

Vote Against Bank Taxes – Pay Cash

By March Twisdale

You may have noticed that young folks working the register tend to automatically assume customers will pay with a card. This happened at C&P Coffee a few weeks ago. As I was tapping on the screen, my brain started to ping at me. Only when I handed my \$20 bill to the girl, and she said, “Oh! You’re paying cash,” did I realize what was wrong. You don’t need a screen when you have green!

As we laughed, I handed her a slip of paper, explaining why cash matters, and I said out loud, “I always try to pay cash.” The owner behind the espresso

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Unsung Medic One

By Andy Valencia

If you’re an Islander and have been listening to our public discussions and media, you might have this nightmare image in mind of yourself, holding your chest, on the phone, begging for help which isn’t coming. The truth is, you can set aside this anxiety, because it isn’t going to happen. And the reason is: Medic One.

On Vashon, Medic One is managed directly out of King County Emergency Medical Services, funded by its own property tax levy. King County EMS operates those Medic One trucks you’ll see around town, staffed by a pair of

Continued Below the Fold



Stella

By Elizabeth Van Deventer

Stella taught me one of the most important spiritual lessons of my life. Yet, you wouldn’t find her sitting in the lotus position in an Ashram or giving a sermon behind a church pulpit. She wasn’t a guru with a great following or what anyone would think of as a spiritual teacher at all. Instead, Stella was a beautiful brown cow.

I’d always been drawn to cows. As a child growing up on a farm in Virginia, I loved to sit under a tree with a herd of black and white Holsteins chewing their cud. They emanated a peaceful stillness, their dewy eyes glassed over, hind legs cocked, hips sloped. As I watched their jaws circling, I too became deeply still, sinking into the moment, feeling myself melt into the herd.

For decades, I longed to be near cows again, without fully understanding what it was that drew me to them. Then one day, my deepest longing manifested. Four glossy, big-eyed, brown cows magically stood under the dappled shade of our apple trees. They looked at me in a knowing way, like we’d all agreed to this plan in some other time and space.

Stella was born to one of those cows. She was a sassy little heifer who’d sidle up to me, pushing her belly into mine so I’d scratch her back. When her mamma died unexpectedly, Stella and I bonded. She followed me everywhere. She grew up to be the lead cow and taught the whole herd to follow my call to fresh pasture. As the matriarch, she became their voice. When I’d hear her lowing in the distance, I learned to be still and listen to decipher what the herd needed by the different qualities of her call.

Each morning, when I went to move the herd, Stella was waiting for me. She was there through hurricanes, blizzards, droughts, and floods. She was there through the birth of my children and when they grew up and moved away. She was there through disasters and deaths. She was there when I showed up in tears, or angry, or anxious. She’d simply sashay up to me and press her belly



into mine for her back scratch. For a few moments, I’d forget my problems and melt into her as she gifted me the joy of the present.

When Stella was eight, we moved to Vashon Island. Her photo sat on my desk in front of a view of Mount Rainier. I longed to be near her, fearing she’d forget me, or I’d never see her again. Three years later, we came home. I ran out to the pasture, calling her. In the distance, I heard her mooing. She left the herd and began to walk toward me and I to her, like lovers in a romance film. Then Stella pressed her belly into mine and I flopped over her, scratching her back, tears soaking her fur. I promised Stella that I would never leave her again.

I kept my promise until the day she died at age 20, just a few weeks ago. Then it hit me all at once why I’d been drawn to cows. Stella, like the Holsteins of my childhood, was free from the dungeon of past and future fears that imprison us humans. Stella was the stillness in the storm of my life. She taught me to live in a state of non-resistance to what is – just like she did. By the very nature of her loving being, Stella taught me the immense joy of how to simply be, despite it all.

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Medic One

Continued from Above

paramedics, capable of providing the elite tier of emergency medicine, known as Advanced Life Support. While one of the more expensive emergency medical response systems, Medic One is also one of the most effective. Nobody wants a heart attack, but Medic One provides a best-in-class response to such emergencies when they happen.

An impressive aspect of Medic One is their ownership of the need to provide emergency response all day, every day. A unit with its paramedics is on-duty 24/7. If an off-Island transport is needed, they send only one of their paramedics, so the second is still on-Island providing coverage. If an extraordinary event requires a second transport, they will use an airlift rather than leave the Island without coverage.

They are a part of the King County system, and if needed, can call for another unit to be sent across. Such units not only enjoy priority loading, but also can order a ferry to turn around and pick them up. How confident should we be that Medic One will be there? One person with deep knowledge of the service replied without hesitation, “100%.”

An old joke is that the problem with doing it right the first time is that nobody appreciates how hard it was. Medic One is easy to miss exactly because they do their job so well. Be sure to give them a friendly “thank you” the next time you see them around town.

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AtWork! – Part Three: A Manager’s Perspective

By Aly Norling

Last September, Anthony started working at Little Bird Gardens with help from AtWork!, a supported employment nonprofit organization that works throughout the state of Washington to match people with intellectual and developmental disabilities with good jobs in their communities.

Susan, Anthony’s supervisor, answered a few questions about supported employment from her perspective. She watered a flat of “Pink Pixie” catmint before we sat down to begin.

A: Susan, what jobs is Anthony assigned at Little Bird Gardens?

S: Anthony is assigned the jobs that we assign all our part-time employees. Emptying the compost, tidying plants, shifting old plants to back-stock or the greenhouse, sweeping tables, pruning back plants seasonally, helping to water ...

A: How is it different to supervise a person with a disability?

S: Delegating tasks is essentially the same as delegating tasks to any part-time employee. Communication about those tasks can always be hard. Just leaving space for things not to be done to a certain expectation all the time. Delegating more time to a task so that Anthony can feel successful without feeling pressured. Anthony is really learning and becoming more independent. Even things like his muscle movements from the time he

started to now – he navigates the uneven terrain with more confidence than he did before.

A: Totally! Just today he went down a hill to get the bulbs planted in and I was thinking ...

S: Right!

A: ... that’s a big step forward from when he first started.

S: What’s important to me as a supervisor is that it meets what he needs out of employment, not just what I need out of an employee.

A: Why do you think it’s important to have supported employment in our community?

S: Everyone deserves the opportunity to work and be successful. To feel important and needed and a valuable part of the community. Without supported employment, people sit at home feeling sad and depressed. I want work in the community to be less about efficiency and more about relationship. More about meeting people where they’re at and giving everyone a place.

A: What has been Anthony’s greatest success while working at Little Bird Gardens?

S: Seeing all the bulbs he planted bloom and people purchase – that was such a win! That was awesome, that was like –

A: You can see it!

S: – A visual reward. But my most

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What Brought You to the Island?

By March Twisdale

When we moved from West Seattle to Vashon Island, it was after a two-year search. We were looking for a rural environment with an eclectic homeschooling community, but every rural community in the region was almost exclusively religion-inspired. Concern that our children would be disconnected from both schooled kids and homeschooling families kept us searching.

In August of 2004, our first real introduction to Vashon Island came via Jessa Zimmerman. After commuting for years to Duvall, she convinced the Wilderness Awareness School to offer their amazing program at Camp Sealth. When she dropped off a flyer at my son’s “playschool” in West Seattle, we immediately signed up. Within a month, I was hooked. Vashon Island offered a rural lifestyle plus a vibrant, eclectic homeschooling community.

Now I had to convince my husband, who had only ever been to the Island once, for a Cohousing Retreat at Camp Burton. His memory was of trees. Lots and lots of trees. After asking around, I turned to Amiad & Associates Real Estate (no longer on the Island). “We aren’t ready to look at houses, I need him to discover the Island,” I remember saying, but when we arrived at the North End ferry dock, Amy Carey said, “I’ve got three houses to show you, let’s go!”

We followed her in our Eurovan, me grumbling all the way, and when we walked through the first house, all I could see was what was wrong with

it. For example, the huge, professional Wolf oven and range was “big, black, and ugly.” Amy raised an eyebrow and calmly said, “There are plenty of Islanders who would gladly buy it off of you.”

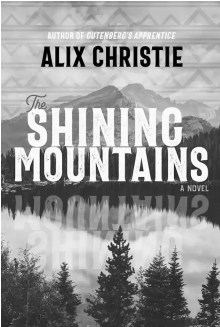
At the end of our three-hour tour (yes, the theme for Gilligan’s Island comes to mind), I apologized for being irritable, explaining to Amy that my husband’s commute to Kirkland was a serious impediment. Unless he “fell in love” with the Island, it was a non-starter. She nodded, pointing out that all three houses were in different regions of the Island, allowing him to see the island and her to see how we responded, so she could best recommend other homes for us to consider. Ah, yes. I had chosen my real estate agent well.

I turned to my husband and said, “We can come out next weekend to look at more houses!” He raised an eyebrow and shook his head, saying, “Oh no! I’ll come over when you’ve got a short list, because we’re not buying a house unless you like it.” Wise man.

And so, our search for a home began ... and quickly ended. It was midweek, and I was checking out the fourth or fifth house on Amy’s list. I began to reflect on how it differed from the first home we’d seen ... as I’d also done with each of the previous properties.

Racing back to that first house, I realized my grumpy attitude had blinded me. It was everything we wanted. Within easy walking and biking distance of town and bus lines, direct access to hundreds of acres of

Book Review



The Shining Mountains

By Catherine Henderson

“The Shining Mountains,” a historical novel set in the mid 1800s and written by Alix Christie, is the enthralling story of Angus McDonald, a Scottish immigrant, and his wife Catherine Baptiste, from the Nez Perce tribe. Angus is a trader for the Hudson Bay Company, moving between their outposts in Montana, Idaho, and Washington (including our neighboring Fort Nisqually in Point Defiance).

The Hudson Bay Company

traded guns to the Native people in exchange for beaver pelts used for men’s hats. Angus and Catherine had a large family, and the author outlines the joys and challenges of their bi-cultural life, and we learn how the Natives regarded the incomers to this land. There are lyrical descriptions of the wilderness of Idaho and Montana, and the Grand Tetons.

As the Americans arrive on wagon trains, Angus helps them with maps and supplies ... even as their fencing, building, and gold-panning is destroying his Native relatives’ way of life. We see how his children are treated with racist attitudes, and their stress from being neither fish nor fowl. We see the pressures that develop on the Hudson Bay Company men, all married to Native women, as the American influx gains momentum, and the conflict with the Tribes (Kootenai, Nez Perce, Salish, Pend d’Oreille) escalates.

This is the little-known history of the American West, told from many points of view, including that of the tribes. For more information go to www.the.shiningmountains.com.



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preserved wilderness and trails, fenced, with forests along the edges and clear, open pasture for a garden or grazing equines ... and it was large enough to guarantee a room for my mother!

I believe the Universe wanted us here. The house (in good condition, well represented and nicely staged) seemed to have waited for us, sitting on the market for 18 months, while the owner refused multiple, better offers. We came up with \$40,000 under the asking price, and crossed our fingers.

Then, there was the challenge of selling our Cohousing unit in West Seattle. Typically, this takes two years! To our surprise, a friend of a friend immediately offered, allowing for a fast, private sale. Next, my husband’s boss called to say, “We’re shutting down the Kirkland office. You’ll start working from home next month.” And then, our Vashon offer was accepted. Kismet!

Six weeks later, we spent our first night in our new home, and we’ve never looked back.

Know Your Home Waters

Shortly before social media’s proliferation, a 2004 Department of Education study estimated that 10% of pre-college students faced sexual misconduct. No one has suggested improvement since, and in one 48-hour stretch earlier this year, six high school teachers were arrested across the US for having sex with their students. All are females between the ages of 26 and 40, awaiting trial for rape and sexual misconduct. Together, they face over 100 years of combined jail time, with prosecutions relying heavily on social media records.

Communities overwhelmingly want simple things from schools: Teach useful skills, be transparent, and don’t sexualize children. We are blessed with a vast majority of teachers here who follow that mission 100%. Yet, technologies enable back-door communications by design, and are obvious accelerants to boundary-crossings. This month, American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten tweeted one solution, “Our union is here for you to help you future-proof your social media. @AFTunion has partnered w/ LifeBrand for a 25% discount off the cost of this powerful tool that scans your social media to catch forgotten posts that may not reflect who you are today.”

So, would LifeBrand scrub the phrase, “I can’t wait to help blow out your birthday candles?”

Life Branding might not have worked for two teachers who claim to



have met our state’s criteria to exercise consenting civil rights with graduated 18-year-olds. For the present, and with resignations, their lawyers secured the de facto blessings of the Vashon Island School District, and most importantly, the teacher’s union, to wait for current students until they were fair and legal game. State Superintendent of Schools Chris Reykdahl has maintained perfect silence.

There’s a repellent Ick Factor reserved especially for grooming; somewhat like watching rabbits raring to be let loose onto a greyhound racetrack. A grisly practice that was banned decades back. Explicitly approving the outcomes implicitly approves the preparations, and saying that any of these behaviors are OK certainly looks and feels like catering to the predators’ side of the equation. Who is being protected here?

What if a non-teacher adult had sent sexually explicit messages to a current student? How about an assistant coach? A bus driver? Hard to

imagine they would have been given paid leave or guaranteed job recommends.

But the problems in these waters seem deeper than only minor-attracted pedagogy. The recent 29-page investigation, its results withheld by VISD until requested via Freedom of Information Act, lists 32 separate policy violations by one teacher. There are requests for solutions aplenty, yet no suggested penalties.

Additional insight into the dysfunctionality of the VISD is illustrated in an incident report, obtained via FOIA, dated March 28, 2022. It reveals that the administration was repeatedly warned by multiple parents about one particular teacher’s ongoing violations of VISD policies 3207 (harassment, intimidation, bullying) and 5253 (professional boundaries) against several other students.

The parent email begins: “This is my fourth email in the last two years on the subject of (the teacher) and her professionalism. While I appreciate the promise of change for next year ... it looks like you need to take action sooner. (The teacher) is retaliating against her students, and it seems to be escalating ... Previous steps to wrangle the behavior of (the teacher) included an email from you about policies ... (the teacher) openly read, and mocked this email to students.”

Added to what we know, this dysfunction indicates an almost total loss of administrative control over teachers, even apart from sexual misconduct. Is it possible to fix this? It may be time to try. Ten teachers have

been let go due to budget shortfalls; other teachers, nurses, and administrators have fled, including the VHS principal, who left mid-year over last holiday break; all school board positions except one have opened; and, per the current Riptide headline, the theater and band departments now face cancellation.

In response to the community’s request to prohibit sexual relationships between teachers and students for a specified timeframe following graduation, Vashon teachers’ union reps have chimed in with less-than-resounding moral guidance: “While we believe that our members would be in full support of such a policy, we are not yet clear on the ramifications and recommendations from the Washington Educational Association.”

We fear that what they’re actually saying is, “We’re your shop stewards. And we’re terrified!”

Given a lack of clarity and an absence of amends, numerous families have already taken up alternatives to VHS attendance, or are still searching.

There is a kernel of hope left by the outgoing board, which seems to recognize that it needs outside help, referring consultations to DOVE. At first blush, this might not make sense, but DOVE does have the skills to deal with sexual harassment, domestic violence, and addictions. Still, there is an internal management problem here that seems beyond their purview, and which won’t be addressed by their

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If I Were Running for the School Board...

By March Twisdale

We need people who know the job. If I were running for the school board, this would be my first and primary focus. What is my role? My duty? My obligation? Who do I serve?

We need people who can hold power responsibly and gently. Power is scary, because coming along right behind it is responsibility. Many people like the idea of power, but they’re quick to abdicate when things get tough. Dodging responsibility is the one thing you can never do, as a school board member. “Our lawyers told us to do it,” won’t fly, because those lawyers will quickly point out, “We advise, but you decide.”

We need people who can hold firm to their decisions, even if the superintendent disagrees. You provide your new housecleaner with vinegar and baking soda. He says, “I only use bleach.” Now, you have a problem. Bleach is bad for your septic system, and no matter what reasoning the housecleaner gives, if your septic system fails, you’re the one paying \$60,000 to replace it. As the homeowner, you must hold firm to your decision, even if it means hiring a new housecleaner.

We need people who seek to serve. The school board does not “own” our school district. They are temporary managers, serving our community. Imagine you’re managing your brother’s property. The landscaping team wants to spray Round Up on all the dandelions, and they’ve got lots of reasons for doing

so. But your brother’s greatest love is his apiary! Your job is to say, “No, you cannot do that.” Even if you hate dandelions. Because your job is to serve your brother’s interests, not your own.

We need people who listen and learn from those they serve. If I were running for the school board, I would be exploring other school board websites and calling previous board members to ask, “What outreach methods work best?”

We need people who respect and advocate firmly for our community’s values. Vashon Island is a heavily artistic, musical, and theater-oriented community. If I were on the school board today, I would work with my fellow board members to direct the superintendent, by saying, “On Vashon Island, art, music and theater are an integral part of our community. These programs will continue to be supported in our schools. Make it so.”

We need a school board that prioritizes Island students first. Our school district, and previous school boards, have set us up to be economically dependent upon a student base that extends beyond our own watery shores. But our community values come first. It is our school district, meant to serve our children, and largely funded by our taxes. Pursuing an educational plan that aligns with our values empowers off-Island families to make an informed choice.

We need a school board that

understands the Open Public Meetings Act, and members who cherish and actively pursue transparency. Silence is not neutral. Keeping our community in the dark is a decision that must be justified.

We need better meetings. We need school board members who engage directly with individuals making public comments at meetings. A single “umbrella comment,” directed at an entire audience (after a dozen or so people have spoken), is inherently disrespectful and thoroughly ineffective – no matter how well-intended. This is a new change in meeting behavior that needs to be reversed. Vashon Island needs school board members who excel at active listening, clarifying questions, authentic responses, and building rapport with community members. We are your equals, and we are your allies.

We need a clear separation of powers. School board meetings should reflect the divide between our elected officials (who answer to us), and the employee hired as superintendent. Blurred lines between these two roles is inappropriate. During board meetings, our school board should sit together, in the center of the room, and our employee (the superintendent) should sit apart. This physical set up makes it clear who is responsible to who and who supervises who.

What do we want from our Island schools? What do our children need to learn? We can’t have it all, so what do we care about most? What makes our Vashon Island community unique, and how can our schools build upon those strengths? If our

Home Waters

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proposed approach:

“We are modeling restorative justice practices and have created goals as it pertains to education for the school community, procedural changes, reparations, and cultural change.”

As one Island born-and-raised mom observed about the school situation, “It’s like a snow-globe that needs to be shaken up really hard, so the snow can even out again.” Clearly, we need legal protections for our children, similar to those that were changed in the past to cover medical patients and college students in Washington state – exactly and simply as Vashon parents and students have point-blank demanded of our board and superintendent.

children are to have the best school experience ever, what will make it great? These are some of the questions I would be asking myself and other islanders, if I were running for the school board.

The Vashon Loop is published monthly



Encounter With A Frog

By Michael Shook

A few weeks ago, my wife returned from taking the Scotties on their morning walk, and informed me she had seen a squashed frog on the road. The younger Scottie, Walter, had lunged for it, no doubt to eat. She at first thought it to be a rat, albeit a misshapen one – but of course, it would be misshapen after being run over. On closer examination, she realized it was a frog, and a rather larger frog than the usual green-brown tree frogs we most commonly see.

I felt a pang of sadness when she told me. This was not just sadness that yet another creature had met its end under the tire of an automobile (joining untold millions of others), but its size caused me to wonder if it was a frog I had had an encounter with a year or so ago.

I was coming home on a spring night, turned into the driveway, and there, at the crest of the first rise, very low to the ground, two bright eyes shone at me, reflecting the headlights of the truck. I stopped quickly, and got out to investigate.

I saw immediately that it was a frog, a fairly big frog for these parts. I approached, and stood by it. Definitely not a bullfrog, but 3 or 4 inches long, with spots prominently arranged upon its back. We looked at each other.

“Get out of the road, small creature,” I said, and gave it a nudge with my foot. Nothing. It sat. Of course, the wretched thing was “caught in the headlights,” and so froze and stayed froze. In retrospect, I should have turned the lights off, but I figured the frog would move along, given more incentive.

So, I nudged it again. Damn if it didn’t shriek, loudly, and piercingly high. I stepped back, surprised. What the hell kind of frog was this? A few moments went by. It sat, looking in my direction – I think it was too short to actually look at me, but it definitely had my feet in its sights. I took a long look at it, to see if it might do

Island Voices

something. Nothing. I carefully nudged it again.

Gaaah! Another high-pitched scream!

I feel compelled to mention here that I am not a person easily frightened by animals. I once, while climbing in the Olympics, awakened at about 10:00 pm to see a black bear not 15 feet away, clawing vigorously on a tree trunk (it was a beautiful night, so we were sleeping sans tent). I watched for a moment, then went back to sleep. I’ve had numerous other interactions with beasts, domestic and wild, some quite large (like the bear, certain elk, the odd bald eagle, etc. – even a friend’s overly friendly Holstein cow – if you don’t think that’s a danger, you’ve never been cornered by an amorous creature that weighs in at 1,500 pounds).

But this ... this amphibian no larger than the palm of my hand ... shrieking at me! It was uncanny, it was weird, it was frankly unnerving. I was flummoxed, a mix of emotions, not least because I also felt guilty for causing it such distress.

I continued to gaze at it, and was about to go back to the truck, to shut off the motor (and lights!), and wait for it to move, when it spun around and hopped off into the brush. I waited to make sure it was well on its way before I drove down to the house.

At home, a quick search online gave me a match – the Northern Leopard Frog. A species listed as “threatened,” once occupying most of the continental United States and lower Canada, its numbers and range now greatly reduced. I was pleased to know that we had one on the property, and hoped we would have more.

I could not tell from the remains of the frog on the road that Cynthia had seen if it was a Leopard, much less the frog I had encountered. I had named him (or her) Chet – Chet being the name I give to any creatures that are on or near our place, be they



Heidi Grimsley

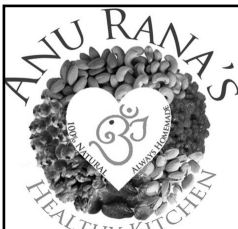
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frog, fowl, or other. I decided to believe it was not, and to further believe that Chet/Chetlina is froggily alive, breeding down in the wetland, and growling out its song alongside the tree frogs.

Useless Skills And Dumb Ideas Part II – Pants On Fire

By Seán Malone and John Sweetman

Gene Amundson and I came up with the first rendition of “concealed carry” long before the National Rifle Association had it as a policy. We found we could make a “zip” gun out of a clothespin, using just a pocket knife and something to bend the spring. We used these at first to shoot spitwads at each another from the back of class.

The advantage of the weapon was that everything could be completely disassembled in a pocket with one hand, thus concealing the thing alongside other useless detritus commonly found in the pockets of 8-year-old boys ... things like rocks, marbles, gum wrappers, and the occasional dead frog.

If asked to turn out our pockets, we had nothing but a bunch of unrelated junk and could plausibly shrug our shoulders and, with as much of an innocent face as we could muster, simply say, “Who? Me?” Well that was the idea, anyway. Somehow Mrs. Little, our teacher, might have suspected something and subsequently moved us to the front of the class, directly in front of her huge desk. In addition, there might have been an implied threat that she would nail our hands to the desk. She was at least ten feet tall and carried a ruler with a metal edge. Not only that, but she had a side business of selling penny candy and baseball cards during recess, teachers probably not being paid well even then.

We were under some pressure to behave, so Gene and I pursued our zip gun warfare outside. We discovered that, outside, we could shoot small rocks better than spitballs, and then we discovered that “strike anywhere” match heads were even better, which led to me being unfairly blamed for setting Gene’s pants on fire.

In one of our battles, Gene snuck up behind me while I was reloading and fired a double match burst. In retaliation, I fired a triple match back at him. They flew a couple of feet and hit him right above his pocket. In beating the flame out, Gene ignited the reserve ammo dump of match heads in his pocket. Burning matches cascaded down from his pockets to the cuff of his pants. It all went downhill from there, as Mrs. Little saw this. Gene went off to get some Vaseline rubbed on his leg, and I was sent to stare into a corner of the room for an hour.

As reparations, Gene demanded that he be allowed to look over my shoulder at the answers to a couple of arithmetic tests. Later on, he expressed gratitude for the help and credited me with the fact that he passed second grade.

Moving on, our next skill was to try to talk like Donald Duck. This took real effort, and we practiced for a month, enduring taunts from my smarty pants sister that we were, “Stupid and annoying and couldn’t you find anything better to do?” This

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Does Vashon REALLY Need Another Levy Lift?

By Scott Harvey

Vashon Island Fire & Rescue has a tax increase on the ballot for this August. The previous VIFR levy, approved in 2017, has grown from \$2.4 million in 2017 to \$5.4 million in 2023. The new proposed levy continues this growth, reaching \$9.2 million by 2030.

Our population has grown by roughly 5% over this timeframe, and total calls have remained somewhat consistent: 1710 in 2018, 1630 in 2022; 2022 incidents are also right in line with the 8-year adjusted average. The serious medical event rate is also stable, and those are handled by Medic One, which has its own levy and management outside of VIFR.

The information sheet for VIFR's levy proposal tells us they have only 13 firefighter/emergency medical technicians available. While true, the 2023 budget already authorizes 20 firefighter/EMTs. Our population is barely growing, the incident rate is stable, and we've yet to see all of these authorized, funded personnel join the department. Do we truly need another six years of significant budget growth for VIFR?

With the current VIFR staff plus the seven new full-time firefighter/EMT hires planned for 2023, all information indicates the department's regular workload should be nicely handled. There are few if any stories of buildings burning

because VIFR was too busy elsewhere, and VIFR's average 7-minute response time is better than for most big cities. In 2022, Vashon averaged one structural fire per month, and the average over the last six years is even lower.

For most of our Island's history, volunteers provided a very flexible pool of responders. One or more of your fellow citizens would get paged, drive over, get their firefighting gear out of the trunk, and help at an incident. Vashon still has some volunteers, though their number has faded. Their flexibility and cost-effectiveness would solve most of the challenges named by the new levy request, and yet VIFR is not currently advertising for volunteer firefighters. This should be happening year-round.

The Chief and Assistant Chief have always been available to respond to calls. The new VIFR Strategic Plan has the Chief and two Deputy Chiefs dedicated to administrative duties. There is no reason they cannot continue to respond to calls, as needed, while accomplishing their administrative duties. Why is it a good plan to discontinue this assistance?

The VIFR plan includes adding two EMTs at the Burton Fire Station to prevent Burton homeowners' insurance from increasing when the Island is rerated this summer. We have two Burton volunteers, but we need six to avoid the increased insurance. How many Burton residents might volunteer, if they knew VIFR only needed four more volunteers to reduce their insurance

costs by \$1,000-2,000?

Here are some other considerations that could help VIFR work better and more cost-effectively.

Partnerships - Our EMTs spend too much time off-Island. Why not add an ambulance service to reduce VIFR transports? With the SeaMar subsidy gone, the Hospital District has over \$1.0 million in unallocated funds, which could subsidize this venture.

Even without Hospital District ambulances, VIFR could still call TRI-Med ambulance service for transport, freeing the emergency responder. Why does VIFR not pursue this for every transport? Since King County Medic One is responsible for all life-threatening incidents, handoff to an ambulance will generally present no danger to the patient, and enables the responders immediate return to service.

Redeploy - After the new firefighters graduate in July, there will be five firefighters on every shift. If VIFR does not have enough volunteers for Burton, why not staff two of the new firefighters there? While a fire engine company normally has four firefighters, it does not have to be housed in the same building. By staffing two firefighters/EMTs in Burton, the south end gets more coverage, with no additional expense to the taxpayer.

Refurbish - Rural emergency vehicles are used less than urban vehicles, and have less "wear and tear." While some VIFR vehicles may be chronologically old, the chassis and many non-moving parts remain

in good condition. That is why some rural fire departments refurbish their vehicles, instead of replacing them.

Bonds - The vehicle and building needs of VIFR would be much better addressed by a bond. It would spread the cost over many years, and lock in the price against future inflation. Fire vehicles are also highly specialized, with lead times of two or more years. If they'll be needed soon, they should be ordered now. There are lenders offering very favorable terms for fire districts.

VIFR must certainly be funded by its public. But the public looks to its agencies to spend money wisely and to always seek cost-effective solutions. Sometimes a failed levy is the catalyst for needed, beneficial changes in plans.

Aging in Place

By Deborah H. Anderson

There is a Halley's Comet watch party at Gaswork's Park on my 110th birthday. I have let the appropriate people know they can roll me up to the top pf the hill in my wheelchair and then put me in the pine box and six feet under the next day.

Now, hearing about Márin Hughes, I am reconsidering that plan. Hughes is an Irish woman who just celebrated her 109th birthday. Wow! Born in 1914, before World War I had even started, think of all the events her life has spanned.

Did they wheel her into her birthday party? Nope. She walked in under her own power, looking to be no more than mid-eighties. After the party, she climbed up the steps of a bus going for a special outing!

I also just discovered surgeons can fix me again - swap out deteriorated bones with titanium. Many of you know I took a hard hit when I was nine in the back seat of a car with a rear-mounted engine by a drunk driver doing 90 mph in a 3,000-pound Oldsmobile. I'm pretty crunched from the L4-5 and below. Thanks to medical science, I may be able to walk up that hill for the aforementioned watch party. Yeah, medical team extraordinaire!

The last few weeks have also included the example of a friend who just passed, a few weeks after his 102nd birthday. We were bridge buddies for years at Camp Burton Family Camp. His example, how he lived his life, has encouraged me to reaffirm my commitment to physical

and cognitive health practices that increase the odds of being at the watch party. To appropriate a phrase from another setting, fitness is a practice, not a point of arrival. It is ongoing, daily, consistent.

I know that staying curious and embracing the unknown is the antidote to craving comfort and familiarity as my primary lived experience. I want my life to be an ever-expanding adventure, not shriveling or becoming diminished.

Erik Erikson, the German-American developmental psychologist, defines this choice as "stagnation vs generativity." "Aging in Place" takes on new meaning when one considers a continuation of exploring new opportunities. Independent living and adaptive living engender the resources and supports to embrace and engage with new ideas, joys, awakenings, practices, and delights with gusto.

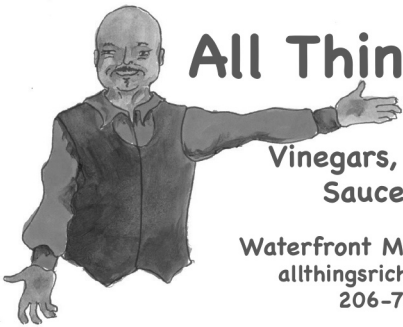
But what of collective generativity? What of generativity within a community? We are, as a community, at a worthy crossroad. What will we choose?

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An Islander's Response to "Our Electric Vehicle Future"

By Nellie Bly

In re Marc Elzenbeck's "Our Electric Vehicle Future," a persistently unasked question is, "How does the life cycle impact of a new electric vehicle compare to keeping and maintaining an existing internal combustion vehicle?"

Humans have aspired to unsustainable lifestyles, once reserved for kings and nobles, through a series of unsustainable means: slavery, then solid fuel consumption for steam power, then liquid fuels. We have not adjusted our lifestyle aspirations to something more sustainable and less consumptive, except when camping. We still want to live like kings. And that takes a lot of co-opted energy.

At the community level, hydro, solar, and atomic energy inputs have mitigated household dependency on solid and liquid fuels, and I'll avoid addressing the merits of those for the moment.

But in our household transportation, we still rely on liquid fuels, whether in our own vehicles, or in those of our delivery drivers.

There are good reasons why gasoline and diesel became the dominant fuel sources for vehicles and power equipment for five generations. The energy in a gallon of liquid fuel is roughly equivalent to one man's sustained physical labor

for a week. In that analysis, a gallon of gas might be worth about \$500. And that leads to the core of one prevalent misunderstanding: how much power it actually takes to move a vehicle and occupants, particularly at higher speeds. We underestimate the power in liquid fuels, and the power it takes to accelerate and move us around in safety and comfort.

Since the early 1990s and the advent of widely available engines designed for fuel injection, cars have become extremely good at wresting nearly all the energy from each drop of gasoline. (Many mechanics agree that build quality dropped around 2007, so that decade and-a-half was the sweet spot.)

By the way, 10% ethanolized gas is a con foisted to create a triply subsidized corporate farm market for #2 feed corn. Gasoline efficiency drops in lockstep with the percentage of ethanol, and a major reason your modern car is needlessly complex is so it can run on this garbage fuel.

Liquid-fueled cars need not be major emitters. Low-temp catalytic converters, ubiquitous in mining operations, enable extremely low tailpipe emissions. (I ran an ambulance fleet, and retrofitted them.) Some experiments with low-temp catalysts on radiators, to clean the outside air passing through for cooling, yielded internal combustion engine vehicles that actually made the air cleaner in already smoggy environments, like LA and Mexico City.

Continued on Page 10

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Freedom Cells

By Blaz Fremont

Sick of the global hybrid war waged against humanity by shiny, smiling suit-puppets spouting identically scripted, caring, altruistic psyop blather designed to weaponize your own altruism and empathy against you?

Tired of being a terrified experimental pincushion for occult Dark Lords hell-bent on trans-humanizing you into a supine Smart City-dwelling slave-soul enveloped in a genetically hacked graphene body-antennae, unknowingly receiving approved thoughts and feelings from our relentlessly expanding artificial intelligence-managed, electro-magnetic panopticon?

Frustrated that you have been lied to your whole life about everything, leaving you completely unprepared to face the whirling multi-tentacular techno-tsunami of economic collapse, smirking authoritarianism, and looming war of all against all?

Well, grab your cup of Minglement joe and stay a while as I reveal the most significant emergence of world-wide communalist action since the Summer of Love.

Freedom Cells are, "An organized yet decentralized movement of mutual aid groups offering education and skill-sharing, with the mission to promote freedom through self-sufficiency, economic empowerment, and peaceful activism." The core principles of freedom cells are "localization, decentralization, solutions," and to be "focused, apolitical, [and] nonviolent."

Cells are local groups of approximately eight people who live together or collaborate from where they live for the purposes of hosting skill-shares, ensuring autonomous food production and storage, setting up encrypted communications (e.g., Session, Status, or Briar apps), establishing independent economies (e.g., time bank labor exchanges or local employment trading systems), and developing alternative currencies and trading methods, all while offering ad hoc mutual aide to members.

After 20 years of research, psychologist Robert Podolsky (author of "Flourish: An Alternative to Government and Other Hierarchies") found that humans are optimally creative and innovative in groups of eight, called "Octologues." Smaller groups tend to lack resources for autonomy, while larger groups tend to calcify into hierarchies and cliques.

According to Derrick Broze, activist and proponent for the Freedom Cell movement, "Cell members organize themselves in a decentralized manner, with no member having authority over other participants. The cells work towards empowering one another and the network as a whole ... [via] education, peaceful non-compliance, and the creation of parallel institutions."

Over time, cells affiliate with other cells, thus expanding organically as needs and interests permit. Eventually, it is hoped that many cells concentrated in a given region would be able to establish

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alternative institutions to serve the needs of all local cells. The Freedom Cell Network currently has 39,000 members worldwide.

Political organization within cells echoes the community political norms of the Quakers, and is based on the Socratic Circle Method developed by Gerard Endenburg in the Netherlands in the 1980s. Endenburg merged these ideas into "Sociocracy ... a peer governance system based on consent," in which decision-making is delegated to small groups with a defined aim and full authority in a given domain. Sociocracy avoids the inertia of consensus-based, large-group decision-making that has paralyzed many alternative communities in the past. Instead, Sociocracy delegates responsibility for a given issue to a small group, which must then reach consensus before taking action. Consensus is thus more likely to be achieved, while also avoiding some pitfalls of democracy, such as permanent, voiceless minorities, or dominant hierarchies.

After everything we have lived through over the last 3 years, do you still trust the fusion of government

and corporations (aka, Western crypto-fascism) to serve your interests? Do you still believe the ocean of lies? Come on Vashon, the time to wake up is now! Take your destiny in your own hands. Connect with like minds and hearts who want to be free from the System. Let's stand up to create the independent lives we want for ourselves and our children.



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Summer Gardening

By Kim Cantrell & Little Bird Gardens

Hello, sunshine. It’s so good to see you! Thankfully, we have made it through one of the coldest and rainiest spring seasons in a long time. The daffodils did bloom longer than usual, with their bright blooms alongside tulips in their vibrant display of color. What an exceptional treat, and we expect a lot more of that this summer with plants and trees alive with the buzz of bees, birds, and all essential wildlife that serves the health of our ecosystems and landscapes.

Here are a few things to remember for your gardens this summer.

Choosing the right plants

For best results, considering how much sun or shade, the type of soil, and the level of watering a plant needs, is vital. Shade-loving plants are happiest in areas that enjoy 3 to 6 hours of morning sun versus the intense heat of late afternoon. Acer palmatum, i.e. Japanese maple, finds these conditions ideal. Sun-loving plants want 6 or more hours, but even then, there is some nuance to consider. Some plants that say “sun” might need part sun versus full sun. For example, Viburnum davidii can survive in full sun, but performs better in part-sun, while shrubs like Ceanothus can take the sun’s heat all day long.

Your plants are alive and need food, just like you.

We all know watering and fertilizing are essential, but we often

forget that we must step it up during the summer! I like to water in the morning to allow better absorption. Remember, water the ground as much as possible, versus your plant’s leafy and flowering areas. Our gardens benefit from a seasonal feeding of fertilizer to provide nutrients. I prefer composting over all other methods for my ornamental plants. My native plants already get many of the nutrients they need from our soil, so fertilizing is unnecessary, which is why I am a big fan of native planting.

Good bug or bad bug?

Natural control methods for aphids, cabbage moths, or other damaging pests are what I always recommend. Beneficial insects like lacewings can keep populations in check. A spray of water on aphids will wash them off the infected area, and you can cover your brassicas with a floating row cover to keep the cabbage moths from laying their eggs. Cleaning up rose petals and leaves will help reduce black spot. If you are unsure whether that bug you found is beneficial or harmful, take a picture and look it up! Insects make the world go round, and using poison to defend against harmful insects can also remove the beneficial ones. So please, be mindful!

Mulch, mulch, and mulch again

Mulching is the best method for moisture retention, weed suppression, and soil temperature regulation, regardless of the season. It promotes a more robust soil structure that will require less watering and fertilizer over time. Organic mulches such as

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arborist chips, grass clippings, leaves, and fern fronds laid in beautiful patterns will all offer effective mulching benefits. Remember, a 2"-4" layer is all that is needed.

Deadheading and pruning

Deadheading keeps your flowers producing longer and extends bloom time. However, knowing which plants to deadhead and which to leave alone is crucial for maintaining a healthy garden. Leaving some plants with their spent flowers will provide valuable food sources for wildlife. If you have trouble with your perennials getting leggy, try the “Chelsea Chop” early in the season. When your perennial gets to about half its intended height, take some clean pruning shears and cut back the

stems by one-third to one-half, making clean cuts just above a leaf node or bud. This method makes your perennials bushier and less likely to flop over.

Have fun this summer, and plant something unusual in your garden. I’ve had success with melons in past years, but this year, I will give okra a try, thanks to our new hot summers.

Come stroll the gardens in our nursery, and visit our gift shop. We love garden talk, especially if it keeps your fruit and veggie beds happy.

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

Beyond Begonias

Native and Medicinal Plants for Vashon

By Diane Emerson and Michael Laurie, Dragonfly Nursery

Growing up in the Midwest, I (Diane) found it amazing that Monarch butterflies would lay their eggs on only one plant – milkweed. I thought that was the exception for butterflies. As it turns out, research indicates that 90% of butterflies and moths are like Monarchs – they will only lay their eggs on one specific NATIVE plant.

These native plants are not only important to the butterflies and moths that depend on them – the very best food for raising songbird babies are nice, fat caterpillars. And birds need a lot of them. Recent research found that, during the 16 days between hatching and fledging, a clutch of chickadee chicks will eat more than 9,000 caterpillars. Even hummingbirds raise their chicks on caterpillars. The connection is clear: More native plants = more caterpillars = more songbirds.

Why can’t most caterpillars just eat any plant? Our native plants evolved together over millennia with the fungal networks, insects, birds, fish, invertebrates, and mammals that depend on them. Caterpillars depend on native plants for their very survival.

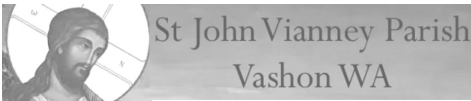
Since learning how important native plants are to butterflies and birds (and more), I’ve started composting the non-native plants in my part of our nursery. Not selling them at a discount, not giving them away. Composting them. Now I

specialize in native plants, and learn more every week about their beauty, benefits, and how to grow them.

I (Michael) am focused on growing and selling medicinal and culinary plants. I have been growing culinary plants in Western Washington for over 40 years and medicinal plants on Vashon for over 25 years. I have taken many classes, read many books, and attended a number of conferences on medicinal plants. Through having grown over 100 species of medicinal plants on Vashon for so long, I have learned which ones are easier to grow here, and which conditions most of them like the best.

I have long thought that it makes sense for everyone to grow at least a few plants that can help them with their health issues, or common health concerns. Like arnica to help with sore muscles, valerian to help with falling asleep, osha to help with congestion and fighting viruses, and licorice for a wide range of things.

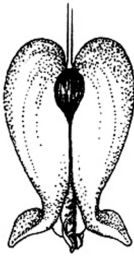
Feel free to come by our booth at the Saturday Farmers Market to see our wide selection of culinary and medicinal plants, and to talk about them with us.



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Love Letters to the Island

By Rich Osborne

The Vashon Loop invites Islanders to share what they appreciate about Vashon-Maury Island and Island life. Send your letter to editor@vashonloop.com

June 2017, I was selling my foods at the Vashon Farmers’ Market. John Moore and I were helping other vendors set up their booths. One week, John said “Rich, you act like a Rotarian, being of service to others.” I replied “Thanks.” John invited me to a Rotary meeting. To ‘meet Islanders who share our mindset.’

I came to the next Rotary meeting. I met a group of men and women who were hard working, successful, and organized. Smart people who would come into a room, check their ego at the door and ask “How can I help the mission?”

In 2017, I had idea, to provide free

ferry tickets home to islanders who had to go off island for medical treatment. It became the ‘Home2Vashon Project’. My Rotary sisters and brothers were the first to offer help. We continue to this day.

My other Rotary project is ‘Music Mends Minds’. Every Tuesday at 1:30 pm, we have a sing-along at the Senior Center, for people with dementia. Singing makes a huge difference in our quality of life. Rotary has dozens of other projects.

I admire and respect my Rotary family. We really are making a difference, to so many people around the world.

Editor’s Note: To learn more about Music Mends Minds, Please see Rich’s article “Come Sing With Us at Music Mends Minds” published in The Vashon Loop, Sept. 2022.

MINGLEMENT

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From Eva - Probiotic Asparagus Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 bunch of washed asparagus, approximately 15 spears, woody ends trimmed. Medium-thickness asparagus spears with roughly the same circumference work best in this recipe.
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard seed
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 whole clove of garlic, peeled
- 2 cups brine (1 tablespoon of coarse or sea salt, dissolved into 2 cups of room-temperature water)
- 1-quart Mason jar
- Yield: This small-batch ferment makes one quart; fermentation time is approximately 2 weeks at room temperature.

1. Chop your asparagus spears crosswise into 2-3 inch pieces – a slanted cut is always pretty – or use whole spear.
2. Place your seasonings in the bottom of the quart jar; place asparagus spears over the seasonings and pour brine into the Mason jar until there is a layer of brine over the spears. You don’t want your brine level above the shoulders of the jar.
3. With the quart mason jar – Ensure that veggies are completely submerged at all times (you may need to use a weight), then cover the whole thing with a cloth napkin and secure it with a rubber band.
4. Let sit at room temperature (somewhere between 64° and 75° is best) for 1-2 weeks, or until your desired acidity has been reached, then remove the weight, close the jar with its normal lid and stick them in the fridge. Enjoy!



The Island Epicure – Cold Soup for Hot Days

By Marj Watkins and Suzanna Leigh

This summer is promising to be plenty hot! How can we stay out of the kitchen and away from the hot stove and still serve nourishing, satisfying meals? Cold soups are refreshing, nourishing, and surprisingly nutritious. Here are some ideas.

Marj’s Cold Potato Soup

Make this ahead in the morning when it is still cool, giving the soup a chance to chill by dinnertime.

Ingredients

- 4 cups peeled, cubed white potatoes
- ½ cup water or broth
- ½ cup half-and-half and ½ cup almond milk or 1/3 cup cream and 1/3 cup milk
- 1 vegetable bullion cube
- Salt to taste
- Dash or 2 of cayenne pepper
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 bunch green onion tops (6-10), white part only, chopped

Scrub the potatoes with a vegetable brush. Cut into small cubes. Rinse them well in water. Simmer them in clean water or broth, for about 10 minutes; retain the cooking water.

Combine any remaining cooking water, the chopped onion whites, the bullion cube, salt, cayenne pepper, and butter. Cook for 1-2 minutes. Taste. Add more seasoning if desired.

Add the dairy to the soup, and

combine.

Serve the soup chilled, with a sprinkling of chopped green onion tops, or serve it hot on those unexpectedly chilly days.

Smorbrode

A family favorite is something we call smorbrode. A cross between an open-faced sandwich and a smorgasbord, it is basically a slice of bread with a choice of things you like to put on it. We like:

- Sliced luncheon meats
- Sliced cheese
- Lettuce
- Sliced tomatoes and cucumber
- Pickled herring
- Sweet, hot mustard
- Mayonnaise
- Pickle relish
- Gluten-free bread
- Olives and pickled beets

The toppings are served separately, so that each person can choose what they like. It is a quick and complete meal, with no stove involved. But at age 98, Marj doesn’t like running back and forth from the kitchen to put all the ingredients on the table, so she waits until she has help to create this meal.



The Footloose Foodie

Hello! I would like to introduce myself and why I write. I am your “Footloose Foodie.” My plan is to visit the various businesses that offer food on and around Vashon, sharing my experience here in The Loop. I have no nefarious intent, nor will I write unkindly about my experience. Honesty served with kindness is easier to palate!

I write for transparency in business information with my honest opinion. Yes, my opinion and not that of this publication. Food has been my life since I was 15 years old. My first job was a dishwasher, busboy, and night cleaner of a small restaurant in Seattle. Then, a college degree in hotel restaurant management. Literally, I fell in love with the concept of feeding people. Planning, prepping, cooking, sharing great food and service with and for many different people! Purposefully keeping the business financially solvent and resalable!

I am looking forward to sharing my experience as I indulge in the offerings and services our local businesses offer. Perhaps my personal experience will present information to help residents, tourists and the other folk who live, work, or just visit our Island home, find a meal to their liking.

I look forward to visiting and enjoying a meal and the ambiance offered. I must be out “n” about now, Footloose so to speak! Lol! and enjoy a bit of what this Island has to offer a “Foodie” like myself!

Monday evening on Vashon, the pickins’ are slim. So, I decided on

Casa Bonita! Mexican food most never fails. I am not into spicy food that burns away flavor buds before they get a chance to do their job. So I ask how hot the menu item is. Notice I did not ask how spicy. I love spice, just not the burn!

The specials seemed like a good choice. Chicken wings tend to be a bit spicy, but hey this is a “Mexican Food Restaurant,” and I expect some burn in the spices. I opted for the Chili Colorado with refried beans and rice. I was a bit leery, as I have been disappointed in the past. Lack of consistency burns more than a ghost pepper!

A stickler for constancy in menu items is important. Far too many times, I have told friends or visitors to try someplace or order something, only to be told it was less than I said it would be. Disappointed!

Noticing a raise in pricing in the past 4 months, I understood. Being on the purchasing end of restaurant foods, I understand the need to adjust prices. On the same note, if I ask, I expect the truth! Transparency is another concern of mine.

Thank you Casa Bonita, you did not disappoint! The Chili Colorado was great. The servers were on spot with making me comfortable with my dining experience.

I am already looking forward to my next foodie adventure! This first article was more an introduction of myself and my purpose-fed direction. Please feel free to write “The Loop” and help this Foodie find fodder!

Suzanna's Gazpacho

In a blender, put:

- One can of stewed or chopped tomatoes (Italian seasoned tomatoes are good!)
- Other raw vegetables to taste, such as a chopped celery stick; ½ red or green pepper; peeled, chopped cucumber; a few tablespoons of chopped onion; one clove garlic smooshed in a garlic press.
- 2-3 tbsp olive oil
- A dash of pepper, cayenne powder, or tabasco.
- Blend until smooth. Serve with crackers and cheese, or a cheese and fruit plate. Serves four.



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The Unadulterated True Story of ... Meditation

By Tracey Stover

Meditation is the fifth pillar of this series – the five pillars of health. The pillars of breath, hydration, nutrition, exercise, and meditation are equally important to maintaining health. I sincerely hope this series of articles have provided insightful ways to promote your well-being. If the body is healthy, happiness is a much easier endeavor.

Volumes have been written on meditation; this is but a snapshot. Essentially, meditation is the key to walking in awareness because it can align body, speech, and mind. When we can choose between thoughts of stress or a thought that enlivens us by learning to focus, we have set ourselves free.

Cultivating the ability to focus on what we choose, by not getting caught in the swirl of thinking, especially stressful thoughts, is a skill. In my practice, I have learned to incorporate the peaceful, focused awareness, meditation generates into the rest of my life. As the observer of my thoughts, I am less easily swept down the rabbit-hole of my latest drama – I am not enough, I don't have enough, I am frustrated with ...

We all know what it feels like to jump on the runaway train of thinking ... It is because we believe the story we are telling ourselves. However, by practicing observing thoughts, we learn to create space between ourself and thinking. It's

Health Matters

easier if I remind myself, "I don't even know if this thought is true." Most thoughts are not true. Before you know it, all of one's stories have less power. I am more likely to investigate my premise. What I repeat has more power.

Learning to focus and calm the mind stimulates the brain to release hormones that support peace and calm. Meditation is not the end of the journey, it is an essential step. Meditation helps to reduce stress, it increases peace and calm, which is an inner medicine that helps heal the body. It also transforms the body into an action-ready, fully functional body, able to respond to life swiftly and effectively. Mediation helps us attain self-realization. Think of it like hygiene for the mind.

In a world that keeps us distracted, most of us in the West are wound up like a top (the old-fashioned children's toy). Once we pull the string, we spin in all directions. It is essential to learn to focus on what we choose – and not be distracted by the latest personal or societal drama.

Here is something to consider: By meditating, we are a peaceful presence, a powerful reflection of equanimity for those we love, and really for all beings. In the 1980s, several meditation groups began researching its effects in cities with high crime rates. In 1976, a group practicing Transcendental Meditation found that when 1% of a community

practiced, crime rates reduced by 16%. This was called the Maharishi Effect.


In 2007-2010, a group was formed to meditate during the economic downturn. The leading experts of the time claimed this was the first economic downturn since WWII where crime rates did not rise during the downturn. Since then, several meditation studies have been performed around the world; in all situations, including war-torn countries, they demonstrated similar results. A relatively small group of meditators with virtuous intentions in fact become powerful conditions for peace in the world.

Start with 1-5 minutes a day; before you know it, this will increase. Relaxation is the key. Allow your spine to be straight but not rigid, let

the jaw relax, gaze soften, hands rest lightly on the knees. You can use a flower or candle to gaze upon. As you maintain focus, listen to sounds, feel the sensations beneath your fingers; this helps the mind focus and stay present.

Even if life derails us, by cultivating the meditation muscle, we more easily get back on track. No one can take this from us, and only we can do it. It is our birthright. At the gym, we build our strength, and we don't stop once it's achieved. Not at all; we rejoice in our achievement and incorporate working out as part of our routine. You've got this! Have fun cultivating the inner muscle of meditation; enjoy the peace and happiness, internally and externally, on the path to greater awareness.

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Pay Cash

Continued from Page 1

machine whipped around and said, “I love that! Thank you!”

I stepped around the counter to chat further with the C&P Coffee owner. She pointed out that their “profit margin” on a single cup of coffee runs about 30 cents, which matches the “per transaction” fee charged by most banking institutions. Meaning, when you buy a cup of Joe and pay with a card – they earn nothing. Zip. Zero. Nada. And, depending on the card and the “rewards” it offers its users, the store could actually end up losing money.

There are a lot of “behind the scenes” credit card and debit card fees. Every business owner I talk with mentions something new, leaving all of our brains spinning. Here’s what isn’t confusing. These “fees” serve as an ever-increasing “Bank Tax.” Meaning, we are paying for the privilege of using our own money. It’s like an extra sales tax – except we don’t vote on it, and the money does not go into our communal treasury.

If you use plastic to purchase \$50 worth of produce at the Farmer’s Market, your bank collects \$1.80 from that farmer. If 40 other customers that day do the same, that farmer loses \$72 in profit. Over the market season (20 weekends), that farmer pays a bank tax of \$1,440. All because we’re avoiding the “inconvenience” of stopping at the ATM, which is a 30-45 second walk away?

Here’s the good news! Unlike government taxes, these bank taxes

can be avoided. So, why don’t we? Because of the so-called rewards. Most people with a strong “plastic habit” are making a mathematically intelligent decision. My sister-in-law recently told me, “We pay for everything with our credit cards, to get the air miles.” If this makes sense to you, don’t feel bad. Reward card campaigns are well-funded, heavily researched, exquisitely planned, and expertly promoted. They’re also predatory.

David Hinchman, owner of Vashon Print & Design, has been a great source of insight and detailed information with regard to the back end of these transactions. As he put it, “Nothing is free.”

The hard truth is, businesses pay a fee every time we use plastic, and that fee counts as a “cost of doing business.” Business owners can’t afford to pay these fees out of their own pocket, so it gets embedded into the price of goods and services.

If you think this is a small issue, think again. When local business owners showed me their electronic system tallies this past month, it was not unusual to find that 90% of transactions were plastic. Maybe we should shop like our parents shopped and use our island’s many ATMs?

This summer, adopt one new habit. Hit up your favorite ATM when you come into town & give it some love! Then go shopping, and smile at your local business owner as you hand them bills, and not fees. Together, we can make a notable dent in the cost of doing business and living on this Island, and that’s a great goal for all of us to have.

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An Islanders' Response

Continued from Page 6

Analyses and characterizations of emissions from “transportation” that fail to break out commercial and private road vehicle impacts, and break out air and shipping, are inherently suspect.

The worst of air transport emissions are deposited high in the atmosphere, where they persist the longest, with the highest adverse impacts. At this time, I do not believe high altitude jet travel is currently possible with effective emission mitigation.

Shipping, from cargo to cruises, relies on filthy bunker oil, and nearly always with no effective emission mitigation. These impacts lay directly on the sea surface, where the majority of nature’s carbon offsetting occurs, via algae metabolism. However, unlike air travel, emissions from shipping can be (and for some countries, already are) readily addressed with exhaust scrubbing technology.

There are, in fact, many ways to reduce one’s carbon footprint. More next month.

AtWork!

Continued from Page 2

exciting success for him is that I was able last week to send him on a task and have that task completed without me or his job coach. That was such a big win. For me and for him. Because that means he’s gaining skills, gaining independence. That independence, the way his self-esteem is increasing – that is such a big win.

A: Is there a lot of laughter that happens at work at Little Bird Gardens?

S: Yes. Yes, yes. Anthony has a great sense of humor and I love it to be fun.

A: Susan, is there anything else you want to say to the Vashon community about supported employment?

S: If you can do it ... do it! Include somebody. Change the way you think about your employees and what they mean to our community. What they mean to your business. Make space.

For more information about AtWork! and how to begin services, visit atworkwa.org or call (425) 274-4000. For Island businesses wishing to discuss partnerships with AtWork!, contact Aly at AlyN@atworkwa.org.

Pants on Fire

Continued from Page 4

seemed a bit of an unnecessary critique coming from one who was speaking “pig Latin” to her friends.

Sean’s Mom spoke pig Latin, but not his Father. Their three kids in the back seat of the Oldsmobile weren’t privy to their private conversations until years later when we learned to speak Pig-Latin ourselves. Dad’s inability to speak pig Latin was probably due to his pride in his ability to speak the “King’s English.”

John’s sister closed her bedroom door on us, and my mom sent us outside with the chickens and ducks, threatening to make us live with them. We got good at this, but after trying the duck talk in class, and being sent up to the front desks again under the severe eye of Mrs. Little, we only used our skill in secret club meetings (in which Gene and I were the only members).

We had other useless skills, too. Like driving a stick shift, using a rotary phone, riding backwards on a bike with no hands, and seeing who could hold one’s breath the longest. I guess calling the cows into the barn was another skill developed and now useless.

The riding the bike backwards thing was never fully developed due to technical complications involving bandaids and stinging applications of iodine. I tried that bike skill riding in front of my secret girlfriend. Sadly, it was her bike I used. I’m sorry about the bent spokes. Maybe that was why I secretly broke up with her. When I apologized to her several days later, she noticed the iodine stains on my arms and said I should stop doing stupid things. She probably had been talking to my sister.

Thank goodness we still can whistle, although not as loud, and we only need that skill when crab season gets revived.

Dogs in cars need shade



Shade spots are at a premium, but while we may all want to climb back into a cool car, the folks traveling with their canine companions and furry family members have no other option. Please preserve shade spots for workers on a lunch break and families with dogs.

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This Could Be Your Ad!

Terms Of Concern – Convenience

By March Twisdale

When we hear something said often enough, we have a human tendency to believe it is true. This is known as the illusory truth effect: Hearing or reading a claim, especially repeatedly, makes you more likely to think it’s true. And it’s used against us, again and again.

When businesses hire advertisers to promote their product, they want to do more than capture our attention. They want to put their product imagery, tagline, and jingle into our heads. Permanently. They want to gain our belief, lodge themselves within our memories, and craft our habits. One example of this is the banking industry. They charge us a fee every time we leave our cash in the bank and go shopping with their debit or credit cards. And we do it ... again and again. Why?

The immediate answer, usually given with a shrug, is that “It’s more convenient.” But is it?

This idea has been repeated to the point where no one questions it. After all, if everyone is saying it, it must be true, right? Or ... not. As it turns out, shopping with a debit or credit card is arguably less convenient than using cash. Don’t believe it? That’s okay. Neither did I until someone said “it’s more convenient” so nonchalantly that I thought, “Wait a minute – is it really?” A few minutes later, I had my answer.

The simplicity of cash is extremely convenient. Let’s say I want to buy a latte at Café Luna. I stop at

PSCCU, withdraw \$20, buy my coffee, and that’s it. The transaction is over. Done.

Imagine that I buy that same latte with a debit card? I buy my coffee and walk out of the store, but the transaction isn’t completed. It’s still a lingering issue. At the end of the day, my bank will tally up all of my transactions, and that latte could be the reason I end up paying \$35 or more on an overdraft penalty.

What if I buy my latte with a credit card? I buy my coffee, walk out of the store, and just like the debit card, the transaction lingers. I have to watch the mail for my monthly credit card bill, check that there are no erroneous charges, and pay the bill on time to avoid sizeable late fees. Even if I set up auto-payment, I still have to track that payment date. If I don’t, and my checking account can’t cover the monthly bill – I pay a hefty overdraft penalty.

I’m not sure what’s worse. The illusory truth effect and our ready acceptance of frequent messaging, or the idea that “living a life of convenience” has become a life goal in and of itself? Either way, when you hear someone say, “I do _____ because it’s convenient,” it might make sense (and dollars) to give it some thought and make up your own mind.



Una Oración a Nuestra Señora

By Jane Valencia

Mis abuelos hablaban español, yo solo aprendí a hablar un poquito, pero ahora estoy tratando de aprenderlo. En honor a mis abuelos, me gustaría contarles una historia muy pequeña y decir una pequeña oración. ¿Les parece bien?

Gracias, queridos lectores.

Un día, estaba en el Jardín del Rosario en la Iglesia Católica de San Juan Vianney, y al final de mi tiempo ahí, noté pequeños seres viajando de un lado a otro a Nuestra Señora de Vashon. ¡Entonces noté que hay un nido de avispas bajo las manos en oración de Nuestra Señora!

Mientras trataba de decidir qué hacer, compuse esta oración.

Una Oración a Nuestra Señora

Madre Misericordiosa de la Gentileza y la Fuerza
Espero que guíes a tus pequeñas y
fervientes protectoras
las avispas
para que habiten en el bosque o en otro lugar
donde es poco probable que la gente se aventure.

Que todos los hijos de Dios, humanos
y criaturas por igual,
logren encontrar armonía unos con otros,
seguridad y paz.

¡Amén!

Con el vaivén de ancianos y niños en este lugar en particular, imagino que, probablemente, las avispas, al ser fervientes protectoras, entiendan – a grandes rasgos – por qué su nido ya no reside bajo las manos de Nuestra Señora. Sin embargo, la Santa Madre es la protectora de todos los hermosos seres de la tierra, y se que ella alberga a esta familia rayada en lugares secretos, conocidas solo por ella.

Gracias a Cynthia Sadurni por ayudarme con mi español.

For English translation, visit this article at vashonloop.com

Llaughing Llamas Chronicles



By Daniel Hooker

Al Pacino has taken up knitting for his new movie.

Scarf Face.

- From my landlady, Lynn Simpson

You have to be aware of your children's balanced diet, because if they eat a box of granola in the morning, they might turn out to be serial killers!

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and want help?



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Wednesday: July 19th

This is for health
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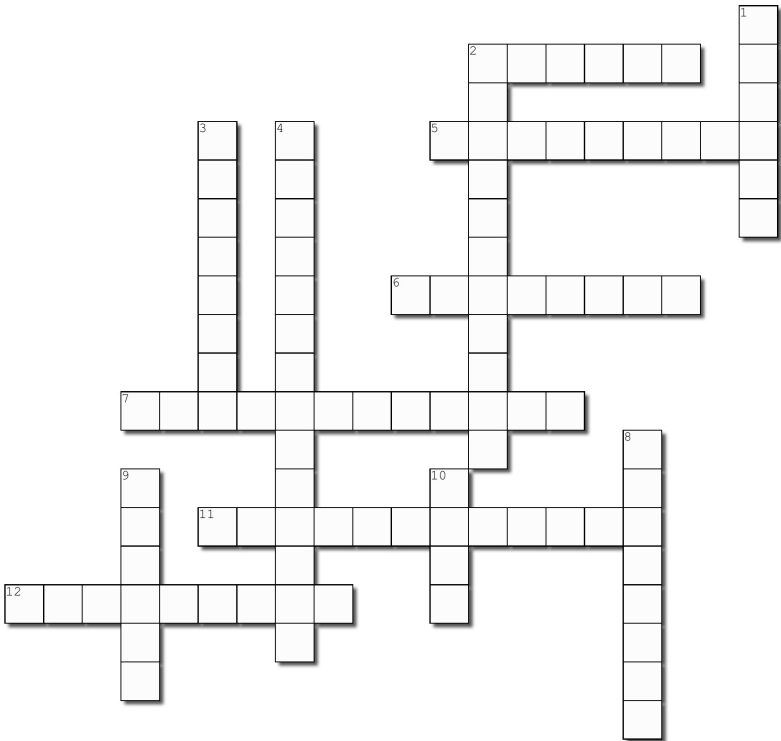
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Answer Key will be provided online (vashonloop.com) once we have a winner, or by the 15th, whichever comes first.

Lazy Days of Summer

Imagine yourself in your favorite place, warm and cool, relaxed and energized, and with all the time in the world...



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

- 2. The city of Seattle is named after him, Chief _____ was a Suquamish and Duwamish chief.
- 5. In 2022, King County banned all types of _____, including sparklers and smoke bombs.
- 6. The perfect snack, midsummer, red or yellow, firm, sweet and tart.
- 7. Some build castles out of brick or stone, we build _____.
- 11. Did you bring the graham crackers, chocolate bars and _____?
- 12. Where bonfires burn, tides rise and fall, crabs crawl under a wide, wooden bridge, and dogs run _____.

Down

- 1. The best thing to do from 1-3pm? Take a summer _____!
- 2. Salmon will soon return, up this winding creek, filled with dappled light and birdsong
- 3. When I was young, summer _____ seemed longer.
- 4. Where else does everyone go on a Saturday morning?
- 8. The strawberries are long gone, but let's have a _____ anyway!
- 9. I _____, you _____, we all _____ for ice cream!
- 10. Pirates, soccer, taekwondo, parkour, circus, sailing, theater...you name it, we have a summer _____ for it!

Aries (March 20-April 19)

You are standing at an intersection of many possibilities, with more options than you can handle. If you don't feel this is true, first think in terms of two main potential realities to choose from, and you will see that those contain others.

Many times in the past you would have been thrilled to find yourself where you are today, with the potential that you possess. You have all the ingredients, but this meal is not going to get up and cook itself. The courage, the initiative and the willingness to invest your time and energy into your own cause are things that you alone can bring. And when you take that step, you're likely to find you have any help and support that you need. But you must lead the way.

Taurus (April 19-May 20)

Jupiter in your sign may feel like an invitation to drop anchor and stay put somewhere for a while. Yet the essence of your current astrology is your capacity to make spontaneous choices. Usually this idea makes you nervous; you usually like to think things through, and have all your homework done before you even try a new restaurant. However, you have sufficient resources to give you room for error, which is also room to benefit from experiments.

As the weeks unfold, however, you're likely to want to settle in a little more. So take your opportunities for new places, sights and sounds as you can. When the upcoming Venus retrograde (which begins in July) starts to draw near, you may decide your backyard or neighborhood is the place to be for a while. Meanwhile, wherever you may be, remember that ideas increase by giving them away, and when you feed someone or something you care about, you feed your soul. The hunger you may be feeling is your reminder that you have one.

Gemini (May 20-June 21)

You may find yourself addressing an important issue that you were sure was resolved. Mostly, it is. Whatever may be manifesting is some kind of last gasp, or a matter you may have overlooked. Algorithms don't go away easily. So take your time and work this out. As you do so, you may discover some wider or deeper connections that you were wondering about.

If you have not made one particular discovery during this time, you're in a great position to make it now. You have far more available to you than you think, in terms of both spiritual and material resources. Moreover, you are in a position to manage and allocate the flow of resources within your community—including putting the right people together with one another. You've not been accustomed to taking this kind of leadership role any time lately. But using your intelligence suits you well in whatever form you may get to do it.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

It's rare that you wake up and find yourself in a whole new environment. Maybe you've had the experience of moving cities with no special plan, and waking up that first morning realizing you can create your life in a whole new way. Well, the cosmos has moved around you. Whole new territories of your life have opened up and been illuminated over the past few weeks. If you're the kind of Cancer who stays home a lot, now is the time to get yourself outside.

Your interests are what is tactile, warm, emotional and recognizably human. If you keep those senses open, it will be easier to notice who else is doing so. When you encounter a creator, how



Planet Waves

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



awake are they? How passionate? How conscious of their potential impact are they? How devoted to understanding their world and its interrelations? Thinking about these things will help you take your philosophy of life to a new level. And as you do, you will find little pockets of affinity-intelligent people who consciously create their world.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

Jupiter is summoning you upward, toward new goals, a bigger vision for your professional life. This involves wanting more recognition for what you do. However, I would draw a line between recognition and reputation. It may seem subtle, but someone giving you an award (recognition) is different from your clients or customers counting on you to do an excellent job (reputation). You now have the benefit of a yearlong transit of the "greater benefic" Jupiter moving through your house of reputation and responsibility (Jupiter in Taurus, your solar 10th house).

You thrive on substance and depth, though these are values that are being wiped away from the new world as it is emerging. The real work of the 10th house is gradually becoming known for what you're good at, because you're good at it. Many factors indicate that you are due for a rise in profile, though this comes from the ground up rather than from the top down.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

Speaking from long experience working with people as their astrologer, I can tell you that most never get beyond the control of their families. Most of this involves guilt, which is the glue that holds back most progress, creativity and growth. You have a special sensitivity here, and also, for many years, you've been working through this material. You've had little choice, with Pluto burning through Capricorn.

This is an invitation to review your progress on your inner child work (which includes inner artist work, and your capacity to be spontaneous). Pluto is here to stir up your revolutionary tendencies. Yet you will be more likely to succeed if you stay close to your own experience, and understand what has shaped you, and who has pushed you to compromise. Then you will be far less likely to do it again.

Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

The seeming complexity of your financial affairs will soon give way to a much simpler picture. Yet you will need to keep making decisions to reduce, remove, scale down and let go of what is not working. By that I mean really working, at least paying its own way and not causing too much trouble. From time to time this is a necessary exercise. Now with Jupiter providing you with opportunity and potentially with people interested in what you're doing, you must free up the bandwidth for that to manifest.

At this stage of your life, you face a special challenge: unraveling the many ways that other people have dibs on your personal resources, of all kinds. Too often, you start with plenty, and then there is not enough left for you. You will need to be logical about how you figure this out, keeping count of both money and time. While love cannot be measured, whether someone holds a balanced place in your life must be subjected to evaluation. This can seem cold; not everyone wants to go there. Yet

is it not a fact that your life is your own?

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

You have time to change your mind about a few things. Thanks to the recent brief experiment of Pluto in Aquarius, you have broached some emotional topics that have long been out of your grasp. You have learned enough over the past two months to give you not only plenty to think about, but the awareness that it's time to think deeply and make some decisions.

The fundamental question is: how do people get power over you? Why and how does that keep happening? You might say that they convince you of something, though it's something you already believe. This can be confronted logically. One experiment that might help is to make a list of everything you believe about yourself, and your abilities. Then slowly, thoughtfully, account for how you got to that particular opinion. Remember: the goal here is freedom.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

Have you noticed that the lead story these days, in what passes for the news, is how artificial intelligence is going to take over our jobs and our lives? Yet there is nothing mentioned about the state of mind that we are being forced to endure in a world that is run by "artificial and enhanced reality." You're likely to want natural, ordinary reality; it's weird enough and you do well here. This would be an excellent time to get a sense of how you may have been compromised and what you can do to stay grounded in the world of flesh and spirit.

To stay at least partly out of the Meta-maze, it helps to read physical books, and to notice your state of mind when you do so. Books move slowly. For them to work, you must bring your imagination. The ultimate question, though, is your basis for determining whether something is true, especially about you. If the "thought" process in determining anything about you involved a robot or algorithm of any kind, you can assume that there is a problem. You need not to be told who you are; you already know.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

Pluto returns to your sign this month, where it spent most of 2008 through early 2023. There will be two such visits, through the second half of 2023, and in late 2024. Then Pluto moves into Aquarius, where it will remain for the next two decades. The two retrogrades into Capricorn represent important phases of completion. One

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News You May Have Missed

Are annual checkups good for you?

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thing you're wrapping up is what you've learned about the world. Your observations have led you to certain conclusions that you simply cannot deny.

As time goes on, it will be tempting to think of everything as a matter of power. This has been one of your most important areas of study. Yet that is not true. What we think of as power is merely a distortion. The natural world runs without electricity, petroleum or politics. The tides move; the seasons change; the light plays beautifully upon the Earth. That is your world.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

I am seeing renewed discussion of whether humanity is entering the "astrological age" named for your sign. The information is right in front of us; this isn't groovy, but the Aquarian Age is about humanity's struggle with artificial intelligence and synthetic reality. These extremely seductive developments have their hooks into nearly every person on the planet. The danger of anything Aquarian is that it becomes a solid pattern, not considered subject to change. This, in turn, is a setup for demolition by Pluto.

That you have a strong Aquarian signature in your charts means two things. One is that you must make a conscious effort to preserve your humanity; to not submit to control of any kind. Second, you are in a position of leadership. The particular flame you are running with is that of group initiation. Nearly all spiritual efforts are focused on individual transformation and not on groups of people taking leaps of progress. The next few months will once again call you inwardly, to do more deep work, and learn how to be available for others on a similar journey. Inevitably, you will be in the role of teacher. This will happen whether you're ready or not—so you may as well be.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Your ruling planet Jupiter has taken up residence in the angle of your chart associated with ideas, written communication, commerce and community. This is Taurus, your 3rd solar house. For as airy-fairy as people think Pisces is, you like your ideas practical, solid and most of all, beautiful.

Because Taurus is involved, that brings in what is called preserver energy. Maintain what you've gained so far; honor what you've earned; give yourself double credit for having accomplished anything meaningful during our near-total drought of wisdom. There is always the temptation to "be special." You don't need to worry about that at all; you already are, and you're also seen that way. Skip that part in favor of being real, and focusing only on what you know comes from your creative essence. The world will catch up with you sooner or later.

Illustration by Del

