

## Dispatch Health Adoption

By the Editorial Team

Investor and Warren Buffet partner Charlie Munger famously said, "Show me the incentive, and I'll show you the outcome." The quote serves as a rule of thumb when thinking about business and performance metrics, shorthand for how human behaviors can be profoundly altered by what at first glance may appear to be minor changes.

Recently, we've noticed a remarkable reduction in the number of sirens around town. While not a scientific number, you could usually count on ambulances hitting their sirens a few times a day. What changed? Beginning October 1st, Islanders started to become aware of a new care provider alternative. Dispatch Health parked their distinctive blue and white Ford Escape near the center of town and attended various community functions to promote their service and explain how it works.

The for-profit firm's idea is to provide sophisticated mobile care, covering incipient, urgent, recurrent, and not-quite-emergency visits, staffed by nurse practitioners and emergency medical technicians, backed by trained physicians. Apart from the convenience of a house call, the biggest side-effect is cost savings for the patient. A Dispatch Health call comes to only a fraction of the typical ambulance and emergency room bill. Accepting most insurance plans, or a flat \$375 fee, they "dispatch" directly to the patient's address, where they diagnose, treat, dispense, prescribe, and re-direct or escalate as necessary. (Apple Health is not yet covered, but is intended to be added soon.)

At first, Dispatch had a few idle days with no calls. Then a trickle of requests started coming in. Positive word of mouth spread quickly, and over the course of only two months, their average call rate has shot up to about 5 a day.

This new alternative appears to have logically and perhaps permanently reduced former reliance on 911 services. Dispatch Health has also undertaken direct cooperation with the SeaMar clinic, providing both a scheduling overflow valve and effectively giving SeaMar's community-focused services greater "reach."

Perceptive readers will have noticed that other channels are exhorting local residents to call 911 early, often, and whenever in doubt. At best, appeals to

Continued on Page 3

## The Monks of Vashon



Our Island Neighbors Since 1988  
Introduction

By Andy Valencia

The Vashon Loop is working with All-Merciful Saviour Monastery to publish excerpts from their documented history. We hope you enjoy learning a bit more about one of the Island's quietly famous neighbors.

Continued on Page 6

## Santa Loves Cigars!

By Seán C. Malone and John Sweetman

As very young children, Christmas was always an exciting and wondrous time, but not for the same reasons that adults experienced. We were totally taken in by the family and church gatherings. Religious rituals, stories, and experiences were just taken for granted. We did have the eminently logical questions that 4- and 5-year-olds ask: "Were the wise men really smart? "Where is the guiding star now?" "Why do camels have those lumpy backs?"

"Mom! What is 'frankincense'?" She answered, "It's kind of a perfume!" "You mean that smelly stuff grandma puts on her wrists?" Exasperated, she would reply, "Something like that, now go feed the dog!"

And the answers would be mysterious adult answers that we would accept with childish aplomb. Until adult patience wore out and the answer would be, "Here! Lick these beater blades!" Mom usually was making cookies, cakes, and whatever, always with lots of sugar frosting or whipped cream. That would shut up the questions for a while from my sister and I. We were not much more than a year apart, so we were natural partners in any mischief or crime, while our younger brother was too young to be other than a nuisance.

While we accepted all the Christmas stories of the Christ child, the angels, the wise men and such, the Santa Claus issue filled us with doubt, and my sister and I were not so sure.

We had been taken to the Bon Marché to shop and visit Santa. On the way from Coleman Dock, however, we saw all kinds of "Santas" on the street



corners. We stood in line to see Santa who was perched on a large chair and took kids upon his lap. It turns out this was just a subtle interrogation technique, as when I finally got on his lap, the first thing he asked me was, "Have you been good?"

This turned out to be my first use of the concept of "plausible" deniability, as I stuttered lamely, "Well, mostly." I had been somewhat unfairly accused of licking the frosting off some cookies, but in my defense, I was merely sharing with my little brother and our dog. I remembered that the week before I'd gotten in trouble for taking apart a clock to see what made it tick, and my sister and I had licked the top cream off a milk bottle.

In those days, we had milk delivery and the glass bottles were delivered in early morning to our outside porch. The night had been cold and the freezing weather had pushed a cylinder of cream

Continued on Page 5

## Going Shopping in '78

Legends of Vashon

By O.S. Van Olinda

This account of a day's shopping in 1878 is from the diary of a fifteen-year-old boy, whom I shall call Bill Jones. His real name is John Smith, but he might not wish that his identity be disclosed.

Bill's father was among the first settlers on Vashon Island, having taken a homestead near the shores of Quartermaster Harbor in the spring of 1878. The family, father, mother, Bill and two sisters, lived in a tent while the men folks (meaning Bill and his father) cleared a little patch of ground, planted a little garden, and then built a log cabin. Bill, of course, (according to Bill), doing by far the greater part of the work.

There were plenty of deer and grouse on the Island and Bill kept the family well supplied with fresh meat. Even unto this day he admits that he was a first class hunter, but "store grub" was getting very low and a trip to Tacoma must be made. Bill gave me, in 1890, this copy of the entry in his diary describing the trip, slightly elaborated, I suspect, but a good picture of a pioneer shopping day:

October 9. No chance to write anything yesterday. Dad and I went to Tacoma. We got away about eight in the morning, took turns rowing the old flat-bottomed boat, and when we got into Old Town, it was pretty well along towards noon.

Tide was running pretty strong out in the middle of the channel, and for a while I wished that we had two pair of oars in the old tub. Anyway, we finally got there, bought the stuff we wanted and

Continued on Page 11

# Book Excerpt: Discovery of Geminus

By Neil Orint

Earth has a magical twin, and it is called Geminus.

While on Vashon Island, 15-year-old Henry Brooks discovers Geminus, a twin world to Earth powered by spirit and magic instead of materialism and technology. He travels to this new land with his friends Kate, Max, and his faithful dog Rocky.

Upon his return to Earth, Henry accidentally gives away his secret to Marcus, a deceitful and power-hungry boy who exploits the wealth of Geminus by introducing Earth weapons that upset the delicate balance of power.

Gonzalo Pizzaro, the bloodthirsty conquistador, discovered Geminus while on his quest for the Fountain of Eternal Youth. Using the Fountain's waters, he and his crew have stayed alive for over 400 years, plotting to conquer Geminus and Earth. With Henry's unwitting help, Pizzaro sets his plan in motion, bringing death and destruction to peaceful Geminus.

Feeling responsible for fixing the disaster he created, Henry sets off on a quest to make things right. He becomes an apprentice to Father Antonio, an eccentric shaman with tremendous powers; he learns the path of Spirit from mystical creatures such as Sasquatches and Yetis and meets Grace, an enchanting farm girl who steals his heart.

Together with his friends, Henry overcomes dangerous challenges, learns from magical creatures, and uses his newly discovered shamanic powers to save Geminus and Earth.

## Chapter One: The Vision

Henry perched himself on the seat of the ancient swing deep within the forest. He wrapped his hands around the thick rope, rubbing off a thick layer of green mold until he revealed interlaced white and blue fibers. It was identical to the ropes they used to secure the Vashon Island ferry to the dock. How had it ended up here in the middle of the woods?

As his gaze followed the rope upward, about a hundred feet, he saw it attached to a branch of the oldest maple tree in the area – one of few that had survived the clear-cutting a century earlier. The rope was sturdy and looked like it had been there for ages, so Henry figured it could support his weight. The swing's path would take him down a steep hillside and over smaller trees and underbrush. It looked safe enough.

"Should I do it, Rocky?" he asked his dog, a shaggy black-and-white mutt with gray whiskers. Rocky woofed and wagged his tail enthusiastically. "Why don't you try it if you're so eager?" Henry muttered.

A raven suddenly swooped by, sending raspy croaks through the forest and vibrations through Henry's chest. I must do this, he thought, courage rising within him – and with a deep breath, he pushed off the platform.

Ferns brushed against his legs as he picked up speed. The wind roared in his ears and blew through his long mane of chestnut-colored curls. He briefly considered backing out, but it was too late now. He was going too fast. He could only hold tightly to the rope and hope for the best.

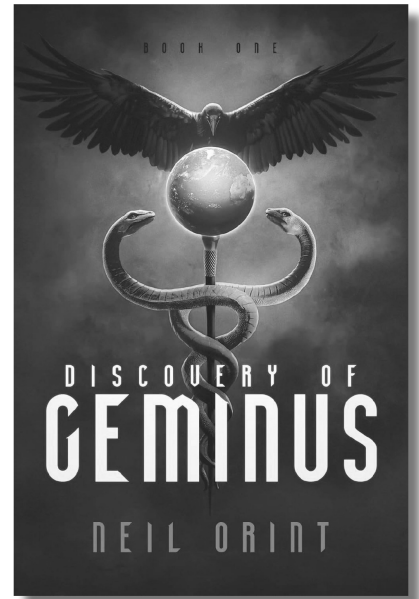
He flew down the hillside faster and faster. Fear and exhilaration churned in his stomach. He felt heavy as the swing reached the bottom of its arc, then light as he soared upward. Henry braced for impact as he approached the upper branches – but he passed through them unscathed, emerging into bright sunlight through a break in the forest canopy.

In the moment of suspension between rising and falling, the light and air shifted, and Henry felt like he had entered another world.

Instead of his grandpa's farm, a forest of towering trees grew wild in the distance. Beyond them, spanning a narrow stretch of saltwater, endless green forests led to the Olympic Range, where mountains rose brilliantly, snow-capped

If you enjoyed *The Hunger Games* and *Harry Potter*, you won't want to miss *Discovery of Geminus*, a young adult epic fantasy written by a local author that prominently features Vashon Island.

Available in Vashon Island bookstores and Amazon.com



"...a richly imaginative tale that beautifully blends the wonder of a magical world with the urgency of a coming-of-age adventure."  
- Readers' Favorite Reviews

"I thoroughly enjoyed this original and cinematic journey into the alt-world of Geminus."  
- Joe Plummer, musician, Cold War Kids, Modest Mouse, The Shins



SCAN ME

even though it was mid-summer.

Enormous cedar longhouses adorned with intricate totem poles loomed over a fleet of colorful canoes. In the foothills, small farms with red barns and windmills dotted the landscape. A magnificent golden pyramid, modeled after the Inca style, stood proudly on the peninsula's northern shore, its red-and-gold banners fluttering in the breeze. A Spanish galleon floated at a nearby wharf. Its brass cannons gleamed in the sun while conquistadors loaded it with supplies.

This can't be Earth, Henry thought.

Neil Orint grew up on Vashon Island and now lives in Seattle. He's currently working on the next volume in the "Discovery of Geminus" series

The Vashon Loop is published monthly



## The Vashon Loop

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

Contributors: Eric Coppolino, Seán C. Malone, John Sweetman, Kathy Abascal, Daniel Hooker, Marjorie Watkins, Michael Shook, Anne Cotter Moses, Suzanna Leigh, Stephen Buller, Alex Soriano, Pam (aka Gates) Johnson, Jo Ann Herbert, Neil Orint, Sandi Silagi

Comments: [editor@vashonloop.com](mailto:editor@vashonloop.com)  
Placing ads: [sales@vashonloop.com](mailto:sales@vashonloop.com)

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/>  
December 7, 2024

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

### Loop Disclaimer

Paid advertisements and articles submitted to The Vashon Loop in no way express the opinions of the publisher, editor, other advertisers, or staff. We reserve the right to edit or decline to print submissions. AI-generated content in whole or part is not acceptable for publication. Articles are used by the kind permission of each author, who continues to be the copyright holder.

Vashon! Sign up for health insurance and fix problems!

¡Regístrese para un seguro médico y solucione problemas!



Meet with Miguel from King County Public Health at Vashon Library (inside at the back)

Weds, 12:30–3:00 pm

December 18  
January 15

Saturday, 1:00–4:00 pm

January 4

Se habla español

Call or email Miguel Urquiza  
206-477-6965  
or 206-491-3761  
[miguel.urquiza@kingcounty.gov](mailto:miguel.urquiza@kingcounty.gov)

This is for Open Enrollment health insurance for 2025

You can also apply for food stamps and the ORCA Lift reduced fare program

THE MADRONA GROUP  
**John L. Scott**  
VASHON ISLAND REAL ESTATE

*Happy Holidays*  
*from all of us*  
*at John L. Scott*

Please join us in supporting the  
**2024 Holiday Toy Drive**  
Your generous donation  
is greatly appreciated.  
Thank You

**venmo**  
Heidi-Grimsley-1

VashonOffice.JohnLScott.com • 13401 Vashon Highway SW  
(206) 567-1600

# Dispatch Health Adoption

Continued from Front Page

increase 911 calls seem ... awkward? Dispatch Health presents precisely the opposite incentive. Its mission is to NOT cross over into emergency care, but rather to head it off at the pass. Dispatch Express, its proprietary operations platform, is optimized to pre-route qualifying calls to local 911 EMS services, and its staff are trained to seamlessly transition patients for treatment or transport if and when warranted.

Bottom line, it appears the mobile health company's service, so far unique but rapidly proliferating across the United States, including Tacoma, is being adopted here with open arms.

More bottom lines: VIFR's property tax levy has increased by 30.4%, to the State's legal maximum of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value. On top of that, VIFR received over \$3 million in temporary Federal grants to fund additional staff and services, and has committed \$4+ million for ongoing new construction.

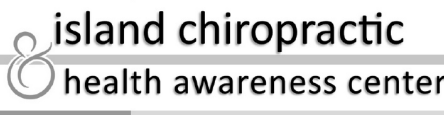
This expansion is consistent with other trends. In the past few years, Washington State's budget deficit has exploded to \$12 billion, despite total tax revenues increasing at the same time by almost 40% (\$25.7 billion in 2019 to \$35.4 billion in 2023). Here on Vashon-Maury, we are now spending somewhere over \$1,200 per Islander for fire and rescue services every year. Full disclosure, we are also spending \$180 per Islander each year for the VHCD.


Actual emergencies will of course keep their place of honor. One of the most common 911 calls in the US is for suspected heart attacks: usually




it's just a scare, as distinguishing between severe acid reflux from a previous night's indulgence and a life-threatening event can be almost impossible. In such cases, and for the real McCoy, we have the best paramedic service, Medic One, top-rated in the US for cardiac transport and outcomes. It has its own separate tax levy and is right here on the Island, always ready to go.

We have more mobile responders than before, with four different types: VIFR, Medic One, Dispatch Health, and Mobile Integrated Health. A few hiccups may be expected while procedures adjust behind the scenes.





Book Here  
Expanded Hours!



- 253-922-0450
- [www.myislandchiro.com](http://www.myislandchiro.com)
- 17917 Vashon Hwy SW #7, Vashon, WA 98070
- Open Tue/Wed 8am-4pm & Fri 9:30am-3pm

Getting the right response to patients will benefit from more information about options, plus transparency and teamwork between providers. We can continue to rely on 911, secure in the knowledge we've got upgraded capacity - the emergency medical services equivalent of Amazon Prime.

For sub-emergencies, Dispatch Health (888-908-0553) and SeaMar (206-463-3671) have already started coordinating, each offering much appreciated on-Island daytime options. To the extent there have been some tensions between the VHCD's Dispatch Health initiative and VIFR's MIH, we note that VIFR's Chief Vinci

has recently announced his departure. We hope this change of leadership offers an opportunity for the organizations to find a more cooperative, or even thriving, relationship while serving Islanders' health and emergency needs.

**The Vashon Loop Health Disclaimer**

It is the right of people to express and share their opinions, knowledge, and experiences to promote health and nutrition. As our collective wisdom grows, so does our individual and community resilience. On an Island where we must at times depend on ourselves and one another, this matters. We at The Vashon Loop are proud to support our community in the area of wellness. Health-related information may appear throughout The Loop, in articles, recipes, and elsewhere.

We remind our readers that your health is your personal responsibility, your body and situation are unique, and information in The Loop is 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 prescribe medicine. Consult with an appropriate medical resource or healthcare provider when making healthcare decisions.



**If you love the Vashon Loop, please consider becoming a paid supporter at:**

**[vashonloop.substack.com](http://vashonloop.substack.com)**

You can *always* view The Loop's current content for free online, at [vashonloop.com](http://vashonloop.com)

# Boys Save the World

By Andy Valencia

Even as an old dude, I still remember bits of my own boyhood. Parts were great, and parts were terrible. But I thought I should mention the thing that really sticks out in my memory:

Boys are the greatest force for good in the world.

The odd part is that, mostly, modern messaging is that they're not much good at all. I grant you that if you measure this by their ability to sit quietly in rows of desks for hours, or to follow - precisely - directions. Or to only move slowly, gently, and quietly. To draw within the lines in the approved color? Then yes, boys are a failure.

This leads to remedies. Social pressure, punishment, and possibly medication. At home, there's deep-fried, salty, and sweet foods. Video games. After adolescence, certain other distractions from the internet arrive. You don't hear much from such boys, because they don't do much. Mission accomplished - so long as you don't look at that mission too closely.

For instance, they don't go out and get ready to improve the world. Is the world so great that no improvement is needed or wanted? My own impression is that things are both far from perfect, and all too often moving in the wrong direction.

Boys, when their super-powers are not dissipated, are capable of becoming fascinated with a subject, and pouring into it superhuman amounts of concentration and energy. Tearing down a toaster? Rebuilding a carburetor? Building a wooden box? Most problems will succumb to concentration and tenacity, and boys can bring both of those to bear with a laser focus.

You can use the internet to show them that

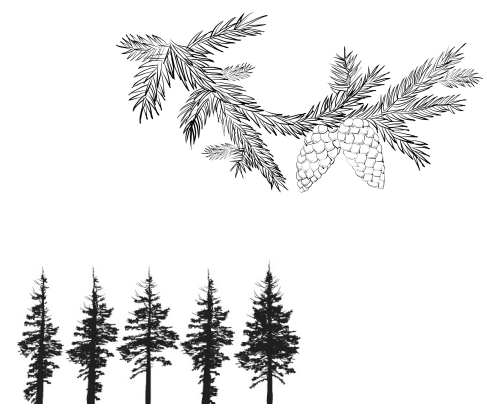


Photo courtesy Leah Hetteberg via unsplash.com

toasters and carburetors and boxes are all long-solved problems. That nicely misses the point. They will master what is known now in preparation for new problems that will only be fixed by new inventions born of ingenuity. Boys when grown into men will keep cities lit, develop new types of engines, and design and build houses that are cheaper, more comfortable, and more efficient. They'll negotiate with other nations and avoid war. As manufacturing returns to the US, you'll be lucky to have boys grown to men who can conceive of what a modern factory can and should be. Better than anything that has come before.

Let us hope that boys will use a little of their unleashed potential to study the question of what is good and what is evil. You can't look up the answer on the internet, because the internet is a mirror maze full of lies. You can't ask AI, because then you're at the mercy of whatever answer it decided to steal. Or what it was programmed to give.

Each day delivers another installment of the future, and those with great abilities are most in danger of moving the world around them towards darkness rather than light. Not a new problem, our nation's founders wrestled with these questions, as



did all the great Western philosophers. The Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius from almost 2,000 years ago shared his own meditations on how to figure such things out. Let our boys join them in this great tradition of using their abilities with discernment.

Bring boys to their amazing, latent powers. Teach them to discern right from wrong. Raise them with love, and then let them get to work. They will repay you by knocking down one "impossible" problem after another, and building a future worth inhabiting.

**News You May Have Missed**

Fastest drive-through food?

WA has a big deficit looming

...and Jay Inslee *isn't* moving to Idaho

These and more at:  
**[vashonloop.com/missed](http://vashonloop.com/missed)**



## Re-Read, Re-Connect, Re-Ligion

By Michael Shook

"Christmas is coming" ... I don't know if the goose is getting fat, but some of us undoubtedly will add some, given all the delicious, butter-laden food that is such a wonderful part of the season. We should also grant that, for those not fond of wet, short, cold, and dark days, it's not exactly "the most wonderful time of the year" (you have my sympathy).

Nevertheless, Christmas is a joy for many, and eagerly anticipated, especially by small humans (big ones, too!) looking to gain or, more likely, add to their stockpiles of stuff. Yes, yes, materialism, and/or consumerism. It's the American way, especially now, as the nation grows increasingly secular. Every year, it feels less religious and more about Santa Claus and presents. That, and whatever new merchandising Disney has created in the guise of an animated children's movie.

Yet, the season still has plenty of the air of religiosity about it, even if fewer celebrate it as the birth of the Messiah. So, it prompts me to again consider religion, and religiousness, what it means to be religious, and what the word itself actually means. I do this religiously (meaning, in this case, that I can be relied upon to do it with great regularity).

The etymology of "religious" is varied. Cicero thought it came from "relegere," to read, gather together, or pass over the same ground repeatedly, but that viewpoint has become rare. It is now considered derived from "religare," to bind things together (hence ligature, ligament). I like both. Given Cicero's many outstanding accomplishments, it's a bit chintzy that his etymology gets short shrift, but on the other hand, he had a heck of a good run (until executed by Octavian/Augustus - ouch), and he has an abundance of other accolades, so I guess it all works out.

## Island Voices

In Cicero's form, it suits us well as we gather together for the holidays. In so doing, we "pass over the same ground repeatedly," often in a literal way (think of driving the same route to someone's home). Whether religious in the supernatural sense or not, many of us have a ritual way of gathering at the same house for a feast. We also pass over the same ground in conversation as we inquire to each other's health, economy, and new or old undertakings. I would always engage both my father and Uncle Vic in post-dinner cribbage games, a ritual I loved (and sorely miss, now that they are deceased). We battled, politely, but battled still, for at least a couple of games each.

In such mundane pastimes, the bonds of affection, family, and community are built, strengthened, and renewed. By such activities we are, in a psychological and emotional sense, bound and rebound to one another - one could say religiously so (or re-ligamented?).

The importance, and absence of, such binding was keenly felt by many during the COVID lockdown. The degree of separation people felt was profound, and I believe we are still emerging from that, still finding our way back to the interconnectedness we sometimes took for granted. We might hardly have noticed our need for such connections until our community was suddenly whisked away, rendered almost impossible to engage with, at least face-to-face.

I think we are all religious in that connective sense, even when we are not strictly religious in the supernatural sense. Some folks will bristle when it is suggested they are "religious." That's understandable, since I know of no one who enjoys being told what he or she is about. But, as noted above, the notion of religiousness is much broader (and deeper) than we think. Much of religion revolves around ritual, and carries with it dogma,

and we rightly accept this as an integral part of religion in the godly sense. Yet, ritual and dogma abound in all sorts of belief systems, even in those touted as "evidence-based" ways of being.

Note that "dogma" means literally, "that which one thinks is true." That which one thinks is true. The distinction is important. We all hold views and beliefs that we think are true (but which ain't necessarily so), and those beliefs are manifested in daily rituals that reinforce our particular dogma.

For me, as a practicing Christian, Christmas is about celebrating the birth of Jesus (I'm an Episcopalian - which counts! - though some deeply conservative sects might take issue with that). I'm also perfectly happy to acknowledge that the day represents the clever co-opting of Solstice celebrations. Of course, the actual day Jesus was born is not important, nor are the birthdays of Buddha, Lao-Tze, or any number of other spiritual leaders. The most important thing is the teaching. And that teaching, for Christians, in a very small nutshell, is to love God with all you've got, and to love your neighbor as yourself. That's it. Easy to say, but a lifelong and humbling effort to do.

Surprisingly, in their behaviour, some of the most Christian people I've known are also the most atheistic. "Whoa!" you say, "How is that, if they don't believe in God?" No big deal. For me, the word "God" is simply "a metaphor for that which I cannot comprehend," representing the real but unnameable Mystery of the Universe, and all within. For you, it might mean something different, or nothing at all. You may not use the word "God," and frankly, outside of church, I don't like to either, since it just confuses people. I simply mean that many people find God - the transcendent mystery - in their own way, in all they do, and thus they practice being kind to all of Nature, and all of Humanity.

It is with these sentiments in mind that I wish everyone and everything a most joyful, most happy, and most Merry Christmas!



## Making Christmas

By Suzanna Leigh

In Oatman, Arizona, the gold-mining ghost town where we were living when the boys were small, there were no malls, no blaring of tired old Christmas Carols, no Salvation Army Santa's jingling bells on the street corners. Actually, there were no street corners to speak of, unless you count where the pot-holed and pitted road going up to Rockhound Hill met Old Hiway 66. There were very few families in this town of mostly snowbirds.

We made Christmas anyway.

Old Joe, with his long white beard and dressed in red, paraded into town riding the vintage fire truck, bells ringing and sirens screaming. All the families - three families with children and most of the adults in town - followed him into the old community hall. Of course, there was a big tree, decorated with lights and tinsel, standing over a pile of gifts for every child. Nine children took turns sitting on Joe's lap while he handed out gifts.

After the community gathering, we had a feast for our friends in the old miner's shack where we lived. Kinder-pa - my children's father - baked the turkey, while our friend Deli played "Lady of Spain" on his accordion.

We have a tradition of making Christmas in our family, sometimes because we couldn't afford to buy it, and sometimes just because we enjoy making decorations, baking treats, or buying gifts from local artists. Decorating gingerbread cookies together with an insane amount of colored frosting, we made memories.

"When we recall Christmas past, we usually find that the simplest things, not the great occasions, give off the greatest glow of happiness." - Bob Hope

This year, I asked my grown sons what they remembered about past Christmases. Here are some things we remembered together:

Digging through the box of eclectic Christmas ornaments to hang on the tree at Gramma's house; you never knew what you might find! There were



Illustration by Suzanna Leigh

silk birds from China, angels made one year from scraps of stained glass, and "God's Eyes" made from colorful yarn wrapped around twigs. There were sea shells made into ornaments from a trip to the coast around Christmas-time, some of last year's candy canes gone soft, and even a very stale gingerbread man that got hung on the tree and forgotten.

We remembered the smell of peppermint, especially the slightly pepperminty frosting glue we tried to fasten our gingerbread houses together with. We tried a different recipe every year and it never worked. The houses were fun to make and to eat, but they didn't stay together; the roofs had a tendency to slide off and the walls slanted every which-a-way.

Stale popcorn strung together with dried cranberries, made into garlands for the tree. The garlands were never very long; it was hard to poke a needle through those little cranberries, and the popcorn kept breaking!

The fresh evergreen smell from the tree and wreath on the door. Sweeping up fir needles.

The smell of cloves as we stuck whole cloves into oranges or into the orange-glazed ham.



**Lavender Cat Studio**  
 20733 87th Ave SW  
 #19 on the Studio Tour  
 or email [suzanna@suzannaleigh.com](mailto:suzanna@suzannaleigh.com)  
 for appointment until Dec 22

*Elegant Whimsy for adults and Children*

**Artists:**  
 suzanna leigh  
 Inge King  
 Alice Larson

Sleeping on trundle beds in Gramma's basement on Christmas Eve. Opening up one gift on Christmas Eve because we just couldn't wait until morning.

The sound of crinkling paper as we all sat around on Christmas morning, opening presents (some of them wrapped in the Sunday funnies) and stepping on discarded wrapping paper no one had picked up yet. Oh, the glorious mess!

Every year I ask myself, what does Christmas mean to me this year? What is the meaning deeper than the commercialism or even the religious overtones? Celebrating at the time of Winter Solstice with songs, gifts, candles, parties, and evergreen boughs predates Christianity. Does that make it a pagan celebration? I think our need to light up the dark cold days of winter with a celebration of light and hope is part of our DNA.

For me, this year Christmas is about making memories with loved ones and cherishing the memories we share. How about you? What does Christmas mean to you this year? I would love your comments on my "Drinking Color" substack article, "Making Christmas," or you can email me at [leigh.suzanna@gmail.com](mailto:leigh.suzanna@gmail.com).



## Tuesday Morning at the IGA

By Pam (aka Gates) Johnson

One of the great things about aging on Vashon is Tuesday at the local IGA. If you are on the south side of 50 - or is it 55 - you get a 10% discount on your entire order every Tuesday. This is a serious bonus if you, like me, are old and on a fixed income. So, all of us oldies in the know head there on Tuesday to save a buck.

The discount is the incentive to get me out of my recliner, put down my knitting, and get to the grocery store. Once there, the social kicks in. Chances are if you are like me, your social circle has shrunk. I see my pals at the pool for senior water walking/aerobics. I "chat" with a few on Facebook. Share opinions via text with some others. Mostly, I talk to family and a few friends on the phone and deep dive into YouTube way too much. Getting out into the real world and having a physical interaction with humans is nice for a change.

Usually, I can get in the door with just a "Hi" from the uber-friendly

cashier who makes a point of knowing everyone's name. Head down the front of the store, past the liquor cabinet (no thanks), and on to the pastry display (yes, darn it). I rationalize the \$5.00 mini cupcakes because they are only costing me \$4.50.

Next stop is the deli, unless it's around lunch time. There are a lot of tradespeople who hit the deli for lunch. If I get a late start, there are no honey corn dogs left, so I have to get a chicken thigh and some onion rings.

At this stage, I usually run into someone I know. It could be a pool pal, a parent of a middle-school student I knew when I worked at McMurray, a parent of a kid who was in 4H with my kids, an old (no pun intended) neighbor, sometimes even a former student, which reminds me why I'm here every Tuesday (my age, you know).

I've lived here since 1970, so the chances of seeing someone I know are pretty high. Some of their names I remember, some not.

I worked for the school district for 32 years. There was an average of 300 or so kids who went through every year. Some kids I got to know pretty well, especially if they tended to get in trouble and sent to the office on the regular. I got to monitor them during their stay in the "clink" and got to know some well. I can recognize a lot of the grown up ex-students, but for some reason their parents think I should remember them too, which I often don't. Just write it off as long-term memory loss.

I don't usually take the time to write a shopping list. Get half-way through the store and have to backtrack for something I just remembered I needed. On the way back, I run into another person I know, and we end up rehashing old times for twenty minutes. Depending on where we stop to chat, cart traffic can back up for a couple of aisles. If it turns out to be a conversation that needs more time, we might set up a lunch date at Sporty's. Then on to finish shopping.

The last aisle of my preplanned route starts with ice cream. I try to bypass the Häagen Dazs dark

chocolate-coated chocolate ice cream bars, but often give in; 10% discount, you know. Produce is the final stop, where I let at least some healthy options into my cart. Usually, I load up on fruit, but my cardio doc said to pass up the bananas and oranges and choose the berries. Apparently, berries are more heart-healthy and at this age we have to take care of the old ticker.

There are often a few people in line at the checkout. More time to reconnect with old friends. Also, an opportunity to check out what others are buying. Are they better shoppers than me? More health conscious or junk food junkies? Who cares? It's none of my business.

Out the door with my loaded-up, recycled Trader Joe shopping bags, and wow, there is another old friend to say hi to on the way to my car. Like a good shopper, I push my cart into the cart corral, then get into my Bronco and head home. That's about all the excitement I can handle in one day.



**Top-quality lawn, tree, and landscape care**

Beautifying Vashon properties for 25 years.

Efficient, thorough, skilled, and trustworthy.

Contact Randall Snowden, 206-578-2614

## Santa Loves Cigars!

Continued From Front Page

up the neck of the bottle. My sister and I scooped the cream up and cleverly put the little round cardboard cap back on. None of this fooled mom, so we were in trouble. I don't know what my sister told mom, but she was a lot more experienced in the "plausible deniability" concept than I was.

Later that night, my sister and I put our heads together and compared notes: "He smelled like Grampa." "I don't think he had a real beard! How do we know he was the real Santa?" The "smelling like" part meant that Santa smelled like cigars, and maybe a touch of "Old Overholt" rye whiskey.

We opened gifts on Christmas Eve. Grampa opened a box and said, "Look what Santa gave me!" It was a box of "Juan de Fuca" cigars. I piped up and said, "I thought Santa was coming tonight! Did we miss him? And I thought he brought presents for kids!"

Gramma rose to his defense! "Santa has lots of helpers and Grampa is a kid, too! He's just older than you two!"

My sister and I took that statement under advisement, and after some quiet conference, stated we wanted to wait up for Santa. It was decided that we could sit in a large chair and wait for Santa, but we had to put out a plate of cookies and some milk, as Santa might be hungry after his night's work.

We settled down in the chair and

read a book, but one thing led to another, so we got up to check the stockings hung on the fireplace mantel. Empty. Then we looked up the fireplace skeptically: "How is he going to come down this? It's dirty and he was pretty fat!"

We had to pass the table with the cookies and milk set out. "Just a little nibble won't be noticed." After several checks of the situation, we found that there were no more cookies, and the milk was gone. No replacement cookies were on hand.

"What can we do now?" After a bit of discussion, one of us came up with a brilliant alternative plan. "I know! Santa likes cigars!" So, we pilfered one of Grampa's cigars and put it on the plate.

Next morning found us both in our beds. We got up and rushed downstairs, and sure enough! Our stockings were filled, and I had an "Erector Set" under the tree and my sister and brother had things also! The cigar was gone.

My sister and I conferred and agreed. "Santa likes cigars!" That fact was to be our secret. We still could not resolve the multiple Santa mystery, but agreed to "wait 'till next year" to try again to catch Santa at work.

**Get more Vashon Loop online!**  
Read our back issues at [vashonloop.com](http://vashonloop.com)

**PRECISION PSYCHIATRY**

YOUR ON-ISLAND PSYCHIATRIC PROVIDER

**DR. MARLI W. PAROBK DNP**

SPECIALIZING IN MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSING & PRESCRIBING FOR ALL AGES

PRACTICAL. INDIVIDUALIZED. COMPASSIONATE


IN-PERSON & TELEHEALTH

206-486-0014 [WWW.PRECISIONPSYCH.NET](http://WWW.PRECISIONPSYCH.NET)



**Headley Holistics, LLC**

Bringing You Holistic Solutions for Equines, Canines, and the People Who Love Them!



17710 112th Ave. SW ♦ POB 868  
Vashon Island, WA 98070  
Hours: Thursday-Saturday, 9:00am-6:00pm  
[www.headleyholistics.com](http://www.headleyholistics.com)  
Like us on Facebook and Instagram!  
@headleyholistics

Today, America spends 2x more on healthcare than any other developed country. One in 5 children and 2 in 5 adults are obese in America and 60% of children under the age of 14 have at least 1 chronic disease.

The current life expectancy for an adult male in the US is 73 years. In countries like Japan and Switzerland, the life expectancy for adult males is 83.

Despite spending more money on healthcare, our country is the sickest and is getting sicker. The burden of agrochemicals and the heavily contaminated food supply are also uniquely American traits.

# Monks of Vashon

Continued From Front Page

All-Merciful Saviour Monastery is indeed a monastery, and it is run by actual monks. They each have their own tiny, humble building, which serves as their monastic "cell." There is a common room with a kitchen where all monks and guests gather to share meals. There is a small but comfortable library building, and there are some very limited accommodations for guests. And last - but certainly not least - there is their church where they gather to worship.

As Christianity spread to the world, there was a single Church up until 1054 AD. At that point, tensions between the East and West portions of the Church became critical. At its heart, the disagreement was about authority - the Pope argued that he held supremacy over all of the Church and could unilaterally make changes to the tenets of the faith. The Eastern portion argued that the Pope was only "first among equals" as a position of honor, but that all decisions on Church doctrine had to be addressed in councils. Neither side abandoned their position, and they excommunicated one another.

The All-Merciful Saviour Monastery is in the Orthodox Christian tradition, ultimately a part of the "Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia." The monastery has been led by Abbot Tryphon since co-founding it with Father Paul in 1986. What follows is how they found their way to Vashon, in Father Tryphon's own words. It's a winding road involving the West Coast, danger, TV stars, and a home nestled against a hill on Maury Island.

## The Planting of a Monastery Part One

By Abbot Tryphon

In many ways, this monastery was founded as one would plant a garden. The germination took place in a small blue-collar house in a poor part of Richmond, California, in 1983, where we struggled in a neighborhood constructed for World War II shipbuilders. It was sometimes a rather scary place; the noise of cars with their boombox stereos blasting, the attempted break-ins, and untended yards. I remember laying in bed at night, looking at the orange-colored sky tinted by the flames of a nearby refinery, jets flying overhead, and remembering the star-studded skies of Northern Idaho, where I was born.

After my youth in Idaho near Pend Oreille lake, I presently found myself drawn to Berkeley, California where I pursued a graduate degree in psychology, followed by a practice in Portland, Oregon. During this time, the call from God became clearer and clearer, and after a sabbatical from my teaching and practice, my path forward became clear.

Still living near Portland, I co-founded a monastery with Fr. Paul that consisted of five monks. When three of them were called to depart, myself and Fr. Paul decided to move our monastery to Richmond, California. It was a dangerous place, but housing prices were low and it was close to all the contacts I'd developed during my Berkeley studies.



One fateful night in Richmond, we were awakened by the sound of a police helicopter hovering directly overhead for 45 minutes, with spotlights trained on the front and back doors of a neighbor's house during a drug bust. That very night, I decided to pray that God, if it be His will, would let us relocate to a rural

location. Little did I know that the All-Merciful Saviour Monastery would one day be nestled in a forest, on an Island, in the Salish Sea.

Love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon

(Continued next month)

## The Money Party

By Stephen Buller

It's been more than a month since the 47th President of the United States was elected, and nobody living today can remember a time when our country didn't operate on a two-party system. Although the party holding various positions influences laws, court rulings, and other governance, I'll argue that your daily life is affected far more by our monetary system.

The intent of this article is not to take a political position or cause division. Quite the opposite, I hope to encourage readers to come together with people who have different viewpoints from their own. I believe we have more in common than separates us, and we should focus on more important issues than any one President can affect.

I might even suggest there is a

reason our country is so divided, that this is a tactic employed by an ineffective government to direct their citizens' ire at each other instead of at them. It's more important than ever that we come together. I'm passionate about the marketplace of ideas and am writing a fantasy novel around this theme: Fight not the other side but those above who divide.

In my opinion, a person's political affiliation is usually driven by the same things as their morals, philosophy, or general outlook on life - where they were born, who their family and friends are, where they went to school, etc.

In any election cycle, there are usually a few hot-button issues that rile people up and create good rhetoric for candidates to swing voters. I don't mean to say these issues aren't important, simply that they're less important than

individuals' overall wealth and prosperity.

If we focused on class, we could solve so many problems. You may have noticed that neither party's candidate discussed the federal debt in any substantial way. Also, any points I heard regarding inflation focused on blaming the other party. "Representatives" from both parties are happy to abuse the system for their benefit.

Is the Fed Chairman worth \$100M because he's a savvy investor? Are congresspeople allowed to trade on inside information because they've earned it? Are reckless companies bailed out at taxpayer expense because they're just too darn big to fail?

Most Americans - human beings, in fact - can be happy with a few, simple things: Clean air to breathe, water to drink, healthy food to eat, a roof over our heads, and time with friends and family gets most of us most of the way. Some purpose in our lives and leisure time doesn't hurt either.

If we look at the wealth in our country, there is more than enough to go around. Yet we have crises around every single one of those basic needs: Our air and water are polluted; our food is poison; homelessness is staggering; and the upcoming generation Z is the most depressed generation in our history.

I don't think the solution is to redistribute (another word for steal) wealth because two wrongs don't make a right. Instead, we need to

redesign our economic system to reward effort in a manner that creates true prosperity and empowers individuals to capture the fruits of their labor. This is what gold does.

A gold standard forces markets to behave rationally - at least until human psychology enters the picture. Price valuations wouldn't be warped so drastically if a single entity no longer had the power to create vast sums of currency out of thin air and purchase assets with it.

For an example of how warped prices have become, look at housing compared to food. The median home price in America is around \$430,000 right now, and the average price of beef is around \$5.35 per pound. A house is valuable, but it's not worth 80,000 pounds of beef - I'm sorry, it's just not.

So, this holiday season, I encourage you to come together with family, friends, and even the "others," who may believe differently from you but deep down want basically the same things. If you're not a gold bug like me, let's talk about fantasy stories, video games, or something else we both love.

Speaking of video games, red and blue are common colors for opposing teams. Red vs. Blue was actually a sci-fi web series based on the popular video game Halo. The two colors are on opposite ends of the light spectrum and provide good visual contrast. However, they fit better in sports than politics.

Red and blue divide where gold may unite us.

**Monastery Blend Coffee**  
206-463-5918  
vashonmonks.com  
<https://store.vashonmonks.com/contact-us>

**VASHON ISLAND**  
BUSINESS ESSENTIALS

**Payroll, Bookkeeping,  
Accounting, and Business  
Consulting**

Stephen Buller, CPA  
206-463-3302  
info@vashonisland.biz  
17147 Vashon Hwy SW, Suite D

**Need a Controller?**

Many small businesses reach a point where they need expert accounting and finance help, but don't have the budget for a full-time position.

VIBE has you covered:  
Our team of a 15-year CPA and five staff accountants will ensure things are done right — and at the right price.

## Development Is Coming. Let's Make It Work for Us.

By March Twisdale

Over the past few weeks, Islanders have heard about a new residential development planned for the open acreage behind the IGA. Reaction was mixed, with some red flags flapping wildly in the social media wind.

Of the reactions put forth by Islanders, on Facebook, the following sentiments should concern us all.

- I'm desperate and will take anything that's offered.
- We have to say yes! There's no time to discuss other options!
- It's this or nothing.
- Don't you care about Islanders who are suffering?

What we have here is (1) desperation, (2) a false sense of being strapped for time, (3) a misleading presupposition designed to increase desperation, and (4) a guilt trip. What we need is something different.

Development is coming. It is the inevitable consequence of living somewhere amazing, wonderful, and of great value. A dwindling ghost town we are not. Development is also a deadly serious endeavor. One wrong move and you can end up with no affordable housing for the people who make it all work! Oh, wait ... yeah.

Like most Americans, Islanders can make the mistake of expecting (rather than appreciating) the comforts of civilization. We think the basics are our due, causing a lot of us to look upon community engagement as an option, rather than a civic duty. We act as if we are playing a game.

Development is not a game, except when it is.

Game Rant has a nifty article listing the top 14 "city-building" games, which includes SimCity 4, Cities: Skylines, Anno 1800, Surviving Mars, Banished, Manor Lords, and more. All of these games are extremely successful, demonstrating our inherent human fascination with "development." But, what happens to our real world towns, neighborhoods, and communities, while we're spending billions of dollars/hours on these fantasy games?

It's not surprising to learn that "city-building" games enjoy a marketshare of roughly \$3-\$4 billion each year, and as a person who's spent far too many hours playing Minecraft, I understand why. They allow us to "scratch that itch," but our achievements are illusory. And, while we're clicking away on our keyboard, other people are going about the business of collaborating in the real world.

As a result, two things happen. The movers, shakers, and dreamers advance their ideas, collaborate, and eventually come to the public sphere and say, "Hey! Look what I'm thinking of doing!" Then we, the folks who haven't been paying attention, typically have a startled reaction which often waxes extreme. This does not make for good community development. The best projects result from a core group willing to engage for the long haul, the tacit support of a wider, less-involved segment of society, plus input from minority voices.

Now let's talk about the development project being proposed for the land behind IGA.

Let's begin by reviewing a few points from the FAQ provided by Morgan Brown to the V-MCC's

## Island Resilience

Affordable Housing Committee, in preparation for their November 14th Committee Meeting.

(1) "The townhomes will likely sell for a similar \$/sf to quality construction of new homes anywhere on the island at the time."

According to Section F of King County's "Vashon Rural Town Affordable Housing Special District Overlay Final Evaluation," 16% of Islanders can barely afford housing at 30% of the Adjusted Median Income (AMI), suggesting an even larger percentage would need housing at 40%, 50%, or 60% below AMI, and so on. How, then, does this development project plan to meet our Island's "low-income housing" need?

(2) "...the target market is Islanders who want to trade in their acreage for a walkable townhome in town with main street's amenities a stroll away."

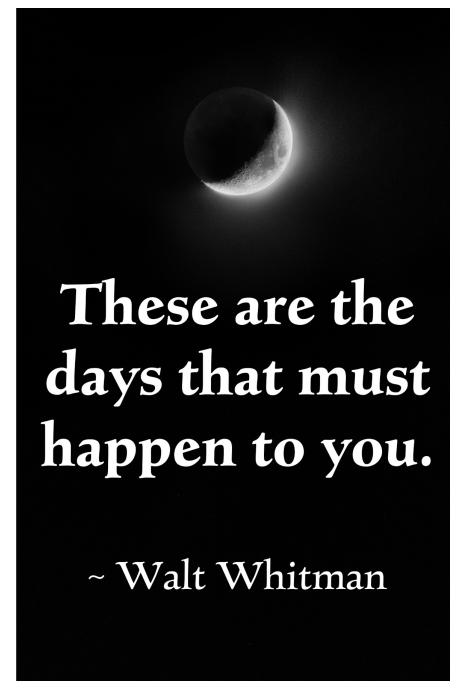
Enabling landowners to downsize and remain on the Island is a noble goal, but how does it meet the Island's goal of increasing "truly low-income" housing?

(3) "Question: If the developer does not participate in the DPO [Editors's note: DPO stands for "Development Plan Overlay"] do they have any requirements to build affordable housing with the project's existing zoning?" Answer: "No."

(4) "Question: If the DPO is delayed or not passed by the King County Council? Answer: Without the DPO, the risk of proceeding with the mixed-use buildings - and the affordable workforce housing rental apartments - is too high. Without the DPO, the developer will have to proceed with only the market-rate townhomes and scaled-back community and environmental benefits."

Regarding items 3 and 4: The developer is being very honest here, and we need to hear him. The goal of even 10-20% of the homes being offered at 80% AMI (which does not realistically impact the lives of lower income Islanders) is in and of itself at high risk of not being realized.

**In short, this project aims high, and it may fall short. This is not a criticism.** This is always the case with "big dreams." Consider Elon Musk and Space X. They have operated on the sharp edge of failure again and again, pushing the envelope on technological innovation to feats previously considered impossible. How have they succeeded? By gathering diverse minds, encouraging trust and



teamwork, and maximizing creative thinking.

It's always hard to put out an idea, when so many people have the bad habit of jumping to conclusions and being hyper critical. So, I'll do it first. After talking to a lot of people, for this article, I have two ideas:

(1) Vashon HouseHold has a goal for 2025 to "acquire land for our next project to build well-designed, affordable homes for working people." Morgan Brown is sitting on a bunch of well-placed acreage. What if they collaborated?

(2) Clallum County offers great support for ADU's with one primary limitation: ADUs must be for long-time rentals, not vacationers. This ensures local people are incentivized to create rental housing, the units will naturally be diverse, people are empowered to remain in their homes, and each ADUs built serves local residents, deepening community cohesion.

Don't like my ideas? That's fine. They're out there for people to consider. Now, how about your idea? I, for one, would like to hear it!

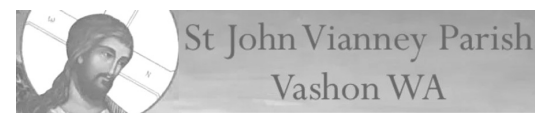
Development is not a game. There is no "reset" button. We cannot hit "back" and try it again. The lives of Islanders today, and for decades to come, will be directly impacted by projects proposed by Morgan Brown, Vashon HouseHold, and others. So, maybe 2025 is the year to get involved more directly?

Personally, I am impressed by the plans presented by Vashon HouseHold in their recent mass mailing. In addition to building new, truly affordable homes, they also offer a "HomeShare" program, "matching people who have extra space in their homes with those who need housing." I'd love to see THAT program gain some momentum!



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

Sunday Service at  
10:00AM



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

Child With a Midwinter Bundle in Front of VCA  
Illustration by Jane Valencia



Fall/Spring clean-ups

Year-round property maintenance

Retaining walls

Roof moss removal

Mowing

Gutter cleaning

Dump runs

Paving

Tree trimming

Pressure washing

... and more!

**Call for free estimates, 206-666-5329**  
[www.vashonlandscaping.com](http://www.vashonlandscaping.com), Facebook: RiosLawnMGM



## Herbs for the Holidays

By Kathy Abascal

*Editor's Note: Please enjoy this article, reprinted from the December 2005 Vashon Loop, and just as relevant today!*

The holidays bring lights, presents, and a variety of tempting foods. We often spend our holidays with people we love in a dysfunctional way. Things may not measure up the way we think they should, and we may not have the money or time for all that we want to do. Even holidays at their best are stressful. The excitement of a perfect holiday is far more fun than one filled with bickering and complaining, but it can be just as stressful. And holiday stress invites us to overindulge in food and drink that leaves us feeling worse rather than filled with cheer.

'Tis the season for a good nervine to help us stay a bit more centered and calm. If we turn down our emotions a notch, we can avoid using an extra glass of wine or piece of pie to quiet the emotions the holidays bring up. Nervine herbs do not have a strong, dramatic action.

Instead, they sweetly soothe and take some of the edge off the moment. My favorite holiday nervines are oats or kava, and in my experience, a good nervine taken with a lot of water works wonders.

Most of us are dehydrated in the best of times, and when we are busy shopping, cleaning, cooking, and having fun, we seriously forget to drink enough water. Without enough water, our bodies simply cannot handle the metabolic waste of stress, alcohol, and rich food. Moreover, we tend to confuse a need for water with hunger, leading us to eat more than we should.

Dehydration also makes it easier to gulp down wine instead of sipping it slowly. Water helps us avoid overindulgence. Enough water also helps our liver metabolize the alcohol we do drink, and can prevent hangovers. I like Gerolsteiner, a bubbly German water that is rich in calcium and comes in a

## Health Matters

beautiful glass bottle, but plain old water works just fine. And I always plan on drinking a glass of water for each glass of wine, beer, or champagne that I imbibe.

Bitters are another herbal ally for the holidays. Things that taste bitter make us salivate and secrete digestive enzymes. In contrast, stress (whether from joy or anger) shuts down those same secretions. Simply adding some drops of bitters to some water shortly before sitting down to a holiday dinner will tell your body that it is time to relax and focus on eating and digesting. In fact, many traditional aperitifs are nothing more than digestive bitters dressed in alcohol for the holidays.

If you have a tendency to end up drinking more than you wish, you might want to start the evening with a few kudzu tablets, as well. Kudzu is a vigorous plant with a starchy root. It both slows the absorption of the alcohol that we drink, and increases the speed at which the liver processes the alcohol.

In one study, chronic drinkers nursed their drinks longer and drank less than they did without the kudzu. Thus, it could be the perfect holiday herb, allowing you to enjoy the holiday cheer longer and better.

Of course, in the end you may find that you forgot your water, did not take the bitters, and indulged a great deal more than you intended. The old Eclectic physicians used a neutralizing cordial for these moments. Tummy tamer, my name for the formula, combines peppermint, cinnamon, goldenseal, and turkey rhubarb in a simple syrup. This formula quickly and effectively quiets mild heartburn, flatulence, stomach aches, and other digestive evidence of too much rich food and drink. A cup of catnip, fennel, and peppermint tea will work as well - provided you remember to make and drink them.

To help abort the impending hangover, you need to drink a few more glasses of water before bed. A little Oregon grape or barberry tincture right before bed may help your liver process some of the excess alcohol. But keep some willow bark capsules on hand just in case you wake up with a headache. Willow bark is one of many herbs that contain the precursors to salicylic acid, the famous ingredient in aspirin. Unlike aspirin, willow bark does not tax the stomach because it does not have the blood-thinning properties of pure aspirin (which is why willow bark is of no help in a heart attack) and does not cause stomach bleeds. Willow bark will effectively soothe a mild hangover headache.

Here's hoping you find time now and then to sit down with a cup of tea or a glass of water and enjoy the way all of the holiday lights brighten up the long, cold nights of the holiday season!

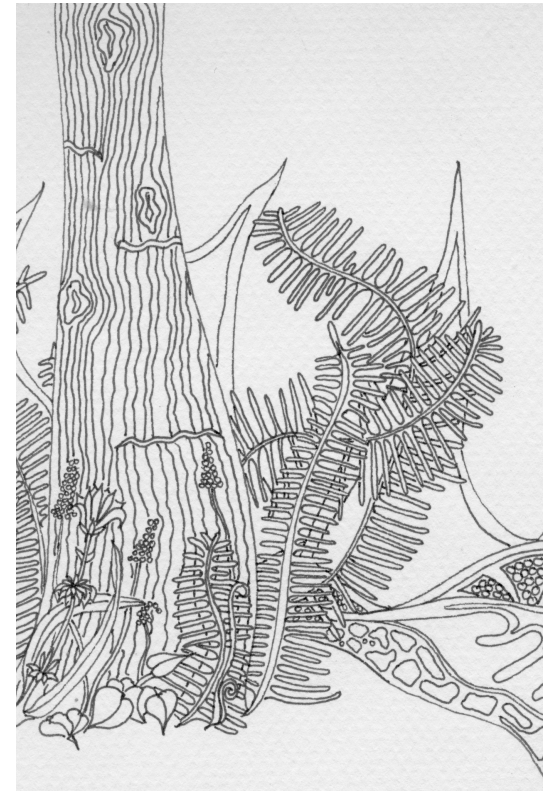



Illustration by Kathy Abascal

**Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz,  
Naturopathic Physician**



**BETULA**  
NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

Practicing independently since 2018  
~ Women, children, digestion,  
hormones, autoimmunity, and more ~

253-330-8708 - text to schedule  
[Info@betulanaturopathic.com](mailto:Info@betulanaturopathic.com)

Inside Tree of Life Wellness Center  
at 17331 Vashon Highway

Love is not affectionate feeling, but a steady wish for the loved person's ultimate good as far as it can be obtained.




- C.S. Lewis



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

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

*In the heart of town*  
17610 Vashon Hwy SW 206-408-7330



**BREATHING  
MANDALA**

**Do you feel stressed? Stuck? Anxious?**

Explore breathwork to relieve suppressed emotions, stuck energy, stress, and so much more ... the breath connects body and mind.  
As you breathe, so you become.

Contact Tracey Stover, 206-769-0040

Breathwork sessions, Access BAR's sessions  
Coaching/energy sessions, Bemer rental  
[www.breathingmandala.com](http://www.breathingmandala.com)



**PANDORA'S**  
SINCE BOX 1983  
**QUALITY PET PRODUCTS**

**206-463-2200**

**We all love mistletoe!** Frankly, who couldn't use a little more love and snuggling this holiday season?

However, please use care, as it is toxic to your pets. We're going to recommend the tacky, yet safer, artificial variety to hang in a conspicuous place

17321 Vashon Hwy SW  
Hours: Monday-Friday 9:30-6:30  
Saturday 9-5, Sunday 12-5  
[pandorasboxpetproducts.com](http://pandorasboxpetproducts.com)  
Instagram: [pandorasboxshopcat](https://www.instagram.com/pandorasboxshopcat)



*selah* health

**NAET® Allergy Elimination Treatments**

Foods • Chemicals • Pets  
Environmental Factors • And More

Say goodbye to allergy symptoms and hello to your favorite foods again!

**SelahHealthFreedom.com 720-289-1761**



## Why Use a Soft vs Firm Roller?

By Sandi Silagi

"Fascia is a network of connective tissue, without beginning and end, which encloses everything in the whole body, from muscles and bones to organs and cells." Foam rollers are generally thought of as a self-massage technique to ease muscle and fascia tension and improve circulation.

The effects of foam rolling have been studied for quite some time. Dr. Robert Schleip, the Director of the Fascia Research Group at the University of Ulm, was researching the foam roller as early as 2003 and finding support in myofascial release by using foam rollers. By 2015, there was research to indicate that foam-rolling did in fact reduce the symptoms of delayed-onset-muscle-soreness (DOMS). DOMS is that discomfort you may feel a day or two after a long hike or intense exercise. Foam rolling can restore the tissue early on, so that you don't have the setback of discomfort.

The research also suggested that foam rolling could be beneficial both before and after a workout. Rolling before training could increase the range of motion, decreasing the chance of injury. Foam rolling did not show any impeding factors to performance like stretching did. Foam rolling was an acceptable warm-up and cool down.

There are foam rollers that are very firm. Your body will tense against the abrasiveness at first. It generally hurts, and you feel resistance using them. Some foam rollers are even bumpy and firm -

even more pain. The outcome of reduced DOMS was beneficial enough to do it.

It wasn't until one of my clients said to me, "This just hurts, it can't be right" that I stopped a moment, took a breath, and said, "You're right." I started wondering what our options were.

Most foam rollers are firm. You will hear the phrases "Blast the fascia" or "Iron the fascia." These have their benefits, but it hurts, and I am not a proponent of tearing up the tissue to rebuild it. We don't have to make ourselves hurt to make ourselves stronger.

I believe we can gently guide the strengthening connections. At any age, we can sustainably build our strength and increase our stability and mobility in a calm and energized way. It's not a race to the finish line. It doesn't need to hurt. In direct opposition, I believe it is best to calm the nervous system and then to strengthen.

At Core Centric Training, we use MELT Method rollers. They are soft and bendable and allow your tissue to adapt around the roller instead of the roller breaking through the tissue. We have clinical data that shows the calming benefits of the softer roller. Now we are getting scientific data.

Dr. Schleip is in the midst of the Fascia Research Update 2024, which studied different types of foam rollers: different densities and textures. Michelle Reed at Core Centric Training recently took a class with Dr. Schleip regarding this research. What she learned is fascinating.

A softer roller can indeed calm the autonomic nervous system so you



**Dr. Cori Bodily-Goodmansen**

17147 Vashon Hwy SW, #111  
(206) 259-0216 (call or text)  
drcori@vashonchiropractic.com  
[www.vashonchiropractic.com](http://www.vashonchiropractic.com)

**VASHON  
CHIROPRACTIC**

**Individualized wellness care  
using low-force techniques**

can function better. Ideally, you want to pick a foam roller density that lets your body feel like it's relaxing or as if the roller (or self-massage tool, such as a ball) is getting softer when you compress into it. The softness or rather the softening response starts to happen within the first 20 seconds.

If, when you take a breath and let your body soften into the roller, it feels like the roller is getting harder, or your body has a fighting response, then it's too firm or the environment needs to change.

When our body response is to soften into the roller, it's changing our nervous system regulation. In our brainstem, we're reconditioning our response patterns to something called pain modulation. Kind of like facing the monster. When a body thinks it is getting close to an unsafe range of motion, it will slow down and not go there. We can change that body knowledge by calming it down, then getting deeper into the tissue using MELT Method sequences with the soft MELT roller.

Oftentimes, when working together using the MELT roller, Michelle or I will say:

Let your hips be heavy.  
Let your body be heavy on the roller.

Breathe into it.  
Edge up to the barrier.

These cues allow you to soften and begin to recondition the learned response of tensing or bracing. By lessening the tension, you allow the change to go deeper into the tissue; you create more change and restoration in the deep fascia. You get more control through your breath and increased mobility and stability.

The strength of the calm, energized body is so beautiful. It feels good, too. As a bonus, if you try it, you will likely sleep better!

This research is yet to be published. We will be keeping an eye on further findings.

*Sandi Silagi is a co-owner of Core Centric Training, offering in person sessions on Vashon and sessions from anywhere on Zoom (Info@CoreCentricTraining.com). In business since 2009, Core Centric Training is located at 17331 Vashon Hwy Suite A1 in the Tree of Life building.*

**FOR THE CHILDREN:  
SUPPORT NATURE  
(RE)CONNECTION!**

Help us reach our \$10,000 goal by December 31st and ensure every child experiences the wonder of VWP.

Together, we nurture resilience, connection, and belonging.

✦ All Donations matched 1:1 up to \$4K! ✦



**Vashon  
Wilderness  
PROGRAM**

Text "VWPGIVE"  
to 44-321

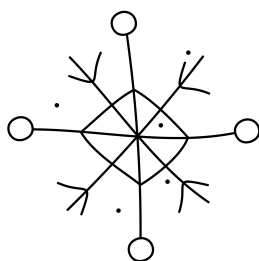


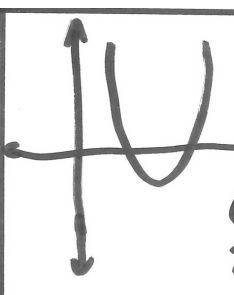
## Services for Vashon Children



**SHAWN CARKONEN**  
Reading Tutor  
206-718-7539  
vashonreading@gmail.com

Phonics-based reading tutor specializing in K-2 students.





**Algebra Tutor  
For Hire!**  
Call Anne Moses  
206-355-2222



Restore your body's flexibility,  
energy and comfort.

MELT and Stability workshops now enrolling.

Scan the code or call.



move better. feel better.



# MINGLEMENT

ORGANIC MARKET EST. 1972



December 27, '23 at the Roasterie - Illustration by Jane Valencia



## Island Epicure – Christmas Oats

By Marjorie Watkins and Suzanna Leigh

Adapted from Marj Watkins Loop article, December 2014

For stamina to keep you up with all the delightful demands of December – chilly weather, snow, winter colds, Christmas shopping, the planning, the parties to give and to go to – we need to feed our bodies and minds well. A good breakfast fuels us for these high energy expenditure days.

You can hardly beat oats for a breakfast ingredient that stays with you for the whole morning, gradually releasing the energy you need. For a quick breakfast, choose granola topped with yogurt and a generous sprinkle of raisins, dried sour cherries (which helps combat arthritis), or fresh or frozen blueberries (for brain food).

Here are a couple of choices for a hot breakfast featuring oats:

### Oat Porridge

Per serving:

- ¼ cup steel-cut oats
- 2 tbsp dried sour cherries or blueberries
- 1 cup boiling water
- Dash salt

Combine ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Enjoy with milk of your choice. (I like coconut milk or almond milk).

To save time in the morning:

### Overnight Oat Porridge

Put above ingredients in a small saucepan. Cover. Let rest overnight. In the morning, bring to a boil, reduce heat, cook covered on medium low for 9 minutes. Stir. Serve with milk or yogurt plus fruit.

From Suzanna: I use Bob's Red Mill Steel Cut Oats. Without soaking, they take 15 minutes to cook in the morning. I shall try soaking them

overnight and see what happens! If you try soaking it, let me know how that works.

Also, I like to add chopped walnuts or pecans, fresh pomegranate seeds, and a Tablespoon or two of olive oil. That's what my beloved Rich served me for our first breakfast together.

### Almond and Oat Pancakes

Makes about a dozen 3-inch pancakes

- 1 cup almond meal
- ½ cup sorghum flour
- ½ cup oat bran
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 eggs, separated
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 cup + 2 tbsp almond milk or coconut milk

Stir dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Whisk egg yolk with vanilla, oil, and milk. Stir into dry ingredients. Beat egg whites to stiff peaks. Fold into mixture in bowl. Heat griddle or skillet and lightly oil. Ladle pancake batter by tablespoonfuls onto the hot surface.

When bubbles form and break, turn cakes and cook briefly. Toothpick test to make sure they are done. Serve with a fruit compote for topping, or with yogurt and applesauce or fruit puree.

From Suzanna: Because sorghum flour is not always available on the Island, I tested this recipe with oat flour, as well. The sorghum flour made thicker, sweeter pancakes, and both were quite tasty! When the batter is thick, I cover the pancakes while they are cooking to help them cook through. One of the cooks in my household suggested letting



the dry ingredients soak for a bit in the liquid to soften before mixing in the beaten egg white and cooking.

This makes a nice Christmas brunch! Top with yogurt, berry sauce, and pecans or walnuts. If you like, serve with scrambled eggs and bacon or sausage. We like beef bacon. I understand there are some nice veggie sausages for our vegetarian family and friends.

### Berry Sauce

For 4 people

- 2 cups of frozen berries
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp cornstarch or potato starch

Put berries in a small sauce pan. Add just a little water – maybe a couple of tablespoons.

Have ready 1 tablespoon corn starch or potato starch, mixed in just enough water to make thick gravy consistency. Bring berries to a boil. When berries are all thawed and water is boiling, pour in cornstarch and water mixture slowly, stirring to prevent lumping. The sauce will thicken immediately. Turn off heat.

Nutri-tip from Marj: Oats are an excellent source of soluble fiber, which lowers cholesterol, reduces blood pressure, stops inflammation, and guards against diabetes. Other sources include barley, beans, peas, lentils, nuts, and seeds, citrus fruits, apples, bananas, pears, strawberries, blueberries, carrots.

Marj Watkins cook book "Gluten Free Baking" is now available! Email leigh.suzanna@gmail.com or stop by Lavender Cat Studio, Vashon Island Artist's Studio Tour, #19, Dec 7, 8, 14, and 15, 10am-4pm.

Note: The Coffee Roasterie will start carrying Sorghum Flour starting Monday, December 9th.

## Pecan Court Bourbon Balls

By Andy Valencia

Yes, another recipe from my mother – a holiday favorite. Nominally for the adults only, I always managed to sneak a few!

Makes 2-3 dozen, depending on size.

## Pecan Court Bourbon Balls

### Ingredients

- 3 cups rolled vanilla wafers (12 oz box)
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1½ cups finely chopped nuts
- 1½ tablespoons cocoa
- 2 tbsp white Karo syrup
- ½ cup bourbon
- Wax paper



### Instructions

- Line baking sheet or large plate with wax paper.
- Mix wafers, nuts, and cocoa in one bowl, pour powdered sugar in its own bowl.
- Mix Karo and bourbon separately, then pour into wafer/nut/cocoa bowl, mix well.
- Form one ball at a time, sized to taste – typically, about an inch in diameter.
- Roll each in powdered sugar and place on wax paper.
- Makes 2-3 dozen, depending on size.
- If needed, wrap entirely in wax paper and store in freezer.

### Vashon!

Do you have a favorite recipe you'd like to share with others and see published in The Loop?



Share it with us at editor@vashonloop.com



Island poetry in these pages

How about yours?



Submit your poems to The Vashon Loop!

Write to: vashonloop-poetry@janevalencia.com

## Moon Carol

By Jane Valencia

Quiet night  
blue snow  
hidden moon twirls a skein of light

Snow falls  
soft woolen coins  
spinning between antler branches

A Christmas rose unfurls  
from her clouded petticoat  
She dyes petals within silent ponds

Moon! Your footfalls  
on the new-woven snow  
reveal patterns in this winter grove

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



Contact us at editor@vashonloop.com

## I Live Under Giant Sequoias

By Jo Ann Herbert

I live under giant sequoias  
with deer grazing by moonlight

I watch thoughts rush tangle  
and lead me to anger and despair.

I count warm memories  
I see wrongs the world over

I cuddle animal sweetness  
that calms the bitter themes

I live under giant sequoias.



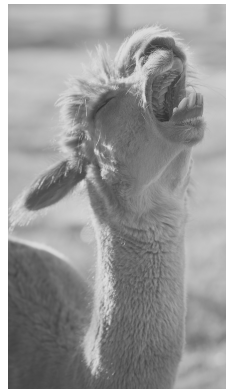
## Math Puzzle

By Anne Cotter Moses

Find two prime numbers that add to 36.  
(There are four different solutions!)

## Llaughing Llamas Chronicles

By Daniel Hooker



If someone in an electric car hits you, can they be charged with battery?

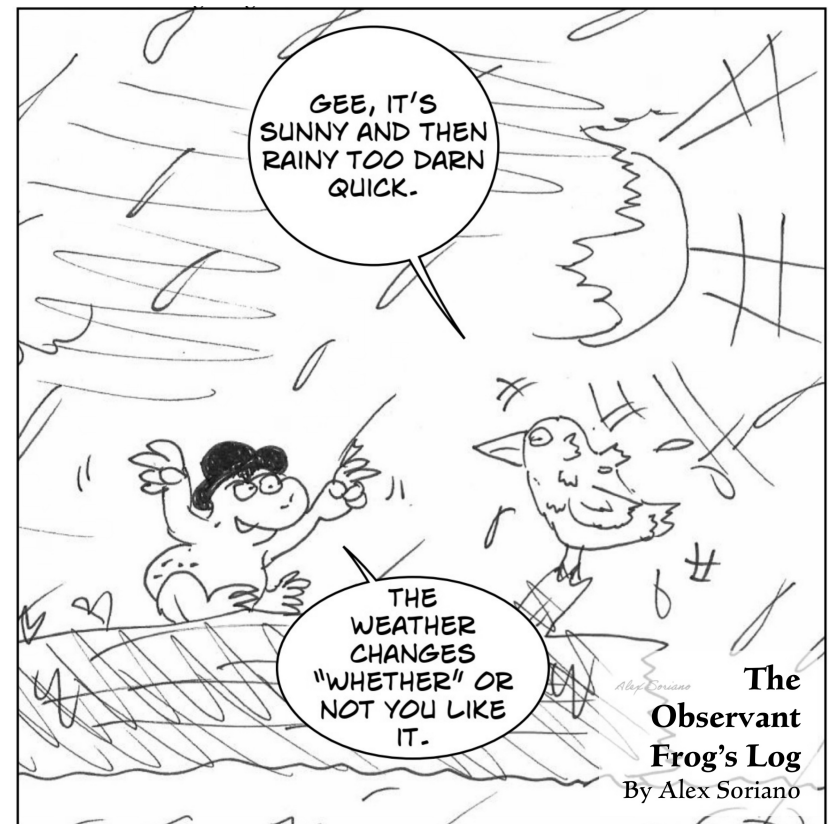
If a weatherman has cataracts, are all of his forecasts partly cloudy?

Q. If an electrician's children get out of line, does he ground them?

A. Only if they're slightly wired.

"How much does the Aurora Borealis weigh?" I asked a friend. They said, "I don't know."

I said, "I don't know either, but it sure is pretty light."



## Going Shopping in '78

Legends of Vashon  
Continued From Front Page

packed it down to the boat. Got a lot of beans, four sacks of flour, a chunk of sow-belly, some stuff Mother needed to make clothes for the girls, and some other little things - Oh yes, there was a little package of sugar too. I bought me a new mouth organ. Cost two bits, and that's a lot of money these days, but, gosh! I had to have it.

Dad looked around town for a while to see what the prospects were for getting a job during the winter, and we didn't get started home or home until about four o'clock. The weather had been fine all day - sunshine and no wind - only pretty hazy with smoke from the forest fires, but fog began rolling down out of the Puyallup Valley pretty soon after we started, and before we were halfway home, it was as thick as the pea soup kind you read about. Couldn't hardly see a boat length.

Dad got out his pocket compass and it told us which way was north, but it wouldn't say a word as to what speed we were making or what the tide was doing to us, which we thought must be plenty. Dad figured we'd best head straight to the South point of Vashon, Neill Point, and then we could work along close to shore until we could be sure of where we were.

But when we got there, the Island wasn't there. We rode around for half an hour trying to find it, hammering

on an oil can to try to get an echo from shore, but no luck. What with the fog and smoke and all, it was good and dark by this time, and we didn't have a Lantern, as we had expected to be home long before night. Only way we could keep cases on the compass was by lighting matches and, luckily, we had plenty of them.

After a while, Dad says: "Which way is north now, Bill?" I lit a match and told him. "Are you sure? It don't seem like it can be!" I told him it must be, unless he'd forgotten to wind the compass and let it run down on us or, something. He said that was a bum joke, but that he was going to head our Glory of the Seas into the north and keep going until we hit something, if it had to be the North Pole.

We put our slickers over the stuff in the boat, to keep it dry, so we couldn't wear them, and it was getting pretty chilly, so we took about ten-minute turns at the oars in order to keep warm. I know we didn't hold anything like a straight course, but we "averaged" north as well as we could and we rode for hours - weeks, it seemed like - and it was so pitch dark we couldn't see a thing.

I wasn't afraid, but it sure gives a fellow kind of a queer feeling. You suspect that it's two or three hundred feet to land, straight down, but you don't know how far it is in any other

direction. You're going somewhere, but you don't know where, and the darkness seems to press in around you until you imagine you can just feel it.

Dad was rowing and he had just started to say something to me when we smashed into something and stopped so quick that I nearly skinned my nose on the bottom of the boat. It was a rock, and it was on a beach, and that was enough for us.

We climbed out into the water and pulled the boat up on the beach a little way - it was near high tide anyway - and tied up to some bushes. We hadn't the least notion in the world as to where we were, but we were somewhere and there we'd stay until daylight.

The fog was heavier than ever now - almost a drizzling rain, and the trees and brush were weeping like they were sorry to have us around. By the time we had found enough dry stuff to start a fire, we were soaked to hide. Dad kept piling driftwood on until we had a noble fire, but we just freeze on one side while we were roasting the other.

In a few more years, it began to get daylight. The fog had thinned out some, too, and as soon as it was light enough to see our way, we started walking up the beach. We didn't go more than a hundred feet before things began to look familiar and within less a hundred yards of our landing point, we found the trail which led up to our own house.

I can laugh at it today, but I'll be darned if I could last night.

## Missing a Headlight?



Been putting off bulb replacement?

Flat fee install \$100  
On site in Vashon  
Most models

Text MJ, 608-695-8200

Let There Be Light!

Can't stop drinking and want help?



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Online Meetings: SeattleAA.org

AA Phone: 206-587-2838

Local Vashon Contact: 206-849-1980

No puede dejar de beber Alcohol?



ALCOHOLICOS ANONIMOS

Reuniones de Internet: SeattleAA.org

Telefono AA: 206-587-2838

Contacto Local Vashon: 206-849-1980

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

You live on a creative volcano. You may not know this; you may sense that it's true; and you may wonder what it feels like to tap in. I'll tell you: it feels good. You're now on a mission of reclaiming your core fire and passion. You are being invited to make friends with intense feelings that come from within you (for example, not from a movie or zip-lining or some other thrilling outer-world adventure). The mystery of who you are is within you, and you will benefit greatly from pointing your mind and your senses inward. You have available the full spectrum of who you ever were. But a risk is involved; even learning is not assured, as that is a deep personal voice. Therefore, your curiosity is essential to learning, growing and experiencing yourself.

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

How much anger are you carrying from your early life? Most people take for granted that they're still pissed off about what happened to them as kids or teenagers. Many places we go in life, there are little potholes of missing experience or missing attention or voids of life that we can keep twisting and spraining ankles on, as if that's natural. In my long and intimate observation of Taurus, one matter persists as essential: acknowledging and then understanding your anger. One core lesson of Mars retrograde will be to teach you how your anger can warp your perceptions, your judgment and your decision-making process. When you see this for what it is, you'll feel much more optimistic about admitting, understanding and addressing your anger. You will be happier, and remove a burden from the people you care about.

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

This time in your journey is all about ideas. I don't mean what Netflix or Hulu series you want to watch. I mean more like the one you want to write. Here's the problem with ideas: when you have a real one, it might shock you into a mild panic. That, perchance, might be a good reason to not do much about it. So this idea-making faculty is the only thing that could possibly get a result, when coupled with the willingness to communicate (which means speak AND listen). Mars retrograde will focus your mind and your spiritual abilities, if you let it. Your thoughts will teach you what you truly believe, and better still, focus your learning on who you are. When you engage your awareness and your creative power, you have to change, which is implicit in growth. There are thousands of reasons to avoid this. However, these days you stand right at the line between living life, and life living you. The difference is all about how you use your mind.

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

Your work is designed to be your spiritual practice. In Eastern thought, this is known as Dharma, which means acting as if to hold the world together. Astrology books describe the sign Cancer's maternal and nurturing tendencies. You are called in this lifetime to bring your soul into whatever you do. Everyone seeks spiritual wholeness somehow, whether through living in a monastery, going to church, meditating, walking in the woods or smoking opium. You find yours in daily activity, in the good works of your hands and your mind. Since work is part of every life, you're



# Planet Waves

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



fortunate to have these two important elements of existence in the same place. With the Sun, Moon and now Mercury joining forces in Sagittarius, it's time to make this personal quality as real as possible. You are not here just to live; you are here to live your truth and devote your most seemingly ordinary activities to the highest forces in the universe. How do you know this is real? A sense of meaning, a sense of ease, and consciously offering love to everyone you encounter.

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

You have a lot of energy and you may be wondering where it's coming from, and what to do with it. It's rare enough to have a true surplus of anything on the planet at the moment. Your chart suggests that your most productive activity is going to surround the research, design and planning of something that you know you want to do. You are working with incomplete information at the moment - that is indicated by Mercury retrograde, which spans from Nov. 25 through Dec. 15. You're on the right track and it feels good to want to focus your desire and get moving on something. The retrograde of Mars is the desire tune-up, and you have this right in your little pocket of the sky. As Mars treks backwards between Dec. 6 and Feb. 23, you will get a look below the level of "normal awareness" into your unconscious motives. The more about those you know, the better choices you will make.

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

Sometimes it seems the whole world runs on fear that masquerades as desire. And desire - wanting - is an all-powerful force on the physical plane, though it's dangerous when it's motivated by any form of anxiety, expectation of loss or aggression. Such is the perfect formula for wanting the wrong thing, and then getting it. Consider the possibility that when you're grounded in correct action, you will feel much safer and more confident. Consider that tapping into your own cosmic origins and your mission on our little world will grant you access to support and energy that is not available otherwise. You have a deep need to feel at home, and that means one thing for you - having nothing to do with the color of your furniture. Really living on this planet, for you, is about being grounded firmly in your origins and your purpose.

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

Sometimes it seems a shame that so much of life is about buying and selling. We live in times where everything seems to either be a commodity, or is about to become one. It's possible to use the commercial aspects of life as meaningful social experiences. Any human contact can be sincere, or not. This implies getting off the internet and into your community to do your shopping. And while you're there, treat each person you encounter like they exist. Make each cash exchange come with a conversation. While the mass hypnosis campaign is in full swing, participating is an option. However, part of that option means specifically not being in a trance. Eye contact, holding doors for others, and a

generally friendly attitude will do you and everyone around you a lot of good. You will feel better, and more significantly, the influence of taking time to stop and express your care or concern to one person can turn their day around.

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

What is a reputation these days? Anyone can put anything online, and unless you employ a private detective or a curious teenager to dig in, it's difficult to tell what is real and what is not. This is a product of digital chaos: the free exchange between the real and the unreal, the physical and the astral. Along a similar line, what is a career? These things deserve to be of the utmost importance to you. Your good name will never matter more to anyone than it does to you. And a career is far different from a vocation, which means a purpose to which you have been called (the 'voc' in vocation is the same as the 'voc' in vocal). My question for you at this time, as your ruling planet Mars moves to retrograde motion in your house of professional activity, is this: What are you called to do? You must be willing to set aside what you do not want, and what does not serve. Old goals must go in the bin. Get ready for some sorting out.

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

My core theory of Sagittarius is that you're a kind of extraterrestrial spirit visiting Earth, and for that reason, you must take special care to adapt to the conditions here. You need to know what is good for you and what is not, then avoid what harms and encourage what helps. However, there are two main things you must be cautious of. One is overreliance on 'positive thinking'. Such can be helpful but it will only get you so far. Rather, it's necessary to be circumspect in your approach, considering all possibilities, and making sure you're prepared. There's another situation, which is about where you seek your grounding. If someone has hurt you in the past, you're the only one who can call a stop to that. Even then it will take time. Here on Earth, hope is a dangerous substance.

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

These days it's difficult to consider what you've learned over a 16-year period. Pluto has now made its way completely through your sign or rising sign. The beginning was January 2008, when so much changed so fast. Pluto finally left your sign on November 19, mere days ago. So: what was your story arc? Do you recognize the person you were at the beginning of this transit, and could you possibly fit into the shoes you wore then? Another way to consider these years is that Pluto was a sculptor, removing much of the stone from the original block. The you who you've become was contained in that original material. The next epoch of Pluto lasts 20 years - a long time, by any measure. The message of this new phase is to use what you learned in the last one, specifically about your core values and principles. These foundational personal laws must then match your priorities, your choices and your actions. Yet this all depends on your having learned something

tangible about who you are and what resides at the essence of your being.

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

At last, Pluto has entered your sign to stay - until its final ingress into Pisces in January 2044. Whether you're young, old or somewhere in between, this is a length of time verging on impossible to consider as one concept. There will be many curves, peaks and valleys, though the beginning is the time to set your intentions and orient yourself toward the future. That means, specifically, not being oriented toward the past. We all contain a multitude of past selves, personality husks we have abandoned or outgrown that still have life, and threads that connect us to past incarnations. There is one you, who speaks for all of you. You have one voice whose job is to assert your will and your intent to everyone else. That we experience ourselves otherwise is a problem that has not been given a name. Yet once you feel and hear yourself speak your core truth, you will never want to go back to any other state of being. You will experience the beauty of being you.

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

What do you envision for yourself, related to your worldly accomplishments? This is calling for true reflection and also stoking the fires of creative intention. Given the ever-mounting chaos on the planet, the one steady thing in your life must be your vision. It exists in the immediate sense of what you do with each day, then the medium sense on the scale of a year or so. And though it's difficult, you will benefit greatly from holding a vision of yourself in five years. It's not just money. It's not just will or ambition - though these all count for some. More than anything, learning how to see your creations and then move into your vision is the most essential skill. And here, you must honor your preference, your calling and your sense of potential. The truly bold thing about living this way is seeing yourself as capable of more than you are today, and more than seeing, feeling, knowing and believing. Start with a blank page and remind yourself that anything is possible.

Read extended monthly horoscopes plus a wealth of extra material at [PlanetWaves.net](http://PlanetWaves.net)

I may not have amazing victories, but I can amaze you with the defeats that I came out of alive.

~ Anton Chekov

