

Salish Current

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

Dear Readers —

With this first newsletter issue of September, we begin our four-month campaign with two goals:

- increase the readership of this weekly newsletter
- raise enough money from reader donations to continue growing our independent, community news in 2022.

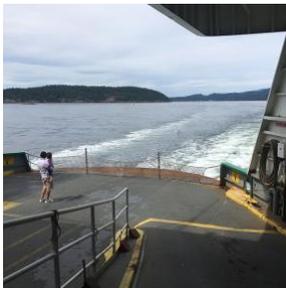
The two goals go together: the more people who read *Salish Current* and find it valuable enough to support it with a donation, the more we can grow to serve our community. So please share this newsletter with friends, family and associates and help us grow and improve with a donation. Our reporters, like **Heather Spaulding** who this week writes from the San Juans, are paid for their work; the rest of us volunteer for the cause of reader-supported, open-access, no-advertising, independent, fact-based reporting for Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit readers. Please use the [DONATE](#) button below. Thank you for reading and thank you for your [support](#).

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

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

News from the Salish Current, week of Sep. 3, 2021

[No new reservations, for now: Living and working around ferry delays, cancellations in the San Juans](#)



Washington State Ferries passengers enjoy a last look at the San Juan Islands as the Samish heads toward Anacortes on a summer evening. Peak-season travel among the islands has been disrupted this year by schedule delays and even cancellations as ferry employees, managers and riders continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

By Heather Spaulding — This year's peak-season summer Washington State Ferries sailing schedule has been plagued by delayed and canceled sailings, some due to a shortage of crew and some to mechanical problems. For the long Labor Day weekend, things are not looking much brighter for the San Juan Islands runs. ([Read more.](#))

News from around the region

Health and Safety

A new state law that requires all law enforcement officers to audio and video record any questioning of juveniles and people suspected of committing a felony crime will require police departments like the Blaine Police Department to purchase and use body cameras by January. ([The Northern Light](#))

Whatcom County two-week COVID-19 infection rate soars to levels reached only during January infection rate. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#)) August in Skagit County was one of the worst COVID-19 months since March 2020. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Whatcom County 9/3/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very High risk; 41.4/100K; 73.7% vaccinated
San Juan County 9/3/21 [COVID ActNow](#) High risk; 13.0/100K; 77.2% vaccinated
Skagit County 9/3/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very High risk; 43.6/100K; 63.4% vaccinated

Education

Whatcom Community College has received a \$7.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation to upgrade the school's National Cybersecurity Training and Education Center. ([KGMI](#)) Kathi Hiyane-Brown, president of Whatcom Community College, represented the nation's community and technical colleges at a White House summit on national cybersecurity last week. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Government

City of Bellingham

The Bellingham City Council and its committees met on Aug. 30. [Agenda items](#) included:

- Approved unanimously (Hammill excused) bid award of \$957,440 to Faber Construction to reroof the Mount Baker Theater.
- Approved unanimously (Hammill excused) to authorize the mayor to enter into an interlocal agreement between the City and Western Washington University for Lake Whatcom monitoring.
- Approved unanimously (Hammill excused) a pilot program of hosting a public comment period on Sept. 20.
- Approved unanimously (Hammill excused) to renew and extend an emergency ordinance imposing a moratorium on processing applications for detached single-family development in multi-family zones.
- Approved unanimously (Hammill excused) to renew the Cascade Natural Gas franchise.

The Council and its committees will meet again on Sept. 13.

Whatcom County

The Whatcom County Council will meet on Sept. 14.

Port of Bellingham

The Port of Bellingham Commission will meet on Sept. 7. [Agenda items](#) include:

- Presentations on the Port's Climate Action Strategy, the America's Marine Highway Project Designation, and SeaFeast.
- Approve authorization for the Executive Director to execute a [lease agreement](#) and Construction of Tenant Improvements with Southwest Airlines Co.
- Approve authorization for the Executive Director to execute an [option to purchase real property](#) between Mercy Housing Northwest, The Millworks LLC and the Port of Bellingham for approximately 3 acres in the Waterfront District.

Port of Skagit

The new Port of Skagit executive director is Sara Young who has served over the past 14 years as the port's planning and environmental manager, airport manager and director of planning and facilities. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Elections

The Bellingham/Whatcom County chapter of the League of Woman Voters invite the Whatcom County community [to submit questions](#) to the candidates before the chapter forums set for early October.

Nature

Strandings of harbor porpoises this time of year isn't unusual but finding two dead porpoises on Fidalgo Island is a rare occurrence, according to Dr. Cindy Elliser, founder of the Anacortes-based nonprofit Pacific Mammal Research, ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

The giant hornet nest near Blaine wiped out by Washington State Department of Agriculture last week was three times larger than the one found and eradicated last year. ([The Northern Light](#))

Community

The Peace Arch at the U.S.-Canada border is 100 years old and there's a lot of history there. ([The Northern Light](#))

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.

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