



## News of the week: March 31, 2023

Dear Reader —

It's been a little over three years since we launched *Salish Current*, and this week we offer you the second part of [Kathryn Wheeler](#)'s reporting on farming in the islands which profiles two women farmers; a Community Voices essay by [John Dunne](#) on what it takes to address homelessness; and a book review by [Dean Kahn](#) of "Calling Bullshit," the subject of our Truth, Trust and the News forum on April 13 (have your reserved your [free ticket?](#)).

Three years ago on April 1, we asked readers to share what they were feeling and doing as the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic settled in and precautionary isolation became the norm. I wrote at that time:

"After a few weeks in isolation I'm less fearful but still anxious and uncertain about the virus. My son asked if I'd ever experienced anything like this. The fear and anxiety after 9/11 were there but not the same as this invisible invader. The last time I recalled praying was during the Cuban missile crisis. And before then being scared by polio and the iron lung. But the difference today is the isolation and having to adapt to a daily routine of an empty calendar. Now we FaceTime with family and friends, so appearances must be kept up — showering and shaving and dressing. A day of nice weather permitted my neighbor and me to enjoy an afternoon happy hour sitting in our driveway in beach chairs appropriately distanced from each other and waving to neighbors driving and walking by. I expect to be adapting and innovating as all of us will be to allay our newfound isolation. We'll do what it takes to go

on — and perchance to make things better than before.”

I'd be interested if you'd share the arc of your journey over the last three years and, perchance, if you have been able to make things better than before. Send me a letter to the editor, 300 words max, with your name, town, phone number. Looking forward to hearing from you.

—Mike Sato, Managing Editor

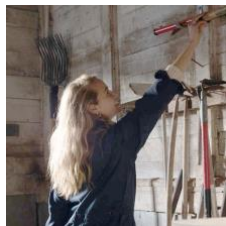
**Salish Current affirms its commitment to work for truth, justice, equity and healing for all people.  
#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter  
#NoJusticeNoPeace**

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 31, 2023](#): César Chávez Friday, kelp forests, bad BNSF, orca prey, herring spawn, B.C. mining, Tokitae return.

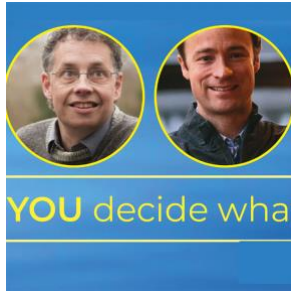
## News from the *Salish Current*

### [Back to the land in the islands — Part 2: Women who farm](#)



*While Emma Rastatter needs an arsenal of tools to operate her San Juan Island farm, she and other young farmers also value the support of the islands' farming elders, as they seek to re-energize local agriculture.*

**By Kathryn Wheeler:** Island farming is an experiment in sustaining a lifestyle — but much more, as young farmers look for ways to support and feed the community. [Read more.](#)



## The art and science of bullshit detection — skepticism in a data-driven world

*How do you decide what is true? Too many people confuse correlation with causality, swallow misleading statistics, blindly accept data graphics and grant unquestioning credence to scientists, say two authors*

**By Dean Kahn:** Review — A “badly needed” field guide and the subject of a free local presentation on April 13, “Calling Bullshit” primes readers with attitude and insights to help recognize what’s true and what’s not. [Read more.](#)

## Community Voices / Can we prevent homelessness?



*“Camp” is meant to characterize temporary lodging, but for some unhoused people, out-of-sight tent encampments sometimes become the only place to shelter for long periods of time.*

**By John Dunne:** Commentary — There are many reasons people become homeless — can it be prevented? Unequivocally, yes, says one close observer. Housing and income play into the complex causes. [Read more.](#)

## Letters to the Editor

- Delores Davies: Shining a light on kidney health

*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 ranking.** The 2023 County Health Rankings funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation places San Juan County #1 among the state's 39 counties, Skagit #7 of 39 and Whatcom #11 of 39. ([CHR&R](#))

**Threat.** The presence of U.S. Border Patrol at Western Washington University's Career and Internship Fair was deemed "a threat" by the Blue Group, a campus club founded in 2013 to provide a safe space for all undocumented and mixed-status identifying students. ([The Front](#))

### **Education**

**Antisemitism.** Western Washington University hosts a free program on April 7 on antisemitism that features Margaret D. Jacobs, a history professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Adam Knowles, a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Zurich. Registration required. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

**School budget.** The Blaine school board directed staff to prepare a reduced education plan for the coming school year with layoffs expected. ([The Northern Light](#))

### **Nature**

**Tokitae.** The Miami Seaquarium has announced that it will begin the work of releasing the last remaining captive Southern Resident orca and bringing her home to the Salish Sea. She has many names, including Lolita. "Lolita is a showgirl's name," said Tah-Mahs Ellie Kinley. "That is not who she is anymore." ([KUOW](#))

**Orcas eat.** A [new study](#) found that over the past 17 years, as the Fraser River chinook salmon population has dropped, the time spent by the orcas around the San Juan Islands has declined by more than 75%. ([KOMO](#))

**Pink snow.** Mountain snow in spring and summer can turn pink from algae which can also darken the snow, increase melting and create a cycle of increased algae growth that can affect the climate, according to research by Robin Kodner, associate professor of environmental science at Western Washington University. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

**Forest plan.** The city of Anacortes is conducting its five-year review of the Anacortes Community Forest Plan that will begin with the April 6 meeting of the Forest Advisory Board. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

**Whale rights.** The Pierce County Council voted 4-3 to recognize the inherent rights of Southern Resident killer whales, thereby joining the cities of Port Townsend, Gig Harbor, Langley, Bainbridge Island and Des Moines, along with Jefferson and San Juan counties that had done the same previously. ([Ocasonian](#))

**Small fry.** Fourth graders from Wade King Elementary School this week released about 300 chum salmon fry into Bellingham's Padden Creek as part of the Salmon in the Classroom program. ([CDN/paywall](#))

## **Business**

**Swinomish win.** A federal judge ruled Monday that BNSF intentionally violated the terms of an easement agreement with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community when the railway company ran 100-car trains carrying crude oil over the reservation and made a unilateral decision in increasing the number of trains and cars crossing the reservation without the tribe's consent. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

**Proposed mine.** The [Ranch Quarry Surface Mine](#), proposed by Cowden Inc., would create a 70-acre hard rock pit over a 108-acre parcel near Whatcom County's Peaceful Valley. Neighbors in the area are concerned about environmental habitat, destruction of homes and ways of life, and questions about ownership. ([CDN/paywall](#))

**Stormwater.** The City of Lynden's [stormwater management plan](#) is up for public hearing on April 3. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

**Vacation rentals.** The Anacortes City Council voted this week to put a six-month moratorium on permits for vacation rentals of fewer than 30 days in Commercial Use, Central Business District, Marine Mixed Use and Commercial Marine Use zones. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

**FROG.** If you have something to say about the Washington State Ferries, say it on the current Ferry Riders Opinion Group [survey](#) hosted by the state Transportation Commission.

**Public works.** Elizabeth Kosa, former assistant director of the Whatcom County public works department, has been named its new director pending council approval on April 11. ([The Northern Light](#))

**\$75 million.** The price for the 90-acre family compound owned by the Ackerley family on the east side of San Juan Island is among the most expensive listings in Western Washington history. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

## **Community**

**Name change.** The birding and conservation advocacy group formerly known as Seattle Audubon has renamed itself as Birds Connect Seattle. ([Crosscut](#)) See "Changing names to step out of a racist shadow," [Salish Current, Sept. 29, 2022.](#)

**Petitions.** Petitions are being circulated by Community First Whatcom to enact by ballot initiative Bellingham city ordinances that would raise the minimum wage and protect against effects of rent gouging. The campaign has until June 30 to gather 3,093 valid signatures of active registered voters living within the Bellingham city limits. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

**Food trucks.** The Town of Friday Harbor Planning Commission is drafting an ordinance that would allow food trucks either to locate in a food court or along designated streets, including parking, hours of operation and other regulations. ([San Juan Journal/paywall](#))

**Fix It.** NW Free Repair volunteers will hold a drop-in repair workshop to fix your broken household item. Bellingham Public Library, April 11 and 18, 4:30–6:45 p.m.

**Map It.** Learn from a firefighter how to bring your neighbors together to share information and develop a plan for emergencies and disasters. Map Your Neighborhood at the Bellingham Public Library, April 25, 6–6:45 p.m.

### **Commentary**

**Shared strategy.** On March 8, the High Seas Treaty was agreed upon and signed by United Nations member nations, after nearly 20 years of negotiation. Christianne Wilhelmson and Ginny Broadhurst ask: Can we also reach such an agreement between Canada and the United States to protect marine life and biodiversity of the Salish Sea? ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

### **Arts and Leisure**

**Salish Sea Early Music Festival** • Obligato Harpsichord and Flute (1720-1760) • with David Schrader (harpsichord, Chicago) and Jeffrey Cohan (baroque flute). March 31, 7 p.m., Bellingham First Congregational Church; April 1, 12:30 p.m., Lopez Grace Church; April 1, 7 p.m., Friday Harbor Brickworks. Donations \$20, \$25. 18 and younger always free.

**Whatcom Reads.** “Red Paint: The Ancestral Autobiography of a Coast Salish Punk” by Sasha Lapointe is Whatcom READS' 2024 featured title. ([Whatcom Talk](#))

**Storytelling.** The Bellingham Storytellers Guild shares stories for older children and adults. Bellingham Public Library, 4:30–5:45 p.m., April 7.

**Territorial justice.** Candace Wellman speaks about her book, "Man of Treacherous Charm," at the Whatcom County Historical Society program on April 13 at Whatcom Museum, 7:30 p.m. See "Who was Edmund C. Fitzhugh?" [Salish Current, Feb. 16, 2023](#).

**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. Through June 11. [Information](#).

### **Jump in!**

**No fooling.** Remove ivy and tree protectors and weed at the wetlands and forest of Samish Island Conservation Area (Samish Flower Farm) with Skagit Land Trust. April 1, 9 a.m.–Noon. [Info and registration](#).

**Book sale.** Friends of the Library on Library Giving Day will sell books to benefit the Bellingham Public Library. April 5, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

**Barr Creek.** Help with trail work at Barr Creek with Skagit Land Trust. April 7, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. [Info and registration](#).

**Trails.** More trail work at the Marblemount Conservation Area with Skagit Land Trust. April 14, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. [Info and registration](#).

**Million trees.** Help transform Squalicum Creek Park by planting 70 more trees on the west slope above the playfields, April 15, 9 a.m.–Noon. [Info and registration](#).

**Earth Day.** Join Skagit Land Trust and Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to plant trees and remove invasive species at the Utopia Conservation Area in Sedro-Woolley. [Info and registration](#).

**Earth Day.** 900+ trees wait to be planted and numerous invasive plants to be removed at the WWU Miyawaki Forest Demo Site. Free pizza, too. April 22, 9 a.m.–Noon. [Info and registration](#).

**EOB.** The 18th annual Essence of Bellingham photo competition is open to community member submittals that capture the essence of living, working and playing in Bellingham. May 1 deadline, [entry details here](#).



## **Government**

### **Washington State Legislature Bill information.**

#### **SB 5352**

[Crossed over from House to Senate] Concerning vehicular pursuits.

#### **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**

[Crossed over to Senate.] 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 March 27. [Agenda items and video:](#)

- Presentation on Local Sales and Use Tax of One-Tenth of One Percent for Housing and Related Services (12:00-49:50) Staff will return with implementation details in coming weeks.
- Discussion of American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) Funds update.
- Sheriff's office briefing on use of drones. ("Sheriff's office demonstrates new drone technology to county council" [\(San Juan Journal/paywall\)](#))

The council will meet on April 4. [Agenda items and video:](#)

- Review of Opioid Settlement Program
- Senior and Disabled Rent Subsidy Program Awards 2023
- Argyle Lots

## City of Bellingham

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

### Committee of the Whole:

- The council adopted 5-2 (Lilliquist, Martens opposed) an ordinance that bans illegal drug use in public, the same way that alcohol and marijuana use are restricted.

### Executive session:

- The council unanimously approved authorizing the mayor to execute all documents required for the City to participate in the national opioid settlements with Walgreens, Walmart, Teva, CVS, and Allergan.

The council will meet again on April 10.

## Whatcom County

The council will meet again on April 11.

## Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet again on April 11.

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Mike Sato, Managing Editor**

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