

*Farewell, December
Snow, merriment, ice, and winds
Old year shuts the door*

Find bios & extra photos at vashonloop.com

Welcome, 2023!

By Jane Valencia

We’re excited to ring in a new year with The Vashon Loop. First and foremost, whether you are a reader, advertiser, or contributor, we are so very grateful for your enthusiasm and support. This newspaper exists because of you!

Our first four months have been a grand adventure! From learning the ropes regarding layout and production, to developing a sustainable timeline for various aspects of content-gathering, to conversing with contributors, engaging in editing and copy-editing, and figuring out the finances of this labor-of-love venture – we’ve experienced a steep learning curve, to say the least. Again, ten-thousand thank you’s to Steve Allen, owner-editor of The Vashon Loop for many years, for his absolutely essential mentorship.

As we enter 2023, we look forward to further collaborations with our Vashon-Maury Island community. We are committed to sharing myriad aspects of Island life and concerns, highlighting unique voices and perspectives, and cultivating a space for listening to one another with curious minds and open hearts.

As we curate Islander stories, concerns, and dreams for a beautiful and inclusive future, we invite you to circle back around to archived issues of The Vashon Loop – especially if you feel you’ve jumped into the middle of the conversation. We intend that The Vashon Loop encourage our collective critical thinking and imaginative skills, and even our playfulness. Only together, with all voices at the table, and musings that reach to the moon and back, can we co-create with and strengthen one another and the generous Island we are blessed to call home.

We thank you for your kindness and support in the many forms in which they come. We wish you the best in your visions for the new year, and look forward to where their flowering or fruition intersects with these pages.

May 2023 be brighter, lighter, and wiser than past years, and open a welcoming door.

Introducing the Not Uptown Vashon Business Lowdown!

Do you have a business on Vashon? If so, are you like the majority of Vashon businesses in that you’re not located uptown?

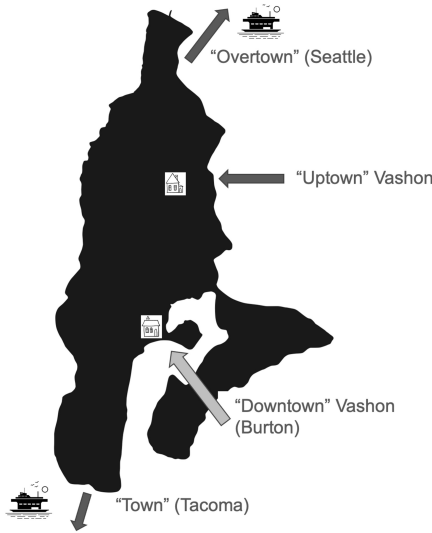
Vashon businesses are everywhere on the Island – really, everywhere. But many are effectively hidden, without the storefront or drive-by appeal that would let you know they exist.

Because Vashon is not zoned like a suburb, our businesses are scattered all over. Outside of town, you will find hairdressers, massage practitioners, and even a couple of places to work out.

You’ll find creative people in studios producing paintings, photographs, pottery, and sculpture – among other art forms too numerous to list.

There are also many local service companies that will help you fix what you have, or build something new from the ground up. These include cement, construction, electric, milling, plumbing, and tree management, to list just a few.

Not-Uptown businesses are the businesses that Islanders often only learn about at the last minute or in an emergency. Islanders share the existence of these businesses by word of mouth and on social media. But newer Islanders and visitors are less likely to find these places, and even long-term Islanders probably don’t



understand just how many businesses exist here. At The Vashon Loop, we want to help change that.

People are reading The Loop, and the companies that advertise in our pages are seeing results. We recently increased our print run by 50%, and we still can’t restock papers fast enough. People are looking at The Loop, and eventually these people will be looking for you.

In February, we are introducing a new feature – the “Not Uptown Business Lowdown” – an organized, creative ad-spread providing background and contact information for local businesses “not” located in Vashon Town (ie, Uptown).

How Substack Supports Writers and Readers



If you haven’t heard of Substack, you’re in for a treat! Substack is an online platform designed to support writers, bloggers, philosophers, citizen journalists, and literary creatives of all types. The designers of Substack believe good writing is invaluable. What we read, what we learn, what we think, and how we engage in the world – matters.

The internet offered a brilliant promise: to connect the people – and their thoughts and ideas – for the betterment of humankind. To achieve this goal, good writers need real world support. Substack helps make sure that happens. With Substack, we are not only given space to share our work with the world, but each Substack subscription empowers us to remain at our keyboards.

We are living in challenging times. The cost of publishing The Vashon Loop is twice today what it was two years ago. Should we pass this inflation on to Island business owners, who are already facing cost increases across the board? Introduce a fee for readers? Our answer is an emphatic NO.

Instead, we are turning to you: our readers, neighbors, contributors, friends, and community members. We ask that you say: “Yes. We appreciate your effort and we have your back.”

The Vashon Loop is an Islander-owned and reader-supported newspaper, designed to benefit all of us. We are entering an era where we need more opportunities to communicate as a community, free from corporate and government control. Our future may be increasingly local, but good ideas and increased awareness is an international affair. This means that even a small-town paper like The Vashon Loop can have a notable impact on people’s lives. As a Substack subscriber, you’ll be taking an active role in our shared success.

As we step into the New Year, please consider creating a Substack account. Do a quick search for Vashon Loop (go to: <https://vashonloop.substack.com/>), click on the subscribe button, review our member options, and choose your level of support.

On behalf of our contributors, editors, and readers everywhere – we thank you.

The Lowdown Registry provides a great and affordable opportunity to increase your businesses’ visibility – and it costs only \$20.

What will the Registry look like? We will give you enough space to briefly describe your business and contact information. Businesses will be organized by categories, so it will be easy to find specific services. The Registry will be formatted so readers want to read it when looking for services on-island or help with a project. And, it’ll be pretty enough to clip and save (like, on the refrigerator).

This will be an ongoing project. At The Vashon Loop, we will brainstorm new ways to add value to the Registry, while maintaining its reasonable price.

The first version of the Lowdown Registry will be printed in February – that’s very soon – so please get in touch. Contact sales@vashonloop.com to take part.

Let’s show Vashon what (businesses) we are made of.

The Vashon Loop is published monthly

Snowballs and Snowboards

By Seán Malone and John Sweetman

It’s just not nice to be hit with a snowball with a rock in it. At Cove, we forbade the use of rocks. They took the fun out of a good snowball fight. We hid behind the walls of our forts, a wall of giant snowballs that could be four or five feet high. Behind the wall, we had a pile of snowball ammunition and the snowballs flew!

Not so at Vashon grade school, where the bullies in the sixth and seventh grades used rocks in snowballs to intimidate and strike fear into the younger kids.

It was mid-December, and we hadn’t had a good snow yet. So, I took the skis to the shop behind the garage and proceeded to sand down the tops and paint the skis black, to honor the best and very expensive Head Skis. When it came to naming the skis, I spelled “Hed” across the top, so I could brag at school that I had a pair of “Heds.”

It always snowed five days before or five days after Thanksgiving, and then the Winter storms came. We gathered around the radio in the breakfast nook, hoping beyond hope that the announcer would tell us that

Code of Ethics – Power of the Pen

Control communication. And, above all, establish power over the printed word. Why? Because the power of the pen cannot be overstated.

Since the advent of the printing press, around 1436, by German goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg (and much earlier, in China and Korea), the written word has had a staggering effect on our world. Venice – a primary, Mediterranean shipping hub in the late 15th century – was fertile ground for a fledgling global news network, as shipping captains were happy to purchase and later distribute everything from religious texts and literature, to breaking news sourced from around the world.

Despite low literacy rates, once the floodgates were open, nothing could hold back humanity’s thirst for communication. Paid readers would recite the latest news, received daily at seaports, while runners were dispatched to carry the written word deeper into the countryside, laden with juicy topics covering everything from royal scandals and natural disasters to war reports and discoveries of distant lands.

In the spirit of “the light and the beautiful dark,” it can be said that everyone recognizes the power of written communication. On this, we clearly agree. Where we find ourselves at loggerheads lies in the realm of ethics and under the judicious gaze of morality. As it should! For when power goes unscrutinized, bad things happen.

In February 2014, Taryn

Champion wrote about the importance of ethics in journalism saying, “Ethical journalism entails factual information, hard evidence, opinions from all parties involved, objective information steered away from subjectivity, and outstanding grammar, spelling, and punctuation.” Taryn went on to say, “Journalists have the power to influence what society believes and should, as a result, provide objective information allowing society to interpret what is being said and done using their own discretion.”

In other words, ethical journalism should NOT control communication. It’s moral purpose is to facilitate discourse on complicated topics for which there is rarely a single straight answer. Should the colonies have revolted against the British? Maybe. Maybe not. Should China be locking healthy people into their apartments? Maybe. Maybe not. Should the U.S. government play a role in personal medical decisions – like abortion, end of life choices, blood transfusions, and disease management? Maybe. Maybe not.

The list of questions is literally endless and never-ending. Similarly, those of us in a position to bring these conversations to light are forever obligated to ensure that we express the greatest respect to our readers, as we present the questions of the day. If we already have a preferred answer to a question ... if we seek to lead our readers to agree with our viewpoint ... if we write with an opinion or outcome in mind ... then we have left

journalism behind, and we have become propagandists.

As journalists, we hope to avoid earning that label. As editors, we regret our limited pages, for even the curation of news – the selecting of what does and does not receive our ink – is an act of power. Ignoring a topic can be as detrimental to society’s processing of current events as heavily biased coverage.

And so, our journey along the ethical pathway continues. One day, one story, one headline, and one word at a time. Thank you for traveling this road with us, as readers and contributors.

Note: Our Ethics Column is not a news report. It is intended to present the opinions of the Editorial Team of The Vashon Loop, and as such, it will usually present a persuasive argument. According to the Stony Brook Center for News Literacy, “Opinion journalism is valuable because once you have studied a subject using reliable information, you often have to make a judgment or decide what action to take. Especially in your powerful Fourth Estate role as a check on the tyrannical tendencies of the executive, legislative and judicial branches. Someone who is working on the same questions, and publishing their conclusions, can help you make up your mind, particularly if they are trustworthy, which means they verify their information, they aren’t on the payroll of one side or the other...and they are accountable for what they say. An evidence based opinion in that case is helpful.”



What Brought You to the Island?

By David Godsey

Short answer: It was the movie “The Paper Chase.”

Longer answer ... It was the week of Thanksgiving 1989 when I found myself on a ferry boat, in a small car that carried my few possessions, crossing the Puget Sound to an Island called Vashon. I was coming to this Island because, in a turn of rather haphazard wisdom, the company of misfit performers I was part of had decided to move here to begin our time as an “Ensemble” called UMO. It was going to be a two-year experiment ... that was 33 years ago.

But before I first crossed over on that ferry to this Island, a place I had never seen and barely heard about, I had been living in New Mexico. So my first damp/cold/grey winter here was, well, a shock and a challenging adjustment.

Before New Mexico, I had been out east with said misfit performers, working on our first nascent projects. And before that, I had lived in

Boulder, where I had been developing my clowning, serving as a guest teacher in theatre at Naropa Institute, and moonlighting as a model for art classes.

Before Boulder, I was in Paris for nearly three years. I ended up in Paris after I fell in love with a cute dancer/clown who moved there, so I followed her.

To make my move to Paris, I had ditched my budding “acting career” in New York City, where I had found an agent after completing two years of rigorous training at Circle In the Square Theatre. Just before moving to NYC, I had worked in dinner theatre in Oklahoma (that’s a whole other story), which had been preceded by two years of performing professionally with a mime troupe in Indianapolis.

I had gotten the job as a mime performer because I had studied mask work as part of my theatre training at Earlham College. And I had decided to dive into theatre studies instead of

pre-law because one night on campus I saw the movie “The Paper Chase” twice in a row. That movie completely and decisively trashed my plan to go to law school and eventually become a senator from Massachusetts.

So, now that I’ve traced it back, if I am completely honest, I guess I arrived on Vashon because of the movie “The Paper Chase.”

*Can’t stop drinking
and want help?*



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Online Meetings: SeattleAA.org

AA Phone: 206-587-2838

Local Vashon Contact: 206-849-1980

*No puede dejar de
beber Alcohol?*



ALCOHOLICOS ANONIMOS

Reuniones de Internet: SeattleAA.org

Telefono AA: 206-587-2838

Contacto Local Vashon: 206-849-1980

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Land Acknowledgment - Waters in Name

Perhaps language arose with humans as a kind of call-and-response with the natural world. In the midst of the companionable sounds around us, we found ourselves with things to say in turn.

In any case, nature expresses in our languages. We can hear the waters, aspects of geography, animals, birds, weather, and temperature in the sounds, phrasings, and descriptive words and verbs that make up a language. To coax one’s ear to language is to engage with ancestral lands and with nature conversing within and around us.

In the name, s̥w̥əbabš, -abš is pronounced ahbsh, and means people of. In the first syllable we have: s̥w̥əb. ̥w̥ is a single character and sound. You can approximate it by making a raspy h sound in the back of your mouth, similar to the “ch” in the Scottish word, loch. When we say the name, s̥w̥əbabš, even imperfectly, we hear something like: swuhb-ahbsh. Make the “wh” sound quite raspy and hollow, almost in your throat.

Practice their name. Then head out to the shore. Find a place where the water swirls, or where waves lap. Listen to the water and its motions, and settle into this language. Say again: s̥w̥əbabš ... swuhb-ahbsh. Experience the waters, Island, and the name of a people for themselves that arose from intimate relationship.

s̥w̥əbabš are the Swiftwater People. The sound of the waters moves through their name. If we listen keenly and with depth of heart, we can hear the ongoing conversation.

Forcibly relocated, the s̥w̥əbabš are now part of the Puyallup, Nisqually, Squaxin Island, and Muckleshoot tribes. In the next issue we’ll explore more about nature and language, and specifically about tx̥w̥əlšucid, (which sounds a bit like “twuhlshootseed”), one of the names for the language of the Puget Sound peoples.

The Vashon Loop

Editors: Caitlin Rothermel, Marc J. Elzenbeck, March Twisdale, Jane & Andy Valencia

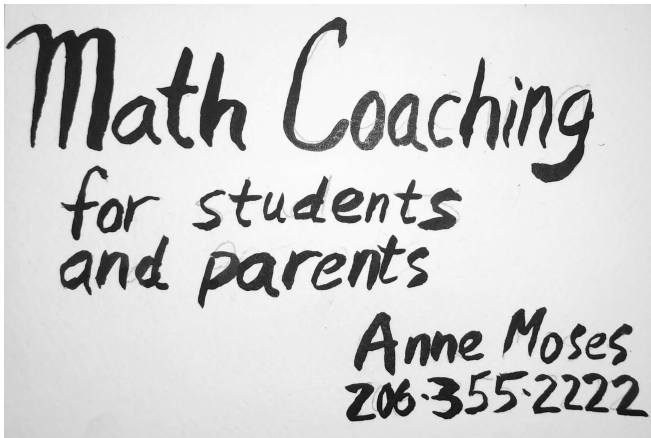
Contributors: Eric Coppolino, Seán C. Malone, John Sweetman, Kathy Abascal, Eva Deloach, Daniel Hooker, Rich Osborne, Marj Watkins, Suzanna Leigh, Emilia Flor, David Godsey, Eduardo Holmes, Ginger Jean Rushford, Kim Cantrell, Tracey Stover, Margaret Roncone, Salina Milstein

Comments: editor@vashonloop.com
Placing ads: sales@vashonloop.com

<https://vashonloop.com/>
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It Was a Pleasure To Balance

“It was a pleasure to burn.”

As many remember, that is the opening line to “Fahrenheit 451.” Published in 1953, it still occupies the #7 spot on the New York Public Library’s list of their most-borrowed books of all time. Its author, a pulp magazine story writer from the Midwest, tapped most of it out on a coin-operated typewriter in the UCLA library. A few years later, his next novel would hearken to one of Shakespeare’s witches as she sensed Macbeth’s approach: “By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes.”

451 is a long meditation on censorship, its title referring to when paper auto-ignites. Bradbury foresaw big-screen TVs, automated law-enforcing hounds, and memory devices akin to the internet. In his own time, the McCarthy hearings were unfolding, Feds were pulling comics off of shelves for subversive content, and everyone knew the media-fueled phrase, “Better Dead than Red.”

The book itself was inspired when Bradbury was stopped for strolling down Wilshire Boulevard with a friend after dinner. A suspicious officer asked what they were doing and he replied, “Putting one foot in front of the other.” It was the wrong answer.

Science fiction asks big questions. Bradbury asked this one: “What if the censorship gets worse?” His well-considered answer was that it leads



straight to systemic collapse. It leads to places where great minds always think alike ... and fools seldom differ. It leads to the constraints well known in dictatorships. Who wants to be the one to tell Saddam Hussein he put his tanks in the wrong place? Or that he should surrender? If the moderating effects of open discussion are disallowed, if there can be no push-back without dire consequences, the apparatus of censorship guarantees decisions so wrong they lead to catastrophes.

Key struggles in the past were won by freethinkers with some peculiar ideas about governance. The principles they mapped out reflected their own argumentative personalities, sundry backgrounds, and individual beliefs. These were informed by an impressive understanding of humanity’s high and low natures, built on voracious reading of controversial books, printed so as to be readily available. Easy to forget at this remove, they remained enemies of the world’s most powerful kingdom and had to design

a Republic of maximum resilience, one quickly able to withstand more conflict. To that end they embraced the concept of balance in opposition, in which if one or two arms of state faltered, were weak or corrupted, the others could stabilize and see through.

Patience, debate, and superior decision-making were prized over immediacy, much as a group of us might lock arms to make our way over glazed ice. Longer, yes, but surer, stronger, and more convivial. By extolling freedoms, they welcomed friction and fresh challengers to serve as antidotes to the tyrannies which had excluded them. It was an unparalleled leap of faith, and even after having landed safely, they didn’t know if it would last. Steeped in Greek and Roman history, they knew the cycles observable in all constructions, of birth, growth, prosperity, corruption, and rebirth.

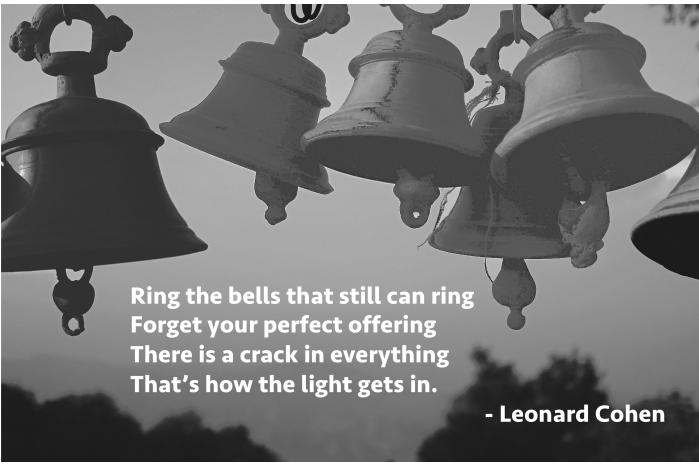
Indeed, their creation has followed an oddly punctual timeline: 1701 brought Queen Anne’s War, which formed the 13 Colonies; 1781 saw the formation of the United States; 1861, a civil war that would weld them together; 1941, a

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triumphant Federal Government; and in 2021, a Milestone of Something. It’s hard to see the future, but harder to avoid the hunch we’re witnessing lateness of stage and entering a new era of American life. As emerging realities rearrange categories we’ve taken for granted, it may be yet more hard on our nation and its individuals, but people who know how to work, who know how to make things work, will be rewarded.

No matter how dedicated, the book burners Bradbury portrayed eventually became disenchanted and longed for truth, common sense, and fair play. For things as simple as original thoughts and kind remarks said in person, and sincerely. On the New York Public Library’s #8 spot of their most-loaned books is “How to Win Friends and Influence People,” by Dale Carnegie, published in 1936. If the cycle holds, it might be coming back in vogue.

This year is shaping up to be full of surprises. We can take hints from our designers, and entertain the balance that has gotten us through volatile times.



Pull, Don’t Be Pushed

By Andy Valencia

The world is coming for you, no invitation needed. Your phone rings, a notification chimes, a spam pops into your inbox. For every time your phone rings and it’s a loved one, there are many more selling you extended warranties or potency pills. We give them their very own words, like “spammer” and “telemarketer.”

When you choose to go get something, you have a little more control. You go to the market and buy some meat. You log onto Facebook and see what’s new. You cruise YouTube to view videos. You choose when it starts; you choose when it stops again.

Of course, when you do choose to visit YouTube or Facebook, you’re going to see a lot more than what you asked for. It seems like an ever-growing wave of ads. Is it your imagination? I could do an article on the subject, but the short answer is: No. It’s never enough ads.

It’s time to fight back, using a technology that “pulls” only what you want, directly from the content creator. It’s been around for decades, and yet it’s probably new to you: Real Simple Syndication – “RSS.” RSS is a communication that happens between your computer and the internet server of a particular blogger or podcaster. Your computer connects to their server’s RSS and receives the name of the show, along with a list of episodes, newest first.

Like your voluntary trip to the store, RSS only pulls from the shows YOU have chosen. With email subscriptions, you have to jump

through hoops to please make them stop. With RSS, as soon as you tell it a show’s off the list, it stops checking it for new episodes. Boom, it’s gone.

Each episode has a name, date, and a URL for the actual content. If that URL points to text, then this is a blog. If it points to an mp3, then it is a podcast. To read blogs, you use a feed reader. For podcasts, you use a podcatcher. RSS is the common engine powering both. What’s available for your device? Search for “RSS reader” in your app store.

Now you need to teach your feed reader about the blogs you like. With your web browser pointed at a favorite blog, look for this symbol somewhere on the page (usually at the top or bottom):



If you don’t see the symbol, a search might give you a list of RSS feeds. For example, “BBC RSS feeds” takes you to the BBC’s directory of their many feeds, each tailored to a particular type of news. “New York Times RSS feeds” works just as well.

Usually, clicking on the feed will hand it over to your feed reader, automatically subscribing you. If that doesn’t work for you, instead right click on the feed, and “Copy Link.” Then, switch to your feed reader app and tell it to create a new subscription. Paste in that RSS URL.

Once you start looking for it,

Continued on Page 10

Book Review



An Old Take On the Emperor’s New Clothes

by March Twisdale

If you blended Beatrix Potter with Stephen King, you might come close to Hans Christian Andersen. All three writers started life with severely limited opportunities. All three overcame those challenges through hard work, grit, and the necessary dashes of chutzpah and luck. And, all three focus (in their own, unique way) on the tough realities of life in the human world.

In our modern Western culture, tough realities are far less popular than they used to be, especially when creating content for children. We like to raise our children with rose-tinted glasses. This cultural shift is quite evident when comparing Hans Christian Andersen’s original writing (Andersen is the eighth most-translated author in the world) to the current, watered down versions so abundantly found on bookshelves

and movie screens. One excellent example would be Disney’s version of “The Little Mermaid,” which barely tracks Anderson’s original story ... losing most of the value and all of the tragedy along the way.

What do you recall from your earliest memories of “The Emperor’s New Clothes”? My child mind retained one specific lesson, centered around the final moment where a child (unbound by social inhibitions) points at the naked Emperor and innocently calls out the obvious. After re-reading the original, imagine my shock to discover what really mattered was everything leading up to that moment.

When Hans Christian Andersen wrote “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” he was asking questions that are uniquely relevant to the times we live in today. What led to an Emperor walking “naked” through the streets of his city? Why did the people tasked with protecting him remain silent and not speak up? How did people doubt what they saw with their own eyes? What fears and insecurities played a role?

All fairy tales and fables offer lessons from the ages. It’s up to us to learn them. Our fate awaits.

Contact The Vashon Loop to share breaking news!

Send pictures, too.

editor@vashonloop.com

Quito: Musings From the Balcony

By Eduardo Holmes

Sitting on the balcony overlooking this colonial courtyard with vines clinging to centuries-old walls, my mind drifts. I am aware of the city's distant sounds, the sun's morning warmth on my neck as I take in the historical sense of this rehabbed colonial mansion. It is located in Quito's UNESCO world heritage site, which is the first and largest such designation in Latin America.

I imagine what life might have been like here 200 years ago. I hear the muted sounds of street commerce and the echoes of horse hooves entering the interior courtyard. As the rider dismounts, he is greeted by several servants. Now the walls are crumbling, the roof tiles are loose. Why have we returned to this country and this house over 15 times? What has drawn me to this country?

My wife says I'm a different person here. She says I'm more present and outgoing. I take the initiative, talk to anyone. Since I'm not tied to a routine, which is a major ingredient in stale living, I'm open to change and challenges. Could listening to my inner voice and paying attention to what brings me bliss have anything to do with it? Perhaps.

Ecuador is unique. It is the size of Colorado, yet contains 4 bio-diverse regions, each compacted with opportunity for exploration - the Galápagos Islands, the Pacific Coast, the Andes Mountains, and the

Amazon jungle.

The country's small size allows access to social diversity and centers of power, be they governmental or indigenous leaders. I have met people whose family names include the founders of the country, the presidents, those who controlled the wealth of the country over centuries. Having social access to power is intoxicating. When I worked at an international school in Quito, I got a phone call from a government office asking if I could meet with the vice president of the country to discuss his son's future college choices in the United States. "Sure, send him on over," I said.

This kind of social diversity and informal contact with people of power is not usually in my diet. I don't seek it out. However, that interchange was bookended by my evening encounter when I sat with a shaman on a dirt floor in a remote village for an all-night healing ceremony. While both men were powerful within their own context and community, I was amazed at the possibility of experiencing both ends of the spectrum in one day.

As I teeter toward 80 years of age, my time is focused on maintaining my health. The neurological literature on aging indicates that learning new things, either in Ecuador or on Vashon, is crucial for maintaining health. To break out of your routine and seek out new experiences is crucial. To be "life-long learners" is

Island Voices



both physically and mentally stimulating. Curiosity and an open mind enliven the spirit.

To that end, I've chosen to stay with an indigenous family in the Ecuadorian highlands to study the language of the Incas. This is my fifth visit over seven years. It is slow going; learning a new language is frustrating and challenging. There is no financial benefit or gain. I won't

find a Kichwa speaker on Vashon, so why do it?

I'm trying to be guided by my inner voice. I get affirmation from attempting to communicate with people in unfamiliar situations. I was recently able to have a conversation with a taxi driver in Kichwa, his first language. He was surprised, since few foreigners speak his language. Indigenous languages and cultures here, as in many parts of the world, are discouraged. In Ecuador, Spanish is the language of progress. Many obvious and subtle messages undermine maintaining the relevance of indigenous cultures in the modern world.

What does the taxi driver do? As we chat, mostly in Spanish mixed with Kichwa words, we talk of the cost of potatoes in his region. We talk of the popular indigenous musical groups he likes. He writes down his phone number and says, "Whenever you want to visit Riobamba, my part of the country, I'll take you and we can stay at my parent's house."

I treasure these precious interactions. They are the result of being open to learning new things in unfamiliar territory, and they are the reasons I keep coming back.

Falling Through the Cracks – Part 1

By March Twisdale

In 2021, my husband and I began to prepare for his retirement, planned for March of 2023. Most of my husband's friends and family had already retired. They'd had no trouble. We expected the same. Then, we tried to create an online Social Security account, and couldn't get past the first screen.

My husband was born in Juarez, Mexico on a dirt floor in a very poor part of town. It was 1955, and he was the ninth of 13 children, two of whom had died in their toddler years. Eleven months later, the whole family moved to California where the children - as they eventually entered the public school system - were all given new names. María became Mary. Jaime became James. Raquel become Rachel. José became Joe. Such was the experience of young immigrants from south of the border.

José's high school diploma was followed by naturalization, a Social Security number, and almost five years serving our nation, our society, and our fellow Americans in the Air Force. That service was followed by 43 years of full-time employment in the telecommunications industry, helping to manage, design, strategize, and create the modern cell phone system that we depend upon for almost everything. Having begun work as a child in the fields, José has been invested in this country, despite its human foibles and imperfections, for almost 70 years.

One would expect this to mean something. One might even expect loyalty. And that's where our

problems began this past April. With expectations. Because everyone we knew had an easy time with the Social Security Administration, we "expected" the same. Because we are law-abiding, hard-working, tax-paying, military-serving, and politically engaged citizens, we expected the system to work for us. More than that, I expected it to care. And it didn't.

It wasn't the waiting patiently part that was hard. It wasn't the shock of being refused Social Security benefits by a federal government that claimed my husband wasn't yet age 62, despite sending us Medicare enrollment paperwork for the past three years. It wasn't the long hours spent standing outside in the cold, the dark, the rain, and the sleet, in hopes of getting a drop-in appointment (because appointments can't be made in advance). None of that wore me down.

It wasn't the ferry fees, the money spent on faxing endless letters to the SSA office, describing how I'd jumped through one hoop and then the next, and the next, and the next. None of that bothered me as much as the realization that my family had fallen through a crack. And, no one was coming to help us. Do our systems work? The answer to that question varies from person to person. No matter how nice, organized, patient, easy-going, and respectful I was ... I was on my own. On my third visit, I was told, point-blank: "I don't know how to help you. It can take years for the U.S. Embassy to deal with these things, and that's your problem. No birth certificate, no retirement



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benefits."

Those words left me breathless. What do you mean, my husband will be denied his retirement benefits? How could a man with a driver's license, passport, naturalization papers, proof of military service, a high school diploma, and almost 50 years of faithfully paying taxes ... be told no?

Back to that question: Do American social systems work? I have friends who love the Social Security system. Of course they do! The system worked for them. Seamlessly,

easily, application filed, approval received, money in the bank ... what's not to love?

But for me and my husband? It almost failed us entirely. Making our answer to the question very different, yet equally accurate: "This system is unreliable, filled with dangerous cracks, and if you fall through, no one will help you."

How did we overcome these challenges? Did I fly to Juarez? Did we hire an immigration lawyer? Did my sister-in-law save the day? Tune in next month for the rest of the story!

The Virtues of Self-Directed Play, Nature Immersion, and Place-Based Learning

By Ginger Jean Rushford

I am the founder and principal teacher at the Vashon Art and Nature School (VAANS), where self-directed play, nature immersion, and place-based learning are all foundational methodologies. These interrelated and interdependent methodologies were developed from the work of academics, teachers, predecessors, practitioners, and my own experiences.

One such experience was working with founder Erin Kenny at Cedarsong Nature School on Vashon. Cedarsong earned an international reputation for its nature immersion model. Erin defined nature immersion as “Unstructured free play in nature, resulting in an intimate, deep, and personal connection with the natural world.”

The desire to play is inherent in children. Self-directed play means that a child experiences independence in a safe, secure environment. The environment can be created by adults, but should be organized by the children themselves. This process nurtures creativity and advances imagination. Children control play with no adult intervention, unless reminders of agreements of safety or kindness are needed.

The privilege of being raised on Vashon greatly influenced VAANS’ philosophy. I grew up spending hours enjoying self-directed play on

acres of land, with days filled with building forts, bushwhacking trails, and frolicking through fields. Later, in forming my teaching philosophy, I learned that the freedom of unstructured play was backed by science. My childhood, combined with formal education (a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education and sustainability), created the foundation of my preschool methodology.

VAANS embraces the beauty of nature immersion because it can be paired with any indoor, student-led learning to fit each child’s individual needs. In a world experiencing tangible impacts of climate change, introducing and supporting children in finding their connection to nature, and fostering their care for the natural world, is more important than ever.

The principal of place-based learning is an important piece of this introduction – creating an environment where learners are focused on local themes, content, and systems. This leads to a curriculum where the content becomes relevant and personal to the learner. For example, a three-year-old may point out a robin and observe that it is a bird we often see at school. This observation and the conscious memory of it is the result of being in an environment of place-based learning. Children more easily absorb information when they experience a



subject in real time.

When children learn in a place they are familiar with, it translates to them wanting to learn and reach out into their community, state, and world. Experiencing these observations in youth can contribute to fostering global environmental awareness and care as an adult.

Learning outside of a highly structured setting also fosters collaboration and exploration. Placing children under the age of six into academic rigors that are too advanced for them can be detrimental, shutting them down before their developing mind has had a chance to explore. Public schools now teach kindergartners what was once a first-grade curriculum, pressuring parents to have their child reading, writing, and understanding math by age six, which often is not academically age-appropriate.

Children who are allowed to explore their worlds in natural time may be more curious and open to learning when introduced to academia at the appropriate kinder age. Part of VAANS’s orientation holds that unstructured time, largely spent outdoors, is crucial to a child’s development. Many children today

receive neurodivergent diagnoses, which are very real in many cases, and may also be no more than normal preschool-aged behavior in others. These behaviors include bouncing from one thing to another, and pausing and taking longer with things that interest them.

Being allowed to learn about the natural world around them should be a fundamental right for young learners. Children today need fewer scheduled to-do’s, and a more appropriate curriculum for Pre-K-aged learning. This curriculum naturally becomes available when playing outdoors. From birth to age 5-6 years, the most important experience a child can be offered is the chance to create authentic play. Child-directed and interest-led play creates sensory-leading questions, empathy, compassion, and positive life-long qualities.

Children today deserve the opportunity to learn the calming effects of nature and the therapy it provides. These uninterrupted moments of child-directed play are where children and adults alike naturally create a relationship with self and the natural world.



Winter Gardening

By Kim Cantrell of Little Bird Gardens

Rain or shine, Vashon is an island of garden enthusiasts passionate about our plants!

I love gazing out on my winter garden, especially when little birds flit around in search of seeds and insects, available in abundance, as so much of what I do in my garden accommodates these precious pollinators. My perennials are cut back in varying lengths to provide cavity-dwelling bees and beneficial insects a safe home to overwinter. My garden beds are covered with leaf mulch providing nutrients from my bare trees. And as the bulbs I planted last Fall start peeking out of the soil, I am filled with joy and a sense of satisfaction for the time and effort I put into my garden spaces before the first frost. These moments motivate me to keep going into my Winter Garden. Working in our Winter gardens supports the emergence of a healthy and lush Spring. There is still time to mulch, plant, and prune your garden to enhance its beauty, synergize it with our natural world, and prepare for the next season.

Mulching and Frost Protection

One task that is never too late to perform is mulching. Mulching increases soil fertility and helps to keep tender plants safe from freezing temperatures. If you have a lot of leaves, rake them up and cover your garden beds or use them to keep vulnerable plants warm. If you don’t have an abundance of leaves, you can cover tender plants with straw, fir

boughs, frost cloth, or even an old sheet. Using frost protection increases the warmth of the air underneath and prevents more delicate plants from freezing. Frost often comes later in the season or right as our plant is going to bloom in early Spring. Even winter-hardy Camellias can benefit from the use of frost cloth protection. In addition, raking your leaves into small mounds or shredding for mulch layers throughout your garden creates natural habitats for small reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. The pupae of butterflies and moths will also use leaves for overwintering, as will swallowtail and other moth larvae. And birds will pilfer through the leaves in search of insects.

Yes, you can plant in the winter

We have all heard that Fall is the best time to plant. However, there is time for winter planting in Vashon (zone 8b). If it is mild enough, planting can happen. Winter is a great time to see where our gardens lack substance. If the ground isn’t frozen, get that plant into the dirt and add mulch for warmth. The plant will be much happier there than in a pot. Roots of trees need 4-6 weeks to get established. Since most plants are dormant during the Winter, they will have time to settle into their new growing space and are less likely to suffer from transplant shock due to the lack of water and high temperatures that happens with summer planting. When planting this time of year, you’ll want to consider plants that will withstand our winter temps (zone 8 or lower). Winter bloomers like Camillia, Hellebore,

and Witch Hazel add interest to your winter garden, and will support our pollinators as Spring approaches.

Winter Pruning

Winter is a great time to understand your deciduous trees or shrubs. With the leaves gone, you can see the plant’s structure and any problems that might need attending. I prune roses and fruit trees in early Winter, then move on to ornamentals when I know the danger of frost has passed. Pruning can be done any time of year, but I suggest avoiding extremes like freezing weather or intense heat. I do very little Fall pruning as most plants have been under stress from lack of water, and you don’t want to stimulate late-season growth. I am a colossal advocate for proper pruning. It requires finesse and accurate cuts that will keep your trees and shrubs looking their best natural selves and, more importantly, helps with keeping disease and pests at bay. In an ideal

‘plant world,’ your tree or shrub is planted in a suitable space needed to grow to its natural size, and no pruning is needed other than removing dead or broken limbs for the plant’s health. With correct pruning techniques, your trees and shrubs will require minimal cuts. And in some cases, the proper pruning early in a plant’s life makes less work overtime, every gardener’s dream. So before you go out with your brand-new cutting shears and start hacking away, ask an expert for advice!

Winter can be tough, but it is worth the effort to pull on your boots and rain gear and get outside. It’s good for the earth, our pollinators, and to me it’s good for the soul.

Kim Cantrell has been tending gardens on Vashon for 20 years and owns Little Bird Gardens located at The Country Store. Learn more at littlebirdgardens.com

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Please join us for an evening with Tom Dadant and Rob Yeager, mushroom gurus from Fungi Perfecti!

They will lead us through a mycelium maze of mushrooms and their current uses, and will be available to answer questions afterwards.

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Amazing Vegan Pâté (a La Kauai)

By Salina Milstein

I discovered this amazing pâté in Kauai. It is an adapted version of a recipe from the vegan cookbook, “Blossoming Lotus.” I’m not vegan, but I sure love the vibrancy of this versatile food. You can serve the pâté on toast, use it as a salad dressing or pasta sauce, or put it in puff pastry and bake.

Amazing Vegan Pâté (a la Kauai)

Ingredients

- 1 cup almonds, raw, unsalted
- ¼ cup shallots or sweet onions, sliced
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 cups mushrooms, sliced
- 2 tsp Herbs de Provence
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ cup water
- 1 clove garlic
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 cup basil
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 dash cayenne pepper



Several days before you are ready to eat, put your almonds in a mason jar or a similar open-air container. Fill the jar 50-60% with the almonds, and then the remainder with clean (ideally, filtered) water. It will bubble up a little, and you should clear the water out at least twice a day for two days.

There are a few options for preparation. My preference is to cook the mushrooms with the shallots and garlic (all finely chopped), along with salt and pepper. Once the mushrooms are soft, combine this mixture with the other ingredients and blend in a blender or food processor until it has a pesto consistency.

To deepen the flavor of the pâté, roast the garlic. Coat the garlic with olive oil, roast it in a little pan at 350 degrees for about 10-15 minutes, until it looks soft and can be mashed easily.

You can also prepare this dish raw. Chop the mushrooms finely and blend all the ingredients.

Kitchen Medicine

By Marjorie Watkins with Suzanna Leigh

There are many things in our kitchen cupboards that can bolster our body’s ability to heal itself. Every mother is a bit of a medicine woman, and what do you do if no doctor is available?

Prevention is of course the best medicine. We all know that fresh air, fresh vegetables and fruits, and plenty of rest strengthens our body’s immune system. Did you know that, when threatened with the viruses and bacteria that cause colds and respiratory infections, the cells in our nostrils quickly release tiny sac of fluid to bind and expel these germs before they can invade our bodies? Colder temperatures (about 40 degrees) inhibit this process, but then, at 40 degrees, bacterial growth slows way down as well. That’s why we keep our refrigerators at that temperature. So, don’t be afraid to go walking in the winter wonderland – just use a mask or scarf to keep your nose warm!

Herbs can help, too. Marjorie and her family were exploring Crete when they came across an old man giving away bouquets of sage, thyme, and marjoram, to prevent colds. Marjorie made these into a tea, which she served to her family every day that winter. No one caught a cold.

Suzanna asked Jamila Al Dahir how her family in Syria has handled COVID-19; they haven’t had the vaccinations or access to hospitals. She told me that, in her community of about 10,000 people, everyone got sick, but only three people died. They

treated their symptoms with the traditional remedies they use for respiratory infections. Mustafa gave me one of the recipes his family uses for all winter illness, including coughs and flu:

Mustafa's Winter Cure

- One cup of boiling water
- 1 tsp cumin (seeds, though powder would do in a pinch)
- Boil for about 5 minutes

Add:

- 1 lemon, sliced
- 1 tbsp fresh mint
- 1 tsp minced fresh ginger

Boil 2 more minutes

Drink hot or cold. Optional, add honey to taste.

Marjorie says, to clear a stuffy head, wet a washcloth in hot water and hold it against your face. This loosens congestion in the sinuses. Hot onion soup is both tasty and effective, also bouillon in hot water with kelp. Suzanna adds a pinch or so of dried red pepper flakes to soup; this helps to clear her head. Miso soup is good too, or a teaspoon of miso in hot water. Also, try a gruel of brown rice with a little salt, cooked in lots of water until the rice splits.

Gargling with hot salt water (a scant 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon salt in a cup of water) washes out the germs and soothes a sore throat. Gargle every hour or so if you have a very sore throat. Another gargle is to steep one teaspoon of dried sage leaves in one cup of hot water. Add one teaspoon of vinegar. Or simmer one tablespoon of cloves in a cupful of boiling water

for 15 minutes, and sip as needed. Even small sips are effective.

Suzanna’s Sage Tea for Lungs

In a glass quart jar put:

- 4-5 fresh sage leaves or 1 tbsp dried sage

2 cloves garlic minced or smashed in a garlic press

- 1 generous tbsp honey (to taste)

Fill with boiling water and steep for at least 10 minutes.


Drink 1-3 cups hot, per day as needed

For swollen glands under the hinge of the jaw, simmer chicken gizzards until very tender, along with a bay leaf, a sliced stalk of celery, three or four peppercorns, and a pinch of tarragon. Or gently massage camphorated oil into the glands, wrap the throat with a clean fuzzy sock,

and stay out of the wind.

An important part of self-healing is prompt treatment for symptoms, paying attention to how your body responds to your remedies, and knowing when to call the doctor.





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The Problem With Anti-Lectin Diets

By Kathy Abascal

Lectin-free diets seem to come and go with some regularity. At present, Dr. Steven Gundry’s “Plant Paradox” is the most popular version. Anti-lectin diets urge people to stop eating all grains, legumes, and nightshades. They claim that these specific foods contain lectins, a type of protein that binds sugars and can cause cells to stick together. When eaten, lectins allegedly create a “leaky gut” situation (or porous intestinal lining) that allows whole lectins to enter the body. These undigested proteins trigger an immune attack and inflammation, resulting in scores of problems, ranging from acne and alopecia to autoimmune conditions, depression, and Parkinson’s, to all types of weight issues.

I am very skeptical of these diets, to say the least. First, common sense suggests the lectin theory is wrong. Second, the scientific support is scanty. Third, the anti-lectin diets fail to eliminate lectins and, in fact, recommend that people eat some foods that are quite rich in lectins, while eliminating others.

Lectin proteins bind to sugars. They are abundant and ubiquitous: Humans, animals, plants, fungi, and microbes all make lectins. Lectins are involved in many biological functions, including how cells interact and how the immune system responds. Many are beneficial; we use our own lectins as a first line of defense against bacteria and viruses. Some plant

Health Matters

lectins, such as ricin, are toxic. Lectins in uncooked beans, especially raw kidney beans, are damaging, but cooking destroys lectins, and humans as a rule do not eat uncooked kidney beans. One study showed that legume lectins were “disarmed” by sucrose when both were eaten at the same time. It is probable that the small amounts of natural sugars in vegetables eaten along with beans have this effect, as well.

Ultimately, the strongest evidence against the anti-lectin approach lies in the history of the human diet. Hunger-gatherers ate some legumes and grains, but beginning with the agricultural era some 10,000 years ago, most cultures began to eat a great deal of grains, legumes, and nightshades. Rice, soy, and wheat became staples in China; this was similar for rice, beans, and nightshades in Mexico and many parts of South America. Wheat and potatoes became staples in European and Slavic countries. If the lectins in these foods caused the problems the anti-lectin diets claim, autoimmune conditions and other chronic ailments would have been very common in the past. They were not.

As well, we would see autoimmune conditions and chronic illness dwindling now, because people today eat far less of those foods than people did in the past. Instead, these ailments are increasing. Given that autoimmune problems were rare in cultures that ate a diet

rich in lectins, and are common in today’s food culture that contains far fewer lectins, there is simply no logical reason to eliminate these foods wholesale from our diets. While it is possible to be sensitive to a particular grain, legume, or to nightshades, it is extremely unlikely that all of these foods pose a problem to anyone.

Finally, the anti-lectin diets are not lectin-free. They cannot be, because lectins are biologically important compounds found in some form in most plants, including fruits. Take mushrooms, for instance. Mushrooms are rich in lectins, but

despite their many lectins, “The Plant Paradox” recommends eating lots of mushrooms, and even has a recipe for mushroom pizza.

Anti-lectin diets do eliminate many troublesome foods like white sugar and cow dairy, and many people’s health will improve from that alone. “The Plant Paradox” also makes a good point of encouraging people to eat only properly raised animal products. However, it makes no sense to adopt a diet that has you trading your quinoa, red rice, and tomatoes for goat milk ice cream, palm oil, and sugar alcohols. Those replacement foods are neither sustainable, nor good for your intestinal flora, or for you.

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Turn Off the Stress, Breathe Deeply

By Tracey Stover

After two years of pandemic stress, lockdowns, and mask wearing, most people are breathing shallow, contracted breaths. This is what happens under extreme stress. Pre-pandemic, the average person accessed 20-40% of their breath capacity, depending on whether they held trauma or were managing daily life stressors. Can you imagine what it is like now? It is really time to reinvigorate our breathing.

Breath is life, literally. Most of us would expire after three minutes of not breathing. Knowing the quality of our breath is vital; it tells the story of how we live our lives. When we experience trauma, stress, or repeated stressful thoughts, our breath takes on that tension and becomes constricted and shallow.

How does tension prevent us from breathing deeply? We hold our breath to prevent feeling the pain of trauma or stressful thoughts of grief, anger, or self-loathing, to name a few. Under this strain, our breath becomes shallow. Repeated shallow breathing acts like a rope around our lungs, and diminishes our energy. If we do not address this “metaphoric rope,” it gets tighter over time, decreasing oxygen flow to the body and affecting every metabolic process, which is the precursor to chronic illness.

When we breathe deeply, the movement of the diaphragm triggers the vagus nerve – which tells most major organs to relax – letting the body know you have it under control.

This is how the parasympathetic nervous system is stimulated.

We want to train ourselves to do this at will. This is, in fact, one of the breath’s super-powers. To switch off the flight, fright, freeze response, and turn on the rest and digest mode, which is how we access peace and calm. We can learn to turn off the stress.

How can we bring the breath back online? We have to know the quality of our breathing. Has there been trauma, long ago or recent? One client in his 60s had a severe burn accident when he was 8 years old. He was at peace with the incident, but his breath was still holding the trauma. After a few sessions, it was integrated. He could not believe how free he felt. Nor could he believe he had lived most of his life with a deep sense of oppression. We can talk through our troubles, but not until the breath pattern is cleared do we feel truly free.

For others, it takes more time to unwind the stressful thinking behind the challenging events. Breathing and thinking cannot be separated. For most, having a deeper breath is not just a physiological issue. The good news is that the breath wants to be open, and the body wants to heal. If you are ready, the heart-mind connection will support the journey.

Remember, breath is life. For example, how deeply we breathe

helps direct how well the lymph will flow, and lymph flow relates directly to immunity. As we exit the pandemic, we want to make sure the breath is free of constriction and tension; we want to make sure we are breathing deeply.

Test yourself for a deep breath: Are you winded going up a flight of stairs? Do you have the energy to do your daily activities? Do you feel generally happy about life?

An exercise: Put one hand on your lower abdomen and one hand on your heart, take a breath, and notice what moves and what does not. Did the lower abdomen move? Did the heart area move? A little, a lot? A deep breath expands the lower abdomen, reaches into the sides of the ribs and crests on the shoulders. The exhale is relaxed like a silent sigh. A deep breath feels like you massaged yourself from the inside-out.

The power of the breath is the best-kept secret, hidden right beneath your nose. Know thy breath. For as you breathe, so you become.

Tracey Stover, MA maintains a breath practice in Seattle and on Vashon. She facilitates private sessions, group classes, and trains others. You can learn more about Tracey’s work at www.breathingmandala.com, or contact her at tracey@breathingmandala.com.

In our December 2022 issue, we neglected to include biographical information for Dr. Cori Bodily-Goodmansen (“What Is Causing My Pain?”)

Dr. Cori has a Chiropractic Doctorate, a master’s degree in nutrition, is an NIS Masters practitioner, and has advanced certification in activator adjusting. She has been practicing for 15 years and is very grateful to serve the Vashon and Tacoma communities.

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Masks for All Doesn't Work - A Practical Dilemma

By Caitlin Rothermel

Respiratory diseases are surging again, and there is disagreement about what we should do in terms of masking. Some people are masking when they go out, some are no longer masking, and some would like everyone to wear a mask.

There’s been no answer that makes sense for everyone, and this puts us all at a disadvantage. But there are a number of reasons why it does not work any longer for us to mask as a society.

In February of 2022, I was invited to conduct a medical literature search on whether masks prevented COVID-19 transmission. Over the past 40 years, researchers have evaluated whether the day-to-day use of facial masks blocked respiratory particle transfer to prevent diseases like influenza, the first SARS-CoV-1 (in China in 2002-2003), and now SARS-CoV-2. I looked at hundreds of articles.

Most of these studies were conducted in the real world – in hospital, healthcare, household, or school settings. Many were conducted in very crowded places, with masks worn for hours at a time, or even a majority of the day. There were also mechanistic studies; in these, masks were force-tested in a laboratory to see if very small particles could penetrate.

What were the findings? Cloth or surgical masks did not protect from infection or particle transmission.

However, masks with improved filtration capacity, like N95s, were possibly protective, but for the wearer only.

When designed and used properly, N95 masks will block a good proportion of very small (virus-sized) particulates. This has been referred to as “one-way masking,” and it is an important strategy that some people use to avoid respiratory infections.

If this makes you wonder whether we all should wear N95 masks, you need to understand that, to mask for self-protection and to do it effectively, you need to commit at a number of levels.

For your N95 to work, you need to fit it properly on your face. Healthcare professionals know how to do this, and you can learn from videos online. Any gaps in the mask’s seal provide an opening for particles. So, if your glasses fog up, you have a leak. Likewise, if you have a beard, you won’t be able to seal your mask.

If you wear your N95 in a restaurant only until your meal is served, or at a meeting only until it is your turn to talk, your earlier efforts will have been for nothing. You also need to plan to replace your mask regularly. Our supply chain is unpredictable, and only becoming more so, so buying in bulk makes sense. A single N95 may last about a week with occasional use, but more frequent replacement is needed if you wear it all day.



You can’t wash and reuse N95s, or put them out in the sun to disinfect, because it will damage the mask’s electrostatic layer. You always need to replace your N95 if it gets wet, dirty, or if you notice it getting harder to breathe.

N95s must also be stored carefully to avoid contamination. A clean paper bag is a good place, but not an airtight container (because you don’t want to turn your mask into a petri dish). Evidence shows that N95 masks can be cleaned using a type of UV radiation, but there is no product yet that’s been designed specifically do to this.

These complex and careful masking steps may be doable by the individual, but not by everyone in the community. This individual decision is also not without risk. Daily, ongoing mask-wearing actually decreases your personal immune status – it lowers white blood cell count and activity.

We also tend to overlook some other, big problems with widespread masking. Do you remember plastic drinking straws? As of 2022, a King County law prohibits businesses from automatically providing single-use utensils like drinking straws. The goal is to reduce waste and prevent environmental pollution due to plastics.

Masks have microplastics in them, and according to the United Nations, 75% of used masks end up in

landfills or the ocean. China alone now manufactures 5.3 billion masks each year, and they are only responsible for one-half of global production. Masks have become a very profitable industry. In 2019 (before COVID-19), the global market for face masks was \$2.9 billion dollars. In 2020, this had increased to \$32.3 billion, and continues to rise.

Masks also have some substances in them that you just don’t want to breathe in. A study conducted in England found antimony, cadmium, copper, and lead in the fibers of face masks, and research from Germany found formaldehyde, perfluorocarbons, and other toxic chemicals.

These substances are all definitely bad for humans, and even worse is the way they will leach into the ocean and the land, making them a brand-new source of waste and contamination. To me, this conflicts directly with widely shared environmental priorities.

A role of public health is to develop community recommendations that make sense when key medical, environmental, and economic issues are all considered. When there are too many flaws in a plan, its relevance to the community cannot hold. The issue becomes a private concern.

Please visit the online version of this article for links to any research mentioned.

Staying Healthy With the Seasons

By Emilia Flor

We are in the time of Winter, Rest, Earth, North, Elderhood.

Elson M. Haas, M.D. wrote the book, “Staying Healthy with the Seasons.” I was drawn to this knowledge in the 90s, and Haas’s book was very influential on my learning journey. The insights he shared resonated with my inner knowing, and enlivened my passion for health and wellness.

This book shows how nature affects not only the outside climate, but our internal health and mental well-being. It revolutionized the fields of preventive and integrated medicine, and introduced a seasonal approach to nutrition, disease prevention, and mind-and-body fitness.

I took a deep dive into the experiential wisdom that Haas shared. Since finding Dr. Haas’s book, I also have received perspectives from many teachers and been introduced to numerous schools of thought around health and wellness. The topic of staying healthy with the seasons has remained the constant thread of “knowing” throughout my life. I am passionate about eating local and seasonal. In the Pacific Northwest, we are very fortunate to have an abundance of food available seasonally, even in the winter, give thanks.

I would like to continue to share seasonal health tips here and wanted to acknowledge where the title of my sharings originated.

Hydration Tip and Recipe

Proper hydration is critical for good health. Water makes up 55-60% of our bodies, and is responsible for a whole host of processes from flushing toxins and moistening oxygen for easier breathing, to transporting nutrients within cells and maintaining the normal electrical properties of cells. It’s also vital to the body’s natural healing processes.

But water isn’t the only part of the hydration equation: Electrolytes play a key role. An excellent healthy electrolyte is one-half of a lemon or lime, juiced in 8 oz of water, with a pinch of Celtic Sea Salt. I recommend this 3 times per day.


Once a month, I will be offering more in-depth wellness information at the new the WE Sessions from “Women Hold the Key.” All sessions will be held at at Synergy Vashon. January’s topic will be staying hydrated in the winter, and other winter renewal suggestions that are easy to implement into our routines.

Join us on January 19, 2023, from 12:00-1:00 PM, at our Lunch and Learn, “Staying Healthy With the Season: A Dive Into Winter Hydration” – 17600 Vashon Hwy SW, Suite 105. Contact: Tina Shattuck at (206) 898-3093 (text is best), or email: tina@tinashattuck.com.

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The EPA has established tolerances for glyphosate in food crops at 0.1 to 400 parts per million (ppm). While the FDA routinely monitors levels of pesticide residues in foods, they refuse to test for glyphosate. The Institute for Responsible Technology lists glyphosate residues in common foods. The results are shocking: Honey Nut Cheerios—864 ppm; Quaker Oats—930 ppm; Stacy’s Simply Naked Pita Chips—813 ppm; Organic Harris Teeter Dry Chickpeas—13,982 ppm! Since the introduction of glyphosate into our food supply, rates of chronic disease in children have increased from 1.2% (1960s) to 52%-54% (today). Coincidence?

Contact us if you want to advertise or share a story with The Vashon Loop!

editor@vashonloop.com

Poetry for the Light and the Beautiful Dark

I Have Yet To See

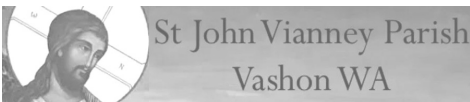
too many stars
their vastness pricks
my skin with wonderment

Perhaps in another life
I will be an astronomer
and know their names
or perhaps an astronaut
who will land on the moon

I will eat from her extraordinary
lightness then become
a star hanging in
the limitless sky.

By Margaret Roncone

From 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.



Vashon's Catholic Church
Noon Mass Wed-Fri
Sat. 5:00PM, Sun. 9:30AM
<https://stjohnvianneyvashon.com/>

Rose Hips and Snowberry – Part 2

By Jane Valencia

This is a continuation of the story started in the December issue of The Vashon Loop.

In a time when technology falls away, the folk of an Island find themselves returning to the ways of the forest. Two children, Rose Hip and Snowberry, explore their new world. This is one of their adventures.

Rose Hip and Snowberry head up and down the deer trail, and through some thorny bushes. Rose Hip spies a pile of twigs and branches.

“My ears are cold. Let’s make me a house!” Gathering small, thin sticks and larger ones, Rose Hip jams them together with twigs every which way. It topples over. Snowberry comes to help, and together they come up with a structure that resembles an upside-down boat, but just the bones of it. Snowberry had once learned how you might build a shelter, thinking that it might be a good thing to know one day, and here is one day!

Rose Hip and Snowberry layer leaves on top of the bones of the structure, and then ferns too, because Snowberry thinks it’s a good idea. Rose Hip piles on even more fern, both inside (“for a head bed”) and out. Then, into the shelter goes Rose Hip’s head.

“Comfortable,” says Rose Hip. “But not warm enough.”

Snowberry laughs. “You need a bigger shelter if you want to be really warm. One like a big sleeping bag.”

Snowberry is all set to work on a bigger one, when Rose Hip springs up. “Look at that. I know how to get

warm!” Rose Hip dashes down the deer trail.

What can Snowberry do but follow. Down the deer trail and up and down it. Different trees mix with the Red Alder, and among them are tall Bigleaf Maples, who have dropped most of their big, yellow leaves. On the trunks, however, are lengths of moss, with shoots of little ferns growing in them. Rose Hip squeals. “Licorice Fern!”

Reaching into the moss, and with the sensitive fingers as if of Raccoon, Rose Hip probes the moss, revealing a small network of roots. Rose Hip snaps off a piece of the root and takes a bite, “Yum!”

Because, if you’ve ever tasted the root, you know that it has a sharp, slightly sweet flavor, and is much like licorice in taste and feel in the mouth.

Snowberry breaks some off too. Then Snowberry, delighting in that taste and the coating that soothes the throat, and thinking of Mam, decides to pick more. In short time, Snowberry’s hands are full of licorice root, and the moss is a torn-up tangle.

And then Rose Hip pulls the moss off the tree in one big layer, and places it around her shoulders. “A moss coat! Isn’t it beautiful? Now I’m truly warm.”

The moss coat is beautiful indeed, and for one amazing moment, Snowberry imagines what would it be like to live in the forest, dressed like the trees, and gathering the treasures of the forest for food and fun. To live here all the time. What would it be like to find a home here – under a

downed tree or in a little cave? – or to make one from the branches and blankets of the forest? To be at home and wild!

But then, Snowberry becomes aware of the many roots in their hands, and the mangle of moss and torn-up fern. The torn-up fern trails back the way they came, when Snowberry and Rose Hip were picking them for the head house. Snowberry feels that squeezing in the gut for the third time. While Rose Hip’s moss coat is handsome and fun, and all these roots will be helpful medicines during the winter, and tasty too, something about the gathering of the plants hadn’t been a gathering at all, but instead was something all mixed up. A frenzied taking instead of ... what? Instead of asking, maybe.

The chill picks up to a wind, and the wind to the first splatterings of an icy rain. Rose Hip grabs Snowberry’s hand, “Let’s go home.”

But, as they turn to head back the way they came, they stop short!

To be continued.

Magical Nature Field Note

Licorice Fern (*Polypodium glycyrrhiza*): The roots in small nibbles can be soothing to the throat, mouth, and gums if sore, and if you like the taste. Herbalist Michael Moore in “Medicinal Plants of the Pacific West” recommends cutting the rhizome into small pieces and drying them before use. It can help to decrease hypersensitivity and inflammatory states. Some contraindications exist, so research before using medicinally.



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February will soon be upon us, and with it comes National Pet Dental Health Month.

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Terms of Concern

by March Twisdale

In March 2021, Forbes Magazine ran an article titled, “The Roots of Conspiracy Theory.” According to Helen Lee Bouygues (the author), “What’s needed is a more nuanced understanding of what drives conspiracy theories, and what kind of interventions can actually be effective against them.” Labeling conspiracy theories as “far fetched ideas,” she reminds us that “people who do poorly on critical thinking tasks” and those who “feel the world passing them by” are most vulnerable. In her words, “...Conspiracy theories are often not just the result of people being misled or duped, but expressions of deeper feelings of powerlessness.”

To say that “conspiracy theory” has become a label, a loaded term, or a linguistic shortcut is to belabor the obvious. What’s not so obvious is the reason why this and similar “terms of concern” are created, the deleterious effects they have on society, and who stands to benefit from their introduction and propagation?

This column hopes to help us answer such questions, in the smallest of ways. Each month, we will explore a term. This may include the history of the term and its linguistic roots. Or, perhaps we’ll explore the actual definition versus our colloquial understanding, nuanced by such persuasive articles as this one published by Forbes. Then again, maybe we’ll simply print a list of synonyms, reminding ourselves of the exquisite wealth of words available to

us, each and every day.

Language is alive. The creation of new terms is a natural extension of the human experience. Our goal is not to cancel these terms of concern. We seek to highlight their power, and we ask that you see, analyze, and recognize them for what they are, and actively choose whether or not, and how, to use them. Weaponized words, in the mouths and writing of those who are not disciplined in their use, are as dangerous as physical weapons. Maybe more so.

January’s term of concern: conspiracy theory (theorist).

The verb, “to conspire” exists in almost every dictionary known to humankind. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, conspire/conspired/conspiring means: (1) to join in a secret agreement to do an unlawful or wrongful act, or an act that becomes unlawful as a result of the secret agreement; and (2) to act in harmony toward a common end.

In other words, parents conspire to raise their children well, coaches conspire to motivate their players to achieve their best, new start-up businesses conspire to develop market shares and gain the attention of buyers, grocery stores conspire to sell candy by presenting it at the check-out stand, alcohol brands conspire to increase consumer consumption with careful selection placement in Hollywood movies, the military conspires to win wars, and politicians conspire to win elections. We all conspire ... so, what’s the big deal?

Theory/theorist, the second half of this term of concern is another

excellent but oft-misunderstood word. According to vocabulary.com: “Someone who considers given facts and comes up with a possible explanation is called a theorist. Theorists observe various phenomena and use reasoning to come up with practical ideas that must be proven. Theorists come up with abstract ideas and then spend their lives trying to prove them.” This is true in the social sciences and hard sciences. Again, ask yourself, how is this a bad thing?

Answer: It’s not. Unless said theory challenges the goals and desires of people with power.

Millions of Americans have been fascinated by the controversial assertion that there was only one shooter on Friday, November 22nd, 1963. Consider the people who stood on the grassy knoll and heard the second gunshot. What happened to them when they tried to speak up? Today, most Americans laugh at the “single-bullet theory.” But in the 1980s, questioning the single bullet theory could get you into a fist fight, ruin Thanksgiving Dinner, or earn you the label conspiracy theorist.

Almost 60 years ago, a lot of very powerful people wanted that single-bullet theory to be written into the history books. At that time, when public opinion mattered a great deal, alternative ideas were not welcome, but since then, according to Vincent Bugliosi, author of “Reclaiming History: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy,” “...Over 1,000 books [have] been written about the Kennedy assassination, at least ninety percent of which are works supporting the view that there was a conspiracy.”

January 7, '23

And so it goes. Fundamentally, the role of the term conspiracy theorist is simple. When you want to promote your own version of events, label those who offer an alternative explanation as conspiracy theorists. The implication is that they are literally crazy, or as Helen Lee Bouygues suggests, that they’re sad, powerless, and lack critical thinking skills ... so, just ignore them. Don’t look behind the curtain.

“As he looked out and saw the grey landscape through the gently falling snow, he could not help thinking how much better it would be if people could go to sleep like the fields; could be blanketed down under the snow, to wake with their hurts healed and their defeats forgotten.”
- Willa Cather



Pull, Don't Be Pushed

Continued from Page 3

you’ll find RSS lurking all over the internet. Fourty-three percent of web content is powered by WordPress, which automatically provides an RSS feed of its content. Vashonloop.com is a WordPress site! Since popular substack.com also provides RSS, more than half of all blog content on the internet is available via an RSS subscription.

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podcasts – you may need to try an app or two before you find one you like, but there are many. Within the app, search for a name or subject, then click a podcast and listen to some episodes. Whenever you find one with great content, click its “Subscribe” button.

It’s just the podcaster’s recording straight into your headphones by way of your own personal podcatcher. RSS is powering it, but that’s a well-hidden technical detail.

The internet has become increasingly a corporate-centric experience. These corporations serve you “For free,” but the reality is you pay by being measured, monitored, advertised to, and manipulated. To pay the bills, how will they use you next? Sidestep them when you can. RSS makes it possible.

Snowballs and Snowboards

Continued from Page 1

“Vashon schools were closed until further notice.” We cheered, as it was our signal to get the sleds and skis out.

“In the late 40s and early 50s, there were a number of years where significant snow events occurred on the Islands. We youngsters much appreciated these events because we eagerly awaited news of release from school, and looked forward to snow adventures.” John claims, 70-some-odd years later, that he made the first discovery of “snowboarding,” although he grants that the evidence is pretty slim.

John’s parents had a small farm on Bainbridge. The farm had a large, old dairy barn with a giant roof and a metal roofed lean-to off the side. The barn was full of old cars, a military surplus snowcat, and a mostly finished spruce wood glider his dad was making.

The lean-to had been converted into a foundry and machine shop which John’s dad and his uncle Bill had set up to manufacture a model airplane engine, namely ... the Husky 0.45. It was somewhat successful, in that it had a clever piston and port design and was extremely powerful. It had such a high compression ratio that special fuel had to be mixed, making it hard to start, which probably led to it eventually being unpopular.

One day, after a big snowfall, John wandered out to the foundry followed by Fritz, the barn/house cat. The foundry had been running and all was warm inside. As John and Fritz

settled into comfortable warm spots, a giant crash suddenly occurred as the heat caused all the snow to avalanche off the roof and tumble partially down the steep hill next to the barn. At the bottom of the hill was a frozen pond.

John went outside to inspect. He climbed up on the berm and tried sliding down on his butt. Being inside those bulky snowsuits of that era naturally slowed everything down. He looked around and spied a pile of hand-split shakes. Old shakes of first-growth cedar were cut about three feet long, and one looked just right for a makeshift sled.

He took one up to the top of the snow berm and stomped it into the snow to make a flat space to launch; he stood up on the shake to check out the path. And this is when all the rules of physics ... gravity ... dumb luck ... seemed to be temporarily suspended, as the next thing he knew, he was standing upright on the shake and flying downhill! Probably yelling “I’m flying!”

Well, that ended as soon as the shake ran into the tufts of grass down the hill, and John flew face-first directly across the pond, with snow filling every opening in his snowsuit.

The only witness to this event was Fritz the cat, who was totally unimpressed. He merely licked his butt, and turned back to the foundry to wait for slower members of the mouse colony to appear.



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editor@vashonloop.com

New Year's Letter From Our Astrologer

An open letter to my old friends (and new)

From London, Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, Toronto, Vancouver, Melbourne, Sydney, Christchurch, Perth, Miami, Vashon Island, Zaporozhye, Montauk, Kingston-and everywhere in between.

ERIC F. COPPOLINO
DEC 29

Dear Friend and Reader:

Greetings from a beautiful winter day in Kingston, New York. It's your old friend Eric Francis saying hello. A few minutes ago, I finished my 25th annual readings, a project I did the first time the same week I published the first Planet Waves website in 1998.

Is There Time to Be Human?

The theme of my 25th annual, called Inner Space, is preserving your humanity as we enter the next stage of the digital age, described by Pluto in Aquarius.

The feeling I keep getting is that people think they don't have time to be human. Yet something else is going on. We are under the spell of full digital conditions, having one main property: they are not human. And it may seem easier to go with the flow and give up all those annoying inconsistencies and yearnings and curiosity and hunger.

Artificial intelligence has none of those issues, though is by definition not natural. And it is teaching us to be robots faster than we could ever teach it to be human. It is not merging with us. We are merging with it. And I am

profoundly concerned about this, because I'm witnessing what it's doing to us. The fear level is just astonishing. There is a corresponding loss of potential and sense of the possibilities. I dare say, to some people this comes as a relief. There are fewer opportunities to fail.

Humans often seem to have difficulty feeling, though we are now being pushed into a state that could best be described as deep freeze. That is the relationship between us and a server farm in Utah where your memories now seem to live.

The Aries Point

In astrology, the Aries Point is a spot in the chart where the collective intersects with the individual. It's the first degree of the zodiac, where the Sun arrives on the spring equinox. To one side is the vast ocean of humanity (Pisces); to the other is you (represented by Aries, the sign of I Am).

In other times, one could actually spot events that had that signature. Something would stand out, with the feeling, "this makes a difference."

Now it's everything, all the time. Therefore, nothing really matters - except how you feel. Notice the sensation of sitting in a folding chair along the George Washington Bridge with half a cup of coffee. We live moment to moment where we face all the cares and traumas of the world crashing into the kitchen, stalking you in your car, or vibrating your night stand at 3:45 am.

The question is, where are the

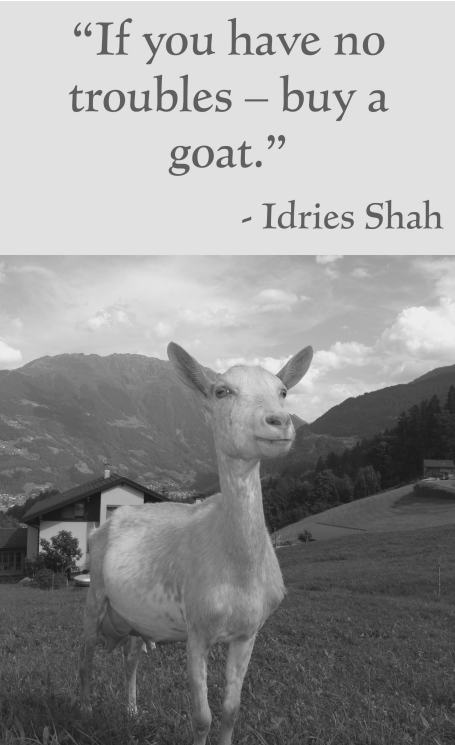
backstreets, the hidden passageways and the quiet spaces? Where is the place you can go to be yourself, or take a moment to remember?

Where in the world is there someone not telling you who you are and what you want?

I often think of Planet Waves as the last art-deco hotel on the Miami Beach strip - the one that didn't sell out to a high-rise developer laundering money. We remain advertising-free. I write all of my own copy, including the same weekly and monthly horoscopes you remember from the turn of the century.

And I'm happy you're still in the neighborhood.

With love,
Eric Coppolino



OLD COOT

Giving free advice ...

It's probably bad advice

But it's free!

The Llaughing Llamas Chronicles

By Daniel Hooker

As we change from the old year into the new year, and as I shed my aging skin, I tend to look at myself in the mirror and laugh now at the different things we are going through as we get older.

Recently, I've been alerted to the fact that we are starting up a new themed restaurant, for seniors only, the name of which is Cooters! Discounts will only be given to SAG members, excluding Dolly Parton.

On another note, Vashon Island is also starting up an online senior dating service called Carbon Dating Dottie Dot Com.

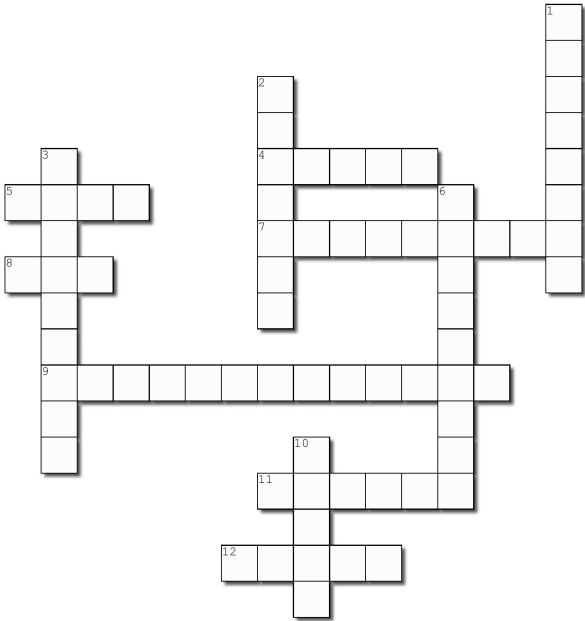
That's all for my senior moments this month. We'll see you in the New Year! May we all have a more enlightened one.

Knight Rider



Beginnings, Goals, a New Me!

Get your New Years Groove on, and visualize a healthy 2023!



- Across**

 - 4. Combine with #5 for an excellent, refreshing tonic.
 - 5. This four letter word is your BEST defense against viruses of all kinds!
 - 7. A substance that increases zinc's capacity for reducing viral replication.
 - 8. These foods are chock full of natural enzymes.
 - 9. With trails like these all over the island, there's no excuse to not walk every day.
 - 11. No matter what, this habit has to stay! Hot & Foamy...
 - 12. One thing most of us get too little of in life.
- Down**

 - 1. Have plump lips and happy skin? You must be well _____.
 - 2. A great way to make your body feel ten years younger.
 - 3. Without this, we're all more vulnerable to infection.
 - 6. Wait. You can't be serious? But, I can't live without _____!
 - 10. Natural sweetener, thanks to the insect and plant world.
- Find Answer Key at vashonloop.com

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Saturday, January 7th, 12- 3 p.m.
This will be the last time to speak with Miguel during open enrollment

- Wednesday: January 18th, 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.



Come To 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



Planet Waves

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



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Aries (March 20-April 19)

Jupiter is back in your sign for a nonstop run that goes through May 16, when Mr. Fat and Happy—the boss of the solar system—enters your money house, Taurus. This is a formula that says “be yourself and you will succeed,” through being self-involved with who you are becoming rather than who you were. What most of the world thinks of as holiday season is a highly productive time in your personal year, and I suggest you keep a balance between having fun with your family or friends, and focusing on your highest professional priorities. Make sure that you conduct yourself with the highest level of integrity, because people will be paying attention to you, and looking to you for ethical leadership. You are blessed with considerable influence right now. What are you going to do with it? What example do you want to set? Think carefully; others will follow.

Taurus (April 19-May 20)

You seem to have several different goals and aspirations right now—which is excellent, because these days it’s difficult to be positive about much of anything. Somewhere in the mix, you may have this idea that you want to bring people together for a purpose other than entertainment or recreation. You are seeking deeper meaning with every cell in your being, and this will be a lot more fun if you are around other people whose values you share. Do what you can to “get out of your head” and actually share your thoughts with people, rather than merely thinking about doing so. In everything you do, the sense of risk is essential. Routine is nice, but what opens up the possibilities and unfolds the future is the sense (and the reality) of taking a chance on someone or something. The seemingly safe option is rarely the fulfilling or even interesting one. In my reading of your chart, that which is a little weird will suit you very nicely.

Gemini (May 20-June 21)

Jupiter’s move into Aries will open up your social possibilities, providing you with the opportunity to repopulate your circle of friends over the next five months. And with the Sun’s move into Capricorn, given the increasingly hostile state of the world, I suggest you collect the friendly people, get to know them and build a little organization. The theme is physical rather than digital presence. People you consider to be in affinity with you are always good to have around. However, if we forget our need to actually be with one another, we are gradually ceasing to be human. Neither our bodies nor our souls are compatible with the robots that are taking over our lives. Gemini is a human sign, and the cosmic joke is that the first time one person shows up in the zodiac, there are two of them together—actually _with_ one another, not emailing or on Zoom. Remember that.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have your relationship and partnership options open at the moment. It may not seem like it, in the midst of our current social ice age, but it’s true. This is about more than romantic opportunities, though those are on the horizon. If you are seeking collaborators of any kind, now is the time to send out the word. Some people already present in your environment

may be open to additional possibilities. Note carefully what people are interested in (based on what they do, and to some extent on what they say), and learn what skills they may have. This is an important moment to have your priorities, your plans and your personal needs as clear as possible in your mind. The universe seems to be offering you human connection, and also some of the help that you’ve been asking for. Pay attention and do your best to form trusting and compassionate bonds with others. Community should begin in your kitchen.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

Keep your focus on professional priorities. It’s important to get time among friends for the holiday season, but make sure you stay three drinks behind the crowd at all times, and think about what you have to do the next day. You will have time to pause and reflect soon enough, though work is calling you—the kind of work that matters. You do need balance in your life, though that’s as much about maintaining your commitment to your wellbeing in the many ways you know how to do that, most of which are personal and do not involve other people, or any of the usual social forms of recreation. You set the example for others, which includes reminding them through your presence that work ethics are an essential part of life, especially now, in our time when things seem to be falling apart. Many people have decided that they don’t care and that nothing matters. You are unlikely to have come to any such conclusion, and there are others with similar feelings who need you as a point of orientation.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

The little kid in you loves this time of year, so do it up. I suggest you get yourself one really nice holiday gift—something you’ve been wanting for a while, which is likely to have some mix of fun and practical use (rather than a luxury item). If you’re buying gifts, weigh your investment toward young people, though what they really want is your love and attention. You are like the aunt or uncle who understands children better than their parents do. In recent years, the so-called adults have sucked up most of the oxygen in the room and the kids have nearly all taken an emotional and social clobbering. Do them a favor and show them that you’re not afraid of the kinds of things society has been obsessed over. Adopt any distressed kid and be their honorary guardian—through the year. Make sure they know how to contact you and that you’re open to hearing from them.

Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

Jupiter has entered your opposite sign, Aries, for which I suggest you raise a glorious Praise the Lord. Resources and helpful people are in your environment. Some of them (at least one in particular) will go the distance with you. Therefore, welcome new people into your life, and do what you can to get to know them (making no assumptions about who they are). You are learning how to be emotionally independent and self-assured in a way that preserves your vulnerability, which means your humanity. Know the symptoms when you or someone else starts to act like a robot. Factor your feelings as well as the “data” into every

decision you make. Study people’s eyes when they speak to you, on any matter whatsoever. That will reveal more than their words ever could.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

You have a lot on your mind. Try not to let it distract you. You can afford to take an optimistic approach (though I know you might not be an expert in this). One by one, various issues that seem to be of the utmost importance will fade into being something you used to be concerned about. The most important issue described by your astrology is about one particular relationship where there seems to be quite a bit at stake. Make plenty of room (mentally, emotionally and in time) to get a sense of where the subject of your concern is really at in life. I don’t think you will be fully grounded in your understanding and your intuitive sense of the relationship until Mars enters Cancer in late March. Until then, you may feel like things could go either way, and it’s important that you leave room for that. The space to breathe will serve you and the situation well.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

Jupiter’s move into Aries is likely to come with the feeling of having a new lease on life. Or more accurately, it’s about emphasizing your bold determination to be who you are, and nobody else. That “who you are” is about what only you can say, do, express or dare to experiment with. If ever there was a time when you could make friends with one simple fact, it is now. And that is you were born to take creative risks, and to lead the way with your curiosity. Everything you do paints your vision into the world; be bold with your ideas. This approach will be your most effective way to stay human in a time when the very concept has been dragged into the trash. Your passion is human, as is your insecurity, your courage, your fear and your unusual perspective as the ultimate visitor to the human realm—in this world but not of it.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

Friday’s gorgeous New Moon in your birth sign is a reminder that you have everything you need. All the basic resources, and the people who might assist, are close to you. And if anything is not there, it’s available with a little effort. It’s critical that you use your energy efficiently, and not waste any on what is unnecessary, or on what you

wanted yesterday or 10 years ago. The New Moon aligns with another factor: Jupiter has arrived in Aries to stay, clear through its move into Taurus in mid-May. Take advantage of the potential, the optimism and the substance of Jupiter, which you can draw like energy from a power source. To do this, the first place to reach for what you need—whether material, spiritual or intellectual—is within yourself. You have it all.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

If you have been short of ideas, Jupiter in Aries suggests they will be present in abundance. However, it will help if you focus on a problem, puzzle, or need and then seek the answer. Work with specifics rather than with generalities. I know that Jupiter is the master of all that is broad and general, but it’s making its way toward Chiron, which is about refinement and documentation. You may find yourself in a situation where you were looking right at the answer or the solution and didn’t know it. That is often the case. Ideas exist in profusion, but focusing them and then applying them specifically to your situation can take some time and some skill. So take your time, and while you’re busy keeping your focus, remember to allow your mind to drift at times, since the best information and ideas come from your intuition.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Jupiter has departed your sign and entered Aries, which is the start of a new cycle for you. It’s true that these happen in a diversity of styles (such as the Capricorn New Moon now underway). Jupiter in your own sign on and off through 2022 has left you with a sense of your potential, and has filled in more cracks than you may imagine. Whatever stresses you were under, or cracks you were filling in, you fared much better thanks to Jupiter’s presence. The Aries stage of the journey, which lasts through May, is about gathering your resources, and also, recognizing what they are. You might conduct an inventory of your abilities, your natural talents and your tools of the trade. I would remind you that the most important thing you have is yourself. Most people do not know this. We are taught over and over again to seek nearly anything and everything outside ourselves. Now is an excellent time to turn that around.

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