



What's New & Cool in the San Juan Islands

Summer 2020

COVID Coping

Many of our island inns and businesses have relaxed their cancellation policies to help guests book with more confidence. They have also gone beyond masks and hand sanitizer to create fun and engaging stay safe videos.

For Island Inn at 123 West, it's more than a pivot; it's a pirouette! Check out its INNspiring examples of creativity and a sense of humor in the INN's outreach:

Check-INN video – they send this to guests after they register online: <https://123west.com/go-with-the-slow-arrival-instructions>

Get ready video – they send this to guests 3-days pre-stay: <https://123west.com/ready>

Even their promotional rates are INNspired:

Re_combobulate rate – If you're feeling a little discombobulated these days, you're not alone. It's been one heck of a ride. To help everyone ease back INN to their newest version of normal, they launched their re_combobulate rate.

This is just one example of how San Juan County businesses, parks, and public entities have thoughtfully and thoroughly prepared for visitors and are ready to warmly welcome them back when the County transitions to Phase 3 from [Phase 2](#). We are fortunate that our outdoor options of hiking, biking, and kayaking allow for natural social distancing. However, the San Juan Islands community still respectfully requests visitors to [do their part](#) to help make its tourism restart successful, sustainable, and enjoyable for everyone.

On the Food and Farm Front

Bistro for Buck Bay

An Orcas Island favorite chef, Steve Debaste, has started a new venture – The Bistro, Oyster & Wine Bar at Buck Bay Shellfish Farm. It's a dream coming true for both Debaste and Buck Bay owners Mark and Toni Hermiston, opening his own bistro for Debaste and a casual oyster and wine bar for the Hermistons. The goal of Buck Bay has always been to offer guests quality fresh seafood from Orcas Island. Debaste will be serving a menu of bistro-style plates along with his favorite south-of-the-border flavors, ensuring a new and bright culinary experience. Contact: Toni Hermiston buckbayshellfish@gmail.com or visit www.buckbayshellfishfarm.com/bistro--oyster-and-wine-bar.html

Room for Cider

Madrone Cellars and Cider on San Juan Island has a new tasting room in downtown Friday Harbor. Wine and cider flights are available along with glass pours and bottle sales. They specialize in Sparkling Dry Unfiltered Ciders, Dry White Wines & Bordeaux Varietal Reds. Owners Shaun and Amy Salamida have a passion for organic and bio-dynamic farming and plan on planting a fully bio-dynamic and organic vineyard and orchard on San Juan Island within the next five years. Contact: Shaun Salamida shaun@madronecellars.com; or visit <https://madronecellars.com/>

Sweet Strawberry Revival Story

In 2017, the Olga Strawberry Council—with the help of several generous donors and grants—began an all-out effort to bring back the almost extinct Marshall Strawberry to Orcas Island. The fruit, known as the finest eating strawberry in America by the James Beard Foundation, is a deep, dark red with an exceptionally bold, sweet flavor. In 2008, Marshalls were listed on Slow Foods’ “Most Endangered Foods” with just a handful of plants existing at the USDA’s Germplasm Repository in Oregon, having been destroyed in the Northwest by a deadly disease. Fast forward to the spring of 2020, and thousands of Marshall plants are flourishing on farms and home gardens from Deer Harbor to Olga, including their original home on Sunny Slope Farm as well as island favorites like Inn at Ship Bay and the organic garden at Doe Bay Resort. The Marshall has been reborn on Orcas for the community to enjoy as sweet jam on toast, sauce on dessert, or popped fresh off the vine, hopefully for years to come. As of this writing, the strawberries aren’t yet publicly available for sale or consumption, but that will change as the plants become established. For more information, contact Madie Murray at gomadie@gmail.com or visit www.olgastrawberrycouncil.org/workshopsevents.html

A Locus for Local Food

The San Juan Islands Food Hub (SJIFH) is launching an online marketplace for locals and visitors to order directly from local farmers, producers, and restaurant chefs once a week on Lopez, Orcas, and San Juan Island. SJIFH has invited island producers to sell through the Food Hub at no membership cost during the 2020 growing season to assist producers who have lost visitor markets due to the pandemic. The Hub offers everything from locally grown nursery starts, produce, and island-raised meats, to island-made products like soaps, tortillas, and cheeses. Producers update products they are offering weekly. As the fruit and vegetable harvest season begins and more producers join the Food Hub, the variety will increase. Check back often to see what’s new! Find details here: <https://sjifh.com/>

Writing, Art, and Music

Fledge on a Ledge

Doug Chapman, a writer raised on Orcas Island, has completed his new book “Fledge on a Ledge:” an entertaining opus about two peregrine falcons that nurture a family in an urban setting. Doug writes, “Peregrine falcons are the fastest animal on the planet (over 200 mph in a dive), and their amazing life cycle is made available within these pages, in a wonderful and exciting tale with thrills for all ages.” This book is also an eye-opening account that reveals the strength and endurance of the peregrine falcon after almost going extinct due to DDT. Order online here:

<http://covenantbooks.com/books/?book=fledge-on-a-ledge-an-urban-falcon-story>

Girls Weekend Gone Wrong?

Jody Gehrman's new thriller "*Girls Weekend*" takes the drama and emotion of a girls' reunion trip to another level. June Moody, a thirtysomething English professor, has been invited by her old friend (and longtime professional nemesis) Sadie McTavish to a baby shower at her estate in the San Juan Islands. The party gets off to a shaky start when old grudges resurface, but when they wake the next morning, they find something worse: Sadie is missing, the house is in shambles, and bloodstains mar the staircase. None of them has any memory of the night before; they wonder if they were drugged. Everyone's a suspect. A Celtic knot of suspense and surprise, this brooding, atmospheric novel will keep you guessing as each twist reveals a new possibility. *Girls Weekend* will be released on July 7, 2020.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/52001120-the-girls-weekend>

Break for Beethoven

For their first major project since the coronavirus outbreak, the Miro Quartet will come together in-person to perform all sixteen Beethoven string quartets and the Grosse Fuge live for online audiences via the streaming platform OurConcerts.live. Presented by the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival, this 12-evening, subscription-based concert series is scheduled for July 16 to August 8—Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Following each live stream, the performance will remain online for on-demand viewing for 24 hours for ticket holders. The cycle takes the place of both the originally planned, in-person Miro Quartet performances this month on Orcas Island and the planned annual Chamber Music Festival in August. For further information, visit the websites of the Miro Quartet (www.miroquartet.com), the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival (www.oicmf.org), and OurConcerts.live.

Just Right: A New Home for the Three Bears

A grizzly family has come to live at the San Juan Islands Sculpture Park. Jim and Bonnie Towne originally commissioned the mama bear and her two cubs for their lodge in Colorado, and when they moved to San Juan Island, the bears came with them. Made of bronze, the friendly mama looks down on her two cubs from a grand 13 feet tall. She was named "Large Marge" by the Towne's children after a character in "Pee Wee Herman's Big Adventure." Stop by and say hi to Large Marge and her cubs on your next visit to the San Juan Islands Sculpture Park! See art and social distance. <https://sjisculpturepark.com/>

Something Fishy for Friday Harbor

Joining an ever-growing number of public art sculptures and murals in Friday Harbor, Alchemy Art Center on San Juan Island has undertaken an ambitious community mural project that, when complete, will be installed in downtown Friday Harbor. The vision for the mural began with the idea of interconnectedness. Here in the Islands, the delicate Salish Sea is an example of the complex interdependence we all share. Starting with a 15-foot King salmon, the plan is to create a rich visual exploration of the Salish Sea incorporating ceramic tile mosaics and painting. The King salmon will be made up of hundreds of ceramic tiles, each handmade by different community members. For more information, contact Maria Michaelson alchemyartcenter@gmail.com or visit www.alchemyartcenter.com/community-mural-project.html

Growing Poems

More than vegetables and flowers are springing up in Friday Harbor. Among the greenery, you will now find poems, thanks to the Town of Friday Harbor Arts Commission's (FHAC) Poetry Garden project. The Arts Commission sought poems from San Juan County residents, and final selections were made by

Washington State Poet Laureate Claudia Castro Luna. The selected poems have been engraved on plaques and placed at Spring Street Landing below Downriggers Restaurant, near the San Juan Community Theatre, and the post office. Due to COVID, a celebratory unveiling is postponed, and a booklet of the selected poems will become available later as well. Meanwhile, take a quiet moment to enjoy some poetry. As the project states, *“Poetry is a way of seeing our world through another’s mind.”* The Poetry Gardens *“have been created as a way of bringing poetry into our daily experiences.”* The poems will remain in these locations for two years. Contact: Julie Greene julie@fridayharbor.org

New Products

Calming Cedar

Searching for positivity amid the chaos? Try the new Wildcrafted Redcedar hydrosol from Orcasong Farm and bring the serenity of Orcas Island forests into your living room. Harvested from fallen branches at the farm, then distilled and bottled onsite. Deeply sweet, uplifting, and resinous, Red Cedar is a sacred plant used extensively by native peoples of the Pacific Northwest. It is meant to bring protection and positivity. This makes it excellent for cleaning and refreshing spaces. For more information or to purchase online, visit www.orcasong.com/products

Nature and Stewardship

Zero for the Win

Washington schools may be closed, but when students return, some will be riding in new, zero-emission electric school buses, thanks to grants from the Department of Ecology. One bus will be headed to Orcas Island and another for Lopez Island. “When students are able to return to school, these new zero-emission buses will help them get there,” Governor Jay Inslee said. “This is a great investment in a healthier future for students and their communities. Funding from Washington’s Volkswagen diesel emission settlement will pay for the buses, which will go to 22 school districts. The first of the new buses are expected to arrive later this year. For more details, visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News/2020/April-29-electric-school-buses-headed-to-WA>

Foraging for Fish

This past winter, staff from the nonprofit Friends of the San Juans and a team of trained citizen scientists documented six new spawning beaches for Pacific sand lance, as well as two previously unknown surf smelt spawning sites. Coupled with results from the previous winter’s study, the number of documented spawning beaches in the San Juans has more than doubled from eight to 19. Pacific sand lance and surf smelt play an essential role in local and regional marine food webs; they are critical prey for juvenile and adult Chinook salmon (favored prey of Southern Resident orcas), seabirds, and marine mammals. When eggs are documented on a beach, that knowledge is added to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife’s habitat maps, which helps to guide shoreline protection and restoration efforts. For more information on the project, visit www.sanjuans.org/foragefish.

Base for a Spill

To address the need for quick response to small oil spills in the Islands, construction on a new oil spill response operations base will begin this summer by the Port of Friday Harbor at its Jensen and Sons Boat Yard and Marina in Friday Harbor. When complete, the base will be the on-water location for the local nonprofit Islands Oil Spill Association (IOSA). Currently, IOSA’s oil spill response equipment is

spread across the San Juans, in on-the-water locations such as the Port of Friday Harbor but also in parking lots and temporary storage sheds that aren't as easily accessed. With a physical base that provides a central location where IOSA staff and equipment are ready, Port of Friday Harbor Director Todd Nicholson anticipates that oil spill response times will be improved significantly. It could also act as a command post in the event of a large spill in the area. Contact: Todd Nicholson
toddn@portfridayharbor.org

Signs of Nature

The Jakle's Lagoon trail, part of the San Juan Island National Historical Park, is a favorite among locals and visitors. Regulars will notice a few new additions to this familiar trail. The National Park Service was awarded a grant from The Fund for People in Parks to upgrade a post-and-book nature trail to develop permanent, interpretive waysides with numerous pieces of original artwork for the project. Over the 12 panels, visitors can expect to discover more about Pioneer Species, Western Redcedar, Orchids, Woodpeckers, forest undergrowth, and more! For more information, contact Brandon Cadwell
Brandon_cadwell@nps.gov.

Making the Salish Sea Plastic Free

Many environmental advocates are familiar with Plastic Free July as a campaign to reduce the use of plastic in our daily lives. In the San Juan Islands, the Plastic Free Salish Sea Campaign (PFSS) has launched with the creation of a dedicated website at www.plasticfreesalishsea.org. The website will be the go-to resource for local information related to solid waste, recycling and how to reduce your dependence on single-use plastics. For those interested in learning how to become less dependent on plastics, PFSS has created "toolkits" that you can access through the website to explore alternative actions even during this pandemic!

Self-serve Firewood

Moran State Park on Orcas Island has installed a vending machine that allows guests to buy firewood, according to the Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission's [Facebook page](#). Dancing Tree Farms and Services on Orcas has placed a mobile firewood vending machine at the park that allows guests to insert \$7 and get a bundle of firewood. The wood will not harbor pests from other parts of the state since it is sourced on the island, the posting noted. The Parks and Recreation Commission said something like this could be a game-changer for campers and recreators during the coronavirus pandemic while people are trying to maintain their social distance. Park officials said if the firewood vending machine works out, they may add another machine at the park and consider adding this service to other state parks as well. For more information: www.kioskmarketplace.com/news/mobile-firewood-vending-machine-serves-guests-in-washington-park/

Awards and Anniversaries

The Best Book

San Juan Islands author Susan Wingate has announced that her forthcoming novel "How the Deer Moon Hungers" has won the 2020 Pacific Book Review Award for best fiction work. "How the Deer Moon Hungers" is a coming-of-age novel in which the hidden horrors of juvenile detention facilities are

exposed through the journey of teenage girl Mackenzie Fraser. “I am honored and ecstatic that How the Deer Moon Hungers has won the Pacific Book Review Award for best fiction,” said Wingate. “Writing the book was a labor of love and is a great coming of age story, and to see it recognized by industry leaders with this award is truly a dream come true.” How the Deer Moon Hungers is available for presale and will be launched nationally on July 15, 2020. For more information and ordering:

<https://www.susanwingate.com/how-deer-moon-hungers>