

## News of the week: July 29, 2022

Dear Reader —

Who do you trust — and why?

When it comes to who we trust as sources of information, social media has come to be the first answer for many.

“Social media” means different things to different people.

It may mean comments from people we personally know, or people we’ve never met but with whom we feel we share some values or world view.

It may refer to a personalized feed of links to journalistically sound reporting by bona fide news publications.

Based on a platform’s invisible affinity algorithm, a social media feed may become populated with posts that are quite convincingly dressed up as news yet devoid of any basis in fact. These are disinformation; misleading, damaging, even toxic ... but they may also be trusted by the reader.

If everyone around you says eating monosodium glutamate is bad, most likely you’d stop eating it, too. [\[It isn’t bad for you.\]](#)

But to make important choices on the ballot or in the community that are based on factual information, it’s vital to think about the social media we’re consuming.

That’s especially true since social media has become a powerful political and cultural tool that has disrupted and eliminated many newsrooms and thousands of local newspapers which once provided news coverage that supported strong communities and healthy democracy.

It takes an open-minded and open-hearted awareness and even courage at times to question the truth of what we hear from sources we trust. But when it comes to the information on which we base decisions about the vital issues of personal and community life we must.

The vital need to encourage children and teens to recognize when and why to trust information was emphasized by local participants in research roundtables organized in Bellingham this week by the University of Washington Center for an Informed Public, along with *Salish Current* and library cooperative OCLC. [We'll share more on that when the research is compiled.]

Repost? Share? Like? Retweet? Think first. As journalist Edward R. Murrow urged in another complicated time, "A nation of sheep will beget a government of wolves."

—Amy Nelson, Publisher

Wait! There's more: [Salish Sea News Week in Review 7/29/22](#): Tiger, nix 'Audubon,' Terry Williams, Northern giant hornet, Alaska water warming, pathogens on plastic, pervasive plastic, bird heat strain

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

## News from the *Salish Current*

### [Faith communities ally for climate justice; to hold Sacred Earth Fair](#)



*Multifaith Network for Climate Justice members were among the crowd at the Red Road to D.C. send-off event on the Bellingham waterfront in May 2021.*

**By Clifford Heberden**

— A grassroots multifaith network is seeking to increase awareness of — and action to address — climate change issues through its Sacred Earth Fair July 31. [Read more ...](#)

### [Led aviation fuel fires decades-long complaint](#)

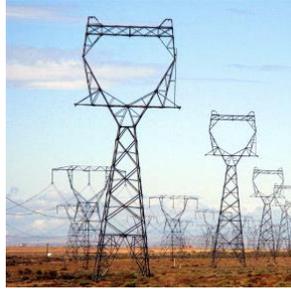


*To avoid dropping hazardous lead on residential areas, the Bellingham International Airport recommends pilots fly out over the water before turning.*

**By Sadie Fick** — A Cliffside neighborhood resident is

challenging federal, state and local officials including the Port of Bellingham over the use of leaded airplane fuel. [Read more ...](#)

## [Intalco restart: can 'green' aluminum get 'clean' power?](#)



*Transmission lines carry rivers of clean energy from Bonneville Power Administration dams on the Columbia to localities across the state and elsewhere. A new company is looking for ways to tap in, to enable a green restart of the Intalco aluminum plant.*

**By Eric Scigliano**—Options for a clean-power source are narrowing for a buyout firm with a sustainability ethos that wants to restart and upgrade the Intalco aluminum plant near Ferndale. [Read more ...](#)

### [Letters to the Editor](#)

- Timothy Manns: Ramel is environmental champion fighting for big solutions

## **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](#). Orcas Island's Buck Bay Shellfish Company retail market and restaurant oysters and clams tested on July 26 and 27 showed high levels of paralytic shellfish poison and should not be eaten. [\(KGMI\)](#)

[Asbestos](#). Seasonal warnings have been issued to stay out of Whatcom County's Swift Creek and Sumas River to avoid disturbing naturally occurring asbestos which can be released if disturbed. [\(KGMI\)](#)

[Anti-vax](#). Ben Elenbaas, Whatcom County councilmember and 42nd Legislative District candidate

for the state Senate, told the Lynden City Council that he opposes COVID-19 vaccine mandates for the city's first responders. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

#### COVID-19 Community Health Levels:

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

### **Education**

Budget. The Blaine School District's adopted budget for the coming school year forecasts a \$14 million deficit by 2026 due to low enrollment. State law requires a district balance its budget before each upcoming school year. ([The Northern Light](#))

### **Government**

#### San Juan County

The council will meet on Aug. 2. [Agenda items](#) include:

- Public Hearing: Annual Docket Process and Requests
- Action: Approve a Resolution re Road Levy Increase Ballot Measure
- Discussion: First and Second Quarter Financial Reviews
- Discussion: Marine Program Update
- Discussion: Sustainable Tourism Management Plan Update
- Discussion: Overview of Current Use and Designated Forest Land Special Tax Programs

#### City of Bellingham

The council met on July 25. [Agenda items](#) included:

- The city will use a \$60,000 Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission grant to assist with recruitment of bilingual police officers and provide incentives to applicants and employees who help recruit new officers.
- The city will begin a one-year pilot program eliminating the requirement that applicants to the city's

police department have earned an Associate of Arts (AA) degree.

Committee of the Whole:

- Update on Development Process, Community Engagement and Structure of Proposed Whatcom Racial Equity Commission. Heather Flaherty and Shu-Ling Zhao, Chuckanut Health Foundation, provided an update on the community engagement process and summary of their work to date (video 08:40).
- Overview of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy Plan. Fire Chief Bill Hewitt provided an update on the EMS levy (video: 17:34). He will return to council on Aug. 1 seeking support of a resolution for the levy.

The council will meet again on Aug. 1.

- Public Hearing, Aug. 1, 7 p.m. Police. The Bellingham Police Department is applying for a Department of Justice Assistance Grant and would like to use the grant for recruitment of new officers through print media, radio, buses, social media, billboards, and banners.

#### City of Blaine

Quit. Public works director Bernie Ziemianek abruptly resigned July 12, submitting his resignation letter the day he left and citing personal reasons. Gary McSpadden, maintenance and operation supervisor for the city's public works department, will serve as the acting public works director. ([The Northern Light](#))

#### Whatcom County

The council met on July 26. [Agenda items](#) included:

County Executive Report:

- The council unanimously confirmed (Byrd absent) the County Executive's appointment of Bennett Knox as Director of Parks and Recreation effective Sept. 6.

Other Items:

- The council approved (4-2, Elenbaas and Kershner opposed, Byrd absent) a resolution supporting a transition to zero-emissions transportation. [Amended Second Substitute Resolution - Track Changes.](#)

- The council approved (5-1, Elenbaas opposed, Byrd absent) an 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 \$.295 or less per \$1,000 assessed valuation to continue to provide emergency medical services.
- The council approved (5-1, Frazey opposed, Byrd absent) a resolution establishing priorities for Whatcom County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan update. [Second Substitute Resolution - Clean.](#)

The council will meet again on Aug. 9.

#### Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet again on Aug. 9.

#### **Elections**

All ballots must be mailed or deposited in ballot boxes by Aug. 2.

Public Disclosure Commission  
[Campaign Contributions](#) Reported as of July 29

#### LD 42 Senate Campaign

- Ben Elenbaas (R): Raised \$105,914.91; Spent \$79,021.60
- Sharon Shewmake (D): Raised \$160,533.70; Spent \$142,205.12; Outside For \$62,963.20; Outside Against \$184,125.72
- Simon Sefzik (R): Raised \$353,129.65; Spent \$229,898.62; Outside Against \$17,131.25

#### LD 42 House Campaign Position 1

- Alicia Rule (D): Raised \$131,698.01; Spent \$126,479.29; Debt \$4,001.00; Outside For \$19,244.77; Outside Against \$14,518.20
- Kamal Bhachu (R): Raised \$17,892.93; Spent \$12,087.71
- Tawsha Dykstra Thompson (R): Raised \$107,426.67; Spent \$62,918.88; Outside For: \$42,018.90

#### LD 42 House Campaign Position 2

- Dan Johnson (R): Raised \$59,189.35; Spent \$51,265.82; Outside For \$51,265.82

- Joe Timmons (D): Raised \$72,418.00; Spent \$36,998.98; Debt \$25,678.95; Outside For \$73.51
- Kyle Christensen (R): Raised \$45,961.05; Spent \$39,549.42; Outside For \$4,803.52
- Richard May (D): Raised \$60,187.52; Spent \$45,414.50; Outside For \$73.51

#### LD 40 House Campaign Position 1

- Debra Lekanoff (D): Raised \$44,898.85; Spent \$40,238.41; Outside For \$110.27

#### LD 40 House Campaign Position 2

- Alex Ramel (D): Raised \$117,437.32; Spent \$73,290.33; Debt \$43,563.00; Outside For \$110.27
- Trevor Smith (D): Raised \$46,335.07; Spent \$22,457.01; Outside For \$103,791.37

#### 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 \$47,023.07; Spent \$55,078.83; Debt \$14,729.75
- David Nelson: Raised \$34,500.00; Spent \$30,185.17
- Gordon Jenkins: Raised \$26,722.29; Spent \$22,228.62

### **Nature**

Little Squalicum Beach Park in Bellingham will undergo a two-month closure for restoration to create a more accessible beach and habitat for forage fish.

[\(Bellingham Herald/paywall\)](#)

### **Business**

Skagit County reports it is close to settling a 2019 lawsuit against the state Department of Natural Resources over how the department handles timber management on state trust lands within the county. The state developed a new, plot-based inventory management system for forest lands over 20 years old and increased reporting by the agency. [\(Skagit Valley Herald/paywall\)](#)

## **Commentary**

Karen Sullivan in part two of the Rainshadow Journal's Deranged Gourmet series highlights "Recipes Form the 1950s: Passive-Aggressive Casseroles." Crown Roast of Frankfurters, Centipede "Casserole" and more!

[\*\(Rainshadow Journal\)\*](#)

## **Community**

Prayer. Lynden Christian High School's head football coach Greg Terpstra and Blake VanDalen, Lynden High School's head football coach, talk about the Supreme Court's praying-coach decision. Said VanDalen, "Anytime a decision is made that gives people more freedom, it's a great decision." [\*\(Lynden Tribune/paywall\)\*](#)

Homeless. Whatcom County's annual point-in-time homeless count in February reports that the count decreased by 3% from last year with a 15% decrease in homeless families with children. [\*\(KGMI\)\*](#)

Shelter. A five-story, 300-bed homeless shelter will be built in Bellingham's Old Town neighborhood by Lighthouse Mission Ministries after the project received approval for a permit. [\*\(CDN/paywall\)\*](#)

Race. In the aftermath of the 2020 summer of racial justice activism, a new Whatcom County Racial Equity Commission advisory group composed of elected officials and appointed members who speak for a variety of community interests, including representatives of business and social justice organizations, has been proposed to the city and county councils. [\*\(Bellingham Herald/paywall\)\*](#)

22 North. Despite progress by the Opportunity Council in reducing crime and other problems at the 22 North State Street low-income apartment in Bellingham, neighborhood complaints continue and two Whatcom County council members voted against a \$242,648 measure to add staff and cover expenses.

[\*\(CDN/paywall\)\*](#)

## **Arts and Leisure**

Jansen Arts Center celebrates its [10th anniversary](#).

Film. The Friday Harbor Director's Film Series presents "The Babushkas of Chernobyl," a film about how 200 women defiantly cling to their ancestral homeland in Chernobyl's radioactive "Exclusion Zone." July 29–Aug. 10, \$1.95. [To watch](#).

Film. Fairhaven Outdoor Cinema. "Dirty Dancing (1987), July 30, 7 p.m. [Tickets at the event](#).

Pump Boys and Dinettes July 15–31 (Fri.-Sun.), Zuanich Point Park Fisherman's Pavilion, 7:30 p.m. A playful country-western musical set in a dockside diner. A family-fun show with foot-stomping music and a piece of pie at intermission! [Tickets](#).

Exhibit: "Looking Forward, Facing Back" features the work of Jessica Silver, Lyz Staman, Susan Cohen Raphael and Erin Libby, and will send you on a time-traveling journey through the whimsical and surreal dream worlds of these evocative creators. Reception, Aug. 5, 6–9 p.m.; exhibit Aug. 5–27, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. [Allied Arts Gallery](#), Bellingham.

## **Jump in!**

Indigenous Justice. "Seeking Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People" presentation by 40th District Rep. Debra Lekanoff, is [available for viewing](#).

Low Tide Naturalist-Led Beach Exploration. July 29, Noon to 2 p.m., Birch Bay State Park. [Info here](#).

NSEA Community Work Party, July 30, 9 a.m. to Noon, Bell Creek in Deming. [Info here](#).

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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