

It's Late on Vashon



Season Two of It's Late on Vashon (iLoV) opens on Monday, March 1st at a NEW time- 8pm!

March's episode, titled "Having a Voice on Vashon" will feature Susan McCabe from Voice of Vashon, and the talented singer/songwriter Maira Kennan.

VCA's home grown production broadcasts live from the Kay White Hall on the first Monday of each month, and features local guests. The show is a chance to get to know, up close and personal, some of our island gems through interviews with host Darragh Kennan, and through performances by our amazing local artists.

The show also highlights islanders

and island businesses through its very local segments: The 4-way Traffic Report with the charismatic Glenn Easley, Restaurant Demos, Vashon Trivia Time, and Who's Your Hero, where anyone is welcome to nominate an inspiring Vashon resident. Visit the VCA website to submit your hero prior to broadcast.

Tune-in for the fun Monday, March 1 at 8pm on the VCA website or Facebook page. \$10 suggested donation.

It's Late on Vashon - VCA's Talk Showish Thing

Vashon Center for the Arts
With Guests Susan McCabe and Maira Kennan

VashonCenterForTheArts.org
Monday, March 1 at 8pm

An Evening with Charles Johnson, PhD

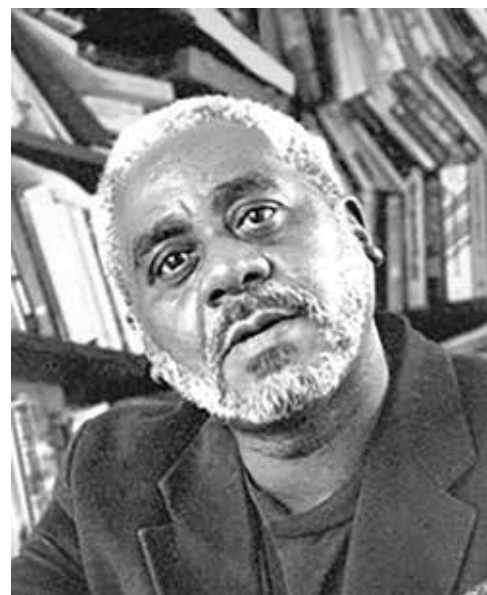
Dr. Charles Johnson and Koshin Chris Cain, Abbot of PSZC will discuss Professor Johnson's latest work, *Grand: A Grandparent's Wisdom for a Happy Life*. In this book Johnson relates the advice he will give his eight-year-old grandson, Emery, recalling lessons he has learned from his father, the great philosophers, Martin Luther King, Ralph Ellison, Robert Heinlein, and many others.

There are lessons gained from Johnson's Buddhist practice throughout the book. Chapters include "Know Thyself," "Life is not Personal, Permanent, or Perfect," "Suffering is Voluntary or Optional."

The evening begins at 7:00pm with 20 minutes of silent meditation, followed by a conversation, and time afterward for questions.

Dr. Charles Johnson is Professor Emeritus at University of Washington, where he taught from 1976 until his retirement in 2009. He is the author of 16 books, including *Middle Passage* which won the U.S. National Book Award for Fiction in 1990, making Johnson the second African-American man to receive this prize after Ralph Ellison in 1953. Johnson received a MacArthur Fellowship or "Genius Grant" in 1998.

He has served as a judge for many literary prizes, among them the Pulitzer Prize in fiction (1992, 1995, 2010) and National Book Award in fiction (1988,



1999, and 2009), twice chairing the fiction panel for the latter. Johnson is a contributing writer for *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, and publishes regularly in *Shambhala Sun* and *Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly*.

This event is offered at no charge and all are welcome. Register at PSZC.org and we'll send you the Zoom link and password via email.

Please consider a tax deductible donation to PSZC in support of our educational programs, land & building fund, and other activities. To contribute, visit our website Support Us page and scroll to the red "One-Time Donation" link. Thank you!

The Road to Resilience

Pandemic Lessons

By Terry Sullivan,

The pandemic is drastically changing the way we do things and the likelihood is that many of the changes will persist after the epidemic. Some of the changes will remain because they are preferable to the past, and some will be preferable simply because we won't want to get caught in a vulnerable position should another pandemic occur.

There are massive changes in the workforce. Right now, 42% of the workforce works remotely and virtually from home. Thirty-three percent are retail, food, entertainment or other service workers, many of whom are unemployed because of the pandemic. The remaining 26% are the essential workers who are required to be out and about or in immediate proximity to the people they serve.

The people that work from home are largely professionals, managers, and financial workers that can perform their jobs via the internet and their computer. These are the ones that have been lucky enough to continue with minimal impact on their income or lifestyle. The essential workers are also still bringing in an income, but at great risk to their health and with the consequent great efforts required to preserve their health and that of their families. The rest who are unable to work, either because their work is shut down or because they need to stay home to take care of children, are having a very tough time. If nothing else, this pandemic has highlighted vast discrepancies in

quality of life. The people least affected by the pandemic tend to be the best paid. The essential workers, except maybe for doctors and nurses, are paid far less. Perhaps as a result of this pandemic, grocery workers, janitors, maids, garbage collectors and others will get the respect and the pay that they deserve.

The effect of remote work means that much of our central business district infrastructure and services are underused and may remain so. I say this because there is sufficient reason to believe some of the pandemic precautions will be maintained, and there are obvious economies to be had by limiting commuting. A large portion of remote workers worked in the many tall office buildings that make up the city center. The impact of vacancies is already becoming a problem. The many restaurants, bars and other service providers that used to serve the city center employees have lost at least 50% of their business. I would have thought it would be more.

After the pandemic, Nicholas Bloom, economics professor at Stanford expects that a good number of these remote workers will continue to work at home for at least part or most of the week. This prospect bodes dramatic changes in land use and transport. Remote work will no doubt lower demand for office space downtown, so there may be little demand for more highrise office space. Employers

Continued on Page 6

LeRoy Bell & His Only Friends Livestream Concert

Acclaimed singer and songwriter and Vashon favorite, LeRoy Bell will perform a livestream from the Kay White Hall on February 26 at 7pm.

Bell is known as a dynamic performer in his own right, but along with long-time co-writing partner, Casey James, has also penned many hits recorded by the likes of Elton John, The Spinners, The O'Jays, The Temptations, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Teddy Pendergrass and many others. Bell and James released three albums: *Bell and James* (1978), *Only Make Believe* (1979) and *In Black and White* (1980), and had a number of singles, the most successful and well-known being "Livin' It Up (Friday Night)" released on A&M Records. It reached #15 on the U.S. Hot 100. In 2011, Bell appeared on the American version of *The X Factor*, finishing 8th overall in competition.

LeRoy will be backed up by Terry Morgan on bass and Ben Smith on Percussion.

Friday, February 26 at 7pm
Livestream on the VCA website



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Published every other week
by Sallen Group
Vashon Loop, Vol. XVIII, #4
©February 18, 2021

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Do you have an event or Public Service Announcement? Email questions or submissions to Steven Allen, editor of the *Loop*, at editor@vashonloop.com. Photos are welcome as jpeg or pdf attachments.

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Discussion group on Racism

Join our free discussion group on RACISM, starting Monday, February 22, 6:30pm. We will meet for 5 consecutive Mondays, for 60-90 minutes depending on the number of people in the group.

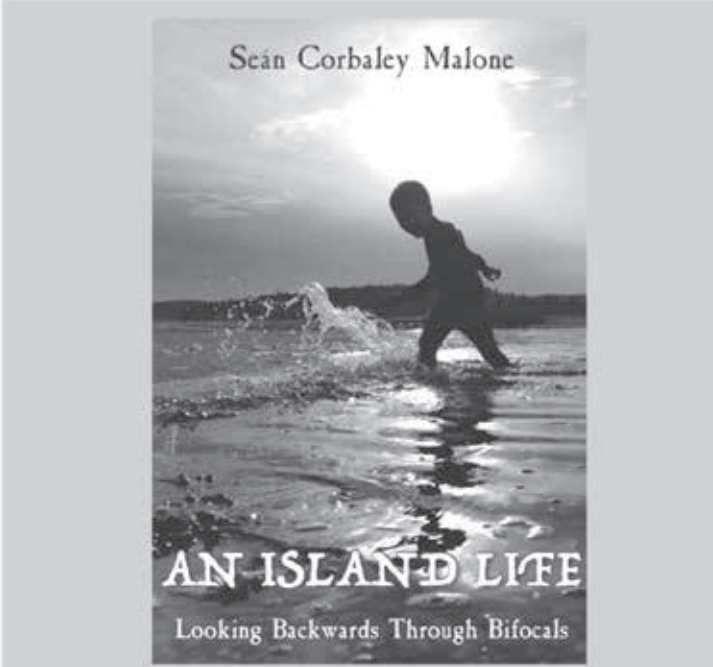
Supplies needed: The book, *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad, and a journal.

Structure: We will be using her step-by-step reflection process to examine our racist thoughts and behaviors. For 28 days we will journal and we will meet weekly over Zoom to discuss the process.

Who: All of Vashon is invited, teenagers and adults. Co-facilitators are: Cathy deSmet, Vashon Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) and Tanya Roberts, Vashon Island Unitarian Fellowship (VIUF).

To join and get the Zoom link, please contact Tanya Roberts at tanyaroberts@centurytel.net or call/text 240-505-6110.

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Branded Logs



By Sean Malone and John Sweetman

“Hey! Look what i found!” , Sean yelled out ..

“Ok... coming!” , i said, looking up from the edge of the log pile at Portage beach.

Sean and i had been beachcombing. Sean had decided to build a carport for his sort of new Toyota which he had just acquired after finally wearing out the twenty year old Toyota he had gotten from me. We were looking for some nice 6 inch or so cedar drift so we could put something together to accommodate the used, but nice metal roofing he seen on ‘Vashon All’ or the local freecycle site.

I clambered up over the jumble of logs and saw immediately what drew Seans attention..

“This is an old boomchain and here is the real treasure!”. Sean pointed at a big round of log a bit further up and he showed me a much weathered side where he had cleared enough such that we could see distinct markings. We both knew this was an old log brand that someone had cut off the end of a log to prevent identification.

A Boom-chain is used to tie the log raft corners together and was about four feet of chain with a ring on one end and a log toggle on the other. Many years ago some of the more ambitious ‘log ranchers’ would let a corner of a log raft loose and drag out a few logs which they later sold to the mills. Most log ranchers merely waited for the natural course of storms and accidents to take place and kept an eye out for loose logs which they then ‘salvaged’ and accumulated and sold to small local mills.. All beach areas had a few people that found this a way to

augment seasonal jobs, fishing or other endeavors that made a living.

Well before Sean and I were born, there were actual ‘log pirates’ who made off with whole rafts of logs, but the development of the “Log Patrol” pretty well stopped this large scale theft after 1929 , and mostly just loose logs were ‘repurposed’ or salvaged in the late forties and fifties. All of us who lived in Islands knew someone who could supply a nice few sticks that a small mill could cut up. The price was always affordable. At one time you could easily find a round with a brand on almost any beach. My grandfather used a ‘Simpson’ brand for a chopping block for years.

I was telling John about the log branding we did in Ferry County years ago. If I left wood by the side of the road after filling the truck, I always branded the log with my initials. I can’t say that I started the practice; maybe I had seen someone else do it. Honor among thieves always demanded that we respect someone else’s efforts to get their wood to the road. One day I was whacking up a log and branded several rounds I couldn’t get on the truck. When I came back the next day to get my wood, each log was painted with the letters USFS. I was on the wrong property again.

The old blacksmith on the hill outside town invited me in for a drink. His son wanted to show me a piece of wood he brought up from the basement. It had most of my initials on it. Not much I could say; except I can’t remember his name.

“Sean can’t remember his name.. But I can! Gwynn Mason.. He and his brother Marvin ‘Marvelous’ Mason were wood pirates of the highest sense of honour! They would only ‘misappropriate’ wood in order to give it away to those in need.”

Spiritual Smart Aleck

By Mary Tuel

Graze, Pray, Nap, Repeat – oh, and Curse

There is a big snowfall here today, which is cheering, even though I will not be able to get up my driveway for days, not that I want to. Being snowbound is not that different from isolation, so not a change.

Coming up on my one-year anniversary of isolation. That is the paper anniversary, right?

Talking with my friend Lynn Carrigan the other day, she said her isolation routine is graze, nap, sleep, repeat. My isolation protocol includes “pray,” and then “curse.”

I added cursing, because, boy, do I. Here alone at home I observe how often I drop things, run into things, trip on things (or nothing), lose things, and forget things. So, cursing.

I do not mind breaking things, because I can throw whatever it is out and be relieved of that part of my burden. Sometimes that is what it takes to break the bonds of sentiment.

Despair has been knocking on my door a lot the last few months. Life is hard anyway, and now it is harder. I do not know about you, but I am experiencing Isolation Adjectives: I define myself with words like, “loony,” and “squirrely” and “depressed.”

“Lonely” figures large in there, too.

It was my belief last spring that the pandemic would not be over in six months or even a year, or longer, and I should settle in, but having a reasonable perspective on a situation is not the same as living through the situation.

This is what it is like to be in a plush solitary confinement for a year. So far. I could not possibly have imagined what this would be like, or how it would affect me.

I am thinking of the anchoresses in the middle ages, women who were walled into little rooms to spend the rest of their lives in prayer and contemplation.

They had a little window into the church so they could watch mass; they got food handed in (and waste handed out) through that window.

Then there was one window outside where people could come up and talk to them, ask them for spiritual advice or prayers, or shoot the breeze, I suppose.

That fad did not last long, and I can see why. First, wall yourself into a little room for the rest of your life? What? Second, you had to pay some servants to do the food passing in and the slops taking out, so only women of means were able to take this path.

There are people now who live in tiny houses, but those houses have doors and windows, and plumbing and kitchens and a heat source, not to mention the composting toilet and the sleeping loft. Not the same thing at all. You must haul your own slops.

But I digress.

Isolation life has been hard. I miss people. I especially miss making music with people and laughing with people. I miss hugs, and I miss real books because I get most of mine on kindle now.

People said, “Make yourself a routine.” I am more of a “variety is the spice of life” kind of gal. I do have a routine into which I have settled, but



probably not what the advice folks have in mind.

My friend Alice told me that her biggest challenge was doing nothing. I get it.

I was pushing myself for months to be productive with the chores: do the dishes, sweep the floors, do the laundry, sort out stuff so I could send some things to Granny’s and some things to the transfer station. Now that I was isolating at home, I finally had the time to get all that sorting and tossing done, right?

I got some of it done. I will keep at it.

I am also at level 900 or so of a phone game to which I am addicted. I have the television schedule for weeknights memorized. Do not come between me and my British murder mysteries.

I have more of a “what the heck” philosophy these days and I am working on my doing nothing skills.

Productivity is overrated.

Yeah, when you cannot go anywhere or see anyone, or laugh with anyone, or hug anyone, or sing with anyone, eating, praying, and sleeping can make the time fly.

And cursing, of course.

How are you getting by in this pandemic world?

News: Trump was acquitted in his impeachment trial, which was expected. Republican Senators had two big reasons to acquit: they want to be re-elected, and death threats.

Watching videos of what went on inside the Capitol did not convince Republican Senators that they needed to convict Trump. It made them realize what might happen to them if they did not acquit him.

O, Republicans. How far you have strayed.

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Island Life Going Forward

By Peter Ray
pgray@vashonloop.com

I think of all the common, everyday phrases and tropes that pass through modern daily discourse, I truly detest the two words that form the title here the most. It is of course, also the order that those words are presented in that is critical. Forward going might imply forward thinking, which would be fine with me. But going forward is simply a redundancy- one goes forward whether one proclaims it that way or not. And it is a proclamation that usually proceeds whatever it is that one is talking about at the time. One can unplug a clock , or superglue its hands (old school) to its face and the sun will still set and rise again tomorrow, not yesterday. So on we go, forward- you don’t have to say it, or turn it into something that needs stating, or repeating, and act like you’re actually doing something.

There is the whole ‘moving forward’ thing, which could be placed in the same box as moving on. Both of those are actions that require some effort. You can sit in a chair and watch the minutes tick away while the shadows creep across the floor and up the wall whilst not moving an inch from where you are settled. Moving on requires that you at least get up and go somewhere, even if it’s going to the fridge for another beer, in which case you are both moving on to another place and another state of mind. It has been said that we need to move on from the place we’ve been stuck in for the last four years, but we have to be sure that what we are moving on from is not left behind like so much dust under the rug because that dust will still be there when we get back from wherever it is that we are wandering off to.

As an illustration of the going versus moving forward thing, one needs to look no further than the letters to the editor section of the other newspapers on the Island. By this, I don’t just mean the other paper of this present now, but also, one can go to the library right here in town and request a gander at what they have on record for the Island News Record, the predecessor to the Beachcomber. It’s been a couple years since I’ve done this so I don’t know if they’ve upgraded the technology- when I looked back into the printed past here a short while ago it was by tediously going through the microfiche cards and guessing what the time window where the information I was looking for might be. This is trouble for me on two counts. The first is that I am an incredibly slow reader, so the going was slow. The second problem

was that, at least for me, when you start looking into the past, everything is fascinating. One starts off with all the good intentions to just skim the headlines and move ahead to the next page. But then, that cat-, and time-, killing thing called curiosity creeps in, and the next thing you know you’re halfway through that article that caught your eye but has absolutely nothing to do with the reason you sat down there in the first place.

One of the places I always got stuck was in the letters section. This wasn’t horrible, since most of the letters were short and easy to get through. The thing that stuck out most for me here was that many of the writers voicing opinions back then could very well have passed for some of the writers writing in these days. Many of the problems that existed for the ferries back then still persist today. Some voices back then spoke up to support Island businesses, encouraging others to shop here before going over town. There were complaints about other people’s animals and how some people just drive too fast out here. It would seem that in many of these cases, things have gone forward without moving forward, in large part because the culture did not change, nor did basic human nature.

Regarding our current political situation, I thought it would be interesting to see what the Hollywood record had to say about politics, and so I sought out a copy of ‘Mr. Smith goes to Washington’, which I will admit to having never seen before. I was surprised to find that it came out in 1939, the same year that ‘Gone With the Wind’ and ‘Wizard of Oz’ made their cinematic entrances. GWTW ran away with things that year grossing almost six times what Mr. Smith brought in at \$18 and \$3.5 million respectively, and they were one and two on the box office list with the Wizard coming in at number five. But that’s not why we came or went here. What was truly astounding about my visit with Mr. Capra and Mr. Stewart was the portrayal of the Senate from back in 1939. There were the trumped up and untrue charges against Mr. Smith in order to cover the graft of others, and the media frenzy that followed with more baseless charges of the “alternative facts” variety. There was even the entire scene that was a carbon copy, or prototype of, depending on which direction in time one is traveling, the Senate impeachment “jurors” in the recent trial where many in the audience were not paying any attention to either the house managers in presenting their case, or Mr. Smith in his self-defense.

In going further backward in an effort to find evidence of moving forward, or not, we find ourselves in the House of Representatives this time, with the relative time reference being

March 20, 1866. The reason why we are in this here and now is because it was the day that representative Hulburt from New York was attempting to read a bit of fiction into the record in order to get back at Horace Greeley for something he had written in his paper, the New York Tribune. Greeley had made a point of mocking Mr. Hulburt regarding a bill intended to settle the issue of government paying out coin redemption for paper money. Greeley had made disparaging comments about Hulburt’s grasp of economics, and in order to get revenge and retribution, Mr. Hulburt wanted a fictional account of Greeley’s ride in a stagecoach from Genoa, Nevada to Placerville, California read into the congressional record, which at the time was known as the Congressional Globe. This account was written by one Artemus Ward, a comedic author of some reknown. It described Greeley looking ridiculous as he supposedly bounced all around the back of the coach as he implored the driver to go faster so he would get to his speaking engagement that night. There was debate about putting a fiction into the record and thereby debasing the integrity of the House at the time, but it was read in anyway. I do not know that this was a precedent in terms of the genesis of legitimizing fake news, but it does exist in the record to this day.

Some say that this mockery of Greeley, which was still alive and well when he ran for president against Ulysses S. Grant in 1872, was a reason for his losing to Grant. Others claim that Greeley’s hand in freeing Jefferson Davis from prison, because he felt that his imprisonment was dividing the country, had a much greater affect on Greeley’s defeat at the polls. Greeley had perhaps been the single greatest advocate of the Emancipation Proclamation, and had badgered Lincoln ceaselessly about his signing it. It is hard to say if Davis’s being given a pass after only two years in prison actually led to any national healing as it was intended, and to speculate as to whether Greeley would have done things differently than Grant if he had been elected is somewhat pointless, as Greeley passed away not long after the election- some say it was a cascading of health events possibly exacerbated by his extreme disappointment at losing. It is difficult to say whether or not Greeley would have issued in a more enlightened view of Civil Rights since he was also known to have made disparaging comments about the inferiority of Black peoples, along with expressing a disdain for Native Americans. While I was on my journey of discovery about Greeley a few years back, the day I came to my home town to visit Greeley’s statue there, a high school senior was proposing a name change for Horace Greeley High School because of his racists comments.

And now, just last night on the news I see there is talk of tearing down the statue of George Washington at the U., and talk as well about a movement to rename the state of Washington itself because of the extent of our first president’s slave holdings. And so, as we look back and then move forward along the timeline, we move past various mileposts that were supposedly allowing us to move beyond our slave owning, racist past. There was the first Black President just a few years back, along with the recent election of the first female Black Vice President that seemed to indicate some progress in that regard. But there was that disturbance in the force, in between, that pointed emphatically at the reality that while it seemed we had been going forward all along, we had not really been moving forward at all. I don’t know that we were moving backward- it seems that in spite all the implied progress as a nation, we seemed to have gone nowhere at all, thanks to the now disgraced former president giving voice and validity to all that bad stuff that we thought we had moved by. In some ways that is a good thing- the exposing of the bias and hatred in the system that had never really left. What we need to do now is not go forward or move on until it is dealt with and purged from the system. The overt white supremacist, racist leanings of the disgraced former president could have in part been remedied by a Senate conviction for his second impeachment. In a sense, because he wasn’t held accountable we are being pushed now into just going forward. I am not sure what the remedy is for that. I don’t know what it will take to get some justice around here. I just don’t know. It is wrong that in a democracy, no matter what we do it seems out of our hands.

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Our VIPP Shelter is open for adoptions every Saturday.
Visit our website www.vipp.org for Directions and to
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Or give us a call 206-389-1085


Leia Needs A Home

Like the Star Wars princess, I’m out-of-this-world amazing. I get along with other cats, so if you already have some, I’d be fine sharing you with them. Just seven months old, I’m full of fun and playfulness. I don’t jump into laps, but I’ll happily cuddle with you if you pick me up.

My dream is to live indoors with adults in a quiet, peaceful setting - no lightsabers or Wookiee bowcasters, please!

**Go To
www.vipp.org**

To view adoptable Cats and Dogs



Island Epicure



By Marj Watkins

Good Fats vs. Bad Fats

The convictions that all fats are bad and that we should throw out egg yolks seems to have run their course. Now we’re learning that some saturated fats are actually necessary. We’re reading a lot about the good Omega-3 fats and tsk-tsking Omega 6 fats--bad but only because we get too much Omega 6, especially in fast foods and fried foods, ready-made foods like bottled salad dressings, canola oil and generic “vegetable” oils, and in processed foods. Canola oil claims omega 3 fat, but contains more Omega 6. Olive oil is a healthier source of Omega 3. I no longer use canola oil or Splenda, preferring the healthier olive oil and coconut sugar, Glycemic Index 35, instead of cane sugar, G.I. 100. Now the cookbooks Minglement has been selling for me need revision. That doesn’t mean you have to toss out my Wholegrain and Gluten Free book, or my Soups and Stews book. Just substitute olive oil for canola oil. I especially like importer, fellow Islander, and son-in-law Richard Osborne’s Turkish cold-pressed, extra virgin olive oil for salad dressings, available at the IGA, or the lighter Spanish oil from Thriftway for cooking. I buy the 3-litre

box straight from Rich. Most of my old family recipes, like my Welsh grandma Fannie Wey Brunson’s Carrot Biscuits are fine with oil instead of shortening, and with gluten free or low-gluten flour. Barley flour is lower in gluten and behaves well in baking. We like the taste and texture of it. I and those of my descendants who are gluten-sensitive have no trouble with barley flour. If I were making these for someone with celiac, I’d use sorghum flour with a bit of cornstarch to smooth the texture.

Grandma’s Carrot Biscuits

Preheat oven to 450 degrees

Sift:

2 cups barley flour

3 teaspoons baking powder

¾ teaspoon salt

Stir in:

2 long carrots, grated

Stir briskly to combine carrots and flour mixture and then fork-beat to combine and stir in:

¼ cup Spanish extra virgin olive oil

¾ cup milk

1 egg

Stir in 1 Tablespoon honey

Honey will keep leftover biscuits, if there are any, from growing stale. Drop dough by heaping tablespoonfuls onto a parchment lined baking sheet. Place on center rack in hot oven. Bake 13 to 15 minutes. The biscuits should be nicely brown with darker brown peaks. Eat them warm with real butter, which supplies virtuous Omega-3 fat, and tastes better than any substitute. Eat these warm from the oven and generously spread with real butter. Yum! They go well with baked chicken or beans.

Michael Whitmore Live Stream Concert

Sunday, Feb 21st, 6pm PST, Michael Whitmore, nylon string guitarist, occasional vocalist in a live streaming concert – jazz, post-jazz, torchsongs, neo-sambas, improvisations, things that make you go hmmm ... the Poodle Sessions #48.

Michael Whitmore tends towards the frayed edges of jazz -- post-jazz, avant-jazz, free-jazz, with a hint of old school samba. He was a veteran of the Los Angeles new music scene before moving to the Northwest a decade ago and for the past seven years, Whitmore and the ensemble Some’tet have had a residency at the Snapdragon Café on Sundays. He is an author, music historian, very often a DJ and always a record collector and he co-hosts the Friday Morning Scramble with Shelley Hanna on local KVSH 101.9FM.

Michael Whitmore
The Poodle Sessions
Live Stream Concert
Sunday, February 21st, 6pm PDT
Link to watch: <https://www.facebook.com/michael.whitmore.14>



Tipping at Venmo: michael-whitmore-28 or: paypal.me/sometet

Patsy Needs a Home

I’m an exotic combination of calico and Manx, possibly the only one on Vashon. My stubby little tail doesn’t seem to go with the rest of me! I get along with people but not dogs or other cats, so my dream home is one where I can be the only pampered pet.

Did you know that some people think Manx cats are the hybrid offspring of cats and rabbits? Fake news! Here’s some true news - VIPP has an eBay store! Proceeds from the sale of donated items will go to VIPP to help animals like me. Please check it out at <http://ebay.com/usr/vashonislandpetprotectors>.



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To view adoptable Cats and Dogs

Road to Resilience

Continued from Page 1

of these workers are already considering continuing some elements of social distancing at the office as a precaution. By doubling the workspace, a lot of the empty office space downtown may be utilized. Will that lower the revenues to building owners or greatly increase the costs for renters? A remaining intractable problem is that safe elevator use will require a capacity reduction of 90% in the case of another pandemic.

For some, working at home is difficult or impossible depending on home space and internet speed availability. Others just prefer to get out of the house and off to the office for social reasons. When you consider the time, fuel expenditures, and carbon footprint for millions of people going 5-100 miles roundtrip five days a week, anything that reduces that will be a real boon. For all of these reasons, there may be an increased demand for regional office space with state-of-the-art technology for remote workers living nearby. The current business hubs like the one here on Vashon serve this need now.

Essential workers for the most part will have to continue commuting. Perhaps, in addition to the pay raise they deserve, they should be paid for commuting time. Retail, food, entertainment, and personal service workers will need to commute as well or be retrained for the new economy that will emerge from the pandemic. I’m not throwing a wet blanket on the

prospect of returning to the crowded restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues that we love, but some sort of security for employees in this sector will need to be in place.

We should also try to continue limiting our air travel, because it is one of the biggest contributors to the carbon buildup causing climate change. So far, no easily produced sustainable renewable fuel has been developed with the weight and energy density to equal jet fuel. Perhaps the day of large scale heavier-than-air travel should be ended in favor of taking a little more time to travel in comfort by state-of-the-art electric rail. I recently read a description of lighter-than-air ships made of photovoltaic fabric that could travel at a third the speed of jet planes, land closer to cities and provide service to cities that can’t afford the massive investment in an airport with runways. Why travel in a cramped seat in a tin can when you can travel comfortably for a few more hours?

Comments? terry@vashonloop.com

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Aries (March 20-April 19)

The Sun’s ingress into the most sensitive angle of your chart on the 18th commences a phase of deep internal review for you. Events the past few weeks have kept you involved in the social world, which is the perfect thing for this particular moment. Keep doing that, and then honor the calling to spend plenty of time alone, reflecting on the many events of the past year that have so changed your life, and all of known reality. You will benefit from a deep internal audit of your state of being: from true personal inquiry. That, however, is a skill, and it’s one that is not taught anymore and that has been worn down in many who previously had it. Living digital lives has taken us outside ourselves. Turning our attention inward seems as appealing to some as jumping into the water on a cold day, or wandering into a dark cave. Yet you contain your reality, and you need a sense of your inner being. The only way to get there is to ease back and find your way inside yourself. If you feel like this is strange and unfamiliar territory, then you might consider how that came to be. Look back through your old journals. Not your old Live Journal or Blogspot — your physical written journals, letters and photographs, and notice what has changed.

Taurus (April 19-May 20)

You may be concerned about maintaining a boundary between what is your responsibility and what belongs to others. You may not want to take on too much. You may have personal priorities to attend to. Yet there is no separating those things from something else that is trying to get your attention, something much larger than yourself. There are people who naturally have that sense, and others who cannot see past the rims of their eyeglasses, for whom everything is merely personal. You are in an extended time of personal reinvention, described by Uranus in your birth sign. People begin such transits one way and often end up entirely different people. One way you are changing is by extending your concept of “self” to something that includes many more people. Your life is no longer about minding your own business. Neither is it about minding the business of others but rather the business of society. Parents, teachers and therapists tell us not to take on what is not really ours. Your chart advises differently.

Gemini (May 20-June 21)

You are about to make a discovery. Or rather, you will, if you notice, and if you are willing to give up a false idea about something. Learning means a few things. For one, it means changing. For another, it often means having been wrong. Anyone attached to staying the same, by which I mean in their ideation (in this case), will not want to make the change necessary to learn successfully. Anyone who is attached to being right will not be able to be wrong enough to actually learn, and that, sadly, is where many people are stuck. Making a discovery is not seen by everyone as a reward. For many, it is the last thing they want, as making a discovery could require them to change many other things about their life and it is seemingly easier to live in denial. For you, to do this would be to miss one of the greatest opportunities of your life so far. Embrace that what you learn will change you. Accept that change is necessary, and to have your beliefs corrected is only helpful.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

With the Sun’s move to your fellow water sign Pisces, you are likely to have

a more optimistic outlook. Matters that seemed complex will have a tendency to feel simpler. Yet this mostly depends on you acknowledging something you learn just as Mercury stations direct (exact Feb. 20 at 8:52 pm EST). There is an idea I learned in therapy, which is “use what you know.” We might add to that, “Know when you don’t know.” Between these two concepts, we could devise a mind-map of our whole society. We can infer why people are resistant to gaining knowledge: because it imparts a responsibility to actually do something about it. That is exactly the ethos I suggest you live by. Take full responsibility for the implications of what you’re aware of. Know that in many cases you’re also responsible for what you’re not aware of. This may not be true in some strict legal sense, though it is very true in both the moral and practical senses. It’s a big job staying aware and informed. It’s an even bigger job dealing with the implications of what is so. The decisions you make this week could have far-reaching implications, and you don’t want any of them to be based on assumptions.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

You may now have a sense of how fuzzy some of your agreements are. Now, however, is the time to figure out where you stand with people. That means more than anything figuring out where you stand with yourself. This is always the challenge, when it comes to getting clear with others. You’re in a situation where it’s vitally important to be on level ground with yourself. This is of course the great challenge of human existence, particularly as our awareness is not only under assault all the time, but constantly for sale or for rent. What you must be cautious about is your idealism. It is one thing to be optimistic, and to see the best in people. However, not everyone’s motives are wholesome. Not everyone is honest. And it can take some serious scrutiny to filter out who is real from who is not. Nobody has a perfect batting average no matter how much they may practice. The Sun moving through one of the most sensitive areas of your chart for the next few weeks is about cleaning up your boundaries. And before you get there, you will get the opportunity to find out where they are.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

Seeking the truth is not so popular these days. It’s easy to understand why: those who did not do so and who are certain they are right are threatened by those who inquire. You, however, have an inquiring mind, and this has been running at peak potential lately with Mercury retrograde in Aquarius. The sign associated with advances in science and technology is in your house of healing (Aquarius is 6 places from Virgo, hence the 6th solar house). Right now, as in this moment, there is a movement to merge medicine, technology, biology and health. That is dangerous because an experienced herbalist is more likely to help you than all the molecular biology in the world. All this science stuff is the opposite of the Holistic Principle, which is what you would live by in a perfect world: all of life is one expression (described magnificently in the book The Biophilia Hypothesis by Ed Wilson). You are a whole person, and the key to your wellbeing is your wholeness. The more you investigate that, and explore and experience it, the better able you will be to take care of yourself and those you love.

Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

Put your plan into physical form. It’s

probably a fantastic scheme, with well-thought-through strategies. However, you need to get it into the third-dimension: into physical space and time. That means build a model, hold a rehearsal, write the proposal, and generally clear the space and put it where you can see it. Even if we’re talking about some form of digital art, make it as tangible as possible. You will need a good few run-throughs, redesigns or rewrites to discover the bugs and work them out. This transition from theory to lived reality is something that is going out of style fast, but which humanity dispenses with to its peril. You are here in your body to do things with your body, whatever that might mean to you: as long as it means physical form. One other bit. There is an influence in your chart that is cautioning you about daddy-pleasing. This is going on at manic proportions, though the message is the loudest and clearest for you: make your own choices. Listen for that voice of disapproval, or the notion that you must construct yourself in someone else’s image in order to be acceptable — and go beyond it with the bold determination of knowing, “My life is my life.”

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

The Venus-Mars square, now active in your chart, does not have a good reputation. I once dug through 10 old astrology books writing an article about it, and there was hardly a kind word to be found. Yet they all missed the point, which is the struggle that humans have to integrate both genders. From time to time this gets thrown up on the big board as the existential crisis du jour, usually in the form of political battling or an alleged existential disaster. And it’s always about accepting someone else, and not something within yourself. Women demanding their rights become the symbol of womanliness. Gay people demanding rights become the symbol of your gayness. Men standing behind a row of barbecues become the symbol of all that is wrong with the world. This is all a missed opportunity to accept, admit and acknowledge who you are. And it’s not merely about your identity. It’s about how you feel, who you want, what you want, and what you need — for real, not merely because someone finally said it’s OK. Which is unlikely to happen, unless that someone is you.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

So what are you doing now? Your chart suggests you could finish all five books you have going, all three movies, and your top-five favorite ideas for websites. You have more power running through the language and mind angle of your chart than a lightning storm on Saturn. I suggest, however, that you focus on your single most important priority. It is likely to be the thing calling you today, right now. It may not be your “favorite” thing (but it might); that is irrelevant. It’s what needs to happen and happen well enough such that only you can do it. For this purpose, your mantra does not need to be about reminding yourself how brilliant you are. Rather, remind yourself: “I am efficient. I will find the best way to get this done. I will set limits on my creativity and work with what I’ve got. I respect time and necessity. I will use my creativity as a tool, not as the thing that rules me.” And so on. You must be the one in control of your mind and your personal resources. That does not mean all of destiny or the fate of the world, only your personal abilities and assets. That is quite enough.

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Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

You choose your community. You do this from your available options, a little at a time. But it’s not like getting into Harvard or the Church of Scientology where you must pay, and do exactly what is expected of you at all times. Community is not about being deemed worthy or not on a black and white basis: acceptable or not. There must be flexibility, and also a commitment to honesty. Those are the two qualities to notice with your senses and, your emotional body and your physical body. To put it simply, you want food and not the promise of food. You want warm acceptance, not the pretext that if you are eventually good enough, you will be accepted. Yet those pretexts are pervasive, and worse, they are soaked into most people at a very young age. The bottom line is, to find your place, you must be willing to be alone for a while. Yet you do not want a substitute for the thing you need or desire; you want the real thing. Having nothing for a while, or delaying gratification, is better than an imitation, though you must recognize that when you use and feel it. This is about one thing only: being real with yourself at all times.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

Many people never succeed at getting their financial lives in order. Yet this is a metaphor for taking ownership of one’s existence. It is a metaphor for being a self-directed person who is not under the thumb of others. And this always comes back to parents, and the institutions that substitute for them in our lives: governments, banks, employers, and quite often partners — among others. While the emphasis of your life now shifts to the financial aspects of your experience, there is much more to the story than how much money you have, or need. What we are talking about is being responsible for your existence. That means moving on from all those who may end up with the role of encouraging you not to be wholly in possession of your life. These are assigned roles, though they may seem like fate, destiny, or circumstances beyond your control. You now have Jupiter and Saturn in your sign. That is a way of saying there must be no matters that you do not take hold of with the full force of your being. This is a time like no other. Use it wisely.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

The Sun enters your sign this week (Thursday at 5:44 am EST), which always comes as a relief. The water signs in general and Pisces in particular thrive when the Sun is in a water sign. You need to be in your element. Yet it’s vital to recognize that ultimately your element is within yourself. Yes, everyone needs an inner life, and in these days of inside-out digital chaos, few people have one. For you this is not an option, particularly now, with so many planets moving through the most sensitive angle of your chart (Aquarius, your 12th solar house). If I may be so bold, the challenge you face is how not to feel like a prisoner of your own life. You have much more freedom than you may recognize — now you must figure out how to make that real. The first thing you can do is exercise your options. Get out whenever you can, by which I mean outside and away from the all-consuming digital realm. You may need to push, pull or lure yourself, and you’ll need to remember how good you feel when you succeed. Then, the next thing to do is indulge in any and all forms of physical sensuality. That is the one thing lacking from the in-silico universe of the cyber realm. Get wet. Get real.

Read Eric Francis daily at
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PANDORA'S BOX

On this President’s Day I shall be reflecting on the importance of personal accountability.
Now, I will get off the soap box.

Bo’s Pick of the Week: Appreciating the importance of the self-warming beds last week! Also, enjoying the new Freely cat food. Stupid name, but tasty.

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