

Salish Current

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

News from the *Salish Current* for the week ending May 22, 2020:

[Justice delayed by COVID creates hardships, weakens protections](#)



Attorneys including Leta Sanchez (above, meeting with a client) are seeing court dates delayed, sometimes years into the future, under COVID-19 shutdown rules.

By Matt Benoit — From local courts to federal ones, stay-at-home orders and social distancing guidelines have had a significant effect on the wheels of justice across the United States and locally. [Read more here.](#)

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News from around the region...

Health & Safety

- The BC-Washington border is closed to non-essential travel for another month until June 21. ([Associated Press](#))
- Beginning May 22, the Whatcom County Health Department says everyone should wear a cloth face covering where a person will be within six feet of someone they don't live with. ([Whatcom Talk](#))

Education

- An independent third-party investigation has found that former Lopez Island School principal Dave Sather failed to follow the district's letter instructing him to refrain from sexual harassment of employees. He has resigned. ([Lopez Island School District/Islands Sounder](#))

Government

- Sharon Kivisto, Daniel Miller, Christine Minney, Ryan Palmateer, and Steve Wehrly filed for county council District 1 (San Juan) position. Incumbent Bill Watson did not file for reelection. For the District 2 (Orcas) position, incumbent Rick Hughes filed for reelection, and will be opposed by Michael Durland and Cindy Wolf. ([San Juan Island Update](#))
- The city of Lynden has about a \$410,000 sales tax deficit in its 2020 budget from COVID-19 and expects more lost revenue. ([Lynden Tribune](#))
- San Juan ferry ridership got a boost from sunny, warm weather and Mother's Day weekend but traffic is currently at half of the usual traffic volume for this time of year. ([Orcas Issues](#))
- Skagit County commissioners complained they want to have more meetings to discuss more issues and have more public participation than current state guidelines permit. ([Skagit Valley Herald](#))

- Whatcom County Council voted 6-0 to send a letter to Governor Inslee asking for more self-determination over when and how Whatcom County reopens. ([My Ferndale News](#))
- City of Burlington mayor Steve Sexton accused Governor Jay Inslee of using the COVID-19 shutdown to promote his climate change agenda. ([Skagit Valley Herald](#))
- Plans are underway to construct an oil spill response base in Friday Harbor by the Port of Friday Harbor, the Islands' Oil Spill Association (IOSA), and San Juan County. ([San Juan Island Update](#))
- Parts of the draft 2036 San Juan County Comprehensive Plan update are available for review as well as instructions on how to comment. ([San Juan County/Orcas Issues](#))

Nature

- Shannon Point Marine Center has been awarded a \$182,413 National Science Foundation grant to upgrade its culturing facility for small marine organisms. ([Anacortes American](#))

Business

- Shutting the Blaine Peace Arch border crossing that once saw 14 million annual crossings has reduced auto traffic by 98% — down to barely a couple hundred cars per day. ([Seattle Times](#))
- Whatcom County Council members voted 4-3 to consider on June 2 another temporary ban on shipment of unrefined fossil fuels from the oil refineries at the Cherry Point. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- The Anacortes area real estate market had a 24% drop in listings in April, a 50% drop in pending sales, and a 48% drop in closed sales. ([Anacortes American](#))

Community

- The Emergency Community Response Fund at the Orcas Island Community Foundation received \$764,765 in donations and granted \$596,050 to island programs providing essential services. ([Orcas Issues](#))
- The Lynden Farmers Day parade scheduled for June 6 has been cancelled. ([Lynden Tribune](#))
- Ninety-eight per cent of the boats moored at the Point Roberts Marina are Canadian-owned and inaccessible to Canadian owners. ([CBC](#))

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Salish Current is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, online local news organization serving Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit Counties. Salish Current exists to strengthen democratic governance by reporting and curating local news with independence and strict journalistic integrity.

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