

Celebration Begins Is it Snow?



“Snow” (the streaking bits in the photo), courtesy of a handheld snow maker by Island Queen. This photo was taken during this year's WinterFest, just as the tree was lit. But the real news is that the evening and festivities felt **normal**, as if the last three years hadn't happened. Many, many kids were out and about on the closed-off streets, and adults without kids as well. A merry time was had by all.

Holiday Shopping, Vashon-Style!

By March Twisdale

Some tend to wax negative about shopping during the holiday season, expressing concerns over thoughtless consumption of resources or over-commercialization. In truth, there's nothing wrong with shopping. We do it all year round, and for good reason. It's human productivity expressed and shared. And during the winter, traditions focused on love, kindness, light, music, good food, and joy are often vital for those who find the bitterly cold months challenging.

So, yes! Let yourself enjoy the “gift-giving season!” Here on Vashon, we're not fighting the crowds at a mall, nor are we standing in long lines, surrounded by strangers. When we decide to amble through our beloved town, we're browsing unique and sense-stimulating items that have been carefully selected by local business owners who excel at knowing our tastes – and surprising us!

Eugenie Mirfin, the owner of Kronos, looks forward to the special moments that fill her store throughout the holiday season. She especially enjoys watching Islanders run into friends they haven't seen in awhile, fathers bringing their daughters in to help pick out a gift for Mom, grandparents searching for the perfect stocking stuffer, and holiday tourists she's come to know by name, as they make December shopping trips to Vashon Island a family tradition. While wrapping my own early-purchased Christmas gifts, Eugenie pointed out that gifts purchased at Kronos (like many other Island stores) are super-easy to exchange later, if the size isn't quite right or a different color is preferred, with no dreaded long lines at the mall or post office! “Even if you think you know what you're looking for,” she added, “wandering through well-stocked and

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The Vashon Health Care District Hasn't Talked to Us in a While

By Caitlin Rothermel

The Vashon Health Care District hasn't talked to us in a while, and people have definitely been asking questions. But that ended this November when they met to present and pass their 2024 budget. It's important to talk about the VHCD now because their proposed plans substantially change their original mandate, with the potential for substantial additional costs in the future.

There has been limited recent coverage of VHCD activities by VHCD itself or other local venues, but the VHCD consistently meets twice a month (you can attend via Zoom), and their meeting minutes are available on their web page (<https://vashonhealthcare.org>), so anyone can keep up on their work.

First, some historical and technical details. The VHCD is our local public hospital district, one of 56 in Washington state. As defined by the Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts, “Public Hospital Districts are community-created, governmental entities authorized by state law to deliver health services – including but not limited to acute hospital care – to district residents and others in the districts' service areas. Owned and governed by local citizens, hospital districts tailor their services to meet the unique needs of their communities.”

Even though the VHCD is technically a “hospital district,” the VHCD's name does not include the

word “hospital.” This is because we do not have a hospital on Vashon, and do not intend to. The mission of the VHCD is “to promote and maintain the health of the residents of Vashon and Maury Islands by supporting accessible quality health care through community partnerships, shared decision-making, transparency, and responsible stewardship of resources.”

The VHCD was established in 2019 to address a clear problem. A series of clinics had opened at the Sunrise Ridge site and then left, citing financial strain. Therefore, the VHCD exists to ensure that the Vashon clinic consistently has the funding needed to stay in operation. Voted on and approved in November 2019 by a large majority of Islanders, the VHCD is managed by a five-member board of elected commissioners and a part-time, paid supervisor. Its other expenses have been basic, including rent for an office space and modest technology and administration costs.

The VHCD is funded by a property tax levy, initially set at \$0.58 per \$1,000 of assessed value, and calculated to provide \$1.95 million in yearly funding. The actual homeowner cost per \$1,000 varies year-by-year, based on property tax values. The VHCD can lower the levy rate or set it as high as \$0.75 per \$1,000 in value, but has no current plans to do so. If the VHCD ever wanted to raise the levy above \$0.75 per \$1,000, Vashon would need to hold a vote to approve this (similar to the recent levy lift voted on for



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Starting at the Top



and Working Our Way Down

By Seán Malone and John Sweetman

Dig faster! There's a big roller coming in!”

A roller was the result of a log tow in transit to Tacoma or the Bainbridge mill. They moved slow, but had an almost tsunami-like roll that could result in a one-foot wave.

“We got some good ones!” As a ledge of the favorite little-neck manillas was revealed.

Seven year-old hands scooped and gathered through the muck, the best ones from the clam ledge were thrown into our bucket ... and then ... “We got some big ones!”

The big ones were horse clams ... lower down and less sought after, but we were after the goal of clam

Vashon Island Fire & Rescue). Otherwise, the levy, with the general rules described above, remains in place.

2020-2022: COVID-19 and clinic clashes

Voter approval of the VHCD did not mean immediate access to funding. In Spring 2000, the VHCD took out a loan with King County to reimburse Neighborcare's outstanding deficits, and an agreement was put in place to subsidize clinic operations going forward.

Then, everything changed again. In May 2020, Neighborcare

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Love Letter to the Island

Dear Local Farmers

By Emilia Flor

Dear Local Farmers:

You are heroes! I think you are extraordinary. We love farmers, gardeners, seed-savers, and soil-makers.

I would like to take this opportunity to express how much I value YOU, local growers. I commend you as those whom we rely on to make sure we have local seasonal food to eat. I feel an intense pride thinking about our earth stewarding community.

All gardeners, harvesters, wild foragers, and food producers, I have a sweet spot in my heart for you. I can relate, as growing my own food on a small scale is rewarding and allows direct connection with the land and water. I love growing my own food because it gives me purpose on this planet. It is easy to feel lost in the modern age, and growing food is something that, no matter how far it pushes me over the edge, is still grounding.

The story of humanity starts on a farm. It might have been called the Garden of Eden, but when you look at what Adam and Eve were given to do, they were farmers. We cannot accurately understand the history of our world unless we understand the history of agriculture. Civilizations have risen and fallen based on agriculture. Our farmers, you are the most important part of our society. Three times a day, our Island depends

on you to thrive. You put in long hours and hard labor to grow real food, fresh as it gets, grown in our community by folks we actually know and appreciate. I thank you for the healthful, delicious eating in harmony with the seasons. And how it supports families. A local economy. The greater good.

I commend the values you embody. These are the values that bind the fabric of society together. Faith, sense of family, and understanding of community. When I look around our community, I see farm families serving on boards and in leadership positions, and it gives me hope that common sense will prevail. Let us not forget your work ethic. I have engaged many youth in various events and you can always spot a farm kid; they work smarter, harder, and stay longer.

Our country was founded by farmers. The Native Americans who lived here long before the Europeans arrived were agriculturalists and pastoralists who understood the soil, the weather, and crops. When the Pilgrims arrived, they first put seeds in the ground.

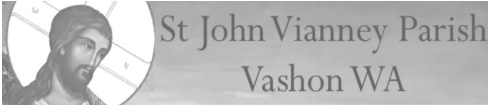
If you've ever been to George Washington's farm at Mount Vernon, you understand our first President was first a farmer, then a soldier, then a politician. Thomas Jefferson said, "Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute more to real wealth, good morals, and

happiness." What did Lewis and Clark bring back that Jefferson liked the most? Seeds. He was fascinated with various plants and crops that were grown out west.

Every child in America would be served by integrating agriculture into every subject they're taught. Maslow's hierarchy of need places food as the most important part of our sustenance, so it only makes sense that we know how to grow our own. Agriculture studies could be a primary part of every college's general education credits like math, English, humanities, and science.

Farmers, I hope you know the affection for you from this community runs deep. As Vashonians, we love all things that grow. Because so much of who we are, how we celebrate, mourn, create, and connect with each other culturally revolves around food, we treasure opportunities to share a meal and drink. You are more than local farmers, growers, producers, you are our neighbors, friends, and family. You are our history and heritage. You are us.

Thank you for producing your best work.



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Vashon-Maury Clothing Drive



Where: Vashon Food Bank

When: Wednesdays, 10AM-2PM
(except the first Wednesday of the month)

Needed: clean clothing, shoes, rain gear, warm jackets for all ages; bedding/sleeping bags, tents, camping stoves, heaters (electric or emergency camping heaters also welcome)

Contact: Daniel Hooker, (707) 771-1999, to discuss contributions, 7 days a week, 9am - 5pm.

Thank you for your support and generosity in keeping Vashon-Maury Island a caring community and village.

Dear Vashon,
We are heading into Winter.
Donations of sleeping bags and blankets are urgently needed (See ad above).

Thank you!

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The Vashon Loop

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Christmas with Keltoi!

Keltoi, Seattle's premier Celtic band, returns to Vashon for a concert of Scottish and Irish melodies to warm your heart and get your toes tappin! Richard Hill, scholar of Scots Gaelic music and culture, is the main vocalist of the ensemble with David Rivers on guitar, Brandon Vance, fiddle, Bill Woods on bodhran, and Cameron St. Louis playing pipes and singing as well. It's been a while since we've had the pleasure of hosting this great band and we are chuffed to have them back! So come join us for an evening of good cheer and great music!

Saturday, December 9th at 8pm

\$15 Suggested donation

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... Replace

By Michael Shook

When I hear the word “replace,” I usually think of it in the sense of something or someone being gotten rid of. As in, “Let’s replace that old vacuum cleaner,” or “Bill, we’re sorry, but we’re going to replace you with a robot.” But the first definition in my dictionary is, “To restore to a former place or position.” It’s possible, then, that having been displaced, one can be replaced – placed again. And even better, restored.

I have, in my career as a carpenter, restored many old homes. When finished, they were the same houses, but better, restored to former glory, with modern updates. There’s a pleasant symmetry to that, and obviously a more palatable end than being left on the junk heap or tossed aside for a machine.

The older residents, the Swiftwater First People, were, of course, displaced violently and suddenly, with devastating consequences for both themselves and their descendants. But they hung on, humans being wonderfully adept at survival. And now, they, along with tribes across the continent, are resurgent. Emphasizing their traditions, cherishing and transmitting their cultures, and (perhaps most crucial after culture) educating their people in the ways of capitalism. They are on a roll.

The First People are using their relatively new political and economic power to proactively replace themselves, restoring themselves to a former position – regaining their

pride and self-respect, making themselves a flourishing people again, albeit different from what they were. They drive autos, fish from fossil-fueled power boats, manage casinos, sell tobacco tax-free, run a brisk trade in illegal fireworks (would they did not!), and with the proceeds from these and other endeavors, help their people restore themselves personally, while funding schools for their kids to learn environmental science derived from the Western Enlightenment in concert with their traditional ways of knowledge.

I like the term “First People” because I think it speaks more clearly to who the Indians were, and are – they were the first humans (that we know of) to live here. Indigenous is often used, but factually, I am as indigenous as anyone, “having originated in, living, or occurring naturally in a particular region...” I originated in this region, and as far as I know, it was a natural occurrence, since my parents ... well, you know.

I also like “First People” because it implicitly acknowledges that others will follow. If there is a First, then a door is open for a Second, and a Third, and so on. Most of us fit in one of those categories, though perhaps Sixth, Seventh, or Eighth, etc.

Wherever I am in that, I am, however, still stuck with figuring out how to replace myself, since I have such a strong feeling of being displaced (granted, not pervasively, not all the time, but it is there).

Perhaps a way forward is to strive instead for reintegration, that is, “To integrate again into an entity: restore to unity.” (There’s that restoration again.)

Unity. That much has not changed. The feel of the countryside; the smell of dirt; the texture of furrowed bark on a Douglas fir; the smoothness of young madrona bark; the taste of huckleberries and salal fruit; the smell after the first rain of fall; the cold, viscous sense of the Sound that contrasts with the leaping glacial cold of the White and Carbon rivers; and the soothing, friendly coolness of the Green River. All of this and more, I am still with, unified, it is still with me, in me, as I breathe out and breathe in the oxygen from the forests.

Yes, I barely recognize the countryside I once knew. But, if I see clearly at all, I also barely recognize myself. Or rather, the myriad old selves that lie in my past, that were and are known to me, and are still a vital part of me, that appear as ancestors – some sober, others antic, most of them taking themselves far too seriously. People who helped me along the way, who were indispensable to my being who I am now, but who are now like old portraits, sepia-toned, folded, faded, or torn, endearing and enduring, but (thankfully) no longer so actively a part of my life.

And yes, favorite haunts have disappeared, and all around, both

immigrants and current residents carve out new housing developments from farmland and forest, expanding towns and cities, shops and schools. Barring the big earthquake, the Puget Sound basin is only going to get more crowded, and the existing infrastructure will only grow more expansive (and expensive). To the north, pressure for development is exerted ever more powerfully on Snohomish farmland, and to the south and west, the same on Thurston and Kitsap counties’ rurality, respectively. To the east, Wenatchee, Cle Elum, Yakima, Ellensburg, and beyond, clear to the Tri-Cities, the growth is unabated.

We humans are just going to keep inundating the land. And yes, again, I lament this along with others. But, mother of all paradox, nearly every friend I have made in the last 45 or 50 years has been someone who is “new” to the state, including the women I’ve married. Quite simply, my life would be awfully, sadly diminished if any of these people had not been, and were not now, a part of it. (The buildings, the roadways ... not so much.)

What’s done is done. My lamentation, my sorrow over what was and will not be again is real, and deeply felt. But I am still here, replaced, re-integrated, more lively than I’ve ever been, more grateful than I thought possible for this gift of life, however and whatever direction it goes. We’ll all be displaced and replaced someday, because we all die. And that ... is as it should be ...? I am not the one to say. Better perhaps to say that is how it is. And that is more than enough. Shalom.

A Simple Conversation

By All Ears Vashon

“Hey, I’ve got an idea.”
“What’s that?”
“Build a giant something down at Point Robinson.”
“Why?”
“It will attract many people to the Island.”
“Oh, that makes sense. So many ferry runs are almost empty. It would be nice to fill them up. But how would they get to the park?”
“Public transit.”
“There is no public transit to Point Robinson.”
“Oh, you’re right. So, by cars.”
“And by trucks and by motorcycles?”
“Yes, and even by motor scooters and by e-bikes.”
“Wouldn’t that add a lot of traffic, which can be noisy and even dangerous?”
“Sure, but almost nobody lives on that road, so it’ll be okay.”
“That road isn’t in the greatest shape. A few of the dips could just about swallow a compact car.”
“We’ll get the county to fix it up.”
“Okay, but wouldn’t all that traffic add to pollution emissions?”
“I suppose so. We could look into buying carbon offsets.”
“What about all the tire particles that can wash off the roads into the waterways and poison the fish?”
“Have you not been paying attention? There are almost no fish

now, anyway.”
“So, it wouldn’t require an environmental impact statement?”
“Nah, that’s for big projects. Little environmental hits like this aren’t important.”
“Brilliant ... sort of like guilt-free ice cream when you’re on a diet.”
“Yes, and another bonus is all the extra money that will flow into local businesses, which will allow them to hire all the unemployed.”
“And those workers could fill up all the unused low-cost housing that is going wasted.”
“I think you’re beginning to see the big picture.”
“So, what would this thing be?”
“Imagine a big imposing king sitting on a throne.”
“I’m not sure how that would go over with the public. Wasn’t our country founded by overthrowing a king?”
“Sure, but that was a long time ago, and no one knows any history now. Besides, there is a big trend toward autocratic rulers ... it’s all the rage.”
“You’ve got a point there.”
“And he’ll be pointing too.”
“Pointing where?”
“To all of his subjects who make the pilgrimage.”
“Since this is a public park, we should probably send out notices about the project and its location.”
“No, no, no. This king wants a cloud of secrecy. We don’t want to let

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Countries around the globe are banning the use of agricultural chemicals, petroleum-based fertilizers, and GMOs. Yet, to this day, the U.S. continues to be one of the biggest consumers and users of these horrific chemicals. Around the globe, other countries are not only banning these chemicals and genetic modifications, but they are also preventing the import of these contaminated products.

If other countries won't allow these things across their borders, what are we missing? We invite you to seek your own answers. Try the documentary film, "Children of the Vine." Watch, read, or listen to recognized experts like Dr. Zach Bush or MIT Senior Researcher, Stephanie Seneff Ph.D.

It's past time to advocate for yourself and your family ...

the cat out of the bag.”
“Okay, but do you really think people will be interested in this thing?”
“Trust me. Build it and they will come.”



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Let There Be Light!

Entering the Workforce – Part 2

By Mickey Fontaine

This article continues the topic of young adults entering our work force. See vashonloop.com for Part 1.

We next talked with John, who highlighted the huge amount of pressure that we put on students to decide their career path:

“The system isn’t tailored well to people with doubts. Right as you become financially independent, you are expected to basically gamble on your future. For many, that decision is just a leap of faith.”

It’s a question that our culture rarely asks – what if you end up hating your career? You’re thrust into independence and expected to pick a hill to die on with limited life experience. John initially got a liberal arts education from a small university with a focus on conversation and critical thinking, but changed his course afterwards to get a nursing degree, saying:

“I just couldn’t figure out what I wanted to do with my life, so I was trying it out.”

He described his experience with liberal arts positively, saying that it taught him how to live and think. This was in contrast to his later, more traditional education, which he said was of little value in his life.

“I just found myself sitting in this big lecture hall with no idea what I was doing or what I wanted. I had made this decision out of necessity, and I was aware of it. That made it very scary, knowing that I couldn’t

change my mind.”

Tuition costs turn this decision into a gamble where the stakes are your future. Debt makes it almost impossible to change the course of your tuition without jeopardizing your financial stability. John experienced indecision about his career path and faced costly consequences. He described his experience with debt in this way:

“You can’t make big changes in your life or explore anything new because you have tens of thousands of dollars holding onto you. If you realize you hate what you are doing, your options are to either take out even more money or just quit. You want to change your mind? You’ve got 80,000 reasons not to, plus interest.”

Emmanuel was able to broaden his horizons with the help of student aid, but heaps of financial aid will not solve everything wrong with our colleges; there are many other problems that go unrecognized. John experienced these, and was forced to pay the price.

To find the solutions, we need to look beyond the average education.

Nick pursued a very alternative path, opting for programs built around self-directed learning and interdisciplinary teaching. He thrived in cooperative spaces with small class sizes and close teacher-student relationships. He described his ecopsychology studies at Evergreen WA positively, saying,

“There was a lot of collaboration between teachers and students. We would learn from one another; we were equal.”

Nick felt that traditional colleges don’t value students’ lived experiences and lacked the meaningful, cooperative interactions he found in his education:

“I wonder what the world would be like if student’s perspectives were valued by their teachers more? We are learning every day, and that passive knowledge of how to live and think shouldn’t be ignored.”

College should not be a four-year career course, it should be a time to find what path is best for you. Our institutions need to recognize this and create opportunities for students to learn foundational skills of critical thinking, motivation, and empathy.

When you push students to what pays best, they will see less intellectual diversity, and their perspectives will be narrowed. “We need to make opportunities for different worldviews to interact and recognize the interdisciplinary nature of education.”

Nick applied this to his own education, saying, “I learned through conversation and cooperation, so there was a lot of intersection between ideas. Everyone’s voice was valued, which was very liberating.”

Although Nick’s education was very untraditional, it proved useful in his later life, and let him follow the road that was right for him. He works to educate youth on essential naturalist skills, ecological awareness, and community interaction.

Our culture puts a huge amount of pressure on youth to pursue high-paying, technical jobs, even if it’s not in their best interest. High tuition costs and loan debt prevent them from changing their minds, effectively trapping them in their career.

There’s nothing wrong with pursuing a high-paying career, but that life isn’t for everyone, and trying to force it won’t change that. We need to put the well-being of students first; they are not just statistics or economic variables, they are our future. Trying to shape the next generation into what makes the most money will only leave people tied to unsatisfactory jobs by social expectations and unlivable debt.

We need to enable exploration and personal growth in our colleges by emphasizing general education and genuine interaction. This can be done by creating diverse, conversational spaces where students are encouraged to share their perspectives. We need to leave students breathing room to change their course, by incorporating flexible educational programs, and administering financial aid. Most importantly, we need to give students a voice and recognize the value in their experiences.

News You May Have Missed

Articles from Around the World
vashonloop.com/missed

Legends of Vashon Swimming the Colvos

As recounted to Tripper Harrison

I’ll just dive right in here because that’s what I do. Mom always said to never go swimming for at least two hours after you eat, or you could seize up and drown. I generally tried to stick by her advice, but she never said anything about liquids doing the same. Downing a couple beers right before crossing the Colvos on a bet was a bad idea.

No matter if it’s summer or fall, that first plunge into the Sound is always a shock, and I was used to that from going into Quartermaster and Dockton. By high school, I might not have been the best swimmer or athlete, but I was in good shape and completely confident of being able to swim across the harbors. Or to Tacoma if I damned well felt like it. So to me, the bet was as good as won.

But this time, not long after wading in from Anderson Point, I started to feel a little off, and by the time I looked back, the beach was already about a quarter-mile away. The problem was my legs had pretty much stopped working. It was all I could do to not start heading back, but it was too far to make in a panic. Anyway, I’d rather die and be remembered as a fool, not a quitter. On top of reputation, there was 100 dollars on the line; real money at the time.

This was before the era of sticking your nose into a cell phone or playing all night on Xbox, and 100 bucks would still go a long way to getting

into a car. We were out partying after the Gig Harbor football game when things got to things and the subject of animals – bears, cougars, raccoons – swimming over to Vashon from the peninsula came up. A group of rich kids said we didn’t know what we were talking about; I said it was a fact and if I could do it, so could a bear and vice versa. The challenge was given, I responded, and we shook on it for Sunday.

We drove up the 16 and turned right towards the point down past the Ormann’s old place, where the Swedes of my families’ line settled. Team members were waiting across the way down at the Cove. This was the first or second week of October, just after 2:00 P.M., sunny with a little breeze, but no waves to worry about.

There was maybe a mile still left to go, so I stopped thrashing and rolled over onto my back to just focus on floating and to make some



On Hanukkah, the first dark night, light yourself a candle bright. I'll you, if you will me invite, to dance within that gentle light.

~ Nicholas Gordon

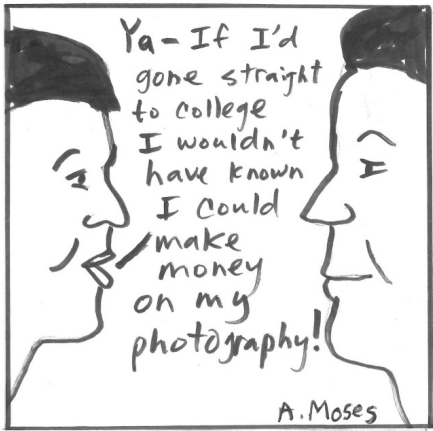
forward progress. Doing the backstroke means you can’t look around for boats, but my arms were doing OK and there was no chance of missing Vashon as long as I kept the current on my south side and the mountains at my feet.

After 15 or 20 minutes and 10 gulps of the Puget Sound, my legs came back. I rolled over onto my stomach and kicked into my freestyle. The old Island started getting closer, and for the first time from almost the get-go, I was sure about making it. What I wasn’t sure about was making the rendezvous at the Cove; the tide was pulling a lot stronger than it looked.

In fact, it pulled me right past Cove, where they were whooping and

waving. I motioned to mean that I’d be further up the beach, so they left. I caught shore and crawled up on a sandy spit near Shinglemill and recharged a bit before trying to walk, so it worked out by the time they got there. The Gig Harbor boys paid up, and with that plus some savings, I was able to buy my first car, a 1972 Mustang Boss 302 fastback.

That led to bragging rights, then to other bets, and to the service. I often think of that moment when things weren’t looking good and could have gone either way. Listen to your mothers and don’t eat or drink anything before swimming across open water. It would be best to have a boat right next to you, and if you take a bet these days to cross the Colvos, I wouldn’t do it for less than \$500.



The Accusatory Fog

By Gene Kuhns

We must be courageous enough, curious enough, and intellectually honest enough to break the chain of Accusatory Fog.

What does this mean? There surrounds each one of us a fog of accusations, partial truths, or outright lies about many things, organizations, places, items, and people. Whether it started as gossip, because of an argument, a misunderstanding, completion, or a heightened desire to see them/it fail, there are things you have heard about people, entities, etc., that are simply exaggerations, half-truths, or perhaps lies altogether.

Some of these accusations have been passed on from generation to generation, parents and grandparents to children, or friend to friend, without one person having the fortitude to find out what the truth really is and break the chain of lies and accusatory fog.

Think of media today, and especially social media. We are constantly bombarded by the “spin” someone else wishes to project and the belief they want us to have about a person, place, or thing. We need to be courageous enough, curious enough, and intellectually honest enough to explore where the truth really is and stand independent of what anyone else says, learning and knowing for ourselves.

Think about Seattle. Most of the country and world thinks Seattle is wet and rains here every day of the year. With this exaggerated truth, only a relative handful realize that there is almost no better place on earth from June to September, and also miss out on everything else good in the Pacific Northwest ... not to mention the cool mushrooming and gardening opportunities that exist because of the rain ... just because of the “Accusatory Fog” surrounding Seattle.

Think about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Just mentioning it may, for some,

bring up thoughts and deep emotions of ill-feelings towards this organization. Honest question: Are these thoughts and feelings based on truth that you have been courageous enough to learn for yourself, or is it because of things others (parents, friends, priests/pastors, the media, etc.) have said ... i.e., the Accusatory Fog?

Were the things you were told, even by sincere, well-meaning people, true? Words and thoughts like: Those Mormons – they are a cult – Polygamy – they added to the Bible – have a different Jesus – Joe Smith – salvation by works – take from the poor. All these things point to different aspects of the Accusatory Fog of lies, half-truths, or exaggerations that surround this organization.

Each of these items, when courageously studied, can be broken apart and the lies, half-truths, exaggerations, and actual truths exposed for one to determine the validity of and where the truth actually is.

Briefly, I’ll take one: Polygamy. The Accusatory Fog would tell one that it was a sexualized orgy cult ... that simply is not true. Did you know there was an extermination order signed by Governor Boggs of Missouri? We call it genocide today. Basically, if the members of the church did not leave the state, they would be killed by the state militia ... and some were (The Hawn’s Mill Massacre of 1838).

How can a people survive while they are being hunted? How can women and children survive in those days of sustenance farming? God revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that, for a time, worthy men should take more than one wife. Initially, it was very few who obeyed the revelation. It became public in 1852, and in actuality, only 20-30% of families were involved.

Polygamy was stopped in 1890 as Utah was getting ready to become a part of the United States. Literal survival of the people is only one reason why God instituted polygamy during the restoration. Another reason is increased faith: If God commands one to do something difficult, and one obeys, it builds one’s faith and shows to God

that one will be obedient in most all things.

Today, a practicing polygamist would be excommunicated. That is the truth.

Time and space do not allow me to explore all of these items in this article, but perhaps I’ll have the opportunity to go through each one in more detail in the future. For now, please just realize that the Accusatory Fog is real. By being open and honest with yourself about what you have been told or taught, you may find that it may not be true ...

To find the truth of something or someone out for ourselves is a wonderful, fulfilling experience.

Peace to you all during this Holiday Season. Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah and merry/happy whatever you may celebrate this time of year. Peace.

Legs, Part 2

Continued from Page 4

pay it forward to those who now need what I once needed. Compassion is the hallmark of community.

You can choose what kind of community surrounds you. Do they encourage health or toxicity? Vision or familiarity? Hope or stasis?

Moving forward with hope feels so good, so life-giving. Within weeks, months, I will be standing and walking unassisted by devices. My communities of hope, however, will remain forever.

Vashon! Do you have a great story that you want to share with The Loop? We want to hear from you!



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Starting at the Top and Working Our Way Down

Continued from Front Page

chowder, and even the horse clams, chopped and peeled of the neck skin, turned out just fine and added a certain “toothiness” to the result.

The clam hole collapsed as the roller wave collapsed, and only caused minor dirty renderings of our nearly unclothed selves.

Picking up the clam buckets topped full, we strode up, muddy and disheveled, to present our results to the adults for the ultimate reward ... clam chowder!

We did not know it at the time, but we actually had the start of what we later learned was a “career!” We started at “the top,” and just worked our way down, but with the most immediate and great results being clam chowder.

Clam chowder was made with things that we had on hand. Sadly, as we later graduated from colleges with supposedly great educations and other honors, we learned that we had to “start at the bottom” and work our way up. Well, such is life, filled with untaken opportunity, but we still dig clams, and clam chowder is still one of our best delights

Clam chowder brought out the best of living on the beach. Home-raised potatoes, cream, and especially butter. Other items were added as available, but the best was “bacon ends.” Farm-raised pigs were turned into bacon and sausage, but the trimmed ends were specially saved for chowder. There was always a

debate as to how much flour (or not) would be added. Seán later made a singularly brilliant discovery that remained unknown until this publication!

From Seán: I was newly married and living at our homestead at Portage when I discovered a relationship between Bach on electric guitar and the clams at low tide.

Little-neck or butter clams are my choice for steaming. They live in families or groups, as seen by their squirting. The clams squirt at low tide to rid their little stomachs of sand that they pick up processing salt water for food.

I opened the doors and windows of our cabin and turned the volume up as high as it would go. “Ode to Joy” boomed out, as the sound vibrations of Bach cascaded onto the sand, causing the clams to squirt in time with the music, a most interesting phenomenon to behold.

Clamming was a part of our lives, growing up in Vashon. The Vashon Sportsmen’s Club held a contest at the start of each summer to determine a world-champion clam digger. Our Grandfather, Papa Jim, won the trophy so many times that the Club gave him the cup describing his achievements. He never used a shovel and worked near the top of the beach instead of near the water’s edge. His tool was a long-tonged hand cultivator with which he attacked the gravel, raking the clams out. The

clam-digging contest was always held on Tramp Harbor in front of the Portage store.

One day, we heard yelling coming from far down the beach toward Des Moines. Grandma Ada was yelling in Danish, her native language, and we couldn’t understand her, except that she was yelling for help. Grandma Ada had a hold of the neck of a geoduck and wouldn’t let go. Geoducks are the largest of our clams, and can be 75 years old. Their necks can be three or four feet long. The foot at the other end of their body is used for digging, and they can disappear into the sand at a fast rate. The hole was filling with water fast, while we dug like crazy to rescue Grandma Ada’s huge clam.

This discovery of “symphonic” clams could have been the start of a lucrative career for Seán, but sadly his family devoured the evidence, and taking the advice of our local clam King, Ivar, Seán has “kept clam” about this discovery for 65 years. Now you know!



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Holiday Shopping, Vashon-Style!

Continued from Front Page

lovingly curated gift shops can lead to unexpected inspiration!”

Vashon Islanders deeply appreciate community businesses’ role in building up the local economy. Deja Starr, of Vashon Bikes, summed it up as, “Use it or lose it.” In her words, “Locally owned and operated businesses are uniquely important in that they use their expert knowledge to curate services and products that appeal to their specific community. When people purchase something through a small business, they are telling that business (and their distributors) that they are necessary. This ensures stronger margins for business owners, lower future costs to customers, and long-term business sustainability. The more we collectively choose to support brick and mortar businesses instead of purchasing online, the more services we secure for our community. That is how a community not only survives, but thrives.”

“But, wait! What if they don’t stock what I want?” Not a problem!

Vashon Bikes, Ace Hardware, Thriftway, Minglement, Pandora’s, and a plethora of other stores on the Island place weekly orders from huge warehouses. If you want it, they can probably get it, and are happy to do so! Consider our Island’s much beloved Vashon Bookshop. With orders placed 3-4 times a week, it’s easy to receive books in time for the holidays. They can even ship directly

Island Resilience



to your home or the intended recipient’s home. Drop by between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (except Tuesdays) or call 206-463-2616 for answers to all of your questions.

Curation, curation, curation. Not every business will thrive in every location. The owner of Giraffe, Priscilla Schleigh, is an excellent example of careful, community-oriented curation. She knows Islanders are generous by nature, conscientious about their impact on the environment, and love to make every carefully spent dollar count. Gifts purchased for our loved ones at Giraffe are also gifts given to myriad communities around the world. Drop by to see a world’s worth of imported, handmade items, knowing the profit goes straight to the artists and small business owners. Imagine the good you can do while stuffing stockings and spreading holiday cheer to the ones you love here at home.

And ... let’s keep our Island money on our Island. Online shoppers are forced to pay with plastic, automatically racking up fees and other “Bank Taxes,” making December the biggest “resource extraction” month of the year. Are we okay with this? No. Which is why many Islanders are now cultivating a “cash habit,” according to local business owners and banks. Go Vashon!

This month, stop by your favorite ATM machine, grab some cash, and enjoy the town! Meet friends for

lunch, sip on a hot seasonal drink, or munch a crunchy, chewy, sweet, or savory pastry as you window shop and meander. Know that, as you find just the right gift to express your love and appreciation for the intended recipient, you’re also spreading joy and economic prosperity to your community, one local purchase at a time.

One last thought. During most of my life, buying gifts was hard. So, I made gifts. In my 20s, I gave cookies and mailed Christmas Cards. This year, I’m knitting two scarves out of island-woven yarn and the stockings will be mostly filled with nuts in their shell and citrus fruits. The point is to take time to appreciate those we love, and a handmade gift is always as good as one bought at a store.

December Events at Vashon Theatre!

A Holiday Concert for Vashon, with the Portage-Fill Harmonic

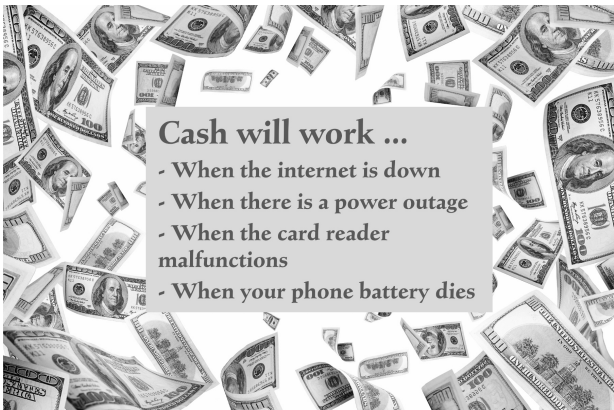
Sunday, December 10th at 7PM, suggested donation \$10, to support The Interfaith Council to Prevent Homelessness

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Sunday, December 17th at 1PM, free!

Community Sing-A-Long

Tuesday, December 19th, free, all ages, family-friendly!
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Holiday Cheer at The Roasterie



Illustration by Jane Valencia



Island Epicure – Chicken Soup Season

By Marjorie Watkins with Suzanna Leigh

Winter winds mean it’s chicken soup season! For soup stock, you can use canned chicken broth or chicken broth cubes and water, or you can make your own broth with chicken bones. My grandmother Fanny taught me how to make the bone broth.

Fanny and Albert, my grandfather, came to Oregon from Kansas. Their first house in Kansas was a sod house, and their first four children were born there. They hung sheets up for walls. Eventually, they built a wooden house. My dad was their first child to be born in a wooden house. My grandmother said the sod house was warmer, but they didn’t have to keep killing the rattlesnakes that nestled behind the sheets.

One year there was a terrible hail deluge, and the big hail stones ruined their wheat crop. Grandfather’s sister Ada had already moved to Oregon and she kept saying, “Come to Oregon, it’s much better than Kansas.” Fanny and Albert proclaimed an auction and sold everything they had. That made enough money to move to Oregon by train. My grandfather worked at a brick factory to get money down on an 80-acre farm. The house on the farm was not livable; it was full of insects, so they lived in the barn while they built the wooden house.

I was born in that house. On a very hot day in July, Fanny helped to deliver the new baby and it was a girl.

It was me. My dad was so angry because he was determined his first child would be a boy and he would name it after himself. Instead, it was a scrawny red thing, and it was a girl!

I loved my grandmother very much and wanted to be a really good cook like her. I learned to make bone broth from her, as well as how to cook shelled peas.

Chicken Bone Broth

Save the bones when you have chicken, until you have a pot full. (Steve, who is doing most of the cooking these days, says to take the chicken off the bones when it is raw for better flavor. Suzanna uses bones from cooked chicken.)

Add a tablespoon of vinegar and a teaspoon or two of salt. (Optional: add vegetable peelings or chopped carrots and celery. Add a chicken boullion cube for extra flavor.)

Bring to a boil and simmer for at least three hours; strain out the bones

This broth a a good stock for many soups.

Chicken Noodle Soup with Peas

Cook one cup of noodles in 3 cups of chicken broth until noodles are tender (makes 4 servings). Add ½ to 1 cup of frozen peas (extends the soup to 6 servings).

Chicken Rice Soup with Peas

Cook 1½ cup of rice in 3 cups of chicken broth until rice is tender. Add ½ cup of frozen peas and bring to boil for 1 minute (serves 4).

Roasted Butternut Squash and Apple Salad

By Nichole Banducci

You’ve gotta try this perfect, unexpected fall / winter salad. It’s a family favorite during the holidays, but honestly, I can sit down with a plate of it at any time. Roasted squash, onions, and apples provide a uniquely delicious base, highlighted by tart cranberries, crunchy pecans, and salty/sweet manchego cheese. The best part? You can make it ahead and serve it at room temperature. Of course, it’s also delicious straight from the fridge. (Original recipe given to my mom by Chef José Sanchez.)

Roasted Butternut Squash and Apple Salad



Ingredients

For roasting

- 1 small butternut squash, peeled and cubed
- 1 large sweet onion, peeled and cut into wedges
- 4 Fuji apples, peeled and cut into wedges
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil to coat
- 1 tsp pumpkin pie spice

Salad mix-ins

- 1 cup toasted pecans, chopped
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup manchego cheese, diced
- 1 tsp chopped, fresh sage
- 1 tsp chopped, fresh parsley
- Salt and pepper
- Salad dressing
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp cranberry syrup (ingredients below)

Cranberry syrup

- 2 cups cranberry juice
- ½ cup red wine
- 2 tbsp sugar

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350°
- In a baking pan, toss the "for roasting" ingredients
- Bake for 45-60 minutes until the squash is barely fork-tender, but not mushy
- Let the roasted ingredients cool
- To a large serving bowl, add the cooled roasted ingredients, plus pecans, cranberries, manchego cheese, sage, parsley, olive oil, and vinegar
- Drizzle with about 2 tbsp cranberry syrup (instructions below), and stir to incorporate
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cranberry syrup

Place cranberry juice, red wine, and sugar in a small saucepan and reduce on medium heat to a syrup consistency, stirring sporadically. (You’ll end up with about 1/4 cup of syrup.)

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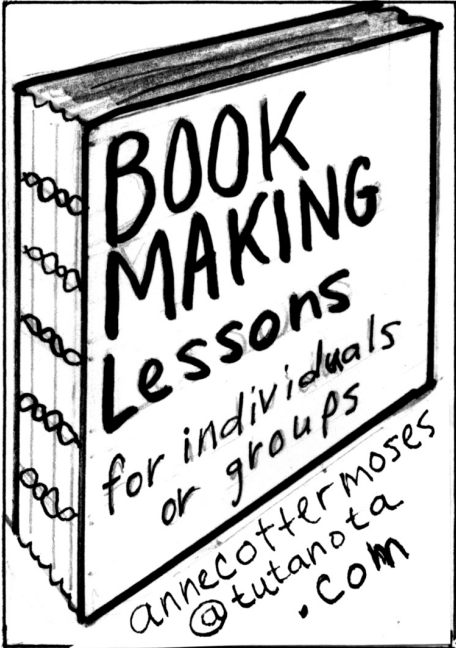
Chicken and Vegetable Soup

Combine 3 cups of chicken broth with 1 or 2 garlic cloves (well-chopped) and 1 cup diced celery (use tops as well as stems). Cook until celery is soft (serves 4).

Vashon! Do you have a favorite recipe you’d like to see published in The Loop?



Share it with us at
editor@vashonloop.com



Who Were The Eclectic Physicians?

By Kathy Abascal

I often mention the Eclectic physicians in my articles because of their deep knowledge about medicinal plants. The Eclectics were licensed medical doctors who primarily used herbs and natural principles of healing to treat their patients. They were a strong force in American medicine from the 1830s to the early 1900s, but were driven out of medicine by the 1930s. Their views and practices differed greatly from the “regular” MDs who later formed the American Medical Association, and medicine as it is known today.

Consider this: On Friday, December 13, 1799, George Washington woke with a painful sore throat, labored breathing, and a fever. He had been soaked in a rainstorm the previous day. He called for a bleeder who took 12 or 14 ounces of blood from his arm. Washington felt worse the next day and called in his doctors. They prescribed two more bleedings, along with two doses of mercury and a cathartic enema. He grew worse. After some debate, his doctors decided to bleed Washington another 32 ounces, and gave him a much larger dose of mercury combined with a dose of antimony (another strong poison). Blisters were raised on his throat and the soles of his feet. On December 14, soon after awakening with a cold, George Washington was dead.

This “heroic medicine” was accepted medical treatment, and had been for centuries. King Louis XVI likely survived childhood only because his mother locked him away from the doctors who had bled and killed three other heirs to the throne. These practices continued in use for most of the 1800s. Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, taught medical school and advocated bloodletting for almost all conditions. He recommended drawing up to 140 ounces to cure pneumonia (the average adult has about 160 ounces of blood). He also taught that

Health Matters

mercury was a “safe and nearly a universal medicine.”

In reaction to the “heroic” medical practices of “regular” MDs, a group of physicians created the Reform Medical Society of the United States and called themselves Eclectics from the Greek word meaning “select.” Their goal was to find the best remedy for each patient’s ailment by choosing carefully among available remedies, including those of the homeopathic MDs and Native Americans. Their primary medicines used were herbs. The Eclectics believed strongly in nourishing the patient rather than using bleeding, mercury, and antimony.

The Eclectics opened medical schools, and some of the first women and African American MDs were graduates of their schools. They published journals and gained the aid of John Uri Lloyd, a famous and very skilled pharmacist. Lloyd focused on how to make herbal extracts, working to create tinctures that retained the actions of the whole plant. Many tinctures sold today are still made according to his recommendations.

Eclectic books remain available, and detail how

these physicians used plants in all aspects of medicine, from simple colds to serious heart ailments. The Eclectics sometimes struggled – as do modern herbalists – with the gentleness of their medicines compared to the strength of allopathic drugs. Thus, one Eclectic MD lamented: “Some people will take a few doses of medicine from an Eclectic, and if it does not cure at once, they think there is nothing in it. But they will take large doses of strong drugs week after week and though they do not improve they think it is all right because the medicine has a big bulk and a powerful taste. They think it is doing something. Well, so do we. It oftentimes gives the undertaker a job.”

So why have so few of us heard of the Eclectics? In large measure, that is due to a battle a man named Flexner waged against both Eclectic and the homeopathic MDs on behalf of the AMA. The public was left with the strong impression that plant medicines were both ineffective and dangerous, and that disease was never treated successfully before the advent of modern drugs.

And while some of our prescription drugs are truly wondrous, we have developed the habit of always looking for miracle drugs to fix any woes, big or small, rather than taking care of ourselves by learning when and how to use plants as food and medicine.

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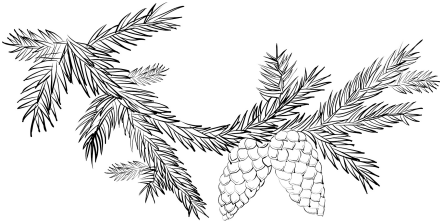
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The Vashon Health Care District

Continued from Front Page

announced they were leaving at the end of October. Vashon had never loved Neighborcare, and in some ways, there was a sense of “good riddance” about this transition. But it left us in a bind, and during the early days of COVID-19.

The VHCD worked diligently to identify a new clinic vendor. An initial request for proposals came and went with no applicants. SeaMar, which operates the current clinic, was ultimately the only group willing to establish this relationship.

However, SeaMar was a good choice in many ways – they were a large, experienced regional operation, and were federally qualified to receive higher Medicare and Medicaid payments. After some site renovations, SeaMar opened at Sunrise Ridge in November 2020, with the VHCD providing a monthly subsidy of \$125,000, or \$1.5 million a year, an amount that was reset to \$1.1 million in April 2022.

In winter and spring 2022, the VHCD started discussions, both internally and with SeaMar, to start a capital project to build a new clinic. In play was \$3 million in state funding awarded in 2018; these funds were given to Neighborcare in 2021, and then transferred to SeaMar. Ultimately, the VHCD determined it would buy the land for the new clinic. Then, the VHCD would either lease the site to SeaMar, and SeaMar would fund and construct the new building, or the VHCD would build the clinic itself. In June, the VHCD authorized that it would build its own clinic.

In August 2022, SeaMar surprised Vashon by announcing their plan to separate from the VHCD and leave the Island at year-end. In a press release, SeaMar cited conflicts between their desire to operate independently and the VHCD’s preferred level of involvement. Then, days later, SeaMar walked back and said they wanted to stay at Sunrise Ridge for now. Also, they planned to remain on the Island. However, they would be independent and no longer needed the VHCD subsidy. In fact, they would be building a new clinic on Vashon.

Over the next month, the VHCD and SeaMar made repeated efforts to negotiate. Overall, public details were murky, and what was reported as likely to happen kept changing. At different times, both sides said the other group was difficult to work with. The VHCD also expressed concerns about SeaMar’s ability to self-fund the clinic, something that SeaMar has never fully clarified.

On September 9, SeaMar announced the purchase of a new clinic site in town (the Spinnaker building), with a plan for demolition and construction of a new structure. It was agreed that SeaMar would keep the \$3 million in state funding and continue to sublease at Sunrise Ridge until 2025 or whenever the new clinic was ready. There have been permitting delays, but SeaMar now hopes to start work in late winter or early spring.

On September 14, the VHCD announced that it had bought a 2.3-acre parcel of land next to Kathy’s Corner, financed using a King County line of credit.

2023: A new mission, to “buttress” existing Vashon systems

As of 2023, the VHCD is no longer subsidizing SeaMar costs. By May, they had paid off their King County loans, both the initial funding and for the land purchase, and were cash-positive. At the November budget meeting, the VHCD reported \$1.23 million in reserves.

This financial situation has enabled the VHCD to begin work “related to the pivot from the primary activities relating to the SeaMar relationship.” In early 2023, the VHCD reached out to community members via formal and informal listening sessions, and also coordinated with key Vashon organizations to obtain input on Island concerns.

From this, the VHCD’s new priorities are to: Establish access to after-hours and urgent care on the Island; implement a primary care safety net for Islanders; and support increased access to behavioral health care, particularly for youth. In the 2024 VHCD budget, the largest line item – \$1.4 million – is reserved for these items, along with new programming and ongoing community outreach. The VHCD also recognizes the need to develop a contingency fund that will protect primary care delivery on the Island if SeaMar leaves.

During last spring’s community listening process, some Islanders proposed another option – that the VHCD should “go dormant” because the Island clinic was now operational without a subsidy. I interpreted this to mean that the VHCD should continue to function while also cutting back on its draw of community funds. This would keep the organization in place, providing some level of community leadership, and maintaining financial reserves to address future clinic funding concerns. The VHCD does not appear to be considering this option at this time.

This all raises unasked questions. These VHCD priorities are not unimportant things, but does Vashon see these tasks as the role of the VHCD?

Can urgent care make sense on Vashon? Since the VHCD started, the most-mentioned priority has been to establish after-hours care. But putting a typical urgent care facility on the Island would be expensive and complex. The site would be challenging to staff and would compete directly with SeaMar for employees and patients. It would require large start-up costs, and would then consistently lose money because our population is too small for financial success (a typical urgent care clinic needs a local client base of about 30,000).

Also, running any kind of urgent care clinic may just suck. Consider this cautionary advice from “Succeed at Urgent Care” in Medical Economics: “According to those who have made the leap, the hours are long, the profits margins are thin, and the financial risks are high.” With urgent care, residents could end paying a higher yearly clinic subsidy than before. And what if SeaMar decides to leave?

Creativity and genuine cooperation would be needed to succeed with urgent care. At certain stages, the VHCD has discussed urgent care collaborations with Vashon Island Fire & Rescue and SeaMar. Will the VHCD find a way to combine resources, or will they choose again to go it alone, and what will the financial commitment be?

Why is the VHCD planning a building project? Specific to the land purchase, the VHCD has cleared the site is looking at multi-use possibilities, indicating in August 2023 that “all possibilities can be considered for developing the property into the best possible community asset. Unmet health needs are the priority, but an approach that includes some housing connected with health service may be a possibility.” Related to this, discussions have occurred with Vashon Household, and a mock-up of potential plans that include affordable housing has been presented.

Part of the VHCD’s rationale for this new building is the need to ensure the Island has community ownership of a site – to avoid another loss like the Vashon Care Center. But consider that SeaMar and the VHCD have agreed that, should SeaMar leave, the VHCD has first right to purchase the new SeaMar clinic. So, if SeaMar left, the VHCD would become responsible for two buildings, or one building would be empty (and don’t forget the empty Sunrise Ridge site). Combine this scenario with the rising costs of new construction and delays experienced by new projects (like the SeaMar clinic), and it’s worth asking if this work should be dramatically staggered, especially if you think inflation is going to get worse.

Conclusion

There’s a lot to praise the VHCD for. Over their first few years, they effectively addressed a series of unpredictable, urgent issues. But now, we have a bit of a breather between emergencies. This gives us the time to consider certain questions and weigh our financial priorities. It is time for the community to get more engaged with the VHCD’s goings-on, and for the VHCD to do a serious overhaul of its approach to community outreach.

Here are two immediate next

steps. First, the VHCD needs to survey Island residents. The survey should be professionally designed and conducted, ideally by a qualified Islander business and not a large consulting firm, and administered in a number of settings, both online and in real life. The survey should present a realistic range of potential directions for the VHCD, including one or more scenarios where the VHCD “goes dormant.” The survey should target a prespecified percentage of Islanders – the exact percentage can be determined, but enough to show meaningful representation. Certainly, the VHCD should aim to reach substantially more than the 358, or 3.1%, of Island residents professionally surveyed by the VIFR before their recent levy vote.

Second, the VHCD needs to work much harder to keep the community updated, in the most basic of ways. As a start, this could include Facebook announcements – both in local groups and on the VHCD’s own site, regarding the agenda and dates and times for every meeting. VHCD should also develop a system wherein community members can sign up to receive VHCD updates and links to meeting minutes by email.

Homeowners may pay the levies that support the VHCD, but this is not just a homeowner issue. Property tax increases (and there have been so many in the last few years) lead to higher Island rents, the loss of more long-time residents, and less money to spend locally and on the essential items that make day-to-day life possible. This is an issue that every organization on this Island should have at the forefront when making financial projections.

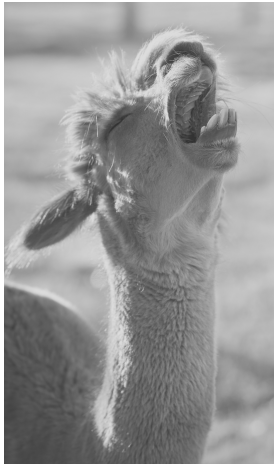


VASHON ISLAND
COMMUNITY CHURCH

9517 SW Cemetery Rd.
PO Box 2479
Vashon, WA 98070
206-463-3940

Sunday Service at
10:00AM

Llaughing Llamas Chronicles



By Daniel Hooker

A friend came up to me and said she’s giving up ham for Christmas.

I said, “Porque no?”

~

A rabbi, a priest, and a politician are on a road trip, and their car breaks down out in the country. They see in a farmhouse in the distance. They walk to the farmhouse, knock on the door, and explain their situation to the farmer.

The farmer says, “Well, it’s too late to go into town right now. We can go there in the morning. I have room for two of you in the house, but one has to sleep out in the barn.”

The priest says, “I’ll sleep in the barn. I don’t have a problem with it.”

An hour later, there’s a knock on the door. The priest is there, and says, “Due to my allergies, I can’t sleep out in the barn. There’s hay everywhere.”

The rabbi says, “I’ll sleep in the barn.” So, the rabbi goes out to the barn.

An hour later, there’s a knock on the door. The rabbi is there, and says, “I can’t sleep out in the barn. There are pigs out there, and it’s just not kosher for me.”

So the politician goes out to the barn. An hour later there’s a knock on the door. The farmer opens the door, and there’s the pig and the cow.

Naked Are the Branches

By Antoinette M Levine

Holding on to nothing
Release Falls Naturally
Dear Mother, hear my prayer
Samhain is past
Breath Breathes Chilled Air
Please hold my hands...
as I dare to be as naked as autumn’s trees.
Stay with me now
As all-of-me bows – in Awe – to
Winter’s coming Mystery
Naked are the branches
Alive. Inside. Of. Me.

Autumn reflects – natural release cycles – that encourage a wise willingness to let go.
Nature’s seasonal guidance inspired Ms. Levine to pen this poem.



Christmas Tree

after Connie Wanek

By Yvonne Leach

To stand tall but not in earth
to survive in plastic and faucet water
to live for wearing colored lights
to ignore the four walls and no sky
to show off ornaments and still be simple
to be evergreen and oxygen and holiday spirit
to bless the one family who picked you.

“Christmas Tree” is after another poet, Connie Wanek, who constructed a poem in a similar format but about a different topic. I have always appreciated my Christmas trees for giving me such joy during the holiday season.

“A Christmas Resurrection” or “Dead Santas”

By Claudia Hollander-Lucas

Dead Santas lay in vinyl heaps
on lawns cased in a blanket of hoar.
Did Vashon youth all over this Island- menacing bored
slit each Santa’s belly?
Were they giddy to hear his slithering a diminishing
wheeze ho-ho-ho ho ho...

Such a silly fat man
who shakes his copper bell for coins and candy,
greets shoppers then blocks entry to all the box stores.
Here in the country, children romance the season-
take reindeer for camels and Santas for Jesus,
hide sea treasures under boogie-man beds.

Big yellow buses lumber along the rutted lanes
scanning for deer, for rain and for Santas.
Just as they steer (with an awkward grind) onto one-hundred-
and-five, a dark curtain chuckles, the man has his timers
sensitive to clock and light— commands a miracle!

Stippled vapors begin to fill the crumpled red suit-
a coal handed Santa arises! his glove waves, billows, and bellows
good morning! happy christmas!
Wide-eyed innocents wobble on age’d green seats,

press tiny fingers to breath-fogged glass, some aching
to glimpse their friend from the North.
Others wonder how such a big man can shrink and expand
each morning so cheery— ?

That this tethered Santa can and must know
each secret Desire that is buried miles deep
in every size’d heart— un-tombed at the press of a button.

This seasonal poem is a response to the daytime puddles of Christmas inflatables seen all over the Island, that come alive with the press of a button. This poem is officially called “A Christmas Resurrection,” but I prefer “Dead Santas”. Happy Winter Holidays!

It Was a Night of Psychedelic Canaries at Grandmother’s House

By Laura C. Lippman

The baby screams in the house full
of leftover turkey & stuffing, fries and pies
potatoes mashed by another shrieker & his dad.
Sleep settles into all the warm beds but mine.
Awake as windows rattle
I pen a poem. Stillness embraces
all the others downstairs. Our dogs mumble
in sleep, paws tapping.
I imagine owls clutching furious
dancing branches outside,
snuggling the tree trunks while
I’m cozy in my bed, mute as a mouse.
The neon spirits of the departed
visit me as I remember full
houses of Thanksgivings long past,
preserved in dusty attic photos.
I listen & wait for the rain to stop,
hope the precipice perched over us
holds steady under howling gusts.
I imagine hot coffee in the quiet morning.
I’m hankering for tomorrow’s aromas,
leftovers-for-breakfast with pie,
stuffing & maybe an egg thrown in,
cracked and scrambled in the pan.
Tomorrow another drenched day,
with games & cranberry nibbles,
veggie loaf with pudding, still until
the kids’ next crescendo of tears.

Laura and her husband live on Vashon part time. They love to walk the beaches and parks, birding, invasive weed eradicating and tidepooling. With her writing group, Laura recently published “Writing While Masked, Reflections on 2020 and Beyond,” published by WSU press

Can’t stop drinking
and want help?



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
Online Meetings: SeattleAA.org
AA Phone: 206-587-2838
Local Vashon Contact: 206-849-1980


**Vashon! Time to
change insurance
coverage.**

Starting this November,
everyone who lives in
Washington state will have the
opportunity to buy health and
dental insurance
through Washington
Healthplanfinder, regardless of
immigration status.

**Meet with Miguel from
King County Public Health**
1pm - 3pm,
at Vashon Library
(inside at the back)

- Saturday, December 16
- Wednesday, December 20

Se habla español.



**ANU RANA'S
HEALTHY KITCHEN**

Fresh made, grab and go!
Vegan, gluten-free meals
Authentic Nepali cuisine

Almond flour cookies (vegan),
locally roasted organic coffee,
organic loose-leaf teas,
bubble tea, gifts, and more!

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Anuranashealthykitchen@gmail.com

In the heart of town

Illustration and Tale – Rejoice

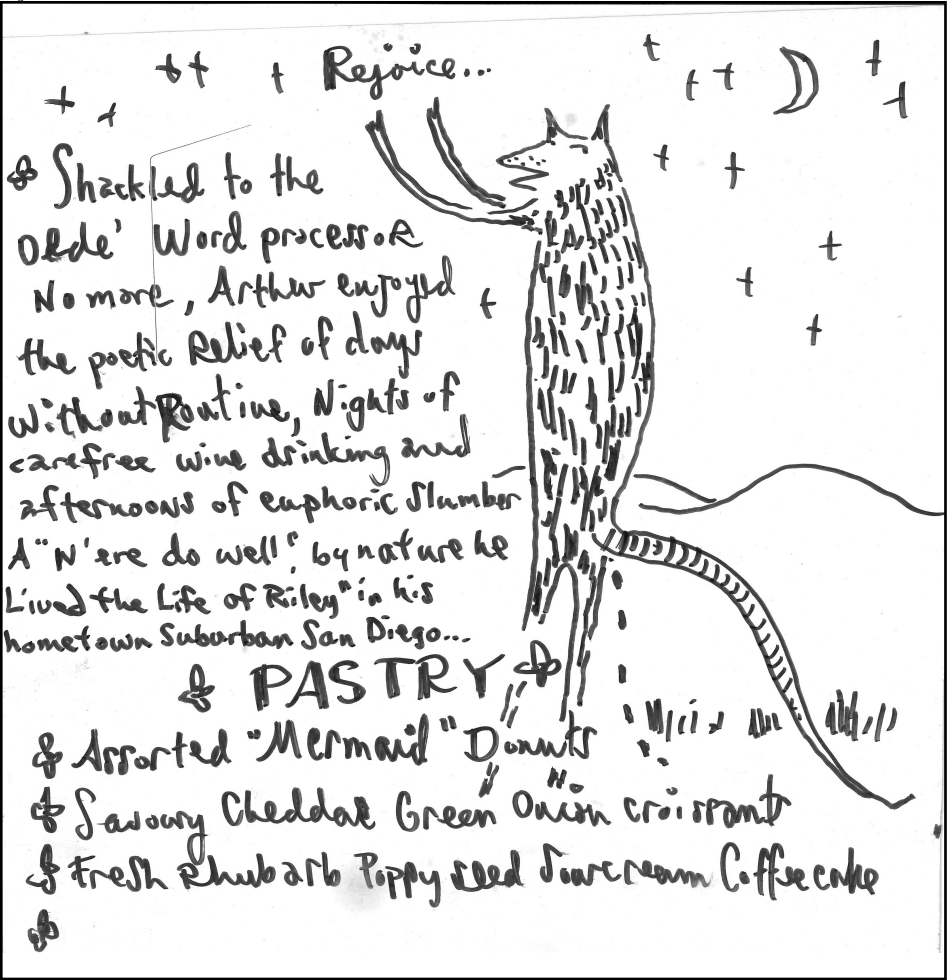
By Adam Cone

+ + + Rejoice... + + +

& Shackled to the
Olde’ Word processor
No more, Arthur enjoyed
the poetic Relief of days
Without Routine, Nights of
carefree wine drinking and
afternoons of euphoric Slumber
A “N’ere do well” by nature he
Lived the Life of Riley” in his
hometown Suburban San Diego...

& PASTRY &

& Assorted “Mermaid” Donuts
& Savory Cheddar Green Onion croissants
& Fresh Rhubarb Poppy Seed Sourcream Coffee cake
&



Aries (March 20-April 19)

It's time to remember the notion of a higher calling. Such is an invitation that seems to come from beyond you, but which is really coming from within you. Your cosmic assignment this month is to tune in to your inner voice. That means listening to yourself, and in particular, listening for some clarity beneath all of the static of existence. Digital life is nearly all crackles and fuzz. You are unlikely to find it when glued to a screen. You might want to listen in total darkness. To succeed takes practice and learning. Follow your guidance, make a decision and see how it works out. Then review. Sometimes your spirit voice will speak first, but softly. Sometimes another aspect of your mind will speak, and you can ask for clarification. After a while, it becomes easier.

Taurus (April 19-May 20)

Many who advocate what they think of as spiritual illumination make a distinction between pure love and "base" desire. To make physical hunger, need and yearning bad is to stunt spiritual development; they must exist in harmony rather than in a state of mutual exclusion. The cost we pay for this inner competitiveness is rarely counted-of constantly wanting to outdo ourselves, or an inner punishing quality for not living up to self-expectations. I've seen situations like this resolved through years of therapy, though usually it occurs in one significant revelation; one discovery that an approach to life needs to be changed. One consideration is the role of jealousy in your life. To what extent do you think you've addressed this, and to what extent do you require others to compensate for your insecurity? The basis of any relationship is spiritual, as is the basis of any collaboration.

Gemini (May 20-June 21)

At the moment you have an enhanced ability to see where others are coming from; to grasp their point of view intuitively, on matters that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. It's essential that you remain unassuming-that you not assume you're correct-but rather use your observation as a way to facilitate discussion and be open to a viewpoint that might at first seem opposite to your own. Yet you may discover that there is deep harmony and a sense of shared mission. You both raise awareness and take control by knowing that you have a choice; and a choice to face what you do not like. Even if you're sure you know something from another person's viewpoint, ask them about it. This is what I mean by unassuming; use your awareness as a hunch and be willing to be wrong. There are few experiences happier than realizing that what seemed like a harsh disagreement is really a few degrees of difference in viewpoint. And if you put those viewpoints together, you can get an image with depth and added



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



relevance.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have the ability to get a lot done at this time of year. I was working with a Planet Waves tool called The Oracle the other night and came up with a horoscope from early 2017, some of which I will offer you here, then elaborate on: "Don't fall for the line that Americans (or whoever) work too much. For you, work is where you find your identity... work is profoundly important to you, and consequently you must have something to do every day that is 1) not boring and 2) actually meaningful, relevant and helpful to others. The net result will be that you'll feel more solid in who you are; you will feel more real; you will live with purpose. More than overwork being an issue in our society, it's the lack of meaning that's the actual problem." You are happiest when activity is connected to its meaning and its source. Don't worry about anyone else- get up every day and proceed on the basis of what's right and true.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

Children experience both their senses and their emotions with much greater intensity. This is partly because their egos are not so built up that everything they may feel is buried beneath the surface of so-called civilization. The people whom we call "artists" are the ones who are able to tap into those trapped wells of psychic energy and direct it in some conscious way back into the world within and around them. You've had plenty of pent-up feelings during the past month that the Sun (and other planets) have been in Scorpio. Now, it's as if a portal has opened and suddenly you have the power to translate your dark intensity into something beautiful or even helpful. This is the gift of what some mistakenly call "creativity." The ability to express yourself, or the ability to be alive in harmony with yourself (they are the same thing), is contingent on not projecting judgment onto others. Let others deal with their own responses on their own terms, and grant yourself the simple freedom to be and exist on your own terms. This seems more radical than it is. Once you get there, there's no turning back.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

Nothing helps you feel safe or secure unless it has a spiritual basis. There must always be something that allows you to feel a much larger reality. You do grounding in an unusual way: the Earth below you is one thing, though there must be a greater cosmos below that. I would say that for the next month or so, you cannot go too large on that "cosmos" thing. Questions don't all need answers, and most of them are not really questions anyway. Slow down this process, and take care to treasure certain variables or unknowns that will become your greatest teachers. One of them is how you wound up on this planet, with your ability to ask questions about your existence and what it means. The greatest unknown is within you. Take it slow.

Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

You may go through a spell of assuming the worst is going to happen. It's a big seller right now: all the cool kids are predicting the downfall of civilization. This is not what you would call a Zen-like orientation. It is, rather, being caught in the world of time and

the world of maya (illusion) without imagining there is anything more. Human existence is fragile but it is not frail. We who are here today have the ability to wreck the world around us, or to help hold it together. The results of your personal actions may seem insignificant, though the results of this choice are far from it. When you bring yourself into the meekest alignment with the Dharma-the living, nameless truth about existence, which can be acted upon but not described-beautiful things happen. Do what is meaningful to you. Read and write only what is genuine. Speak of beauty and you will see it appear before you.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

You will feel less edgy and less emotional if you recognize there is very little to cling to. The experience of existence as humans always rides along an uncertain edge, though this is an especially cliff-like time to be alive. In a fairly short time, your modern ruling planet Pluto will be arriving in Aquarius, where most of your limited thought forms are contained. They exist as invisible patterns that were instilled in you by the speech, the emotions and the authority structure of your family of origin. During your most formative years, there was very little you could do about any of this. You are discovering that was an illusion, and further recognizing how fragile and uncertain they all were despite their bravado and know-it-all quality. At this stage of your life, a healthy outlook is something like this: "I'm not sure, but I want to know." Then take up the full responsibility for finding out, and allow the quest itself to have most of the meaning you seek.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

The Sun's arrival in your sign comes with an invitation and a promise: you can put yourself back together. You can gather all the seeming parts of your existence and your purpose, scattered though they may be. Yet as you do this, there is one thing you're likely to overlook; one thing you might just miss. It may be that your sense of something missing will drive your whole quest for completion. At the moment, there seem to be a great many people in the world who are terrified at any sense of there being an unknown. They do not like the news that institutions which have promised they have all the answers simply do not. The whole problem is the "all the answers" business. If there exist any great mysteries at all, they may be present in anything you do, at any time you do it. True love may exist in every person because it can exist within you. Dare yourself to find out.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

If you're going to think about something a lot, make sure it's a topic you can do something about. This criterion will filter out most of the abstractions. If, rather, you invest your

thoughts and your precious resources where you can make a difference, you will feel much better. Pluto is now active in your chart and will be for the foreseeable future, and this is compelling of personal growth. Yet this is further described by the centaur Orius, which is the sigil of those who attempt the impossible. What you cannot connect to tangible options and choices is probably irrelevant, and not only that, a distraction of your precious intelligence. There is plenty that needs to be done; plenty calling on your sincere consideration. Time is moving faster than ever, and is being squandered more than ever. This is no luxury. The luxury you want is the ongoing satisfaction of doing the right thing.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

You may be walking the world feeling like "something is about to happen." Well, it already is. Everything is in motion, in progress, and in its alignment original to this moment. Ask yourself: what is so? Make a map of your current situation: drawing it on a sheet of paper would be the most helpful. Who are you now? Describe this as a stand-alone, and also in the context of who you were in the past. You are going through a profound process of individuation. You are also seeking your wholeness and your sanity, which is rather individualistic these days: most people think they are content to be driven insane. But this is a cop-out. It's the attitude, "Who cares, everything sucks." Yet when you hear something like this, remember that it's a statement of individual perspective. Anything you might say about the world, you can say about yourself. Remember that your personal truth may be expressed in words, in deeds, and most significantly, in the place where they intersect. That place is a fulcrum, like the pivot on a telescope. One millimeter of change can make lightyears of difference.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

You will benefit from paying attention, at all times, to what is motivating you. It may not be obvious at first. You may need to consider the reality of your parents to study this: ask yourself how they would have responded to precisely the situation you are in. Could they have handled themselves at all? What do you think they might do? Your mother in particular shows up as a profound influence at this time. She has extensive unresolved emotional baggage, and much of that was passed along to you. Yet it's not your karma; the grief and longing come from somewhere else. Today, the theme of your life is taking total responsibility for your existence. It's about sorting out any variables on the basis of what helps you and what harms you. Keep asking this about everything: is it beneficial or not? Is this useful, or not? Do your attachments hinder, or do they help? This includes your goals, of which one now stands out as the most important.

Read extended monthly horoscopes and more at [PlanetWaves.net](http://www.PlanetWaves.net)

May the
forces of evil
become
confused on
the way to
your house.

~George Carlin

