

Salish Current

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

Dear Reader —

This weekend marks the beginning of the holiday season and the midpoint of our [NewsMatch Campaign](#). It's a good time to say "thank you" to readers who have donated and had their donations matched — and to encourage other readers [to donate](#) so we can continue to grow in 2022. We volunteer our time as editors and pay our freelance reporters because we believe that fact-based news that is free to read and free from advertising is a community good. Sue Cross, Executive Director and CEO of Institute for Nonprofit News, of which *Salish Current* is a member, recently wrote about INN member news organizations:

"These outlets are not partisan. They don't do a lot of ranting, don't fuel the national political divides. They just produce great, deep reporting — the kind we all need. This news is for everyone, like our libraries or hospitals. People who can afford to support this kind of news donate to keep these newsrooms reporting. People who can't afford a donation still get the news, for free. And that helps them participate in public life. When we say news strengthens our democracy, this is what we mean. It provides information so that everyone can take part."

It's a long weekend and if you have the time and inclination, watch the Bellingham City Club online forum ("[Extra, Extra, Read All About It](#)") where I spoke to this community need and how to meet it. Also on this topic, a year ago, our board member William Dietrich wrote in *Salish Current* a Community Voices column addressing the plight of traditional newspapers locally, regionally and nationally ("[Erosion in local news threatens democracy](#)").

Just as there's a countdown to Christmas, Hanukkah and the new year, there's a countdown to our two-month [NewsMatch Campaign](#) and, in a larger sense, to preserving our democratic processes and institutions. Please make your donation to *Salish Current* online or by check. I thank readers who have made their [NewsMatch donations](#) and especially those in our Publisher's Circle below who encourage their donations to be matched during our campaign. Thank you to all!

Publisher's NewsMatch Circle (as of Nov. 26)

Eric Hirst, Elsie Heinrick, Barbara and Mike Ryan, John Binns and Julie Fleetwood Binns, Betsy Gross, John and Kathy Whitmer, Floyd and Dixie McKay, Sarah Spotts and Kevin Covey, Shaun Hubbard and Harold Kawaguchi, Alan and Lisbeth Hadden Fritzberg, Cindy Madigan, David and Bonnie Dick, Tony Angell and Lee Rolfe.

— Amy Nelson, Publisher

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 Nov. 26, 2021

[Vigil calls for more urgency to save endangered salmon, orcas](#)



Alyssa Macy, CEO of the Washington Environmental Council and Washington Conservation Voters, encouraged continued pressure on elected officials to find solutions that would enable removing dams on the Snake River to restore salmon habitat.

By Jacqueline Allison — A vigil in support of endangered salmon in the Pacific Northwest drew environmental advocates and members of the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe to the Bellingham waterfront on Nov. 20. The event commemorated the 30th anniversary of the original declaration of Snake River sockeye salmon as endangered, and was held in conjunction with several similar events around the region. ([Read more.](#))

[Letters to the Editor](#)

- Faxon: Fully contained communities, FCCs, no longer allowed in King County
- Ferguson: Saving an irreplaceable food source and an economic driver

News from around the region

[Health and Safety](#)

The Nooksack River is predicted to crest at Cedarville and Ferndale late Friday and again on Sunday night. ([KGMI](#))

Watch and read details and highlights of the community meeting at Nooksack High School with government officials Wednesday night about flooding and responses. ([Whatcom News](#))

The community of Everson is grieving the loss of Jose Garcia, 50, who died in last weekend's flood. ([KNKX](#))

The Whatcom Community Foundation Resilience Fund has grown by \$560,000 since Nov. 15 and the foundation has granted more than \$280,000 to organizations in communities hardest hit by the flood disaster in Whatcom County. To contribute to the Resilience Fund, [click here.](#) ([Whatcom Talk](#))

Whatcom County 11/26//21 [COVID ActNow](#) High risk; 20.3/100K; 72.6% vaccinated
San Juan County 11/26/21 [COVID ActNow](#) High risk; 16.3/100K; 81.2% vaccinated
Skagit County 11/26/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very High risk; 26.3/100K; 67.6% vaccinated

Education

The proposed Blaine school district boundaries as presented on Nov. 22 would provide Birch Bay with a majority on the board if residents ran and won, The current five-member board has one representative living in Birch Bay. ([The Northern Light](#))

Government

San Juan County

The San Juan County Council will meet on Nov. 29. [Agenda items](#) include:

- Resolution of the Charter Review Committee
- Tiny House Report Presentation
- A Proposed Ordinance of San Juan County, Washington, Setting the San Juan County Budget for Years 2022-23

The San Juan County Council will meet on Nov. 30. [Agenda items](#) include:

- Adoption of the 2022 Annual Construction Program and Approve a Resolution Adopting the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan 2022-2027

Public hearing and action:

- Resolution Approving the 2022 Capital Improvement Plan and the 2022-2027 Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan
- Ordinance Setting the Property Tax Levy for Land Conservation Futures for 2022
- Ordinance Setting the Property Tax Levy for County Roads for 2022
- Ordinance Setting the Property Tax Levy for Current Expense for 2022
- Ordinance Setting the San Juan County Budget for Years 2022-2023 (Continued from Nov. 9)

Bellingham

The Bellingham City Council met on Nov. 22. (A meeting summary was not provided as of Nov. 26.)

The City Council will meet again in regular session on Dec. 6.

The next Bellingham City Council Public Comment Sessions will be held on Nov. 29, Dec. 20 and Dec. 29. To participate, [click here](#). (Meeting ID: 923 0705 9297 Password: 018602)

Whatcom County

The County Council met on Nov. 23. [Agenda items](#) included:

Public hearing

- AB2021-628 The council approved (5-2, Byrd and Elenbaas opposed) an ordinance amending the 2022 Whatcom County [Budget](#), request no. 1, in the amount of \$50,655,096
- AB2021-648 The council referred to committee (6-0, Brown abstained) an [ordinance](#) revising the County's recreational marijuana production, processing, and retail sales zoning regulations. ([Staff memo](#))

Other items:

- AB2021-653 The council unanimously authorized the County Executive to enter into a three-year interlocal agreement among Whatcom County and the Port of Bellingham and City of Bellingham to provide economic development services and complete special projects that promote beneficial outcomes for the parties, in the amount of \$2,084,322. ([Presentation](#))
- AB2021-640 The council unanimously approved an ordinance amending the 2022 Whatcom County [Budget](#), request no. 2, in the amount of \$12,007,450
- AB2021-680 The council unanimously approved the County Executive award [Bid #21-68](#) for the purchase of 80 each FN303 Mark 2 Less-Lethal Launchers, associated equipment, and related accessories to Arms Unlimited Incorporated, in an amount not to exceed \$86,062.98

The Council will meet on Dec. 7.

Port of Bellingham

The commission is scheduled to meet next on Dec. 7.

Elections

Blaine City Council member Richard May has announced he is running for the 42nd Legislative District Position 2. The position is currently held by Sharon Shewmake [D-Bellingham] who has announced her candidacy for the 42nd Legislative District Senate position. (Richard May Campaign)

<http://www.richardmay.us/>

Skagit County's population in its local voting districts grew evenly which does not require redistricting and changing boundaries. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Nature

Last week's flooding was among the highest on record for the Nooksack River. Years of high annual peak flows are associated with low survival of salmon. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Maxar Technologies produced satellite images comparing farmland in the Sumas Prairie region on June 27 this year and on Nov. 19 that shows the dramatic extent of flooding as water from the overflowing Nooksack River forced evacuations and killed livestock. ([CBC](#))

Business

As of Nov. 23 flood damage in Whatcom County could reach as high as \$50 million according to county officials. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

By Nov. 23 about 100,000 cattle remain threatened by flood waters and diminished food supply. "It's just a crisis that has the potential to continue to escalate as we move along," said Fred Likkel, who heads up an advocacy group for family farmers in Whatcom County. Likkel notes that many farmers across the border in Canada are also cut off from feed for their animals. ([KUOW](#))

According to Washington's Employment Security Department, Whatcom County has regained half of the jobs it lost in last year's pandemic-induced recession. ([The Northern Light](#))

Commentary

Meteorologist Cliff Mass writes that there is no evidence that global warming caused the heavy rainfall associated with last week's flooding in the Sumas area. ([Weather Blog](#))

Pope Francis says that, "Journalism does not come about by choosing a profession, but by embarking on a mission,.. not an easy mission.... The risk, as you well know, is to be overwhelmed by the news instead of being able to make sense of it. This is why I encourage you to preserve and cultivate that sense of mission that is at the origin of your choice. And I will do so with three verbs that I believe characterize good journalism: listen, investigate and report." ([Seattle Times](#))

Community

Lummi Tribal member and violinist Swil Kanim recounts how floodwaters from the rapidly rising Nooksack River threatened his home in the Ferndale neighborhood. ([KNKX](#))

A portion of the pier at Little Squalicum Park in Bellingham Bay has been donated to the city of Bellingham by Lehigh Northwest Cement Company and the city has negotiated a no-cost transfer approved by the city council on Nov. 22. ([City of Bellingham](#))

Arts and Leisure

Western Washington University [Music Department](#) returns with live performances:

- Western Washington University Collegium Musicum annual concert, Nov. 29, 8 p.m., Performing Arts Center. Program features: Johann Friedrich Grenser (the 18th century Carl Nielsen), Joseph Martin Kraus (the Swedish Mozart), Anton Filz (he who ingested poisonous spiders), and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. The last will be his magnificent ode Morgengesang.

Up Close & Personal: The Body in Contemporary Art. The exhibition examines the human body through the expressive lens of 60 artists. Curated by Amy Chaloupka from the Collection of Driek and Michael Zirinsk, Lightcatcher Building, Whatcom Art Museum, through Feb. 22, 2022.

Jump in!

The [Whatcom County Library System](#) presents:

- Mushrooms of the PNW – Sustaining People and Soils, 12/8, 7-8 p.m. All fungi have an important role in the ecosystem. Mycelia of mushroom store incredible amounts of carbon underground. In this richly illustrated presentation, author and researcher Daniel Winkler will help you identify mushrooms while steering you clear of dangerous look-a-likes.
- Botany of the Pacific Northwest, 12/11, 7-8 p.m. There are over 3,000 native plant species in Washington state yet many people can't tell a fir from a hemlock or a calyx from a corolla. By

putting names to these plants, we can begin to understand the important role each one plays in keeping our planet healthy and well fed.

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, Managing Editor

Nonprofit *Salish Current* is Women- and Minority-Led.

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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