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.](#)
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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