



THE VASHON LOOP

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TO INFORM AND AMUSE ~ TO PROVOKE THINKING AND ACTIVISM

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A Dream of Islands

By Marc J. Elzenbeck

The Pacific scales in at about 70 million square miles. Thousands of islands, far fewer than you'd expect, scatter across its vast third of the Earth. Ours is nestled deep into the ocean's easternmost pocket, bobbing on maps like a

jagged splinter of cork near the bottom of a curvy wine bottle. It sports an assemblage of features which together verge on a perfection of sorts, an occasion for mild misbehaving.

There is the sense of maritime, and a literal South Seas connection. By the time the Wilkes Expedition arrived to officially swan about on behalf of the United States in 1841, a contingent of Polynesians from M'ohau who worked for the Hudson Bay Company had already passed by 17 years before. They later returned in 1833 to build Fort Nisqually, and the Company's diverse lot is said to have bought their food from the nearby coastal Salish villages, some of which were on what they called Deer Island.

Despite evidence of habitation going back as far as 12,000 years, the first recorded admiration we have comes from a young Greek midshipman, George Colvocoresses, who was on board with the Wilkes Expedition. He watched a beautiful sunset over the south end's Clam Cove (now known as Tahlequah) and wrote a worthy homage. This led Wilkes to name the island's western passage in his honor, considerably abbreviating its name to Colvos.

A former Tacoma resident who witnessed those same sunsets as a boy

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Photo by
Sonya Lang
Photography

Puppet Rider

By Doug Skove

*The Island is full of people with fascinating lives. Often, it seems that the Island itself has a hand in helping one find a new direction. Enjoy this tale about how one Islander became a puppeteer. **Special note: Islewilde is taking place this month, at their art camp on Old Mill Road. See end of article for more information.***

Up until 1999, I was in industrial sales. I'd moved to the Island in 1997, so for two years, my old life interwove with my new Island life. I realized it was impossible to maintain this situation, as, due to the long commute, it took time away from my family. I started looking for work on the Island.

My next door neighbor, Adam Ende, was the organizer of Islewilde, and he invited me to come and help with the puppet show. Because I was big and tall, they asked me to help move the puppets, and I did. It was a lot of fun. And then Bill Jarcho created Zambini Brothers, a traveling commercial business that offers puppetry to various events around the country. These events look for the

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Good Boys Gone Bad

By Seán Malone and John Sweetman

We never actually set out to do wrong, but occasionally small, impulsive actions led to doing the wrong thing, and for small

lads this outcome was as natural as paint on a fence.

Gene Amondson and I were wandering around a construction site, and as young boys do, we picked up debris and put things in our pockets, already overloaded with detritus.

It so happened that we picked up round slugs that came out of electrical boxes. A few were about the size of dimes, and so we went into the shop, and with files and rasps, tried to make two dimes. In order to make them authentic, we scratched our names on them and a crude "Mercury" head.

We went down to the store, and sure enough! They worked, and we did not have to share a NeHi orange soda.

The next day, Mrs. Neely called us in when we came back with bottles to return. After a bit of a stern admonishment, she sentenced us to an afternoon of bottle washing, but never told our moms. She did all this with a smile and even returned our fake dimes, but said that our "Mercury" head looked like a rat.

Seán reflects: "The freedom to do something wrong is enticing. It just seems to be an easier way to go. We were young and did not yet foresee unintended consequences."

The Bradley's lived next door, and Kit was a best friend in our occasional dishonest behavior. Mackie's store was only a half mile south of us, and Mr. Mackie had a fine collection of penny candy and gum. We could get a bottle of Coca-Cola for a

nickel. We never had any money, and would cruise the ditches for empty bottles on our walk to the Cove Store.

If we were unlucky and came up empty, Kit and brother Mike would hide on either side of the store while I made sure that the coast was clear and signaled them if Mr. Mackie left the front of the store for the back room. Many cases of empty bottles were stacked on the deck behind the store and Kit and Mike busied themselves with filling the bags they carried.

We greeted Mr. Mackie inside the store with our bags of bottles. "It looks like you had good luck collecting bottles," he remarked. At two cents a bottle, we had enough for a few candies or bubble gum, and maybe a 10-cent bottle of coke to share. It only worked for a couple of times; after a second time, Mr. Mackie caught us red-handed and banished us from his store.

All of us read comic books which included advertisements for "neat things" in the last couple pages. One ad read: "Valuable stamps on approval." I answered the ad, and when the stamps came, I "approved of them," and proceeded to enter them into my stamp book. A couple weeks later, I started to receive letters from the stamp company's lawyer, demanding that I pay for the stamps, which I did.

I once applied for a job building trail in the North Cascades when I had two black eyes from fighting. My best friend, George Farmer, had held my arms while a guy punched me through the window of my 1936 Plymouth.

The second black eye was the result of thinking that I would be welcome at a Nez Perce Indian picnic, up the west fork of the Teanaway River on the road to Blewett Pass. I left the fire circle, and was walking up the creek, when he came out from behind a bush with a rock in his hand and knocked me out. I wasn't welcome.

I got the job and worked for 10 weeks, five miles South of the Canadian border, building trail with a Pulaski tool and shovel.

The Famous "Pizza Pie!"

By the Footloose Foodie

Hello one and all. Looks as if the summer season is upon us, and this Island is filling with many new faces and old ones venturing out again.

There are many businesses here on our Island that present various fares in dining. I have become particularly interested in the famous "pizza pie!" I think many of you are in agreement with the fact that we have wonderful options for pizza on Vashon.

The magic with pizza, in my opinion, is the ingredients. There are many discussions on what is proper or acceptable on a pizza pie. I will not even enter the field of discussion concerning them all. I will say that, with all recipes regarding flavor combinations, there is a special thing called "complementary independents." Ingredients can complement or contradict one another in the cooking or prepping process. This results in flavor blends that delight the palate, or the opposite. The idea of complementary flavors is one in which different spices, vegetables, cheeses, and sauces blend together as one flavor. This creates a "WOW!" sensation with the brain-taste bud connection, as the different flavors are broken down in the mouth.

The pizza pie gives such an opportunity for an oral sensation. Complementary herbs and spices in the sauce all bring together a total flavor. The sum of the ingredients.

I have meandered about the Island, taking part in the ambiance and fare of our pizza places. "The Rock" is a great family-owned and -operated restaurant, with friendly and great service. The menu choices are wonderful. I did experience a bit of a lack in consistency in the sauce flavor, but that could have been due to many things that come about with running a restaurant. I in no way cast aspersions, but reflect on the idea of doing what others love, and loving what they do! The Rock is a

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Puppet Rider

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quirky and odd, to beat the previous event’s reputation.

Islewilde was founded by the performance group UMO back in 1992 – at the time Janet McAlpin, David Godsey, Martha Enson, Kevin Joyce, Esther Edelman, and Steffon Moody – copying a form based in Vermont where you have free community art, food, and festival. I served as the managing director of Islewilde for about five years. I’m still a bit supporter, and like to be involved when I can.

Islewilde was transformative for me. I saw and experienced things that I knew weren’t happening anywhere else in the world. Crowds aren’t the point of Islewilde. It’s about the art, and freedom of expression. It was tremendously freeing, and it opened up my creative side.

Because I liked it, I continued my “regular” job at the Park District, but on the weekends I would puppeteer for Bill Jarcho around the country, in Utah, Montana, and other places, and that’s how I fell in love with the performance side of the puppets ... spreading fun and joy, and getting paid to do so!

Eventually, I decided to make puppetry my primary career. Zambini Brothers is a troupe of performers who create spectacle and awe with “Giant Puppet Animals & Roving Comedy Characters” at state and county fairs, festivals, schools, libraries, and events throughout the U.S. Our most famous character is the Chicken Rider, a giant chicken ridden



by a cowboy named Sheriff Fowler.

The Zambini Brothers is very summer- and fall-focused, with less work during the off-season. So that is when I turn to gig work to maintain a steady income. I found an app-based handyman company called TaskRabbit works best for me. I also install art in museums, companies, and private homes with my company Skove Art Services.

And as a reminder to those who require a possibly similar transformation, **Islewilde is happening now until July 29th at their art camp on Old Mill Road** (just north of the former Misty Isle Farms). Look for signs. There is a completely free drop-in art camp during the weekdays, with workshops on the weekends, culminating in a performance of a FREE pageant at the O Space on Sunday, July 30th.

"Pizza Pie"

Continued from Page 1

wonderful place to gather inside or on the patio. The diverse menu options will certainly find a way to please all. Thank you!

Vashon Pizza ... never fails, or at least not for myself! Friendly and welcoming always and in many ways. A true Vashon business, for sure. The owner-operator is consistent and loves her business and our community. Her pizza is, well, her pizza! I know what I get when I order and am never disappointed. Vashon Pizza is a great balance of complementary ways. The service, the pizza, the menu bring together a good thing! Thank you, Vashon Pizza!

O Sole Mio! A marvelous concept for Vashon. Friends of mine love the pizza. My personal preference was left wanting. My palate had difficulty finding the complement between the sauce and other ingredients to bring the sum of the total together as one. Please take no offense, as I am but one in many. Many I know love the pie from O Sole Mio, enjoying the full-flavor experience. I love the ambiance and good-vibe dining within. Great people serving and cooking. I know I will return for another menu selection. Thank you O Sole Mio! You have added life to our town center!

Cafe Lunetta ... the “Red Herring” is the name on the building, but this place is far from being one! A long-time Island man has succeeded in turning a small garage into a great cafe with incredible pizza pie. It sure was no simple fête. A wood-fired oven brings all the incredible ingredients together with a gastronomical delight! Be warned, this is not a “bring your kid’s birthday party” kind of pizza place. Higher-end ingredient flavors are a delight for the discerning palate. This is a one-size-fits-all pizza, topped with imported ingredients – flour, olive oil, cheese, and meats. I have heard tell that its a pricey pizza, but value for the dollar was not disappointing. Definitely an adult “pizza party” place. Thank you, Cafe Lunetta!

I trust you found some enjoyment in my footloose meanderings. I do enjoy our community businesses with all the hard work each puts into our community Happy good food! Thank you everyone!

Next month, I will be “Footloose” seeking a good burger. I do love a good burger!

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The Vashon Loop

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A Dream of Islands

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helped explain the modern appeal. Looking across from the boathouse at Point Defiance to Vashon like an unfulfilled Gatsby staring at the green lights winking on West Egg, he resolved: “They’re having fun over there I can’t get to! That’s what it means to have it made. And that’s where I’m going to live someday.” He did.

Low-lying Anderson conveys no equal romance, nor do Fox or MacNeil. Blake, lovely and a half-hour paddle to the north, makes hints, has the advantages of blonde, sandy beaches that are gentle to moor on, and is rumored to be the birthplace of a feared warrior French and Spanish fur traders called “The Big Guy” (Chief Seattle). But it is small and simple. And Mercer? Why NOT build a bridge to Mercer Island? Build three! In fact, put a cross-country freeway on top and stop at the McDonald’s on your drive to Chicago.

Vashon has the rare insularity, size, and position to qualify it as a base of operations. It has been used as an air defense site and was recently selected by FEMA should The Big One hit nearby cities, to serve as a logistical center for the anticipated long rebuilding of their infrastructures. Traveling from stem to stern, it also has a curious ability to bend Seattle and Tacoma together, otherwise separate and distinct cities that commonly take an hour to traverse. Here, you can see both in 10 minutes.

The travel writer Paul Theroux had one of his characters say, “To be



born is to be shipwrecked on an island.” If you were to make a list, this one would check the signal virtues: a watershed to feed salmon streams year-round; micro-climates to support everything from rainforest moss to berries, grape vines and olive trees; terrain not inhospitable, but invigorating and crenellated around its backbone, so when folded flat it might expand 2-3 times in size; both an outer and an inner harbor with two lagoons, one at its northwest inlet; a central Paradise Valley, where a glacial lake piled soils rich and deep; set on a mattress of loam and rocks churned together by the back-and-forth of the Vashon Glaciation into a surface so hard it is called Vashon Till the world over; the latter has to be jack-hammered out and is known to help bounce radio waves further.

Deer Island, The Rock, Place of Weird Free Couches, hideout for minor celebrities like the Home Depot Voice Guy. (Great work in ‘Ford v Ferrari.’) It always seems to have been part fishing village, part beach resort,

Vashon Loop Editor-Owner March Twisdale Departs

It is with sadness, as well as deep appreciation of her many efforts and contributions, that we announce March Twisdale’s departure from The Vashon Loop Editorial team.

Just over a year ago, the idea to relaunch The Vashon Loop sprang forth during a conversation between March, Caitlin, and Jane, while in her garden. Since then, March has been tireless in bringing her best to this publication. She has done much of the literal footwork in gathering advertisers and helping to lead initiatives such as the “Not Uptown Vashon Business Registry” and the “Cash On Vashon” projects. Our Substack platform, which enables voluntary financial contribution to the Vashon Loop, was her concept, and she established and tended this medium. From columns to articles, March has come up with ideas, found and worked with contributors, and more. March has brought her curiosity, enthusiasm, generosity, intellect, and love of the Island and of Islanders into her work with The Loop.

Please thank March for her essential contributions to this paper as an expression of community voices. We wish her – and Dobby, the Loop’s mascot this past year – the very best in their endeavors. You can continue to enjoy March’s writings and perspectives on her Substack platform, “Our Thoughts Matter,” at <https://marchtwisdale.substack.com>.

castle and time machine, or at least a wonky mechanism for delaying somewhat. Walk or ride up the dock and things start to slow-w-w down, drawing in to buried treasure (yep, hundreds of pounds, almost forgot), to lurking sheep and llamas, the music of harmonicas and harps.

It’s still a place where you can wheel your unregistered 1948 Willys Jeep pickup around to scout for free furniture without worrying about overheating its clutch and brakes in rush-hour traffic. Where you can find a cabin built mostly from driftwood by Michelob-drinking contractors on weekends during Jimmy Carter’s presidency, right next to a \$20 million beach mansion across the road from

someone living in their camper truck.

Sometimes you can still see three boys strolling down the long main drag on the last day of school, carrying a conked-out black lab puppy on the first day of summer. The puppy’s name is Doug.

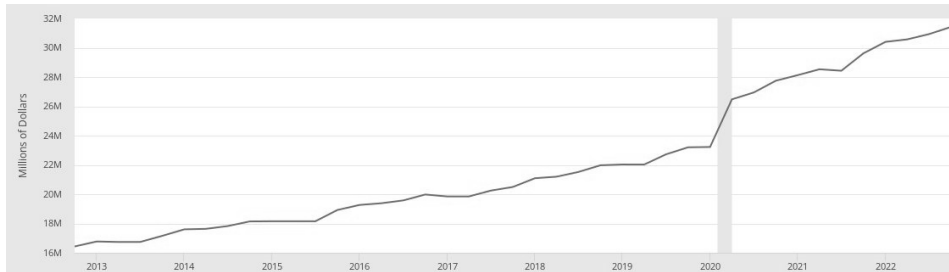


The Vashon Loop is published monthly

Life Despite Money

By Andy Valencia

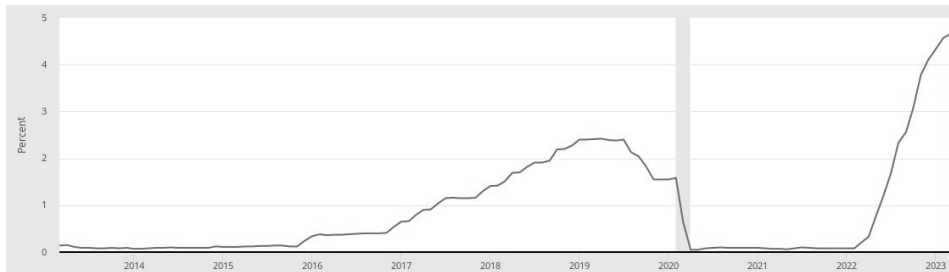
The United States is staggering along under more debt than you might expect:



US Public Debt, Last 10 Years

Debt is money you borrow – rent, if you like. If the rent is very close to zero, who cares how much you’ve borrowed? But over time, if you print endless money at no cost, confidence in all those dollars starts to fade. How can you tell confidence in your money is fading? People want more of it to sell you the same thing – inflation!

This is why the “free money” party is ending. After the 2008 financial disaster, we had nearly free money until around 2016. The cost of money climbed a bit, then crashed right back down to near-zero with COVID-19. In recent years, unless you don’t drive, eat, or heat your home, you’ve felt the sharp pinch of inflation. In response, the price of renting money is being moved up away from zero.



Fed Funds Rate, Last Ten Years

When these interest rates climb, things like borrowing money to buy a house become more expensive. Yet, what does it do to the nation that has already borrowed almost \$32 trillion dollars? Two years ago, the interest rate for new national debt was around 0.07%. Today, it’s around 4.57% – a 65-fold increase. Debt was extremely cheap, but those days are behind us. The US

Editorial Note: In the June article “Know Your Home Waters,” the Vashon Loop reported on information which is in the possession of the Vashon School District. Such information includes items such as a report from a professional investigator and parent statements. The Vashon Loop reminds our readers that none of this has been tested in a court of law, and thus should be considered allegations.

military costs more than the next nine nation’s militaries combined, and yet federal budgeting forecasts our debt payments will surpass our military spending by 2030.

If this wasn’t The Loop, I’d now try to sell you Bitcoin, or gold, or seeds, or guns. Maybe you’ll buy one or more of these, and maybe you’ll feel a little safer. We’re all conditioned to make ourselves happier by buying things. Money permeates our reality.

But can things really make you safe and happy? Even if you have food – it can rot. Water tanks might leak, or tools rust. Possessions can be stolen.

There are two things that will serve you well no matter what you have, or need, or lose. The first is a philosophy of life. If your sense of self-worth rests on job titles and paychecks, would the lack of employment destroy you? Who are you without your phone?

The great systems of thought in human history do not depend upon your paycheck or how you spend it. They also inevitably involve communities of people who share similar conclusions. I’m not going to recommend a particular system to you, but I do recommend that you start looking.

The second thing that will serve you is self-reliance. Most modern people with an urban background are entirely disconnected from all the systems that make their lives possible. How does water reach your faucet? Where does the drain take it? How are lights, plugs, and switches connected? How is a window attached to your house?

It’s an overwhelming list, but take heart from how one eats an elephant: one bite at a time. It’s not about knowing everything all at once. Pick one single project, and work it through to completion. Now you’ll know about how, say, wires go into the back of a light switch. That bit of information is much less important than the real lesson: You can learn and use that knowledge to great effect. Now, make your faucet stop dripping. Then, change your car’s oil. (Along with its oil filter!)

Eventually, a new challenge causes you to feel anticipation and curiosity, rather than a smothering sense of dread and helplessness.

When money seems to be going wonky, make sure that it’s just one part of your life. When needed, pull out a \$20 bill, look at it, and say: “It’s just green ink on paper.”

Life, Sex, and Death in the Garden

By Michael Shook

By the time this is in print, the leaves of the bigleaf maples will have taken on their darker summer look, and depending on how dry things are, they might already have the first dulling of dust covering them. But for now, in June, their leaves, and those of every other plant in sight, are exuberant, shining, and vivid in their myriad shades of green, vibratory in their robustness. Small wonder that spring is the favorite season of so many (for myself, I am unwilling to choose).

Our garden has been roaring along for some weeks now. The rhododendrons are almost bloomed out – Anah Kruschke hangs onto her light purple (a fine old cultivar, and the name brings with it fond memories of an adoptive grandmother from my Enumclaw youth, Granny Klimke). Autumn Gold is full, and r. glanduliferum is just peeking through, its delicate scent barely perceptible. Soon enough, though, I will be enjoying only the foliage and the new growth, all the while scouring the plants for next year’s nascent blooms.

Jude the Obscure rose is covered with blossoms, and will continue to flower through the summer. Sometimes, when I stick my nose in a bloom and inhale deeply, I come away thinking of my mother and my two aunts. All three were avid, accomplished gardeners. They were also – I say this with affection – quite prudish. Raised as they were by an indomitable, very proper mother of conservative Anglican Irish stock, and having little male presence with their father away at sea much of the time, the three girls grew into women who, as my cousin once remarked, astonished themselves and others by actually having children.

So it is with a smile that I contemplate that trio smelling roses. For the truth is, as we know, when one sticks one’s nose into a flower blossom of any sort, one is sticking one’s nose and face into a sex

Island Voices

organ. I can say with confidence that neither my mother nor her sisters ever thought of it that way, but there it is. A garden, as much as any facet of nature, is a place of life, which means of course a place of sex, and, as omnipresent as the former two, death. Yes, it’s controlled (to a degree) by our intentional planting and weeding (thus contributing to our illusion that we are separate from nature – somehow outside biology, ha!). But that is simply our willful ignorance of what is right under, and sometimes around, our noses. Life, sex, and death. Let the species be perpetuated!

Speaking of death, years ago I was in the garden with my two young daughters, showing them a crab spider perched on the blossom of a gladiolus. I was explaining to them how the spider could change color to blend in, and that it did not weave a web, but rather depended on its camouflage and a morbid embrace with its powerful front “crab” legs to secure a meal. In the next moment, on cue, a large fly landed on the flower and WHACK!, the spider struck, the fly was held and bitten. It buzzed frantically for a moment before the venom took effect, then was still. We were delighted, and a little aghast.

On another occasion, I was strolling about in the same garden, coffee cup in hand, binoculars hanging from my neck (in case of bird sightings), when a bald-faced hornet zipped by and smashed into a smaller black and yellow hornet (both actually wasps of the yellow-jacket variety, though the bald-faced has nary a bit of yellow). The two tumbled to the ground where a short, furious battle was fought. The bald-faced found a chink in the armour of the smaller, and that was that. The victor then grasped dinner in its legs, ponderously rose straight up (reminding me of a large military helicopter), circled, and flew off. I was again delighted, and again, a little aghast.

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The Importance of Truth

By E. Dane Rogers

About three months ago, March Twisdale asked me to write a few articles for The Loop. We share many similar views, and many opposite views, but what stood out to us both was the centrality of truth and our pursuit of it. Cultures rise and fall on much smaller issues. Another thing that stood out in our conversation was that perceptions of truth and its importance vary from culture to culture. Humanity’s struggle with truth is universal. Thus, we agreed that I would write on the subject of truth from an international perspective, discussing the importance of truth for healthy societies.

This is admittedly a tall order! I fit the bill for international travel. I got bit by the travel bug when I was 18. Since then, I have scarcely gone a year without getting antsy to jet-set on my next foreign adventure. So, when it came to writing about international experience, I said, “No problem at all!”

But it was the angle of truth that has challenged me. How does one write an article on truth from an international perspective? The most humbling realization was, I am not an authority on truth. For that reason, writing about truth seemed like an impossible task.

March and I picked each other’s brains for quite a while, over multiple coffee dates, phone calls, and emails. I love the vision for The Loop being a channel for real conversation and investigation, not fearing cancel culture, browbeating, or warnings to toe the party line. To do this, truth must be its goal. Truth is undeniably important. And, in order to set truth as a goal, it must be defined. Truth is the content of reality – the reality that we all share, and must learn to cohabitate within.

But how does truth intersect with international experience? Let me start with what caused my

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Is Free Money Free?

By Stephen Buller

Continuing with the “Cash on Vashon” concept, this article will get to the heart of why so many people use credit cards, namely the rewards. We’ll look at the incentive this creates, why it’s okay for you to get that cash back, and how you can consciously choose when your reward is worth it. My goal is to encourage readers to use cash at local or loved businesses, and to feel good about using their card elsewhere.

First, we must start with a brief history of credit: Looking back as far as the 1700s, it was common for a farmer to keep a tab with the merchant who sold him seeds, and later for a customer with his local grocery store. These relationships were intimate, and their nature was one of trust and mutual success. Prior to that, the concept of credit surely goes back as far as the concept of money. You may have heard of the Diners Club card, invented in 1950 and commonly referred to as the first, modern credit card. Frank McNamara was an entrepreneur who saw an opportunity when he forgot his wallet dining out one night in New York.

Once his product was successful in the marketplace, the banks were quick to follow. Their contribution to the industry was that, unlike the Diners Club card, you didn’t have to pay off the entire balance at the end of each month. And this “convenience” has painted the current-day picture of credit cards: In the U.S. alone, we are approaching \$1 trillion in credit card debt, with the average balance-holder

owing \$7,279 at the end of 2022. In the first quarter of 2023, the average interest rate on those balances was almost 21%, meaning those people are donating well over \$100 to their bank of choice every month.

When I was younger, I remember credit cards being a novelty. Not everyone had them, and those that did used them less often than they do now. Someone needed good credit to start with, and there was often a significant annual fee for the privilege and prestige of buying now and paying later. Over time, qualifying became easier and the fees disappeared. Today, you’re “pre-approved” for thousands of dollars if you have a pulse, and fees have been replaced with rewards. Not long ago, there was a veritable arms race in rewards, prompting one of my friends to open a credit card each month, transfer balances, and make purchases to claim the sign-up bonus and other rewards.

Today, you’re missing out on cash back or its equivalent if you don’t use a card. Don’t you want that “free money?” Unfortunately, no such thing exists in the marketplace. A business must profit to perpetuate, and even though banks can fabricate currency out of thin air, they’re not charities. If you get \$2 from your bank, you can be sure they got more than that. The merchant pays a percentage of every electronic sale to their processor, and the banks are at the end of every transaction.

I’m a firm believer that people

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By Rich Osborne

Yes, Vashon, at long last, we need to fully fund our fire department.

Someone wiser than I said “Expecting better results while repeating the same behavior is the definition of insanity.” VIFR just getting by is risky in a warming climate with, whisper it, GLOBAL WARMING increasing our fire risk every year. Everyone’s main asset is their home. Burning one’s home is the death knell to financial security. And that doesn’t even address the personal tragedy of losing everything one owns.

It has been suggested that VIFR form partnerships with other service providers. At the same time, it is suggested that administrative time be lowered in priority. So, which one do you want? Partnerships with private companies, which don’t come cheap, or less administrative time to provide competent management? This proposal takes money from public employees to improve the bottom line of private corporations. But the proposal is to reduce costs. TriMed LLC from Kent, WA is a for profit corporation. They take customers to collections. VIFR does not do this. You want us to hire these guys?

Our firefighters risk their lives on a regular basis. THEY RUN INTO BURNING BUILDINGS, for God’s sake. They die young from the toxic chemicals in those burning buildings. Highest cancer risk of any profession I know.

Every Vashon firefighter should have two sets of the best, safest, high-

tech gear on the market today. Why two? So that one set can be cleaned, dried, and prepped for the next call out. On Vashon we provide one set. The absolute minimum the law requires. Shame on us. VIFR is valiantly try to scrimp together the cash to fix this shortcoming, but should not have to. We should be there for them, like they are there for us.

Our firefighters risk their lives on a regular basis. THEY RUN INTO BURNING BUILDINGS, for God’s sake. They die young from the toxic chemicals in those burning buildings. Highest cancer risk of any profession I know.

It has been stated that the “Vashon population has only grown by 5% over the last 6 years.” The 2020 census states that our population is growing younger. I question these statistics. They remind me of the Mark Twain statement, “Lies, damned lies, and statistics.” I believe what my eyes report to me. I see the Vashon population growing older. I shopped at Thriftway today. I looked around to see that two-thirds of the customers were seniors. Two-thirds!

It has been suggested that VIFR rely on volunteers. Great idea. Where are these volunteer firefighters to come from? With so many of our younger citizens priced off-Island, good luck with that.

It has been suggested that we refurbish our old fire equipment. Really? Look! Up in the sky! Do you

Continued Below the Fold

By Caitlin Rothermel

The Vashon Island Fire and Rescue levy (Proposition 1) is coming to a vote this August. If the levy is voted in, the VIFR annual budget will grow from \$6.7 million in 2023 to as high as \$10.4 million in 2029. In our population-stable community of 10,866 people (based on United States Census data), that’s an increase from about \$600 to \$1000 per person per year.

I think the levy is likely to pass. I also think that VIFR’s campaign has been manipulative and non-transparent. It has focused on emotion and fear, and hasn’t provided the kind of budgetary detail that would allow a thoughtful person to consider the proposed increases. This is disrespectful to the community.

There are some things I believe we can all agree on. VIFR has done great work protecting us from fire and helping with health crises. We want to feel safe and that our property will be secure from fire and destruction. We don’t want to see home insurance rates increase dramatically because we don’t have close-enough access to fire personnel, and we are concerned for our neighbors who are most affected by these issues.

Research also shows that the VIFR is doing a great job – we know this from word of mouth and because VIFR hired a professional consulting group to conduct a survey. Only 3% of Islanders responded, which is

unfortunate. Nonetheless, 81% of them said that our firefighters are kind, courteous, and professional. Among respondents who had personally witnessed or received a VIFR response, 95% reported the quality of service as “good” or “excellent.”

If these points are easy to agree on, then why any hesitancy about Propostion 1? First, the amount of the proposed increase is bitinglly high: An immediate 34% lift (raising property tax rates from \$1.12 to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value), followed by subsequent increases up to 6% annually for the next 5 years. For contrast, San Juan Island (population 8,632) has a levy rate of \$0.35 per \$1,000, while Bainbridge Island (population 24,456) has a combined fire and EMS levy rate of \$1.20 per \$1,000. For us on Vashon, it’s also important to note that we pay an additional \$0.25 per \$1,000 for Medic One medical emergency services.

VIFR is not being clear regarding the progressive cash outlay their plan will require. The VIFR Levy Lid Lift FAQ “What will this cost?” tab does not show projected revenue increases over time, only for 2024. In fact, most of what I have read about the levy lift has only looked at its first-year impact.

It is worth mentioning that VIFR staffing grew substantially in 2023. Firefighter base salaries increased from \$1.28 to \$1.87 million between 2022 and 2023, representing 7 new full-time firefighters/EMTs. There is

Continued Below the Fold

Pro

Continued from Above

see any biplanes? No. Why not? They are not safe to fly. New-generation fire equipment has safety upgrades that saves firefighter’s lives. That is a simple truth.

Redeployment has been suggested. I respond that we need full crews to deploy safe firefighting teams. Splitting them up slows down the concentration of personnel and response times, putting lives at risk. And what about the response time/ insurance rate jackpot? If our response times go beyond a certain mark, our fire insurance rates will skyrocket!

It has been suggested that we buy new equipment with bond money. People are complaining about the cost of a fire levy and our best solution is to add \$2 MILLION in interest payments? It has been suggested that VIFR issue bonds for fire equipment? Issuing bonds are administrative black holes. But it has been suggested that we should lower the priority of administration.

It has been hinted that a failing levy is a good thing. When we are already so late out of the gate? Tell you what, when the inevitable firestorm arrives, pull out your checkbook and read your bank balance. I’m sure there will be enough light, as our houses burn down.

Con

Continued from Above

also a lot more administration. In 2022, base administrative salaries were \$176,000; in 2023, this grew to \$710,521 for office administration and three chief officers dedicated only to administration.

You can review the VIFR budgets for yourself; visit the newly launched website, <https://vashonsafety.org/VIFR/financials/>, where you will find full budget summaries going back to 2013.

VIFR has also conducted a messaging campaign to emphasize our lack of ongoing safety with current arrangements. This has stoked tension both online and in-person. Once again, neighbor-upon-neighbor is accusing each other of “not caring for grandma” if disagreement occurs.

Last, VIFR is failing to consider the real financial situations of many community members. Island resident Steven Nourse has been vocal in his opposition to the levy, pointing out the disproportionate impact it will have on retirees on fixed incomes, people with disabilities, and other

low-income earners.

According to Steve: “I met a young woman who works on the Island. She holds down two jobs and works 7 days a week for a total of 70 hours weekly. I asked her why she worked so many hours. She stated, ‘I love Vashon, and I feel included and safe here. I have to work all these hours to be able to live here financially.’

“Here is a good, hard-working person who may not be able to afford Vashon. This would be worsened due to increased taxes imposed on all Island citizens if Proposition 1 is approved.

“It seems as if every public and private agency on Vashon is screaming equality, equity, and multi-culturalism. If so, let’s live up to these goals through our actions and not just our posters and words. This is why I am against Proposition 1 as it is currently written.”

If this measure does not pass, we hope that the VIFR will return with a more reasonable and specific request that transparently lays out priorities for progressive improvements.



Dr. Cori Bodily-Goodmansen

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View from
Anu Rana
Illustration by
Jane Valencia

An Islander’s Response to “Our Electric Vehicle Future” – Part 2

By Nellie Bly

To continue from last month, reducing one’s carbon footprint may best be achieved by:

Keeping the car you have. Using real, pure gas.

Taking care of your car, and other things you already own.

Buying American. Not because of jingoism, but because buying local, or at least on your own continent, is the greener practice.

Reducing single-item online ordering, and avoiding unnecessary rush (air) shipping.

Eating less and doing more, particularly walking and biking. (Biking, while dependent on a groomed surface, is the only means of transport more efficient than walking.)

Buying used, and local. Using up what you have. Wasting less.

Coordinating for shopping excursions in your own household and with neighbors.

Avoiding unnecessary air travel and cruises.

Taking good care of your fossil-fueled car, and planning to pass it on to your grandkids. If you think that’s a fanciful notion, look at the longevity of cars in Cuba. Your car’s not really much of an environmental demon, or at least, it’s not evidently much worse



than electric vehicle alternatives.

Driving a stick shift. That’s good for about a 10% mpg improvement over a conventional automatic transmission, and it’ll last longer. (Cars with continuously variable transmissions get better mpg, but the transmissions don’t last as long, and cost more to rebuild than the engine. A clutch can be replaced for the cost of the sales tax on an automatic transmission rebuild.)


Keeping tires properly inflated.

Living in a smaller home, or sharing your larger home. In the early 1950s, a typical house was about 800 square feet, and housed a little over 4 people. An average US home now is closer to 2,400 square feet, with a bit under 2 occupants. That’s a six-fold increase in square feet of housing per capita, and a major reason housing is increasingly unaffordable.

Learning to use tools and perform basic maintenance and tasks, and sharing skills and workspaces and tools with neighbors.

Buying only quality, serviceable, durable items. (Many of the best are only available used now.)

Island Resilience

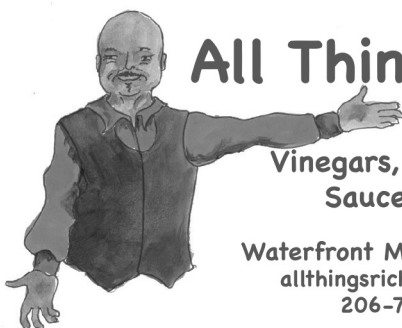


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Avoiding replacing things unnecessarily, and not buying poor-quality or unserviceable products; it is bad for the environment.

Passing through our time on this planet in a reasonable manner is probably more nuanced than simply buying a new electric vehicle, and

may not involve buying anything new at all. Of course, that message is easily outpaced by marketing. No one, except maybe you, is spending money advertising the message, “Keep and care for what you have, share more, and buy less!”

Gardening With Children – Late-Season Carrots

By Caitlin Rothermel

It can be challenging to garden when you have young children, but you also want to get them excited about growing things. It’s a dilemma.

It is totally possible to introduce small, focused projects that can be fun for everyone. Like carrots. They can fit into small or otherwise hard-to-use spaces, and there’s just enough time left now to start a crop before the weather turns.

Carrots can be grown just about anywhere that there’s room beneath the soil – they don’t need a dedicated site, and they are okay in partial shade. Since it’s the time of year when we’re harvesting things and other plants are maturing, there are patches of space opening up. Like where the onions or garlic use to be, or underneath the broccoli that’s quite tall at this point.

Take advantage of these empty spaces and your existing plants vertically or “up-ness.” Don’t plant them where root vegetables are now growing – too crowded and too much competition for soil resources.

After you pick some good spots, the first, essential step is to loosen the soil. The biggest barrier I’ve found to growing carrots in our area is compacted soil (due to the rain pressing down on the earth for so much of the year). You can do this soil-loosening on your own ahead of time, or if it seems safe and fun, work with the kids to do it using satisfying tools like a Hori Hori.

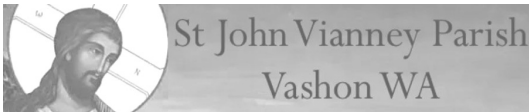
Treat your loosened soil like a baking project and make it more special by mixing in a few special ingredients. Definitely add some new compost. To be super-fancy, add some worm castings, Epson salt, or Azomite mineral mix.

Set yourself up for success and plant your carrots in places that you already water, or that are easy to remember to water. Not all of the carrots will grow, and that’s okay.

If you want to just dip your toes into carrot-growing, you can buy a few cloth planting bags and use those instead.

This time of year, it is best to use carrot types that mature quickly – in fewer than 65 days – and that grow smaller (4-6 inches). Atlas carrots are another good option; these are the shape and size of golf balls.

You can also make your future more colorful by planting red or purple carrots in addition to orange. Go for quality, not size. When they’re harvested, the kids will love them either way.



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From The Roasterie Coffee

“The coffee flavor manifests its characteristics through the land, the elements, and from the hearts of the people all along its way.” – Eva

Within the coffee industry, there are many ways to describe the flavors of coffee. Hints of caramel, chocolate, or wine. Undertones of nuts, figs, or flowers. These fancy descriptors cannot capture the living narrative of all that is coffee. It’s complicated and takes time to get to know the true heart of coffee, and of the people along its way who will ultimately impact its spirit and flavor.

We had one of the best cups of coffee after dinner with friends one evening. It was their interpretation of “cowboy coffee,” without the campfire, stars, or dusty roads, and with no mention of flavor notes. They

chose an old pan from the cupboard, ground some of our fresh-roasted beans, and added them to tepid filtered water. Then, when just below the boiling point, they dropped an ice cube into the pan to sink the grounds. Simple. Perfect. Delicious. Few memories can compare to that most wonderful cup of coffee, that day, with friends.

We invite you to experience coffee in the ways that work best for you. We think that YOU are the true experts of the coffee you choose to buy and how you choose to brew it – no matter its descriptors.

Keep things simple – A French press or an AeroPress are two of our favorite gadgets for brewing coffee, and Berkey water filters are a good choice if your water isn’t the best. All are easy to use, make delicious coffee, and pack nicely for traveling or hiking.



Walnut Waldorf Salad with Citrus Maple Vinaigrette, in Jars

By Sandra Thylin

I live in Montana. At the beginning of June, I drove to Spokane for my niece’s graduation. I was excited to hit up the Trader Joe’s because there isn’t one in Montana. My old roommate and I went on a snack run to stock up the mini-fridge, and one of the items we picked up was the Waldorf Chicken salad. It was delicious!

When I returned to Montana, I immediately started searching online for a non-mayonnaise dressing for a Waldorf salad. I found one that seemed okay to use as a base, and then whipped up a small batch. I tested the dressing out by dipping sliced apples to see if it would work. Some tweaks were made, and then I was ready to assemble the jars!

I started trying out jarred salads recently in the hopes that I could take advantage of always preparing too much food; being motivated to cook



new things sporadically.

As a person with type 1 diabetes, remembering to eat, especially lunch, has been a struggle since I started working from home. I try to make 4-6 jars per recipe, and make sure they are visible when I open the fridge so I don’t get sad over only having “ingredients.” @sandrathylin is my Instagram.

The Island Epicure – Salad Days

By Marj Watkins

When I and my family first came to Vashon Island in 1969, we bought a house with a view, joined the yacht club, and my husband, just retired from the United States Air Force, returned to his first career as a schoolteacher. He was hired to teach sixth grade as soon as school started.

We had come from an air base on Okinawa, Japan, where everyone was amazingly healthy. At the age of 100 years, native residents worked in their gardens and had all their natural teeth. However, when sugar cane became Okinawa’s major crop, the Okinawa kids chewed on sugar cane stalks and ruined their teeth.

I resolved to do what I could to upgrade eating here on Vashon Island. I went to the Vashon-Maury Island Beachcomber office and talked with Jay Becker (who then owned the Beachcomber). I noticed that he had no food editor, and offered my services, free. After a few months, Jay insisted that I be paid, since more people were subscribing to the Beachcomber. Later, the new owner dropped all their columnists. From there, I took my column to the free newspaper, the Vashon Loop. The relaunched Loop has restored “Island Epicure.”

My husband’s teaching stint lasted four years. Then he took a year off; a sabbatical. We wanted a winter without cold and snow, like San Diego. A glance through our atlas showed that Crete was at San Diego’s latitude.

As a retired officer, my husband could travel with wife and children under 21 on empty Air Force planes. We packed our bags, got a suitcase full of fifth-grade text books for 10-year-old Steven. His 20-year-old brother also went with us. Every week we were on the island of Crete, Steven wrote a letter to his 5th grade class back home on Vashon.

People warned us that the Greek diet wasn’t healthy, as everything was awash in olive oil.

We rented a villa on the south bank of the Mediterranean Sea. Steve and I had crammed on the Greek language, but many Greeks spoke English. This is what we ate for our first supper on that first day in Crete.

Salata Horiatiki – Village-Style Salad

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Salad:

- 1 onion, halved crosswise
- 3 tomatoes, wedge-cut
- 1 green bell pepper, in rings
- 1 cucumber, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup Kalamata olives, seedless
- ½ pound feta cheese, crumbled and scattered over salad

Dressing:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon oregano
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Walnut Waldorf Salad with Citrus Maple Vinaigrette, in Jars

To fill 4 pint jars.

Dressing:

- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp citrus champagne vinegar (you can substitute a different type)
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard

Salad:

- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 stalk celery, finely chopped
- 40 red grapes, halved
- 1 red apple, chopped
- 8 tbsp walnuts, smashed
- Mix of spring salad and arugula

Assembly:

- Divide the apple into the 4 jars
- 2 tbsp dressing
- Divide the celery and grapes into the jars
- Add 2 tbsp walnuts to each jar
- Top with spring/arugula mix (or lettuce of your choice)



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The Wonders of Licorice

By Kathy Abascal

Many of us love real licorice candy and enjoy licorice’s sweet flavor in various herbal teas. But few appreciate what an amazing and useful plant licorice is. Licorice has been used medicinally for thousands of years in both European and Asian traditions.

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), licorice is considered harmonizing because it moderates the actions of other herbs in beneficial ways. It has been called a wise elder statesman, and was important enough to be buried with a Chinese emperor. In Western medicine, licorice is used as an adaptogen. Adaptogens are special herbs that, when used long-term, help the body and the brain deal with stressors, whether physical or mental.

Licorice has a very long history of use for coughs, sore throats, stomach and duodenal ulcers, and hepatitis. The old Greek and Roman physicians used it to treat asthma and virtually all other lung diseases. It was used similarly in TCM, and modern research tends to confirm the wisdom of these uses.

Licorice is a demulcent that soothes irritated mucus membranes. It is antispasmodic and suppresses coughs very well, with an effect shown to be equal to, or better than, codeine. Licorice is one of the best herbs for children who suffer from frequent colds and coughs.

Licorice also has an

antispasmodic effect on the stomach and intestines. In fact, licorice has many positive effects on the stomach, where it acts as an anti-acid, a demulcent to heal inflamed membranes, and as an antibacterial. These properties are useful in healing ulcers, and several clinical studies show that licorice effectively helps heal stomach and duodenal ulcers.

In most cases, the whole licorice root is used to heal ulcers, but deglycyrrhizinated licorice (DGL) tablets, where the compound glycyrrhizin has been removed, work equally well. Glycyrrhizin is what gives licorice its sweet taste; it is 50 times sweeter than sugar, but does not raise blood sugar levels. Glycyrrhizin is also responsible for much of licorice’s many antiviral effects. Preliminary studies showed glycyrrhizin to be quite effective at inhibiting severe acute respiratory syndrome, and also showed strong antiviral effects against its relative, COVID-19.

In China, licorice is used to treat chronic viral hepatitis, with a reported 70% success rate. Other in vitro studies show that licorice has a wide range of antiviral actions. This includes antimicrobial effects against influenza strains, including the worrisome H1N5 (worrisome because this strain of bird flu is now appearing in a variety of mammals).

The Japanese use isolated glycyrrhizin to moderate the patient’s immune function in human

immunodeficiency virus infections, and to help suppress HIV replication. They have done several long-term studies showing that oral administration was quite effective; they also administer the compound intravenously and report that it effectively suppresses HIV levels. Although not studied, given the historical uses of licorice, whole licorice root should be beneficial here, as well. Licorice is also a common ingredient in many topical treatments for herpes simplex sores. Finally, glycyrrhizin has shown strong antibacterial effects, including against some antibiotic-resistant strains.

Glycyrrhizin should be used cautiously in those with a tendency to hypertension because it can cause the body to retain too much sodium and excrete too much potassium. This can lead to edema, hypertension, headaches, and sometimes cardiac dysfunction and severe hypertension. As a result, licorice is avoided in those with a history of heart or kidney problems, hypertension, and obesity. It is also to be avoided in pregnancy, and in those taking diuretics,

stimulant laxatives, blood thinners, and various other prescription medications.

However, licorice side effects are not common. In TCM, licorice is an ingredient in many formulas and is viewed as nourishing, gentle, and safe for almost everyone. As well, no side effects were reported in the Japanese studies where glycyrrhizin was administered intravenously as treatment for HIV.

It may be that any risk associated with taking licorice can be avoided by consuming a healthy diet, rich in fruits and vegetables and other potassium-rich herbal teas. DGL is often used to avoid any possible licorice side effects, but DGL does not have the antimicrobial effects attributed to glycyrrhizin.

Much like marzipan, the taste of licorice is one that affects people differently. Most either love it or strongly dislike the taste. However, I have not found that these likes and dislikes reflect whether licorice might be beneficial for the individual. Instead, I think acquiring a taste for licorice might be well worth cultivating for many, as the benefits of licorice are so striking.

Health Matters

Health Disclaimer

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

Medicinal Plants on Vashon – Cleavers

By Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz

When I first started learning about herbs, it was so exciting to find that the common weeds we see everywhere can be consumed for many benefits. After learning about cleavers, galium aparine, I can’t help but notice how abundant it is in spring. Cleavers are native to Europe, but have naturalized here.

Cleavers are part of the coffee family, and you can actually roast the seeds as a substitute for regular coffee. The whole plant, with leaves and stems, can be harvested fresh to make a tea, or it can be preserved in brandy as a tincture when the fresh herb is out of season. It is rich in micronutrients and makes a fun addition to your normal tea routine. On a hot day, you can have a cold infusion ready by putting fresh or dried cleavers in a pitcher of water in the refrigerator for 12-24 hours.

Cleavers grow in long stems low to the ground over and around other plants. Long, thin leaves grow in whorls of 6 to 8 around the stems at intervals all the way along. Small white flowers bloom in late spring and early summer. They have sticky burrs or “hitchhikers” that attach to clothing and animals to help their seeds disperse.

The most common use for cleavers is to help the lymphatic system, in herbalism known as a lymphagogue. They gently support the immune system and encourage the removal of normal waste products of the body, and are useful for

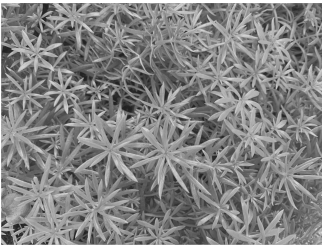
swelling in the hands and feet. When used long-term, cleavers can help break up calcifications and fibrous tissue or scar tissue.

On the skin, cleavers can be helpful for healing wounds, ulcers and other skin irritations. You may find it as an ingredient in many commercial herbal skin salves. Although modern scientific evidence on cleavers is limited, a 2020 in vitro study discovered evidence to justify the traditional use of cleavers for skin wounds and infections; a raw infusion of cleavers was found to have antioxidant and immunostimulatory effects. Another 2016 study found promising preliminary results on cancer cells in vitro that should be further investigated.

Cleavers can also be used to gently soothe inflammation in the bladder and kidneys, and as a supplement to other therapies to break up kidney stones.

If you are unsure about identifying wild plants, always be certain to ask an expert before consuming. Otherwise, have fun trying to make a tea, tincture, or topical herbal formula with this very safe medicinal plant!

Leigh Siergiewicz, ND. Schedule online at: Betulanaturopathic.com. Please visit the online version of this article at vashonloop.com to see a list of additional readings.



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Many commercial horse supplements are sourced from the lowest-quality nutrients to increase profit margins. These can offer lower efficacy and potentially dangerous, even toxic, results. Nutrients come in different chemical structures, more or less similar to how they occur in nature. The body has a hard time recognizing the unnatural forms, causing many carefully measured supplements to be excreted in manure and urine.

This wastes your money and robs your horse of the nutrients he or she needs. Bio-availability matters! As logic would dictate, organic whole foods and superfoods are the best sources for most of the vitamin/mineral needs of your horse. Curious? Come see us and we'll break it all down for you.



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This is for health insurance that will begin the following month.

Se habla español.

Assess, Move, Re-Assess

By Sandi Silagi

In February 2015, after withdrawing from a golf tournament, Tiger Woods claimed, “My glutes are shutting off.” That was the “butt” of many jokes to come, but what is the reality?

Initially, I thought, “Fire your trainer!” “Use your ground forces, use your feet!” “Channel Arnold Palmer!” But I was wrong. The chain reaction of response in his body had been disrupted by pain, surgery, and cool weather.

Any one of those disruptors is enough for the body to find inefficient workaround movement patterns. When pain is within our bodies (physically or mentally), the brain/body protects itself and finds alternate ways to move – to bypass those things that will create more pain.

Think of a freeway of smooth-flowing cars. If you get an Island Car in one lane, that lane slows down. Other cars move around it, and the next lane slows down also. The third lane, not so much, but it is more crowded.

The Island Car takes its time – usually getting to the destination, but slower, not so much power, not so much speed, and maybe with a little more pollution, congestion, or a backfire hiccup. Certainly not performance-level stuff.

Maybe the driver was at fault and had it in second gear the entire time,

or had the emergency brake on. Either way, it is inefficient, causing a disruption, and we have to move around it. We get to the same place, at a different speed, and in a different mood.

Which car are you driving today? Where is your body today? Are you connected to your needs for your current daily activities? Is there ease in your movement? Are you balanced? A daily check-in can increase your body comfort, confidence, function, and performance. Making the connection between your feet, hips, and back is part of this balance. Learning how to do a quick check-in reduces injury and improves mobility and stability at all levels – including professional swing sports.

You can gain a fluid chain-reaction of response efficiently in your body with 3 simple steps: Assess, Movement, and Reassess. In 5 minutes, you can do a quick assess, a little movement/connection, and a quick re-assess to start your day. Go to www.corecentrictraining.com/blog for an audio to walk through your 5-minute assessment, or follow this guide:

Assess. In a safe space, stand with your feet hip-width apart. It is best to assess with your eyes closed if you can safely do that. Notice and identify how your weight is distributed. Do your feet roll in or roll out? Are you more forward on the ball of the foot, or on the heels?

Notice the ankles, knees, and hips. Where are you tightening (check your hips)? Can you lessen the grip of where you feel the tightness? Do you

feel like distinct parts from joint to joint?

Movement. Open your eyes. Hydrate the right side of the body by tapping, patting, and/or squeezing the chest, arm, hip, butt cheek, and leg – up and down the leg (inside, outside, front, and back). Bounce both knees several times in a “bounce, bounce, and straighten” rhythm.

You just hydrated your right side. Repeat on the other side.

Connect the neuromuscular system. To find the butt-back connection, put your hands on your hips. Roll the feet in to stand on the inside of the foot. Do you feel the hips broaden? Touch your lower back. Do you feel the low back broaden? Do you feel the shoulders roll forward? Now, roll the feet out. Do you feel the hips tighten? Do you feel the back pull together and the shoulders slide down the back? This is the main highway of the chain response of the neuromuscular system that will give you power and stability.

Reassess. Stand, close your eyes again. Notice and identify how your weight is distributed. Do your feet roll in or roll out? Are you more forward on the ball of the foot, or on the heels? Has the weight distribution changed? Do you feel like distinct parts from joint to joint, or continuity?

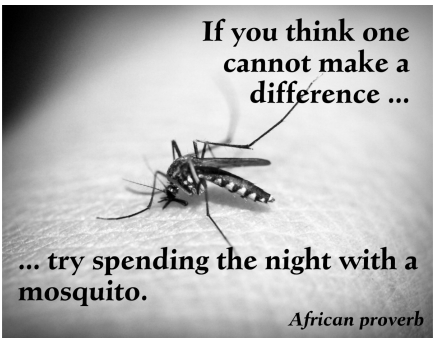
This simple sequence, when done once every day or two, can increase awareness of your bodies’ needs and improve your sense of balance and stability. This sequence affects function and performance in basic day-to-day tasks, as well as in professional sports. It encourages the

fluid fascial connection in the autonomic nervous system. It brings awareness to excess holding patterns or tensions, and allows the calming of the neuromuscular system.

Supplement your activities with simple restorative movements to enable you to move and feel better. Awareness is healing and decreases the chance of chronic pain. Address the need before the oil runs out and your car grinds to a stop!

PS: What sounded like Tiger Woods throwing a fit was actually a pinched nerve in a game that was delayed due to cold fog settling in. Tiger went on to have four back surgeries and came back to win the 2019 Masters at Augusta National Golf Club. In 2021, he had yet another back surgery and continues to rebuild and come back! True grit and will to play!

Sandi Silagi is co-owner at Core Centric, where personal training, classes, and monthly workshops in Melt Method and Stability and Function are ongoing. For information, contact 206-388-8953 or info@CoreCentricTraining.com.



Father’s Day

By Daniel Hooker

It’s Father’s Day. I remember being a father and why I tell dad jokes, and tell humorous stories.

I studied psychology as an 18-year old in London, and worked/lived at an unfunded halfway house, called Cope House. There, I manned a Help/Suicide hotline two days a week, where humor and sharing stories was a way of coping with abandonment, abuse, neglect, and of dealing with the frailties of life without connection in communities.

Creating community through love, humor, and compassionate actions has been my thing for as long as I can remember. After having several traumatic brain injuries, some caused by anesthesia and some from concussions, memories and skills such as math, science, and language disappeared. To be replaced by depression, cancer, heart disease, and, soon to follow, displacement and homelessness.

Having studied psychology, and knowing from my experience how I have healed up from death sentences placed upon me by the medical industry and supported by Big Pharma, I made choices to rebuild my memories and neuropathways by telling jokes and humorous stories, which help the brain’s neuroplasticity, creating new bridges.

As we get older, all of us need the following as a daily regimen of joyous practice:

- Meditation
- Jokes
- Memorizing and singing songs

that make you happy

And most of all ... participating in community in ways that make you connected to others in a positive way!

This last one is the most helpful, because community becomes the healthy family that some of us lacked growing up. From this disconnect, disharmonizing, destructive, self-annihilistic bad behaviors arise, causing mental and physical illness and disease.

My ex-wife used to say, “Danny, you were born under a Dark Star,” and I disagree!

When I shared the news that I had pancreatic cancer, my son Jay said to me, “Pops, what are you worried about? You’ve helped others get well from cancer.” And so I had, that and heart disease (which I had experienced first-hand, so I could, once again, help others heal). I am 19 years well today!

Humor, laughter, love, and compassion – you are not separate from your cells. Each and every cell in your body is reflecting your emotional state. Re-member your mind/body connection. Re-member your community and reconnect, especially now! What better time!

Two jokes I’ll share for this article’s closing. COVID joke #1.

We’ve been isolating and quarantining for sooo long – I’m stuck with inside jokes.

When is a father’s joke a dad joke? When it’s a parent!

For more jokes, read Daniel's column "Llaughing Llamas" on page 11.

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Is Free Money Free?

Continued from Page 4

respond to incentives. If someone says I can have a product for \$100 cash or \$98 on credit, the second option sounds better – on the face of it. But that’s ignoring those nasty statistics above ... Even if you don’t carry a balance and pay exorbitant interest on it, have you ever forgotten to pay and swiftly been slapped with a late fee that does its best to offset your rewards? There’s a reason credit cards are marketed so furiously – they are profitable.

The question then becomes about value. Where is the value in this product? In a word, convenience. It’s easier to pull out a card than to count bills and audit the checker’s count on your change. It’s also easier to pay later. But fees, interest, and a culture of consumption above our means represent serious costs to using a credit card. There is also value in using cash: People who use cash budget better, are less likely to succumb to impulse purchases, and don’t pay for the use of their currency.

My recommendation is to go reward-crazy when shopping on Amazon or another mega corporation that can easily afford the merchant processing fees. Then, experiment with the benefits of using cash at your local and beloved businesses, brush up on your personal budgeting and arithmetic, and give your hard-earned dollars to your neighbors instead of the banksters. The world of money and currency is constantly evolving, and you may find these skills invaluable in the near future ...


Stephen Buller, CPA, is a Vashon native who graduated from VHS before getting his graduate degree in accounting from the University of Washington. He worked for four companies over 10 years before starting his own firm serving small businesses. In 2021, he returned to Vashon with his wife and two daughters, and is happy to be part of his hometown community once more.

Life, Sex, and Death in the Garden

Continued from Page 4

The garden is, for me, an ideal place. In addition to life, sex, and death, it’s a sublime location, as lively as can be, within which I ruminate on the mysteries of such liveliness, such loveliness, while simultaneously destroying (weeding), creating (placement and choice of plants), and shaping (pruning, creating hardscape, and long-term design). And digging holes. I do some of my best thinking while digging holes (something I have in common with the Scotties, but that’s a tale for another time).

Additionally, gardening is humbling. Just when I think I really have it nailed, nature shows me otherwise, thus reminding me that biology, in the end, trumps all else. And that I am merely dabbling at the edges of a mystery that has existed, and will exist, for many, many years without my efforts, well-intentioned though they be. It’s a comforting thought. All is well in the garden.

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4. No purchasing privacy
5. No money available without the internet and a power source

The Importance of Truth

Continued from Page 4

fascination with travelling the globe. It wasn’t a wanderlust for exotic scenes, warm beaches, or high mountain peaks that made my heart palpitate ... it was people, culture, and most of all, the languages they spoke, that raptured my passions.

Yes, I am the dork who would rather dissect Japanese Kanji over coffee than go clubbing in Shinjuku. I have more fun practicing Spanish and teaching English to the Quichuan kids in the Ecuadorian mountains than learning to surf in Máncora or bungee jump in Baños de Ambato. I would choose to exegete a pericope in Greek or Hebrew rather than lay about on some Mediterranean coastline burning myself to a crisp. Language and people, not luxury, is what has driven me to every corner of the globe.

Not surprisingly, after finishing university, my infatuation for language and people led me to South Korea as an English teacher. It was perfect. I spent every day exploring Korean, while my kiddos explored English. I would try putting some new words to use, sometimes eliciting a laugh with a bit of slang I’d picked up and stored in my back pocket, just for them. Or else I would attempt (and usually fail) to try new verb endings to express the many nuances of perception in the Korean verbal system.

My Korean students were kind enough to show me the ropes of their language, correcting me when I made a mistake. “No, teacher, you can’t say it like that.” Should I be surprised?

Their language has rules, just like mine. They didn’t decide the rules of their language. And I couldn’t decide which I preferred and which I did not. There is plenty of room for stylistic preference in language, but there are simply rules that cannot be broken. There may be many correct ways to say something, but there are also many incorrect ways.

I think the kids liked the reciprocity of our interaction. I inevitably returned papers with corrections of incorrect grammar ... and sometimes I would simply make suggestions for them to improve their style.

I remember one mistake that was so common in my student’s essays we had to spend a whole day discussing it. For some reason, whenever they addressed a letter, they would write something along the lines of, “Dear my mother,” or “Dear my best friend.”

You, the reader, are most likely a native English speaker. You know this is not correct. But do you know why? This became such an issue in my academy that I eventually had to “argue my case” to the principal. It turns out, this was how she was taught, too. It was probably how her teacher was taught. In fact, this error has become inculcated in the entire culture of English-speaking Koreans!

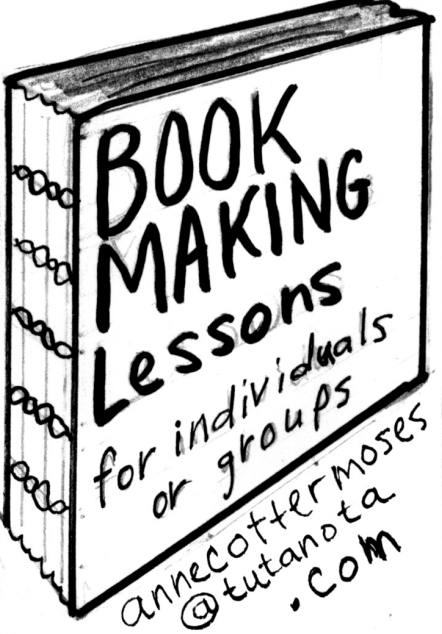
Recently in Korea, a movie was released entitled, “Dear My Lover.” I winced when I read that. And a new single was just dropped by one of the top Korean music artists called “Dear

My Light.” It’s like nails on chalk to see the same error repeated again and again and again because truth has been exchanged for falsehood.

For those of us who know this is wrong, we can’t help but look at those who adamantly continue to demand the truth of their error and say, “They just don’t know any better.” But sadly, the response I got from my principal was, “Well, the professor who taught me is an expert in English.” Truly, he is among the top Korean scholars of the English language. But English is not in him the way it is in a native speaker. Trust me. I know what it’s like to spend years perfecting my ability to speak another language, only to be corrected by a toddler who speaks that language natively.

Let me tie this up in a bow. When March asked me to write an article on truth, drawing from my international experience, I knew I would be able to draw on experience, but truth is not native within me for me to draw from it freely. It exists outside of me, and I speak it like a foreign language. I want to become so familiar with it that I know it natively. To do that, I can’t get away with simply demanding that my errors are actually truths. Just as communication breaks down when we spurn the rules of grammar, so societal cohabitation breaks down when we perforate reality with the imposition of “my truth” and “their truth.” We all live within the truth, and we all had better start discovering it, rather than deciding it.

I had the unique opportunity to write this article while in Jerusalem. My friends and I spent a lot of time



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with a local named Ralf who went to great efforts to explain to us the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. He said something that resonated with me, and I want to leave you with his words. “Truth might be complicated, but it is there to be discovered. What causes conflict is not truth, but our varying degrees of relationship to it.”

Without truth, we as a society have nothing that binds us together. We have no common ground. We have no basis for harmony. We have no order, no organization, no grasp of reality. I hope the re-launch of The Loop provides the opportunity for this community to discover that reality which knits us together. My hope and prayer is that we all move closer toward a better relationship to truth. Truth must be our goal, if that is all we have.

The Best-Kept Secret on Vashon

By Judy Mulhair

Welcome to the AYH Ranch. I bought the land in 1970 and raised two boys, many sheep, goats, horses, and one cow named Hamburger. The orchard, gardens and livestock fed us well.

As a United Airlines Flight Attendant, my first goal was to see the world, but this goal was put on hold while I married and raised my family. Then in 1979, divorce dissolved my family and I needed to re-examine my goals. I looked at the idea of showing my boys the world. I called the American Youth Hostel Association to see if an old lady qualified to use their hostel system if she had young children. When I discovered that hostels were for people of all ages, the boys and I headed for Holland to bicycle in search of tulips and windmills.

What a healing experience! We never met a hosteler we didn't like or that wasn't friendly, caring, or sharing. The wooden shoes on the hostel wall were worn by my boys throughout our journey. I have hung them in the cabin as a symbol of our beginning. For when we returned home, I had a vision of what I would do with my land.

In 1980, I was chartered with AYH, now known as Hostelling International. I chose a theme from my youth for the hostel. As a child growing up in Waitsburg, Washington, we loved the stories of the Old West with Dale Evans, Roy Rogers, and Geronimo. We loved

playing them all, and spent many lazy summer days having fun being Cowboys and Indians.

I dedicated my hostel to those who dare to dream of times when life was simpler and more fun, and who have the guts and perseverance to make their dreams a reality.

In 2003, my dreams turned into my nightmare when a neighbor challenged the legality of my hostel. I had created the ordinance in 1982 for hostels in unincorporated King County. To my surprise, the county never voted it into law, but just hoped I would get tired of the concept and move on. I offered to re-establish the ordinance, but they decided they did not want hostels in their jurisdiction. Consequently, my worldwide free advertising ended. The county would not grandfather me, but offered a non-conforming campground status (use it or lose it). The community was very supportive of my efforts to keep the hostel, but to avail.

As a world-famous hostel for 35 years, our title stuck in the minds of Vashonites, who enjoyed the presence of worldwide travelers. To this day, AYH Ranch is still referred to as the "Hostel," and will be long after I leave the planet.

One of the best images linked to the "hostel" is that of backpackers walking down Cove Road and being picked up more often than not by Islanders who knew exactly where they were headed. In addition to Teepees and campsites, many Islanders have recommended us to others seeking higher-end options.

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can rent an entire ranch that sleeps 50 in lodgings and teepees at \$5,000 for 24 hours. Our large barn has hosted parties, memorials, and retreats year-round.

In the future, when someone asks about lodgings on Vashon, don't forget the AYH Ranch, the best-kept secret on Vashon and recently nominated for the Northwest Best Places contest.

Get more Vashon Loop online!

Read our back issues at vashonloop.com

Peaches

A summer memory poem
By Claudia Hollander-Lucas

Joan and Sally, me in the back
happy to wait in the leather car,
windows open to catch salt breezes
after a long wet winter in this Salish sea –
Yes, we are content.
Content to watch our ferry slowly approach
from the near distant port –
happy as Sunday to finally stroll culture
and shops, the French bistro lunch
down in the Market.
The sun slants warm across our faces –
like warm peaches, says Sally, always my favorite.
When we lived in Boise I'd drive the twenty-five miles
to this orchard where I'd spend hours beneath
shade fragrant, divine trees like Botticelli painted –
talk about low hanging fruit! soft and velvet
tender globes, like Jimmie's head when he was just born...
I'd reach up – they were so warm,
and twist the stem just a bit,
they'd drop sweetly abundant
heavy into my sticky arms.

Llaughing Llamas Chronicles

By Daniel Hooker



A friend of mine is about to become a Catholic, and he told me he was starting to study the catechisms. And it just popped into my head: "What chases a catechism? – A dogma."

A friend said to me, "You really ought to do stand up comedy!"

I answered, "At my age, I'd rather do sit down."

You heard about the riots in Paris on the Fourth of July? They blew up a cheese factory, and 10 kilometers away they found d'Brie!

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Aries (March 20-April 19)

The influence of family is quite strong at the moment, though this looks more like a gathering of the ancestors than like a typical holiday. Or more like their guidance and influence is thundering in and in some way shaping your every move.

In times of chaos, spiritual reference points, and honoring the passage of time, are vitally important. You hold the connection, the golden thread that joins you to all whose existence led to yours. Among those whom we call the living, this is a special time of taking family leadership for you.

Taurus (April 19-May 20)

Your solar charts present a picture of your life in balance, where you have meaningful and mutually supportive relationships with other people. This includes those you would consider intimates and those you know through various aspects of community. Is this true? If it's not, you have the resources to make it so.

We live in a time in history that is calling for people to step up to challenges from which they don't personally benefit except from the satisfaction of doing the right thing--and even that can present a temptation to rely on personal benefit. Be the leadership you seek in the world.

Gemini (May 20-June 21)

The most important gift you can offer to yourself, and others, is to live your truth. There is a process involved here, made necessary because life on our planet is so complicated. What is living your truth? It means knowing what you value, which is to say, what is truly important to you, and making your decisions on that basis.

Part of acting on your own priorities is the potential that you will annoy people through your independence. These interrelationships make an interesting study in how things get to be the way they are. You know what matters to you. Have the courage to act on your own self-awareness.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your solar chart is a map to how



Planet Waves

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



you can integrate yourself into the good works going on around you, and invite people into what you're doing. There's a delicate balance necessary here, and it's becoming more difficult to find--which is energy exchange. That means mutual support and investment.

You must create your own ecosystem, based on solid principles and with some sense of urgency. What you are doing can serve many people; and there are others in a similar position. Your quest is to determine who has the intelligence to respond in a way that dependably builds the world and holds it together.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

With Jupiter and Uranus going across the midheaven angle of your solar chart, you're likely to be on a winning streak. You are visible and recognized. This is an excellent time to build your reputation though working for genuine accomplishments (not merely being seen).

One way to consider the theme here is "how we use our power." First you have to know what it is, and then you would respond to situations where you can have an influence. There will be many, and some of them will be a pretty good fit. Perfection is not necessary.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

You may experience the temptation to push against an immovable object, or to take part in some other futile exercise. You have far better options. Yet the difference between now and the past few years is that Saturn in your opposite sign will hold you to the reality principle.

It's essential that you know when you don't know, so you don't respond by jumping to what seem like easy conclusions. This is asking for more than most people can offer right now, but not more than you have. What do you have? Intelligence, a measure of faith in yourself, and the ability to be flexible. Put all that to work and you

will do just fine.

Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

Your ruling planet Venus turns to one of its rare retrograde phases later this month. This happens in what has become one of the most complicated houses in all of astrology--the 11th, that of groups, and contact with the limited public.

Aspire to total sincerity, be artful in all that you do. Taking actual risks is a sign that you're alive and conducting your life force through what you create. The retrograde will give you an opportunity to read the public, as well as to retreat into a more deeply self-aware space. The two will go together well.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

In a few weeks, Venus will station retrograde in the angle of your chart associated with your reputation and professional aspirations. That will be in Leo, which describes you as always wanting to be seen in a positive light. Yet the retrograde may have the effect of you turning your back to the Sun, all the better to see what is in the shadows.

Other people have their struggles too, and you are often in a position to offer your assistance. Do you? Do you expect something in return, even if you don't need it? In our time especially, it's vital to remember that price is not the only measure of value.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

The Sun moving through one of the most sensitive areas of your chart is going to test some of your relationships. This soft-spot is the sign Cancer, which covers situations where there is usually a mix of financial and sexual intimacy. The result is likely to be the need for honest discussion and a mutual agreement on what is truly important.

Working toward shared goals and supporting one another's ideals is what does. And you have plenty to work with, though at first it would be best to keep it as simple as possible and start with high-level priorities.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

The Sun's journey through your opposite sign can be a challenging time of year, though it will be easier if you know what to look for. Cancer is also called your "solar 7th house" and is a kind of cosmic mirror where you can see what is going on with you below the verbal or mental level.

There will be a series of juncture points--events that might manifest as a little crisis, or a chance encounter. Treat each one of these as if it matters: as if each is a significant intersection point where which way you turn matters. Know when you've reached one, and proceed with full awareness rather than the usual techno half-sleep of our society.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

Later this month, something unusual happens in your relationship angle that may come with a touch of nostalgia or a reminder of how good the past was. This might be a feeling you have generally, and it might pertain to a specific relationship. It's the kind of transit where past partners and old squeezes might show up.

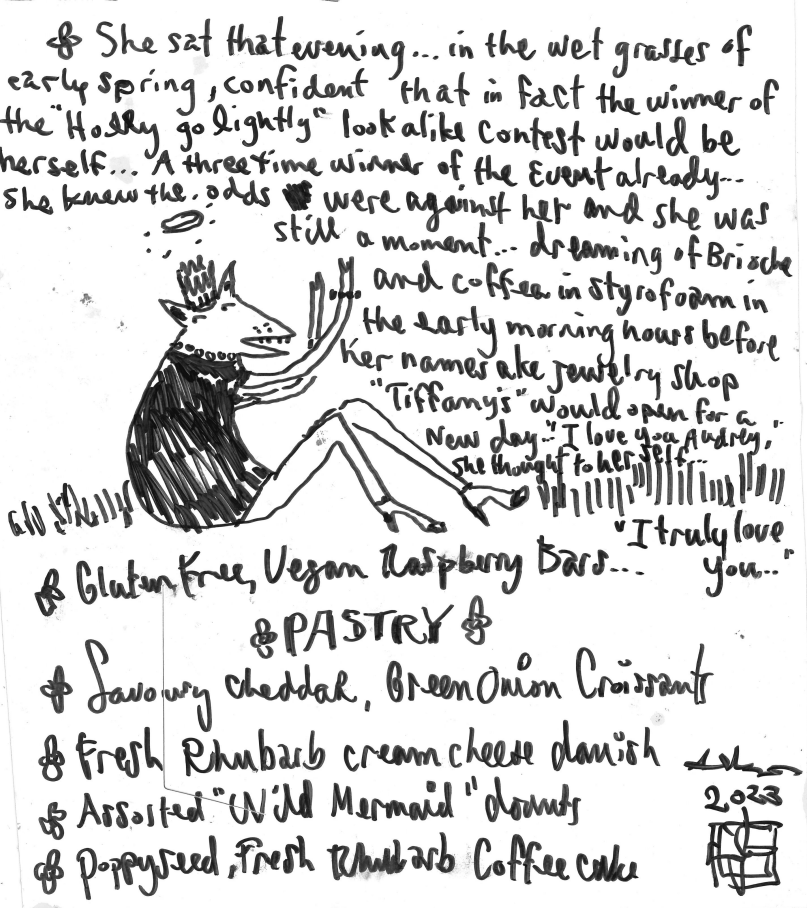
In times of chaos like we are in, people cling to what they remember as the good times. However, those past times were often as hectic and even as chaotic and stressful as what we are living through now. The message of Venus retrograde can be summed up in two old expressions: Be here now, and love the one you're with.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

You may feel like you're under a lot of pressure, but you're also getting a lot done. Pisces experiences everything from a psychic and emotional perspective first. This creates a distortion when you have the sense that the walls are closing in, but really, you're a little behind or short on cash.

The effect is Saturn in your birth sign. I suggest you work with it, because if you do, you can transform your life--slowly but dependably. Saturn is about taking on responsibility for yourself and authority over your affairs. It's also about the wise and respectful use of time, and respect generally. With Saturn, the greatest of the taskmasters, you can accomplish what you set out to do.

Illustration and Tale By Adam Cone



News You May Have Missed

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Bees are still not doing well at all

Woman punches bear to save her dog

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