

What's New and Cool in the San Juans Spring 2022

Dropbox of images: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sba6cn3mw56q19u/AABqCEACFTIsDOOC-HcEbt6Ea?dl=0>

Nature, Stewardship, & Sustainability

New Baby Brings Hope

When naturalist Sara Hysong-Shimazu spotted a tiny dorsal fin among the more familiar orcas, she thought at first her eyes were playing tricks. But a quick call to The Center for Whale Research, which maintains the official census for the Southern Resident population, brought out the research boat and confirmed the birth of a new calf to Hy'Shqa (J37). The new baby is designated J59 as the 59th official member of J pod and joins brother T'ilem l'nges (J49) as part of Hy'Shqa's growing family. The Center reports that J59 (sex unknown) appears to be in good condition and is the first new calf in J pod since September 2020 and first in the whole population since February 2021, when Element (L125) was born in L pod. New calves are usually given nicknames that follow family "themes" and are voted on by the public; however, this particular family group – known as the J14s after family matriarch Samish (J14) – is traditionally given names by the Samish Nation, which has deep ties to J pod. For more information: www.whaleresearch.com/j59

Quiet Sound

Quiet Sound is a new collaborative program that aims to reduce the impact of large commercial vessels (such as cargo, cruise, ferries, fish processors, tugs/barges) on the critically endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales through voluntary measures, similar to British Columbia's Enhancing Cetacean Habitat and Observation (ECHO). [Washington Maritime Blue](http://WashingtonMaritimeBlue.org), a nonprofit, will provide administrative and financial support, and the decision-making body for Quiet Sound is a group of stakeholders organized into a Leadership Committee and five Working Groups. These stakeholders include state, federal, and tribal governments, industry, research, and nonprofit groups. For more information: <https://quietsound.org/program>

Art Meets Nature

This spring, Alchemy Art Center is partnering with the San Juan Island Conservation District and the Madrona Institute to offer a free 10-week art and environmental stewardship program geared toward middle and high school-age kids. In this program, guest artists and speakers will share concepts and techniques that connect art and design with environmentalism. During the first part of this program, students will meet weekly at Alchemy for group learning experiences addressing sense of place, creative reuse, effective messaging/design, and other topics. During the second part of the program, students will design and execute an independent project using concepts and techniques they have learned. Independent projects will be supported and guided by Alchemy Art Center staff. The culmination of this program will be an exhibition in the Dome

space of the completed independent projects. More information:
<https://alchemyartcenter.com/art-environment>

On the Food Front

Natural Sparkle

Orcas Island's favorite Girl Meets Dirt is best known for their small-batch, mostly single-varietal fruit preserves. Efforts to curb food waste became their popular shrubs and bitters. Now owner Audra Lawlor is expanding into winemaking. Her core plan is to try both "method ancestral" (barrel fermentation, then transferred to bottles before initial fermentation is complete; the classic pét-nat style) and "method traditional" (barrel fermentation, then tirage with sugar, honey, or more juice for a second fermentation, a la Champagne). At least one of the blends will combine all the old orchard fruits — Gravensteins, Bartlett pears, Italian plums — into a single wine that will be "a real expression of the island's terroir and the orchards' history." Contact: Audra Lawlor (360) 375-6269, info@girlmeetsdirt.com; www.girlmeetsdirt.com

Outstanding in Lopez's Fields

After a COVID hiatus, the *Outstanding in the Field* dining experience returns to the San Juan Islands. Watmough Bay Farm is a particularly picturesque spot on Lopez Island. Husbands and farmers Derek and Abe grow a variety of seasonal vegetables and herbs, plus chickens and goats. Their pristine produce is beloved by local chefs, including guest chef Nick Coffey. Nick's Ursa Minor is famous for its obsessively seasonal rotating menu, changing daily to adjust for what's available on the island. Prepare for an abundantly creative meal using Watmough's homegrown goods, fresh fish, and wild edibles like cattails and reindeer moss. For more information: <https://outstandinginthefield.com/event-details/watmough-bay-farm-22-2/>

Fire at Saltwater

This fall, join Tournant PDX at [Saltwater Farm](#) on San Juan Island for a four-day retreat designed to inspire, nourish, and refresh. Days will be spent outdoors exploring the natural wonders of the island. Come evening, gather around the outdoor fire kitchen to cook meals over the flames, then sit down to share al fresco feasts paired with local wines and spirits. This workshop is for cooks of all levels who love food, fire, nature, and adventure. It's a deep dive into the basics of building and combining flavors, cooking with the seasons and surroundings, and mastering open-fire cooking techniques. Fun excursions will be coupled with hands-on lessons as well as plenty of leisure time to rest, soak in the hot tub, gaze at the sea, and simply take in the extraordinary beauty of the region. For more information: http://tournantpdx.com/events/saltwater-retreat-2022?mc_cid=d294a79039&mc_eid=891f770c11

Events

A Porcine Sesquicentennial

2022 marks the 150th anniversary of what is known as the "Pig War" crisis – a little-known international dispute that shaped Washington State and our country. In the late 1850s, when the

San Juans were neither here nor there, neither American nor Canadian/English, an Englishman's pig was snortling through an American settler's garden when the American exercised a little prairie justice and shot it. A bloodless "standoff" ensued. For. Twelve. Years. Finally, in 1872, Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany ended the Pig War by deciding to draw the watery border in favor of the United States. To celebrate this anniversary, park rangers are bringing back Encampment in August – a weeklong series of reenactments, demonstrations, and other fun activities. Encampment coincides with the grand opening of the new visitor center at American Camp on August 27th. The new interpretive plaza at American Camp will play host to local artists on Sundays throughout the summer. For event updates:

www.nps.gov/sajh/index.htm

New Products, Services, & Shops

Salty at Heart

Salty at Heart is, in the words of owner Sarah Bernstein, a curated wellness green lifestyle apothecary. As that description might suggest, when it opens sometime next month – hopefully by Easter – it will be unlike anything else you'll find on San Juan Island. Like most modern apothecaries, Salty at Heart will feature an extensive collection of herbs and natural medicines. But it will also have an eclectic mix of health and wellness products, along with artwork and handmade goods from artists both local and international. Sarah is focused on providing all those items with as little waste as possible. "People spend a lot of time ordering things online, from all over the country, all over the world," Sarah says. "And we live in a place where not only is it hard to get mail, it's expensive to get mail, and it has a big carbon footprint to get here. So, I'm trying to curate the items that are in here to be very earth friendly, body friendly, family friendly, ocean friendly." A major part of that effort centers on Salty at Heart's so-called refillery, which will allow locals and tourists alike to buy soaps, shampoos, and conditioners with reusable containers, instead of consuming products that have been shipped to the Island in individual plastic bottles or single-use packaging. For updates:

www.facebook.com/saltyathearts/

A Co-op for Olga

The Orcas Food Co-op is known for being a leader among food co-ops nationwide and has reached a new milestone this year with a second location on Orcas Island. In 2019, a local nonprofit was formed to save The Olga Store (c. 1937) and The Olga Post Office (c. 1890). Located on the eastern reaches of the island, The Olga Store had been vacant for many years, and then in 2019, the post office building across the street was put on the market. The community came together through the nonprofit; they purchased the historic building and then succeeded in bringing together USPS and the Orcas Food Co-op as tenants. The co-op's presence in Olga will reduce the need among residents to drive the 16-mile roundtrip into Eastsound for groceries. For more information: <https://orcasfood.coop/>

Fun Additions for Susie's Mopeds

This year, hit the island roads in a new kind of car—a Fun Utility Vehicle from Arcimoto available soon at Susie’s Mopeds in Friday Harbor. Arcimoto’s FUV is a small electric car with all the bells and whistles, tandem two-seat configuration, Bluetooth connectivity, a lockable rear storage compartment, and a transparent roof, so you won’t miss any spectacular island views. For more information: <https://susiesmopeds.com/>

Awards & Anniversaries

More Good Food for the Islands

Girl Meets Dirt’s reputation for shrubs (aka ‘drinking vinegars’) rivals its long-standing recognition of great jam. Their Island Plum shrub joins the pantheon of Good Food Award winners—previous champions include the Island Pear, Lemon Lavender, and Ruby Spiced Apple shrubs. Girl Meets Dirt is joined this year by San Juan Island neighbor San Juan Sea Salt for their chocolate honey caramels, a first-time winner. The annual designation honors small specialty food and drink producers across eighteen specific categories. A blind tasting yields the winners, who must also demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and social responsibility. For more information: <https://goodfoodfdn.org/awards/winners/2022/north/>

The Beards are Back!

After a turbulent time during the pandemic—including scrapping the Oscars of the restaurant industry in 2020 and 2021—the James Beard Awards are back, and the San Juan Islands have a couple of new semifinalists. Nick Coffey of Lopez Island’s locavore favorite Ursa Minor was nominated for Best Chef Northwest and Pacific. Orcas Island’s popular bistro Matia Kitchen and Bar was up for Best New Restaurant. Though they didn’t win, the Islands are honored to have our local talent recognized on the national stage.

www.jamesbeard.org/blog/the-2022-james-beard-award-semfinalists