

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 4, 2026.

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On a gray but dry Tuesday, January 28, 2026, a small yet significant ceremony marked a new chapter for Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park. The reopening of the park's public restroom facility, closed for two decades, served as the backdrop for Mayor Amy Howard's first public address, framing the event as a symbol of community renewal and forward-looking stewardship. She extended sincere thanks to city staff, acknowledging that while the council is the public face of such projects, they do not perform the actual work. Howard stated, "The fact that this work happened is a testament to our community looking to better times in the future."

City Manager John Mauro followed. He said, "We have the best team. We really, really do." Broadening the definition to include parks caretaker Ed Mead, the Parks Board, the city council, and every community member in attendance, he recognized the collective effort required to reach this point.

Reflecting on recent challenges, Mauro described a strategic "holding pattern" post-COVID, a period marked by a return to basics, crediting Facilities and Parks Manager Michael Todd for his pivotal role. Taking the microphone, Community Services Director Melody Sky Weaver thanked Mauro for his belief in the team. She opened with an amended quote from Cicero. Weaver said, "If you have a garden, a park, a library, you have everything you need . . . but I think you forgot one really fundamentally important thing: you need bathrooms."

The ceremony culminated with a poignant contribution from Port Townsend Poet Laureate Rufina Garay. For ten minutes, Garay captivated the audience's attention with a story and an original poem composed for the occasion, delving into the deep historical and cultural significance of the Kah Tai Lagoon site, grounding the practical achievement of the day in the enduring story of the land itself.

Kah Tai Lagoon, originally a large, tidal salt marsh estuary, has a history marked by profound transformation and community-led preservation. For millennia, local indigenous people used it as a crucial route to carry canoes between the lagoon and North Beach to avoid dangerous currents. In 1930, the construction of Sims Way first blocked its mouth. The most dramatic change came in the 1960s when the Port of Port Townsend, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, filled over half the lagoon with dredge spoils from boat haven expansion, significantly altering its ecosystem. The event, blending governance, practicality, history, and art, underscored a community-wide commitment to honoring its past while thoughtfully building its future.

It all began in Seattle, where she was raised by a show-business father and a reserved Norwegian mom. When Lindy West was a baby, the West family bought a log cabin in the woods of Jefferson County. West said in an interview from that very cabin, "This is what we did for vacation. It's a meaningful place to me." Forty years after her folks found the cabin, she and her husband became full-time residents here.

West's move coincided with her creation of a show about her own journey from childhood dreams to adult disillusionment and, eventually, joy. The show, titled "Every Castle, Ranked," uses castles as a jumping-off point on a romp through West's life. At 7pm this Friday, February 6, West will bring it to Field Arts & Events Hall in Port Angeles. West, like many American children, swooned for castles and princes. She remembers thinking, "I don't want to read about real stuff. I want to read about magic stuff. There's enough of real life in real life."

West, at age 40-something, found ways out of disillusionment and into joy on her own terms. And that, she said, is what "Every Castle, Ranked" is about. West said, "It's just a really funny comedy show. We're going to have a lot of fun." Her dad, Paul West, always encouraged her to become a performer. He was a jazz piano player in

the 1950s and 60s and went into writing and performing advertising jingles in the 70s and 80s. His young daughter was a shy kid, though, but she also had a big desire to create things and make them hilarious.

In the past few years, West has worked her way into herself, into her own story. Her father didn't live to see her do "Every Castle, Ranked," but she talks about him in her show. She is thankful for his influence, which included his reading "Lord of the Rings" to her when she was little. And thus West is now crafting her happily ever after. Tickets are at <https://fieldhallevvents.org/>.

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