



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

News of the week: Sep. 2, 2022

Dear Reader —

Remember how Boomers used to say, “Don't trust anyone over 30?” Remember why? Because trust has to be earned; it's not something to be taken for granted.

Trust is the currency of a healthy community; news and news media are ways in which a community talks among itself. Millennials and Gen Z — 16- to 40-year-olds — are highly tuned in to what's trustworthy, noted a [recent study](#) from the American Press Institute. While they report more trust in local news organizations than in national ones, trust in news media overall, among all ages, is declining.

That poses a direct challenge to news media.

Salish Current has been addressing that challenge head-on since our founding in 2020. With every article, we seek the most complete version of the truth available, and report it fairly and accurately.

We provide that information, freely accessible to all, independent of fear or favor, to inform our community, support democracy, and identify solutions. We work to raise the voices of vulnerable members of our community and to illuminate the truth.

If we do that well, maybe we can help Millennials, Gen Z and all our community regain trust in fact-based local journalism.

This week's articles demonstrate our pursuit of the truth and quest for solutions.

- Salish Current staff have [fact-checked statements](#) made in a recent forum for 42nd District Senate seat candidates.
- We're working with the Rotary Club of Bellingham to [engage conversation around homelessness](#), seeking your ideas to move the discussion forward

toward solutions. Please send in your thoughts — help solve this hard problem.

We're truly grateful to our readers and donors who support us in this mission — and for your trust.

Thank you for reading Salish Current and for your [support](#). And remember to share this newsletter with others who may be interested!

— Amy Nelson, Publisher

Want more environmental news? [Salish Sea News and Weather](#) and the weekly [Salish Sea News Week in Review 9/2/22](#): Coconut Friday, Anjali Appadurai, Pacific marten, Bristol Bay sockeye, urban trees, data center water, “woody debris,” orca encounter

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

**#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter
#NoJusticeNoPeace**

News from the *Salish Current*

[Got something to say about homelessness? Write it down, send it in](#)



Life on the verge, in more ways than one: Tents along Cornwall Avenue provide temporary shelter for some of Bellingham's unhoused residents.

By Salish Current Editors:

Salish Current and the Rotary Club of Bellingham want to hear your thoughts on homelessness — a reality for the well over 1,200 people in our community who lack housing. [Read more ...](#)

[From the Editor's Desk: Fact-checking state Senate candidates](#)



Truth and trust: Candidates for the 42nd Legislative District Senate seat — incumbent Sen. Simon Sefzik (R) and 42nd District Rep. Sharon Shewmake (D) — appeared in a recent online forum presented by Bellingham City Club. In

pursuit of the truth, Salish Current staff have done a post-event fact check on candidate statements.

By Mike Sato and Salish Current Staff: Fact-checked: *Salish Current* reviewed comments made in an online form by candidates for the 42nd District Senate seat. [Read 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

Jail. Snohomish County, despite a \$1.2 million contract with Whatcom County, will not accept Whatcom County inmates in its county jail due to liability issues and jail staffing shortages. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Overdose awareness. The Whatcom County Health Department observed Overdose Awareness Day on Aug. 31 by handing out free Naloxone, a nasal spray that can reverse a drug overdose. ([CDN/paywall](#))

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

Education

Budget. The Anacortes School Board approved a \$45.6-million 2022-23 budget last week. The board used reserves to cover a deficit and has begun to identify cuts for next year's budget. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Government

San Juan County

The council will meet again on Sept. 13.

City of Bellingham

The council met on Aug. 29. [Agenda items](#) included:

Public Hearings:

- The council maintained the emergency ordinance imposing a moratorium on the acceptance of development applications within the RM zones in the Silver Beach neighborhood.
- The council unanimously approved moving further discussion of the Hundred Acre Wood (aka Chuckanut Community Forest) Master Plan to the Parks and Recreation Committee. See also: "City, park commissioners at odds over Hundred Acre Wood" ([CDN/paywall](#))

Neighborhood traffic:

- The council unanimously approved directing the Transportation Commission to study neighborhood traffic programs in other communities, explore connections to ongoing updates on the bike and pedestrian plans, and to consider equity and provide policy/program recommendations to the city council.

Park Naming:

- The council unanimously approved tabling approval of the naming of the Chuckanut Forest until after the public hearing and the master plan is approved.

Property acquisition:

- The council unanimously approved purchase of three watershed parcels totaling two acres on Lake Whatcom for \$250,000 and purchase of two watershed parcels

totaling 1.17 acres near Lake Louise Road for \$60,000, the latter which will close in September. ([City of Bellingham](#))

Police bargaining:

- The council unanimously approved agreement with the Bellingham Police Guild, pending ratification, to increase the base rate of pay by 5%, adjust salary structure by increasing Step 1 Grade 29 by 3%, pay all active employees a signing bonus of \$700, and restructure HSA contribution in the High Deductible Plan.

The council will meet again on Sept. 12.

Whatcom County

The council will meet on Sept. 13.

Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet on Sept. 6.

Elections

Forum. The Aug. 24 Bellingham City Club virtual forum is [available for viewing](#), featuring candidates Sharon Shewmake (D) and Simon Sefzik (R), for state senator, District 42; and Jaime Arnett and Eric Davidson, for Public Utility District No. 1 Commissioner 3.

Nature

Nooksack. New gauges are being added to provide faster warnings when the Nooksack River overflows dikes near Everson and Nooksack to give more precise data on where floodwaters are flowing in rural areas of northern Whatcom County. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Nookachamps. Environmental Science Associates has begun collecting data and meeting with the community on a plan to relieve frequent flooding and restore declining fish populations near the east fork of Nookachamps Creek in Skagit County. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Bird flu. Several wild Canadian geese collected from Crescent Beach in Eastsound tested positive for Avian Influenza Virus at the end of August. ([San Juan County](#))

Bees. The Xerxes Society, which is dedicated to pollinator preservation, has certified the Western Washington University campus as an official bee campus. ([KGMI](#))

Business

Crops. Crop yields in Skagit County are anticipated to be down after near-record rain in June caused a delay in planting and tractor work, the opposite of last year's heat wave, which caused many plants to have a slow start to their growing season. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Gravel. A proposed special-use permit sought by Concrete Nor'west for a 25-year operation on a 51-acre site continued being heard by the Skagit County hearing examiner this week and will continue into next week. The mining operation northeast of Sedro-Woolley would require an average of 46 truck trips per day on area roads. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Climate. Cross-border West Coast government officials, businesses and academics are scheduled to attend a climate action conference at Semiahmoo Resort Sept. 12 and 13. ([The Northern Light](#))

Port lobbying. The Port of Anacortes commissioners have contracted with Insight Strategic Partners for \$36,000 to provide lobbying services during the next legislative session. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Commentary

Last meal. In the final installment of the "Deranged Gourmet," Karen Sullivan treats us to 1950s culinary treasures: Tube sea and eggs, Roman galley of jellied hamburger rowed by Vienna sausages, Bologna and cream cheese birthday cake, Circle of life Jell-O chicken ring, and more. ([Rainshadow Journal](#))

Community

Clam garden. Indigenous people once farmed the sea by building, tending and harvesting clam gardens. The Swinomish Tribe is reviving the ancient method.

[\(KUOW\)](#)

Latino clinic. Consejo Counseling is the first and only fully bilingual behavioral health clinic in Skagit County offering therapy to the local Latino population. [\(KING\)](#)

Youth housing. Fewer young adults will be housed at the troubled Bellingham 22 North apartment facility, and an effort will be made to meet homeless youth needs with more family-type, group-home environments rather than independent living as in an apartment. [\(CDN/paywall\)](#)

Sewage pause. Bellingham mayor Seth Fleetwood has proposed a pause in city council action on rebuilding the city's sewage treatment plant after cost estimates rose from \$200 million to over \$1 billion. [\(CDN/paywall\)](#)

Trestle fire. An early Tuesday morning fire burned 60 feet of the Tommy Thompson Trail trestle in Fidalgo Bay in Anacortes. In 2009, a fire destroyed 300 feet of the trestle. [\(Anacortes American/paywall\)](#)

Train. Amtrak tickets for service between Seattle and Vancouver BC went on sale Sept. 1 as service resumes on Sept. 26 on a one daily round-trip schedule.

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

Arts and Leisure

Friday Harbor film. The Director Series presents "Yasuni Man," a film focused on the conflict between oil companies and native Waorani people in South America. Stream on demand through Sept. 7 for \$1.95.

[\(FHFF\)](#)

Lummi artists. Lummi Artists on Lummi Island features traditional and contemporary arts and crafts, Sept. 3, 11 a.m.–6 p.m., Otto Preserve, Lummi Island. [Information.](#)

Rena Priest, Washington's poet laureate presents a reading and writing workshop. Mount Vernon, Sept. 3, 7:30 p.m., Lincoln Theater. [Information](#)

Jump in!

Mitigation banking. Skagit County commissioners will hold a public hearing on an [interim ordinance](#) prohibiting offsite compensatory mitigation projects on Skagit County prime farmlands, Sept. 8, 9:30–10:30 a.m. Comment by Sept. 6 by [email](#). See also: "Will mitigation banking offset loss of valued wetlands?" ([Salish Current](#), Aug. 24, 2022)

The future. Pulitzer Prize winner Hedrick Smith speaks on "What is the outlook for American democracy?" on Sept. 10, 4:30 p.m., Emmanuel Parish Hall, Eastsound. Indoor seating: Masks required. Free tickets at Monkey Puzzle, Darvill's and Office Cupboard.

Two screenings. Whatcom County Library System presents "Revitalizing Cultural Knowledge and Honoring Sacred Waters: The Documented Oral History of Life on the Nooksack River" with Tli'nuk'dzwidzi/Althea Wilson, Lummi tribal member and documentary filmmaker. The screenings are 5–8 p.m. Sept. 10 at the Deming Library, [registration required](#) and 5–8 p.m. Sept. 24 at Pioneer Pavilion in Ferndale, [registration required](#).

Read and share. Whatcom County Library System's annual Read and Share program of online author events features from Oct. 8 to Nov. 10 Bellingham author Clyde Ford's memoir, "Think Black." Borrow the book or the eAudiobook from the library and register for the book discussion and writing workshop events. [WCLS Read & Share](#).

Scoop it. Take the city of Bellingham's "Scoop the Poop" [pledge](#) and enter your [pooch's pic](#) for a chance to win first, second and third prizes in two categories. [Information](#).

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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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