

News of the week: May 27, 2022

Dear Reader —

Alert: the following publisher's note may be disturbing to some readers.

This year's Memorial Day weekend follows the horrific murder by gun of 19 children and an aftermath of shock, grief, anger and frustration; one more tragedy added to a heartbreaking list.

We can debate the right to bear arms—whether that should include weapons such as the assault rifles used to kill so many people in recent years. We can debate the finer points of regulation of gun ownership.

What is not debatable: The death of innocent people and especially children by gun is horrifically wrong. The risks of suicide too-easily accomplished and accidental shooting resulting from a loaded gun left within a child's reach are horrifically wrong.

Let's act now—not just those who don't own guns but also law-abiding gun owners—and stand up for requirements of licensing, background checks and training for law-abiding gun ownership.

Unmet mental health needs, unequal education, poverty and unequal opportunity are societal ills that need to be healed. None of them, on their own or together, can kill a classroom full of children in an instant. It's a gun, unlawfully used, that has done that.

I welcome your thoughts and comments on this issue. *Salish Current* has addressed gun violence in a past story ([“As gun death rates rise in Whatcom, Skagit and San Juan counties, state refocuses to public health approach”](#) June 11, 2021) and we will return to reporting on this subject.

We have many lost loved ones to remember this Memorial Day. May there be healing in the remembrance.

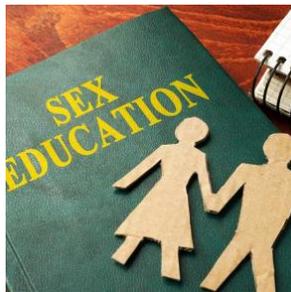
— Amy Nelson, Publisher

Looking for more news? Check here:

[Salish Sea News Week in Review 5/27/22](#): Three Little Pigs Friday, fish skin, carbon price, trash diving, water wins, saving salmon, Bristol Bay, British Columbia climate, pond turtle, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) in turmoil, J-pod in Salish Sea

News from the *Salish Current*

[Law into action: Teaching sexual inclusivity in school sexual education](#)



A new Washington law goes into effect with the start of the 2022-23 school year, requiring sexual education curriculum to be inclusive of all students based on current protected classes, including sexual orientation, gender identity and gender

expression.

By Lauren Gallup — Local public school districts are preparing to meet new state mandates for teaching about sexuality and gender. ([Read more.](#))

[Canoe Encampment highlights earth, sky and water threats](#)



Canoes traveling ancestral highways of the Lhaq'temish (Lummi) people arrive at Shipyard Cove on San Juan Island, part of a canoe encampment around the islands with a final stop and celebration at the Lummi Stommish Grounds on Friday.

By Nancy DeVaux — The Esqaplh etse Kwelengsen (Gathering of Eagles) Canoe Encampment is traveling the Salish Sea bringing attention to threats from pipelines, tankers and extractive fossil fuel industries.

[Letters to the Editor](#)

- Chom and Chris Greacen: “Disappointed about decision to increase Lopez Island vacation rental permits”

Salish Current affirms its commitment to work for truth, justice, equity and healing for all people.

#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter

#NoJusticeNoPeace

News from around the region

[Health and Safety](#)

[COVID-19](#). State and local health leaders remind residents about masking guidelines, as COVID-19 hospitalizations and cases are on the rise. ([Skaqit County Herald/paywall](#))

[Community Health Levels](#)

- [Whatcom County Community Level Health Risk](#):
Medium

- [San Juan County Community Level Health Risk:](#)
Medium
- [Skagit County Community Level Health Risk:](#) Low

[Quiet Skies](#) over San Juan County's most recent report for data collected in March and April concerning jet noise from the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island shows that the total noise reports for 2021 exceed the total of 2020 by 50%. The first four months of noise reports for 2022 have exceeded the first four months of 2021 by 60%. ([Quiet Skies](#))

[Salmonella](#). Jif's creamy, crunchy, natural and reduced fat peanut butters have been linked to a salmonella outbreak across 12 states including Washington. Jars with lot codes 1274425 through 2140425 have been recalled and should be disposed. ([Associated Press](#))

Government

San Juan County

The council will meet on June 7 and 8.

City of Bellingham

The council met on May 23. [Agenda items](#) included:

The council approved unanimously Mayor Fleetwood's appointment of [Eric Shew](#) to his final term on the Bellingham Arts Commission.

The council unanimously approved of the [Wildfire Risk Reduction](#) Interlocal Agreement with the Whatcom Conservation District.

The council unanimously approved award of a bid for [Padden Creek Improvements 24th to 30th](#) to Matia Contractors, Inc. of Ferndale for \$254,858.02.

Council members divided up responsibilities during Council Member [Huthman's excused absence](#). The council unanimously approved appointment of Council Member Williams to the Whatcom Transportation Authority during Huthman's absence.

The council voted 5-1 (Lilliquist opposed) to continue meeting virtually and will re-evaluate its decision when COVID-19 conditions in Whatcom County substantially change.

The council will hold its next Town Hall meeting on Sept. 9 on at 6 p.m. on Funding Priorities.

The council will meet again on June 6.

Whatcom County

The council met on May 24. [Agenda items](#) included:

Presentation: Whatcom County Executive Sidhu presented his "State of the County" remarks to Council [Read here.](#)

Other items: The council adopted (4-0, Byrd, Elenbaas, Kershner abstaining) a resolution supporting every person's right to inclusive healthcare. [Resolution.](#)

The council will meet again on June 7.

Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet again on June 7.

Elections

- Mike Murphy. Four-term Whatcom PUD commission incumbent Mike Murphy withdrew from the primary election last week, leaving two contenders to advance to the November general election. ([Secretary of State](#))
- Jane Fuller. San Juan County's Residency District 3 commission position sole candidate Jane Fuller will advance to the November general election. Incumbent commissioner Jamie Stephens chose not to file. ([Secretary of State](#))

Nature

Hornets. Scientists believe "murder hornets," first detected in 2019, are confined in Whatcom County; around 1,000 traps will be set in the county. ([Associated Press](#)) Researchers confirm the first "murder hornet" of

2022 has been found in Whatcom County. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Pocket estuary. The Skagit River System Cooperative will begin restoration of about 17 acres of chinook salmon habitat in a pocket estuary along Similk Bay south of the Swinomish Golf Links. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Tree farmer. Van Zandt resident Bob Barker's forest restoration work on 70 acres over the last 26 years has earned him the award as the state's Tree Farmer of the Year. ([CDN](#))

Heat dome. Researchers have determined that last summer's heat dome was caused by a change in the jet stream that grew out of a cyclone in the Gulf of Alaska that created a stagnant column of warm air over the Pacific Northwest and trapped heat near the surface. ([KGMI](#))

Business

Pay for news. A new [Dutch study](#) explores why readers may or may not be willing to pay for news. ([Seattle Times/Voices for a Free Press](#))

Plover sails. The historic passenger ferry *Plover* is returning Friday, May 27, to carry passengers between Blaine Harbor and Semiahmoo Resort for the first time since the pandemic started. Rides cost \$5 for adults, \$1 for youth and are free for children 12 years old and younger. The ferry will run Memorial Day Weekend to Labor Day Weekend. ([The Northern Light](#))

Community

Juneteenth. Local governments of Bellingham, Ferndale, Nooksack and Whatcom County, but not Lynden or Everson, will observe Juneteenth as a holiday [Blaine and Sumas had not confirmed]. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Happy Valley. The City of Bellingham will purchase property located at 2710 Donovan Avenue in the Happy Valley neighborhood for \$615,000 to improve an

existing park and improve access to trails that connect to the Connelly Creek Nature Area and the Interurban Trail. ([City of Bellingham](#))

Pride Month. The Anacortes City Council passed a resolution Monday recognizing June as LGBTQ+ Pride Month. ([Anacortes American](#))

Docket items. Skagit County commissioners will decide June 14 which planning docket items such as saltwater intrusion on Guemes Island and fully contained communities will be analyzed in the coming year. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

City population. As of July 21, 2021, Bellingham's population was 92,289 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, making it the 12th largest city in the state. ([Bellingham Heald/paywall](#))

Immigrant help. Bellingham's Immigrant Advisory Board proposed to the city council establishing an immigrant resource center to assist Whatcom County's approximately 24,000 immigrant population, an estimate half of whom are undocumented. ([The Front](#))

Arts and Leisure

[Salish Sea Early Music Festival](#) presents its final program of the season: "Johann Sebastian Bach Brandenburg 5 & Triple Concerto," performed by Oddie & Cohan & Krause & Phelps & Kuroda & Strand-Polyak & Bonham

- Anacortes: May 27, 7 p.m. · Croatian Cultural Center · 801 Fifth Street
- Lopez Island: May 28, Noon · Grace Church · 70 Sunset Lane
- Orcas Island: May 28, 6 p.m. (**please note new earlier time**) · Orcas Adventist Fellowship Church · 107 Enchanted Forest Road, Eastsound
- Bellingham: May 29, 8 p.m. · St. Paul's Episcopal Church · 2117 Walnut Street (**Rescheduled from May 23**)

Masks and vaccination required • \$20 or \$25 suggested donation • youth 18 and under always free (See: "[Old is new again with early music festival](#)" *Salish Current*, May 12, 2022)

Jump in!

The Bellingham City Club program, "Can Ukraine Survive the Russian Invasion? A Diplomat's Perspective" of May 25 is [available online](#).

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Mike Sato, Managing Editor**

Salish Current is a nonprofit online newsroom serving Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit Counties. Founded in 2020, *Salish Current* exists to protect and improve democratic governance by reporting and curating local news — freely accessible to all — with independence and strict journalistic integrity.

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