



## What's New and Cool in the San Juan Islands

### Fall 2020

#### On the Food and Farm Front

##### Virtual Savor the San Juans

If COVID-19 is teaching us anything, it's a reminder of the importance to stop and savor the moment. In the San Juan Islands, we've been doing just that every fall for the last 12 years with "Savor the San Juans" – an opportunity to celebrate the food, farms, and films in the archipelago. This year COVID has changed the way we do things, so you can Savor the San Juans from home. The first week (Oct. 5, 7, & 9) is Farm Tour week with glimpses behind the barn doors of Pebble Cove Farm, OrcaSong Farm, and Buck Bay Shellfish Farm. The second week (Oct. 12, 14, & 16) is Fall Food week, with recipes and cooking classes from Otters Pond B&B, Edenwild B&B and Coho Restaurant. The third week (Oct. 19 - 23) is Virtual Film Festival week, with films offered by both the Friday Harbor Film Festival and the Orcas Island Film Festival. And the final week (Oct. 26, 28, & 30) is Wine Tasting Week, with Doe Bay Wine Company, Lopez Vineyards, and Madrone Cellars & Ciders. For more information, including Savor the San Juans lodging and dining specials, and to register for these events, [www.visitsanjuans.com/savor](http://www.visitsanjuans.com/savor). We are adding new specials to the page all the time.

##### New Leaf Café Turns Over New Leaf

Chef Mario Granata and his wife were visiting friends on Orcas Island just as the Outlook Inn's New Leaf Café was conducting final interviews for a new head chef. He stepped in to make a sample dinner of his rustic Forest Salad (Maitake and Oyster mushrooms sautéed with crispy bacon and served with field greens tossed in a garlic-infused olive oil), a grilled Halibut Lemon Piccata, and pan-seared scallops with a wasabi cream sauce. Hired! Chef Granata describes his cooking as rustic cuisine with a Pacific Northwest flair, and he hails from the small community of Ferrara, Emilia-Romagna, Italy. New Leaf To-Go is still available on the weekends between 4 p.m. and 5:30 p.m., and dining-in is open Thursdays through Sundays, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. For more information: [www.outlookinn.com/newleaf](http://www.outlookinn.com/newleaf)

##### Rosario Reopens with New Chef and Enticing Fall Lodging and Marina Specials

After closing for months due to COVID, The Mansion Restaurant and Moran Lounge at Rosario Resort and Spa have reopened with a new chef at the helm. Hailing from Atlanta, Chef Richard Neal worked at the Hermitage Hotel in Nashville, then as "Top Chef" Hugh Acheson's traveling chef before coming to Orcas Island. Richard is a seasoned forager with a deep enthusiasm for the natural world, which is clearly represented in his food—clean, connected food with an emphasis on quality products. From Neal: "My food is simple, and local food means a ton to me, so I use that and the environment around

me to push myself creatively to make unfamiliar ingredients attractive and approachable in a modern style.” The Mansion Restaurant is open for dinner Wednesday – Sunday 3 p.m. – 9 p.m. and brunch 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Thursday – Sunday. Take-out orders are available during restaurant hours. **Lodging/Marina specials:** Extend your stay on Orcas this fall and winter – when you book two nights at Rosario, the third is free! Visiting by boat? Moorage is free if you book a room. Please call 1-800-562-8820 for availability. For more information: <https://rosarioresort.com/the-mansion-restaurant>

## Creative COVID Specials and Events

### **Earthbox Inn and Spa** -- *Your Fall Curriculum Starts Here*

This retro motor inn in Friday Harbor on San Juan Island is inviting guests to bring their classrooms to the Islands by offering a [package](#) that includes room discounts, discounts on whale watching, kayaking trips, and a restaurant discount. Learn about the Salish Sea, the habitat, and the challenges of our beloved orca whales at The Whale Museum. Hike and bike in our many parks. Complimentary beach cruiser bikes provide exercise opportunities right from your doorstep. Kids under 12 stay for free, and Earthbox offers pet-friendly rooms. They are paving the way for a family-friendly fall, but the romantic seaside village of Friday Harbor is perfect for couples and singles as well. For more information, please contact Laura Saccio at [laura@earthboxinn.com](mailto:laura@earthboxinn.com) [Earthbox Inn & Spa](#), [Bird Rock Hotel](#)

### **Virtual Silver Screen**

COVID-19 may have postponed the in-person Orcas Island Film Festival (OIFF) until 2021, but film lovers will have the opportunity for socially distanced screenings at a special 5 film Drive-In series this fall. Beginning September 20<sup>th</sup> with “Kiss the Ground,” and running through September 26<sup>th</sup> with “Black Panther.” OIFF is also presenting exciting virtual film screenings on their own online platform with more than 16 films from around the world. They will continue to add new exclusive theatrical films for viewing in the safety of your home regularly throughout the year. View virtual cinema films, information, and ticketing at [www.orcasfilmfest.com](http://www.orcasfilmfest.com).

### **Orcas Strong**

The art of 21 local artists will be dancing in the wind in front of Orcas Center for the next few months alongside the “ORCAS STRONG” banner. Each artist was provided with a 3’ x 5’ nylon banner and asked to create an artistic expression of inspiration and hope during this crazy time in our lives. The collective goal is to provide an exciting visual experience and to raise the spirits of their Orcas neighbors by sending good wishes on colorful cloth. The exhibit began on August 8th and will hang until Orcas Center is able to open again. [www.orcascenter.com](http://www.orcascenter.com)

### **Leathery Fun**

Mindy Sonshine and Mike Connell were just getting ready to open their retail store for handmade leather goods when COVID19 became a pandemic and locked things down. Adjusting quickly, they’ve created elevated DIY leather kits and tutorials that open the world of high-end leather goods to everyone. No cutting, expensive tools, or special skills required. Everything is included, from the highest quality precision cut leather to the detailed instructions required. Guaranteed head-turning results the

first and every time. For more information, email Mindy Sonshine [mindy@orcasislandleather.com](mailto:mindy@orcasislandleather.com) or visit <https://orcasislandleather.com>

## Nature and Stewardship

### **New Hope for the Southern Resident Orcas, as Two New Calves Join J-Pod**

On Labor Day weekend, the Center for Whale Research announced that a new calf had been spotted among the endangered group of orcas known as J pod, part of the Southern Resident population. Officially designated as J57, the mother was identified as J35 Tahlequah, the orca mother who made global headlines in 2018 for her “tour of grief” – the 17-day odyssey of carrying the body of her dead calf on her head for close to 1,000 miles. A few weeks later a calf designated as J58 was born to J41 Eclipse on September 24. J-pod is the group of Southern Resident orcas most likely to be spotted around the San Juan Islands. These two births bring the total population of Southern Residents to 74, but they remain critically endangered due to a lack of their primary food source: Chinook salmon. Another group of Orcas known as Bigg’s killer whales are also found in the waters surrounding the San Juan Islands. This population, which relies on a diet of marine mammals, is doing well. For more information: <https://www.whaleresearch.com/j57>

### **Landmark for Turtleback**

The San Juan County Land Bank and San Juan Preservation Trust, longtime partners in natural protection, have announced the acquisition and permanent conservation of a 36-acre addition to the popular Turtleback Mountain Preserve on Orcas Island. Concurrently, an adjacent six-acre parcel was returned to the Lummi Nation. The entire 42-acre property will be protected from development, in perpetuity, by conservation easements held by the San Juan Preservation Trust. The culturally important six-acre part of the property, including Haida Point itself, will be owned and managed by the Lummi Nation as private property (and will remain closed to the public). At the same time, the 36-acre upland portion will be added onto Turtleback Mountain Preserve, which the Land Bank owns and manages. The 42+ acres acquired, conveyed, and protected today create a permanent wildlife corridor that reaches from ridgetop to shoreline and tidelands and extends the Preserve’s extensive trail network. For more information: <http://sjclandbank.org/record-5-2-million-gift-expands-turtleback-preserve/>

## Writing, Art, and Music

### **Currents of the World**

Once Orcas Island native Quinn Bailey realized how deeply nature moved him, the course of his life became clear. A naturalist, wildlife tracker, and teacher, Bailey has released his first book of poetry, “The Currents of the World,” via Homebound Publications. According to the book description, “In his first collection of poetry, Quinn Bailey has crafted a book meant to live in your backpack, to be carried with you, as a companion, field guide, and friend as you traverse the rich wilderness of life. Inspired as much by the words of poets like Mary Oliver and Jim Harrison as by the songs of the trees and the birds, the poems within arise from a deep love of the natural world and call attention to the power an outer landscape has—to be all at once, mirror, compass, and divination tool for our inner landscape.” The book is available at Darvill’s in Eastsound and online from Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Visit <https://quinnbailey.com> for a video of him reading from his collection.

## **The Pig War: How a Porcine Tragedy Taught England and America to Share**

Children's author Emma Bland Smith has a new picture book about a unique aspect of San Juan Islands history, *The Pig War: How a Porcine Tragedy Taught England and America to Share*. As Smith says, "The story is so silly: One man shot another man's pig. They let their tempers flare. One thing led to another, hostilities escalated, and the United States and England came close to war. The takeaway is that it's never too late to check your ego, apologize, and get along. I think that message is very pertinent in our current political climate!" *The Pig War* will be released in November 2020. For more information: <https://emmabsmith.com/books/the-pig-war-or-how-a-porcine-tragedy-taught-two-great-nations-to-share/>

## **Ian Boyden, Releases Poignant Book of Poetry**

Published by the prestigious Wesleyan University Press, San Juan Island writer, artist, and translator, Ian Boyden released his new book, *A Forest of Names*, on September 8th. The genesis of the book began in 2016 when Boyden curated the exhibit *Ai Weiwei: Fault Line* at the San Juan Islands Museum of Art in Friday Harbor. On the walls were listed the names of the 5,196 schoolchildren killed in China's 2008 Wenchuan earthquake. Boyden spent a year reading, translating, and meditating on those names. He chose 108 names to make into the title of a poem and used them as a point of poetic departure. *A Forest of Names* has many layers; it is an indictment of political corruption, a healing tribute to people whose names were almost erased, and a haunting meditation on how language can suggest a new path forward. For more information: [www.ianboyden.com/posts/a-forest-of-names-press-release](http://www.ianboyden.com/posts/a-forest-of-names-press-release)

## **New Products**

### **Bring Us Some Figgy Cherries!**

Girl Meets Dirt, the popular purveyor of island preserves and shrubs, has a new, limited-edition spoon preserve highlighting a Washington classic—cherries. A combination of Rainer and Lapin cherries matched up with aromatic, hand-picked, and island sourced fig leaves from one of the heirloom orchards on Orcas Island. The pairing was inspired by a delicious Fig Leaf Crème Brulee founder Audra Lawler experienced at Inn at Ship Bay, home to Girl Meets Dirt in its early seasons and still a supplier of heritage Bartlett pears and Italian plums. The Cherry Fig Leaf preserve shines dolloped on desserts of all kinds, but the heart lies in spooning it over a super ripe and creamy brie. To find out more and place an order while supplies last, visit [www.girlmeetsdirt.com.shop/cherryjam](http://www.girlmeetsdirt.com.shop/cherryjam).

### **Benefit in a Bottle**

Feel good in more ways than one with a limited-edition Benefit Bottle of Lavender Hydrosol from OrcaSong Farm. With your purchase, you'll contribute to organizations that make a powerful difference in the world while enjoying the calming, therapeutic benefits of OrcaSong's farm-grown and distilled (and certified organic) lavender hydrosol. All proceeds from the sale of these bottles go to two organizations—the "Black Lives Matter" and "Grow" bottles benefit Planting Justice, a grassroots organization with a mission to empower people impacted by mass incarceration and other social inequities, and the "You Got This" bottles benefit Safe San Juans, a non-profit focused on the prevention and elimination of domestic violence and sexual assault based on the San Juan Islands. To find out more and place an order, visit [www.orcasong.com/products/lavender-benefit-bottles](http://www.orcasong.com/products/lavender-benefit-bottles)

## **Hippy Gold**

Did you know hippies discovered gold? It's yellow, flaky, beautiful, and one of the tastiest substances on Earth. Some call it nutritional yeast, but San Juan Island Sea Salt calls it Hippy Gold! The first product in their new line focusing on their third true love (after salt and honey): nutritional yeast. They've been buying it for years to make their Popcorn Blend and decided that eager yeast aficionados might want to have a tub of just straight yeast in the kitchen as well. This is large flake, beautiful stuff, and package sizes vary depending on how far down the addiction curve you are. To find out more and place an order, visit [www.sanjuanislandseasalt.com/online-store/Hippy-Gold-Nutritional-Yeast-p190700936](http://www.sanjuanislandseasalt.com/online-store/Hippy-Gold-Nutritional-Yeast-p190700936)

## **Awards and Anniversaries**

### **Literary Laurels**

Not everything is canceled for 2020—the Washington Center for the Book has selected 39 finalists in eight categories for the 2020 Washington State Book Awards. These represent outstanding books published by Washington authors in 2019, all judged by the publications' literary merit, lasting importance, and overall quality. Two finalists hail from Friday Harbor on San Juan Island: Claire Hodgson Meeker with "Growing up Gorilla: How a Zoo Baby Brought Her Family Together" in Books for Young Readers and Olivia Hawker for "One for the Blackbird, One for the Crow" in Fiction. For more information: [www.washingtoncenterforthebook.org/2020-washington-state-book-award-finalists/](http://www.washingtoncenterforthebook.org/2020-washington-state-book-award-finalists/)

### **Two Decades for SeaDoc**

Founded in 2000, the SeaDoc Society conducts and sponsors vital scientific research in the inland waters of the Pacific Northwest, also known as the Salish Sea, to uncover the environmental factors threatening to unravel the web of life in the Salish Sea and surrounding watersheds. This rich and vibrant ecosystem is home to 37 species of mammals, 172 species of birds, 253 species of fish, and more than 3,000 species of invertebrates. Nearly eight million people make this region their home today while billions of dollars are generated annually by Salish Sea commercial and recreational activities. Among the projects they've pioneered is a killer whale electronic medical records and health index, helping to analyze trends for entire populations, compare health between populations or ecotypes, and evaluate factors that may contribute to disease. When wasting disease devastated sea star populations along the West Coast, SeaDoc collaborated with partners to identify the cause and which species were the hardest hit. To learn more, go to [www.seadocsociety.org](http://www.seadocsociety.org).