

Salish Current

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

News from the *Salish Current* for the week ending July 31, 2020:

[Local music plays on — differently — with stages dark during pandemic](#)



The stage is dark at the Firefly and other local live-performance venues, but musicians are finding new ways to reach their audiences during the COVID-19 shutdown. (Matt Benoit photo © 2020).

By Matt Benoit — Bellingham musician Chuck Dingée had his entire summer booked with gigs.

From outdoor concert series and private weddings to indoor venues like the Shakedown, the 66-year-old would normally be handling rhythm guitar and vocals in the five-piece band The Walrus, performing as one half of the acoustic duo Free Harmony and doing the occasional solo show.

But it all disappeared in an instant when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March, indefinitely altering the lives of anyone associated with live entertainment. [Read more here...](#)

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*Salish Current affirms its commitment to work for truth, justice, equality and healing for all people.
#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter #NoJusticeNoPeace*

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News from around the region ...

Health & Safety

- A total of 59 new cases of COVID-19 have been tied to Fraser Valley Packers, a blueberry packing plant in Abbotsford. ([The Abbotsford News](#))
- Beginning today, foreign nationals traveling to Alaska through Canada will only be allowed to enter the country through five border crossings in Western Canada, will be limited to following "the most direct route" to Alaska, must avoid all national parks, leisure sites and tourism activities along the way, and must report to Canadian border officers when they leave the country. And display a tag on their rear view mirror with the date they must leave Canada. ([CBC](#))
- Dr. Frank James, San Juan County public health officer, talks about the most significant COVID-related challenges facing the County, reliable sources of information, the balance between public health and economic health, tourism, prospects for a vaccine, the opening of local schools, and other topics. ([Orcas Issues](#))

Education

- Western Washington University classes will be again taught remotely in the fall, with about eight to ten percent of classes on campus, which includes a majority of labs and studio courses ([Western Front](#))
- Non-tenure track faculty at Western Washington University, who work on a contract basis and make up about 42% of all faculty, may have fewer jobs and be paid less in the coming school year. ([Western Front](#))

Government

- VOTE by August 4. See candidate profiles and interviews here. ([Salish Current](#))
- Take a [one-minute survey](#) and help the state's Broadband Office identify areas with little to no high-speed internet service. This is part of the state's goal to achieve universal broadband access by 2024. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))
- The San Juan County planning commission has approved the county's marijuana draft ordinance and the county council is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the ordinance on August 25 at 9:15 am. ([San Juan Journal](#))

- Whatcom County

The next Whatcom County Council meeting is scheduled for August 5 at 6 pm. [Click here to participate.](#)

- Consent agenda [AB2020-303](#): Approval of \$83,328 contract with San Juan Cruises for temporary, passenger-only Lummi Island ferry service during dry dock work.
- Consent agenda [AB2020-307](#): Approval of contract amendment with the Opportunity Council to administer the Washington State Department of Commerce Housing and Essential Needs Program in the amount of \$608,211 for a total amended contract amount of \$2,037,324.
- Consent agenda [AB2020-313](#): Approval of an interlocal agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Health to provide funding for the delivery of various public health programs and services in the amount of \$408,842 for a total amended contract amount of \$4,928,000.
- Consent agenda [AB2020-334](#): Adoption of a resolution establishing County Council budget goals and guidelines.

- City of Bellingham

The next meeting of the Bellingham City Council is scheduled for August 24 at 7 pm.

- Port of Bellingham

The next meeting of the Port of Bellingham Commission is scheduled for August 11 at 4 pm.

Nature

- Tahlequah, the mother orca who carried her dead calf 17 days and more than 1,000 miles two years ago, is reported to be pregnant by marine scientists. ([Seattle Times](#))
- An Asian giant hornet was caught in a trap in Birch Bay, the sixth confirmed hornet found in western Whatcom County. ([My Ferndale News](#))
- Malcolm Goodfellow's \$5.2 million donation-- the largest cash donation in San Juan County history-- has allowed purchase of an additional 42 acres on Turtleback Mountain on Orcas Island by the San Juan County Land Bank and by the San Juan Preservation Trust. ([San Juan Update](#))

Business

- Chatham Asset Management, a New Jersey hedge fund, will pay \$312 million to purchase the McClatchy Company, the parent company of the Bellingham Herald. Chatham promises to keep all employees and most senior leaders and honor existing union contracts. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

- All American Marine of Bellingham is building a 50-foot vessel for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The vessel will be put in service in the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary next summer. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- Due to COVID-19 financial considerations, the city of Blaine and Family Care Network have agreed to delay closing on the sale of a 2.5-acre city-owned parcel at the former airport site until next year. ([The Northern Light](#))

Community

- The 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington State-- which include Lummi, Nooksack, Swimomish, Upper Skagit, Samish and Sauk-Suiattle-- will receive about \$380,000 each from a pool of \$20 million in emergency CARES funds, with the \$7.98 million allocated according to an agreed formula based on tribal employees and enrolled member data. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))
- Bellingham held the first of four virtual "listening posts" examining systemic racism. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

The next session will be held on August 10, online here to speak: cob.org/listen0810, meeting ID 997 6322 7294, password 123. To watch or listen only, the meetings will be live on BTV television, Comcast channels 10 and 321, and on the city's [YouTube channel](#).

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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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