



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

News of the week: July 8, 2022

Dear Reader —

You know it's election season when the local League of Women Voters chapter primary candidate forums come around.

In our readership area, the focus this time is on the 42nd Legislative District where the Senate and two House seats have multiple contenders — and some very heavy campaign financing.

The LWV candidate forums will be held [online](#) next week on July 13 (House Positions 1 and 2) and on July 14 (Senate and District Court Judge Position 2).

Readers of *Salish Current* over the last two years have read our stories about the political shift from red to blue in the district House seats and the process of filling the unexpired Senate term of the late Sen. Doug Ericksen. We've also reported on the contentious issue of mask mandates spilling over into Lynden's school board election, the community grappling with racism and the ongoing threat of river flooding and just allocation of river water.

Salish Current will listen and watch candidates next week, report on what they say and make sure what they say is true. But you watch and listen, too. Holding our leaders and those who want to be our leaders accountable for what they say and what they do is a first step toward building trust in our community.

We'll do our part. We ask that you do your part, too.

I thank the League of Women Voters for the work they do. I thank you for reading *Salish Current* and I thank you for [your support](#) of news that is free to read and free from advertising.

—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*

[Sylvia Center closure clouds future for local theater](#)



The nonprofit Sylvia Center for the Arts board's decision to go dark when its lease expires has left performers, producers and patrons wondering about the future of local theater. Some are encouraging the City of Bellingham and Whatcom

County to find funding to help fill the gap.

By Matt Benoit: Announcement of the closure of Sylvia Center for the Arts — a surprise to many — has prompted questions about the future of local theater. [Read more ...](#)

[Local policing at recruitment crossroads](#)



The Bellingham Police Department posted decals on one of their cruisers to advertise for new recruits, a response to their shortage in officers.

By Kai Uyehara: Local police departments are adapting to staff and applicant shortages in ways as multifaceted as the reasons behind the trend. [Read more ...](#)

[Community Voices / 'Be the Bridge': RUN-Lynden marks 2nd anniversary of March for Black Lives](#)



Nooksack elder George Adams, whose ancestral village was near present-day Lynden, welcomed those attending a Racial Unity Now-Lynden sponsored second anniversary observance of the March for Black Lives on July 5.

By Vernon Damani Johnson: Racial Unity Now-Lynden's approach of addressing racism under a Christian framework may indeed "be the bridge" for community engagement. [Read more ...](#)

[Community Voices / A twisted path to homelessness](#)



Physically disabled and recurrently depressed, 54-year-old Megan is living in temporary housing. As others who become homeless, Megan's spiral into homelessness happened in stages over several years.

By John Dunne — A community resident finds herself without long-term housing after a downward spiral into homelessness. [Read more ...](#)

[Letters to the Editor](#)

- Suneeta Lara Eisenberg: In support of Alex Ramel

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

Jet Noise Report May and June 2022: The number of noise reports in 2021 exceeds the number reported in 2020 by 50%. As for the first six months of the year, January/June 2022 reports are 49% higher than those reported in 2021. ([Quiet Skies](#))

Little Cranberry Lake in the Anacortes Community Forest is closed indefinitely because of high levels of fecal coliform bacteria in the water. ([Skaagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Peace Arch Provincial Park remains closed because of open U.S. entry until Canada's vaccine mandate ends. ([The Northern Light](#)) Canada announced this week that it is extending current border rules in effect for at least three months. ([The Northern Light](#))

COVID. B.C. is entering its third wave of the omicron COVID-19 variant as hospitalizations jumped 35% in the last week. ([CBC](#))

COVID-19 Community Health Levels:
[Whatcom County Community Level Health Risk](#): Low

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

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

Government

San Juan County

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

City of Bellingham

The council will meet on July 11. [Agenda items](#) include:

Public Works and Natural Resources:

- Post Point Resource Recovery Project - Facilities Plan. [Presentation.](#)

Committee of the Whole:

- Discussion of Labor Concerns Related to Climate Action Efforts. [Staff memo.](#)
- Update on the Renewal of the EMS Levy. [Staff memo.](#)

The council will meet again on July 25.

Whatcom County

The council will meet on July 12. [Agenda items](#) include:

- Request authorization for the county executive to enter into a purchase and sale agreement between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council for the transfer of property at 1000 N. Forest St. at no cost for public benefit purposes consistent with RCW 39.33.015. [Staff memo.](#)
- Ordinance providing for submission to the qualified voters of Whatcom County a proposition renewing the levy of a regular property tax at a rate of \$.199 or less per \$1000 assessed valuation (amended from original request of \$.295) to continue to provide emergency medical services. [Substitute levy plan revised.](#)

The council will meet again on July 26.

Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet on July 12. [Agenda items](#) include:

Consent agenda:

- Approve [a lease](#) between the Port and Rainier Petroleum LLC for the fuel facility at the Bellingham Cruise Terminal.
- Authorize the executive director to execute an [amended agreement](#) to the Little Squalicum Habitat Beach Project One Time Grant Program Agreement with the Dept. of Ecology for the Little Squalicum Habitat Beach Project to provide up to \$1.5 million in funding.

Presentations:

- Q2 Financials/Audit Results

- Alaska Ferry Railroad Crossing Project Update
- House of Tears Carving Dedication

Action items:

- Authorize the executive director to enter into an [insurance contract](#) for the Port's Property, Cyber and Crime insurance.
- Authorize the executive director to enter into an [Interagency Agreement](#) with the Dept. of Ecology for \$90,000 for the Port to complete a Brownfield Affordable Housing Inventory.

The commission will meet again on Aug. 9.

Elections

Candidate forums. The League of Women Voters of Bellingham-Whatcom County will conduct [televised candidate forums](#) on July 13 (42nd District Rep 1 and 2); and July 14 (Whatcom District Court and 42nd District Senator)

Campaign Contributions Reported As of 7/7/22 [Public Disclosure Commission](#)

- 42nd LD Senate Campaign
Ben Elenbaas (R): Raised \$102,532.82; Spent \$26,212.76
Sharon Shewmake (D): Raised \$134,671.73; Spent \$35,644.49
Simon Sefzik (R): Raised \$240,559.96; Spent \$46,086.00
- 42nd LD House Campaign Position 1
Alicia Rule (D): Raised \$85,685.34; Spent \$29,117.37;
Debt \$1,409.99; Outside \$For: \$301.14
Kamal Bhachu (R): Raised \$13,257.93; Spent \$2,283.46;
Debt \$2,700.89
Tawsha Dykstra Thompson (R): Raised \$80,181.52;
Spent \$25,476.58
- 42nd LD House Campaign Position 2
Dan Johnson (R): Raised \$53,011.20; Spent \$14,718.21
Joe Timmons (D): Raised \$57,051.40; Spent \$19,326.34;
Debt \$2,336.47
Kyle Christensen (R): Raised \$32,542.67; Spent \$17,522.28
Richard May (D): Raised \$57,244.03; Spent \$14,347.90

- 40th LD House Campaign Position 1
Debra Lekanoff (D): Raised \$37,218.81; Spent \$25,673.85; Debt \$3,500.00
- 40th LD House Campaign Position 2
Alex Ramel (D): Raised \$88,047.22; Spent \$24,050.27; Debt \$3,150.00
Trevor Smith (D): Raised \$32,130.03; Spent \$4,226.66
- Whatcom County District Court Judge Position 1
Angela Anderson: Raised \$1,901.20; Spent \$1,901.20
- Whatcom County District Court Judge Position 2
Jonathan Rands: Raised \$40,860.91; Spent \$17,689.12; Debt \$20,785.50
David Nelson: Raised \$30,200; Spent \$9,387.10
Gordon Jenkins: Raised \$24,625.29; Spent \$6,532.39; Debt \$4,250.00

Nature

Eagles. The number of bald eagles seen around Deming along the Nooksack River has increased by six times over previous years but the numbers may end up dropping as chum salmon runs diminish, according to a [recent study](#). ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Business

Amtrak will resume its Seattle-Vancouver route in September after a more than two-year suspension. ([CBC](#))

New EDC. The Anacortes City Council approved creating a new Economic Development Committee to organize local groups and activities. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Union. Employees at the Cordata Starbucks have voted to unionize, the second store in Bellingham to do so. ([CDN](#))

Community

Mercy Housing Northwest, a nonprofit low-income housing provider, was able to competitively bid for the 145-unit Evergreen Ridge apartment complex in Bellingham with a \$4 million bridge loan provided by the City of Bellingham. The nonprofit is purchasing the property for \$33 million with contributions from the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, the state Dept. of Commerce and the federal government totaling \$7.5 million. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Flood. Whatcom County is seeking \$13.5 million in federal money to buy 24 flood-risk properties in Sumas, Everson and the unincorporated county, and \$3 million to raise the foundations of 14 Sumas homes and three in Ferndale. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Cayou Channel is the new name given to the former Harney Channel in the San Juan Islands to recognize one of the first Indigenous elected officials in Washington state. ([KING5](#))

Bennett Knox, who worked for Louisville Metro Parks for 20 years, has been named the new Whatcom County Parks and Recreation director, replacing Michael McFarlane who has retired. ([The Northern Light](#))

Arts and Leisure

"Encanto" is the July 9 feature showing at the Fairhaven Outdoor Cinema at the Village Green. Tickets at the door.

"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.](#)

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!

[NSEA Fishtival!](#) July 9, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Vanderyacht Park, Ferndale. Flyfishing, Salmon Storytime and bracelet making.

[Northwest Tune-Up](#), July 8-10, is a bike, beer and music festival held in celebration of PNW culture. Bellingham Waterfront.

Candidate forums. The League of Women Voters of Bellingham-Whatcom County will conduct televised [candidate forums](#) on 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.

Wait! There's more

[Salish Sea News Week in Review 7/8/22](#): Math 2.0 Friday, Saturna Island, kelp crisis, Snake River dams, Makah whale hunt, green crabs, Cayou Channel, big quake big wave

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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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