

## **News of the week: June 17, 2022**

**Dear Reader —**

Our lead story this week is by Kenneth Duncan detailing, gun violence in schools and its effects on students, administrators and teachers. The focus of the story is not about the prevalence of guns but about the stress and the mental toll the possibility of violence carries with it.

We were surprised and heartened to see that today's lead story in *Crosscut* ([WA law looks to address the trauma of 'active shooter' drills](#)) addressed some of the same stresses.

These are without doubt difficult times when the stressors on our mental health — and that of our community — confront us with no seemingly easy solutions in sight. COVID past and present, gasoline prices, groceries, housing and houselessness, jobs and fair wages, health care costs and access, race and gender equity ... and on.

There are many stories to report about those issues and we will report them — but my uneasy concern is how these seemingly intractable conditions corrode our mental and emotional resiliency in ways we may not even be able to self-identify.

During the days of terrorism threats, we were urged if we saw something amiss to say something. I think the same could hold true for some of the effects of stressors caused by our current conditions — depression, loneliness, loss of purpose — that if recognized in others call for us to reach out.

There are no easy solutions to the crises we find ourselves in. The least we can do is to take care of each other.

Thanks for reading and supporting [Salish Current](#) and nonprofit, local journalism.

— Amy Nelson, Publisher

Looking for more news? Check here:

[Salish Sea News Week in Review 6/17/22: Croc Friday!](#)  
Sea lice, estuary restoration, British Columbia floods, dike failure, British Columbia bees, jellyfish, wildlife conservation funding, old-growth suit, “forever chemicals,” suing oil companies, protected areas

## News from the *Salish Current*

### [Schools assess safety protocols after shootings, threats](#)



*With messages such as “how many more?” and “fear has no place in our schools,” students have joined other members of their communities throughout the country in protests against gun violence since the wave began.*

**By Kenneth Duncan** — Recent school shootings and threats have renewed concern over safety — and impact on students’ mental health. ([Read more.](#))

### [Dead gray whale: a sign of what’s to come?](#)



*A tourist examines a rotting whale corpse on Camano Island. The whale's gigantic tongue is on display after time, lye and scavengers have had their way with the body.*

**By Cooper Castelle** — The emaciated body of a dead gray whale washed up on a

Salish Sea beach raises questions about food supply and species survival. ([Read more.](#))

## Letters to the Editor

- Andronetta Douglass: [Sefzik should not take the credit](#)

**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 Community Health Levels:

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

Medium

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

### Government

#### San Juan County

The county commission met on June 14. [Agenda items](#) included:

- Discussion: Recommendations concerning tiny homes communities ([view 0.30.43](#))
- Action: The council unanimously approved a resolution as amended to acquire and accept a statutory warranty deed on Orcas Island for the McPeake property. ([view 1.02.08](#))
- Action: The council approved (2-0, Stephens excused) the grant submission for salmon recovery grants ([view 1.49.23](#))

The council will meet again on June 28.

#### City of Bellingham

The council will meet again on June 27.

Meetings. Now that the COVID pandemic has abated a bit, why is the Bellingham City Council still meeting virtually and what effect might that have on public participation. ([The Front](#))

### Whatcom County

The council will meet on June 21. [Agenda items](#) include:

Public hearings:

- Ordinance adopting amendments to the Whatcom County Code Title 20, Zoning to allow and regulate Battery Energy Storage Systems. [Staff memo](#). [Draft ordinance](#).
- Request authorization for County Executive to enter into Interlocal Agreements with the cities of Bellingham, Everson, Lynden, Nooksack and Sumas concerning planning, annexation and development within urban growth areas (each interlocal will be voted on separately). [Staff memo](#).

Consent agenda:

- Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to administer the Housing and Essential Needs Program, in the amount of \$2,530,694. [Staff memo](#).
- Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to support operations at the permanent supportive housing facility 22 North, in the amount of \$242,648. [Staff memo](#).

Other items:

- Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Pyramid Communications for public communications for the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force in the amount of \$88,800. [Staff memo](#).

The council will meet again on July 12.

### Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet on June 21. [Agenda items](#) include:

Consent agenda:

- Motion by the Port Commission to approve a Lease Agreement between the Port of Bellingham and ABC Recycling Operations Corp for 6.00 acres of property located in the Log Pond area, plus rights to use the Bellingham Shipping Terminal on a nonexclusive basis. [Staff memo.](#)
- Motion authorizing the Executive Director to execute the Second Amendment to Remedial Investigation Funding and Litigation Tolling Agreement between the Port, Yorkston Oil Company, the Estate of Thomas Yorkston, ExxonMobil Corporation and Chevron U.S.A., Inc. to fund remedial design for cleanup at the Yorkston Oil Site. [Staff memo.](#)
- Motion authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate and enter into a 5-year agreement with the Lighthouse Mission Ministries for up to 38 parking stalls in the Central Waterfront District. [Staff memo.](#)
- Motion authorizing the Executive Director to 1) Accept a \$1.125 million Whatcom County Economic Development Investment Program Grant to modernize power and telecommunication utilities at the Bellingham Shipping Terminal; 2) Amend the Port's 2022 budget by combining capital projects 109-874 and 109-760, and moving 2023 budget for 109-760 forward to 2022, and add \$247,641 of new budget for a total cost of \$2,657,668 and total offsetting grant of \$1,125,000. The net cost to the Port is \$1,532,668 to complete these infrastructure improvements. [Staff memo.](#)

Presentations:

- Aviation Noise Complaint Update
- Blaine Sawtooth Pier Update
- Electric Vehicle Charging Program Update

The commission will meet again on July 12.

### **Nature**

Bird flu. A red-tailed hawk collected from Skagit County in May tested positive for a strain of avian influenza, or what is commonly known as bird flu and it can be assumed that bird flu is actively circulating in Skagit County, similar to much of the state. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Bioluminescence. Visitors who join the Bellingham Community Boating Center's bioluminescence paddle excursions this summer can help collect samples of the tiny plankton that create the mesmerizing phenomenon, measure the light being produced each night and identify plankton species using a video microscope. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Wetland monitoring. The Community Science Wetlands Monitoring project, run by Friends of the Forest, every month takes water samples in Big Beaver Pond and Little Cranberry Lake to monitor oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in the wetlands as well as to survey egg masses of native frogs and salamanders. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Butterfly. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is taking public comment until Aug. 8 on a draft [recovery plan](#) for the island marble butterfly (*Euchloe ausonides insulanus*) now found only in the American Camp Unit of San Juan Island National Historical Park.

[The Outdoor Classroom](#), a Recreation Northwest project, continues to move ahead in Fairhaven Park. ([The Front](#))

Beaver dams around Little Cranberry and Heart lakes in Anacortes have been illegally moved and broken apart by humans, according to Anacortes Parks and Recreation. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

## **Business**

Point Roberts. Two years later, with the border the most open it's been since the pandemic started, there are slow signs of recovery in the isolated community of Point Roberts—but some residents say more needs to be done. ([KUOW](#))

MV Dorado. The Mavrik Marine facility in La Conner built and delivered the 140-foot MV Dorado passenger ferry after a 48-hour trip down the West Coast to San Francisco. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

RR bridge. Burlington Northern's plan to replace the railroad bridge over the Skagit river between Mount Vernon and Burlington was rejected by the Washington

Department of Ecology because of failure to include water quality protection, debris management and construction methodology. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Climate action. A new city office to focus on climate action projects has been proposed as part of the Climate Action Fund proposed \$60 million, 10-year levy. ([CDN](#))

Site cleanup at the Port of Bellingham's Lignin Operable Unit property in preparation for Mercy Housing Northwest's affordable housing project will be discussed at an on-site tour and at in-person and online public meeting on June 29. ([Washington Dept. of Ecology](#))

Plastic ban. Bellingham's ban on single-use plastics in the city's food, grocery and lodging businesses goes into effect on July 31. ([City of Bellingham](#))

## **Community**

Farmworker housing. Skagit County commissioners approved further planning commission study of a proposal to repurpose farmland buildings for farmworker housing but voted against further study on proposals for urban development in rural areas and monitoring of seawater intrusion on Guemes Island. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Mission shelter. A seven-hour hearing examiner meeting drew over two dozen public comments, many in opposition, on the Lighthouse Mission's request for a conditional use permit for a five-story building to replace its shelter at 910 W. Holly St. on the edge of the Old Town district. A decision is expected by July 14 or earlier. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

22 North. A 40-unit apartment building in downtown Bellingham known as 22 North which aims to be a safe haven to get homeless people off the streets has drawn complaints from people who live or work near 1022 N. State St. who report excessive litter, thefts, vandalism, assaults and brazen drug use. ([CDN](#))

BC flood. The Lower Mainland flooded in 1948. The next one will be worse. A six-part series exploring life and risk on the Lower Mainland's floodplain, the stretches of flat land in the region by the Fraser River and the coast. ([The Tyee](#))

Ericksen overpass. A Ferndale city proposal to name the Thornton Street railroad overpass in honor of the late state senator Doug Ericksen was withdrawn for discussion at a later date. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Free ride. Skagit County youth 18 and younger will ride free on Skagit Transit beginning Monday with the Youth Ride Free program. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

### **Arts and Leisure**

Jazz. Internationally acclaimed and Grammy Award-winning trumpeter and composer Charlie Porter and his quintet, June 22, 7 p.m., Sylvia Center for the Arts. [Tickets at the door.](#)

Art Walk. Lotus Wise Images: "Colors of Summer" by photographer Kristi Moseley at Evolve Chocolate & Cafe dURING the Fairhaven Art Walk, June 24, 4-6 p.m. [Information.](#)

Movie. "Back to the Future" is the Fairhaven Outdoor Cinema feature at the Fairhaven Village Green, June 25, 7 p.m. [Information.](#)

Arts award. Recipients of Bellingham Mayor's Arts Awards for excellence in the arts for 2019-2021 will be honored on June 29 at the Mount Baker Theater. ([City of Bellingham](#))

### **Jump in!**

Juneteenth celebration. Bellingham Unity Committee Juneteenth Celebration, June 18, 2-6 p.m., Maritime Heritage Park, Bellingham. Bring your food and a blanket to spread around the Maritime Amphitheater and enjoy live funk, soul, R&B, reggae music along with dance performances, community step, art wall, local organizations tabling, and more. [Information.](#)

Health future. Bellingham City Club presents a virtual discussion on "Health Equity or Private Equity: Is Wall Street Taking Over Health Care for Seniors?" at Noon on June 22. [Registration required.](#)

Ukraine gathering. "Hope for Ukraine: Stories, Songs and Prayers" will be held at the North County Christ the King Church, 1816 18th Street, Lynden, at 6:30 p.m. on June 22. Come hear stories, join in songs and prayers for the people impacted by the war in Ukraine, and let the people of Ukraine know they are not forgotten or alone. [Information.](#)

Town hall. South Fork Valley Community Association sponsors a town hall at 7 p.m. on June 23 at the Van Zandt Community Hall, 4106 Valley Hwy., Deming, to discuss community safety and internet connectivity.

Race equity. Whatcom County residents are asked to take part in an online survey on the scope and structure of a proposed Whatcom Racial Equity Commission. [Survey deadline July 1.](#)

Candidate questions. Submit questions to the League of Women Voters of Bellingham/Whatcom County you'd like candidates running for office to answer [here](#) and watch the candidate forums in July. [Schedule here.](#)

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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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