



News from the *Salish Current*, Dec. 28, 2020:

Dear *Salish Current* Supporters and Readers:

With this posting, *Salish Current* completes its first 10 months of publication. Thanks to your support, we've met our initial [NewsMatch goal](#) and now have been given the opportunity to have [additional donations](#) matched dollar-for-dollar until December 31. If you can make that [donation](#), please do. Thanks to your support, we look ahead to 2021 confident that we are demonstrating that there is a readership for independent news reporting serving our communities. With strength and purpose, Happy New Year!

— Amy Nelson, publisher, and Mike Sato, managing editor

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[Wanted: the 'right' dog — pet adoptions set records during the pandemic](#)



Taffy walked into her new home as though she owned the place; the Havanese-poodle mix was placed in a successful pet adoption among a record number during the pandemic.

By *Alex Meacham* — During the social distancing and isolation of this year's pandemic, many people have sought the companionship, unconditional love and friendship that comes from adopting a dog — and now, more than ever, people are having trouble finding the “right” dog because so many others are doing the same. ([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

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News from around the region:

Health & Safety

- A tanker train hauling crude oil derailed near Custer on Tuesday. Crews are working through the weekend on cleanup and plan to remove the cars starting Monday. ([KING](#))
- The Skagit County Board of Health will hold a public hearing next month on a proposal to establish civil fines for violations of safety orders issued by the county health officer, including those related to COVID-19. Under the proposal, first-time violators would be fined \$50, with the penalty increasing with subsequent violations. For businesses, fines would start at \$250. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Education

- Internal audit reports at Western Washington University regarding expense accounts and "ghost courses" have led to firings and a law suit and have created a "culture of fear," according to a news report. ([Seattle Times](#))
- Sixth-graders at Kendall Elementary in the Mount Baker School District have been studying life cycles and decomposition at a nature preserve near their school through the Connections program, a collaboration of outdoor education groups and the district. ([KNKX](#))

Government

- The Anacortes City Council voted to adopt a \$75.4 million city budget for 2021 and approved a plan to spend \$147 million on capital improvement projects over five years. The 2021 budget includes \$50,000 to "explore an on-call, contract relationship with a professional social worker," a Dec. 7 city budget presentation states. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))
- City of Bellingham
 - The City Council will hold a reorganization meeting on Jan. 4 at 1 p.m.
 - The next meeting of the City Council is scheduled for Jan. 11 at 7 p.m.
- Whatcom County
 - The next meeting of the County Council is scheduled for Jan. 12 at 6 p.m.
- Port of Bellingham
 - The next meeting of the Port Commission is scheduled for Jan. 12 at 4 p.m.

Nature

- Alexarc Mastema, a resident of the Sunnyland neighborhood in Bellingham, Washington, often wakes to find a family of black-tailed deer sleeping in his front yard. When slipping past them to get to his car, only a few steps separating them, the deer don't bother getting up. ([The Planet](#))
- The annual Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count carried on this year, with a few modifications because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collected by participants worldwide is used for identifying global trends in bird populations, said Tim Manns, conservation chair with the Audubon Society and a frequent participant in the count. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Business

- The Skagit Regional Health and United General Hospital District 304 boards vote unanimously against continuing discussions to sell the Hospice of the Northwest to Bristol Hospice. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#)) (See also: Possible hospice sale sparks concerns in San Juans about changes in end-of-life care [Salish Current](#))
- The Western Washington University Border Policy Research Institute has published a report on how the COVID-19 border closure has affected the tourism industry in Whatcom County. ([BPRI](#))

Community

- Skagit County Sheriff's pilot program launched in September that pairs deputies with professionals from Compass Health in an attempt to peacefully resolve issues stemming from mental health crises so that a trip to jail doesn't become necessary has proven successful enough to add two more deputies to the program. ([Skagit Valley 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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