

## CowExist

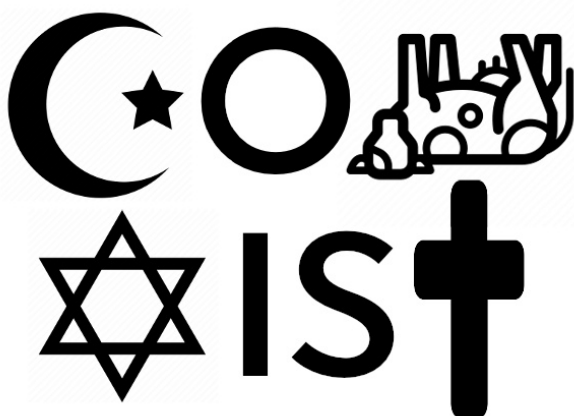
By Marc J. Elzenbeck

Cattle were domesticated from wild aurochs starting about 10,500 years ago. Roughly speaking, an auroch is to a farm cow as a timber wolf is to a cocker spaniel. These were amongst the biggest, baddest land-borne mammals left over from the Pleistocene, so by “domesticated,” what they mean is “captured and trying to keep while figuring out what to do.”

Fossils show the female’s withers (shoulders) were about five feet high and wide enough to stabilize heads suitable for toppling lesser trees. The thickly muscled males were about eight feet high at skull’s apex, with two weaponized three-foot long horns thick as a bodybuilder’s biceps, which, if here today, they could idly sharpen on a basketball hoop’s rim.

Aurochs survived into the early Industrial Age, the last known full herd fading out in a Polish forest in the 1600s, but their underlying genes can on occasion be strongly expressed in present-day individuals. As they did in Leslie Lou “Minnie” Moo.

In size and temperament, our Holstein-skinned rescue cow was a monster, the fundamental reason for her rescue and adoption. While in human years still a svelte teenager, she already weighed on the northern side of 3,000 pounds, making her two or three times bigger than the average beef cow. That plus her dramatic personality precluded snuggle



sessions, on-belly meditations, or athletic forms of team yoga.

Originally gifted as a birthday pet and raised on Vashon, Leslie’s first owner, shocked by her tremendous appetite, obnoxiousness, and penchant for feral havoc, preferred not to send her to slaughter. She looked for a new owner, one appreciating dairy potential.

Leslie was probably capable of producing 12 gallons of milk a day, but no one in their right mind would ever set a bucket under her udders. Even greenhorns, enthusiasts, and lunatics knew better than to try. That’s where we came in.

To recap, our spotted giantess had just been put into our pasture for foster care, where she was re-branded (just kidding!) from “Minnie” to “Leslie.” She then high-jumped a four-foot-tall fence, clearly

Continued on Page 9

## Report From Aman Omid Village, Part 1



By Nellie Bly

Prologue: This was written over the course of several deployment periods of one to three weeks. Aman Omid Village on Holloman Air Force Base closed at the end of January 2022, having in-processed and placed 16,000 Afghani evacuees. All but eight survived. For the five months it existed, and adjusting for average population, the Village death rate was about one-third that of the general U.S. population.

There were about 7,200 people in this improvised “Village” in the middle of the Tularosa Basin of the Chihuahuan Desert, home to White Sands Missile Range and National Park, the Malpais Lava Fields, and the Trinity Site, where the world’s first nuclear detonation turned the desert sand to glass.

These flatlands lie between the Oscura and San Andres ranges to the west, and the Sacramento Mountains to the east, home of Smokey Bear and the range wars with Billy the Kid and the Regulators.

Forty years ago, at age 17, I started my emergency medical services career on the Mescalero Apache Reservation, nestled in the Sacramento Mountain range. Participation in the “closed” Emergency Medical Technician-Basic class required approval from the tribal elders.

Coincidentally, I ended up getting my first EMS job in nearby Ruidoso, once part of Pat Garrett’s jurisdiction as Sheriff of Lincoln County.

This “Tulie” Basin was also home to Holloman Air Force Base, host of this refugee camp. Among the 7,000 or so initial refugees were about 800 pregnant women. Another 3,200 or so were children under 12 years, with most of those under age eight, and about 1,300 younger than three. These were among the first evacuees as the Taliban closed in.

I was one of four mission leads running three paramedic teams staffed 24-7 under federal contract, each with one man and one woman, responding to the EMS needs of the refugees, and occasionally civilian contractors and service members. Leads were responsible for team readiness and response, triage, coordination, and personnel issues.

The Air Force named the camp Aman Omid Village, and we hosted “villagers,” not refugees or detainees. The slogan on the T-shirts worn by medical airmen was “Be Our Guest.” Everyone here was free to leave, though in leaving, refugees would abandon the transitional support and resettlement programs offered and coordinated by the U.S. State Department and other agencies. The main base gate on the southern side was very close to Mexico, and regularly patrolled by the U.S. Border Patrol. No one walked away.

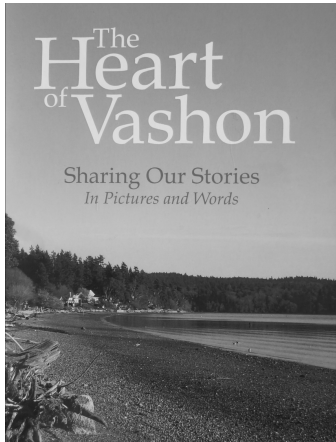
Fluor International was the prime contractor with the State Department, and our team, from Motion Picture Set Medics, was subcontracted by Fluor. We were largely independent, but coordinated with the medical command and resource structure on location under the Air Force and Alamogordo’s civilian system.

MPSM has extensive experience providing paramedic services in austere environments on sets and on location for major film and TV productions. One of the paramedics who worked here in the first days was later the set medic for the Santa Fe area

Continued on Page 10

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## The Heart of Vashon: Sharing Our Stories in Pictures and Words



By Barbara Gustafson

There once was an island named Vashon  
The residents loved it with passion  
As visitors neared  
They found it was weird...  
In just Vashon’s own homegrown fashion.  
~ Lynn Walters

So begins the newly released book, “The Heart of Vashon: Sharing Our Stories,” a lovingly written tribute to the Island accompanied by rich and inviting photographs.

The stories in this book were originally solicited for “Heart of Vashon: Telling our Stories,” a community-building literary project spearheaded by Mary G. L. Shackelford and Shirley Ferris in 2015, and archived at the Vashon-Maury Island Heritage Museum.

Inspired by these heart-felt stories, island educator and photographer Barbara Gustafson decided to pair her photographs with some of these poems and prose pieces to create a series of three slide presentations, which she shared with Island seniors at Vashon Senior Center and Vashon Care Center.

Later, with encouragement from friends, she and Laurie Stewart, author of “On Fisher Pond,” created this book as a gift of love by and for the community. The Heart of Vashon is truly a labor of love as all of the writers, photographers and artists involved in this project have graciously shared their work for this book knowing that proceeds from its sale will benefit the Heritage Museum.

“Heart of Vashon” was originally released just before the pandemic. Even so, we quickly sold out of books. Recently we considered that Islanders and visitors really missed out on this delightful book and decided to reprint it.

Elsa Croonquist, Executive Director of VMIHA, says “Each vignette depicts a moment of life in a community filled with people who are proud and

Continued on Page 10

## Attention Vashon Small Business Owners!

### The Vashon Not-Uptown Business Registry is Coming Back

Next month, The Loop is bringing back the Not-Uptown Business registry, and now is the time to make sure your small Vashon business is listed.

We have businesses everywhere on the Island – did you know that most businesses on Vashon are **not** located uptown? We are a pretty entrepreneurial bunch.

Continued on Page 3

# The Vashon Interfaith Council To Prevent Homelessness Community Meal Program

By Brownie Carver

The IFCH free Community Meals Program has been in existence for well over a decade. It has gone through many changes over the years, and the most dramatic change happened during COVID. The Community Meal Program stopped abruptly when COVID hit the island. Knowing that these meals are a lifeline for some people, we knew we had to do something. We took over all the meal preparation and handed out sandwiches and soup to go. IFCH has been working hard to bring back this important community asset.

We have hired two people to coordinate the program. We have teams cooking delicious, balanced, nutritious, hot meals. We are again serving these meals five days a week. People can dine inside, or if they

choose, can have a take-out meal.

All are welcome! These meals are for our whole community. Our program emphasizes nutritious community meals, where people can meet and enjoy good food and company.

The meals program is now located at the Presbyterian Church at 17708 Vashon Hwy SW. Meals are served Monday-Friday, 5:00-5:30, but you may stay longer to mingle and talk.

If you would like volunteer to join our meals team, contact Brownie Carver at bc2vashon@centurytel.com. If you would like to donate, please send a check payable to IFCH to PO Box 330, Vashon, WA 98070.



# Concerts in the Park 2023

By Pete Welch

The Vashon Park District is proud to present “Concerts in the Park” once again this year in partnership with Vashon Events. The concerts will be held every Thursday night in August from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

Concerts in the Park is a family-friendly series of events that bring the community together to enjoy free outdoor music concerts. The concerts take place at Ober Park, located between the Vashon Public Library and Vashon Park District. Ober Park features grassy berms that make perfect amphitheater seating, and you are invited to bring a blanket or lawn chair to enjoy the music.

However, your blanket or chair may not get much use because each concert features a different music genre that will keep you dancing. For this year’s lineup, we’ll enjoy:

- The Ian Moore Band’s unique rock with Texas roots (August 10)
- Groove-heavy Mexican folk with Locarno (August 17)
- Bowie/Rex and His Boogie

Army, a rock tribute born from the Bowie-Idol project (August 24)

- A harmonic fusion of traditional Djeli and modern Guinea music with the Djelijah Band (August 31)

Sound equipment and lighting will be provided by Laird Gonter, and Martin Feveyer will dial in the sound.

Opening for each band this year is a fresh Vashon Events program, “New Voices,” an opportunity to hear the latest musical additions to the Vashon music scene. This year’s performers include Alex Davis, Anna Hicks, Maire Kennan, Ian Olney, Zoey Rice, and Monica Schley

Openers will perform at 7 PM, and the headlining band will play from 7:30 to 9:30 PM.

On Thursday nights this August, bring the family and enjoy live music performing against one of Vashon’s most beautiful outdoor backdrops. Spread out those picnic blankets, relax comfortably, and enjoy some wonderful music on a warm summer night.

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# What Brought You to the Island

By Nichole Banducci

Saying that Vashon feels like home has so much more meaning than we could have realized.

Our family first visited the Island back in June of 2018. The trip was a part of a “top secret” future home search, disguised as a family vacation. Our older kids were going to college in a few years and our little girl, Cora, would be at a great age to move.

During the trip, we visited a number of Pacific Northwest spots that might check a few boxes: coastal, excellent schools, and close community. We wanted a wonderful place to raise our little one, while also planting roots for retirement.

While most spots were “nice,” Vashon was our proverbial Goldilocks. A few fun days on the Island were capped off with Strawberry Festival. The other locations didn’t stand a chance. Goosebumps were felt. Tears were shed. Vashon was home.

We headed back to Southern California with our plans in place. There was plenty of time to search for our spot on the Island. This will be fun!

Little did we know that, in a few short months, our need for a home would become a bit more extreme.

In November, we lost our home in the Woolsey wildfire. As we evacuated in separate cars, my husband Brian texted me “#VashonDreaming.” That hashtag became our source of inspiration for the years to come.



At the time of the fire, we were living with Brian’s parents. They were having some health issues and it was a great opportunity for the kids to be with Grammy and Papa. Unfortunately, without renter’s insurance, our loss was not covered.

It was so weird to know our future home was somewhere else, yet we needed to lay short-term roots. #VashonDreaming indeed.

We chose to move back to the burnt-out property in trailers while Grammy and Papa rebuilt. The kids could remain in their schools and we

could save some money. It’ll only be a year, right?

One year turned into two. COVID hit. Grammy passed away. We moved off the property. OK ... we can make it for just three more years.

The bright light was that we were going to start our build on Vashon. We found a property. Septic design was approved. Building permits were in-hand. Future home, here we come!

Building on Vashon gave our short-term unsettled span in Southern California added positive energy. Moving to Vashon this June resurrected our spirits.

We had found our home on Vashon what felt like a lifetime ago. This year, we enjoyed Strawberry Festival as locals. Again, we felt the goosebumps. I cried a few more tears. We have finally come home, and it certainly is living up to #VashonDreaming.

*Editor's Note: Enjoy a recipe by Nichole in this issue: Strawberry Oatmeal Bars on Page 7*

# The Vashon Loop

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Distribution: The Vashon Loop is a monthly newspaper, with 3,000 copies printed per issue; the paper is distributed to multiple sites throughout Vashon-Maury Island, and all content is also available at our website.

<https://vashonloop.com/>  
August 7, 2023

Address: The Vashon Loop, P. O. Box 2221, WA 98070

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# How To Run a Stop Sign

Blowing through stop signs or, should any present themselves, red lights, yields tangible benefits. It increases fuel economy, saves a few seconds, fights global warming, and generally makes humdrum lives a little edgier.

Downsides include making everyone else’s lives a little edgier and slightly shorter in an actuarial sense, plus the fact that there are no on-Island accident repair shops. In any case, running stop signs is increasingly popular and it’s a hell of a bargain, practically free on the continuum of Washington State traffic infractions.

Looking up the codes, the maximum fine for these violations should not exceed the lesser of \$48 or the cost of a local parking ticket. RCW 46.61.190 applies if you go straight on through, and RCW 46.61.055 applies if you make a “free right turn.” Under certain conditions, these fines can increase to \$136 if you cause an accident or exhibit more exotic problems like driving under the influence. It’s a sort of Gateway Infraction.

If a vehicle doesn’t come to a full and complete stop in a forest, does it make less sound? Usually, yes! But let’s face it, there probably shouldn’t be any accident sounds at all on this Island other than falling into a ditch while trying to get a free chicken coop. Yet accidents happen, and U.S. auto insurance rates increased 16.9% in 2022, so here is The Loop’s



multiple-choice pop quiz.

If you come onto a 4-way stop intersection when other vehicles are present, should you:

a - Notice that someone just answered your text and edge slowly through while reading and formulating a reply

b - Wait for the driver with the right of way to turn their head away from you as they double-check traffic, then hit the throttle and jump into the intersection in front of them

c - Calmly scroll through music-streaming choices for good songs and wait for someone to beep at you, safely indicating it’s your turn to go

d - Watch the car in front of you intensely and stay right on its bumper as if they’re towing you, getting the drop on other drivers and saving up to a full 30 seconds of wait time

e - Employ all of the above randomly

The correct answer is choice “d,” as regularly performed in front of Minglement by a south-bound silver



Honda Fit, sometimes with its left-hand turn signal still blinking.

By law and ancient custom, motorists arriving at a four-way stop must yield their right of way to any vehicles that arrived before, and wait their turn before entering the intersection. If each of the other three stop signs already has a vehicle waiting at it when you approach, it’s like showing up at the DMV and taking a numbered ticket – you are number four. If only two spots are filled, you are number three, and so on. If two or more vehicles arrive at the same time, the right-most has the “right” of way, and can proceed first.

To be honest, right of way is often more a choreography that is quickly complicated even in unincorporated areas like ours. There can be a lot going on at a four-way intersection. Long lines from schools and ferry commuters eager to get home; throw in a few pedestrians and bicyclists, and confusions arise. Eye contact, nods of assent, and hand signals are

time-tested ways to keep out of trouble ever since Marco Polo pulled columns of spice-filled wagons across the Silk Road.

We don’t do so badly here in the context of the now nationally established “California Stop,” though we’re on the same upward trend. Even in the most hectic conditions, only about half of Vashonites fail to make full and complete stops. Whereas you can search YouTube for intersections near California elementary schools; only about 1 in 20 drivers will stop completely. They’re smooth criminals, these Cali drivers, lifelong experts at rolling through. We can’t hope to catch up to their level. It’s in their blood.

Because of advancing technologies like reliable sensors, emergency auto-braking, lane assist, and other driver aids, it may be that the importance of stop signs is waning, and is for practical purposes going extinct even here. Maybe the stop sign’s evolutionary niche is being taken over by what used to be the “yield” sign. So long as we maintain situational awareness and extend common courtesy, it’s possible to safely glide through our intersections at mild jogging speeds, stopping when appropriate and necessary. Great preparation for the roundabouts and traffic circles King County may one day put in.

The Vashon Loop is published monthly

## Tech Friction

By Andy Valencia

Friction is certainly present in our day-to-day life. Your skateboard slows down on a level surface because of it, and some of the energy your car uses is to avoid slowing down. A different kind of friction is used to guide your behavior as a consumer; in this article, I’ll cover technology products. Once you’re aware of the techniques, you’ll see them everywhere.

Consider search engines. You can tell your browser to go to google.com, then type in the words of your search. Just as easily, you could have gone to duck.com to do the search. They’re both likely to find you some useful results.

The fact that you can choose either search engine at a whim means there is little friction in the marketing sense. Consumer whim could leave Google search a ghost town in the space of a few days. You don’t think about which search engine to use, but Google certainly thinks about its users – they pay Apple around \$15 billion dollars per year to be the default search engine on Apple products, and another \$450 million to Mozilla to also be the default on Firefox. There’s virtually no friction in search engine choice, so they spend large amounts of money trying to be the default, hoping you never think about.

Compare search engines to email services. Imagine you use Gmail – all of your friends, family, and services have been told about your address. Suppose that some particular day you get tired of them ditching important messages in the spam folder. Or you get creeped out because somebody sent you an article about Hawaii, and they start advertising Hawaii trips to your spouse. For whatever reason, you decide it’s time to switch.

If you want a privacy-respecting email provider, we suggest you look at tutanota.com. We have no business relationship with them, except as customers.

It’s easy enough to open a new email account somewhere. How many people and businesses do you need to contact? How many online accounts

have to be accessed, just to update the email part of your profile? How many will you forget, and what sort of late fees or other trouble will it cause? Most people find it overwhelming, and decide to stay where they are after all.

Changing email providers is a high friction technology choice. A provider who becomes abysmal may see a declining user base over time, but each lost user represents somebody who had to put in a lot of tedious effort. With high friction technologies, the business pretty much has to drive users away. Most Gmail users I know say they liked the service much better five years ago. Google doesn’t care; they don’t need to. Friction.

With this sort of friction in mind, you should look at each technology-based service you use. If you use TurboTax, you might think it was difficult to switch away. However, that .tax file they let you download can be imported by a number of other online tax services. This is a case where your intuition is that the friction is high; it’s actually quite low.

As a possible alternative to TurboTax, take a look at FreeTaxUSA.com. The name sounds like a scam, but a number of my family have been using it for years. I mention them solely as a satisfied customer.

With high friction services – in Google’s case, an entire family of services – it can be very painful to switch away. You make the choice, you get the pain. A corollary of this is that the service can kick you off. Without making a choice, you still get all the pain. There are many stories of people who wake up one day with no access to their digital world – the quintessential article is “Dumped! by Google.”

Why might you get kicked off? The reasons are as varied as the services and companies. A tech company might have a new China project, and your opinions on Tibet are suddenly unacceptably hateful. Or an attorney general is making headlines with a tough-on-crime campaign, and your public views on the police or marijuana put you in the crosshairs. There are cases where the cancelled user never finds out why.

At least for Google, takeout.google.com can supply you with a snapshot of all your user data. It’s not in a user-friendly form, but it’s much better than having nothing at all.

Understanding friction is understanding how services look at you, and how you can control your digital life. The higher the friction, the more likely the service doesn’t care about what you like or don’t like. But it might finally become too much, and you make the switch – or they might just kick you off. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail. Manage your options before you need them.

## Not-Uptown Business

Continued from Front Page

The “Not-Uptown” businesses are the businesses that Islanders often only learn about at the last minute or in an emergency. Islanders talk about these great places and share their names one-on-one, but most of our small businesses could use a bit more exposure. The Loop wants to help.

This is a very affordable advertising opportunity and a chance to increase your business’s visibility. For \$25, we will give you enough space to briefly describe your business and provide contact information. Your ad will be part of an eye-catching full-page spread.

Currently, we are printing 3000 monthly issues of the Vashon Loop, and they disappear quickly. Your “Not-Uptown” ad will be seen by the people who need to see it.

Contact sales@vashonloop.com. It’s time to show Vashon what you are made of!

### News You May Have Missed

Notre Dame's golden dome is returning

Promising new solid tumor cancer treatment

LK-99 is either a room temperature superconductor, or something truly exotic

These and more at vashonloop.com/missed



# Finitude And More To Do

By Michael Shook

I turned 69 this summer, from which it follows, of course, that next year I'll hit 70. That's assuming I live that long. I expect to, but one never knows. At this age, I've lost a number of friends that I just assumed I'd be growing old with, some of them very much too young. And several old buddies – guys I've known for close to 60 years – have had multiple bypass heart surgeries. All this has me thinking about being dead.

More precisely, it has me continuing to think about being dead, or even more precisely, about death generally, and my death, specifically. Perhaps I should capitalize that: Death.

The Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza thought that the “free person thinks least of all of death, and his wisdom is a meditation not on death, but on life.” I'll go with that. But for most of us, probably Baruch as well, to get there I think one must first do some meditating on death.

I mentioned “continuing” to think about death because, for as long as I can remember, I've done just that. I can recall sitting in grade school when we were forced, for some forgotten reason, to have to sit inside, looking out at a beautiful day, and thinking, “What if I died tonight, or on my way home from school? This day, a day I should be outside playing baseball, will have gone, and there will be no more.”

I suppose lots of kids think roughly the same thing, and of course, at such a tender age, not having grown up in a war zone, my experiences of death were limited to the demise of birds, bugs, wasps (my enemy back then, no longer), and an occasional pet. Still, there was an omnipresent sense that this all was finite, could disappear in an instant ...

In any case, here I am now. And if I died in the next moment, I wouldn't be upset. I'd be dead! In itself, that wouldn't be so bad. I've lived a marvelous life, experienced many and varied things, enjoyed the love of friends, family, and a

# Island Voices

small number of lovely women, to whom, one and all, I've reciprocated love (and hopefully done so well).

And it's got to end sometime. My old work buddy was an avid fisherman who used to say that, once our kids were able to fend for themselves, we ought to shuffle off. Like salmon, we'd done our part by spawning, and now it was time to go.

All this is fine and dandy. Jokes about death abound, and accepting the finitude of our lives is easy to do intellectually. And meditating upon the transient nature of life is, I think, important, and can be a great help in our discernment of where and how to direct our lives, as much as that can be done.

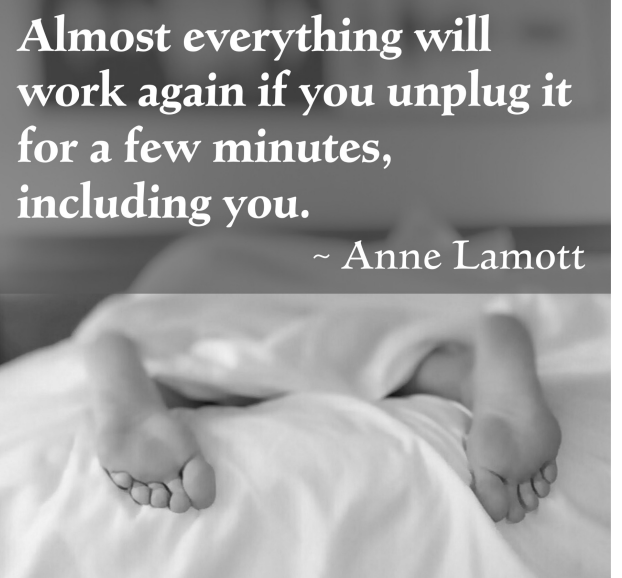
But ... all that is in the mind, the intellect. And the body is a whole 'nother proposition. This is where Spinoza and many other philosophers, make the error of thinking that we are, or can become, highly rational creatures. We are not, and to learn to think and act that way is a daunting task, requiring a lengthy, dedicated effort. Oh, certainly, we can do it in bits and pieces, especially regarding something like, say, a business decision, or where to go to college. But we are animals, and our energies are primarily devoted to fulfilling our animal needs. Foremost among them is doing almost anything to keep living. That fundamental nature cannot be denied or fully subjugated. On the rocky shores of this immovable fact, countless schemes meant to resolve humanity's difficulties, from centuries past to the present, have foundered.

So I am divided. On one hand, intellectually, I'm okay with it; when I die, I die. On another, in my bodily animal sense, I don't want to! I grow weaker each passing year, more creaky, stuff falling apart everywhere. But the life force shall not yield, at least not easily. And I've still got trees to plant, trees I've already planted that need caretaking, music to sing, and family and friends to enjoy.

Then again, how much is enough? Some days I feel, eh, I am who I am, I've done what I've done – what more is there? I'm not going to start a new career (too much work), and anyway I've got more than enough to keep me busy. But there is a sense that, though I be old, I still have a responsibility, a duty to do something to contribute to life – not just while away the days casually, as if none of it mattered.

Like most things, it's out of my hands (certainly the death part, thank goodness). I'm still figuring out the other stuff, and I daren't take any time for granted. One of these days, something will bust, like a piston rod blowing through an engine block, and that will be that. Or it might be that the valves have too much slop, too many leaks, and there will be a slow demise, with lots of oil burning ...

Whenever it does come, I hope I can let go with some grace, and gratitude. It's a truly remarkable experience to live, and also to die. We should all be so lucky as to have the time and resources to contemplate it, Spinoza notwithstanding.



## If It Tastes Bad, It Must Be Good for You

By Seán Malone and John Sweetman

As kids, we attended schools that were a quagmire of communicable diseases, where various ailments were freely communicated, just like today.

Pink eye ... ringworm ... head lice ... measles, and so on, including various rashes, itches, and the common issues of sniveling, coughs, and sometimes more serious issues of croup and whooping cough.

Our second grade teacher, Mrs. Vanhouse, told us that hankies were a source of disease, and that washing did not remove the danger of our spreading sickness. We should not use hankies, but only scraps of cloth that would be thrown away after use. I remember that Bobby Billings and Mike Kennedy both followed her advice and came to school with rags in their back pockets.

Hand-washing was strictly mandated by our teachers, who had us wash our hands with Twenty-Mule Team borax, a white powder dispensed from metal containers above the sinks. It felt like washing our hands with sand.

We were at the mercy of treatment by a variety of family members who frequently prescribed “medicine” of mysterious components that always tasted awful. Cod liver oil was horrible, as was some black cherry concoction made with Angostura bitters from Swedish neighbors: “A spoonful of sugar did NOT make the medicine go down, thank you very much Mary Poppins.” Getting a cough always resulted in

some preemptive dose of some ugly spoonful administered by one's tyrant mother or grandmother. Surgical procedures such as removing splinters were the responsibility of a dad or grandfather.

Before we were administered a spoonful of any ugly, foul-tasting cure, the advice was “it will be good for your gizzard.” Some of this “medicine” may have been efficacious, but even as kids we knew what gizzards were. We knew we didn't have them, and furthermore we hated them. They were the tough-gnarly things that, if we found them in chicken stew, were secretly passed to a dog under the table.

There was kind of a reverse Zen karma thing to this idea of “if it was horrible tasting, it must certainly be good for you.” Much later on in life, we still ponder this paradox as we enjoy stinky pickled herring, varieties of pâté, and worst off, the dreaded Marmite. We can only enjoy these away from the women, and outside, with an occasional ceremonial cigar.

It also turns out that too much of a good thing can result in a bad thing! That took a longer time to realize because we simply enjoyed the good things. Too much of a good thing caused red bumps to appear, usually around the tummy. The confusion between “hives” and “flea” bites has been a source of contention as long as there have been little green apples ... and strawberries and cherries.

Seán was visiting with the Bruners, an elderly couple who raised chickens down by the Cove store. Mr.

Bruner had an old black van that he would fill with eggs and produce for the ferry ride to the Pike Place Market in Seattle.

Finding a good summer job was hard for a 12-year old, so when Mrs. Bruner asked Seán if he wanted to pick cherries, he readily agreed. Bruner's Bing cherries were so big and sweet, Seán began eating them by the handful. After a couple of hours, Mrs. Bruner came down to the orchard to see how he was doing. He had eaten so many cherries, his bucket was only half-full, and she fired him.

Seán woke up the next morning with little red bites all over his chest and stomach. At first, he thought that they were flea bites, which we were prone to pick up from our dogs or cats. But that wasn't the case. He had the “hives.” Mom consulted her medical book and found that Seán was allergic to cherries. She handed

him the bottle of Calamine lotion and told him to rub it all over his itching bites, and to repeat the treatment in a couple of hours.

Seán writes: Fast forward to 2023 and my little log cabin on Indian Point and the two pounds of black cherries that I had picked up at Thriftway.

My little dog, Duffy, picks up the occasional flea and I give him a pill to discourage them. They don't like Duffy anymore; so, when he comes to bed, the fleas jump off Duffy and onto me. I wake up in the morning with two or three bites, and fold back the covers to spray the bed with insect spray, which cures the problem.

In a moment of Déjà vu, I remembered my picking experience 71 years ago in the Bruner's orchard. I realized that the red bumps were an allergy, not the fleas. It turns out that Duffy doesn't like cherries, so if he gets red bumps, it's got to be fleas.



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# Herbs With Kids – Plant Safety Basics and a Few Summer Remedies

By Jane Valencia

Are you curious about learning how to use herbs in your yard or around the Island for medicine? A great way to start is to learn with your kids. And here on Vashon, chances are they know some herbal remedies already. Start there!

Do they have a favorite remedy for a nettle sting? What are their favorite wild summer berries, besides the ubiquitous Himalayan blackberry? Do they have other nature remedies they use?

Make a list of those plants, and then with field guides or other trusted resources, look up the plants together. Discuss them. Invite your children to share what they know, but before you – and they – start eating or working with the plants, take time to cultivate some essential skills.

**Plant identification.** Make absolutely sure the plants are what you and your children think they are, and that the plants are safe to eat or use as medicine. Check three different resources. Take special note of plant names. Sometimes plants share the same common name, yet are very different plants. For example, the herb plantain (*Plantago* sp.) vs. the banana-like plantains. Check the scientific names of the plants to be sure which plant you’re referring to.

Avoid working with plants that have poisonous lookalikes. Field guides devoted to edible and medicinal plants will note these and other cautions.

Notice the shapes and “edges” (margins) of leaves, the branching and leafing patterns, growth habits of the plants, various

## Island Resilience



details regarding flowers, and textures – all elements of what’s known as “plant morphology.” Be observant of as many details as possible. Take note of distinctive characteristics.

If your family can tell the difference between a dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) and a false dandelion/Cat’s Ears (*Hypochaeris radicata*), and identify at least four differences, you’ll be well on track!

**Expand your awareness.** Colors and smells, aspects of the plant that inspire playfulness and imagination, and even sounds (the rattle of branches or rustle of leaves, for instance) can carry your relationship with a plant to the next level. Noting details about a plant’s habitat and its communities (other plants that grow with it, types of insects that may be found with it, and so on) will also help you learn the plant “by heart.” Learn its stages of growth, so you can recognize it in any season.

**Harvesting.** Are the plants in their proper stage of growth for harvesting? Do they look vibrant and healthy? What part of the herb will you harvest? Some plants may be entirely edible or useful for remedies, such as Self-Heal/Heal-All (*Prunella vulgaris*), but others may only have leaves, flowers, or other specific parts that you can use.

**Common sense.** Gather plants from toxin-free environments, and away from foot traffic and animal poop or pee. Engage your children’s and your own observation skills and curiosity. Is it possible that the plants are “downstream” (literally or figuratively) from something questionable (a polluted water source, for instance)?

Practice “second sight” – look again to be sure you have the plant you think. What details about the plant will confirm its identity?

**Kindness and respect (ethics and sustainability).** Make sure there is an abundance of the plant, not just where you are, but elsewhere on the Island. If the plant is considered endangered, it should not be harvested from at all. Only harvest what you will use, and only take a small amount of what’s available. Be kind to the plants! They have their own lives, and serve many roles in nature. The gifts of food, remedies, and beauty or interest we receive from them should be regarded as such indeed.

Often, Island children (and grown-ups) “ask” a plant before taking from it, or give a gift to it. Respectful practices give us the opportunity to slow down, appreciate, and also confirm that this is a plant we want to harvest from.

**Putting it into practice.** Remedies for nettle stings and other typical children’s wounds, and finding delicious berries, are all compelling reasons to learn herbs with your kids, and make a good summer starting point. The following are a few plants, with notes on parts to use.

Narrowleaf plantain and broadleaf plantain (*Plantago lanceolata* and *Plantago major*) –

leaves. The parallel veins on the underside make this plant easy to learn. A great vulnerary (wound healer).

Self-heal/Heal-All (*Prunella vulgaris*) – flowering tops or leaves. This is one of my favorites for its cooling, soothing properties for any skin injury that feels fiery.

Wild rose petal (*Rosa* sp.) and willow leaf (*Salix* sp.) – I recently used this combo for a child who skinned her knee, and she loved it! Rose petals are vulnerary and lovely, and willow is pain-relieving. Don’t use grocery store roses!

How to use the above plants: Make a poultice of the leaves or plant top by crushing or chewing the plant material and then putting the juicy plant wad on the irritated skin.

Yellow dock (*Rumex crispus*) – Kids often make poultices of the leaves for nettle stings, but try using the gel found in the shoots for that purpose.

Sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*) spores – Children like to rub the spores onto the nettle sting area.

Delicious summer berries include himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*) – of course, red huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*), and salal (*Gaultheria shallon*). Coming soon to Island forests is evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*).

See this article on [vashonloop.com](http://vashonloop.com) for resources.



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# What Is Money?

By Stephen Buller

In my previous article, we discussed how you can give more of your hard-earned money to your neighbors when shopping at local businesses by avoiding credit card fees. We also touched on the reasons the banks want you to use credit cards – spoiler: they profit.

Now, let’s look at some other advantages of using cash, what money is, where it’s going, and why we should keep cash on Vashon ... and beyond. If you read to the end, I give two specific tactics to navigate what’s to come.

In my opinion, the greatest advantages of cash center around privacy and control. In the big data age, whenever you make a purchase on your debit or credit card, or through Paypal or another online system, that information is associated with you and saved for the future. The transaction is processed on a network controlled by one or more entities that have the power to pause or reject it, along with the source of funding itself.

Banks, your government, and marketers see great value in collecting data to assess your spending patterns and sell you more. If you believe these entities want your data to serve you – rather than themselves ... They may not even know exactly what they want to do with the data at first; the usual plan is to sell it to the highest bidder. Regardless, once they’ve captured your data, they can use it for the foreseeable future for purposes we may not even be able to imagine

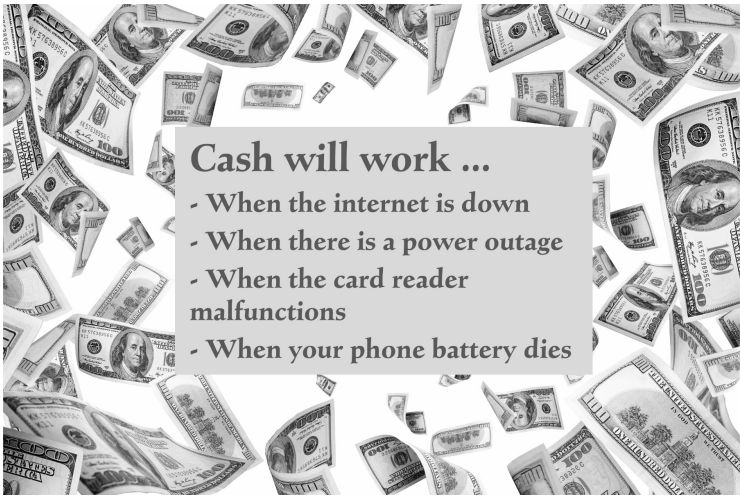
today.

It’s more likely that big data is used to assess trends over large populations and time periods. The issue of control is much more personal. You may have heard of a trucker protest in Canada that began in early 2022. Regardless of your position on that issue, law-abiding citizens in a western democracy had their donations confiscated and their bank accounts frozen by their government. Whether you and I ever come into the crosshairs of our governments can’t be known, but relinquishing control of your wealth is a real risk.

How did we get here? A big part of the answer is that most people don’t understand what money is. I’ve repeatedly used the word incorrectly above, and you do the same every day. Simply put, United States dollars are not money – nor is any fiat currency – because one of the necessary characteristics of money is that it is a store of value.

Today, it’s easy to see that the dollar in your pocket has less purchasing power than it did a year ago. Since the 1913 inception of the Federal Reserve, the third US central bank and a non-government entity, the dollar has lost 97% of its purchasing power. This is a disadvantage of holding too much cash.

Many tangible commodities have been used as money throughout human history, but for thousands of years, gold and silver were widely recognized as the best. There are



many reasons for this, but the most relevant in this case is that you can’t print – or type – them into existence.

Today, we have intangible cryptocurrencies vying for the title of best money. A cryptocurrency that had the same monetary characteristics as gold, solved current problems like extreme energy demands and transaction costs, and that kept privacy and control in the hands of the user, would contribute greatly to a free and prosperous society.

But that’s not what we’ll get – without a fight. Governments prefer a monopoly on money, and they’re already implementing central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) the world over. FedNow is coming to a digital wallet near you.

Up to this point, central banks could fight deflationary forces by creating more currency units, but they feared letting the inflation cat out of the bag because the psychology of a society isn’t simple to reverse. To reduce inflation, they would have to do something like lock everyone in

their homes ... But with CBDCs, they could put a cap on how much you could spend in a day, and that’s only the beginning. In theory, they could limit what you can buy, how much of it, and where you could travel based on your social credit score or the whims of your current “representative.”

What can you do? First, recognize that cash gives you privacy. Second, when they implement a US CBDC, spend yours on only a few, large purchases, to limit the information you give. Third, spend this new currency as fast as possible to acquire something with real value, because you understand Gresham’s law: Bad money drives out good. In Roman times, the emperor would dilute the precious metal content of coins to create more units to spend on wars. Savvy people noticed the difference and would hoard coins with higher silver content, while spending those with more base metals. Today, it’s harder to see through the scam, but that’s what it is.



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# MINGLEMENT

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## From Minglement

The fruit and berry season is in full swing now and making bubbly refreshing shrubs to make it through the hotter days ahead will be a delight. Here is my recipe that I use for most things shrubs, and of course you may have your own twist, too! It's easy and the shrub mixture should last about 3 weeks!

### Eva's Shrub Mixture

One-third fruit – slightly macerated

One-third honey – I use raw honey – sugar can be exchanged for honey

One-third apple cider vinegar – I use Bragg's

Find a mason jar with tight-fitting lid and mark where one-third might be for each ingredient to maintain thirds for each. Shake. Leave in a room out of light and not too warm

for 3-4 days, shaking often. When it is ready, strain out the fruit, add the remaining syrup into another mason jar, and put in fridge.

To make the shrub. Use about a tablespoon or more to your liking with approximately 8 of water. I use Gerolsteiner water because of its minerals and for the fizziness it adds to these refreshing waters.

Enjoy – Eva

*Editor's note – Shrubs, also known as vinegar cordials, are non-alcoholic syrups made from concentrated fruit, sugar, vinegar, and sometimes herbs. These sweet and acidic mixers have a unique flavor and can be combined with soda water and/or as part of an alcoholic drink. Shrub-based drinks were popular in the U.S. during the colonial period, and have a history of use going back to the 17th Century. Prior to refrigeration, shrubs were an efficient way to make a versatile syrup that could be stored for year-round use.*



## Island Epicure

By Marjorie Watkins

When we lived in Crete, there were little white churches scattered over the hills. Their doors were always unlocked and you could go in any time to say your prayers, although you might not find chairs to sit in. The priests were always tall. Greeks are not noted for being tall, but the priests were. You would meet them on the streets, always dressed in long black robes.

This recipe is said to be so good, that when the priest ate it, he fainted! All the herbs in this recipe grow wild in Crete. You can make Imam Baildi in the oven in the morning when it is cool. Serve cold on a hot day.

### Imam Baildi (the Priest Fainted) – a recipe to serve hot or cold

Ingredients:

- 3 lbs (10-12) narrow eggplants, 4-6 inches long
- ½ cup olive oil
- 4 onions, thinly sliced
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 can tomato sauce

- 1 green pepper, seeded and diced
- 2 tsp oregano
- ½ tsp thyme
- 1 cup chopped parsley

Put sliced eggplant in salted water for about 15 minutes. Squeeze out excess moisture and pat dry.

Cover the bottom of a frying pan with olive oil (about ¼ cup) and heat until it sizzles when a drop of water lands on it. Fry eggplants lightly on both sides, adding more olive oil if necessary.

In another frying pan, heat enough oil to cover the bottom, and saute onions until soft. Add tomatoes, tomato sauce, garlic, parsley, salt, oregano, thyme, and green pepper.

Layer with eggplant in 10-inch glass pie pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Serve hot or cold.

Serve with:

- Tzatziki
- Kalamata olives (in Crete, they always had them on the table)
- Shredded lettuce
- Oinos Kokinos (red wine)

## Strawberry Oatmeal Bars: A Festival for Your Tastebuds

By Nichole Banducci

In honor of Strawberry Festival, I wanted to share my favorite strawberry-filled baked treat.

Rolled oats, whole wheat flour, brown sugar, strawberries, chia seeds, and lemon juice are the main heroes that make these bars delectable.

The cool part is you can substitute your preferred flour, sugar, butter, or fruit filling to meet your family's specific tastes or nutritional needs.

The "bar" part of the recipe comes together in just one bowl. It is then divided into an 8 x 8 baking pan, with jam as the middle layer. Pressing hard on the bottom layer gives it a good chewy crunch, while a lighter touch on the topping provides crumbly goodness.

My family loves this recipe using a strawberry chia jam. I feel good knowing that it reduces the total sugar, while adding extra fiber and protein.

Speaking of sugar ... you can cut to ¾ cup of brown sugar or replace with coconut sugar without changing the results. However, any less sugar gives you a dryer, reduced-flavor bar. (One overly dry batch with ¼ cup brown sugar became my breakfast "cereal").

Want to simplify the recipe even further? Simply pop-open a jar of your favorite jam instead of making something from scratch.



## Strawberry Oatmeal Bars

### Ingredients

Bar base:

- 8 tbsp salted butter, softened
- 2 cups rolled oats (not instant)
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 cup brown sugar (pressed)
- 1 tsp baking powder

Strawberry filling:

- 2 cups frozen or fresh strawberries
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 tbsp lemon juice



### Instructions

Bars:

- Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare an 8 x 8 baking dish with either parchment or non-stick spray/butter.
- In a large bowl, mix the butter, oats, flour, brown sugar, and baking powder.
- Once incorporated, the ingredients will be crumbly and slightly moist.
- Spoon just over half of the mixture into the 8 x 8 pan and press down firmly.
- Spread 1 cup strawberry jam over the pressed bar base.
- Sprinkle remaining mixture from the bowl over the jam layer; press down lightly.
- Bake for 35 minutes. Remove and let cool for about 15 minutes before cutting into 2-inch squares.

Strawberry filling:

- Put strawberries in a saucepan over medium heat. Soften for about 5 minutes, then smash with a potato masher or wooden spoon.
- Once the strawberries reach desired consistency and begin to bubble, remove from heat.
- Stir in chia seeds and lemon juice.
- Cool for about 30 minutes. The chia seeds will thicken the strawberries and create a jam-like consistency.

## Vashon!

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Fireweed

By Kathy Abascal

I am told that you can measure when summer will end by watching fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*) bloom. Here on Vashon, its purple flowers began to open at the base of its stem in early July. They then work their way up until finally the tips of the plant are in bloom. When that happens, summer is just about over. Fireweed is reasonably common on the Island, so you can watch summer progress by keeping an eye on this plant.

There are about 200 species of fireweed, and they prefer to grow either at relatively high latitudes or high altitudes. This plant is found in all parts of the world, but the further north you go, the bigger and more abundant it gets. I used to gather it in the Colorado Rockies where it was at most a knee-high plant. It was a joy to come to Vashon and find plants towering over the blackberries along the Island side roads.

As you go further north, to places like Sweden or Alaska, you can find meadows of large fireweed plants. Fireweed is a perennial, and its flowers range from lavender to pink to carmine-purple; its pods are long, narrow, and filled with feathery seeds.

Fireweed has been widely used as a medicine and a food in many parts of the world. Young shoots were eaten and used as fodder for animals. I am told that the shoots taste a bit like asparagus, but I keep forgetting to gather some in spring to try. The seed fluff was used as a fire-starter,

and some say its common name comes from the ease with which the fluff catches fire. Cloth has been found woven solely from the seed plumes, which were also used to make thread. The Swedes call the plant mjoele or “milky” based on their observations that cows grazing on fireweed produce more milk. Fireweed leaves also make a nice galactagogue tea for human mothers.

Medicinally, the Native Americans used fireweed for burning urination, male urination problems, coughs and sore throats, stomach aches and intestinal discomfort, bowel hemorrhage, gastritis, tuberculosis, and as a panacea for pain. They also used it as a poultice for boils, abscesses, bruises, infected sores, cuts, wounds, and other skin ailments. Various Eskimo and Siberian tribes used the plant similarly. Fireweed species were used in both Egyptian and European folk medicine to treat inflammation, adenoma, and prostate tumors. The Europeans also used the plant to treat skin disorders such as eczema, dandruff, as well as for menstrual disorders.

The Eclectic physicians considered fireweed unequalled as a treatment for diarrhea, including when caused by cholera and dysentery. According to the Eclectics, fireweed can be tinctured, but works best as a tea infusion. They preferred frequent small doses of the tea for diarrhea, recommending a dose as often as every 10 minutes.

Although there is little clinical research on the plant, studies show that most fireweed species have analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, anti-tumor, and prostate-related activities. Thus, infusions of fireweed strongly reduced prostaglandin release in animals, and worked as well as indomethacin at preventing edema. Like indomethacin, fireweed inhibited platelet aggregation but, unlike the drug, did not cause stomach ulcers. The researchers speculated that fireweed is safer than non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and works by inhibiting the production of leukotrienes that sustain inflammatory reactions in the body.

Tinctures of fireweed are antimicrobial and inhibit many types of bacteria, yeast, and fungi. In various studies, fireweed very strongly inhibited *Microsporum canis* (a cause of fungal skin problems), strongly inhibited *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli*, and weakly inhibited *Candida albicans*. These test tube studies suggest that folk uses of fireweed for skin

problems and diarrhea may eventually be validated as effective – if these uses are ever studied, of course.

Finally, fireweed has some potentially very interesting benefits for the prostate. Tinctures of various fireweed species inhibit aromatase, an enzyme that converts testosterone into estrogen. In one study, two of fireweed’s constituents had a considerably greater inhibitory action on 5 alpha-reductase than the prostate drug finasteride. This, of course, strongly supports European and Egyptian folk uses of the fireweed plant for prostate issues, and Native American uses for “male urinary problems.” Again, there are no clinical studies on fireweed for this use, which is a shame.

Fireweed has no known toxic effects, a fact borne out by its worldwide use as food for both humans and animals. It is a lovely plant that makes a quite pleasant tea. If it is growing along your roads, I suggest harvesting and drying leaves for tea. If it is not, you might want to gather some seed fluff this fall and plant the seed in some sunny spot to remind you to enjoy summer while it lasts.

Health Matters

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Medicinal Plants on Vashon – Horsetail

By Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz

Equisetum, or horsetail, is the only remaining genus in the prehistoric plant family Equisetaceae. I certainly think it looks like it belonged with dinosaurs, with its crusty texture and poky, bottle brush appearance. It is extremely persistent, with very deep rhizomes that make it extremely difficult to eradicate. It does not flower, and reproduces with spores rather than seeds.

It contains uncommonly high levels of silica because it grows in sand. Silica is an important element for the health of human connective tissue, which includes the bones, cartilage, hair, skin, and nails.

It is particularly well known in traditional

medicine for healing the bladder of all kinds of common problems, especially incontinence, as it can help strengthen the tissues. Horsetail is also commonly included in preparations for allergies, osteoporosis, healing broken bones, and weak and brittle hair and nails.

This herb is best prepared as a cold infusion (soaked in cold water for 10 hours or longer) or as a hot tea decocted in a covered pot for 15-20 minutes. Discard the cooked plant and drink. Alcohol preparations should be made with fresh, not dried, herbs.

Some cultures have a history of eating the plant itself, but some sources caution against this as it can cause intestinal irritation. I have not tried this but just looking at it makes me imagine it would hurt my insides. No matter the preparation, using the youngest, most tender tops where the bristly parts are still pointing upward is best.

Science confirming the traditional uses of horsetail is still evolving, however multiple studies referenced from 2010, 2013, and 2014 have found that an aqueous extract of horsetail has anti-inflammatory benefits and supports the immune system.

Horsetail contains an enzyme called thiaminase, which can cause deficiency in thiamin or vitamin B1 if consumed for long periods. If it is prepared as a hot tea, the enzyme is likely denatured, but caution is still warranted. Use for shorter periods or take breaks in between consumption.

As always, be certain about plant identification before consumption. Consult an expert if necessary.

See this article at [vashonloop.com](http://vashonloop.com) for additional reading.






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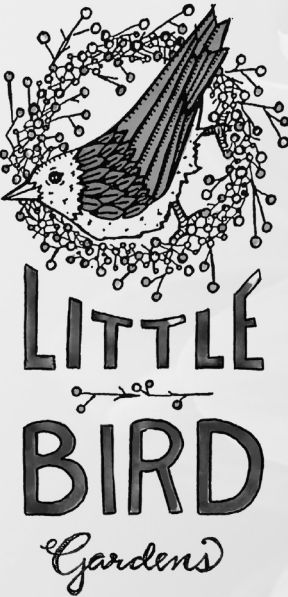
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CowExist

Continued from Page 1

intending to re-unite with Mr. Harm zum Spreckel's bull, from whom she had been torn away a couple of hours earlier.

While under close human pursuit, Leslie was scared off by angry motorists and soon took a wrong turn, leaving a trail of destruction through forest undergrowth and tumbling by stages down 400 feet of high-bank cliffs to the Colvos Passage beach.

There, she was discovered when Larry the Bus Driver returned home from work. Having no particular need for a scuffed-up, mutant dairy cow, and concerned for his beach property, he contacted the search party. They converged on the scene, but in the re-rescue process, Leslie-Cowzilla ripped apart a stamped steel gate, turning her left shoulder into a 10-pound hanging flank steak.

Under normal circumstances, any bovine in her blood-drenched condition would immediately be euthanized, both out of mercy, and because it's genuinely dangerous to be close to wounded, agile, grief-stricken, and extremely annoyed animals who weigh over a ton. But Leslie was pregnant, a technicality revealed shortly after her escape and misfortune, so the Foster Cow Welfare Committee decided to try saving her.

The first vet we called told us we were crazy, to put her down like normal ranchers, and hung up. The second vet agreed to come by.

Because of the wound's size (deep as your hand, two and a half feet long) and the cow's skin, stitches and staples couldn't be used. The vet laid out a bold healing plan that could, in theory, work.

It was simple, really. All we had to do was tie Leslie between two trees every morning, brush sterilizing chlorhexidine into her wound, debride it until completely clean, pat it dry with a towel, then rub in a half-tin of Bag Balm. Remember the movie "Terminator 2," and the scene with the gallon jug of blue liquid that Linda Hamilton fills a syringe with and threatens to inject into the asylum's psychiatrist? That's chlorhexidine. Into the wound. Every. Morning.

A member of the Committee we'll call Rhett Butler was a handyman who happened to have a wicked crush on Leslie's adoptive mom, so he gallantly volunteered to be the healer. And for the next three months, he was. It gradually got easier, but let's put it this way: A ton-and-a-half cow can perform a forward somersault, land on her back, and flail her legs in the air while roped between two trees. The things we do for love.

Rhett and his patient survived, and the wound closed so completely you could hardly tell it was ever there. Best of all, love did blossom, even more than foreseen. Due to close contact and time, Leslie forgot all about her first romance. She decided Rhett was worthy of her considerable attentions, and that he would make a great dad for her calf.

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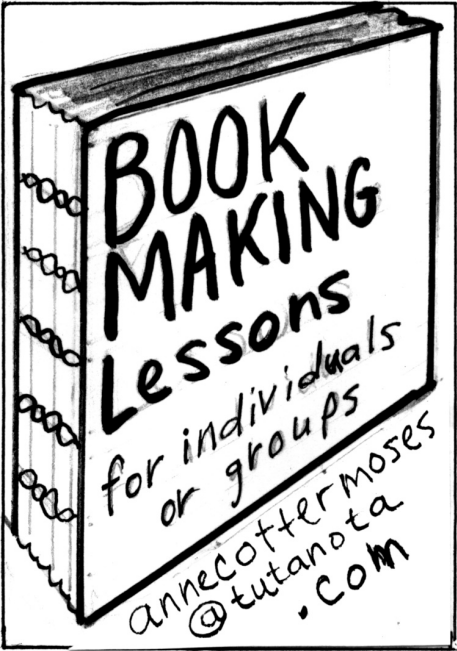
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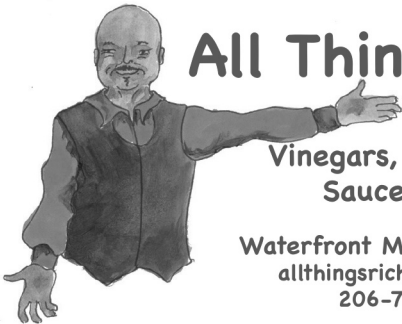
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# I Love A Good Burger

By the Footloose Foodie

I am especially excited about the subject matter of this month’s article. I love a good burger!

Footloosing it, I meandered uptown in search of a good burger. What makes a burger good? There are as many answers to this question as there are burgers! Everyone has a personal set of taste buds, creating a personal flavor desired in the foods they consume.

This in mind, I will create the burger as I taste it. Agree or disagree or agree to disagree, it’s all okay with me. Just enjoy a good burger!

First off, give kind words with a tip to the servers, cooks, host, and dishwashers. To everyone who puts themselves forward in service, showing so in kindness and friendly professionalism, “Thank you!”

Okay! Now to the burger. Ground chuck is the most affordable of the finer burger meats. Ground brisket is awesome, but a tad bit more in dollar value. An 80/20 split in fat content is preferable; the first number is the meat percentage. I like this percentage. Beef fat is a flavor carrier. Oops! Apologies to my cardiologist.

The bread or bun is an important part of the burger. Bread is the first thing you bite into, so it has got to be a quality bun. No need to be “bougie,” just good.

Off-the-grocery-shelf potato is at best a substitute for a kitchen short list. Yes, thank you for the effort, but a kind gesture from the kitchen would be to provide a bit of “decisional” information ... Pros, cons, the options of wanting the burger with the bun or no burger at all, being the bun used is lacking quality. Server, offer up a conversation that gives direction!

Fresh lettuce, but please, not romaine leaf ends! Sliced tomato, dill pickle, and onions on the side are preferable. Mayo I like only to regulate the flavors that ketchup and mustard give my burger. I ate a burger last Wednesday in which there were

lots of onions slathered in a “special sauce.” The beef lost its flavor. The sum of the ingredients brings out the “good” burger in burger! Some like it that way, as this place has been known to sell out on Wednesdays! Kudos!

Many times, I find my day ending late, so a burger run is a great, simple, and easy thing. I must shout out to Sporty’s. Their burger is consistent as all get-out, made with love, or a lot of care. The beef patty is flavorful. Side condiments are mine to choose. The hamburger relish is a nice twist in which I imbibe at times. Yes! The K2 burger is a pretty good choice. Consistently served with a kind word and smile. All-around deserving of a compliment in kindness and a fine tip! Never been disappointed!

Consistency is so vital in the food industry. Much money is made by return customers. Consistency is what brings many back. People know what they like and how and where they like it! Good thing the most consistent burger on the Island has nowhere to dine in, so its “grab ‘n go!”

Freedom of speech is a right. A consistent burger is a blessing! Every burger is as close to a clone as one can get. When the flavor is good, I do purchase a double or two singles, preferring a larger meat to bread ratio! American cheese has earned its place on a burger! A burger emergency is just as it sounds, so enjoy the freedom of choice!

Often, I get the quick raised eyebrow ordering a burger at a Mexican cuisine house. I have enjoyed some really good burgers at such a place.

The prolific use of the “limited menu” idea is a rebirth blamed on the pandemic. Understandably so. With to-go orders, limited staff, and sporadic business, limited offerings are good cost control for the house. Limiting your menu can work, and does for many. Coming from 48 years of cooking experience, I would like to see excellence in the flavor of the limited foods offered. Easier to focus on the creative love.

But a recent limited menu burger was disappointing at best! Mostly because I recognized the “beef patty,” knowing the business. There was a

problem a while back with meat temperature, but the flavor was there. Hand-pressed is a great start, but like all foods, they are only as good as the sum of their parts! Make it good, be consistent, respect it, make it well, and make it with love.

Please note that I write from personal experience. Food is a personal thing for me. I like good food, ambience, and quality when I dine out. I am no way coming from a nefarious place. These are my opinions, and not those of this publication. Once again, agree, disagree. Agree to disagree in kindness.

I am looking for a someone who likes beer, as the breweries are my next Footloose Foodie adventure. I can do the food, but not more than one beer. My treat!

## Heart of Vashon

Continued from Page 1

steadfast in their protection of its (Vashon’s) natural beauty, and yet sincere in their welcome and joy in sharing the Vashon story.”

The stories and poems chosen for the book range from childhood memories to spiritual ponderings, from humorous limericks to contemplative poems, from tender moments in nature to the rules of commuting.

The earliest island story in the book is shared by Joy Sherman White, a direct descendent of one of the original island settlers, Salmon Sherman. Her story about her grandfather as a young boy in 1887 is accompanied by a photograph of Marshall Sohl’s handcrafted “First Settlers” wooden plaque, currently owned by Emmett Sherman.

Erin Canfield and Tressa Azpiri share memories of their lives as Island children, while Katy Jo Steward and Frank Jackson share thoughts on community activism. With humorous detail, Gayle Kellner shares The Vashon Way: How to Be Mistaken for a Local.

Photographs by Ray Pfortner share the page with stories about orcas, and a Deere-shaped pond brightly lit for the holidays. All of the stories share a love for this unique and special place that we call home.

Beauty splashed everywhere around me  
Stars and rain  
Smells of woods  
I live here!  
Gratitude.  
~ Mary Kelly

“The Heart of Vashon: Sharing Our Stories” may be purchased at the Vashon Heritage Museum, Vashon Bookshop, and Vashon Pharmacy. All proceeds benefit the Vashon Heritage Museum.

See Page 11 for Excerpts from "Heart of Vashon."

## Aman Omid Village

Continued from Page 1

production of “Rust,” and dealt with the victims of Alec Baldwin’s gun mishap.

This was an unusual assignment for MPSM. The entertainment industry does not involve many children or pregnant women. On this gig, we were running what was primarily a pediatric and obstetric critical care transport service. We delivered babies. We saved and lost tiny ones, and saved and lost physically and mentally traumatized kids and adults.

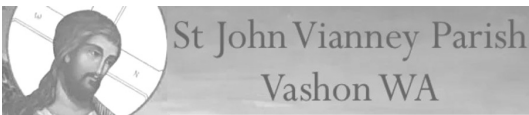
Not everyone survived. Among the first wave of evacuees were two babies with disease severity and complications that proved too dire to survive, despite our efforts and air evacuation to pediatric specialty centers.

We took care of one 9-month-old three times, managing fluid balance and fever with intravenous lines, steroids, and antibiotics, finally getting her airlifted to El Paso Children’s Hospital. She had C. difficile, astrovirus, adenovirus, sapovirus, and giardia. This constellation of disease is never seen in the first world. She also had old bruises that were suspect until we learned they were from being thrown into the Kabul airlift plane by her mother, who was herself grabbed by others and pulled into the plane as it taxied to liftoff. Mom saw her husband and five other children gunned down.

The Languages there were Pashto, Dari, Farsi, and two tribal dialects

incomprehensible to the others. The single men lived in a tent of their own. Families were in the others. There were no single adult women; they were housed at different bases. But we had plenty of widows.

*Continued next month. Substack subscribers (vashonloop.substack.com) with paid subscriptions have early access to the full content of this article. Join the Vashon Loop Substack today.*



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## Excerpts From “The Heart of Vashon”

### The Vashon Way: How to Be Mistaken for a Local

By Gayle Kellner

When you run out of almond milk and have to go purchase more, put on a loose-fitting dress and mismatched sweater, preferably hand-knit. Finish off your outfit with a pair of rubber boots. If they look new, walk through a couple of mud puddles on your way to your Subaru.

Note to the nearest person within earshot you are going “up town.” There is a distinct difference between that and going “in town” which means you’ll be catching a ferry boat.

Run at least 5 minutes late everywhere you go. Be exceedingly polite at the 4-way stop – the likely

reason you are late.

Don’t wash your car unless it is to support a local school fundraiser. The scraping of moss once it has taken over 50 percent of the windshield is permissible every few years, as is the removal of small saplings sprouting in the crevices, so long as you replant them.

Regularly recycle; listen to Voice of Vashon radio. Buy local produce, eat kale by the bale, and consider getting your own chickens.

Pronounce Maury with a long “o” sound, and consider a tattoo if you don’t already have one.

### Know Who To Trust

By Frank Walls

It was early summer of 1928 when an almost new Model T truck was driven into our front yard followed by a car with two men in it. Dad went out to meet them. Axel Peterson, the Vashon State Bank president, stepped out of the car.

Dad and he warmly shook hands and, after some small talk, Axel asked Dad if it was true that his truck was broken down. Dad said it was, as he didn’t have the money to fix it. Dad was a shipwright, home-builder and cabinet-maker. In berry-growing season, he hauled berries to canneries on and off the Island. He also co-managed the Vashon Cannery. Axel knew all this, as he was at the

financial heart of the Island.

Axel told Dad he thought he needed a new truck and that, as he had repossessed the Model T, he thought Dad should have it. Dad responded that we could not afford it.

Axel tossed the truck keys to Dad and said “I’m selling this one to you for \$600. Pay me when you can.” He turned his back, leaving Dad speechless, got into his car with the other two men and drove away.

Dad and Mom saved pennies and paid the truck off in a year. It was a prosperous year in part to having that new truck. And thanks to a very knowledgeable small-town banker who knew who to trust and when.

### A Vashon Moment

By Carla Pryne

It was a Vashon moment.

Walking in lower Gold Beach, we spotted a mature bald eagle landing on a tree just ahead. It seemed this eagle had an awfully large head, as there was a very large shock of white near the top of the tree.

As we drew closer, we saw why: there were two eagles, side by side, surveying the shore and the sound, motionless except for occasional tilts of those great heads. We were pretty much spellbound. Another woman joined us and looked up to where we pointed. After a few quiet moments, she put into words what my friend and I were feeling: “It’s so beautiful it makes my heart ache.”

Vashon moments happen a lot. This Island is a place where it is not uncommon for people to point at something that breaks their hearts with delight. Sometimes what stops us may be something considered rare. More often though, it’s something commonplace: your neighbor’s goat with its head turned just so; a mare galloping across the pasture, wind and light catching her mane and tail; a young buck strolling across the tide flats at Tramp Harbor.

We share these moments of joy and acclamation. And in so doing, we encourage each other in the wider work of healing the planet, the commons of life we share with all who live on this blue-green pellet, bright in a very large universe.

### Golden Rules of Commuting

By Lorna Delano Cunningham

Golden Rules of Commuting:

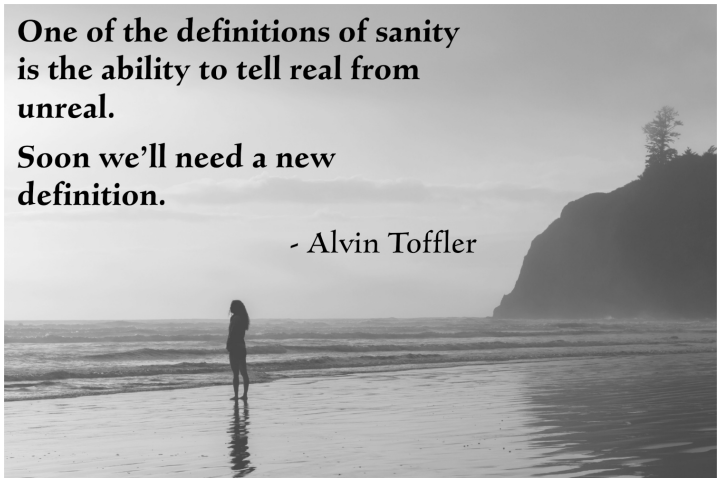
Commuting is not for the faint of heart.

Patience is a virtue.

Never cut in front of another commuter.

“Back in the day” ferry workers could see you coming down the hill, or if you gave a good long honk, they would hold the ferry and wait for you! I seldom run into folks I know on the ferries anymore, but one thing has never changed: the ride home!

It is my firm belief that “True Vashonites” show up with no time frame in mind. Waiting in line is for being neighborly, napping, singing, hanging over the dock rail watching for sea life as gulls glide on the wind above, calling out the day.



## Llaughing Llamas Chronicles

By Daniel Hooker



A man goes to Australia after meeting a U.S. couple that shared tales of a town in the Outback called “Life.” The town had a tea called Koala that had rejuvenating properties. It took a week’s worth of travel with buses and jeeps to get to the town. Once the man arrived, he found the only restaurant in town.

The man entered and sat down at a table of a sparsely busy place. The Aboriginal waiter handed him a menu and walked away. Ten minutes went by, and finally the waiter returned, asking what would the man care to drink? To which the man said he’d like to try the Koala tea that he’s heard has wonderful benefits. The waiter left with his order. Ten minutes, then 20 minutes went by, with the man almost fuming at waiting so long.

Finally, the waiter returned after 30 minutes, with a pot of tea, a cup, a fork, and a spoon. The waiter asked if he can be mum (pour the tea), to which the man replied, yes. The man smelled the tea. It had a sweet, fruity smell with undertones he was unfamiliar with – maybe eucalyptus, he thought. Then, taking his first sip, he started spitting out a bunch of white fur.

Outraged, the man screamed at the waiter, “What’s this?!”

The waiter replied, “Maybe you haven’t heard? But Koala tea in Life is never strained.”

From Jack at Euphorium:

Did you hear about the man who spontaneously evaporated?

He is mist!

From one of our Ace Hardware helpers:

What do you call a nun or priest who sleepwalks?

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What do you call a nun who can’t decide how to vote?

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Fans of Eric Francis should be aware that this is a special reading due to the Venus retrograde. [planetwaves.net](http://www.planetwaves.net) has an entire article on the retrograde readings, information on the formulas used, and will have a special mid-month additional round of readings.

**Aries (March 20-April 19)**

Your solar chart is exploding with the kind of creativity that is so concentrated and so meaningful that it requires patience to bring out. So if you focus on making some time and space for yourself, and slowing down enough to focus inwardly, you can do something beautiful that you’ve wanted to do for a long time. There is an element of retrieving something that you left behind or unfinished in the past, even if that is just a starting point. There is also a necessary element of trusting yourself enough to think your ideas are worth developing.

Venus stations retrograde in Leo, the 5th solar house for Aries. This is a significant creative gift, so meaningful that you might overlook it or take it for granted. Venus rules the 2nd (Taurus), 7th (Libra), and the 12th (exalted in Pisces).

**Taurus (April 19-May 20)**

Even though you’re one of the best at feathering your own nest, and what could generally be called “making home,” it’s still not easy for you to feel comfortable on the planet. Perhaps this is behind your drive to improve your spaces and fill your home with art and artifacts that you personally value. (Not everyone does.) Yet the adjustment described by Venus retrograde is about aligning with yourself emotionally. You are past the point where feeling accepted by your family is especially relevant. If you’re aware of any ways you didn’t fit into your family of origin, you will have a basic set of principles to work with.

Venus will be retrograde in Leo, the 4th solar house for Taurus, emphasizing the importance of home, and also the conditions of your early childhood environment. Venus rules your 1st (Taurus), 6th (Libra), and the 11th (exalted in Pisces).


**Gemini (May 20-June 21)**

Finding a new kind of success is on your mind these days. Saturn’s presence at the top of your solar chart is encouraging you to take charge of whatever you’re involved with. You may or may not have professional aspirations, though your charts suggest that you be impeccable in all that you do. You have a rare gift for words (which means ideas), though you may not understand the extent of your distinctive talent. Though you may not want to be known as a writer, you have a rare opportunity to do something potentially valuable and vital for yourself and the world.

Venus will be retrograde Leo, which is the 3rd solar house for Gemini. This fact is a clue to understanding the power of the solar chart generally, and also your personal gift for communication. Leo in this placement for Gemini is a clue to your talent with language. Venus rules the 12th (Taurus), 5th (Libra), and the 10th (exalted in Pisces).


**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**

You are in a period of financial rearrangement, and it’s crucial that you take this rare opportunity to go the whole way. There are at least two layers here. One involves the basics of consolidating your financial power:



# Planet Waves

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



knowing where you stand with yourself, how much you have, and how much you owe. The more important exercise is aligning your spending and investing with what you personally hold to be valuable. Such an inquiry into values is a rare activity on Earth, and an important point of maturity for you. Most people go through life spending their money where they are forced to do so. The false lesson is that you don’t have a choice, which is another way of saying your resources are not your own.

Leo is the 2nd solar house for Cancer, associated with finances and self-worth. The water signs all have fire signs on their financial house, though Cancer’s emphasis via Leo is one of the greatest gifts in all of astrology. Venus rules the 11th (Taurus), the 4th (Libra) and the 9th (exalted in Pisces).

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

Everyone, it seems, goes through a phase where they must learn how to say, “I am an artist” or musician or writer or race car driver or whatever you may be. Venus retrograde in your own sign is about aligning your whole being with your aspirations. Practice not hesitating when asked what you do. You don’t need to recite your curriculum vitae, or account for your side-hustles or hobbies. Answer simply and declaratively, so that any discussion focuses on the one thing that matters to you the most. Pay attention to any sense of doubt you may feel, without succumbing to it.

Leo is its own 1st solar house, and this is where Venus will be retrograde. By the end of this transit, you will feel much more solid and confident in expressing what seem like professional goals but which really are core concepts of self-actualization. Venus rules the 3rd (Libra), the 8th (exalted in Pisces) and the 10th (Taurus).

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

Venus retrograde for you is about finding yourself, when culturally there is no such thing anymore. Most people are under the persistent (digital) illusion that they know everything there is to know about themselves. This would be true, if we count skipping the whole topic as a means of gaining knowledge. The kind of finding I am talking about will feel a little like discovering a wad of cash in a jacket you haven’t worn for five years. You may wake up one day and discover that you’re a talented investor, clairvoyant or special events planner. But you won’t know until you try.

Leo is the 12th solar house of Virgo. The retrograde will offer you a rare glimpse into interior portions of your psyche that are easy to avoid or pretend do not exist. Remember they have a logic of their own that nobody else will understand. Venus rules the 2nd (Libra), the 7th (exalted in Pisces) and the 9th (Taurus).

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

This is the time to make being social your vocation. If you spend what feels like a disproportionate amount of time outside of the house among people, there are likely to be significant rewards. Go where people are generally unfamiliar to you, rather than your old haunts. Then find the people who feel familiar, and notice when an actual conversation starts. Then, collect these

people over the next couple of months. This is more than about networking (the old-fashioned kind, in person rather than by typing or tapping). It’s about finding your community of interest, one person at a time. If there is a social/spiritual exercise involved, it’s about getting good at being yourself.

Leo is the 11th solar house for Libra, which helps explain why you are so naturally a social person (even if you’re an introvert). Venus rules the 1st (Libra), the 6th (exalted in Pisces) and 8th (Taurus). The retrograde will offer you excellent confidence-building opportunities.

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

Venus rules your opposite sign Taurus, and is therefore about your personal relationships with others. Yet it also rules your deeply introspective 12th house, so it’s about your relationship with yourself. This is an odd setup, because it means that so much of what seems to be about other people is really about you. You’ve surely heard that “relationships are a mirror of your inner reality,” and this is truer for Scorpio than for any other sign. Therefore, you can relax, and focus on having a peaceful relationship with yourself. It will help if you give people a lot of room to be themselves, while you give yourself room to be yourself.

Leo is the 10th solar house for Scorpio, so it affects your relationship to authority, and to being an authority. You don’t need to convince anyone of your power; you just need to relax and be yourself. Treat people kindly, knowing they want to respect you. Venus rules the 7th (Taurus), the 9th (exalted in Pisces) and the 12th (Libra).

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

All of your questions currently come back to your ultimate philosophy on life. Jim Morrison said that Sagittarius is the most philosophical sign, though this is now getting new and unusual emphasis. Perhaps you’ve identified that, though even if so, the retrograde of Venus is here to help you tune up your relationship to your quest for your personal truth about your own life. There are plenty of fake plastic trees you could put in this space; you can paint any view you want on the inside of your windows. Yet your soul is craving the direct experience of reality, and if you let go of certain distractions—anger, wanting to be the best, or certain falsehoods imposed on you by religion—you will make some exciting discoveries.

Leo is the 9th solar house for Sagittarius, meaning that this retrograde happens where you form your relationship with both ideas and what you think of as god or your higher self. Venus rules the 6th (Taurus), the 11th (Libra) and the 4th (exalted in Pisces).

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

Questions surround the role of investors, partners and collaborators. It’s important that you account for everyone who has a role in your business life, or who has access to your funds. What role does everyone fulfill? You must align with them on your purpose, but also on your creative aspirations and your thinking style. You have a brilliantly intuitive mind. You are often right without having taken the

steps to get there—but what you’re doing now requires concrete thinking and tangible goals. Where you can have that conversation, and get useful information, you know you are probably with the right people.

Leo is the 8th solar house for Capricorn, and so the retrograde happens in a deeply transformational house. What seems like a matter of life-or-death is really a matter of growing and relating to others. Venus rules the 5th (Taurus), the 10th (Libra) and the 3rd (exalted in Pisces).

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

Close intimate partners on the level of family are the focus of Venus retrograde. You are seeing that there are many levels of exchange you have with them, and Venus right on your personal horizon is holding out the potential for going deeper. This will be based on emotional contact, though be mindful of who from your past reminds you of someone with whom you’re currently close. Just because someone reminds you of your father does not mean you have to treat them that way. However, you have opportunities open for resolving certain important legacy issues that may have seemed stuck for many years. If you can get beyond the emotional level, you will make more progress.

Leo is the 7th solar house for Aquarius, so you’re looking right at this transit in your day-to-day interactions with others. These seemingly routine relationships take on much deeper importance now. Venus rules the 4th (Taurus), the 9th (Libra) and the 2nd (exalted in Pisces).

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

The value of your work is the focus of Venus retrograde. Under digital conditions, this has become difficult. There always seems to be someone doing for free what you do for pay. And the value theme can be challenging for Pisces, because your ingrained tendency is to want to give everything away for free. However, you have a spectacular opportunity to clean up this aspect of your life. Value is something that you first establish in yourself, and then with that, you can take it out into the world. With Pisces more than any other sign, this must proceed from the inside out. You really have to understand your value not just in some abstract sense, but in the world of commerce and trade.

Leo is the 6th solar house for Pisces. This is why you can be so dedicated to the work you do, though be careful of any lazy habits and strive to complete what you begin. Venus rules the 3rd (Taurus), the 8th (Libra) and the 1st (exalted in Pisces).

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