

## News of the week: March 3, 2023

Dear Reader —

Do you care about education for the next generation? School districts across the state are waiting to hear what the Washington Supreme Court will decide about equitable capital funding for schools when it hears a suit later this month brought against the state by a small, rural district. [Kai Uyehara reports.](#)

Long-time Anacortes landmark Lovrić's Sea-Craft has sold its marina and shipyard to a Seattle-based company (owned by Orcas Island residents). What's next? [Richard Arlin Walker reports.](#)

Mining rights in the so-called Donut Hole area in the Skagit River headwaters are now under oversight of the British Columbia provincial government. Journalism professor and border policy research fellow [Derek Moscato asserts](#) why that matters on both sides of the border.

Local journalism matters as well, and change for the struggling industry that produces news may be in the air.

Supportive legislation is one trend.

Congressional proposals would provide financial incentives, for:

- individuals to subscribe to local for-profit newspapers or to donate to nonprofit news outlets
- businesses to advertise in local outlets (we recently heard of a similar grassroots effort floated in San Juan County)
- employers toward supporting journalist salaries.

... and a requirement for Big Tech to pay for using copyrighted journalism.

Our state legislature is looking at a B&O tax exemption for for-profit papers; and funding of a journalism

fellowship program to help offset the loss of 67% of Washington's newsroom jobs since 2005.

New tax policies can help but, beyond economics, the industry needs innovations that will draw back readers and advertisers.

The League of Women Voters has taken admirable initiative to look for solutions with its study and consensus process now underway on [The Decline of Local News and its Impact on Democracy](#). What is the government's role, and what support should it provide? What does local journalism provide that our communities — and our democracy — need to thrive?

*Salish Current* is here to meet that need, with always-free-to-read local news. We deeply appreciate your essays, comments and letters to the editor about our coverage, and we deeply appreciate the financial support provided by generous donors around the Salish Sea that makes it all possible. A [recurring monthly donation](#) and encouraging others to read this newsletter are what you can do to help keep our communities strong, connected and healthy!

—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 March 3, 2023](#): Hergé, extinction risk, sapsucker housing, Nisqually quake, Electron Hydro, Rosa Franklin, kelp help, licenses to pollute, B.C. LNG, Guardian Watchmen.

## News from the *Salish Current*

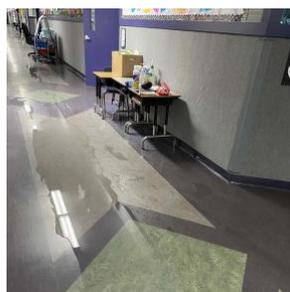
### [Era ends with sale of Lovrić's Sea-Craft](#)



*Lovrić's Sea-Craft has sold the marina and adjacent shipyard to Stabbert Marine and Industrial. The new owner is embarking on a cleanup and improvement of the 22-acre site.*

**By Richard Arlin Walker:** A Seattle-based company is bringing a new look to a long-time shipyard and marina in Anacortes. [Read more.](#)

### [Bond system, wealth inequity are targets of school-funding suit](#)



*School districts locally and elsewhere around the state are waiting for the Supreme Court to hear a suit filed by one of the state's smallest districts seeking equity in school construction funding.*

**By Kai Uyehara:** If a lawsuit brought against the state by one of Washington's small, rural school districts prevails, it could level the playing field for rich and poor districts when it comes to funding school construction. [Read more.](#)

### [Community Voices / Donut Hole win can guide transboundary strategy](#)



*Donut Hole — from Porcupine Peak, seen from down the 26 Mile Valley in the Skagit Headwaters — is surrounded by Manning and Skagit provincial parks.*

**By Derek Moscato:** Commentary — There are many good reasons for protecting the Skagit River headwaters; high on the list is the ongoing health of the larger Skagit watershed, a defining element of the region's geography and cultural heritage. [Read more.](#)

## Truth, Trust and the News: 'Calling Bullshit'



*So much information! What is true? How do YOU know?*

The authors of “Calling Bullshit: The Art of Skepticism in a Data-Driven World” tell how to sort it out. [Read more.](#)

## Letters to the Editor

- Sheri Lambert: Public health advisory board needs medical professionals and consumers
- Suzanne Magnuson: Riding the ferries

*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**

**COVID.** UW Medicine and Kaiser researchers are recruiting for a four-year study 3,500 adults and children who were either vaccinated or not vaccinated with the COVID vaccine to study the longer-term effects. ([KGMI](#))

## **Education**

**Decline.** Test results from assessment exams taken last spring show declines across all grades in every Whatcom County school district in English language arts, math and science. ([CDN/paywall](#))

## **The Border**

**WTF.** Washington State Ferries' boat-building schedule will not allow for resumption of service between Sydney and Anacortes until 2030 at the earliest. ([Times Colonist](#))

## **Nature**

**Green water.** Padden Lake and Stream's green waters are being tested by the City of Bellingham and the county health department for toxic algae. ([City of Bellingham](#))

**Kelp help.** The towering brown seaweed with the floating bulb on top is in steep decline. That's alarming because underwater kelp forests provide shelter and food for a wide variety of sea life. ([NW News Network](#))

## **Business**

**Carbon credits.** Six Whatcom industries emitting more than 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide a year were eligible to purchase carbon credits to continue to pollute in the state's first carbon credit sale: BP Cherry Point, Phillips 66 oil refinery, PSE Ferndale generating station, the Encogen generating station, Puget Sound Energy and the Northwest Pipeline in Sumas. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#)) See: "First auction held for 'licenses to pollute' in Washington" ([KNKX](#))

**Lead out.** Whatcom County needs to clean up years of lead pollution at its Plantation Rifle Range, one of two publicly owned ranges in the state, as reported in a three-part report. ([CDN/paywall](#))

**Opine.** Sign in to FROG, the Washington State Transportation Commission Ferry Riders Opinion Group, to share your views about ferry service. ([FROG](#))

**Re-opening.** Matia Kitchen, a nationally-acclaimed farm-to-table restaurant on Orcas Island suddenly closed two months ago and will reopen in a new

location on Prune Alley in Eastsound. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

**Vacancy.** Port of Anacortes commissioners have appointed Shawn Ottenbreit, owner of Salish Boat Co. and Freedom Boat Club, to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of commissioner Joe Verdoes. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

### **Community**

**GoFundMe.** Local activist Stoney Bird suffered a horrific fall in late November and a GoFundMe campaign has been established for his medical expenses and caregiving. For more information and to donate, [go here](#).

**Bridge.** The city of Lynden will use a \$5.5 million Public Works Trust Fund loan to build a new Pine Street bridge over Pipin Creek in anticipation of future diversion of the two ditches of Pepin Creek away from Double Ditch Road into a single wider channel. Construction will be designed to accommodate a 100-year flood and create a better habitat for fish. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

**Ridge.** The Blaine City Council unanimously gave final plat approval for the 110 single- and multifamily homes second phase of The Ridge at Harbor Hills, an 88-acre property located west of North Harvey Road and directly west of the East Harbor Hills, a 144-acre property also being developed by Skip and Katie Jansen. Grandis Pond, a housing development that will have nearly 1,000 homes when built out, is east of East Harbor Hills. ([The Northern Light](#))

**Chickens.** The town of Edison last Sunday celebrated its chicken parade with costumed participants carrying live chickens and dancing down main street. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

**Trestle.** The city of Anacortes Tommy Thompson Trail trestle, which has been closed since late August due to arson, reopened Feb. 23. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

**Shelter.** Skagit First Step Center, the county's only low-barrier homeless shelter, is funded through April and may have to close its doors if it does not receive additional funding. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

## Commentary

**Homelessness.** Kevin Schofield comments on facing up to the truth when discussing the real cost of addressing homelessness. ([Post Alley](#))

## Arts and Leisure

**Whatcom READS.** Jess Walter, author of "The Cold Millions," lectures at the Mount Baker Theatre, March 3, 7 p.m. [Info and free tickets.](#)

**Orca sing.** A concert honoring the life of Sk'aliCh'elhtenaut, the killer whale also known as Tokitae or Lolita, by the Choir of the Salish Sea with Lummi elders Raynell Morris and Shirley Bob telling the story of Tokitae's life and sharing the news of her imminent return to the Salish Sea. Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, March 3, 7:30 p.m. and March 4, 3 p.m.

**Baroque music.** Salish Sea Early Music Festival: Musica Alta Ripa Plays Baroque (1695-1740) • with Bernward Lohr (harpsichord, Hannover, Germany), Anna Röhrig (violin, Hannover, Germany) and Jeffrey Cohan (baroque flute) in a program of Italian, German and French 18th-century solos and trio sonatas by Johann Sebastian Bach, Archangelo Corelli, Andre Chéron, Louis-Antoine Dornel, Georg Philipp Telemann, Johann Christian Bach and Domenico Scarlatti. Fir-Conway Lutheran Church (March 7, 7 p.m.); Orcas Adventist Fellowship Church (March 8, 6 p.m.); Bellingham First Congregational Church (March 10, 7 p.m.); Friday Harbor Brickworks (March 11, 12:30 p.m.) and Lopez Grace Church (March 11, 6 p.m.). Donations \$20, \$25. 18 and younger always free.

**Organ music.** The Whatcom Chorale celebrates its 50th anniversary with "Chants Celeste: Sacred French Masterpieces for Choir and Organ" featuring special guest Dongho Lee, organist. March 12, 3 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bellingham. [Info and tickets.](#)

**Poetry contest.** The Sue C. Boynton Poetry Contest is open to Whatcom County poets March 1 for a month. [Details here.](#)

**Showtime.** The photography exhibit, "Vintage Vaudevillians," promoting early vaudeville acts in Bellingham, returns to the Lightcatcher in partnership with Whatcom READS. Through May 31. [Info.](#)

**Textile dyeing.** The Whatcom Museum presents Katazome Today, contemporary visions of a unique and historically significant Japanese textile-dyeing process. Though June 11. [Information.](#)

### **Jump in!**

**Expo.** Come to the seventh annual Whatcom Farm Expo March 4 in the WECU Expo Building at the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds in Lynden. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. [\(The Northern Light\)](#)

**Work party.** Skagit Land Trust invites you to the Skagit River Kahn Conservation Area work party to plant patches of native shrubs and trees in areas that were formerly dominated by non-native blackberries and in gaps in the forest. March 10, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. [Info and registration.](#)

**Birds.** The Wings Over Water Northwest Birding Festival comes to Blaine, Birch Bay and Semiahmoo for its 20th annual event. March 17-19. [\(The Northern Light\)](#)

**Work party.** Skagit Land Trust invites you to the Skagit River Kahn Conservation Area work party to plant native trees in areas that were former pasture lands and not a restored creek. March 17, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. [Info and registration.](#)

### **Washington State Legislature Bill Information**

#### [HB 1389](#)

[\*Passed out to Appropriations.] Concerning residential rent increases under the residential landlord-tenant act and the manufactured/mobile home landlord-tenant act. [Ramel, Lekanoff]

#### [HB 1363](#)

[\*Passed out to Transportation.] Concerning vehicular pursuits. [Rule, Timmons, Lekanoff]

#### [HB1340](#)

[\*Passed out of the House; in Senate Health and Long Term Care.] Concerning actions by health professions disciplining authorities against license applicants and license holders. [Lekanoff, Ramel]

#### [HB 1337](#)

[\*Passed House; forwarded to Senate.] Expanding housing options by easing barriers to the construction and use of accessory dwelling units. [Lekanoff, Ramel]

### [HB 1110](#)

[\*On floor calendar.] Increasing middle housing in areas traditionally dedicated to single-family detached housing. [Lekanoff, Ramel]

### [SB 5371](#)

[\*Passed Senate; in House Agriculture and Natural Resources.] Protecting Southern Resident orcas from vessels. [Lovelett, Shewmake]

## **San Juan County**

The council met on Feb. 28. [Agent items and video link.](#)

Agenda items included:

- USGS Groundwater Recharge Study Update [1:44]

The council met in special session on March 2 to discuss the Aleutian Isle sinking and recovery response with Coast Guard, Ecology, Fish and Wildlife and other agency representatives. [Video.](#)

The council will meet in special session on March 6.

[Agenda items and video link.](#)

The council will meet on March 7. [Agenda items and video link.](#)

Agenda items include:

- Resolution Authorizing a Multi-Year Lease of the Coffelt Farm Property on Orcas Island for Agricultural Purposes [Land Bank]
- Resolution pertaining to the purchase of Property on Lopez for Public Works purposes. [Public Works]
- Prosecuting Attorney Office staffing.
- Conservation District update.

Observer Corps. League of Women Voters San Juan [meeting reports.](#)

## **City of Bellingham**

The council met on Feb. 27. [Agenda items](#) included:

Mayor's Report:

- The Bellingham Police Department hired seven new recruits last week, a new officer recently graduated from the academy and two officers were sworn in in December.

Public Works and Natural Resources Committee:

- The council unanimously approved a resolution to begin single-stream recycling, putting all recyclable

materials into one bin instead of three, and to provide free food scrap and yard waste containers and collection.

Committee of the Whole:

- The council unanimously approved an agreement between the Bellingham Police Department and Homeland Security Investigations for reimbursement of overtime to do a joint operation for retail theft under the condition that, "This is not for any immigration enforcement against undocumented people and is for the sole purpose of reimbursement for cost of retail theft operations."
- The council unanimously approved a rental agreement regulations ordinance extending to 120 days from 60 days notification required for a rent increase.

Executive Session:

- The council unanimously approved the purchase for \$375,000 of a 3.78-acre property located on Democrat Street just west of Yew Street and abutting the North Samish Crest Open Space. The property provides another link in a planned trail between Whatcom Falls and Lake Padden.

The council will meet again on March 13.

**Whatcom County**

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

Public Hearing:

- Resolution adopting the Healthy Children's Fund Implementation Plan. [Memo and resolutions.](#)

Consent Agenda:

- Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to operate the Whatcom Homeless Service Center in the amount of \$1,344,000 for a total amended contract amount of \$9,033,021. [Staff memo.](#)

Other Items:

- Request authorization for the County Executive to sign the Washington State Allocation Agreement Governing the Allocation of Funds Paid by Certain Settling Opioid Manufacturers and Pharmacies and the attached

Subdivision Settlement Participation forms. [Allocation Agreement II.](#)

- Ordinance suspending Whatcom County Code 1.28 to update the Correctional Facilities Operational Standards. [Proposed ordinance.](#)

The council will meet again on March 21

### **Port of Bellingham**

The commission will meet on March 7. [Live video and agenda links.](#)

Presentation:

- Aviation Lead Fuel Update [See resident Bert Webber public comment at March 21 meeting regarding leaded aviation fuel ([YouTube 4:21-16:43](#)) See also: "Leaded aviation fuel fires decades-long complaint" ([Salish Current, July 26, 2022.](#))

The commission will meet again on March 21.

**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.

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