

# Salish Current

Independent, fact-based news for Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit counties

News from the *Salish Current* for the week ending April 3, 2020:

## [Life in the time of COVID-19: community voices](#)



Shoppers wearing face masks are met at the door of the Bellingham Costco store with a list of out-of-stock items — markers of the “new normal” during the coronavirus pandemic, at least for the moment. (Amy Nelson photo © 2020)

*Salish Current* readers and writers share their stories about how the COVID-19 virus is affecting them in this time of the evolving “new normal” — virtual coffees and happy hours, worries about the vitality of the arts and cultural sphere, isolation and social distancing rules, and more. [Read more.](#)

**Update:** [Plastic bags, clean water: local legislators vote on wide-ranging issues in 2020](#)

All four representatives to the state House from the 40th and 42nd legislative districts voted in every roll-call vote during the past session, according to the Missed Votes Report issued by [WashingtonVotes.org](#) at the session's end. Debra Lekanoff (D-Bow) and Alex Ramel (D-Bellingham) from the 40th district and Sharon Shewmake (D-Bellingham) and Luanne Van Werven (R-Lynden) from the 42nd each voted in all 617 roll-call votes. On the Senate side, the 42nd district's Doug Ericksen (R-Ferndale) missed a quarter (143) and Liz Lovelett (D-Anacortes) of the 40th district missed 7 of 569 roll-call votes.

**Update:** [Water concerns spark funding request for groundwater studies for San Juans, Guemes](#)

As of adjournment of the 2020 state legislative session on March 12, Sen. Liz Lovelett's office reported that funding for groundwater studies on Guemes Island and in San Juan County were approved and included in the capital budget.

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## News from around the region...

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Coronavirus news coverage in the [Bellingham Herald](#) and the [Lynden Tribune](#) can be accessed online without a subscription.

### Health & Safety

[Whatcom report on coronavirus response shows hospital status, more cases projected](#)

Whatcom Unified Command reported Wednesday that confirmed cases of the new coronavirus will climb to well over 200 infections in Whatcom County by Saturday. (Bellingham Herald)

[A Mount Vernon choir went ahead with rehearsal. Now dozens have coronavirus and 2 are dead.](#)

A March 10 choir practice turned into an example of contagion, infection and death. (LA Times)

### [Two New Confirmed Positive Test Results Reported in San Juan County](#)

San Juan County Health and Community Services staff have been notified of a second positive COVID-19 test result on San Juan Island and a third on Orcas Island. This brings the total number of cases in San Juan County to six. (San Juan County, April 1, 2020)

### [County leaders urge residents to restrict off-island travel](#)

As Washington State approaches the anticipated peak of COVID-19 medical surge cases, San Juan County urges everyone to take more aggressive precautions to protect their families and neighbors when coming to the islands from the mainland. (Journal of the San Juan Islands) ([San Juan County residents have been weighing health risks and tourism benefits](#)) as well. (Salish Current)

### Education

#### [Ferndale School Board online meeting disrupted – rescheduled](#)

The March 31 online meeting on Zoom Video was cancelled after "the meeting was overtaken by loud music and obscenities," according to District officials. (My Ferndale News)

#### [Annual salmon project cut short](#)

The state Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group abandoned the program at area schools. (Skagit Valley Herald)

### Government

#### [Property taxes not due until June 1](#)

First-half Whatcom County property taxes paid by individual and commercial taxpayers who pay the taxes themselves are not due until June 1. This does not apply to mortgage service companies that have already collected property taxes and are holding them in escrow. (Lynden Tribune)

#### [County to stick with April 30 property tax deadline](#)

Skagit County won't be postponing the April 30 property tax deadline, but will offer relief to those who need it. (Skagit Valley Herald)

#### [Bellingham suspends plastic shopping bag ban over coronavirus fears](#)

Bellingham's plastic grocery bag ban is suspended for one year, or until the proclamation of local emergency issued earlier this month is revoked. (Bellingham Herald)

### [Two Van Werven bills signed into law](#)

Legislation that will keep drunk drivers off the road and let community and technical college students know whether “low-cost” materials are available for their college courses were signed into law by Gov. Jay Inslee March 25. (Lynden Tribune)

### [San Juan County Council remote public comment](#)

How and when to sign up to make public comment in a time of virus. (Journal of the San Juan Islands)

### [City acquisition of Fidalgo Water System could take place by end of year](#)

The water system that serves residents in Dewey Beach, Gibraltar, Fidalgo Heights, Summit Park and Highway 20/Deception Road will be acquired by the city of Anacortes if approved by the Anacortes City Council and the Skagit Public Utility District board of commissioners. (Anacortes American)

## Nature

### [Proposed B.C. container terminal would threaten endangered orcas: review panel](#)

A federally appointed panel has found the development of a new shipping container terminal south of Vancouver at Roberts Bank in Delta would result in "significant adverse" effects on endangered southern resident killer whales. (Canadian Press)

### [Lawsuit filed to protect wolverines](#)

A suit filed in Montana asks that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and U.S. Secretary of the Department of the Interior David Bernhardt issue a final decision on whether to list the wolverine as threatened or endangered. (Skagit Valley Herald)

## Business

### [As coronavirus wilts the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, a farm adapts](#)

Faced with massive financial loss, Tulip Town makes a play for virtual strolling. Agueda Pacheco Flores reports. (Crosscut)

### [Marathon Petroleum donates masks to county](#)

The company donated 28,600 N95 masks last Friday to Skagit County. (Skagit Valley Herald)

### [On-Board Marine Services plans to expand Blaine shipyard](#)

The company, a one-stop shop servicing recreational and commercial vessels, plans to double the size of its shipyard and construct a new shop and office building on the site. (Northern Light)

### [Alaska ferry delayed again](#)

It won't be mid-April but until at least mid-May before an Alaska ferry returns to Bellingham. (Bellingham Herald)

### Community

#### [The Wild: NW tribes' legacy, and power, of telling a good story](#)

Lisa Wilson shares a "creation story" about how her people -- the Lummi -- came to be. Chris Morgan presents. (KUOW)

#### [A Modified Bellingham Farmers Market Reopens on April 11](#)

A modified market opens from 10 am to 3 pm after discussion between Whatcom County Health Department and local partners. (Whatcom Talk)

#### [Annual Canoe Journey postponed because of COVID-19](#)

The 28th annual Intertribal Canoe Journey scheduled for late summer has been postponed by this year's host, the Snuneymuxw First Nation. (Anacortes American)

#### [Bellingham Business Journal closing](#)

The April edition of *The Bellingham Business Journal* will be its last. (Lynden Tribune)

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*Salish Current is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, online local news organization serving Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit Counties. Salish Current exists to protect and improve democratic governance by reporting and curating local news with independence and strict journalistic integrity.*

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