

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with your local news and commentary for Thursday, June 18, 2026.

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The Jefferson County commissioners have unanimously approved an ordinance to ban fireworks in the county, although the ban will not go into effect until next year. While the current code in the county only bans fireworks when the fire danger is high, the new ordinance will ban fireworks across the county at all times. It also introduces an escalating fine structure for violations of the policy and bans the manufacture, possession, sale, storage, and transportation of fireworks. Under the new ordinance, only permitted public displays of fireworks will be allowed.

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With state fire assistance already mobilized to fight wildfires currently burning in five different counties across the state, and with the Olympic Basin snowpack already melted out, Department of Ecology officials have granted a request from Port Townsend Public Works staff to temporarily increase the level of the Lords Lake reservoir this month. Part of the city's Olympic Gravity Water System, Lords Lake is a raw water storage reservoir that holds approximately 500 million gallons of water and is tapped into by the city when stream flows are low, which typically happens in late summer. According to the *Leader*, Public Works Director Steve King says the move to increase the level is intended to provide additional storage capacity during the summer months when river flows decline. While normally that need occurs in late summer, the low snowpack may mean the city needs to draw down the lake in mid to early July.

But no worries, says King: the City won't run out of water. If the Lords Lake Reservoir were to run dry, the Port Townsend Paper Mill would be required to reduce or temporarily cease operations. In that event, the city would begin drawing water from the City Lake Reservoir, which serves as a backup for residents and businesses.

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East Jefferson Fire Rescue has announced that Battalion Chief Jason MacDonald has been appointed EJFR's new deputy chief. Born and raised in Port Townsend, MacDonald's father was a volunteer fireman, and MacDonald became a fire cadet while in Port Townsend High School in 1996. After graduating from Western Washington U. in 2003, he was hired as a career firefighter by Jefferson County, was promoted to lieutenant, and became battalion chief in 2021. As deputy chief, he hopes to prioritize ongoing training not just for firefighters, EMTs and paramedics, but also for lieutenants, captains and battalion chiefs.

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Two Port Townsend High School students and one Chimacum High School student won this year's League of Women Voters of Jefferson County High School Essay Contest. The question for this year was "How as voters can we ensure that democracy is safe and citizens feel secure?"

First-place winner Livia Lee wrote "Democracy Doesn't End at the Ballot Box" and is a twelfth grader Port Townsend High School. Second-place winner Amber Anzick is an eleventh grader at Port Townsend High School and she wrote "A Modest Colony's Take on Democracy. And Finley Jackson, an eleventh grader at Chimacum High School, won third place with "The Importance of Local Elections."

All essays are available to read in this week's issue of the *Leader* and on the League of Women Voters Jefferson County website (<https://lwvwa.org/Jefferson>).

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Fans of Port Townsend's Chetzemoka Park will be excited to learn the park has several construction projects kicking off this summer. Over the summer the Kitchen Shelter will be rebuilt, there will be maintenance work done on the Gazebo, the existing restroom will be remodeled and updated, and a new swing set with a universal design will be added, all in time for an Open House at the park on July 9. To learn more about the projects, visit <https://cityofpt.us/parksrec/page/chetzemoka-park-projects>.

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And finally, Port Townsend's Rakers Car Club will hold their 24th annual Car Show this Saturday at Jefferson County Memorial Field in Port Townsend. Vehicle registration will take place inside the gate from 7am to 9:30am, and the show will open to the public at 9:30am. Awards will be presented at 2:30pm, and Dash Plaques will be offered to the first 150 entrants.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon and 5pm. You can contact us at [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). I'm Diane Walker. Thank you for listening and have a great Father's Day weekend..