



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

News of the week: July 1, 2022

Dear Reader —

Like you, I welcome this weekend and what promises to be our long-awaited summer, and wish us all a few warm days in the sun — with prudent skin protection.

It's also a weekend to ponder and assess some fine words:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness ...”

For me, “men” means “people,” all people (and not corporations). For me, “inalienable” means all people have had rights all the time, rights that we don't have to be given and rights that cannot be taken away.

Although *Salish Current* doesn't report breaking news stories, like you I read the news this past week. I was not surprised but nonetheless disturbed by legal decisions regarding abortion rights, school prayer and air pollution. I found these decisions hard to square with what we are meant to be celebrating this weekend.

Although *Salish Current* does not report breaking news, we provide a context and a deeper understanding to the news of the day. This week's stories feature the rise of women in island leadership, the local implications of reversal of *Roe v. Wade* and the steps being taken toward racial unity in Lynden.

San Juan freelancer **Nancy DeVaux** brings her years as both an observer and a participant in island politics to the story of how the county will reach an historic first with an all-woman county council next year.

Our summer journalism intern **Sadie Fick** dove deep into what comes next at Planned Parenthood and state and local politics around abortion rights — and which 42nd Legislative district candidates stand for abortion rights, which do not and which chose not to answer.

I agreed with *Seattle Times* columnist Danny Westneat about the failure of truth and justice surrounding the Kitsap School District decision ([“The myth at the heart of the praying Bremerton coach case”](#)) so found it heartening that Lynden’s Racial Unity Now project profiled in **Clifford Heberden’s** story puts forth religion as unifying rather than divisive.

Look to *Salish Current* for this kind of in-depth news reporting that’s free to read and free from advertising. Share this newsletter with a friend or family member. We’re reader-supported so we appreciate [your donation](#) to pay our freelance reporters who make our work possible.

Thank you!

—Amy Nelson, Publisher

Wait! There’s more:

[Salish Sea News Week in Review 7/1/22](#): Canada Friday, Snake River dams, Elwha chinook, Site C dam, starvin’ orcas, Keystone Preserve, sockeye, climate activism future, heat lessons, Elwha salmon, hatchery failures

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

#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter

#NoJusticeNoPeace

News from the *Salish Current*

[Women who lead: San Juans to have first all-woman county council](#)



Time was, San Juan County Council was made up mostly of mostly men, with only a handful of women elected in several decades. But next year, the ongoing quest for equity is expected to mark a milestone when an all-woman board takes office.

By Nancy DeVaux — San Juan County is on track to have its first all-woman county council next year.
([More...](#))

[Faith-based Lynden group works for racial unity](#)



Front Street's iconic windmill-themed building tells a story of tradition in Lynden, where a community group seeks to encourage conversations about racism that will inspire equality and understanding.

By Clifford Heberden — Racial tensions in Lynden in 2020 galvanized the formation of a group working to build bridges between communities and cultures.
([More...](#))

[Roe v. Wade reversal prompts questions locally](#)



Advocates for women's freedom of choice reported overwhelmingly supportive response from passers-by on a sunny afternoon this week outside Planned Parenthood in Bellingham.

By Sadie Fick — With bans on abortion rolling out in many states after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, it can be difficult to know what to do and what to expect when seeking reproductive health care. ([More...](#))

News from around the region

(The links found here may have limited access for those who don't subscribe to the source publication. Sorry for any inconvenience!)

Health and Safety

PSP. Skagit County and Whatcom County waters have been closed to recreation shellfish harvest due to paralytic shellfish poison.

Abortion. Gov. Inslee this week issued an executive order to the Washington State Patrol prohibiting cooperation or assistance with out-of-state abortion and other reproductive health care investigations, prosecutions or other legal actions. ([Governor's Office](#))

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](#): Medium

Government

San Juan County

The council met on June 28. Agenda items and video recording may be found [here](#).

The council will meet again on July 12 on Waldron Island.

City of Bellingham

The council met on June 27. [Agenda items](#) included:

Committee of the Whole:

- The council unanimously approved a draft interlocal agreement with Whatcom County concerning joint planning, development review and annexation in Bellingham urban growth areas.
- The council unanimously approved an ordinance amending the 2021-2022 biennial budget to increase American Rescue Plan Act expenditures for food security.
- The council unanimously affirmed that the display of flags on city property is government speech and approved Mayor Fleetwood's request to authorize his office to display Pride banners on city utility poles.
- The council discussed but took no action on approval of the 2022 EMS levy ballot proposition.

The council will meet again on July 11.

Whatcom County

The Whatcom County six-year EMS levy scheduled for the November ballot hit a bump when the Whatcom County Council reduced the proposed tax rate by nearly one-third and added language requiring EMS agencies to recruit and retain more diverse staff. ([CDN](#)) The Bellingham City Council discussed the county's action but did not approve the ballot proposition. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

The council will meet again on July 12.

Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet again on July 12.

Nature

Orca. A new study shows endangered orca pods were underfed in six of the last 40 years — including the final three years of the study. ([Vancouver Sun](#))

Order. The state declared 13 Southern Resident killer whales "vulnerable" due to health concerns and issued an emergency order requiring commercial sightseeing vessels and urging boaters to stay at least half a nautical mile away from the whales this summer. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

Acquisition. The San Juan County Conservation Land Bank and the San Juan Preservation Trust have acquired the former Glenwood Inn property, a 58-acre shoreline parcel located near the northwest tip of Orcas Island, to be managed for eventual public access. ([San Juan Preservation Trust](#))

Business

Dams. Skagit County has joined in support of the lawsuit by the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe against Seattle City Light and its Skagit River dams by filing an amicus brief in the state's Court of Appeals. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Tourism spending in Whatcom totaled \$527.4 million last year, a 38% increase from the \$380.9 million in visitor spending in the area in 2020 and 5% short of the \$555.0 million in 2019. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Unions. Workers at the Starbucks at Iowa and King streets in Bellingham have voted to unionize. Cordata location's union vote will be counted July 6. ([CDN](#))

Port. All tariff rates at the Port of Anacortes are going up by 6% today, with a few exceptions for things like equipment rentals, passenger vessel fees, electric energy and fresh water rates. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Community

Shelter. Many of the residents of the Skagit First Step Center, tiny cabins on Burlington city property, have

returned to homelessness after their limited stay of 90 days, highlighting the need for more investment in affordable housing. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Housing. LifeHouse Foundation withdrew its application for assistance from the state's Department of Corrections for transitional housing in a residential Lynden neighborhood after running into zoning restrictions and neighbor opposition. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Police. Blaine Police Department chief Donnell "Tank" Tanksley celebrated his three-year anniversary serving the police department last week. He reflects on his time on the job. ([The Northern Light](#))

Boats. Shortage of marina moorage space brought business owners and members of the Marine Trade Group to the June 16 Port of Anacortes Commission meeting to voice displeasure and frustration with the waiting list, access, transfer and assignability of moorage slips. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Arts and Leisure

"Haida Gwaii: On the Edge of the World" is the Friday Harbor Film Festival's Director Series for July 1-13 online viewing. \$1.95. [Watch here.](#)

"Jumanji: The Next Level" is the July 2 Fairhaven Outdoor Cinema offering. Tickets at The Green.

Dr. Jimmy and the Swingtime Serenaders, Whatcom County's Big Band, perform at the Elizabeth Park Summer Concert Series, July 7, 6-8 p.m. Bellingham, free.

Free art. The Ferndale Arts Commission presents "Art in Action!" when you can watch local artists create before you — and you can buy their work. July 9, 2-6 p.m. Pioneer Pavilion.

Jump in!

Clean up. Surfrider Foundation will be cleaning up litter along the Gulf Road access to the Cherry Point Aquatic

Reserve on July 5, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. See you there!
[Register here.](#)

Health. Bellingham City Club's June program "[Health Equity or Private Equity?](#)" is now available for viewing.

Travel. The Northwest Straits Foundation's Passport to Marine Adventure travel game is a fun and free way to explore the beautiful shores and bays of the Salish Sea.
[Check it out.](#)

Candidate forums. The League of Women Voters of Bellingham-Whatcom County will conduct televised [candidate forums](#) on July 7 (U.S. Congress District 2, cosponsored by Skagit, Snohomish and Whidbey chapters); July 13 (42nd District Representative 1 and 2); and July 14 (Whatcom District Court and 42nd District Senator)

Tourism. Got some tourism and cultural activities in mind and need funding? City of Ferndale's hotel-motel [grant program](#) is taking applications until Aug. 1. City of Bellingham's [grant program](#) application deadline is Aug. 19.

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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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