

Salish Current

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

Dear Readers —

This weekend we're celebrating the first anniversary of *Salish Current's* incorporation (see the publisher's letter below), taking a moment to look back and, most important, looking ahead. Every week we look ahead to developing and bringing to you reporting that can make this community a more informed and healthier place. What are those stories that aren't being reported by local news? Please write and tell us (SalishCurrent@gmail.com) because that's the job *Salish Current* wants to do. And, looking ahead, one of our next big challenges is to grow our readership. There are over 500 households now receiving this newsletter and you help us by forwarding this newsletter to a friend, associate or family member and encouraging them to subscribe (SalishCurrent@gmail.com). With your help, we hope to double our readership this summer. Those are two ways you can help us as we move into our second year: tell us what we should be reporting on and invite others to read [Salish Current](#) (it's free to read). Thank you.

— Amy Nelson, Publisher, and Mike Sato, Managing Editor

News from the Salish Current, week of June 4, 2021

[Community Voices / A moment of pause. A time to grieve.](#)



The trees wept for them" wrote Abigail Echo-Hawk, in a poem in memory of Indigenous children after bodies were discovered buried near a former residential school.

By Terri Thayer — In a difficult week for Indigenous communities following discovery on May 28 of the remains of 215 Indigenous children near a residential school in Canada, memories of boarding and residential schools and the trauma that has impacted generations are resurfacing. [Read more.](#)

[From the Publisher / One year old, changing life for the better](#)



Cue the fireworks! Nonprofit local news site Salish Current is celebrating as it marks the start of its second year.

By Amy Nelson — Nonprofit local news organization Salish Current is celebrating its one-year anniversary of incorporation on June 5, and continuing on its mission to fill gaps in covering vital news and provide a forum for civil discourse in Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit counties. [Read more.](#)

*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

Win a \$60,000 credit to buy a truck if you win the drawing sponsored by Chuckanut Health Foundation to encourage COVID-19 vaccination in Whatcom County. ([CHF](#)) And wait, there's more: Four Washington residents could win \$250,000 while one person could hit the jackpot — \$1 million in the Washington state COVID vaccination lottery. Other prizes include tuition money, airline and game tickets and tech gifts like game consoles and smart speakers. ([Seattle Times](#))

San Juan County will end its COVID vaccine clinics at the end of June. ([San Juan Journal](#))
Whatcom County Community Vaccination Center will end operations on June 17. ([WCHD](#))
New Pop-Up COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics Available Throughout Skagit County ([SCPH](#))

Whatcom County 5/21/21 [COVID ActNow](#) High risk; 11.3/100K; 51.8% vaccinated
San Juan County 5/21/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Medium risk; 1.6/100K; 69.5% vaccinated
Skagit County 5/21/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Medium risk; 7.2/100K; 50.0% vaccinated

Education

Western Washington University's newspaper *The Western Front* will become *The Front* in part because "we also want to demonstrate the paper's increasing commitment to covering not just Western, but also the greater Bellingham and Whatcom County communities... original reporting is an increasingly scarce resource. Over the past few years, *The Front* has stepped up to fill those gaps and cover underreported stories in Bellingham and Whatcom County." Good news! ([The Front](#))

Fidalgo Island youngsters will benefit from more than half a million dollars used to get them outside as part of a \$4.5 million No Child Left Inside program created by the legislature. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Government

City of Bellingham

The tug-of-war between the mayor and Bellingham's Municipal Court continues amid allegations of a hostile work environment at the court. ([KGMI](#)) Skagit County Superior Court Friday morning granted a temporary injunction stopping the City of Bellingham and Mayor Seth Fleetwood from investigating work conditions at Bellingham's Municipal Court ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

The Bellingham City Council and its committees will meet on June 7. [Agenda items](#) include:

[23012] The Public Works and Natural Resources Committee will receive a [staff update](#) on Middle Fork Nooksack River Fish Passage Project.

[22971] The Committee of the Whole will be briefed on the [Fire Department Strategic Plan](#).

[23015] The Committee of the Whole will discuss [options](#) for civilian oversight of law enforcement in Bellingham.

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for June 21.

Whatcom County

The Whatcom County Council met on June 1. [Agenda items](#) included:

[[AB2021-261](#)] The Council approved (6-0, Kershner absent) an ordinance granting Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless, a nonexclusive franchise for the provision of wireless telecommunications services.

[[AB2021-278](#)] & [[AB2021-279](#)] The Council (5-1, Elenbaas opposed, Kershner absent) and (6-0, Kershner absent) approved ordinances to be placed on the November ballot amending petition gathering requirements to be based on percentage required based on the votes cast in the last county executive election rather than the gubernatorial election.

[[AB2021-316](#)] The Council authorized (5-1, Elenbaas opposed, Kershner absent) the County Executive to purchase a [Conservation and Public Access Easement](#) from the Whatcom Land Trust for the Upper Skookum Creek property, in the amount of \$1,250,000.

[[AB2021-185](#)] The council (6-0, Kershner absent) referred to committee a revised ordinance amending Whatcom County Code 9.32, Unlawful Discharge of Firearms, to establish a no-shooting zone in the Drayton Harbor area of Whatcom County.

[[AB2021-186](#)] The Council approved (5-1, Elenbaas opposed, Kershner absent) an ordinance amending Whatcom County Code 9.32, Unlawful Discharge of Firearms, to establish a no-shooting zone to be known as the Dearborn No Shooting Zone

The Council is scheduled to meet next on June 15.

Port of Bellingham

The Port Commission met on June 3. Click here for the [agenda](#) and view the meeting [here](#).

The Commission was briefed on the Port's "Blast Over the Bay 4th of July" fireworks display, sponsored in part by the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses. The show from Zuanich Park will begin at 10:30 p.m. and last 15 minutes, and will be produced by Wolverine West.

State Legislature

According to Sen. Liz Lovelett's (D-40) office, the state budget includes \$80,000 for a water study of Guemes Island and \$92,000 for a water study of San Juan county. ([WA Operating Budget](#), page 314)

The Washington State Redistricting Commission holds a virtual public meeting on June 5 from 1-3 p.m. to discuss Congressional District #1, which stretches from the Canadian border to Interstate 90 in King County and is currently represented by Suzan DelBene. [Zoom](#), TVW, FaceBook.

Nature

Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center announced its Earth Day wildlife photography contest winners. ([Wolf Hollow](#))

Business

About 50 protesters, mostly island residents, gathered Friday night (May 28) outside the Willows Inn, a world-renowned restaurant on Lummi Island, demanding the resignation of Blaine Wetzel, the restaurant's chef. ([NY Times](#))

The Port of Anacortes has completed an 8-year, \$6 million project to demolish and replace a dock at Cap Sante Marina for commercial use such as fishing vessels, a whale watch tour operator, maritime transportation and oil spill response. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Jump in!

June marks the 15th annual Orca Action Month in Washington state and sixth annual celebration in Oregon and British Columbia. Members of the Orca Salmon Alliance (OSA) and their partners are hosting [events throughout the month](#) to educate the public about the Southern Resident orca community and the challenges they face.

Community

The San Juan Island Community Network will host three Zoom forums regarding vacation rentals in the San Juans. The forums will focus on Discovery (June 9); Common Ground (June 17); and Collaborative Action (June 24). All sessions are free, and accessible through zoom. ([Orcas Issues](#))

Whatcom Transportation Authority will return to regular bus service on June 13 and begin collecting fares on July 1. ([Whatcom Talk](#))

Arts & Leisure

Washington State Poet Laureate Rena Priest will celebrate the Salish Sea online on June 10, 4-5:30 p.m. [Register here.](#)

Like this newsletter? Share it. And it's easy to subscribe by reply mail. Your email address will never be shared and you can unsubscribe at any time. — Mike Sato

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.

Facebook — Follow and engage: [Salish Current](#)
Say something: SalishCurrent@gmail.com

Twitter — Follow and engage: [@currentsalish](#)
Check out what's new: [Salish Current](#)