

Salish Current

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

Dear Reader: Thank you for supporting *Salish Current*!

Salish Current this week met its original *and* additional NewsMatch challenge grant goals, thanks to donors listed in our [Publisher's Circle](#). We sincerely appreciate your generosity and trust that take us into 2022. Not everyone is able to donate; those who can make it possible for everyone to access independent, fact-based local news that's free to read and free from advertising.

Looking back, we're sharing the highlights of some of the stories we've followed in 2021, the [first full year of *Salish Current's*](#) community reporting.

And what might the future look like for some readers? What's life without a future? Please check out [what some folks look forward to in 2022](#).

For more reading over this long weekend: [Salish Sea News Week in Review 12/31/21: Aloha to 2021, Aloha to 2022](#)

See you in '22 — **Amy Nelson, Publisher**

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

News from the *Salish Current*, week of Dec. 31, 2021

[2021: A look back at some stories from our first full year](#)



What a year!. A photo from iDiOM Theater's 2019 production of "Orlando" which illustrated an article on an examination of appropriateness of play content sums up a common reaction to 2021.

By Salish Current Editors — 2021 was a year like no other, with themes such as public health vis-à-vis COVID-19 and opioid addiction; social justice in the courts, the arts, housing and policing; and climate change and natural resources including water rights management. Take a look back via articles published during the nonprofit newsroom's first full year. [\(Read more.\)](#)

What's life without a future?



"Mexico would be lovely," as freelance reporter Heather Spaulding noted, as would many other destinations. Where do you want to see yourself in 2022? Salish Current readers and writers launched the new year with inspiring ideas.

By Salish Current Readers — What awaits us in the new year? Salish Current has been happy to serve the community throughout 2021 with news of Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit counties, and delighted to end the year with a successful fundraising campaign to support our nonprofit newsroom. Looking forward, we asked our readers and writers to take us into the new year by sharing one thing they look forward to doing in 2022. ([Read more.](#))

Editor's Desk / We've met the challenge!



Thanks to you, *Salish Current* met its NewsMatch challenge!

Thank you for making it possible to provide independent, fact-based news that is free to read and free from advertising — and for supporting nonprofit community journalism in Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit counties. You've given us a vote of confidence to continue — and we will — into 2022. [Take a look](#) at the list of donors in our Publisher's Circle (as of Dec. 30, 2021).

News from around the region

Health and Safety

B.C. health officials announced 4,383 new cases of COVID-19 and one more death on Thursday. It is the second straight day of record-breaking daily case numbers in the province. ([CBC](#))

Vaccinated B.C. residents can travel into the U.S. for 24-hour trips and return home without COVID-19 test ([The Northern Light](#))

Whatcom County 12/31/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very High risk; 43.6/100K; 75.7% vaccinated

San Juan County 12/31/21 [COVID ActNow](#) High risk; 17.9/100K; 84.6% vaccinated

Skagit County 12/31/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very High risk; 44.2/100K; 70.0% vaccinated

Gail Amundsen, 61, and Murray Church, 67, were found dead in their home on Thanksgiving Day evening. The apparent cause of death for the longtime Point Roberts couple appears to be due to the faulty installation of a radiant heating system. ([The Northern Light](#))

Government

City of Sumas

Sumas city councilmember Bruce Bosch has been sworn in as mayor, replacing Kyle Christensen, who served one term and chose not to run for reelection. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

City of Bellingham

The council will hold a swearing-in ceremony for Hollie Huthman, Michael Lilliquist, Skip Williams and Kristina Martens at 7 p.m. on Jan. 3. Council meetings are streamed live via the City's website and on the City's YouTube channel.

The council will meet on Jan. 10 in regular session.

Whatcom County

The Whatcom Council will meet on Jan. 11 in regular session.

Port of Bellingham

The Port of Bellingham commission will meet on Jan. 4. [Agenda items](#) include:

Consent Agenda:

- Motion authorizing the port commissioners to approve [Resolution No. 1106-Y](#), delegating certain administrative powers and duties to the executive director.

Presentations

- 2022 Budget highlights and strategic priorities update
- 2022 Legislative update

Public Hearing:

- [Draft Redistricting Plan](#)
- [Draft Redistricting Map](#)

Action Item:

- Motion by the port commission to approve a modification to Point Roberts Press Inc.'s [Harbor Land Lease](#) in Blaine Harbor.

The commission will meet again on Jan. 18.

Elections

A memorial service for the late Sen. Doug Ericksen was held in Bellingham on Wednesday and attended by about 250 family and friends. Few mourners wore facemasks; the family asked that no photos or private recordings be made of the service. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

To replace Sen. Ericksen, the 42nd District Republican party will nominate three candidates to the Whatcom County Council which as of this week is scheduled to meet next on Jan. 11 in regular session. The state legislature begins its 2022 session on Jan. 10.

Nature

People near Anacortes living around the HollyFrontier Puget Sound Refinery (formerly the Shell Puget Sound Refinery) experienced flaring and an odor on Monday coming as a result of what was reported by the refinery as an "operational upset." ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community shows how eelgrass and aquaculture can coexist in Puget Sound. ([High County News](#))

KWIAHT's annual report on the health of Indian Island is available on [YouTube](#). A full report can be found [here](#). (*Orcsonian*)

It's snow geese and winter waterfowl time on the Skagit Flats ([KNKX](#))

Business

Beginning Jan. 1, state restaurants will no longer automatically include single-use food service items like utensils, condiments and straws with food orders. A new state law restricts the use of these items and prohibits packaged bundles of single-use items in order to reduce waste and litter — although customers can still request individual items if needed. ([San Juan Update](#))

Skagit County commissioners have approved a ferry capital improvement plan that includes an all-electric ferry on the Guemes Island run. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Community

Look for Skagit County Sheriff officers to be wearing body cameras to meet the state mandated Jan. 1 deadline. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Grace Kane is Skagit County's new Public Works director, replacing Dan Berentson who is retiring. (Skagit County Public Works news release)

Washington State Ferries' MV Yakima hit the "floating dolphin" bulwark at the Lopez Island ferry terminal in rough water before Christmas, and on Wednesday the structure collapsed into a bobbing mess of pieces. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

Skagit County commissioners approved spending \$800,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds to lease rooms in a Mount Vernon motel to house the homeless as a pilot project in permanent supportive housing. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Arts and Leisure

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.

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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