

News of the week: Feb. 3, 2023

Dear Reader —

Here we are, already into February, watching the days get a wee bit longer and feeling the yearning for Spring. This week, [Nancy DeVaux](#) reports on how islands face the challenges and find solutions for managing waste; [Kai Uyehara](#) updates Fidalgo Bay cleanup and MJB Development's plans; and [Alexi Guddal](#) tells us why it takes a village to raise a tasty Drayton Harbor oyster.

I had the opportunity last weekend to join a panel hosted by the League of Women Voters Bellingham/Whatcom County's Civics Education Team to discuss the risks to democracy posed by the decline of local news reporting. The other panelists were Michael Lewis, publisher of the *Lynden Tribune* and the *Ferndale Record* and reporter Robert Mittendorf of the *Bellingham Herald*.

Our local League is to be congratulated for taking seriously the crisis detailed in the LWV Washington study, [The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy](#). The study is a must-read. Less advertising, fewer paid subscribers, lower profits put traditional local news reporting at risk.

Salish Current is a not-for-profit newsroom directly supported by the community but with our for-profit colleagues, we all are doing our best to build and maintain trust in the institutions of our community. It's hard to trust the government if you don't trust the news media; it's hard to trust democracy if you don't trust the news and the government.

Part of that trust comes from news reporters being in their community and reporting from the community. Another part of that trust comes from news that's independent and free from special influence. Trust in news is earned over time; it doesn't come with one big story but is built up story by story, week by week, year by year.

The panel was a good discussion but you don't need to trust me on that. [You can watch it yourself.](#)

Thanks for reading. Please share *Salish Current* with a friend and, if you can, [please support us.](#)

— 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 Feb. 3, 2023](#): Happy birthday Elmo; smaller salmon; Jeld-Wen cleanup; Pebble Mine block; Tongass road rules; San Juan Islands National Monument plan, B.C. parks, forestry claims, B.C. pipe costs,

News from the *Salish Current*

[Island waste: can't burn or bury it so best to manage it](#)



Orcas Recycling Service's "Big Blue" crushes glass — bottles, jugs, jars, window glass, mirrors — into various sizes. It stays on the island for use by contractors and construction companies, eliminating the need to transfer a commodity with little to no value off the island.

By Nancy DeVaux: Islands in San Juan County present unique challenges in waste management and have found solutions meeting each island's needs. [Read more.](#)

[Pollution cleaned up, Anacortes shoreline preps for development](#)



Shoreline property awaiting development stretches along Anacortes' Q Avenue between 17th and 22nd streets. The first building completions at this otherwise grassy and empty site may arrive in late 2025 to early 2026.

By Kai Uyehara: MJB Properties proposes residences, retail businesses and restaurants, and an event center on the once pollution-contaminated shoreline of Fidalgo Bay. [Read more.](#)

[Community Voices: Ocean-to-table journey of uniquely tasty oysters takes work](#)



Oyster biologist Kat Garrah and oyster farmer Mark Seymour shovel oysters from an oyster cage into a bucket for later processing, as part of their work for Drayton Harbor Oyster Company. Oysters are harvested daily in Drayton Harbor, when water quality

and weather parameters permit.

By Alexi Guddal: It takes a community to raise and harvest an oyster. [Read more.](#)

[Letters to the Editor](#)

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

Health board. Whatcom County councilmembers Kathy Kershner and Tyler Byrd lambasted the volunteers of the county Health Advisory Board for rejecting the application of anti-vaccine activist Misty Flowers and others. Council member Todd Donovan walked out of the meeting, and Health director Erika Lautenbach chastised council member Byrd for publicly criticizing the volunteers. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Killer cops. Whatcom County Sheriff Bill Elfo, Bellingham Police Chief Rebecca Mertzig and Western Washington University Police Chief Katy Potts condemned the Memphis police beating death of Tyre Nichols and said they are committed to hiring officers who will maintain their agencies' integrity, professionalism, and service to their communities. ([KGMI](#))

Deadly drug. The Whatcom County Drug Task Force said it recovered just over 20,000 fentanyl pills in 2020 and the number of confiscated pills grew to over 559,000 last year. ([KGMI](#))

Marijuana forum. The Bellingham City Club's Jan. 25 forum on 10 years of legalized recreational marijuana is [now online](#). "Start Your Year on a High Note" features Dr. Josh Kaplan, assistant professor in Western Washington University's behavioral neuroscience program, and Danielle Rosellison, cofounder of Trail Blazin' Productions and member of The Cannabis Alliance.

Education

Black History Day. Celebrate Fredrick Douglass's birthday at Western Washington University on Feb. 14, 9 a.m. to Noon, with talks on Douglass and educator, activist and writer, Mary Ann Shadd Cary. [Info](#). For free parking at WWU, email DouglassDay@wwu.edu by Feb. 8.

The Border

When the levee breaks. What's gained, what's lost when a river like the Nooksack is separated by levees from its floodplain. ([The Front](#))

Nature

Monument plan. The Bureau of Land Management has issued its Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan for the San Juan Islands National Monument. [See it all here.](#)

Log haul-out. Ducks Unlimited is hauling logs tossed by king tides and rising seas out of Boundary Bay to help restore a large salt marsh area. ([Vancouver Sun](#))

Pink snow. During late spring on mountains like Mount Baker across the region, algae blooms turn the snow pink and is studied by Western Washington University environmental science professor Dr. Robin Kodner, founder of the Living Snow Project. ([The Front](#))

Business

Seafood. There's a growing popularity of buying seafood directly from fishers and the enthusiasm is found at Bellingham's Dockside Market at the port's Squalicum Harbor. ([The Planet Magazine](#))

In the mail. The *Skagit Valley Herald* will be delivered by mail beginning March 1 and, given that there is no Sunday mail delivery, its Sunday paper will be incorporated into its Saturday paper as a weekend edition. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Tourism leader. Dylan Deane-Boyle is the new president and CEO of Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism. He is a former executive director of the Whitefish, Montana, Convention and Visitors Bureau. ([The Northern Light](#))

Auto sales. Go Auto of Edmonton has purchased for \$28.5 million the Mercedes-Benz of Bellingham and Toyota of Bellingham dealerships, ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Community

Salmon People. The crew of Children of the Setting Sun Productions, created by Lummi Darrell Hillaire, completed filming the documentary, "Salmon People," about the Lummi Nation's reliance on salmon as a way of life. ([The Planet Magazine](#))

Trestle repair. Work began on repair of the arson-damaged Tommy Thompson Trail trestle over Fidalgo Bay with financing coming from the Samish Nation, Skagit County and private donations. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Commentary

Housing needs and threats. Margery Hite writes about how housing for essential workers in the Skagit is threatened by development on farmlands, state proposals to build an airport, and mega-corporate warehouses like Amazon's. ([Skagit Scoops](#))

Arts and Leisure

Finn films. Finnish Film Festival, Feb. 3–5, FireHouse Arts and Events Center in Fairhaven. [Info here.](#)

Hot Five. Josh Roberts' Hot Five play traditional jazz, Feb. 4, 2–5 p.m., Bellingham VFW Hall. [Bellingham Traditional Jazz Society.](#)

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 Noon, 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.](#)

Work party. Join the Skagit Land Trust's Tope Ryan Conservation Area work party on Feb. 10, a.m.–Noon, to remove fencing from along the Samish River

shoreline where it's no longer needed to protect the grown trees. [Register here.](#)

Book sale. The Friends of the Bellingham Library holds its first book sale of the year, a one-day, five-hour pop-up sale on Feb. 11, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. at the Central Library Lecture Room. [Info.](#)

V-Day beach clean. Bring your sweetie to the NW Straits Surfrider Foundation Valentine's Day beach cleanup, Feb. 14, 11 a.m.–1 p.m., which starts at 1100 Hilton Avenue in Bellingham. Gather by the trailhead.

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

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] SB 5400 [Lovelett, Shewmake]

- [HB 1337](#)

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

- [SB 5190](#)

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

- [HB 1215](#)

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

- [SB5125](#)

Creating the Washington future fund program. [Lovelett]

- [SB 5371](#)

Protecting southern resident orcas from vessels. [Lovelett, Shewmake] HB 1145 [Timmons, 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.

San Juan County

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

Observer Corps. meeting reports may be found at [San Juan County LWV](#): Fire District (Jan. 10); Port of Friday Harbor (Jan. 11, Jan. 25); Friday Harbor Town Council (Jan. 19); County Council (Jan. 24); Public Hospital District (Jan. 25); and San Juan School Board (Jan. 25).

City of Bellingham

The council will next meet on Feb. 13.

Whatcom County

The council will meet on Feb. 7. [Agenda items](#) include:
Consent Agenda:

- Request authorization for the county executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Washington State University to continue the jointly shared costs for faculty positions and program support for WSU Extension in the amount of \$255,071 for a total amended contract amount of \$2,986,499.90. [Memo](#).

Other Items:

- Request authorization for the county executive 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. [Memo](#).

The council will meet again on Feb. 21.

Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet on Feb. 7. [Agenda items](#) include:

Presentations:

- Drayton Harbor Oyster Marine Ecotourism Update (See: "Ocean-to-table journey of uniquely tasty oysters takes work" [Salish Current, Jan. 31, 2023](#))
- End-of-year financial update

Action Item:

- Approve [Resolution 1354\(H\)](#) to adopt the Harbors' Rules, Regulations, and Rates Handbook (Rules & Regulations) applying to Squalicum Harbor, Blaine Harbor, and Bellingham Cruise Terminal.

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Mike Sato, Managing Editor**

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