views and clicks on the internet.

In this context, we are all in danger of falling victim to the comfort of our own biases. The truth often has an uncomfortable sting, and with the speed and ferocity of communication, that sting can be compounded by thousands of painful data points, making us witness to a world in distress. More likely than not, we all in some way seek out information we want to hear versus the unvarnished truth, if merely for the fact that the constant drum of negative news can make it difficult to want to get out of bed in the morning.

That's why at the *Beacon* we foster a different approach. The idea of solutions journalism is not new, but it might be unfamiliar to most. It is always an easy perception, and a genuinely verifiable one, that the world is a complex web of seemingly insurmountable problems. What might not be so evident is that for so many of those issues there are multitudes of people thinking about solutions and working to mitigate and even cure the wounds of the present and the past.

What "solutions journalism" means is moving beyond just reporting a world on fire and seeking the perspectives of those working towards solutions and change. Our final edition of the *Beacon* this year is to celebrate local change makers, and congratulations to one and all. These are local people who, despite all the odds, make work out of building something better. When you start to observe the world from the perspective of people who endeavor to help, or to teach, or whose expertise centers around specific problems that most of us don't have the time to think about, you start to imagine a world of possibility beyond our peril; you start to see that doom isn't inevitable, that, as the late great Joe Strummer is credited with saying, "The future is unwritten."

Our masthead, *The Beacon*, is an obvious symbol: a bright light, to guide us in the dark. The idea of solutions journalism is to shine a light on people making a difference, where usually the focus is on the adverse events that brought them to their purpose in the first place. As Fred Rogers famously said, during times of disaster his mother would encourage him to “look for the helpers.” When we look towards the people who heal and help, we can endeavor to envision a world of helping and healing.

This doesn't mean giving up on our ability for discernment and skepticism. My 2026 advice for you as a listener, reader and human of the earth is to first and foremost: observe the world around you! The biggest danger of consuming information in a silo is that you may eschew the truth for the sake of ease; you might lean on your ideological or political beliefs instead of responding to your actual material reality. Look around you! Listen! Talk to the people in your life. Believe your senses. And perhaps take a careful second glance at your strongest emotions.

I'm Nigel O'Shea for the Jefferson County *Beacon* wishing you all a healthy and happy 2026. You're listening to KPTZ 91.9 FM Port Townsend.