

## VIFR Upsize

By Andy Valencia

I’ve managed in both corporate and startup environments, and one rule has emerged above all others: Headcount defines the costs of an organization. As you run up the number of employees, the organization’s consumption of funds runs up in tandem. If you need to draw down expenses, you will need to drive down headcount.

This isn’t about saving \$100 in office supplies. But when you get into make-or-break finances of any non-trivial organization, headcount is everything.

It was thus with some interest that I viewed the recording of VIFR’s October 20th special meeting presenting their proposed 2023 budget. It featured a recommendation to increase the management head count from 2 to 3, and to increase the firefighter/EMT head count from 13 to 20. The old “manager” instinct in me awoke from its slumber: Management staffing would go up 50%, and employee staffing, 54%. Wow.

I’ve seen growth like that, but only when you’re in the middle of an exploding new market, and you have the tiger by the tail. Vashon population isn’t growing by those sorts of numbers, and neither is our income. Proceed with caution.

In subsequent communications with Chief Matt Vinci, he clarified that two of the firefighter/EMT positions will be funded by existing positions that would be discontinued, and their funding slots then moved over. (At this time, we’ve been told the affected employees are in discussion with their union representation and VIFR.)

Thus we arrive in the latter part of 2022, looking at funding 5 new firefighter/EMT positions. Oddly, the budget line for this headcount increase only went up \$200k, which is \$40k per person. Way too low. Chief Vinci stated that the current year’s budgeted amount for such employees was much bigger

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## Do Clams Have Eyes?

By Seán Malone and John Sweetman

As kids, we seemed to start out on a rather low rung of the evolutionary ladder. Pretty much all our activity – not strictly devoted to mere troublemaking – was of the “hunter/gatherer” nature. We were always on the lookout for useful items: driftwood, food plants, clams, stinky dead things ... anything that met our low standards of usefulness or transient interest. Frequently, our definition of “usefulness” was not appreciated by our parents.

“Hey Kit, do you wanna see the eyes of a clam?” The bucket of fresh clams was in the shade in a corner of the woodshed and the clams were squirting water out of the top of the bucket and onto the ground as they fed on the cornmeal that Mom had given them to sweeten their stomachs while they expelled sand. I very carefully reached in the bucket and pulled out a half-open clam and offered it to Kit at eye level. “Here, look inside the shell and you will see his eyes,” and I gently squeezed the shell, causing the clam to squirt seawater in Kit’s face.

Kit exploded, and chased me out into the peach orchard where we could lie on our backs to stare at the clouds, so hard we could split them. You could hear old Boots, our Springer Spaniel gnawing on windfall peaches.

“Go out and get a basket full of lamb’s quarters...” John’s Mom directed, and he and his sister complied. Lamb’s quarters were what we know today as weeds, but decades ago they were seasonably harvested as

similar to spinach, but better ... especially slathered with (lots of) farm butter.

Other things regarded as weeds today were regarded as regular forage items in those days. Fresh young nettles, fiddlehead ferns, and early dandelions were prized for both taste and good nutrition. Parental standards were high, and it was rare that more than half of our offerings were accepted by our moms, especially dubious varieties of mushrooms. It is a wonder we survived childhood, as many mushrooms were tasted on the basis of “I dare ya to taste that!”

We also looked for borage, sorrel, and even tapped the maples for an inferior type of syrup ... which, while tasty, took tremendous effort to collect and boil down. Vine maples along cold creek bottoms were the best.

The maple syrup technique was pretty simple: One snagged an old hand drill from the barn, and after intense effort, bored several holes into as many suitable trees as could be found. A hollow tap was inserted into the bore. From this tap, sap slowly dripped into tin soup cans hung by baling twine.

Sometimes, as many as several dozen cans were hanging from trees, and sap collected every morning, along with various sundry ant and insect life. The effort did not usually last long, because the results were slim and the patience of we kids and mom was quickly exhausted. But we usually got a few tasty lumps of dark sugar out of the efforts, which were

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## The Vashon Theatre Premieres a Series of Fortunate Events



By Marc J. Elzenbeck

Sadly, no one has ever offered me a free LED TV. If they did, probably the first thing I would ask is, “How big is it?” If they said, “32 by 18 inches,” I might accept it to be polite, then maybe set it up on the barn to play calming videos for the sheep.

These days, a 32-inch-wide screen is considered paltry for a TV, or to judge by free roadside piles, it’s far too small for Vashon. But what if the donor said: “No, what I’m talking about is an LED wall and it’s 32 feet wide and 18 feet high.”

Life presents conundrums, sure. Seldom one this big, but still, the right answer would be: “I’ll take it!” Then you’d have to figure some things out, like what to actually do with it. If, however, like Eileen Wolcott, you had happened to own and run a theater for 20 years, you could file this under “good problems.”

This was the puzzle the Wolcott family faced, and it came at a fortuitous time. Their son, Jacob, had returned from working a spell in Las Vegas. While there, he watched a shipping container park grow up around an LED screen in an abandoned lot. It sprouted into an artists’ haven, and finally a modular, ultra-modern shopping destination, both a showcase and hang-out. (Checking online, the park also has a 40-foot-high praying mantis that breathes fire.)

In an odd Vashon-like coincidence, Container Park and a previous civic initiative in Oakland were the design-children of Simon Clark, who also happens to run Vashon Live! and lives on the Island. So, with 576 square feet of outdoor LED wall in hand, Jacob and Simon got together to set up another community chemical reaction, but with an added ingredient: vintage small town movie theater.

Even pre-COVID, the movie theater business was going the way of cinnamon toast and canned hams. All were great things in their day, and plenty still enjoy them, but let’s just say the demographic is contracting. During

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### Animals for Sale

Farms have babies and  
I have to find new homes for some of mine!



**Sebastopol Geese:** \$150 for 2 (2 are available);  
goose hatched 5/21/2021, gander hatched 4/25/22. Must go together.

**African Guinea Fowl Keets:** \$2.50 each

**Nigerian Dwarf Goats:**  
ADGA-registered big intact buck; born 4/14/20 (Bandito), \$150.00  
ADGA registered larger doe; born 3/28/21; tan with white on sides and black feet (Chanti), \$250.00  
Or the pair (ready to start your very own tribe), \$325.00  
Buckling, white with black; born 3/21/22 (Thor), \$100.00  
Doeling sisters; born 3/6/22; \$250.00 registered, \$200.00 not registered  
Primarily tan (Clotho), multicolored (Lachesis),  
black & tan (Apatos)  
Or all three for \$600.00 registered, \$500.00 not registered

Excellent dairy lines, parents at farm.  
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# The Vashon Loop

## Code of Ethics in Action

### Reflections on SPJ Code of Ethics

As a receiver of information, a reader of newspapers, a browser of magazines, a participant in social media platforms, a subscriber on YouTube, Rumble, Substack (and other platforms), a listener of radio shows and an all-around consumer of media ... what does honesty look like to you?

Isn't it strange that we should spend so much of our time focused on "misinformation, disinformation, false information, and fake news," while investing so little of our time defining and creating what we actually want? Focusing on things to be avoided is only so effective. Indeed, many parents learn the value of replacing "Don't fall" with "Keep your balance!"

The Editorial Team of The Vashon Loop has a sacred duty to be as honest in print as is humanly possible. Some ways to go about this are offered in the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics, under the category: "Seek Truth and Report It." Per SPJ, "Ethical journalism should be accurate and fair. Journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting, and interpreting information."

What does that look like? For us, honest and courageous encompasses the following: humility, personal integrity, a willingness to learn uncomfortable information, and a sincere sensation of joy when one

discovers evidence adequate to changing one's mind.

The SPJ's Code of Ethics presents 18 specific guidelines on this topic. Here are just a few of the guiding lights of wisdom and responsibility that illuminate our way forward each month.

- Take responsibility for the accuracy of our work. Verify information before releasing it. Use original sources whenever possible.
- Remember that neither speed nor format excuses inaccuracy.
- Provide context. Take special care not to misrepresent or oversimplify in promoting, previewing, or summarizing a story.
- Reserve anonymity for sources who may face danger, retribution, or other harm, and/or who have information that cannot be obtained elsewhere. Explain why anonymity was granted.
- Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless.
- Boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience. Seek sources whose voices we seldom hear.

We'd love to hear from you! Email us here:  
editor@vashonloop.com

## What Brought You To The Island?

By Janet Miller

We all have our path that brought us together onto this Rock. Each of our stories are unique, and some are truly inspiring. For Wayne and I, we had concluded that we just needed to get back to the Northwest.

Wayne and I met at the University of Oregon. He came west from Philadelphia, and I just a couple hours north from Coos Bay. We married and moved to San Francisco. My family lives primarily in Oregon, so we traveled yearly to visit, and each time I could feel the relief as the air and the picturesque trees lining the highway drew me back home.

After 16 years in the San Francisco Bay Area and a short three-year stint in Austin, Texas, it was truly time to come back. Our oldest daughter was graduating high school and our youngest was starting her freshman year. It seemed reasonable to make our move at that time, otherwise we would be in Texas for another four years. To be fair, Austin was a great place to live and we made some amazing friends. And for those who worry about moving their children from one state to another, I will say, the benefits may be ones you could never have imagined.

We weren't set on Vashon, and we checked out several places closer to Mount Rainier, as Wayne was a mountaineer and I was just getting interested in climbing. But the thought of living near an active volcano concerned me.

We had some friends who lived on Vashon. They would tell us about

these monthly collective dinners they attended and how close the community was. It sounded a bit like Mayberry RFD. It took almost 2 years for us to find our house. Amy Carey took us to so many very different and weird places. In the end, this house just went clunk!

Of course, that meant we needed to sell our house in Texas. It was 2002. The attack on the World Trade Center had impacted the market, houses weren't moving, and we couldn't buy the Vashon house without selling the Texas house.

Out of the blue, an old business colleague phoned. We'd given him financial support to develop some software back in the Bay Area, and he called to say he had an opportunity to sell it and needed Wayne to sign off on the transaction. We negotiated a buy-out of our share, giving us what we needed for the down payment on our Vashon home! Soon after, a buyer for our Texas house came forward with a rent-to-own offer, which we happily accepted.

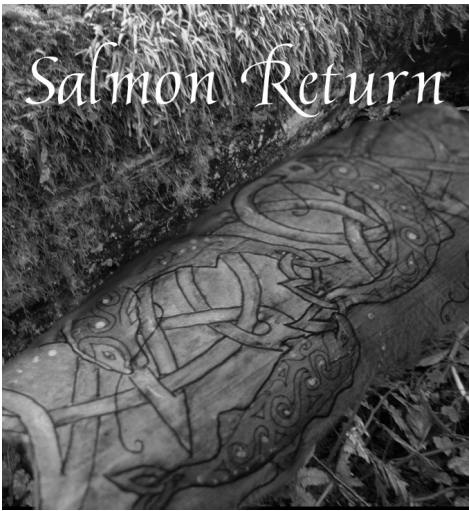
In our view, our move to Vashon was meant to be.

Contact The Vashon Loop to share breaking news!

Send pictures, too.

editor@vashonloop.com

## Land Acknowledgment



### Welcome Back, Dear Salmon!

We celebrate your return to our Island. We honor the end and beginning of your life cycle, and the wonder of your transformation. You feed the waters and forest, the creatures of sea, land, and air, as well as us humans You nourish our bodies, brains, and imagination, our spirits and souls.

Dear Ones, you connect us with the heritage of many shores. We especially acknowledge and celebrate your immense ancestral relationship with this Island's ecology and its indigenous people, the **s̓x̓wəbabš̓**, now part of the Puyallup, Nisqually, Squaxin Island, and Muckleshoot tribes, and the many other peoples who have long relationships with this Island.

Blessings on your journey home, and upon the fecundity of your species. May we be worthy of the gifts you share by virtue of your very nature: wisdom, generosity, perseverance, sacrifice, knowledge, myth, legacy, and sacred life. With humility, curiosity, and playfulness, may we embody aspects of your salmon nature within the flow of Island life. For surely, we have much to learn from you.

Salmon art by Jane Valencia

ACA Health Insurance Open Enrollment – Sign up / Renew

King County Public Health is Here To Help!

¡El Departamento de Salud Pública del Condado de King está aquí para ayudar!

Open Enrollment for 2023 ACA is November 1st to January 15th

It's time to reevaluate the insurance you have and what may be a better fit.

Federal subsidies have increased. Premiums should be MORE affordable

• Wednesday: November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1- 3 p.m.

• Saturday: December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 12- 3 p.m.

• Wednesday: December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1-3 p.m.

• Saturday: January 7<sup>th</sup>, 12- 3 p.m.

• Wednesday: January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1-3 p.m.

You can also apply for ORCA LIFT Metro reduced fare program and food stamps.

También puede solicitar: ORCA LIFT programa de tarifa reducida de Metro, y cupones de alimentos.

✚✚✚

All dates are at the Vashon Library (inside, at the back)

Can't make these dates? Call or email Miguel Urquiza: 206-477-6965 or 206-491-3761, [miguel.urquiza@kingcounty.gov](mailto:miguel.urquiza@kingcounty.gov)

The Vashon Loop is published monthly

“Children Of the Vine” film screening

Wednesday, December 14, 2022, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Vashon Island High School Performing Arts Wing

With 3.6 billion pounds of Roundup sprayed annually on U.S. crops, the investigative documentary “Children of the Vine” couldn’t be more timely.

Shot primarily in Napa and Sonoma Counties, this unsettling investigation into the controversial herbicide Roundup and its impact on public health was directed by award-winning filmmaker Brian Lilla. At the center of this controversy is glyphosate, now found in breast milk, baby food, wine, and 80% of food grown in the U.S.

Lilla interviewed both farmers who depend on Roundup and those paying the ultimate price for spraying it. Lilla digs deep into Monsanto’s misleading science and 40-year campaign that Roundup is “safe as salt.”

“Children of the Vine” also highlights solution-driven farming practices that don’t put public health at risk. The screening will be followed by a panel to discuss non-toxic farming practices.

Sponsored by: Headley Holistics, LLC, VI Horse Supply, Inc., and Vashon Island Growers Association (VIGA).

The Vashon Loop

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# Welcome To the Light and the Beautiful Dark

Autumn is here, and like always, it brings big changes to the amount and quality of daylight on the Island. These seasonal transitions can be intense – especially, it is said, for people who live in the forest and on the Westside. The twilight and eventual darkness become a constant companion, with a presence that’s as strong as a character in a novel; for example, someone who is tall and fully cloaked.

By the time you read this, daylight savings time – a personal nemesis for many and a short-term knock-down punch to the calm rhythms of daily life – will have occurred. There was some promising discussion in January 2021 about eliminating daylight savings time altogether. A federal bill, called the Sunshine Protection Act, was introduced, but never made it out of the House of Representatives. Side note: You may have noticed that almost nothing ever makes it out of Congress anymore, like there’s some sort of fundamental deterioration going on.

When you add the seasonal rain to our local setting, a person can become grumpy and unmotivated. When it’s no longer pleasant to be outdoors, there is this huge matter of what to do with your time. It can be especially problematic if you live here in order to spend more time outdoors.

There is something beautiful about the dark. Getting under the



blankets, huddling together, reading, listening to the rain, and enjoying the fireplace stove are great stuff. For a while. Or at least for part of the day. But what if you are the kind of person who gets jumpy for activity? Or the kind who stops doing much of anything if you spend too much time under the blankets?

Right now is a great moment to think about your seasonal situation and profile, so to speak, and to consider strategies that could help keep you going till spring comes again. Here are three suggestions.

First, do healthy things during your time in the dark. One thing to consider is supplementing with vitamin D3. Low vitamin D levels are linked to depression, seasonal affective disorder, fatigue, and foggy brain. Some of us may enjoy a bit of fatigue and foggy brain from time to time, but vitamin D deficiency is a worldwide problem. In the Pacific Northwest, almost one-half of us are vitamin D-deficient, and most of us don’t know it. Adequate Vitamin D

## Right? Right.

By Andy Valencia

I built a nice device for a huge company (well, I did most of the system design and all of the software). It made lots of money, and – yay! – I was a rock star at my company. Sic transit gloria mundi.

I measured its performance, and determined that it could, easily, handle three times as many users. The hardware team kicked off building such a thing, and I helped the software team that had taken over my code. It was going to be great!

One of my peers ran into me in the hallway, and we talked about our current projects. With mine, he expressed concern that it would be underpowered. I explained that the current product – full out – used 25% of the CPU, so tripling the size should be 75%. That left 25% as a buffer! I assured him that it was going to be fine. He left me with a skeptical face and a shrug.

The device came out and...it was underpowered. Actually, it was barely OK when used like its smaller predecessor. But all of the code had bloated, and that ate up most of the headroom. And as a hit product, the sales teams sold it as far and as wide as they could. It was suddenly being asked to do fancy things that demanded a lot more processing. It wasn’t pretty when it ran out of gas.

The funny thing is, I was right. It’s just that my peer was right, too. I knew all the details, and could provide a mathematical proof that I was right. My friend, not mired in the details, could do a dead reckoning of bloat and the enthusiastic over-promising of sales people. I was right

in the details; he got it right in the big picture.

We limped along until the hardware folks – almost a year later – finally turned out the same product with a large CPU upgrade. Just like that, everything settled down. A lesson for me at my company’s expense.

Last month’s column was on various search engines. Some of them let you jump outside the corporate echo chamber, but that still leaves your own personal echo chamber. When you read search results, or Wikipedia articles, or social media posts, keep in mind that you can be correct – and the surprising or contrary statement that your finger is automatically left-swiping can be correct, too. You can learn from somebody, even though you’re sure they are wrong.

Elon Musk wants to make Twitter federated. This means he dreams of a world where @joe@twitter.com can post a message which @sam@facebook.com can see, comment upon, and boost. And @sue@freeatlantis.com can join in, too. Rather than one corporation, the discussion could span people using the services of large corporations, or small ones, and even people participating by way of a computer their local club owns. Or one they own for themselves. It’s all decentralized.

This isn’t imaginary. Parts of it already exist.

You can already dip your toe into these waters, because the protocols to implement this have been designed, and are being used. You can read about it by way of vashonloop.com/

levels are also protective against severe COVID-19. When you can’t get seasonal vitamin D from direct sunlight, supplementing can be very important.

Second, plan now to build or sustain your social connections. Within reason, of course. We are on an island, after all. We really do appreciate our private time. But this is also a great season to get together with the people you care about the most. If you have the good fortune of spare cash, you can meet your friends at one of our excellent restaurants. Even more hands-on, the COVID closures revived the classic potluck for many – let’s keep it going?

It is definitely the case that COVID-19 trained many of us to stop going out and getting together. Depending on your circumstances, this could be the time to move on from that and get back in the (still pretty slow) Vashon groove.

Third, start new projects and anticipate spring endeavors. Surrender to the fact that you are ancestrally inclined to spend this time in reflection, planning, and some degree of experimentation. Also, getting firewood. Annoying but important questions, like: “How will I

ever successfully start a garden if my property is infested with Bermuda Grass?” or “Does no-knead bread ever really turn out well?” can finally be considered and addressed.

You can also go out of your way to join a new project. What are some skills you’d like to acquire? The world is changing – there so many things to learn. One option available right now is to become part of Vashon Self-Sufficiency, a new group for Vashon residents who are interested in learning about and sharing strategies and skills to become more self-sufficient.

Vashon Self Sufficiency started in October (the first lesson was on canning) and meets Wednesday nights, 6-8 p.m., at the meetinghouse of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 9330 SW 204th St. (just east of the high school). It has been organized by Gene and Jan Kuhns. All Vashon residents are welcome. You can start attending anytime, and you can join the Facebook group, “Vashon Self-Sufficiency” for more information.

Let’s not hide away from community – too much – during the dark period. The light will come back.

### Vashon Self-Sufficiency

A new group for Vashon residents interested in learning and sharing strategies and skills to become more self-sufficient.

We believe that as one becomes more self-sufficient, one is then more able and willing to help others.

Ultimately, as we individually strive to become more self-sufficient, we can better interact with each other, develop relationships, and create a more self-sufficient community.

Self-sufficiency takes many forms and is broad in scope; it does not only involve food.

Wednesday nights, 6-8 p.m., at the meetinghouse of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

9330 SW 204th St. (just east of the high school); all Vashon residents are welcome.

For more information, please join the Facebook group “Vashon Self-Sufficiency” or contact Gene Kuhns at 206-552-4677.

## Book Review

### Hard History = Powerful Stories

By March Twisdale

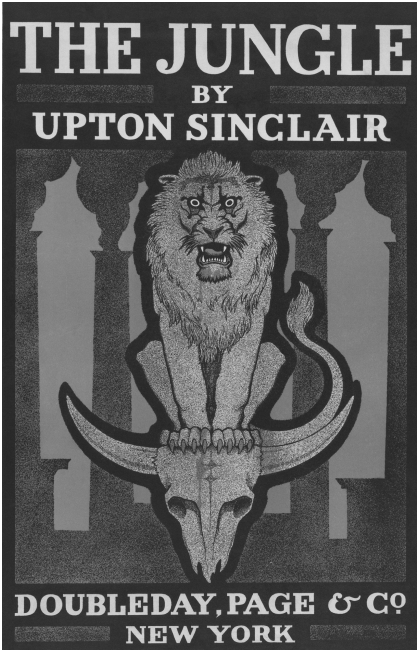
Written roughly 100 years ago, Upton Sinclair’s novel, “The Jungle,” captures the breadth of human behavior, both then and now.

There is an interesting fact about fictional stories. No matter how far the author’s imagination strays from what is considered real or mundane, the fundamental basis of their work, the world, the characters, and the story arc are grounded in objective reality. We, as humans, have a very hard time creating a truly original idea. Instead, we rearrange, rebuild, repackage, and reshape what enters our mind into something “newish” rather than “truly new.”

This is always true, but with historical or urban fiction (reflective of the current day), the reality within the story can be exceedingly painful, brutally honest, and hard to accept. When such a story meets a large enough audience at just the right time it can stimulate concrete change in the real world. “The Jungle” did exactly this.

Upton Sinclair’s fictional account of a young, newlywed couple,

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# What We Hold in Our Hands

By March Twisdale

Money. Hold-in-your-hand coins. Pull-out-of-your-wallet cash. Circles of metal that last decades, centuries and millennia ... matter.

Not only are coins “literally” matter, but they offer an experience, a record of human society, an imprint on our lives and tactile memories that no electricity-dependent, Virtual Reality method of accounting or digital currency can offer.

A child, a teenager, a young adult, and an elder have a far deeper understanding of having “spent money” when they count it out and hand it over – reducing the tendency toward wastefulness, over-spending or debt creation.

Digital currency doesn’t mesh well with our ancient “cave man or cave woman” instincts, just as babies need to be held, and raw whole foods are more nourishing than packaged energy bars. We are living beings, we are animals, and the “material world” far surpasses computerized fantasyland.

These coins laid out in front of me are not that old, but one was minted the year I was born (I just turned 50) and it’s in gorgeous shape. Another is from before my birth. Another is from two years before I graduated high school ... and so on. What digital money comes with a “brought into existence with a keystroke” date, feeling, or other tie to our history? Our past?

Now, look at the half-dollar,



flipped over. Look at the language little kids, children, teens, and adults saw every time they counted out change to buy something at the store... E. Pluribus Unum, Liberty, United States of America.

The money makes it clear that we are a society standing united in the clear light of liberty, arm in arm, as a goal – even if not yet perfectly realized.

What do you see, read, think of, or are reminded of when you tap your corporate credit card or insert a bank’s debit card into a device?

Nothing. Because it isn’t real. And a world build on “nothing” and “a virtual version of reality” will crumble around us with amazing suddenness, for reasons far beyond our understanding & of the common sense variety.

I’m using cash whenever possible. How about you?

# Island Voices

## Virtual Predators

by Jonathan Laine

The holiday season has arrived. Now is the time to gather gifts for our loved ones. This is a warning about a new product that many may know about, but few understand. It’s been in the works for a long time, but it’s here now and relatively affordable. I’m talking about virtual reality.

How amazing to put on a visor and go to a different world. It is possible to easily meet and chat with anyone from anywhere on the planet. Inside virtual reality, you can be almost anything. Try being a different gender, race, or species, a ghost, a monster, a favorite movie or video game character, or a combination of these.

Many of our children are virtually unsupervised while exploring these unknown landscapes. Within this new experience, there are predators. These predators have their eyes on our young ones. Even worse, our young ones have eyes on them. These malicious actors may pose as any seemingly harmless being, and even change their voice to sound childlike or non-threatening. Our children may interact with these people, sometimes over the course of weeks, months, or years. Many young people fully trust those they have met online, not realizing the extent that some individuals can and will go to deceive their potential victims.

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## Dear Old Mom

By Mary Litchfield Tuel

I have spent years in therapy trying to get the critical inner voice of my mother to pipe down, without success. Having realized that, I thought if I can’t get her to move out, I might as well mine her for material.

My mother was fond of telling me that I was lazy. Also, that I was just like my father – I only thought of myself. I know now that thinking of themselves is how children survive.

My mother was a troubled woman who didn’t think she was troubled. She described herself as “happy-go-lucky”after being abandoned in an orphanage when she was six years old. Abandonment did not affect her negatively in the least, she said, and she got mad if anyone suggested it had.

Like most parents of her generation, she felt no guilt for hitting her children, physically or verbally. She was the parent; ergo, she was right. Her preferred move was a slap in the face. Late in life, she asked me if there was anything she could have done better as a parent, and when I said it would have been nice to be hit less, she exclaimed, “I never hit you! And I only hit your brother once.”

Okay, mom.

Our Aunt Thelma once told my cousins that my mother grabbed my toddler arm one day and yanked so hard, she dislocated my shoulder. Aunt Thelma was a nurse, and we lived in a small town, so there was no keeping that secret. I did not and do

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## The Dorsal Spin: Indigeneity

By Orca Annie Stateler and Odin Lonning

The COVID-19 lockdown brought into sharp focus our intergenerational trauma – emotional and spiritual baggage habitually restrained in “normal” times. We dove deep into our Indigeneity. Our thoughts turned to our First Nations ancestors who endured countless pandemics inflicted on them by colonization, the federal government, and the military. Would we survive this novel coronavirus? In BIPOC communities, death rates are much higher.

Another of Odin’s panels for the Open Space Mural Project is “Marginalized and Monetized,” (panel E1, photo), a potent visual statement on social inequity and residual trauma, conceived in an era of major upheaval. This piece reveals forgotten history and culture lessons for Native American Heritage Month.

The Medicine Wheel or Sacred Hoop exemplifies circles of life, knowledge, and self-awareness. Quadrants represent four directions and seasons, as well as four elements, states of being, sacred medicines, and life stages. The Medicine Wheel is an ancient safe space for health and healing, as well as a vehicle for myriad essential Native teachings.

Working with the Medicine Wheel can alleviate historic grief. The topmost skull and crossbones in our wheel warns of obvious danger from COVID, and of unforeseen risk to physical and psychological well-being in confronting the painful past. The upper half of our wheel exposes the horrors of Manifest Destiny.

The European Hand of Contact

extends from top left. A venomous viper in the palm signifies the treachery of broken promises and broken treaties. This ghostly hand is forcing a deadly gray blanket into a Native hand. Smallpox-infected blankets were a weapon in genocidal policies to eradicate Indigenous peoples. An antique skull alludes to that agenda. At center is the omnipresent biohazard sign of a COVID outbreak.

Geometric shapes in the red hand denote mountains and a ceremonial gathering place. Two eagle feathers send prayers to Mother Earth and our ancestors. Considered spiritually powerful, eagles are venerated by most First Nations; thus, stylized feathers border our wheel.

A Rainbow Bridge connects the two halves. In many cultures, the rainbow is a portal to the spirit world. In a Chumash origin story, the earth goddess Hutash creates a rainbow bridge to the mainland (California), and transforms her people into dolphins to save them from drowning. Rainbow is a clan crest for the Haida and Tsimshian. These are just a few Native rainbow prophecies and perceptions. Our rainbow also shows solidarity with another disenfranchised community – Two-Spirit/LGBTQ+ loved ones and associates.

The lower half is grounded in red earth and the Good Red Road. In Hopi culture, Katsinas are divine messengers and spirits of deities, animals, elements, other natural phenomena, or deceased ancestors. “Katsinam” are dancers who embody



these spirits in ceremonies; “katsintithu” are intricately carved wooden figures representing the dancers. Our Katsina is a composite because an exact rendering of an authentic one would be disrespectful. A rain cloud symbolizes renewal and fertility.

Pono-Kamita – Blackfeet for “Elk Dog” – and śųŋkawakŋaŋ – Lakóta for “Holy Dog” – are names for Horse, our sacred relative and four-legged healer. Partnership with the Horse Nation revolutionized Indigenous life. Horses make exceptional therapists because they are so attuned to humans. We honor horses with their own regalia and in diverse Native art forms. Our horse wears a decorated bridle.

Killer Whale rises between Katsina and Horse. A Salish spirit face

in the dorsal fin acknowledges that much of Southern Resident killer whale (SRKW) traditional territory overlaps with Coast Salish territory. The dollar sign echoes the skull and crossbones above. Monetizing what Indigenous peoples hold sacred is toxic. Is the spirit face singing or screaming?

Pacific Northwest orcas, revered First Nations of the sea, suffer from expansionist abuses. The extractive worldview of settler culture condoned wantonly destroying habitat and overharvesting salmon to near-extinction. Colonizers perpetrated violence on Indigenous fisher folk, Resident orcas, and other marine mammals – all deemed loathsome competitors to the fishing industry.

Monetizing SRKW proved

Continued on Page 8

# MINGLEMENT

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### Celebrating Community

Our signature winter root soup ... delicious organic bread with butter ... hot cider ... a warm fire ...

Gifts of the abundant earth from Islanders gardens, beautifully displayed on the porch, featuring herbs, seeds, mushrooms, dried flowers, gourds, and carved pumpkins. We are always amazed by the generosity of this community, and the art of the harvest that shows up here.

Minglement and The Roasterie host this annual event as a way to give back to the community. In the magic of a sweet evening near Halloween, all are nourished.

Find more photos on [vashonloop.com](http://vashonloop.com)



## It's Still Fire Cider Season

Last month, we shared Rosemary Gladstar's Fire Cider Recipe. You can find the recipe on [vashonloop.com](http://vashonloop.com) in Vol. 19, Issue 2.

Fire Cider-making season continues, and Minglement still stocks horseradish and other appropriate ingredients. It is easy to customize your Fire Cider.

Eva says: "I use maple syrup, shallots, burdock root, and dandelion root. I also add a piece or two of oshà root to my mix. The oshà makes it even more medicinal, but some folks may not be looking for a fire cider like I like."

Oshà is a spicy, warming, and bitter root, with an affinity for the respiratory system and providing other health benefits.

Burdock root supports lymph movement, and it, like dandelion root, support liver function. Both burdock and dandelion root are high in nutrients and in inulin, a starchy carbohydrate that nourishes our gut flora.



## Coffee's Long Road

By Eva Deloach

Coffee is a labor-intensive crop, grown in some of the most economically marginalized and environmentally sensitive regions of the world. The life of not only the plants themselves, but also of the farmers, the pickers, and their families and communities, are vulnerable to

rapid changes in political and economic challenges, as well as the ever-increasing unpredictability of weather patterns across the tropics.

The coffee's path to Vashon was a long one this year, and we are happy it made it! Jim Stewart thinks that, "From start to the finish, it's a miracle that the coffee even makes its way to the States." It is complicated, the coffee is stunning, and we are grateful.



New offering at The Roasterie

### Morning Star Medium-Dark - Aegean Rustic Roast

Venus, The morning star planet, the brightest star in the pre-dawn sky, is worth waking to see. This complex blend has the brightest flavor profile of all our offerings. A blend of Ethiopian, aged Sumatra, and more. May this delicious coffee guide you gently through dawn and into your day.

## Lemon Dijon Vinaigrette Carrot Salad

By Caitlin Rothermel

This year, I've been obsessed with learning to make side dishes that capture the aromatic, vitamin C-infused flavors of summer. I'm talking about the kinds of tastes that just explode in your mouth, that also happen to have great texture, and that you yearn to experience during the autumn and winter.

This grated carrot salad does the job. I have always had trouble finding ways to use raw carrots. It's only so much fun to sit there eating plain carrots, and big carrot chunks in conventional salads are not my thing.

A couple of important notes before beginning. This recipe was adapted from the excellent "Once Upon a Chef" blog. And, if you don't have a food processor, don't despair - you can grate the carrots. As someone who never uses a full-size food processor, I'd like to suggest a \$40 life-changing tool - the Cuisinart mini-prep 3-cup food processor. This machine is very versatile and sturdy.

Play with the ingredient amounts to find your favorite proportions. When I make this a meal on its own, I like to eat the cold salad on top of warm brown rice.

## Lemon Dijon Vinaigrette Carrot Salad

### Ingredients

- 1 lb. peeled carrots
- 1/2 cup sunflower seeds
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp white balsamic vinegar
- 6 drops fish sauce (optional)
- 1 lemon (ideally, juice and zest)
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp chopped shallots or scallions
- 2 tbsp finely chopped parsley
- 1 tbsp finely chopped mint
- 1/4 - 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp honey (optional, depending on how sweet your carrots are)



First, shred the carrots, by hand or in a food processor (you can also mix in the parsley and mint for this step). Next, in a bowl, combine all the liquid ingredients and mix. Add to this the shredded carrot mixture, sunflower seeds, and chopped vegetables; mix again.



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# Intermittent Fasting

By Kathy Abascal

Intermittent fasting has been trendy for some time. On this type of fast, people eat freely for 8 hours and fast the remaining 16 hours of the day. While this fast can be very healthy if done properly, many have implemented it in a way that is not.

For example, many skipped breakfast and began eating between 11 a.m. and noon. They then ate freely until 7 or 8 p.m. What they chose to eat in that time frame was not prescribed or limited. Being able to socialize around dinner time without having to worry much about what was being served made this form of intermittent fasting very popular – but ultimately unhealthy.

People were led to believe that the physiologic changes that take place during fasting would fully make up for the negative, inflammatory effect of eating less-healthy foods. However, studies soon established that this was not so. For instance, these fasts did not improve peoples’ blood fats, blood sugar levels, or other laboratory indications of health, and when people lost weight, they lost muscle, not fat. A study that compared this type of intermittent fasting with eating three fixed meals a day found that intermittent fasters did not do better. Again, any weight lost while fasting was muscle, not fat. Not a beneficial outcome at all. As a result, the popularity of intermittent fasting began to wane.

But an improved form of intermittent fasting is now trending. This variation focuses on the

importance of eating breakfast and not eating later in the day. We are told that what one eats does matter, but the timing of meals is most important. I agree that we should eat most of our meals early in the day, but disagree that when one eats matters more than what one eats.

Frankly, some of the arguments in support of this fast should be taken with more than a teaspoon of salt. One author claims that mice who ate only during an 8-hour period were “completely protected” and their diseases “reversed,” even though they were eating their usual “unhealthy diet.” Compared to mice who ate off-and-on over a 24-hour period, they fared better, but that is far from proof that an intermittent fast will protect us from disease regardless of what we choose to eat.

Another questionable claim is that our body needs 6 hours of fasting before it can begin repairing cellular damage. This means that a person eating between say 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. will not begin repairs until 1 a.m., leaving at most 6 hours to remedy damage done during the day. Given how flexible and sophisticated the human body is, that makes no sense to me. While we can dedicate more energy to repairs while resting, we begin to repair damage as soon as it occurs. Historically, humans did not rigidly fast 16 hours a day. Picture a hunter/gatherer who one summer evening in the land of the midnight sun came upon a lovely patch of

Continued on Page 7

# Health Matters

## A Vashon Doctor Speaks Up

By An Island Doctor

When COVID-19 started, I was stunned like everyone else. As the dust settled, I had more questions than answers from our major government institutions. I had colleagues with the same questions and uncertainty as myself, while others took the guidance from the CDC without question as a trustworthy source that needs no further evaluation.

When then-President Trump said we’d have a vaccine soon, I didn’t believe him at all. Properly testing new drugs and vaccines takes many years, or even decades. When the COVID-19 vaccines were given emergency approval in mere months, I was skeptical. How could they, in such a brief period of time, be adequately tested or justify the claims made by the CDC and FDA?

The media took a hard-handed approach, encouraging everyone to get vaccinated to protect our most vulnerable. We all heard that getting vaccinated yourself would prevent transmission to others. Knowing what I know about the different kinds of vaccines, I was hesitant to believe that. This is true about some vaccines, but not all. As more data came out, it quickly became clear that there was no evidence to support the claim, and the CDC finally acknowledged this just recently.

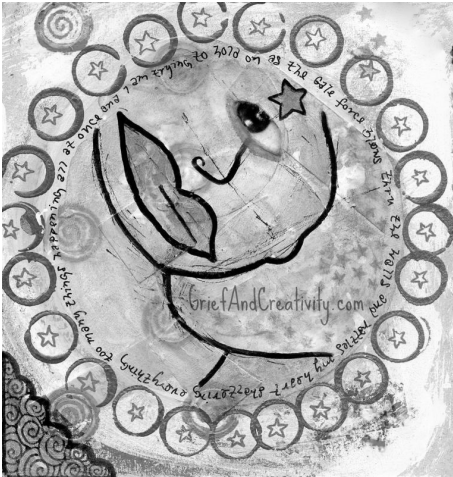
Friends and families were pitted against each other as some were hesitant to inject a brand new pharmaceutical technology into their own or their child’s body, while others were first in line. It was incredibly isolating to not know who you could talk to before knowing what they believed. Tension between my colleagues, friends, and family members was incredibly stressful, and now I am terribly sad that, in some cases, the damage done by the media lies, manipulations, and pressure of the last few years have left irreparable rifts between myself and people I love.

I joined a discussion group of other doctors who wanted more information. I felt relieved to find over 100 mostly Washington state healthcare providers who also wanted to decipher the COVID research and statistics for themselves. What we continue to uncover – after more than a year of shared inquiry – is far more nuanced and complicated than anything covered by the mainstream news. The plethora of COVID data is enough to leave anyone (even someone trained to interpret it) overwhelmed.

Friends and acquaintances often ask my opinion on the hot-button health topics of the day. Sometimes I share my thoughts on Facebook, as I have for many years. However, some of the newer studies discussed in my group of doctors, even when hosted on the NIH website, have been flagged as “COVID misinformation.” Who are we to believe more? Scientific research, or Facebook’s anonymous “fact-checkers?” Of course, the studies that interest me most are the same

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# Meeting Grief: Unmet Needs During The Pandemic Years



By Kara LC Jones  
(GriefAndCreativity.com)

Though grief is as human an experience as joy or love, we often find we are not as skilled at dealing with loss and its aftermath as we might be if dealing with celebration. These pandemic years of human life have included a lot of adaptation, change, loss, and readjustment. And along with these experiences comes grief, even if it often goes unnamed and unaddressed. In our limited cultural idea of grief, it is often thought that grief is about a death and nothing else. Or it’s thought that grief looks like emoting with tears, and if you laugh at all, then it isn’t grief you are experiencing. Or grief is limited to stages or a particular timeline. These pandemic years have blown all those binaries, rightfully, to pieces.

We are fully into the third year of pandemic life and just now people in my life – friends, family, and clients alike – are beginning to express that they’ve lost a lot. They are questioning

if they can call it grief, and asking how to address their losses, some of which are rather invisible to others. It is my hope that, through offerings like this column, we can begin to learn how to better hold space for ourselves and our loves as we integrate the full range of life experiences we’re having in this new version of the world.

One creative idea I’ve suggested to others with good result has been an invitation to go about meeting Grief as if it were a character in your life. Use your imagination and conjure up a character, as if your life were a play you are writing. Give stage directions. Have the character of Grief enter. Where does Grief come in? Suddenly from stage left? Does it climb in a window? Are you out taking a walk one day and bump into it on a forest trail?

As you notice the character of Grief coming into view, try and pay attention to it. What is Grief wearing? How does Grief move? What feeling(s) arise as you notice Grief? Is it a thought that first comes to your mind? Or do you notice something in your body? As you and Grief move toward each other to meet, is there anything that surprises you?

Once you get into the same space with this character, can you set the scene to spend a bit of time in each other’s company? Comfortable seats?

Picnic blanket on grassy field next to a creek? At a tea table?

If you find yourself shallow-breathing at all this, take a moment. Let your eyes relax. Let your breath drop, breathe deep, down into your pelvic bowl, balanced at your center. Let your mind conjure a few questions for Grief.

Maybe ask if Grief has another name it prefers you call it by? Maybe start off by asking Grief if it has any messages for you? Or maybe you will notice that Grief seems to want to ask you something? Maybe you can ask Grief if it has any particular unmet needs?

If it helps to pull it out of imagination, try writing down your questions with your dominant hand

and then try to auto-write replies with your non-dominant hand. Or try typing your questions with your eyes open, and then close your eyes and type Grief’s responses.

If Grief can tell you one or more of its unmet needs, try to stay with that part of the conversation for a few minutes. Maybe ask Grief what is important about this unmet need? Ask Grief if it has any ideas about how you might go about meeting those previously unmet needs?

It may be just a start to your practice of being with the fullness of life, both the grief and celebration. That’s okay. Sometimes exploring Grief’s unmet needs will give you a lot of spark for how to tend your heart and create a better quality of life for you and yours. There’s no particular right or wrong with this. It’s just a creative practice.



**“The things we want are transformative, and we don’t know or only think we know what is on the other side of that transformation.”**

- Rebecca Solnit

## Health Disclaimer

Information in The Vashon Loop is meant for educational purposes only. Any health-related content is the opinion of the author alone and should not be used to diagnose or treat medical conditions or to prescribe medicine. Your health is your personal responsibility, and your body and situation is unique. Please consult with an appropriate medical resource or healthcare provider when making healthcare decisions.

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Do Clams Have Eyes?

Continued from Page 1

quickly put on hot oatmeal with thick cream.

If you remember this process, you probably have a clue as to why no significant maple syrup is produced locally, since it required a lot of no-cost kid labor to get anything at all. Besides not having the proper maples in the first place.

There is licorice root to be had from inside the moss on the bark of maple trees. It looks like a maidenhair fern, but isn't. Old Bill, who used to work for Mr. Joslyn, told us kids that it was an old Indian remedy for sore throat. Mom showed us how to dry it and then chew on it for the licorice taste.

You had to be careful of what old Bill told you, since he was an Alaskan fisherman and full of wild tales, like the day we walked up to Joslyn's to hear more of old Bill's stories and I had a bad cough. Old Bill collared me and took me down to the barn where they were dipping cedar fence posts in creosote to preserve them and keep them from rotting out. It was black goo that stunk to high heaven, and Bill made me drink a cup of it to cure my cold. I told Mom, and it made her mad as a wet hen. "He could have killed you," was what she said. I can't remember if the cup of creosote cured the cough or not.

A Vashon Doctor

Continued from Page 6

studies that never see the light of day at CNN or on NPR.

How are you supposed to be able to confidently make a decision about injecting your children with newly available mRNA technology when you are barely able to access all the information needed to become fully informed? How can we "trust our doctor" when he or she hasn't taken the time to read beyond the surface or ask independent questions?

It has been freely acknowledged that the new bivalent Omicron boosters have had no testing in humans. They were tested in rodents and then made available to anyone willing to take them. If you had told most people this would happen three years ago, there would have been outrage and, surely, this would absolutely never have been approved! Yet here we are, and the outrage is being silenced.

Parents are the only people fully weighted with the outcome of decisions related to their child's care. What should you do when you lack confidence in the information given? All medical interventions come with risk; to pretend it is zero is irresponsible. Parents feel alone with an agonizing decision.

As with all important decisions, parents must never make an important medical decision under pressure, while feeling rushed, or when vital questions remain unanswered. Whether you're talking to an oncologist, gynecologist, or pediatrician, if your doctor is condescending, find another one.

Making a decision simply because

Intermittent Fasting

Continued from Page 6

berries or a nest of eggs. Our ancestors did not automatically stop eating in the later afternoon, and we do not have to, either.

What we eat, when we eat, how much we move, what stress we are under, and how well we sleep all matter. Given our steady access to ready-made foods, we tend to eat too much and too often. Having times when we do not eat makes sense. However, we are also constantly exposed to toxins and the compounds in healthy foods are needed to help the liver process those toxins. Not all nutrients are stored, so there are likely benefits to not always being in a fasted state when out and about the world.

Plus, for many, trying to fast at a time when friends and family do most of their eating (in the evening) will prove too difficult. Others with poor blood sugar control may find the fast too challenging and will experience headaches, cravings, poor sleep, etc. It is important to remember that, in the long run, simply choosing to eat well and not constantly snack, especially before bedtime, will accomplish just as much as intermittent fasting.



that is what your sister did for her kids isn't truly informed decision-making. My goal, as a doctor, is to answer questions as fully as possible, so that my patients feel confident they are making the best, informed choice for their children. If your extended family is belittling your decision-making, or trying to undermine your authority as the ultimate caretaker of your child's health, firmly let them know you have heard them and know where they stand; however, the decision remains yours alone.

With so much difference in the availability of information, few to none of us have been able to make a fully informed choice. We must remember that everyone has different perspectives and that we are all trying to do our best. Don't judge others for making a different decision from you. Also, remember that you are under no obligation to share or discuss your choice with others.

If we want to point the finger of blame, we ought to look to mainstream media for encouraging contention, distrust and ostracism. Let us not allow ourselves to be divided against family and friends over personal medical decisions that - according to the data - don't affect anyone but the individual making the choice.

Information is still coming together. Children are at extremely small risk for COVID complications. It is reasonable to wait. There is no need to rush to vaccinate children.

Editorial Note: Here at The Vashon Loop, we do not grant anonymity lightly. In the case of, An Island Doctor, we have determined the author faces substantial risk, merely for speaking honestly. Please see our Ethics column on page 2.

Virtual Predators

Continued from Page 4

It can start slowly, as it does with child grooming. Children are often helping others in virtual environments, as well as being helped by others. A simple interaction is all it takes to begin the progressive process toward a bad actor's nefarious goals.

Child: "Hey, thanks! I couldn't figure that out." Predator: "No problem. Come check out this room over here."

What are in these rooms? What could our children be exposed to by following a new "friend?" We don't know. This isn't a normal video game. Rooms are created by players for any purpose. Some are mini-games. Some are created to view movies or otherwise just hang out. Some rooms are created specifically to expose young people to virtual sex. It doesn't take much to move from a game playing paintball to a room filled with sex toys and characters with exaggerated body parts performing unfathomable acts on each other. There are instances of young girls and boys being virtually gang raped by groups of older "players."

What does viewing these

experiences do to the child's developing mind? What about actually being the victim of virtual rape? The shame that can result from these horrible acts may cause children to feel that they are at fault. Once the child feels implicit, perpetrators have been known to blackmail the children into giving them whatever they want. There are stories of children being abducted as a result of this type of child grooming. The outcomes tend to be darker these days with sex trafficking, drug smuggling, and God forbid, organ harvesting. The truth is, our children have become a commodity for those who would use them and later discard them to the streets or worse.

To be clear, this isn't just a virtual reality problem. Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat are also hotspots for the grooming and sexual predation of our children. So, when you are thinking that your child needs privacy, does it come at the expense of their safety? Know what your children are doing on any and all of these types of platforms. Consider setting restrictions to access online environments to hours that you are able to monitor what your family is doing. This includes computers, smartphones, tablets, and any internet-connected devices.

Talk with your children and your community members about these potential dangers. It is a strange, new world that we live in, let us attempt to create a positive future for our families. This holiday season, be sure to give the best gifts of all, your attention and care.

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# Poetry for The Light and The Beautiful Dark

**Autumn Light**

lengthening shadows  
discard bright light  
store it in a  
cupboard for next June

what I notice and  
pause to study  
are narrators of  
a fresh story  
unfolding in pebbled gravel  
dried grass  
and moon’s play on stone.

By Margaret Roncone

I write poetry daily because of a commitment with another island poet and a poet in Seattle. I also write to nourish and save my soul.

**A Sad Tilt**

bent cornstalks chatter  
memento mori in town!  
Irresistable  
chrysanthemums glow  
lovers hair tousled

dried cornstalks bundled  
stack mortal lovers  
find only mirrors

By Claudia Hollander-Lucas

A comment about this poem: My creative focus has been concerned with the spaces between things, seasons, mind-sets, and life stages – those liminal markers, like summer fragrance on dried roses and that new wrinkle on the brow.

*Read a haiku by Claudia at vashonloop.com*

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Did you know that glyphosate (the active ingredient in Roundup) was first patented in 1961 as a chelating agent to strip mineral deposits off pipes and boilers? And that it was patented again in 1968 as an herbicide, and again in the early 2000s as an antibiotic? These applications and more all play a role in its detrimental impacts to human and animal health. We must educate ourselves to the realities that our reliance on chemicals has created. We are here to help you make sense of it all. Reach out and let us know how we can support you in your journey.

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Every year at this time, we see an increase in generalized itching and scratching in our furry friends. My suspicion is that it is tied to the "blooming" of mushroom and fungi spores that are prevalent through the first freeze. Keeping your pet’s coat wiped down and clean can help!

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## The Dorsal Spin: Indigeneity

Continued from Page 4

disastrous to their long-term survival. The most egregious harm occurred when “orca cowboys” brutally captured whales for marine parks. The SRKW lost a breeding generation of young orcas. From shootings to captures, entitlement mentality caused innumerable orca deaths and remains an unarticulated threat to SRKW

recovery.

Now to end on an inspiring note: We are thrilled to report that SRKW mom Spock’s (K20’s) months-old baby K45 is a girl! Females are urgently needed to sustain the critically endangered SRKW population. May mother and offspring live long and prosper.

## Finn and The Salmon of Wisdom

### A retelling of an Irish myth

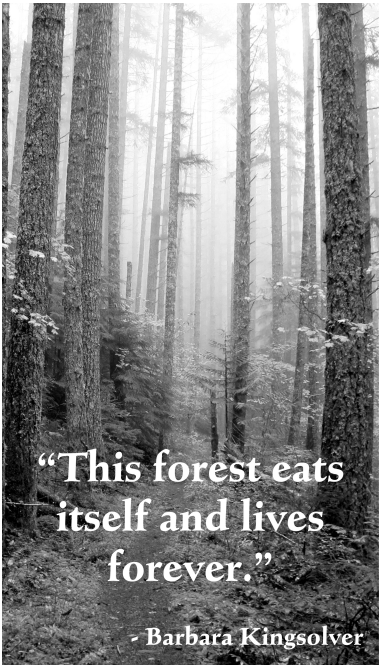
By Jane Valencia

Here on Vashon Island, now is the time that the salmon return home after long years in the ocean. Up streams and rivers they swim and leap and lunge, taking in deep scents of the waters along the way, smells that reach into their beginnings and lead them back. They make a long and dangerous journey to birth baby salmon, and to die in their home waters.

This is a story about one particular salmon, an elder man, and a boy. Legends say that this particular Salmon is none other than the oldest of all animals, born in the pool at the head of the river, back when the world began. This Salmon has journeyed hundreds of miles from out in the ocean to return to a particularly sacred river. This Salmon, being the oldest of animals, holds the memories of the land since the beginning of time. And, having lived thousands of years out in the ocean, this Salmon holds all the wisdom of the sea, so legends say.

The old folk and the old tales all agree: One day the Salmon’s life will end. Someone named Finn will catch that fish and kill and eat it. And in the eating of the Salmon, Finn will gain all of the Salmon’s memories, all of the Salmon’s wisdom...

*For the full story please visit [vashonloop.com](http://vashonloop.com).*



## Llaughing Llamas

By Daniel Hooker

This morning, I was trimming my mustache and soul patch. I almost went too far, which would have given me a Noel Coward mustache. Fortunately, I stopped just in time. After all, I didn’t want to look cowardly. The good news is, I’m looking in like Flynn!

On another note: Curatives!

- Letting go of old anger
- Gratitude
- Meditations on joy
- Realizing: “I am what I pay attention to.”
- Humor, laughter, and love

The other day, a gentleman was passing under the treeline of the IGA parking lot, on his way to the post office. One of the branches knocked his hat off. Totally oblivious to his lost cap, I waved at him and said, “I think you should take up a form of Brazilian Martial Arts.” He just looked at me, so I continued, “Cap-Aware-A.”

And this one, my dear friend March Twisdale actually got!

Q: What do you call one hundred rabbits hopping backwards?

A: A receding hare line.



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# Barley Cranberry Scones and Introducing Marj Watkins

By Marj Watkins

Many people, like me, are allergic to hard wheat. It's the gluten in it that makes us sick. For a high price, you can buy gluten-free bread and pastries at the stores. But why buy, when for a much lower cost you can make your own? Try this recipe.

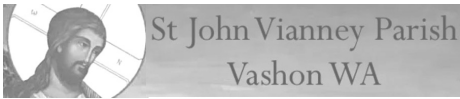
## Barley Cranberry Scones

### Ingredients

- 1 cup barley flour
- 2 tbsp coconut sugar
- ¼ cup craisins (dried raspberries)
- 2 tbsp soft butter
- 3 tbsp coconut sugar
- 3 tbsp almond milk
- 1 egg, fork-beaten



Preheat oven to 350°F. In a mixing bowl, stir all dry ingredients and mash in soft butter. Next, combine almond milk and egg and stir into above mixture. Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment. Drop dough by tablespoons onto the lined baking sheet. Bake until faintly golden. Makes 5 or 6 servings.



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We would like to introduce Marj Watkins, writer of "Island Epicure" in the previous edition of "The Vashon Loop." From Marj:

I began writing the Rockaway column in the Tillamook Oregon newspaper, "Headlight Herald." I had just entered high school, and had sent an anecdote to a little magazine called "Grit." My story was accepted and I received a check for \$5. Back then, \$5 would buy a pair of good shoes and socks. My mother had typed my story using two fingers. Later, as a sophomore, I was allowed to learn "real typing."

Mother believed my story-writing skill would bring in enough money to pay my high school expenses. She asked me, "Would you like to write a column for the 'Headlight Herald?' I believe I can get them to give you a try. You stay here, and I will talk you up to the Tillamook newspaper publishers."

Mother told the paper's office woman, "I notice you have no news coverage of Rockaway Beach. My high school-age daughter writes well, and has even sold a piece to a small magazine. Would you like to give her a try?"

They agreed to try me as a news writer for one month, so I began. I gave them the story of Otto and the bear. Otto Shearer was our neighbor and a dairy man. He had planted a young peach tree on the bank of the stream that ran past his house. My father shook his head, in the belief that peaches didn't ripen in our near-ocean location.

No matter. A peach loomed. A curious black bear came to investigate. He ate Otto's one peach. This

infuriated Otto. Otto borrowed Dad's rifle and stationed himself an an upstairs window.

The bear hoped that a second peach had formed. Predictably, the bear came to see if it had. Otto aimed carefully, shot and brought down the bear. He shared with us. The bear meat tasted terrible, but not as bad as the muskrats my brothers trapped.

At the end of my trial month, I went to Tillamook to collect my pay for the four weeks I'd been sending the newspaper true stories of Rockaway events. For the first time, the Herald staff got a look at their Rockaway correspondent. As a high school student who had not reached her full growth, and would never be tall, who could blame the Herald staff woman who exclaimed, "That's our correspondent from Rockaway? She can hardly see over the counter!"

"Hush! Don't offend her!" the other woman said. "We're getting new subscriptions from as far away as Cloverdale. People really like to read her column!"

Whew! I thought. They'd keep me. I've got a job!

When I'd saved enough money to buy a camera, I did so, and set out for bigger game. The Portland, Oregon paper bought my photos and gave me \$25 each and a byline. I became editor of the high school newspaper. This eventually led to working in the advertising department of Fred Meyer, including for Fred Meyer himself, who was a good boss.



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The Vashon Theater

Continued from Page 1

the pandemic, even when audiences were allowed into theaters, they stayed home and streamed to screens. By the time things opened back up, national theater chains were devastated, and attendance hasn’t recovered.

The Wolcotts noticed, but as grizzled vets of a tough industry, they also saw opportunity in adapting: Combine technology with ideal downtown positioning and transition to a modular, multi-use community-centered space.

What will that look like? As a clue, notice the disco ball hanging from the superstructure in their parking lot, lights bouncing off it at this very moment. OK. How about “Die Hard” showings over Thanksgiving? Doable. “The Maltese Falcon,” silent movies? Check. Simulcast concerts, sporting events, DJs, weekend markets, art installations, video game tourneys? Yep, day or night, including individual headsets and ordering food with mobile apps.

An on-site outdoor liquor license is in the works, and Eileen says, “We will be featuring locally sourced foods and drinks and collaborating with the restaurants and businesses around us.”

The Vashon Theatre itself has been in continuous operation since 1947, which has meant considerable investment in new tech and seating upgrades, putting it in the select company of landmarks like the Stanford in downtown Palo Alto or

Port Townsend’s Rose Theatre (the latter served as a direct inspiration). Community-donated name-and-quote tiles a la the Pike Place Market helped generate funds for the back lot’s platform, Tuesday meeting nights are reserved for non-profits, and free screenings will continue on Thursdays, currently Ken Burns’s “National Parks.”

We will see preview of the new space on Halloween, where the Theater will host a costume party and try out some features. In strategy terms, this is called “Capturing the younger demographic, while re-generating the older segments.” For Vashon, it’s smart business and great to see.

Talking with the Wolcotts, it doesn’t take long to gain a sense for their commitment, intelligence, and flat-out determination to double-down on community. While getting the nuts and bolts together was held up by supply chain delays, they’re relying on their own sweat equity and are confident that all systems will be go for next spring.

As you go by the new construction, you can almost feel the town’s center of gravity shifting southwards from the four-way stop.

Here's how much room we have for our Crossword Puzzle!



Find the full-size puzzle at vashonloop.com

Book Review - The Jungle

Continued from Page 3

recently immigrated from Lithuania – and the horrors they were unable to avoid as they landed in an exploitative region of Chicago – was originally published serially in 1905 in a weekly paper, “Appeal to Reason.” As the political winds shifted, “The Jungle” was republished as a complete novel in 1906. In response to the exposé, President Theodore Roosevelt commissioned the Neill-Reynolds Report and, upon discovering that “The Jungle” accurately represented the meatpacking industry in Chicago (and other industrialized cities), he went on to push two bills through congress: the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act (which eventually became the U.S. Food and Drug Administration).

Think fiction doesn’t matter? Imagine America today without the FDA? Whatever your opinion of this agency – its consistent, daily effect on our lives is without question.

Why was “The Jungle” so impactful? I believe it’s because the story is so well-told. While the events of the day, the issues needing to be addressed, and the awful details of the novel were contemporary at the time, “The Jungle” does not read like a dry, partisan rant. It’s also not didactic or boring. The book is riveting. The characters are fully fleshed out and their tragedy is both epic and intimate. We can relate, and that’s hard to achieve. No wonder the story had such a huge impact on American society!

Born in 1878, Upton Sinclair was more than a story-teller. He ran for

political office multiple times, always as a Socialist, including in 1934 when he sought the Governorship of California. According to Britannica: “He was defeated by a joint propaganda campaign, orchestrated by the conservative political and business establishment, newspaper moguls, and Hollywood studio bosses, who brazenly portrayed him as an American Communist. Using admen, media consultants, and assorted “dirty tricks,” the anti-Sinclair battle has been called one of the most well-orchestrated smear campaigns in American history; bogus interviews were staged and run as legitimate newsreels in movie theaters, a forerunner of “fake news” and the attack ads on television decades later.

Sinclair recounted the campaign in “I, Candidate for Governor: And How I Got Licked” (1935), and said about his experience in politics: “The American People will take Socialism, but they won’t take the label. I certainly proved it in the case of EPIC. Running on the Socialist ticket I got 60,000 votes, and running on the slogan to ‘End Poverty in California,’ I got 879,000.”

This drives home one final point that readers of “harsh history” may sometimes miss. Such novels are not written by hopeless authors, living on the thin, sharp edge of despair, with nothing but pessimistic thoughts running through their heads. There is love in Upton Sinclair’s rendering of the meatpacking industry. There is faith that “the people” will care enough to read the stories and take action. There is commitment to spending one’s life bettering the world. And, there is hope.

VIFR

Continued from Page 1

than what was actually used, thus the small increment.

If the amount for 2022 had unused monies in this category, we should see the surplus dropping out at the end of the year. When you go looking for this, you don’t find it. But you do find a very large overtime expense.

This leads us to an emerging picture which seems to match the facts. VIFR has a bigger workload than can be comfortably handled with their current employee count. The overflow is being handled with overtime –extra hours put on full-time firefighters and EMT’s beyond their regular work week. When you hear about overwork and burnout at VIFR, be sure to listen carefully for how much overtime was experienced. The new budget adds employees, and should indeed reduce the need for existing firefighter/EMT’s to work so many overtime hours.

Thus, the new employee costs are addressed by changes like spending less on overtime, along with using the budget of the discontinued “part-time” employee budget line. The latter also helps to fund the new management position. The proposed budget does not need new taxes.

Since headcount is cost, it would be well-advised to pay attention to the details of how VIFR headcount is paid. All firefighter/EMT employees are unionized, and are being paid and receiving raises under a contract that will soon be up for negotiation. Inflation is certainly painful for employees who have seen their raises capped at 3%, and their union will no

If you haven’t read “The Jungle,” I highly recommend it for all people, ages 14 to 100.

My Old Mom

Continued from Page 4

not remember it, but I wasn’t surprised to hear it.

My mother had a sense of humor, but she tried not to show it. She was terrible at telling jokes. She’d start in, “There was this lady on a train with a dog...” and then say, “No, no, that comes later. Oh, and I forgot...”

Once she said to me, “Remember! The mighty acorn was once a little nut like you!” Then she looked surprised because she realized she’d said acorn instead of oak. Then we both laughed, which was a rare occurrence.

But wait. There was the time we were going home from the Seattle World’s Fair.

In 1962, the train service changed from Burlington Northern to Southern Pacific in Portland. We ended up staying overnight in a hotel.

Somehow, somewhere I picked up a risqué coming-of-age novel told in the voice of a profane teenage boy. I didn’t know what it was when I got it. The cover made it look like it was funny. I liked funny.

Well, it was funny, all right. My mother picked it up and started reading and laughing. I snuggled up in the hotel bed with her and we read it together, laughing our socks off. She made me go take a shower when we got to the part where it looked like the boy might have sex. (Spoiler: he did.)

The next day, shame kicked in and she told me that I was not to tell

doubt push to address this in the new contract. It’s unsustainable for inflation to make your purchasing power fade year after year.

VIFR community funding comes from property taxes, an amount based upon assessed value. We’ve been living with wildly climbing prices, but there are many signs that this is an asset bubble in the process of deflating. Thus, an important question: What happens in the perfect storm of a larger VIFR employee count, higher per-head costs, and reduced tax revenues?

Overtime, like spending on consultants, is easy to dial back when finances get tight. Employees are much more painful to cut, and VIFR is proposing to grow the employee count by significant percentages. In a short downturn, there is a general reserve that can cushion a shortfall. Beyond that are options like layoffs or a new funding discussion with the community.

VIFR started as an all-volunteer fire department, which was extremely cost-effective. VIFR still has volunteers, and The Loop will write about them in an upcoming issue. Please get in touch with editor@vashonloop.com if you have information to share on this aspect of Island public safety.

This article is based on interviews and a review of VIFR materials, and was provided to VIFR so they could provide comments and corrections. However, this article is entirely the responsibility of Andy Valencia, who is very willing to respond to further corrections and clarifications. *The online version of this article has additional background material.*

anyone we’d read that book.

I never did. Her secret was safe with me.

Until now.

My mother was abusive, and she was a human being. I’m not looking for pity here, nor do I mean to minimize my, or anyone’s, experience. It was awful and it happened. I have been dealing with the fallout of her abuse all my life.

Most children acquire battle scars of one sort or another and my heart goes out to all of you, all of us, in recognition of our common humanity and the abuse we survived. Comparisons are useless. Did my mother have it worse than I did? I am pretty sure she did, but what happened to me was bad enough.

I encourage you to give yourself a break if this kind of childhood left you with lifelong twists in your opinion of yourself. Maybe you recognized PTSD symptoms when they were first described. Maybe you thought, “Hey, this sounds like me.” I did.

As for laziness – if I’m sitting still, or reading during the daytime, or thinking about all the chores that need doing, I feel like I am living down to what my mother drilled into me: I am lazy, lazy, lazy.

Which reminds me. I have a couple of baskets of laundry I need to fold and put away.

I think I’ll go lie down with my Kindle and not do that.



## Sometimes You Hear The Light

By March Twisdale

Welcome to our new series, focused on Island Businesses that lie well outside of Vashon Town. For the Island newbie and the occasional visitor, this network of resources, services, professionals, experts, and knowledge is almost entirely hidden from view, and discovery is not easy. Many do not advertise. Some do not even have a published phone number. Signs – when present at all – can be easy to miss on stormy nights or foggy days. I have lived here for 18 years, and despite being very active in our community, I’ve only just begun to unravel our Island’s diverse, scattered, and amazing web of skilled artisans, amazing entrepreneurs, and successful business owners ... outside of Vashon Town.

The usual port of entry for this plethora of island businesses is by word of mouth. Each referral, each recommendation, each name and phone number shared is truly a gift. I experience a visceral sense of gratitude when I think of the men and women who make my life so much better ... and those who considered me worthy enough to be pointed in their direction. It’s a privilege and a compliment.

This month, I’d like to share with all of you, the name, business, and upcoming Open Studio event of a man some of you already know and many of you never will. You see, Gordon R. Barnett is leaving Vashon Island! He’s not going far, but this December will be our last and final opportunity to step into his elegant and productive studio, nestled into a glorious hillside, surrounded by a garden of lovingly tended, living creativity, facing the beauty and grandeur of Mount Rainier (Tahoma) as she gazes downward at the birth waters of the southern Puget Sound.

GRB Bells reflects Gordon’s almost 77 years of self-directed artistic exploration, fostered by his courageous Northwestern Kansas parents, who supported the unique, early painting interests of their eldest son. “I did have other interests and dreamed about other possible lives,” says Gordon, on his website. But painting, and eventually jewelry-making, became one of his life’s great passions, loves, and joys. Much to our benefit.

When one thinks of the dark days of midwinter, what comes to mind? For many of us, it is sound. The creaking of tree branches as stormy winds toss them about. The laughter of children, shredding wrapping paper and discovering new delights. The scream of the kettle, the soft silence of falling snow, the crackling of the fire and, for some lucky humans, the delicate tinkling of bells as one moves about one’s day.

I cannot come close to the exquisite way in which Gordon describes his creations, and so let me tantalize you with a quote from his immensely enjoyable website: “Created for fashionable gifts and

symbolic talismans, delightful in sight and sound, touching deeper sensory connections as well. Each bell rings its own story.” At [www.GRBBells.com](http://www.GRBBells.com), you can pre-explore Gordon’s Bell Collections ranging from Architectural to Beings, Botanical and Limited Editions, Symbolic and Spiritual, Traditionals, and Fancies. However, the website (for all its beauty) offers only a bland taste of these delicious bells, simply by the nature of being purely visual. What is a bell when its song is absent?

This is why we want to alert our Loop readers (and all Islanders) to Gordon’s approaching departure (how’s that for a paradox?) and this one, final opportunity to step into his studio, where bells cast in silver, bronze, and gold adorn the walls, waiting to be touched, swung, caressed and gently jiggled, allowing their music to soar through the deliciously scented air.

Grab your calendar and set aside an hour (or three) on one of the first two weekends of December for your first, second, or tenth visit to the GRB Bells Studio ... knowing it cannot be missed, for it will be your last. Yes, dear newbie, recent transplant, California immigrant (no, we don’t hate you), and long-time Islander who’s managed to somehow not hear of Gordon’s Bells before today ... Consider yourself worthy of being invited to the Open Studio of one of our island’s much beloved, professional artists, on the eve of his new adventures in living.

In Gordon’s own words: “I own a sporadic wanderlust ... Uprooting, alternating with long periods of becoming deeply, sometimes quietly, quite settled.”

## Beach Cleaning

By Rich Osborne

Suzanna and I go walking every day we can. Our favorite beach walks are Tramp Harbor and KVI beaches.

A couple of years ago, we noticed that the amount of beer cans, cigarette butts, vape containers, and general trash had increased exponentially. At Suzanna’s suggestion, we started to take a plastic bag with us, and picking up the trash.

Last spring, some family left a blue plastic pail on the beach. I put it into service as my trash bucket. I now wear a plastic glove. It’s kind of fun.

Then a very cool thing happened. Some of our neighbors saw us and thanked us. But soon, trash started disappearing before we got to it. No complaints! Our neighbor Rhondi picks up the trash from Ellisport Way to the old King County dock.

Tuesday, September 15, 2022 was an extremely heavy day, with two cases of beer cans and two bags of miscellaneous trash. On our way home, a lady thanked us and picked up the two cases. She told us, “I got this!” and took them away.

We ran into the King County Maintenance Supervisor, who was taking some pictures of damage to the beach barrier. He told us that the “Adopt a Road” project is rebooting soon, so we can get bags, vests, and pickers, and leave the full bags with them. And we won’t be paying the dump fees anymore. How cool is that?

So my creed for the month is: Take a bag on your walk. If you see trash, pick it up. Our maintenance crews are overwhelmed with major repair projects and limited resources.

## Big Changes at Vashon’s Pub

By Andy Valencia

We moved onto Vashon more than 20 years ago, and although there were occupants in Vashon Village, most times when I walked through, the feeling I got was “ghost town.” Eleven years ago, Cliff Goodman established himself as a local brewer whose products eventually made their way onto the ferries and to our Farmer’s Market. Five years ago, Cliff opened Vashon Brewing Community Pub in Vashon Village, turning the Village into a destination for tourists and Islanders alike. No more ghost town!

Featuring his craft beers, Cliff also added a selection of other drinks. He also designed a modest yet diverse menu of foods to please most palates and dietary needs. All of this was housed in a building that blended new touches – the artistically stained concrete floors were done by Cliff himself – with original features such as the stained glass windows.

Not only did the pub attract its own dedicated clientele, but when “competing” events like the Strawberry Festival Beer Garden or a concert in the park happened, his sales went through the roof. It turns out that quality food and drink, served in a congenial environment, will always find enthusiastic customers who are just walking by.

The pub came about because of ferries – yes, Washington State Ferries caused a pub. Cliff was supplying beer to a few local ferry runs, and this had grown to be the large majority of his sales. But when a boat went down,

At some point, we can talk about organizing this better with the “Adopt a Road” project, but for now, keep a plastic bag in your pocket or your car, or wherever.

If you see some trash on the beach, the park, the forest, the road, pick it up. You will feel good every time you walk by that clean beautiful spot. I promise, you will.

### Some Comments From Cliff After Reading The Article

Hi Andy, been thinking about the ghost town angle, and have a slightly different take that gets closer to the true intent of leasing that particular space and sounds a bit less critical of the Vashon Village:

The intent of opening a retail space was, as you wrote, to find a better outlet for my beer after losing the ferry business.

I saw Vashon Village with its large front lawn as an underutilized space that could be turned into a nice community space with lots of potential uses, including an outdoor beer garden.

The name “Vashon Brewing

or got assigned away to some other route, local vendors like Cliff were shut down. It became almost untenable to run a viable business for the vendors, who complained to WSF.

To address this, Washington State Ferries decided to let a single vendor run all concessions across the whole system. This precluded small vendors, and therefore ended the possibility of selling to the ferries unless you were a giant corporate supplier. So, most of Cliff’s sales disappeared in the blink of an eye. The need to develop a stable alternative sales channel for his beer led Cliff directly to his pub idea. The rest is Island history.

When I saw the “For Sale” sign in front of the pub, it was time to check in with Cliff.

The pub’s five-year lease was coming up, and this was the catalyst for Cliff to ponder whether it was time for a change. He has family throughout the United States and the world. He and his wife are very interested in getting to know their grandchildren while they’re still children, and this was an important factor in Cliff’s decision.

If you’re wondering about his brewing business, Cliff says that layers upon layers of laws make it almost impossible to sell it. He expects to sell the equipment to somebody who has completed their own mountain of paperwork, and who needs a set of brewing equipment that is ready to go. So enjoy his excellent beers while you can– in all likelihood, they will disappear in the foreseeable future.

Cliff describes the ideal buyer as a couple who can support each other in sharing big tasks, while taking turns covering shifts at the pub itself. Like so many businesses on the island have found, it’s especially hard to hire enough workers in the Fall and Winter seasons when a lot of the younger Islanders return to school.

When prompted to guess how much beer he’s made over the years, Cliff looked off into the distance for 30 seconds, then said “10,000 gallons.” Pints pulled at the pub? “40,000.”

If you run into Cliff or his wife, be sure to wish him well as he starts the next phase of his life!

Community Pub” was a nod to that vision, where people could hang out in a relaxed and family friendly environment.

Over time, we developed it into a space for live music, beer festivals, trivia games, open mike, and guest chef events.

During the worst days of COVID, it became an outdoor haven where people could reconnect in a safe environment.

Building community during good times and tough times is what I will remember most fondly, and I hope to find a buyer who will want to carry on that vision.

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# Planet Waves



by Eric Francis <http://www.PlanetWaves.net>

### Aries (March 20-April 19)

We live in a hall of mirrors. Perhaps we always have; the idea of reality as a reflection is nothing new. I'm talking about our environment of electronic communication, which seems like it's 'out there' and 'all around us' but which can also be seen as a mirage that exists within our minds. I'm always reluctant to call all of perception an illusion, though there are times when it seems that way. There are also times when discovering this reveals the truth behind the veil – something more permanent and more meaningful than the fleeting world of pixels and data that our lives have become. You do not need content feeds or little telepathic devices to communicate with yourself or with others, to dream, or to know what you want. All of that is contained within you already. And books are beautiful.

### Taurus (April 19-May 20)

You seem to have transformed from the person whose whole life was built around a long-held concept of stability and security to someone willing to make radical changes – which are likely to be centered around a somewhat different concept of stability and security. However, we live on Planet Forever Changes, where the future is mostly occluded from view. And in our society, we live in a world where people have been pitted against one another in a Hunger Games kind of scenario. We might trace those trends with a pencil and see where the lines go. The rare occasion of Mars retrograde in Gemini, in your 2nd house, is calling for a deep and honest reassessment of your priorities. The real word is values: the principles by which you make your decisions and guide your life. The assumption you're being called to challenge is that you know what those values and principles are.

### Gemini (May 20-June 21)

Survival is a spiritual matter. It only masquerades as material. Survival depends on awareness, accurate perception, the ability to trust, and understanding that love is the only thing that heals. And these are specifically spiritual skills, and the world teaches them only to those willing to learn. But a little willingness goes a long way. So too, does remembering the important lessons of the past, previously mastered (or close to it) but easily forgotten. You could start with remembering what you've learned, then setting the example that both teaches others and reinforces what you have gained. An aspect of this involves the work that you do, and remembering your purpose as one who is called to serve. You might consider moving on from any work that does not serve humanity in a tangible and sincere way.

### Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Those born under the Cancer Sun or rising are especially sensitive to

eclipses. The Moon has unusual power during these times, and the eclipse process marks intervals of significant change and progress. The recent solar eclipse in Scorpio is urging you to honor the creative, sexual and pleasure-seeking side of your nature. This is what's called a 5th house event: there will be no gains without taking some risks. The corresponding lunar eclipse on Nov. 8 will push you to take a bold approach to your social existence. All of the crisis that society has been through has lowered your expectations of life, and it's time to ask for more from your existence. Dare to experiment and find out for yourself.

### Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

What are you free to do and feel in your home? What are you not free to do? I suggest making an honest list, including things that you might not do or think you would never do. I am proposing that you create an absolutely accurate description of your environment and the four walls that contain your physical existence. Do you have room for all of your feelings and all of your desires inside that container? Do you have space for the activities you love? There will be two lists, most likely, one for what is possible and one for what is not. And I'm speaking here not just of the physical structure, which may not leave you room to build a 20-foot-high sculpture, but rather the social and emotional conditions that are part of the space you live within. If you reflect carefully, you may notice that many of the conditions imposed on your space today are really mental carry-overs from long ago. They are not actually rules you must live by – though one way or another, you will need to stretch.

### Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

Dust off your resume(s), your CV(s) and your LinkedIn profile(s) and give them a careful review. By that I mean print them and study them carefully and truly consider what they tell you. Mars is about to station retrograde in Gemini, the sign associated with your professional activities, your reputation, and your true calling. This rare event calls for considering your desires back to when you first decided you wanted to do something, or be someone. The question is again relevant today, as those are (one version of) the two sides to your Gemini 10th house: what you do, and who people think you are. Mars retrograde will help you integrate those seemingly different paths, which will give you confidence, strength and insight.

### Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

Getting your financial affairs in order will require making changes to how you see your life, your purpose, and your way of relating to the world in economic terms. You have mighty assets. You also have liabilities,

though the positive column far outweighs the negative. It's crucial now that you do two things. One is to recognize your actual preferences for what you want to do, and move in the direction of emotional fulfillment. The other is that you recognize what has the financial value. There will be some divergence and there will be some overlap. The place where the two circles cross is the zone to focus on. And it is there, no matter how small it may seem. You are going for net-positive results in all things, and the best way to get there is to stay close to yourself and to take up the most important tasks in your life with bare hands, so you can feel the substances you're working with.

### Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

You are discovering that you cannot control your relationships. Nor should they control you. Yet, it may seem like the changes necessary to unravel any complications are out of reach. You are about to find out that you have alternatives. These are largely based on shifting your point of view, which will happen if you can loosen up your perceptions and be a bit more psychically mobile. You have the intelligence to resolve any pending matters and the resourcefulness to make it happen. All you need is the patience and the understanding that this may take some time, though you would be wise to set some limits there. Using astrology as a kind of clock, three to five months comes to mind.

### Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

Do what you can to remove the element of survivalism from your relationships. By this, I mean it would be wholesome to take a gentler and more easygoing approach and to recognize that you can live without anyone, but it's nice to have them in your life. Mars retrograde in your opposite sign Gemini is a reminder to take some time to review the past few years of your relationship life. Consider your experience, and consider that of your partner(s), doing your best to get into their socks and feel what it's like to walk around inside their reality. Meanwhile, it's essential that you look after your health. That means studying where the mental and emotional planes intersect with the physical plane. You have a strong constitution; stress is the one thing that can weaken you. Find its sources, and cast them off.

### Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

You have a creative side that is closely related to your true sexuality, and this is at the very core of your being as an earth sign. You like tangible substances such as leather, metal, cloth and wood. You like digging in the dirt, helping plants grow, and working with real materials such as paint and clay. The planets are reminding you that you need grass, trees and physical experiences. The revolution of these past few years has

not completely vanquished our humanity. And it has not vanquished yours. In the coming months Pluto will make its first sweep through the last degrees of your birth sign before beginning its 18-month transition into Aquarius. It's vitally important that you use this time to deepen your commitment to yourself and your personal truth.

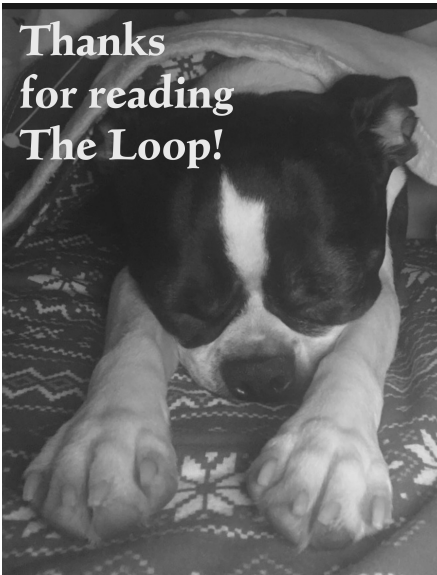
### Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

The next few weeks are likely to bring more questions than answers; and a good question gets you half the way to what you want to know. Without actually asking, you cannot have a meaningful response. Therefore, any sincere inquiry is an excellent investment of your time and thought. But you must also challenge your assumptions, which block answers. In my experience, Aquarius is the sign that most needs to know when it does not know. There will be revelations over the next two weeks (into and beyond the total lunar eclipse of Nov. 8) and the next few months (of Mars retrograde, though January and beyond). Do not assume you know – anything. Identify and challenge your beliefs. Insist to yourself that you have a factual basis for what you think is true. It may seem like the heat is on, though what we are experiencing now is merely a warm-up for Pluto arriving in your sign on March 23. Flex and strengthen your growth muscles. You will need them.

### Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Jupiter arriving for one last visit to your sign, and the recent eclipse in Scorpio, are offering you plenty of energy to draw on. Do so wisely, by which I mean take your opportunities to rest, recharge, repair – and to work in a way that nourishes you. If you are feeling stressed, slow down. Nearly everything can wait. Make sure that you give yourself the necessary nutrients for a Pisces, and feed your pleasure-seeking and hedonistic side. Pisces is an extraordinarily sensitive sign and one that is most challenged by the competitive, fiery nature of the world at this time. You are fortunate to be born under the sign blessed with the greatest gift of flexibility, which includes your ability to see the world, and yourself, from many points of view. Take full advantage of those abilities.

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