



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

News of the week: Oct. 21, 2022

Dear Reader —

There are many paths up the metaphoric news mountain.

Some news organizations race up via funicular: the well-heeled, angel-funded.

Some plod a rutted and potholed road: legacy for-profit businesses with shrinking circulations, advertising and newsrooms.

Others take a winding, less trodden path with fellow travelers and share the view from the valleys and ridgelines with any and all: the not-for-profits.

There are many ways up the mountain to provide you the news that informs our community's ability to make sound, responsible decisions as voters, as parents, as consumers, as investors, as entertainment seekers ... you name it. News—the best obtainable version of the truth—is everyone's business.

We're inspired by the story the folks at *Honolulu Civil Beat* shared about why they're a nonprofit. *Civil Beat* launched in 2010 as a for-profit behind a paywall, underwritten by eBay's founder with a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist as editor. A few years in, subscriptions were stagnant. Nonreaders said, "Why give money to a millionaire?" So *Civil Beat* reorganized as a nonprofit, free for all to read, free of advertising. Twelve years on, community-supported *Civil Beat* operates in the black with a news staff of 30.

We appreciate recent calls for support for local news from the *Seattle Times* and *Washington Post*—but are leery of enthusiasm for government funding.

Would that be stable? The 100-year-old BBC, one of the most widely trusted news organizations in the world, is

funded by a user fee set by government, and sees an ebb and flow of support as governments change.

A dark but pragmatic question: Will politicians, whose world is one of wielding influence, try to influence news sources they vote to fund?

And for-profit newspapers whether they be local or national are businesses owned by the wealthy or by hedge funds. Why give money to a millionaire?

We, too, regret seeing shrinking newsrooms and are pained to see the rising tide of misinformation and disinformation in social media. We are heartened to hear calls for support for reliable, in-depth, free-access local news. We're doing our best to provide that, and committed to keeping it free to read. We intend to continue to grow and produce news for, about and supported by our community. Thanks for [supporting Salish Current](#) — and for reading!

— 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 Oct. 21, 2022](#): Apple Friday!, CWA 50th, TransMountain, Coastal GasLink, Washington carbon auctions, quiet ships, K-45, glacier melt, dead sturgeon

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

#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter

#NoJusticeNoPeace

News from the *Salish Current*

[Devastating wasting illness of iconic sea stars still a mystery](#)



Community science is helping build understanding for an illness that has decimated sea star populations on the West Coast since 2013.

By Rena Kingery: Sea star wasting syndrome still threatens area sea stars, but community scientists and researchers are helping to shed light on the mysterious illness. [Read more.](#)

[Lopez pool plan is making waves](#)



Imagine a swimming pool—right here—in the center of Lopez Island. A grassroots nonprofit organization has been working toward that goal for several years and anticipates breaking ground soon; concerns remain.

By Kathryn Wheeler: An \$8 million campaign to build a swimming pool on Lopez Island for its 2,800 residents has brought out donors, supporters—and opponents. [Read more.](#)

[On Watch](#)



On Watch communicates the scrutiny under which crows and ravens hold their world, observing human behavior even as they are observed.

By Tony Angell: Inspiration for carvings in stone may come from the stones themselves, but originates inside the artist as well. [Read more.](#)

[Fact-checking what's said about Whatcom's Proposition 5](#)



Numbers—of tax dollars, of families in need of housing, of needed child care placements, and more—are significant factors to both supporters of and those in opposition to Whatcom County's Proposition.

By Kai Uyehara: Whatcom voters will decide Nov. 8 on the Healthy Children's Initiative, a property tax measure to fund child care and early-learning programs. [Read more.](#)

[From the Editor's Desk: Fact-checking 42nd District campaign mailers](#)



Mailers produced by candidates, political parties and political action committees (PACs) in support of and against candidates have begun to arrive in 42nd Legislative District mailboxes. How accurate are their claims?

By Mike Sato and Salish Current Staff: Political mailers to 42nd Legislative District addresses—timed to arrive with ballots—carry a variety of assertions and arguments; *Salish Current* fact-checks the claims. [Read more.](#)

[Letters to the Editor](#)

- Hudson: Rands endorsed by judicial colleagues, left and right
- Whitmer: On the myth of economic mobility
- Harvey: Shewmake is the climate champion we need
- Graham and Hanson: Vote 'Yes!' for San Juan library levy

Our policy: Salish Current welcomes letters to the editor from our readers. Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address and daytime phone number. Those accepted for publication will focus on issues addressed in news articles or commentaries in Salish Current and be factual. No snark or put-downs will be acceptable; general nastiness will be rejected. Letters should not exceed 300 words and may be edited for length and clarity. Salish Current will publish letters sent to the editor at its sole discretion.

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

Abortion access. Gov. Jay Inslee today announced at Western Washington University his intent to guarantee abortion access and medical privacy with a constitutional amendment and new laws to be proposed legislatively. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Get your shot. Signs point to a bad flu season ahead. Getting vaccinated is a safe and effective way to avoid getting sick. Getting vaccinated doesn't just protect you — it also protects family and friends who are at risk of more severe flu. ([Kaiser](#))

Education

BTC prez. Dr. James Lemerond has been hired by the board of Bellingham Technical College to serve as president, beginning on Jan. 1. He previously served as the Vice President of Lakeshore Technical College in Wisconsin. ([KGMI](#))

The Border

Last glacier. Metro Vancouver's last surviving glacier, a source of local fresh water, will disappear in less than 30 years, according to local scientists. ([CBC](#))

Government

San Juan County

The council met on Oct. 18. Agenda items and video at [link](#).

- The council approved unanimously a resolution raising the Parks and Fairgrounds fee schedule.

Skagit County

Legislative priorities. Skagit County commissioners set priorities for the upcoming legislative session regarding undoing police conduct reforms, increased mental health facility construction funding and mitigating riparian buffer requirements. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

City of Bellingham

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

- Oct. 24 (HR, Finance, Legal, IT)
- Oct. 31 (Police, Planning, Museum)
- Nov. 7 (Mayor, Council, Municipal Court)

The council will meet on Oct. 24. [Agenda items](#) include:

Public hearings

- Public hearing on the 2023 revenue projections, including a 1% increase to the regular property tax levy
- First public hearing on the 2023-2024 biennial budget.

Presentation

Public Works and Natural Resources Committee

- Fairhaven parking management. [Staff memo](#).
- Proposed ordinance regarding city-owned electric vehicle charging stations. [Presentation](#).
- Proposed resolution establishing a fee schedule for public use of city-owned electric vehicle charging stations. [Presentation](#).

Parks and Recreation Committee

- 2022 Recreation Needs Assessment Report. [Report](#).

Committee of the Whole

- Working Waterfront Coalition presentation.

Presentation

- 2023 bike/pedestrian projects - parking removal.

Presentation

- Immigrant Resource Center models. [Immigration Advisory Board proposal](#).
- 2023 legislative agenda. [Objectives](#).

The council will meet again on Nov. 7.

Whatcom County

The council will meet on Oct 25. Agenda items include:

Public hearing

- Ordinance approving a system of rates and charges for the Whatcom Conservation District. [Proposed ordinance](#). (See also: "Conservation District proposes fees for landowners" ([CDN/paywall](#)))

Consent agenda

- Authorize County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Washington State Health Care Authority to establish an alternative response team to respond to 911 calls that do not require law enforcement, in the amount of \$2,213,000. [Staff memo](#).
- Authorize County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham for design and construction costs associated with the Meridian Birchwood Roundabout project in the amount of \$2,625,000. [Agreement](#).

The council will meet again on Nov. 8.

Port of Bellingham

The commission met on Oct. 18. [Agenda items](#) included:

Consent Agenda

- Consent agenda unanimously approved. Item D held for discussion.
- Item D: A motion authorizing the Port to enter into a Modification of Exclusive Negotiating [Agreement](#) between The BoardMill Group, LLC, and the Port of Bellingham for a 3.42 acre Parcel in the Waterfront District. ([YouTube 6:08](#)) A 90-day extension was granted to finalize design and financing. Approved unanimously.

Presentations

- Budget status report and Q3 financials - Tamara Sobjack ([YouTube 8:07](#))
- Capital project update - Greg Nicoll ([YouTube 23:07](#))
- An update on the port staff meeting with Whatcom County regarding broadband and disagreement with county regarding maintaining public ownership of fiber network. ([YouTube 43:34](#))
- Shipping terminal update regarding scrap metal loading and noise monitoring. ([YouTube 52:31](#))

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 Nov. 1.

For the people

Voting. San Juan County, Seattle and Clark County voters will vote on ranked choice voting in November. What's the difference from approval-choice voting? ([Crosscut](#))

Elections

Last forum. Bellingham City Club hosts an online forum discussion on Child Care in Whatcom County, Oct. 26, Noon. [Info and register](#). See: "Child care shortfall frustrates families, hampers local economy," ([Salish Current, Sept. 22, 2022](#)) and "Voters asked to approve child care support as demand exceeds supply" ([Salish Current, Sept. 29, 2022](#))

Native reps. Rep. Debra Lekanoff (D-40), currently the only Native American in the Washington state legislature, may be joined by three other Indigenous candidates running for office in the November election. ([KUOW](#))

42nd District. Many eyes and much money are focused on a state senate race and two legislative district races in November's election. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

Campaign finances. Public Disclosure Commission [Campaign Contributions](#) reported as of Oct. 20, 2022

LD 42 Senate Campaign

Sharon Shewmake (D): Raised \$561,676.66; Spent \$466,307.20; Debt \$43,550.29; Outside For \$298,050.47; Outside Against \$270,711.88
Simon Sefzik (R): Raised \$721,805.99; Spent \$533,997.47; Debt \$36,245.92; Outside For \$102,469.15; Outside Against \$326,253.71

LD 42 House Campaign Position 1

Alicia Rule (D) Raised: \$437,802.26; Spent \$422,889.63; Debt \$34,100; Outside For \$208,363.22; Outside Against \$36,873.63
Tawsha Dykstra Thompson (R): Raised \$291,703.64; Spent \$270,128.04; Debt \$0.0 Outside For: \$42,018.90
Outside Against: \$0.0

LD 42 House Campaign Position 2

Dan Johnson (R): Raised \$240,213.87; Spent \$132,997.64; Debt \$0.0; Outside For: \$4,803.42
Outside Against: \$80,871.62
Joe Timmons (D): Raised \$346,348.17; Spent \$372,072.69; Debt \$39,500; Outside For \$26,676.71; Outside Against \$22,355.43

LD 40 House Campaign Position 1

Debra Lekanoff (D): Raised \$67,020.36; Spent \$60,047.61; Debt \$5,000; Outside For \$226.07; Outside Against \$0.0
Shannon Perkes (R): Raised \$0.0; Spent \$0.0; Debt \$0.0; Outside For \$0.0; Outside Against \$0.0

LD 40 House Campaign Position 2

Alex Ramel (D): Raised \$196,555.63; Spent \$173,007.76; Debt \$21,350; Outside For \$6,226.07; Outside Against \$6,587.83
Trevor Smith (D): Raised \$59,610.07; Spent \$23,201.70; Debt \$0.0; Outside For \$140,818.77; Outside Against \$0.0

Whatcom County District Court Judge Position 2

Jonathan Rands: Raised \$79,739.58; Spent \$67,415.32; Debt \$15,642; Outside For \$86.85; Outside Against \$0.0
Gordon Jenkins: Raised \$58,392.72; Spent \$55,985.85; Debt \$1,500; Outside For \$0.0; Outside Against \$0.0

San Juan County Sheriff

Sheriff Ron Krebs: Raised \$11,096.71; Spent \$4,349.66; Debt \$0.0; Outside For \$0.0; Outside Against \$0.0
Sgt. Eric Peter— Raised \$10,342; Spent \$8,122.55; Debt \$0.0; Outside For \$0.0; Outside Against \$0.0

Nature

Quiet waters. Big ships transiting Salish Sea waters have been asked to slow down from Oct. 24 to Dec. 22 to reduce underwater noise in the shipping lanes from Admiralty Inlet by Port Townsend south to Kingston and Mukilteo to help critically endangered killer whales. ([NW News Network](#))

Business

Settlement. The Willows Inn, a nationally acclaimed restaurant on Lummi Island, will pay more than \$1.37 million to settle a class-action lawsuit over accusations of wage theft involving 137 employees. Restaurant owners two-time James Beard award-winning chef Blaine Wetzel and his business partner Tim McEvoy a year ago paid \$600,000 to settle a similar wage theft lawsuit. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

Unionizing. Employees at Bellingham's Sehome Starbucks restaurant announced their intent to unionize this week, making the store the third in the city intending to unionize. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Shipbuilding. Bellingham's All American Marine has won a contract to build a specialized research vessel for the University of Hawaii at Manoa's Institute of Marine Biology which will be used to access and study marine environments in the Hawaiian Islands. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Green home. The first Built Green home, certified to achieve net-zero energy emissions, achieve 100% infiltration of stormwater runoff and use at least 20 components that include at least one environmental attribute, has been built in Mount Vernon by local entrepreneur Kevin Maas. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Community

Fair housing. The City of Bellingham invites public comment by Oct. 28 on its draft Assessment of Fair Housing [report](#) for addressing disparities and barriers. [Comment here.](#)

Parks and Rec. Bennett Knox, Whatcom County Parks and Recreation director, began work in September. He answers questions about his priorities. ([The Northern Light](#))

Fidalgo trail. More of the Tommy Thompson Trail in Anacortes has opened while the city waits for permits to repair the 77-feet of trestle burned as a result of arson on Aug. 30. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Arts and Leisure

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.](#)

Skyviewing. Renowned scholars of modern and contemporary art discuss Isamu Noguchi's Skyviewing Sculptures on Oct. 22, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., at the Western Gallery. The program is in conjunction with exhibition with the same name at the Western Gallery (July 26–Nov. 26, 2022), which brings 41 of Noguchi's skyviewing works together for the first time. [Information and registration.](#)

Sci-Fi art. Scarecrow Academy presents online Part 2 of “Art in Sci-Fi” hosted by Robert Horton discussing science fiction and the director. 2 p.m., Oct. 22. Free but [registration required.](#)

Jump in!

Make a difference. Celebrate Make a Difference Day and Arbor Day by volunteering to plant trees and remove invasive plants at Bellingham's Whatcom Falls Park on Oct. 22, 9 a.m.–Noon. [Info.](#)

Urban birding. North Cascades Audubon will take you on a trip exploring Whatcom Creek, starting at Waypoint Park and walking up the creek along the

Whatcom Creek Trail. Oct. 23, 9:30 a.m. at the Waypoint Park parking lot. [Register here.](#)

Beach cleanup. Clean up trash near All American Marine by the ASB Pond Trail in Bellingham and sort the trash using the Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol to understand what types of garbage pose the biggest threats to waterway. Oct. 23, Noon–2 p.m. [Info and register.](#)

Habitat squeeze. Scott Andrews of Audubon Washington describes how armoring of shorelines blocks natural shoreline functions and how rising seas will increase negative impacts by reducing habitat. Oct. 25, 7 p.m. [Zoom link.](#)

Mehler easement. Join Skagit Land Trust's work party Oct. 29, 9 a.m. to Noon to remove invasive plants and plant trees at the Anacortes Mehler Conservation Easement. [Information and registration here.](#)

Cherry Point. RE Sources brings you via Zoom the 10th annual Cherry Point Science Forum, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Oct 29 when local scientists talk about their work on oil spills, microplastics, and eelgrass and kelp restoration. [Register here.](#)

Hallowe'en treat. Skagit Land Trust hosts a Hallowe'en work part Oct. 30 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Grand Creek Conservation Area to seed an open pasture and remove invasive plants. [Information and registration here.](#)

Monument MAC. San Juan National Monument Advisory Committee nominations are open for a wildlife and ecological interest representative and two public-at-large representatives. Complete the [application form](#) by Nov. 4.

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 and Share.](#)

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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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