

## News of the week: Oct. 7, 2022

Dear Reader —

Much has been said, and much work has been done, to address the rampant problem of homelessness. Yet the numbers of unhoused or insecurely housed people continue at high levels. As someone commented this week, it's as though we are busily trying to pull people out of the river, yet still need to go upstream to prevent them from falling in.

A new book, "Homelessness is a Housing Problem," ([reviewed this week in the \*Salish Current\*](#)) looks into the data to find a solution: why do some cities have higher unhoused populations than others?

The book notes that economy is a factor, citing how poorer cities with lower median house prices offer more affordable options for people in lower-income brackets; logical, yet complicated.

The book also cites policy, in particular zoning policy, as a contributor. Some cities with higher unhoused populations offer limited options for multiunit or low-income housing with convenient access to essentials such as grocery stores and transit stops.

Locally, housing issues will receive intense focus from multiple perspectives during [Whatcom Housing Week](#) (Oct. 15–20), organized by the Whatcom Housing Alliance. Activities will range from picking up a hammer to help with repairs in a Habitat for Humanity project, to discussing parking during a happy hour presented by Walk and Roll Bellingham and the Parking Reform Network, and more.

As we focus on housing needs locally, the [words of a \*New Yorker\* columnist](#) about homelessness in California offer food for thought:

"The forces that drive the crisis are bigger than the

failings of citizens, outraged or sympathetic. Housing costs are too high, and an entrenched set of forces, whether building codes, *NIMBY* neighbors, or the decades-long degradation of public housing and mental-health services ... have made it nearly impossible to create places for the indigent to stay. Short of a massive shift in public attitude toward public and affordable housing, and a streamlined process for builders to actually put shovels in the ground, temporary sites ... will be effectively permanent fixtures ....”

Our awareness, best intentions and frustrations won't remedy the problem of homelessness. It's what we do that will count.

Thank you for reading and [supporting \*Salish Current\*](#). Please share this newsletter with others and encourage them to support community journalism: free to read, free from advertising.

— *Amy Nelson, Publisher*

Want more environmental news? [Salish Sea News and Weather](#) is a weekday curated compilation of news from Salish Sea news sources; free via email or on the web.

[Salish Sea News Week in Review 10/7/22](#): Smile Day, SCOTUS on CWA, dam removal, logging old growth, climate plan failures, pipeline crossings, low water salmon, Toikitae, Lorna Smith, West Coast climate, fish passage funds

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

**#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter**

**#NoJusticeNoPeace**

## News from the *Salish Current*

### [‘Starving students’ no more, as campuses address food insecurity](#)



*Patrick Doran, student wellness coordinator at Northwest Indian College, shows off a week's supply of meal kits to be distributed among students and others in the community. NWIC and other local schools are addressing food insecurity.*

**By Sadie Fick:** Increasing food insecurity among college students is being answered with a variety of solutions by schools in Skagit and Whatcom counties. [Read more.](#)

### [Can kelp farming help save our marine environment?](#)



*On the waterfront at Guemes Channel, Teresa DelaRosa (at right) and fellow proponents including Jaime Diamond (at left) and William McWatters envision the many potential benefits of farming kelp on Guemes Island. The new industry could create local jobs and enhance marine health and agricultural soils.*

**By Richard Arlin Walker:** SEA2SEED, a Guemes Island nonprofit, sees multiple benefits from kelp, for land sea. [Read more.](#)

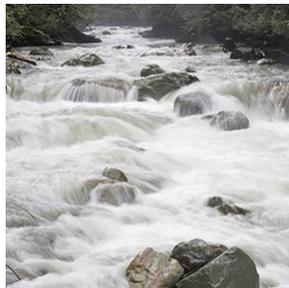
## [From the Editor's Desk: Fact-checking the House candidates](#)



*Five of six candidates for 40th and 42nd Legislative District House seats 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 some of the candidate statements.*

**By Mike Sato and Salish Current Staff:** Committed to accuracy and fighting misinformation, the *Salish Current* fact-checked some candidate statements made in a recent Bellingham City Club online forum among 40th and 42nd District candidates. [Read more.](#)

## [Community Voices / Understanding water rights adjudication](#)



*Just as the water of the Nooksack River is shared throughout Whatcom County, so is the need to resolve questions around water rights in the watershed.*

**By Rick Eggerth:** Comment: Recent letters to editors and from local officials demonstrate misunderstanding of “water rights adjudication.” [Read more.](#)

## [Book Review / Geography, zoning, economy play into the 'why' of homelessness](#)



*Tiny home communities such as Unity Village on Post Point in Fairhaven provide safe, successful transition out of homelessness for some people. A new book examines why some cities have higher unhoused populations.*

**By John Dunne:** Homelessness has stubbornly resisted efforts of cities and nonprofits to find solutions; a new book analyzes the reasons why. [Read more.](#)

## [Letters to the Editor](#)

- Henry: Student views on ferry service nixed by county council
- Hayes: Proposition 5 meets specific needs
- Davies: Fund child care with employer payroll tax
- Jackson: Child care discussion needs more imagination
- Ramos: Shewmake is a clear contrast from Sefzik
- Harmer: Shewmake serves 42nd District best

## **News from around the region**

*(Some of 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. North Whatcom County beaches are closed to recreational shellfish harvest due to paralytic shellfish poisoning. ([Whatcom County](#))

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 met on Oct. 3 for further briefing and discussion of the comprehensive plan. [Video here.](#)

The council met on Oct. 6 in special session to be briefed on Washington State Ferry issues by co-chairs Jim Corenman and Ken Burtness. [Video here.](#)

The council will meet on Oct. 10 for further briefing and discussion of the comprehensive plan. [Video link.](#)

The council will meet on Oct. 11. Agenda items and video link [here.](#)

- 2022 Home Fund Projects
- Proposed Road Levy Increase ballot measure
- Recreation, Open Space and Stewardship Plan
- Orcas Island Public Works projects update
- Parks and Fair Fees Increase Resolution

### City of Bellingham

The council met on Oct. 3. [Agenda items](#) included:

#### *Public Hearing*

- The council unanimously approved a resolution encouraging voters to vote “Yes” on Whatcom County Proposition 2022-6, regular property tax levy for emergency medical services, in the general election.
- The council unanimously approved the mayor's appointment of Betty Sanchez to the Transportation Commission.

#### *Committee of the Whole*

- The council approved 6-0 (Hammill recused) an ordinance amending the 2021-2022 biennial budget increasing revenues and expenditures for the Tourism Promotion Area.
- The council unanimously approved a recommendation that the administration bring forward an interlocal agreement to jointly fund and support the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission upon passage of the County ordinance.

- Introduction of the proposed 2023-2024 biennial budget.

The mayor's biennial budget proposes 76 new positions and investments in climate action, parks and libraries and \$1.24 million for development of a pier at Little Squaticum Park. ([CDN/paywall](#))

The council's 2022 Budget Work Session meetings will take place from 1–3 p.m. at City Hall and are open to the public to listen:

- Oct. 10 (Fire, Library)
- Oct. 17 (Public Works, Parks, Capital)
- Oct. 24 (HR, Finance, Legal, IT)
- Oct. 31 (Police, Planning, Museum)
- Nov. 7 (Mayor, Council, Municipal Court)

The council will meet again on Oct. 24 and hold its first budget hearing.

#### Whatcom County

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

##### *Public Hearing*

- Ordinance adding a new Chapter 2.107 to the Whatcom County Code to create a Whatcom Racial Equity Commission. [Proposed ordinance.](#)

The council will meet again on Oct 25.

#### Port of Bellingham

The commission met on Oct. 4. [Agenda items](#) included:

##### *Presentation*

- Climate Action Strategy Update [[video 9:29](#)]

The port's 2023 Preliminary Strategic Budget will be available Oct. 24 [online](#). Presentations and public hearings are scheduled for Nov. 1 and 15, with adoption scheduled for Nov. 15.

The commission will meet again on Oct. 18.

## Elections

Forums. Bellingham/Whatcom County League of Women Voters hosts online forums on Oct. 7, 9, 12, 14 and 18. See the [schedule](#) and share what you want asked of the candidate by using the online [issues and questions form](#).

## **Nature**

Creek fix. One-third of the work to relocate and restore Bellingham's Padden Creek has been completed after years of delay due to a lack of funding. ([Western Front](#))

Bird watch. Skagit Audubon Society members will be sitting in a circle at Wiley Slough near La Conner Saturday in The Big Sit birding competition to identify as many species as possible while sitting within a 17-foot circle. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

## **Business**

Horizon. A 149-acre property south of Semiahmoo will be the site of 140 single-family luxury homes and 10 multi-family complexes totaling 400 units, and priced, depending on size, between \$700,000 and \$1.2 million. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Safe pipes. The local Pipeline Safety Trust, established 23 years ago after the 1999 Olympic Pipeline disaster, has received a \$1 million grant from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration to expand its staff to work with communities across the country to combat environmental and health issues. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Reefnet. A thousands-of-years-old method to catch salmon practiced by Indigenous peoples has only 14 commercial harvesters remaining with permits in the Northwest. ([NW News Network](#))

## **Commentary**

Zombie permit. Mary Kay Barbieri unpacks the six-year permit battle over a large new gravel mine in the Skagit Valley now before the hearing examiner. ([Skagit Scoop](#))

## **Community**

Cayou Channel. Samish Nation elders and Rosie Cayou, great-grand niece of early 20th century Samish leader Henry Cayou, last Saturday celebrated the renamed Cayou Channel between Shaw and Orcas Island. ([KUOW](#))

Free food. The Helping Hands Solution Center, Skagit County's largest food bank, opened its sixth free food distribution site on Thursday at Inspire Church of La Conner on the Swinomish reservation. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Peak named. A so-called unnamed peak in the Twin Sisters range in Whatcom County has been named Kloke Peak by the state Board of Natural Resources after mountaineer Dallas Kloke of Anacortes who first ascended the peak in 1972. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Settlement. Nooksack tribal elder George Adams and daughter Elile Adams settled their case last month against Judge Ray Dodge who harassed them for five years because they advocated for Nooksack citizens facing disenrollment. The complaint was filed against Dodge, Nooksack tribal Chief of Police Michael Ashby and Nooksack police officers Francisco Sanchez, Daniel Bennett and Brandon Farstad, and settled for \$35,000. ([Crosscut](#))

## **Arts and Leisure**

Studio tour. Whatcom artists show their wares in studio Oct. 8 and 9. [Complete tour details.](#)

Orcas Film Fest. The Orcas Island Film Festival Oct. 6–10 will feature eight documentary films and 28 feature films from 25 countries. [Info](#)

Music Fest. The 2022 Lynden Music Fest Oct. 8–12 features music from Nashville, Finland and Argentina. Hear tango, bluegrass, jazz, Egyptian music, swing dancing at venues around Lynden including the Jansen Art Center, The Inn at Lynden, WECU expo building, The Mill, The Newsroom pub and more. [Info.](#)

Friday Harbor Film Fest. The Friday Harbor Film Festival will feature in-theater films Oct. 21–23 and on-demand films Oct. 24–30. [Information and tickets.](#)

### **Jump in!**

Women's march. Join Indivisible Bellingham at a Rally for Reproductive Rights, Freedom and Privacy in solidarity with the Women's March national days of action on Oct. 8 at 3 p.m., Bellingham City Hall. [Info.](#)

Bright lights. Join a community gathering sponsored by the Chuckanut Health Foundation on Oct. 11, 4–5:30 p.m. at Lee Park behind the Bellingham Library to celebrate the work to establish the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission. Wear bright-colored clothing and go to the county council meeting later where a council vote is scheduled.

Read and share. Whatcom County Library System's annual Read and Share program of online author events from Oct. 8 to Nov. 10 features 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.](#)

**Like this newsletter? Share it. And it's easy to subscribe by reply mail. Your email address will never be shared and you can unsubscribe at any time. —  
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.

Follow and engage with *Salish Current* on social media:

Facebook — [Salish Current](#)

Twitter — [@currentsalish](#)

LinkedIn — [Salish Current](#)

Write to us: [SalishCurrent@gmail.com](mailto:SalishCurrent@gmail.com)

Check out what's new: [Salish Current](#)