

Salish Current

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

Dear Readers — One of the joys of working to bring you the news is working with talented young people on our team of freelancers. This week we've had the pleasure of working with Jack Finley, a journalism student at Western Washington University. We enjoyed and hope you, too, enjoy Jack's story on the skatepark in the works on the Bellingham waterfront, and his photos. We also enjoyed working with recent Western journalism graduate Ella Banken whose second story (her first was on bird feeder disease) this week about books under scrutiny will provoke some discussion. We hope you find *Salish Current* important to you and your community and introducing us to others. We thank our freelance reporters and ask that you support them with a [donation](#). Thank you — **Amy Nelson, Publisher, and Mike Sato, Managing Editor.**

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News from the Salish Current, April 2, 2021

Skaters, business, Port collaborate for Bellingham waterfront skate park



Bellingham skater Cash McClane kickflips over a homemade ramp under the Chestnut Street bridge.

By Jack Finley — A local business owner and rag-tag group of skaters have cleaned up an abandoned parking lot under the Chestnut Street bridge on the Bellingham waterfront with the goal of establishing a skatepark, as the City and Port of Bellingham look at expanding the area's current agreement to include that use.

Books under scrutiny: censorship and cancel culture in a changing society



Curbside delivery has connected readers with their books of choice during the COVID-19 pandemic; at left, Ruth Snitselaar of the Ferndale branch of the Whatcom County Library System delivers library materials to a patron.

By Ella Banken — In a time of massive reevaluation of once widely accepted tropes, celebrities have been called out for past insensitivities and much worse, schools have been renamed and statues toppled. But what does it mean when books are brought into the discussion?

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

News from around the region:

Health & Safety

British Columbia recorded 2,518 new cases of COVID-19 over the March 27 weekend, including a record high 936 on Saturday, prompting a three-week lockdown of new restrictions on indoor dining in restaurants, group fitness and worship services. ([CBC](#))

Western Washington University reports that 67 students from on and off campus have been linked to an ongoing COVID-19 surge among Western students due to exposures at social gatherings on March 8 and 15. ([Western Front](#))

Whatcom County 4/2/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very high risk 10.3/100K
San Juan County 4/2/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Medium risk 6.5/100K
Skagit County 4/2/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Medium risk 5.2 /100K

Whatcom County law enforcement officials this week announced that in the last two weeks there have been a total of five fentanyl-related deaths in Whatcom County as a result of accidental overdoses. ([Whatcom News](#))

Education

Jim Frey will resign as superintendent of the Lynden School District effective June 30. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Will Nelson has been selected by the La Conner School Board as the district's new superintendent. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Grace Borsari and Fred Kaiser — who donated \$10 million to Western Washington University for a new STEM building with their names on it — have retained an attorney in an attempt to remove public records obtained and posted by *The Front* during an investigation into the donors' history of tax evasion. ([Western Front](#))

Government

The Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe advocate for adjudication of Nooksack River water rights and have launched a campaign called [Salmon Need Water](#).

San Juan County

The San Juan County Commissioners met on March 30. [Agenda items](#) included:

[10:40 AM] Agate Beach County Park Road Relocation, update on additional project scope and funding

[11:15 AM] Vacation rental moratorium follow up discussion with staff.

City of Bellingham

The next meeting of the Bellingham City Council is scheduled for April 12.

Whatcom County

The next meeting of the Whatcom County Council is scheduled for April 6. [Agenda items](#) include:

County Executive Satpal Sidhu will present the "State of the County" to the council and county citizens

[\[AB2021-190\]](#) Public hearing on an ordinance imposing an interim moratorium on the acceptance and processing of applications and permits for new or expanded outdoor recreational cannabis growing and/or processing facilities.

[\[AB2021-191\]](#) Authorize the county executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to provide funding for rental assistance and emergency shelter in motels in the amount of \$618,121 for a total amended contract amount of \$1,514,822.

Port of Bellingham

The Port of Bellingham Commission held a special meeting on March 30. [Agenda item](#) included:

The commission approved assignment of Harbor Land Lease and Project Development Agreement from All American Marine, Inc., to RMG Holdings, Co. (a part of the Bryton Marine Group) for property located at 1010 Hilton Ave., Bellingham WA.

Nature

Skagit County is required to manage stormwater runoff under the state's Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit and is now taking comment on its draft Stormwater Management Program Plan update. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

The Port of Anacortes has overseen \$64 million in environmental cleanups over the past 12 years. Port officials credit the cleanups to partnership building between the port, the Department of Ecology and the parties responsible for the contamination. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Business

All American Marine in Bellingham has been purchased by the Bryton Marine Group which also owns boat manufacturers Eaglecraft, Kingfisher and Weldcraft. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Commentary

Western Washington University's *The Planet* magazine has issued an anti-racism statement which begins, "*The Planet* magazine stands for racial equity on all fronts and takes an active stance against racism..." ([The Planet](#))

Community

Kristina Michele Martens, co-founder of the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission, will run for the Bellingham at-large city council seat held by Hollie Huthman who will seek the 2nd Ward seat held by Gene Knutson who is not running for reelection. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

[Kelly Kreiger](#) announced her candidacy for the Bellingham Port Commissioner Position 2 currently held by Ken Bell.

Bellingham writer Rena Priest, a member of the Lummi Nation, has been named the first Native American poet laureate for Washington state. ([Crosscut](#))

Jump In!

Friday Harbor Film Festival Director Series presents Earth Day documentaries beginning April 1 available for viewing 24/7 for \$2.95 a film or all for \$9.95. ([Film Festival/San Juan Update](#))

Create a film one minute or less on a theme of “60 Seconds that Changed the World” and submit it by May 15 to enter the Small Time Film Festival. All proceeds benefit the Lighthouse Mission to help break the cycle of homelessness. ([Whatcom Talks](#))

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