

News of the week: Jan. 27, 2023

Dear Reader —

We take your trust in our news reporting very seriously.

This week:

- [Kathryn Wheeler](#) focused on what an oil spill in the San Juan Islands could mean to a fragile environment and a treasured way of life.
- [Matt Benoit](#) dialed into the local independent radio scene, as a new partnership between KMRE-FM and Whatcom Community College is rolling out and other stations are amping up after the COVID-19 shutdown.
- [Riley Weeks](#) followed up as South Hill residents and Port of Bellingham commissioners pondered how to balance new work at the Port with noise concerns in the neighborhood.

A fascinating discussion at the City Club forum this week about marijuana also brought out the issue of trust.

One example: Even though marijuana has been legal for medical use in our state since 1998 and recreational use since 2012, about 60% of buyers are still going to “their guy” ... unlicensed and illegal.

That’s more common among Boomers and Gen Xers, who have been going to “their guy” — the one they trust — for decades. Millennials and Gen Zers are more likely to shop at pot stores, where multiple varieties of products abound, with multiple combinations of psychoactive chemicals with varying effects.

Those varying effects are of great relevance to the work of panelist Josh Kaplan, a neuroscience researcher at Western looking at applications of cannabis in treatments for a wide range of conditions, among them epilepsy and autism spectrum disorder. Fellow panelist Danielle Rosellison is not only a licensed grower but a leader of The Cannabis Alliance industry association, savvy about everything on the business side. (Check the [Bellingham City Club website](#) soon for a link to the session recording to learn much more.)

This week — [National News Literacy Week](#)— is a great time to point out that local news sources are the most trusted. Your local *Salish Current* exists to serve our community with trustworthy, freely accessible local news. As always, we've done our job this week to examine, verify and vet the stories we publish. Read and share — and [thank you for your support!](#)

— Amy Nelson, Publisher

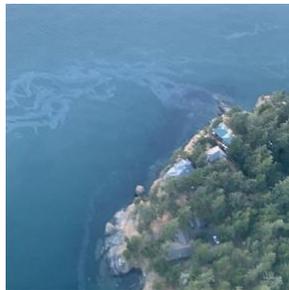
**Salish Current affirms its commitment to work for truth, justice, equity and healing for all people.
#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter
#NoJusticeNoPeace**

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 Jan. 27, 2023](#): Crapper Friday, Washington 8, renewable hydrogen, Corvus Energy, EPA woes, sea lice, bad air effects, BP Cherry Point, B.C. rainforest, Hinman Glacier.

News from the *Salish Current*

[San Juan waters remain at risk from oil spills](#)



Much of the hope for mitigating possible future oil spill impacts in the San Juan Islands is held in the hands of islanders, as first responders and in the relationships forged with mainland responders with greater resources. An aerial view

shows the sheen from spreading diesel oil one day after a fishing boat sank off San Juan Island last August.

By Kathryn Wheeler: The August 2022 oil spill off San Juan Island was called a 'wake-up call' for more prevention and response. Was it? [Read more.](#)

[Tune in! Local independent radio is alive and well](#)



***Do** touch that dial ... nonprofit, independent radio stations offer programming from hyperlocal to international. Local station KMRE-FM is moving operations to Whatcom Community College, beginning a partnership to enable new opportunities for the station and the school.*

By Matt Benoit: KMRE-FM and Whatcom Community College are partnering for new opportunities, as local radio powers up post-pandemic. [Read more.](#)

[Port promises to dampen loading noise in wake of complaints](#)



Giant heaps of scrap metal to be shipped out of the Port of Bellingham for recycling dwarf the cranes that will load them onto barges. Noise from the site, about six blocks from the north end of Western Washington University's campus on South Hill, has drawn complaints from residents. The Port has responded with promises to dampen the din going forward.

By Riley Weeks: Port of Bellingham officials responded to neighborhood complaints with promises to lower the noise level related to a new work contract. [Read more.](#)

[Letters to the Editor](#)

- Scott Jones: **Port noise should not be 'take it or leave it'**
- Art Thomson: **In response: Guemes is 'red-headed stepchild'**

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

Student survey. A survey by Western Washington University polling nearly a quarter million students in Washington state found that around half of college students have experienced either food or housing insecurity. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#)) See: " 'Starving students' no more, as campuses address food insecurity" ([Salish Current](#), Oct. 7, 2022)

Education

Sea stewards. In-person Salish Sea Stewards training is back after pandemic shutdown and runs February through April with trainings in topics such as kelp monitoring, forage fish, European green crabs and local geology. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Nature

Tidal future. "King tides" are a way of seeing what local sea levels will look like in the future. The tides of today will be the everyday tides of the future. ([WA Dept of Ecology](#))

Seal life. Wendy Feltham writes about and photographs her Port Townsend delights, her harbor seals. ([Rainshadow Journal](#))

Business

Cherry Point BP. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will require BP to limit the volume of crude oil handled at its Cherry Point terminal and prohibit handling crude oil at its north wing dock unless authorized. ([The Northern Light](#))

Closed kitchen. Acclaimed Eastsound restaurant Matia Kitchen and Bar has closed down due to a falling out between investors and owners. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

Kamm Creek. The Lynden city council approved the 20-acre Kamm Creek Planned Residential Development which will include 40 residential lots located on two areas to avoid encroaching on critical areas and a floodplain. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Talkin' adjudication. The state Dept. of Ecology will conduct a public webinar on the adjudication process for the Nooksack watershed on Jan. 30 at 5:30 p.m. [Registration required.](#) ([Dept of Ecology](#))

Agritourism. A second survey conducted by Skagit County found that 80% of respondents supported agritourism as long as it was an accessory use to agriculture, and 68% of those surveyed felt weddings should be allowed with conditions such as limiting the size of weddings and how many are allowed per year. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Semiahmoo GMA. Whatcom County Council is asking Sen. Sharon Shewmake [D-42] to seek an amendment to the state's Growth Management Act that would allow extension of an expired development permit for the Ridge at Semiahmoo project delayed due to COVID shutdown. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Blaine boom. The City of Blaine permitted nearly three times as many residential building permits as its annual average over the past decade, topped by the 480 residential units at Semiahmoo Highlands, and received \$376,000 in revenue from building permit fees in 2022, which is \$100,000 more than 2021 and \$200,000 more than 2020. Construction was valued at nearly \$45.6 million last year. ([The Northern Light](#))

Community

Renting. Housing supply is low, demand is high. As Bellingham's population continues to grow, young renters face a housing crisis stemming from building limitations and a lack of rental properties. ([The Front](#))

Volunteer. Bellingham's Road2Home seeks volunteers who will be trained to support the Severe Weather Programs this winter and the Volunteer Ally Program which pairs volunteers with people experiencing homelessness to support them by providing companionship and connections. Visit road2home.org for details. (City of Bellingham)

Ag Summit. The 11th Annual San Juan Islands Agricultural Summit will be held on March 3 and 4 on San Juan Island with in-person workshops and other events. [Register here.](#)

Housing plan. The City of Anacortes adopted a Housing Action Plan that outlines steps the city could take to help ease some of the struggles people are having to find a place to live. The plan was funded by a \$75,000 grant from the state Department of Commerce. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Commentary

Shared border. Ginny Broadhurst, director of the Salish Sea Institute at Western Washington University, and Christianne Wilhelmson, executive director at Georgia Strait Alliance, write about why the shared waters of the Salish Sea need a shared response between B.C. and Washington. ([The Province](#))

Arts and Leisure

Music fest. The Salish Sea Early Music Festival resumes with the Four-Part Italian Canzona (1580-1625); with Vicki Boeckman (renaissance recorders), Anna Marsh (renaissance bassoon), Lindsey Strand-Polyak (viola) and Jeffrey Cohan (renaissance transverse flute). Jan. 27, 7 p.m., Bellingham First Presbyterian Church; Jan. 29, 12:30 p.m., Friday Harbor Brickworks; Jan. 29, 6 p.m., Lopez Island Grace Church; Jan. 31, 7 p.m., Fir-Conway Lutheran Church; Feb. 1, 6 p.m., Orcas Adventist Church. Enjoy by donation.

Dance film. Watch "Piedra Libre" the Argentine documentary about the Argentine dance company Oduduwa Danze Afrioamericana, by directors Alejandra Vassallo and Pia Sicardi, in encore showings online Jan. 19–21 and Jan. 26–29. Presented by Cascadia International Women's Film Festival, in partnership with Kuntz and Company's dance film series; [tickets \\$10 here.](#)

FHFF. "The Long Rider" is the first free Friday Harbor Film Festival's Best of the Fest series offering, screening on Jan. 27 at 7 p.m. at the San Juan Island Library. Director/producer Sean Cisterna will appear by livestream to speak about the film and answer audience questions following the film. The library will provide popcorn and beverages. [Info.](#)

Allied Arts. "Earth to Atmosphere" features work by artists from Baker Creek Ceramics and watercolor paintings by Michael Heath, Janine Hazebrouck and Tom McCalla. Allied Arts Gallery, through Jan. 28. [Info.](#)

History tour. Tour Bellingham's Old City Hall building and basement with a docent and see the historic jail rooms, including a padded cell from the days of prohibition, and learn about the architecture of the venerable building, as well as the history of the early days of Bellingham. Sundays, 1–2 p.m. [Info.](#)

Jump in!

Housing. On Feb. 4, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., the League of Women Voters Bellingham Whatcom County chapter presents "How about housing?," a discussion of state legislation and how it affects Whatcom County and food production. [Register here.](#)

Snowy owl. Join award-winning author and photographer Paul Bannick on an intimate visual exploration of the life history of the Snowy Owl, based upon his 2020 book, "Snowy Owl: A Visual Natural History." Feb. 15, online, \$10, North Cascades Institute. [Info and registration.](#)

Government

For the people

"These Abundant and Generous Homelands."

Washington State Poet Laureate Rena Priest reads at the 2023 State of the State the poem she wrote to the theme, 'A More Equitable 2023.' ([Humanities Washington](#))

[Washington State Legislature Bill information.](#)

[HB 1363](#)

Concerning vehicular pursuits. [Rule, Timmons, Lekanoff]

[HB1340](#)

Concerning actions by health professions disciplining authorities against license applicants and license holders. [Lekanoff, Ramel] SB5400 [Lovelett, Shewmake]

[HB 1337](#)

Expanding housing options by easing barriers to the construction and use of accessory dwelling units. [Lekanoff]

[SB5190](#)

Increasing middle housing in areas traditionally dedicated to single-family detached housing. [Lovelett, Shewmake]

[SB5125](#)

Creating the Washington future fund program. [Lovelett]

[HB 1215](#)

Concerning the protection and restoration of riparian areas. [Lekanoff, Ramel]

Crosscut's Washington Bill Tracker

Crosscut will update their bill tracker throughout the rest of the session, which is scheduled to end on April 23. [Check it out.](#)

San Juan County

The council met on Jan. 24. Agenda items and video recording are [found here.](#)

Observer Corps. Reports on meetings of the Friday Harbor Town Council (Jan. 5) and San Juan County Council (Jan. 9 and 10) may be found here: [San Juan County LWV](#).

City of Bellingham

The council met on Jan. 23. [Agenda items](#) included:

Public hearing:

- Council unanimously approved adoption of an ordinance amending Accessory Dwelling Unit regulations and process. (See: "Washington Bill Would Boost In-law Apartments Throughout the State" Evidence is more conclusive than ever that the reforms proposed in HB 1337 are effective. [Sightline.](#))

Public Works and Natural Resources:

- The council unanimously approved an ordinance amending the Bellingham Municipal Code authorizing employees of the Public Works Department to enforce non-criminal parking regulations.

Parks and Recreation:

- The council voted unanimously to name the Cornwall Beach Park Project as Salish Landing.

The council will next meet on Feb. 13.

Whatcom County

The council met on Jan. 24. [Agenda items](#) included:

Other items:

- The council voted unanimously to table a resolution in support of adjudication funding in the Washington State 2023–2024 biennium.
- The council voted unanimously to approve a letter regarding climate action legislative priorities with the additional amended language of: "Please fully fund the Nooksack adjudication by supporting Department of Ecology's \$2.738 million request in the Governor's Budget. We understand a water rights adjudication in the Nooksack River watershed can help bring together all water users, resolve water right disputes, determine who has the legal right to use water, and the priority and quantity of each right. As water rights are determined, we hope to collaborate with all parties on establishing solutions and market mechanisms to

ensure communities get the water they need to live and support a thriving agricultural economy. Whatcom County has also requested additional funding to support the Solutions Table process including technical assistance and studies necessary to help us quantify water resources. In preparation for adjudication, we also request funding for the County to provide filing and legal assistance for all participants. This will help facilitate the process and help individuals avoid unnecessary, and often expensive, legal fees."

- The council voted 6-0 (Donovan abstain) to refer to committee the County Executive's request to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Hunt Forensics for increased costs of services in the amount of \$893,449.13 for the total amount of \$3,356,602. (See: "New Whatcom medical examiner tells Council that her office is substandard, understaffed" [Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

The council will next meet on Feb. 7.

Port of Bellingham

The commission met on Jan. 24. [Agenda items](#) included:

Consent Agenda:

- The commission voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

Presentation:

- Marina rules and regulations [[YouTube 11:11–36:13](#)]

Action item:

- The commission voted unanimously to authorize the Executive Director to execute an Authorization to Proceed for Harcourt's proposed [Projects No. 5 and 6](#) within the Waterfront District Master Development Area. [[YouTube 36:52–1:03:07](#)]

The commission will next meet on Feb. 7.

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Mike Sato, Managing Editor**

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democratic governance by reporting and curating local news — freely accessible to all — with independence and strict journalistic integrity.

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