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News from the *Salish Current* for the week ending Dec. 11, 2020:

[Be fine or get fined: how businesses are achieving \(or ignoring\) COVID compliance](#)



The Black Sheep is among restaurants in downtown Bellingham and elsewhere utilizing partially closed city streets to continue serving customers in compliance with policies aimed at fighting the COVID-19 pandemic — and many customers were taking advantage of the opportunity on a chilly December afternoon. In addition to social distancing and reduced capacity, wearing face coverings is required. (Amy Nelson photo © 2020)

By Matt Benoit — This year, Chas Kubis' employment numbers have undergone transitions that — if plotted on a line graph — would look a lot like a roller coaster. Besides employees, the vicissitudes of the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in shifting hours and sales, all in order to comply with shifting state-ordered public health mandates to keep businesses and their customers safe from the virus. But not every business complies, and when that happens, state agencies have to step in and ensure that rules are followed. ([Read more here.](#))

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[New thinking, new technology needed for 'transformation' to a greener future](#)



The solar panel array on the south-facing roof of the Environmental Studies Building at Western Washington University gives an idea of what may be more common in the future, as energy suppliers find new energy sources to replace hydroelectricity and fossil fuels. (Amy Nelson photo © 2020)

By Heather Spaulding — For over a century, hydroelectricity has provided the Pacific Northwest with clean energy. But over the years, salmon that once packed the region's free-flowing rivers grew scarcer and are now threatened with extinction. If they don't survive, the Southern Resident killer whales may not either. Can we meet the challenge of living better electrically with greener energy? ([Read more here.](#))

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Editor's Desk:

- [Solstice Show and Tell](#)

Letter to the Editor:

- [Some history about San Juan conservation areas](#)

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

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News from around the region:

Elections

- San Juan County Elections conducted a [recount of the votes cast in Precinct 25, Orcas East](#), for the Office of Governor on Dec. 10 at the request of the San Juan County Republican Party to reconcile the discrepancy between a random batch audit count and the actual ballot count. ([San Juan Journal](#))

Health & Safety

- To help reduce the spread of #COVID19, the current restrictions for all non-essential travel between Canada and the U.S. will remain in effect until January 21, 2021. ([Public Safety Canada](#))
- About 300 people joined a local resistance to Gov. Inslee's COVID shutdown orders in Lynden at a "Santa Rebellion" event last Saturday after staging a "Turkey Rebellion" at Ferndale Nov. 21. ([Lynden](#))

[Tribune/paywall](#)) \$30,000 raised for Lynden's Rose's Cafe after Labor & Industries COVID-19 enforcement action forced take-out only. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Government

- The [Ferndale City Council](#) approved the city's 2021 budget and raises for key city employees at its meeting last Monday. ([My Ferndale News](#))
- The [Bellingham City Council](#) [met on Dec. 7](#):
 - Approved (7-0) the Mayor's reappointment of Phyllis McKee and Ali Taysi to the Planning and Development Commission to an additional one-year term.
 - Approved (7-0) an ordinance adopting 2021-2022 biennial budget
 - Approved (7-0) an ordinance authorizing closure of the Olympic Pipeline Incident Fund [\[22838\]](#)
 - Discussed the Denver STAR Emergency Response Program for Mental Health, Substance Use, and Other Public Health Needs [\[22837\]](#)
 - The next Council meeting is scheduled for Dec. 14.
- The [Whatcom County Council](#) [met on Dec. 8](#):
 - Approved (7-0) the Hearing Examiner's [recommendation](#) approving the preliminary long subdivision application filed by Governors Point Land LP (Governors Point subdivision). The project proposes subdivision of 128 acres into one 98-acre non-residential tract to be owned and operated by the Whatcom Land Trust and 16 residential lots with associated infrastructure including roads, stormwater and fire utilities. Public water is proposed to be provided by the City of Bellingham. The lots will be served by individual septic systems. A tender dock with a float, pier and gangway will be constructed on Pleasant Bay and improved gravel paths and a 800 square foot storage and bathroom building will be constructed within 200 feet of the shoreline. [AB2020-565]
 - Approved (7-0) authorization for the County Executive to enter into a [contract](#) between Whatcom County and GSI Water Solutions, Inc., to conduct a peer review of the Lynden-Everson-Nooksack-Sumas numerical groundwater model, provide recommendations for improvements and additional work, in the amount of \$103,700 (Council acting as the Whatcom Flood Control District Board of Supervisors). [AB2020-564]
- Port of Bellingham Commissioner [met on Dec. 8](#):

Des Dennehy of Harcourt Development presented a detailed [PowerPoint update](#) of development plans for the Granary Building, the condominiums, the Boardmill Hotel, the Alcohol Plant, the Office and Commercial Campus, and the residential complexes of Easy Living, Senior Living, Multifamily Apartments, and Leisure Use. (Watch15:00-48:00)

Nature

- In a paper published in the *Journal of Marine Science and Engineering*, scientists reported an underwater microphone anchored in nearly 100 feet of water offshore of the runway at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island distinctly picked up the sound of the jets, at levels known to affect orca behavior. ([Seattle Times](#))
- The San Juan Preservation Trust has received a \$4 million donation and purchased Reef Island, which lies just outside of Deer Harbor near Orcas Island's Spring Point. ([San Juan Update](#))
- Skeet Townley, San Juan Islands National Monument's Outdoor Recreation Planner gives a Zoom talk about the history of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the San Juan Islands and the BLM's Resource Management Plan for the National Monument, Dec. 16, 1 p.m. ([Orcas Senior Center](#)) See also: Vulnerable lands — and creatures — of San Juan Islands National Monument await management details ([Salish Current](#))

Business

- Between September 2019 and September 2020, the number of employed people in San Juan County dropped by 23 percent, the highest decrease in the state. ([San Juan Journal](#))
- In San Juan County, most businesses are seasonal and start to lay off employees in the fall. With the COVID-19 shutdown, the summer season has been difficult for the tourism industry everywhere, but especially in San Juan County. ([San Juan Update](#))

Community

- "Make a Difference Day" community trail city easement vacation held up for further planning review by Bellingham City Council. ([Cascadia Weekly](#))
- A new government report on high-speed rail in the Pacific Northwest recommends that Oregon, Washington and British Columbia formalize their interest in a Cascadia bullet train by creating an independent body to plan and eventually build it. ([NW News Network](#))
- HomesNOW! which operates Unity Village, a tiny homes encampment located near the Bellingham Post Point Water Treatment Plant, will operate an emergency winter shelter in parking lot of the softball fields at the city's Civic Athletic Complex. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

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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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