



News from the *Salish Current* for the week ending Oct. 2, 2020:

Dear Reader: Salish Current has been publishing for over six months since our soft launch in February. To increase our readership, we ask if you would share this newsletter with friends and associates who share our mission and ask them to send us at SalishCurrent@gmail.com their names and emails if they'd like to receive the next newsletter. (Names and emails are never sold nor traded.) Thanks! Amy Nelson, publisher, and Mike Sato, managing editor.

[Ready to vote? 40th and 42nd district candidates tell where they stand on policing, COVID, more](#)



Candidates vying for the responsibility of representing the people of the 40th and 42nd legislative districts comment this week in the *Salish Current* on police reform, COVID management, taxation strategies and seven other topics.

Special to the *Salish Current* — Policies and funding decisions set at the state level have profound influence on our daily lives — and our long-term safety, health and well-being. Where do the candidates vying for the responsibility of representing your voice in those deliberations stand on issues important to you?

To deepen your voting insights, *Salish Current* invited candidates for 40th and 42nd Legislative District House and Senate seats to answer questions on ten topics: coronavirus, state budget, local economy, policing, climate, education, health care, housing, transportation and border closure. [See the responses we received here.](#)

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Comic relief: laughter in the time of COVID / Community Voices



Local comedians are finding new ways to perform for audiences ... mostly virtual ... as COVID-19 mandates keep clubs and theaters shuttered.

By Matt Benoit — On the evening of March 5, I did a four-minute stand-up set at Bellingham’s Upfront Theatre, a place where I’d had many good times in eight years of performing live comedy. The show was normal for the theater’s monthly stand-up night until the final performer: a man rapping to a pre-recorded beat while dressed in blue latex gloves, safety goggles and a white mask.

Though I appreciated the creative risk involved in performing “Baby, Wear Your Mask” to several dozen people trying to temporarily forget about the news in a darkened theater, I’m pretty sure some of those folks weren’t sure how to feel about it. Maybe it seemed silly to them, or overreactive, or surreal. Now, of course, it seems downright prophetic. [Read more here.](#)

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

News from around the region:

Health & Safety

- Surrey RCMP fined a Bellingham man \$1,000 for violating Canada's Quarantine Act by boating into British Columbia to meet his girlfriend. He was also charged \$1,000 to have his boat returned to him after being ordered to return to the U.S. ([CBC](#))

Education

- Lynden School District Superintendent Jim Frey has moved the district's K-2 in-person school opening from Oct. 5 to Oct. 12. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))
- The Sumas Advent Christian Church is assisting local Nooksack Valley School District students in distance learning by creating a WiFi hotspot at the church. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))
- The Anacortes School District will begin K-3 in-person classes Nov. 2 and Grades 4-5 a week later. The Sedro-Woolley School District has moved its K-2 in-person opening from Oct. 5 to Oct. 12. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Government

- The City of Bellingham begins deliberating during the next two weeks the mayor's proposed \$664 million [2021-2022 budget](#) that avoids layoffs and service cuts by using the city's reserve fund. The proposed budget eliminates one police officer position, reassigns three other officers to mental-health response, and proposes funding a new unarmed 911 responder program. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- The City of Blaine will save more than \$2.2 million over the next 30 years by selling \$5,280,000 in tax-exempt refunding bonds at low interest rates to pay off two water and sewer loans. ([The Northern Light](#))
- 42nd Legislative District Representative Luanne Van Werven accepted and apologized for an ethics violation decision handed down by the Legislative Ethics Board and resigned her position on the board. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))
- Skagit County commissioner candidate Mark Lundsten was censured by his colleagues on the county planning commission after he wrote a letter they say undermined the board. In the letter, Lundsten took issue with the process behind a recommendation on a proposal that would expand protections for great blue heron nesting sites, saying members relied on skewed testimony when making a decision. He was the only person on the nine-member commission to support the proposal. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

- The Burlington City Council will use the \$411,000 of CARES Act funding allocated to the city to cover city costs rather than offer grants to small businesses. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))
- City of Bellingham
The Bellingham City Council met on Sept. 28. A summary of actions is found [here](#).
- The Council approved a [resolution](#) adopting the 2020 Surface and Stormwater Comprehensive Plan (22741) The city will also examine inequities between stormwater rates charged large and small property owners and propose a more equitable rate schedule.
- The Council approved an [ordinance](#) amending BMC 2.16.100 which relates to the City's Electronic Home Detention and Monitoring Program (22769)
- The Council approved an [ordinance](#) creating a Shelter Protection Area for Base Camp located at 1530 Cornwall Avenue (22665)
- The Council approved proceeding in partnership with the Parberry family in development of the Old Town urban village conditional upon relocation of Northwest Recycling which was recently sold by Parberry and phasing out of nonconforming land uses. ([22747](#))
- The next meeting of the Bellingham City Council is a [special meeting on Oct. 5](#) at 2 p.m. to discuss the proposed [2021-2022 budget](#). The Council is scheduled to meet in regular session on Oct.12, 7 p.m.
- Whatcom County
The Whatcom County Council met on Sept. 29. Find a summary [here](#).
- The Council authorized (5-1-1, Elenbaas nay, Byrd absent) contracts between Whatcom County and Meridian, Nooksack Valley, Mount Baker, Ferndale, Blaine and Lynden school districts for costs associated with distance instruction and learning resulting from COVID-19 emergency in amounts not to exceed \$130,000. (AB2020-399 -AB202-404)
- The Council authorized (5-1-1, Elenbaas nay, Byrd absent) a contract between Whatcom County and PogoZone Internet Solutions for rural broadband access in an amount not to exceed \$110,000 to provide access to distance learning for approximately 200 customers. ([AB2020-411](#))
- The Council authorized (5-1-1, Elenbaas nay, Byrd absent) the County Executive to enter into a [Memorandum of Agreement](#) between Whatcom County, PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center, Opportunity Council and Unity Care NW to initiate a capital campaign for the construction of the [“The Way Station”](#) at the county-owned building at 1500 State St. in Bellingham, that will provide services to people who are homeless and living either in shelters or who are unsheltered. ([AB2020-396](#))

- The Council approved (6-0-1, Byrd absent) a resolution supporting Whatcom County sheriff deputies, corrections deputies, and law enforcement officials across the county in response to the increased attacks on law enforcement across the country. ([AB2020-406](#))
- The next meeting of the Whatcom County Council is scheduled for Oct. 13. To participate, click [here](#).
- Port of Bellingham
The Port of Bellingham held a special meeting on Sept. 29 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Zoom to discuss its 2021 capital budget. The next regular commission meeting is scheduled for Oct. 6, 4 p.m. How to participate and the agenda, [click here](#).

Nature

- One of the biggest problems facing southern resident killer whales is that they have a higher number of male births and survivals than females. Of about 40 calves born since 2000, 26 are males while 13 are females. The sex of one is still undetermined. The skewed sex ratio in such a small population does not bode well for the future; just one male is needed for numerous females. ([Canadian Press](#))
- Three more confirmed sightings of Asian giant hornets were reported in the east Blaine area, bringing to 12 the number reported in Washington. ([My Ferndale News](#))
- Forage fish egg surveys resumed on Skagit County beaches after a four-month break due to COVID-19 precautions. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Business

- The Washington State Department of Commerce has \$300,000 available for grants to state shellfish growers impacted by declining exports and restaurant sales due to COVID-19. Some growers reporting revenue declines of 80-90% over last year. ([WA Dept. of Commerce](#))
- King County Superior Court Judge Johanna Bender heard testimony in a lawsuit brought by environmental groups against the state Department of Fish and Wildlife for granting a permit in violation of the State Environmental Policy Act to Cooke Aquaculture to farm steelhead. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))
- Shore-to-ship power, deeper water at one of its piers and commercial service changes may be in the future for the Port of Anacortes as it looks toward diversifying its services, modernizing the terminals and preparing infrastructure. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Community

- As the City of Bellingham chews on what civilian oversight of its police department might look like, different models are discussed and pondered. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- Bellingham grapples with what defines "family" in single-family zoning, its housing availability and construction, and the future of its planning commission. ([Cascadia Weekly](#))
- The League of Women Voters of Bellingham/Whatcom County holds live candidate forums via Zoom on Oct. 7, 8 and 10. For times and how to access, [go here](#).
- The League of Women Voters of San Juan County holds live candidate forums via Zoom on Oct. 6, 7 and 8. Email candidateforums2020@gmail.com to register, and the Zoom link will be emailed to you.
- Point Roberts has lost 80% of its business, hundreds of its residents due to COVID-19 and border restrictions. ([CBC](#)) And: COVID-19 border restrictions have increased the boundary divide between traditional neighbors. ([Vancouver Sun](#))
- The San Juan Island Library District has entered an agreement with the owners of the former Life Care Center on Spring Street in Friday Harbor to purchase the property for a future Library building site. ([San Juan Update](#))

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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 protect and improve democratic governance by reporting and curating local news with independence and strict journalistic integrity.

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