



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

News of the week: Nov. 23, 2022

Dear Reader —

This week's newsletter is a few days early so I can wish you a happy Thanksgiving and express our thanks to you, our readers, our donors and our editors and freelancers for making *Salish Current* possible.

This week we feature Kai Uyehara's story about how food bridges cultures (["East Asian markets bridge cultural gaps—through food"](#)), John Dunne's profile of Sandy Hart (["Community Voices/A Most Interesting Job"](#)) and an account by Tony Angell on the magnificence of the great horned owl (["Artist's Corner: Moonlight"](#)).

Three weeks into our [2X fundraising campaign](#), we're over a third of the way to our goal. Next week, [Giving Tuesday](#) — or Giving News Day for some — is a great opportunity on Nov. 29 to show your support for not-for-profit community news that everyone can freely read because of your support. Every dollar donated is doubled, whether a one-time donation, a monthly donation or a first-time small donation.

It's a long holiday weekend and I hope you will take the time to read an important [study](#) by the League of Women Voters of Washington State that powerfully underscores the need for local journalism.

It also examines the damaging role that misinformation — just incorrect — and disinformation — intentionally wrong or misleading — have played in eroding not only confidence in newspapers but the health of our communities.

The study quotes the [Institute for Nonprofit News](#), of which *Salish Current* is a member, on what is different and important about journalism:

"Journalism ... is information that features a systematic discipline of verification that ... not only presents facts, but it presents the truth about the facts."

On Dec. 1, the Seattle King County League will host an online presentation of the study at 7 p.m. and discuss the impacts on civic engagement, political polarization, public finance, public health, and other areas.

To attend, register [here](#) or watch on the LWV Seattle King County [YouTube channel](#) afterwards.

Thanks for reading. Share this newsletter with others and [support Salish Current](#).

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

News from the *Salish Current*

[East Asian markets bridge cultural gaps—through food](#)



Local East Asian specialty markets offer cooking ingredients from a wide variety of cuisines, including Filipino, Japanese, Thai and Chinese.

By Kai Uyehara: There are only a few Asian markets in Whatcom and Skagit counties, but these small stores provide a rich variety of Asian foods—and a taste of cultures as well. [Read more.](#)

[Community Voices / A most interesting job](#)



Sandy Hart estimates she has gotten to know some 300 homeless people in her year as a crisis services associate at the Bellingham shelter for unhoused people.

By John Dunne: Meet Sandy Hart, who may have one of the most interesting jobs in Bellingham. [Read more.](#)

[Artist's Corner / Moonlight](#)



The great horned owl (presented in oil by Tony Angell) helps sustain ecological balance—and inspires mythic lore around the world.

By Tony Angell: Capturing the boldness and beauty of the owl's attitude and form commemorates the moment. [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

RSV. Whatcom County Health Department reports that residents are in emergency rooms for respiratory illnesses at the highest rate ever seen, and children are being hospitalized at a rate that is four times higher than at least in the last five years. Hospitals across Washington are at or beyond pediatric bed capacity right now. ([Whatcom County](#))

Abortion. The Bellingham City Council joined with Whatcom County and other northwest municipalities in voicing support this week for abortion rights. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Education

WWU racism. Officials at Western Washington University reported racist threats directed against a Black student last weekend following recent threats against Jews and Muslims. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

School cuts. Anacortes School District will reduce expenditures by roughly \$900,000 due to budget shortfall with reductions in operations, materials and supplies, notably cutting three members of the technology staff, a human resources office program assistant and one district office administrative assistant. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Nature

Trees. A survey of 700 residents who participated in the city of Bellingham's Urban Forestry Management Plan found that 80% wanted to see more tree canopy cover in the region and 19% wanted to maintain the 40% of tree canopy cover that currently exists in city limits. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Greenways. Renewal of a multimillion dollar Bellingham Greenways levy is expected next year after adoption of the [2022–26 strategic plan](#) which includes new land acquisitions and new trails connecting parks in and around the city. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Avian flu. Eastsound on Orcas Island has been the epicenter of an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian flu over the past few months and researchers are concerned that resident marine birds such as gulls could become a reservoir for the virus in the islands. ([San Juan Journal/paywall](#)) Unlike previous strains, H5N1 has spread across Canada—raising fears it is becoming endemic in wild birds ([CBC](#)) Avian flu likely cause of 400 Wiser Lake bird deaths ([CDN/paywall](#))

Business

Agribiz. The concept of agritourism has received 85% support among the Skagit County residents surveyed but the county is seeking further public comment to judge how much and what kind of businesses to allow on agricultural land the public also supports. (

Seafood plant. The Lynden Planning Commission has given conditional approval to a seafood processing plant

locating in the industrial area along West Main Street and supplying processing waste to be used at the Alliance Freeze-Dry pet-foods plant in the vicinity. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Community

Give thanks. Lighthouse Mission Ministries of Bellingham will resume its in-person Thanksgiving dinner for anyone who is hungry on Nov. 24, 1 p.m., at Church of the Assumption's gymnasium, 2116 Cornwall Ave. To donate or to volunteer for this or another free meal on Christmas Day, call 360-733-5120, or [click here](#).

Legacy. South Fork activist Matthew Thuney's life will be celebrated on Nov. 26, 5–8 p.m., at the Van Zandt Community Hall. Thuney passed away on Oct. 30.

Levy lift. Anacortes council member Ryan Walters responded to police and fire personnel requests for more staff by proposing a property tax levy rate increase of about 30 cents per \$1000 valuation to be put to the voters. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

AgWeather. A new weather station has been erected in Friday Harbor as part of the University of Washington's Ag Weather Net, which provides farmers with in-depth data such as soil moisture levels, soil temperature, and a log of precipitation and expected rainfall. ([San Juan Journal/paywall](#))

Arts and Leisure

FHFE. Friday Harbor Film Festival's On-Demand Festival winners, as well as the student film award winners and runners-up, are available to [stream FREE here](#) through Nov. 30. Films are "Corky", "Contrasts", and student film winners and runners-up.

Arts fest. Allied Arts 43rd Annual Holiday Festival of the Arts opens Nov. 18 10 a.m.–7 p.m. until Dec. 24 and features over 100 local artisans and craftspeople presenting their holiday goods. [Info](#).

Winterfest. South Fork Winterfest brings together local artisans, crafters and musicians where you can do some early Christmas shopping: pottery, paintings, carvings, wreaths, crafts, books by local authors, refreshments and music. Van Zandt Community Hall, Nov. 19, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Celebrate. November is Native American Heritage Month. Check out the resources at the [Bellingham Public Library](#) and at the Bellingham City Club [web site](#).

The Land. Check out the Allied Arts of Whatcom County exhibit "[Of the Land, From the Land](#)" featuring pieces by John Hoyte, Lori Hill, Sterling Rung, Belinda Botzong and Liz Cunningham. Through Nov. 26.

Skyviewing. The Western Gallery brings 41 of Noguchi's skyviewing works together for the first time. Through Nov 26. [Information.](#)

Jump in!

Opt outside. #Optoutside is a movement designed to get families outdoors on Black Friday. Get outside with Skagit Land Trust on Nov. 25, 9 a.m.–Noon for a work party at the Samish Island Conservation Area. [Info.](#)

Beach clean. Join RE Sources and Surfrider Foundation on Black Friday to clean up Little Squalicum Beach. Nov. 25, 10 a.m.–Noon. [Info.](#)

Salmon watch. Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association invites you to watch the salmon return at Arroyo Park, Nov. 25, 11 a.m.– 4 p.m. [Info.](#)

Native Heritage. Join Cindy Minkler of the Oglala Sioux Nation (Lakota), J.P. Falcon Grady of the Piikani (Blackfeet) Nation and Lummi Nation Elder Cynthia Wilson for an afternoon of blessed talent and wisdom on Nov. 25, from 3–5 p.m. at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, 1207 Ellsworth St. [Info.](#)

Pajama time. Children ages 3–8 with siblings and family are invited to the Bellingham Public Library pajama story time on Nov. 29, 6:15–6:45 p.m. Bring your favorite stuffy for a fun, cozy story time with books, songs and felt activities. Wear your jammies (pajamas) if you'd like!

Willow. Join in the willow cutting harvest at Coal Creek with Skagit Land Trust on Dec. 2, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. [Info.](#)

Wait, there's more. Join Skagit Land Trust for a work party at the beautiful Barney Lake property planting willow stakes, Dec. 3, 9 a.m.–Noon. [Info.](#)

North Fork towns. Local history author Michael Impero will share pictures and research from his new book about the towns, people and events of the North Fork: Kendall, Maple Falls, Glacier and Shuksan. Highlights include the history of the Nooksack Indians, local families like the Zenders and their semipro baseball team, famous murders, gold mines and the making of a few motion pictures. [North Fork Library](#), Dec. 10, 1–3 p.m.

Elections

Proposition 5 (Children's Initiative Levy) as of Nov. 21 with 11 ballots left to count was trailing by 50.04% to 49.96%, a margin of 90 votes out of a total of 108,325 ballots cast. ([Whatcom County Auditor](#))

Skagit PUD. As of Monday's ballot count, Corrin Hamburg led incumbent Germaine Kornegay by 1,161 votes. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

The commission will meet again on Dec. 6.

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Mike Sato, Managing Editor**

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