



## News from the *Salish Current* for the week ending Sept. 25, 2020:

*Dear reader: Salish Current has been publishing for six months since our soft launch in February. To increase our readership, please share this newsletter with friends and associates who share our mission and ask them to send us [[SalishCurrent@gmail.com](mailto:SalishCurrent@gmail.com)] their names and emails if they'd like to receive the next newsletter. (Names and emails are never sold nor traded.) Thanks, Amy Nelson, Publisher, and Mike Sato, Managing Editor.*

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## [‘Your life can’t stop’: class of 2020 faces the ‘real world’ during COVID-19](#)



A “real world” filled with higher-than-usual uncertainty greets 2020’s college graduates, as long-held plans and goals have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Graduates including Mikale Milne (left), Christi Rutz (at right) and Ashley Farnsworth are regrouping as they alter plans — and find new directions. (Amy Nelson photo © 2020)

*By Stella Harvey* — Pandemic shutdown... unemployment... business closures... social unrest: This is the “real world” this year’s college students faced upon graduating and trading class assignments and course credits for

career prospects or moves to another state or country. No other graduating class, except those graduating in wartime, has faced as much uncertainty as the class of 2020. [Read more.](#)

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### [As wildfire smoke endangers health indoors and out, questions arise about government response](#)



Recent smoke from Western wildfires veils Sehome Hill and obscures Bellingham Bay. Along with creating immediate-term hazards for anyone outdoors, the smoke leaves long-lasting health effects as it permeates indoors as well. With the expectation of continued annual air quality impacts from fires, scientists are among those questioning whether governments are doing enough to keep the public safe. (Taimi Dunn Gorman photo © 2020)

By Mara Kardas-Nelson / [InvestigateWest](#) — Dan Jaffe did everything he had been told to do. He shut his windows. He stayed indoors ... When he looked outside, he saw a gritty haze. Everything was covered in grey ash. Even indoors, the smell of smoke inundated his nostrils. He couldn't seem to get away from it. [Read more.](#)

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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

- Whatcom County has seen an increase of new cases over the last two weeks, defying a downward trend in new COVID-19 cases statewide. [\(Whatcom County Health Department\)](#)

## Education

- Lynden School District superintendent [Jim Frey](#) says the COVID-19 indicators have improved enough to begin in-person learning Oct. 5 for K-2 students opting in. At Bellingham School District, superintendent [Greg Baker](#) isn't giving dates for in-person learning but says in-person learning priority will be given to students at risk with highest needs as well as the youngest grades.
- *Snow Goose*, a 47-year-old marine science education vessel working out of Bellingham, needs \$55,000 in repairs and has initiated a GoFundMe campaign. ([Cascadia Weekly](#))

## Government

### • City of Bellingham

The next meeting of the Bellingham City Council is scheduled for Sept. 28, 7 p.m. Agenda and information on how to view and participate can be found [here](#). Agenda includes:

- Resolution adopting the 2020 Surface and Stormwater Comprehensive Plan ([22741 staff report](#))
- Consideration of an [ordinance](#) amending BMC 2.16.100 which relates to the city's Electronic Home Detention and Monitoring Program ([22769](#))
- Consideration of an [ordinance](#) creating a Shelter Protection Area for Base Camp located at 1530 Cornwall Avenue ([22665](#))
- The next meeting of the Bellingham City Council is scheduled for Oct.12, 7 p.m.

### • Whatcom County

The next meeting of the Whatcom County Council is scheduled for Sept. 29, 6 p.m. To participate, [click here](#). [Here's the agenda](#).

- Authorize contract between Whatcom County and Meridian, Nooksack Valley, Mount Baker, Ferndale, Blaine and Lynden school districts for costs associated with distance instruction and learning resulting from COVID-19 emergency in amounts not to exceed \$130,000. ([AB2020-399 -AB202-404](#))
- Authorize contract between Whatcom County and PogoZone Internet Solutions for rural broadband access in an amount not to exceed \$110,000 to provide access to distance learning for approximately 200 customers. ([AB2020-411](#))
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- Authorize the County Executive to enter into this [Memorandum of Agreement](#) between Whatcom County and PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center and Opportunity Council and Unity Care NW to initiate a capital campaign for the construction of ["The Way Station"](#) at the County-owned building at 1500 State St. in Bellingham, that will provide services to people who are homeless and living either in shelters or who are unsheltered. ([AB2020-396](#))

- Adopt a resolution supporting Whatcom County Sheriff deputies, corrections deputies, and law enforcement officials across the county in response to the increased attacks on law enforcement across the country ([AB2020-406](#))
- The next meeting of the Whatcom County Council is scheduled for Oct. 13.
- Port of Bellingham  
The Port of Bellingham will hold a special meeting on Sept. 29 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. on Zoom to discuss its 2021 capital budget. The next regular commission meeting is scheduled for Oct. 6.
- The League of Women Voters of Bellingham/Whatcom County holds live candidate forums via Zoom on Sept. 30, Oct. 1, Oct. 7, Oct. 8, and Oct. 10. For times and how to access, [go here.](#)

### **Nature**

- The Center for Whale Research reported that another baby orca has been born to J pod — the second calf born this month for the endangered southern resident orcas that frequent Puget Sound. The calf's health is yet to be determined since the birth was in Canadian waters. ([Seattle Times](#))
- Officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans seized 316 crab traps they claim were illegally set in U.S. water this month, as part of an annual enforcement operation coordinated with their American counterparts. ([CBC](#))
- The Zylstra Lake Preserve on 313 acres on San Juan Island opens to the public for day-use this Saturday. ([San Juan Update](#))

### **Commentary**

- Hard Conversations. "I'm a 70-year-old white woman, and I've been going over my feelings about police. It's maybe more complicated than you'd think..." Lane Morgan writes. ([Stanford Magazine](#))

### **Business**

- PeaceHealth has purchased 5 acres in Lynden where it plans to build next spring a 22,500-square-foot medical clinic to serve north Whatcom County. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))
- The Port of Friday Harbor has received a low-interest loan of \$750,000 and a \$250,000 grant from the Washington State Community Economic Revitalization Board approved to develop projects on the Jensen and Shipyard Cove marina site the Port purchased. ([San Juan Journal](#))
- The Lynden City Council approved a proposed rezone of 21.8 acres at Main Street and Guide Meridian Road to Mixed Density Residential from Mannahouse (formerly City Bible) Church of Portland, Ore., with a proposal for the site of a Planned Residential District of 134 housing units — single-family, small cottages, townhomes and four-plexes. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

- Two large housing projects in the Blaine area will increase housing availability in Whatcom County by about 1,400 units, mostly single family. The Gradis Pond project will create 18 neighborhoods with 1,000 units on more than 400 acres. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

## **Community**

- Western Washington University professor Vernon Damani Johnson has received the Rosemary and Howard Harris Lifetime Peacemaker Award from the Whatcom Peace and Justice Center. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- With a \$10,000 donation from Skagit Rotary, Skagit County groups are teaming up with the Mount Vernon School District to provide child care for county families who can't afford it. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#)) The Northwest Center for Child Care Retention & Expansion is providing technical assistance, coaching, feasibility studies and planning to help the local child care market survive and expand. ([Whatcom Talk](#))
- San Juan County Community Development staff briefed the Planning Commission on updates to the county's comprehensive plan, including how vacation rentals and accessory dwelling units might be treated in the draft comprehensive plan in order to increase affordable housing and decrease disorder from unruly tourists. ([The Orcasonian](#))
- The City of Bellingham's 1,061 city employees are 90% white and 63% male; the city's 92,314 residents are nearly 83% white and 51% female. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- The Lynden City Council chose to take no action on an equality statement two months in the drafting which does not speak directly to racial justice but rather of the value and equal protection that should be accorded to all people because early supporters of the statement no longer support it. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))
- Nine families have moved into OPAL Community Land Trust's April's Grove housing project on Orcas Island. ([Islands Sounder](#))

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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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