

Gold, Bitcoin, Money, and Currency

By Stephen Buller

“Gold is money. Everything else is credit.” – John Pierpont Morgan

Regarding money, it would be wise to listen to the words of the founder of the largest bank on the planet, but I doubt he could imagine the world we live in today. Did Mr. Morgan simply lack the perspective to consider a technology like Bitcoin, or does gold have immutable characteristics that make it money?

This humble writer would argue the answer lies in the language we use, specifically the distinction between “money” and “currency.” Money has many characteristics, but the most important here is a “store of value.” Fiat currencies such as the United States dollar are the exact opposite of a store of value – they are designed to lose value over time. Gold has been a store of value for thousands of years. Bitcoin has exploded in price since its inception 15 short years ago.

The most important characteristic of currency, on the other hand, is it’s a medium of exchange. If your employer pays you in dollars, you have confidence your grocery store will accept those



dollars for food. Most stores won’t accept payment in gold or bitcoin. Your federal government would prefer it stay that way – they like the monopoly they have on currency.

Many physical objects have been used as currency over the years, from seashells, to fabric, to gold. Bitcoin is referred to as a cryptocurrency, but it was designed to maintain value through scarcity, as well. Bitcoin shares many positive traits with gold, such as being untraceable, divisible, difficult to attain, and fungible (ie, one is as good as another). It is superior in that it can transact over the internet and be carried on a USB drive.

Bitcoin’s track record is too short for it to be considered money. It is a speculative technology that has great potential to empower the average citizen over a tyrannical monetary system that steals through inflation what it doesn’t steal

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Feckless Self Governance and Social Agendas

By Editorial Team

Feckless: Lacking initiative or strength of character; weak or ineffective.

In a whirlwind of public policy, which you may have missed, Redmond was the sudden recipient of a new homeless center; by the time most citizens knew of the project, it was already an accomplished fact. The center was originally intended for Kenmore, but the citizens of Kenmore were alerted before approvals could be rushed through. Filling their council’s chambers, they delivered such a blend of hard questions and statements of opposition that the project was not approved.

You might assume this was a triumph of democracy, but Jay Inslee was outraged, using the term “feckless” to describe the little people who disrupted the plans of the public ecosystem. The project was moved to a more compliant Redmond, and Inslee then turned to the state legislature, supporting HB 2474, which would permit the state to punish any community that inconvenienced such pet projects. Broad-based backlash against this piece of authoritarian statecraft saw the bill quickly abandoned.

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Legends of Vashon Wild Boars of Vashon

As recounted to Tripper Harrison

If there aren’t any wild boars running the trails on Vashon right now, there used to be. Hogs have gone feral a lot more recently than you would guess, and they are much the same thing. One of them was named Piglet B, and he was mine.

Piglet B got loose and avoided all attempts to catch him. We caught brief sights of him a few times down the long driveway, and as he got bigger, he grew wilder and faster. Bristles started forming down his back; he got more muscular and started growing tusks.

Wild boar herds are surprisingly close. My mom still lives up in the Olympics, where they are now officially invasive. They broke into her garden last fall and ate all her tulip bulbs, which she will never

forgive. The Quinault Reservation started hunting their invader hogs down, and thinks they wiped a herd of them completely out, but they’re migrating in from Oregon. There is a whole lot of wilderness to go around in those mountains.

In their defense, hogs have a lot of things in their favor, most of all their snouts, which are more like muscles they use like a shovel. It’s what they do. They turn up everything to get at roots, grubs, leaves, and whatever they might come across, eating it, living or not. You can turn that talent in your favor, as many farmers did, for example to remove stumps. If you put corn into a pipe underneath, or get it down in the stump, they’ll dig and gnaw until they get at it.

The main farm idea is to get pigs

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Island Epicure – Interview at 99

By Marjorie Watkins and Suzanna Leigh

Suzanna: Marjorie, you are almost 100 years old!

Marjorie: This is true. A few months away from 100.

Suzanna: And you are healthy, too. You say you never have a headache or the flu. How is that?

Marjorie: Magic potion. It is a very tasty solution. It is cloves and cinnamon; the cloves are to kill viruses and the cinnamon is to kill ordinary ... germs. One day at the clinic, they gave me just enough anti-viral medicine to last for 7 days. It was a good thing I had my own remedy at home. When theirs ran out, I just took my magic potion. That’s why I’ve lasted so long. I never get headaches. I’m just a healthy person.

Suzanna: You used to get really bad headaches, I remember. Then you changed something in your diet, I think.

Marjorie: I used to get headaches from wheat that was brought from Russia.

Suzanna: How did you know it was that?

Marjorie: I read it in the Oregon newspaper.

Suzanna: But how did you know it was the Russian wheat you were eating that gave you headaches?

Marjorie: My son-in-law was working for a wheat distributor, and he took me to the silos. I was fine when I was in the silo with Oregon



wheat, but as soon as I got into the silo with wheat from Russia, I began to get a horrible headache. I don’t eat wheat at all now.

Suzanna: Are there other foods that you eat that keep you healthy, or that you avoid?

Marjorie: I avoid soy, because although its a fine food for people who can eat it, it’s not good for me.

Suzanna: So, it sounds like you are very aware of your body’s reactions.

Marjorie: You bet! And sugar. I stay away from sugar as much as I possibly can. I don’t eat ordinary sugar, even brown sugar. I eat coconut sugar, and not very much of that.

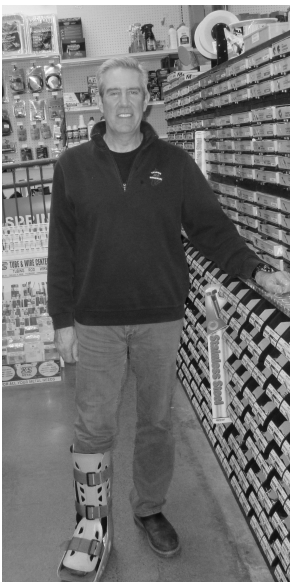
Suzanna: I remember you saying that God does not take away from your life the time you spent creating art.

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John Yates on the Mend

Two issues ago, we found John of ACE Hardware fame with a leg out of commission due to ankle surgery. His doctors promised a quick recovery, and we found him back on two legs and moving around his store at full speed this month, with just a boot as a reminder.

Congratulations, John!



Book Review – “Percy Jackson and the Olympians” Series

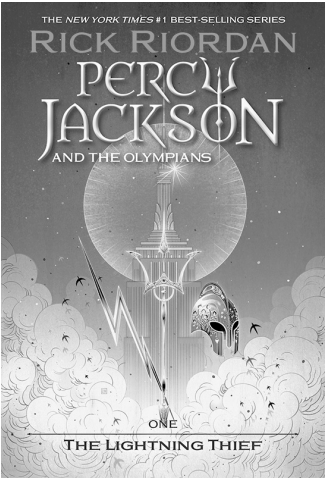
By Emily Kiefer

“Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief” by Rick Riordan is considered by many to be a modern classic. It is the premiere novel in a five-book series that weaves together a spectacular adventure involving modern-day Greek mythology and a coming-of-age hero’s journey. With a new television adaption of the series taking Disney+ by storm, I’ve had a blast reliving some of the most enthralling and memorable moments from my favorite book series as a kid.

Riordan’s storytelling is something of a wonder; he introduces us to a sarcastic hero named Percy Jackson who is navigating the dangers of being a powerful demigod in a world full of mythical creatures intent on his demise. Percy’s witty narration brings humor, as well as an engaging narrative full of suspense and emotion. He embarks on a quest along with two comrades, where they experience countless highs and lows, and become close friends.

Throughout the series, Percy forms deep connections with fellow demigods and creatures alike, all along his unshakeable quest to defeat the Titan Kronos, who is looking to take back his throne from the Olympian gods. Each book raises the stakes for our hero, concluding with a climactic fifth novel packed with a major final battle.

Although the books are full of action and adventure, the series never loses its heart and wit that wraps the



reader in a soft blanket. The genuine and humorous moments between Percy and his close friends breathe life into the already rich story. It’s all especially heartfelt when one learns how the world came to be: Riordan dreamt up the tale of Percy Jackson as a way for his son to feel less alone as a child living with attention deficit disorder and dyslexia, two disorders that nearly all demigods in the series have.

The recent TV adaption has brought much of the original fanbase back into Percy’s world. As a young adult myself, I still find so much meaning and comfort in these characters and their story, and greatly enjoyed seeing the actors and film team visualize a universe beloved by so many. “The Lightning Thief” remains a captivating read, as well as a perfect starting point to an iconic series, and is a journey I recommend to anyone seeking an enchanting blend of mythology and modern-day adventure.




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Feckless

Continued From Front Page

Not one, but two triumphs of democracy? That might sound like the happy ending, but you can be sure that all the technocrats with all their pet projects are still on the prowl. What might this mean for Vashon?

Without questioning the merits of our own new development at the Vashon Community Care Center (VCCC), it is a fact that the project was assembled and committed to before the public was made aware of the plans. The public was invited – after the fact – to marvel at it and submit questions that may or may not be addressed. Our betters in county and state government have a playbook, and it worked here on Vashon, and in Redmond. Don’t be surprised if some reprisal hits Kenmore in the next year or two.

One of our affordable housing developers once commented during an interview on Voice of Vashon that public policy chooses favored themes, and all the money flows towards projects that fit the theme. I believe that 20 years ago, the concern was for members of our community with modest means – they held down jobs, had families, and Vashon benefited by their being a neighbor. Thus, affordable housing. But public favor has drifted away from such people, moving instead to serve irregular immigration, people with addictions, and/or mental illness. More and more of what is to be built with public funds will serve these communities.

For a new kind of development,



there are always questions a community would do well to ask before committing. What is needed when somebody arrives who doesn’t speak the language, doesn’t necessarily know or respect our laws or customs, and is going to be unemployable for the foreseeable future? Or, what is needed for somebody who exhibits periods of disruptive, threatening, or even dangerous behavior? What sort of staff of translators, social workers, medical specialists, critical transport, and law enforcement must be *immediately* available to reasonably host such new members of a community?

These and more are the questions which the citizens of Kenmore asked their city council. The mayor then decided that her duty in this situation was to hold back approval. One governing approach is to have answers to the questions before you start. There are other approaches, most of them much more authoritarian.

Vashonites would do well to take

a hard look at long-empty buildings here on the Island. VCCC has been snapped up, but there are more. You can even look at open acreage – the state can usually brush aside development obstacles that would entirely block a mere citizen. Washington just disclosed that the sum of \$340 million dollars was scheduled to granted to irregular immigrants.

How big a facility could they build on Vashon for a paltry \$5 million? What if the budget was \$20 million? Unlike Kenmore, Vashon has no authority over projects on our Island; we have to live with what the King County Council decides for us. Dow Constantine was as indignant as Inslee in responding to Kenmore’s decisions, making it likely indeed that a project on Vashon might proceed at a brisk pace with little concern for community input.

Vashon’s only real defense is to be proactive. For something as

massive as a county or state project, the only option is to apply pressure as early and as vigorously as possible. As a community, we must keep an eye on each major property, and the local organizations that might be used to usher in a new government development. We don’t need to reject – NIMBY-style – all developments. But we certainly want to make sure the hard questions are answered before we have to live with the results.

The Vashon Loop is published monthly

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.

Looking for a Good Neighbaaa

By Marc J. Elzenbeck

Call me stupid. My auto and home insurance stayed nearly unchanged for the most part of a decade, with only minor upticks reflecting an occasional policy adjustment. Towing coverage was added on a couple vehicles, plus a separate umbrella covering teenager mishap, malfeasance, or vandalism.

Starting in January 2022, both basics started to edge up a bit, nothing too major, 7% here and 10% there. I wrote it off as the inevitable, chiseling march of inflation, and put it on the mental “I should look into this sometime” list.

Then, in October of last year, the car insurance took a sudden jump, as in almost doubled. Hmm-kay. As tactfully as possible, I asked my wife if she had run over anyone while in town and neglected to mention it.

While still recuperating from this, in December of 2023, our nearest neighbor sent out a group email warning that their homeowner’s policy had just gone up 28%, with no prior claims and a \$2,500 deductible. Within days, our property insurance for 2024 took on a much bigger increase, so both the home and auto policies moved onto the “Need to deal with very soon” list.

In my case, this meant not before the Super Bowl, but the total for home and auto had rocketed to \$725 per month. That’s \$451 for home, \$274 for auto, 69.4% and 62.9% increases. No claims, with standard deductibles. No earthquakes had hit, no asteroids had struck, and World War 3 had not yet

been officially declared. But some major catastrophe had clearly occurred.

If more evidence of my procrastination is needed, it should be noted that I have stayed with Allstate insurance for 32 years, even after they started plugging know-it-all telemetry monitors into vehicles and calling it a “Safe Driver Discount,” which claims to reduce rates by up to 40%, but does not.

When Allstate offered it a few years back, I asked, “So if I install this and happen to hit 110 mph on the way to Pullman, will my rates go up?” It seemed like a good question, but the representative wasn’t prepared to answer, and was reduced to silence, so I declined.

While munching on some paprika-salted popcorn during the Super Bowl half-time, State Farm introduced a new commercial. It is quite possibly the most obnoxious ad ever made – a true achievement given an industry segment so full of psychotic nonsense; jailers could harness it to obtain full confessions from the most hardened Guantanamo Bay prisoners.

Is this intentional? Are they trying to drive us insane? Of course they are, that’s the whole point. I’ll prove it now.

There are lizards criticizing porcupines, drug-addled party rappers musing on responsible driving, large flightless birds looking extinct, people jumping into polluted rivers, a sadistic actor damaging cars, and compulsive dorks wearing

butcher’s aprons (let that one sink in). And now, at long last, we have Arnold Schwarzenegger in a burning house and parachuting onto a herd of SHEEP while bellowing “Neighbaaaa!”

According to the latest issue of the National Law Review (a great bedtime read), total annual insurance premiums paid in the United States just topped \$1 trillion dollars. This seems a bit excessive, but right now a lot of things do. Curiously, the largest insurer in the U.S. is State Farm, and it’s losing money hand over fist. It lost \$14.7 billion last year, eclipsing record losses from the year before.

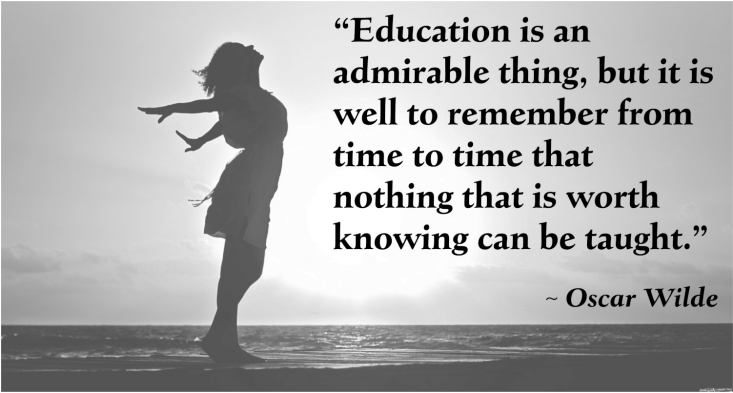
To close out their awkward psy-op, Danny DeVito trotted out to join the Terminator. Even though I only find Allstate’s commercials mildly annoying by contrast, and have been happy with their services, a line had been crossed and I decided the madness had to end, starting the next workday.

As it turns out, State Farm blames its price increases on “catastrophic losses” from all manner of sources, particularly vehicle repair cost inflation, while simultaneously touting higher revenues from the auto

division. In reality, they do the corporate equivalent of mumbling and provide zero transparency into what’s really driving their losses. When companies knowingly charge loyal and passive customers more money, the marketing term for it is “discrimination pricing.”

I’d like to say I went to the library, dug out “Consumer Reports,” and performed exhaustive research to shop for a better deal. All I did was go to Costco’s website, look up insurance, and plug in the details to obtain apples-to-apples coverage. I got a quote of \$149 a month for home and property insurance, and \$89 for auto insurance. I poked around for reviews of the “Costco Connect” insurance program, found it to be highly rated, then called to ask some finer points about falling trees, wind peril events, and deductibles.

Satisfied with all the answers, and not accosted with any apps or “Safe Driving Surveillance,” the insurance policies switch on March 15th. Bottom line, it took about two hours of shopping around to reduce our insurance costs from \$725 to \$238 a month, or by about 67%. Time to tell the neighbors.



Winter’s End

By Michael Shook

“... the hounds of Spring are on Winter’s traces ...”

They are indeed, lashed to a dead run by this year’s strong El Niño weather system. Buds are plump to bursting, daffodils, hyacinth, and crocus have been out and blooming for weeks, and the scents are shifting. In the late winter breezes, one can detect the increase in rot of grasses, leaves, and other detritus left from the fall, brought to us now in new stages of decomposition by the longer days and warmer temperatures.

Like every season – like all living things! – winter yet holds fast, yielding reluctantly as the sun exerts its will. So, it is still winter, if not for much longer, and while I am able, I relish bathing in the cool and damp of these final weeks. There is still much to observe and enjoy. Well into December, the willows somehow hung onto their fall color, a surprising and delightful splash of turmeric-yellow leaves, only yielding to the ground after Christmas. Flowering red currants did likewise (albeit in milder shades of color), but now, after such sloth, they are hurrying on, hung with red-pink blossoms, an early feast for hummingbirds.

The deciduous trees remain bare, and the sculpture that is their living scaffold continues to reveal itself as an enchantment for the attentive observer. Endless divergent patterns of branches look sharply traced as pen and ink on paper, black bones of branches creating fractals of astonishing delicacy and bold

Island Voices

strength, the whole of it held against a soothing backdrop of pillowy, low, blue-gray sky.

How I have enjoyed the depths of winter. Everywhere I looked, new vistas were opened to me, the result of vegetation shed from hazelnut, salmon and thimbleberry, snowberry, and more. Even the damnable Himalayan blackberry lost its leaves and lapsed dormant, at least for a while. (I think – I still hesitate to turn my back on it.)

With brush and shrub trees denuded, I could see back into thickets that held all kinds of life, hidden from me for months. There, a deer bed beneath a closed-in hazelnut bower, and there, what looked like a low tunnel through heavy brown grasses and twinberry, likely made and used by raccoons. Taller archways made by deer – tall for deer, but not tall enough for me – showed a path through close-grown stands of oso that, were I considerably younger and more spry, I could have ducked into and snaked my way along.

The towhees, winter thrushes, and sparrows were then, and are now, tireless in their vigorous scratching, looking for grubs, bugs, and other forage – though now they spend a little more time beginning to sing. Not that the towhees ever stopped. Their melodious, soft, and charming chirring accompanies me throughout my winter garden work, a gentle reminder of my mother, passionate in her love of all things

avian, and who numbered the towhee among her favorites.

The robins are nowhere near as numerous as they soon will be, but they are still abundant enough to make a racket with their alarm calls, diving at a barred owl trying to rest in one of “their” trees. Bushtits, chickadees, juncos, and the odd kinglet flit through tangled nets of dark branches, pecking here, there – swinging upside down, or skittering sideways, one stance as good as any other – always on the move, the better to evade the resident sharp-shinned hawk.

Fog is at its best in winter, and when it arrives, the landscape somehow becomes as quiet as if snow were on the ground. Gone, the neighbor’s homes, gone, the sky and horizon, all is closed in, hushed and damp, and the gray, grounded mist of clouds enfolds me. Walk through it, reach to touch it, it only recedes, then closes behind. But yet it touches us on its own terms, leaving itself behind as droplets of dew on hat, coat, spectacles, and skin. It is there, and not there, surrounding but apart, a liquid spectral touch that is, for me, an intimate, reserved welcome.

Winter is the time for slowing down, for looking intently (for seeing), not just or always at the larger forms of trees against horizons, or the yellow willow and red twig dogwood, but seeing down, at ferns and the mosses and lichens that cover tree trunks, stones, and pathways.

The myriad kinds glow with energy, their colors intense, layered, their liveliness vibrant. On large granite rocks near the entrance to our woodland garden, the moss is rampant and wildly abundant, spreading across stone, simultaneously delicate and stout, vigorously weaving new fronds while the cool damp it thrives in still prevails. A few feet away, the moss clinging to the big-leaf maple trunks is of an entirely different kind, but no less electric in its vitality and richness of colour.

Winter is also, appropriately, the time of death. The leaves dropped in fall, along with branches, and entire trees blown down in winter storms decay and nourish the soil for the life coming this spring – a vivid demonstration that there cannot be life without death. I often have wished for a word that somehow combined the two – lifedeath, deathlife, I don’t know – something, though, that might convey the inseparability of what is truly one great force, what IS.

Everything is continually coming into being, and even when to our mortal eyes it seems all is coming to an end as well, it is not. Round and round and round ... Winter comes, does its work, then yields to spring, and is there any doubt that spring is as sweet as it is because of winter? It is precisely because of the seasons – of our lives, as well as of the calendar years – that this experience we call “life” is so precious, so profoundly and poignantly meaningful. So, I look forward to the surging tide of life that is spring, while I look back, gratefully, to all winter gave, and still gives.

Twinkies and a 1977 Ford Pickup

By Seán Malone and John Sweetman

We were poking around the old Ford F-250 four-wheel drive three-quarter-ton pickup that Seán acquired from me about 30 years ago. It seemed to have a problem with steering. This truck still is a formidable beast, with an 8,000-pound winch and oversized custom bumpers and guards, but it was becoming increasingly hard to steer.

After brushing off the accumulation of maple leaves, we pulled up the hood and examined the large 351 Cleveland engine space.

“Looks like maybe the power steering is out?”

“How could that be? I replaced that pump about 25 years ago.”

Ownership had been transferred to Seán in the mid-90s, after the truck had about 44,000 miles, and today it may have twice that. At that time, we were both living in the Republic area of Northeast Washington, where I had been elected for four consecutive terms as County Assessor and Seán had sold firewood and fought fire in the summer.

After I moved to the Island, Seán decided to return to Vashon with hardly any encouragement; he managed the nearly impossible act of buying a real property just overlooking our secret crabbing spot. I had found the beach property in a lucky moment. Seán took it up and signed the papers on our kitchen table here in Burton.

The “sort of” deal with the truck sale was that I got to borrow the truck for whatever use, usually with Seán

driving. That was only fair, since he had put the first dent in the truck bed.

About 10 years after Seán moved back, he found he needed some parts to fix something or other. Seán had mounted a camper on the truck and needed the extra electrical connections.

“I know where that part is! Let’s check behind the seat!” We had looked through the various side panels with no luck, although I think a useless splitting maul and an equally useless metric wrench set had turned up.

The old-style truck had one of those bench seats that you had to pull forward to get things stored behind it. I had not fully cleaned out the truck of all my stuff before Seán took it over, since I knew I could always have access, and besides that, I had left some bulky sheepskins as seat covers – which made it hard to move the back bench of the seat forward.

We moved the things away, pulled the seat back forward, and exposed a lot of things hidden for 15 years or more.

“Say! I’ve been wondering what happened to my 1878 .22 short bolt action Winchester!”

And there it was! Sure enough, after a decade or more, it was in the same vintage shape as it was stowed, plus some 50-year-old ammunition. We all carried rifles in Northeast Washington at that time, and when Seán got the truck from me, there was an annoying rifle rack behind the seat where I carried an old octagon barrel

1899 Savage .30-30. The trouble was you could not wear a hat with that thing behind you. Seán took the rack down and merely threw his rifle alongside the seat and let his dogs guard it.

Along with those finds, we discovered some tire chains no longer useful, a scaling stick for timber, jumper cables, and the electrical connection we were looking for.

The most significant find, however, was under the seat, tucked away ... a still-sealed package of Twinkies. These probably were left over from either our wood-gathering adventures or our expeditions to stake mining claims, although we usually chose some sort of pickled herring or smoked meat for our lunches. Seán makes a mean sandwich out of cured “farmers” seasoned venison, which is a seasoning not recognized by the game department. We “Googled” that fact to ensure literary due diligence.

So, while we fixed the truck, we tossed the Twinkies in Seán’s marine and ham radio shack (kind of a shop, where his transmitters reside). A few years later, we came across the

Twinkies, still in the original package. I think there was no evidence of an expiration date. We looked. Being much more attentive to Seán’s cucumber sandwiches, we forgot the Twinkies, and again it was much later, looking for some tool, that we rediscovered them.

“I wonder if these are still good?”

So, a few months later, we opened the package and tried them. Sure enough! Just the same intense culinary delight as would come from fast food in the heating incinerator after 2:00 am at a 7-11! They were that good! Good is a relative term. We did not die or suffer afterward. So much for expiration dates.

I recall that we called for a decent sip of Laphroaig single malt to clear the palette. Perhaps that was just the ticket.

Seán’s brother, Mike, claims the old Ford is now “vintage,” and he should know as he has all kinds of vintage cars. The Ford F-250 has not expired yet, nor were the decades-old Twinkies. Best of all, your writers of this story have not expired. We like that last outcome.







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The Standing Nation – At the Speed of Tree, Part 2

By Jane Valencia

This article concludes our interview with Mik Kuhlman regarding her remarkable one-woman show, “The Standing Nation – Remembering Our Kinship with Trees.” In these performances, the audience journeys to a special tree in nature. The tree serves as setting and co-star, bringing surprise and wonder into the experience.

In addition to working with Tess Clark on the script, Mik collaborated with many others in presenting the show.

“Aside from my creative consultant, Meg McHutchison, I have two longtime muses. Mik Kuhlman Productions has been Sally Sykes Wiley, Patricia Toovey, and me.” Patricia Toovey, a visual and textile artist, and Mik have worked together for many years, with Patricia creating big visuals, such as a silk house, a giant coat, and even a giant swab to accompany a nose in Mik’s other productions. For “The Standing Nation,” Mik needed to wear clothing strong enough to protect her from the elements.

“I’m working with bugs. I get bit up. Sometimes, a mosquito will land at times when I’m supposed to be really still. Or right before I begin, I put my hand down and it’s full of sap, and I’m like, ‘Oh my God, now my fingers are stuck together.’ Good canvas coveralls have helped mitigate the inevitable intrusions that come with performing in the forest. Because I’m rolling in it!” Mik laughs.

Patricia is also a master of detail, such as providing pine essential oil to scent the room when Mik presented “The Standing Nation” in its earliest stage at Snapdragon as a concept workshop. Or, in later versions of the show, a small detail of glass test tubes filled with tips of pine cones to highlight a character’s scientific perspective. “I adore working with her because she provides a non-verbal language in the storytelling.”

Dancer and choreographer, Sally Sykes Wiley, contributes movement.

“It’s not choreography like one would think of dance moves. Sally is a master of very nuanced movement.”

The nuance contributes to how Mik portrays the women in the show. “I’m trying to capture the essence of these three women without imitating them. I want to get to their heart and give a flavor of who they are. Because one comes from Japan, one comes from Ireland, and one comes from Canada, those are three different kinds of women just from their cultures. So, that’s another nuanced level to work in.”

Mik also brought in director, Samantha Sherman, to give details to the verbal storytelling and bring all the collaborations into a whole. “It’s not easy to slip into a trifecta of collaborators, but she was in beautiful alignment with us, and worked detailing moments even into the last performance.”

Regarding the work with collaborators, Mik explains: “It’s just me playing ball with somebody. I absolutely love the dialogue. You can hit a ball against the wall, and that’s fine. You can learn some technique with that. But when you hit a ball with somebody else, they bring the velocity of that ball back at you in a new speed. Or they put it in a direction that you’re not expecting, and it opens up a whole other world because you bounced this ball with another human.”

Another collaborator is musician and composer Max Sarkowski, who grew up on the Island, and was a student of Mik’s. He played live music in many performances of “The Standing Nation.” But because Max is not always available, they had to record his compositions. Now, Mik can bring a computer and a speaker into the woods to provide the music.

And of course her biggest collaborator is the community. Mik Kuhlman Productions could not exist without its supporters. Mik shares, “I’m so amazed and grateful for the community that we have here, that the piece got supported and developed. And during a pandemic. Because art absolutely needs financial support. It’s been really beautiful who gave money to support the project. And beautiful how many people came to see the show so far. (475!)

“I’m a solo artist who works with



Mik Kuhlman - The Standing Nation. Photo by Michelle Bates

a huge number of people, because I, too, am like the forest. And lucky me, I get to live among trees. The Island has been a great teacher. We get to intersect here the way a forest does. We’re not on our own. We’re interdependent.

“What I love about Vashon is that there is value in the woods we have, and the forest we have on this Island, and the work that’s being done to preserve them and to manage them, to cultivate them. People donating their land to our Land Trust, the volunteers that are working the forests, the Vashon Wilderness Program that is educating the children about these forests, and many others. The forest is what we have that is right up there, with our farmers as our most valued treasure on this Island. Hands down.”

What’s next for “The Standing Nation?”

“My plan this summer is to present the show again. I know a lot of people haven’t seen it yet that have wanted to, and I know there are people who saw the first few shows, and I would love them to see it again. The show reveals itself more and more.”

Mik wants to invite people from Land Trusts and nature conservancies from the area and across the nation. “It’s not a show I’m selling,” she notes. “It’s an experience.”

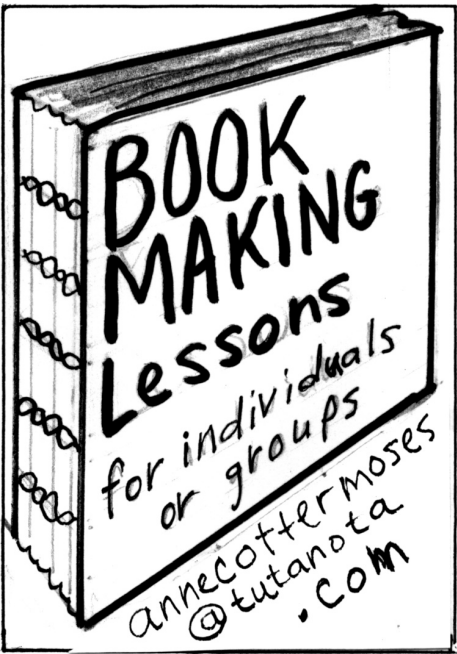
“So now I am creating the experience to be able to tour it anywhere,” Mik says. “I’d love to take it into Central Park or Prospect Park in New York. I might try to see if there’s a place in Seattle’s Discovery Park or Volunteer Park to do a show. You see Shakespeare in the Park, you


see comedies or musicals or something like that. But it’s just seeing theater outdoors. This is theater about trees, with trees, for trees. So it has a different quality to it.”

She’s also open to additional private showings in backyards or orchards.

“I’m not trying to bring the people out to nature, because we are nature. We’re not separate from it. We must remember that. And that will change the way that we interact with it. We’re lucky because here on the Island we know what it is to be a part of nature, we remember our kinship.”

Find out more about The Standing Nation at www.create.mikkuhlman.com/current/.





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Legends of Vashon Wild Boars of Vashon

Continued From Front Page

to till up a field in sections, then come behind them with seeds and a rake. All you have to do is make a paddock, like with an electric fence, and wait for them to do their thing. After it's churned, you move them to their next spot, put in your cover crops, shade peas, beans, nitrogen-fixers, barley and your wildflowers, and fold it back over.

Pigs have some serious negatives. They're smart, so you have to get a couple of them or they get depressed, and a depressed pig is hard to cheer up. They start to get stir crazy and more likely to turn on you. Pigs can bite and draw blood, and once they smell blood it's game on. The old timers used to have a saying, "We ain't had such excitement since the hogs et poor little Willie." Which should make you wonder.

When I was quite young and staying at my uncle's house, I snuck out to wait for him while my aunt and older cousins fixed dinner. I climbed up and sat on the top rung of the fence, and when he drove up he got out and yelled at me to get the hell down from there. Being three or four years old, I ran crying into the house, and that was the only time he ever raised his voice to me. Later, he told me Blackie the sow was in that pen and that I must promise him not to go alone out there again, and to never, ever turn my back on a pig.

When some American Guinea hog piglets came up for sale on Facebook, we drove over near Tahlequah and got a pair of shoats, weaned males about 3 months old. All went well, and for the time being, we put them into the chicken run, an anchor fence enclosure with a shelter. From the start, Piglet B was skittish, and at the first chance, he bolted out

the gate rather than paying attention to his food. Piglet A, his brother, never wanted to leave.

Piglet B made for the 75 or so acres of County land down the bluff adjoining our place, and his range was well over a quarter-mile square. He made some trips back up into our neighbors' forests and to dig furrows into some of their lawns, which took a lot of work to put right. Bless their patience. Meanwhile, it was a constant battle of wits. We set out a raccoon trap, baited box traps with food, dug a Cambodian pig trap four feet deep with a false forest floor, hanging ripe fruit over it. None of which worked. Piglet B was sly and thriving without extra food.

Remember the corn? That's what worked, plus some luck. Every day, I'd set out a small mound of corn for the little devil. The next morning, it would usually be gone, and I'd put another pile closer to the barn. Eventually, it got to be only 25 feet away, and I happened to be with our Goldendoodle at the curve when Piglet B showed up for his brunch. The Doodle gave chase, and Piglet B outran her for the only nearby safety, the barn. I walked over, locked the wild and wooly thing inside, and our months-long feral hog experience was over.

The other recent case I know of was a friend with a 500-pound breeding sow. My cousins bought their piglets from her. One day, the sow simply disappeared. They searched high and low, but she has not been seen since. That's her story. If you of a morning wake up and see some half-foot deep furrows in your lawn or come upon a tusked hog begging for apples and ice cream, it is not mine.



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Pruning, Part 2

By Kim Cantrell, Little Bird Gardens

I just spent the last few weeks talking with you all at the nursery. We agreed we were in the clear weather-wise, and then some of us had snow! And as I write this today, we are expecting a bit of a freeze again.

We're gardeners; we talk about the weather, and Mother Nature is not done with winter, though we are. Thankfully, through all the weather changes, we have had some nice, sunny days, enough that we can get back to our winter gardening tasks.

We talked about why we prune in Part 1 of this article in February's issue, so now let's talk about the How of pruning in Part 2 of our series. Let me reiterate the Why of pruning here so we can be mindful as we start the process of pruning.

Why we prune

- The health of the tree or shrub is the main reason. This means removing dead or dying wood where disease and pests can get in and weaken your plant. This task alone may be all you need to do. Creating good air circulation throughout will also help with the health of your tree or shrub.

- Maintaining natural beauty. Isn't this why we love our gardens? To enjoy the individuality and uniqueness of how a plant grows?

- In a young tree, you may prune to help create a good structure, which may mean you never have to prune that tree again.

- Corrective pruning may be necessary for a mal-pruned specimen, and will happen over the course of several years.

Let's address the how of pruning. There is a lot to say about pruning cuts, and honestly, the best approach is to have a hands-on experience, as the telling of pruning never seems to quite translate to the tree or shrub you are confusedly looking at and wondering why it doesn't look like the diagram in the book. Starting by learning some basic cuts will help you approach your trees and shrubs with confidence and guide you to the most beautiful of gardens.

The most valuable cuts are selective heading and thinning, and should be about all you have to do in terms of pruning. With selective heading, you reduce the length of a branch by cutting off one or

Island Resilience

two forks. You would select the longer of the two and prune it back where it meets the shorter part of the branch. Ideally the shorter branch will take over as the apical or terminal role (new leader or branch tip). This is also called reduction and will not stimulate the branch to respond by creating water sprouts (these grow straight up and there are many coming off a single cut); it keeps the natural integrity, and is easier on the health of the plant.

Thinning is a form of selective heading and is great for reducing the bulk and clutter of a plant. Thinning is taking an entire branch off from a larger branch. This is not meant to make the plant smaller. This helps remove congestion by taking off crossing branches, rubbing branches, a double leader, branches that hang on the ground, a wrong-way branch, or suckers. Now don't be thinking you can do all these at once, and always consider the nature of the specimen. It just may be a messy tree, and doing all this could be at the expense of the tree or shrub, which could easily lead to over-pruning. Pruning is often done over many seasons to achieve a desired effect, the "long game" of gardening.

Branch size should be considered when pruning. When choosing which branch to prune out, the size of the branch you are removing should not be more than one-half the diameter of the branch you are leaving. Anything larger runs the risk of reduced health and die back. With trees, be mindful of the cut you make by not leaving stubs and not cutting into the branch collar (often easily identified as a raised ring of tissue around the base of the branch)

How much should you prune? That depends, as each specimen has a pruning budget, meaning it may take a lot of pruning or not much at all. I have found camellias take a large amount pruning with no ill effect, but give that magnolia or dogwood the side eye and she'll send up water sprouts with the slightest missed cut. Pruning less will always be better than more. Try not to remove more than one-eighth of the leaf canopy in a year; dead wood need not be included in your budget. Each species has different requirements for pruning, and taking time to learn about those requirements before you prune is best.

Common mistakes with pruning include ...

Topping your tree - This type of pruning is called non-selective heading. This only weakens your tree's defenses causing decay, weakened branching structure, and a general drain on vitality. Topping will shorten the life of your tree, make it look ugly, and only stimulate the tree to grow back to its genetically predetermined size.

Shearing your shrubs. Also, a form of non-selective heading. Are you trying to reduce the size? This will only stimulate it to grow, and your attempts to reduce the size of the shrub will ultimately not work. Often, your attempts will create problems like water sprouts. Though you may prune in the winter and said shrub is staying nice and short, as soon as spring arrives, it will take off. The Plant Amnesty method called the grab and snip is much more effective. This means taking the longest stems and cutting them back into the interior of the shrub. Continue to do this until you get the shrub the size you like. Your pruning will last a lot longer and the shrub will retain its natural beauty.

Shearing is also high-maintenance, creates buildup of leaves and deadwood in the interior of your plant, and you will ultimately end up with an unhealthy plant. Remember, we are pruning for health and natural beauty.

Over-thinning. Too much of a good thing can result in unwanted results. Some examples are water sprouts, lion-tailing (removing too much of the internal structure), and over-skirting (which can make a tree top heavy and dangerous).

Final thoughts on pruning:

- Use good-quality, clean and sharp tools. All you need is a pair of clippers, loppers, and a folding handsaw. Sanitize your tools, especially in between species.

- Good pruning will make your job easier over time, not create more work for you, and will eventually lead to no pruning. A dream come true!

- To achieve the desired effect, pruning may take place over a year or two or three.

- Still unsure about pruning? Hire a licensed arborist or Certified Professional Pruner.

These are truly the basics, but will help you get started in the right direction. Ultimately, if we all planted the right plant in the right place, we wouldn't even need to prune. Here's to spring coming and all Mother Nature has to offer.

When Cell, Internet, and Landlines Go Silent

By Andy Valencia

We keep bottled water in case our faucet's suddenly dry. We have emergency rations in case the store's supply chain is interrupted. And then there's how we keep in touch, find out things, and buy things. Everything - phones, texting, email, apps - has converged on internet technology. When that "cyber event" happens, you should expect all of them to go out. Is there a "Plan B"?

Welcome to the world of amateur radio - "ham radio," with operators known as "hams." This radio service has a bunch of frequencies reserved to it; its operators can handle voice and data, and all of it keeps working no matter what happens to the internet. Like cell phones, it works over the air. Unlike cell, it doesn't depend on a corporation.

The smallest and cheapest way to operate on ham radio frequencies is with a hand-held unit - a "handie-talkie" - which is about the size of a cell phone. Hams can talk directly to each other at ranges up to a couple of miles. But they can also install a radio about the size of a paperback book in their car, mount an antenna on the roof, and then talk across an entire city.

Hams also have the equivalent of

a cell tower, known as a "repeater." Hams put a repeater device, along with its big antenna, on top of some suitably large building. Via the repeater, both hand-held and car-mounted radios are picked up by the repeater and retransmitted via that big antenna. The effect is that every ham on their handie-talkie or car-based radio can reach as far and wide as that repeater with its big antenna.

These repeaters aren't very expensive, nor difficult to install. Vashon itself has a repeater on Maury, another at Sunrise Ridge, and one more right near town. Island-wide communication is trivial, even for that hand-sized handie-talkie. During a major cell network outage, our fire department has a ham station in their Emergency Operations Center. It will activate and be staffed 24/7, letting hams carry word of critical situations directly into VIFR from anywhere on the Island.

Thanks to ham radio, we don't lose the ability to connect emergency services with islanders.

Some of the busiest hams have even put repeaters up on our local mountains, such as Tiger Mountain, Lyman Hill, and Capitol Peak. If communications are disrupted regionally, how does the Red Cross hear about what is needed in, say,

Tacoma? A ham in Seattle can easily talk to one in Tacoma by way of one of these repeaters, relaying public safety messages. ARES is the Amateur Radio Emergency Service, a group of hams dedicated to providing exactly this sort of help during emergencies.

What if the disruption is national?

Hams are also licensed to communicate on shortwave frequencies. These are lower frequencies, and thus require larger antennas, starting at something about the size of the flagpole at our post office - but they can be much larger. In exchange for the bigger equipment and antennas, hams are able to choose the right time and frequency, and communicate across the state, to neighboring states, across the nation, and even internationally. You won't watch Netflix over shortwave radio, but during an international disruption, it can handle "health and welfare" messages, which will let you check on loved ones who are thousands of miles away.

City, state, national, and international communications will remain possible during a cyber event. Many hams also keep batteries and generators so their equipment can stay on the air during power interruptions, and repeaters are also almost always installed with backup power. A world that is ever more complicated and interconnected is inherently ever more fragile. Ham radio will keep working even when

everything else lies in ruin.

Ham radio is mostly just a fun hobby, and yet it lets you develop skills that can suddenly be lifesavers for yourself or your community. It is a licensed service, which means you have to pass a federal test and get a license before you go on the air. The training is available for free online, and the tests are easy, and either cheap or free to take. Your local ham club will have people who are authorized to administer such tests. On Vashon, the club's web site is w7vmi.org

We hope to run into you on the air! 73's de Andy Valencia K6AJV. What's a "73 de"? The web version of this article has a pointer to a "hamspeak" resource.



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The Third Option – Ownership of the Commons

By March Twisdale

Prior to moving to Vashon, my family helped develop a Cohousing Community in West Seattle. We lived there for four years. During that time, I fell in love with our Community Work Parties. Twice a year, all 23 families would set aside a weekend to work together to improve, beautify, and maintain our commons. Those days of camaraderie and shared effort felt great to me because I tend to feel a personal sense of ownership (read: responsibility) for the commons.

All of which brings us to the Trash Can Trial on Vashon Island. Thanks to the good folks at the Vashon Chamber, the Vashon-Maury Community Council, and King County Local Services, we’ve seen what happens when we attempt to pass off our responsibility to others, and it’s less than ideal.

Now, let’s add in Island values around energy conservation, personal responsibility, and ecological awareness. What do we teach our children? Clean up after yourself, right? Well, it’s our trash. We have a transfer station a mere five-minute drive away from Vashon uptown, open five days a week, with virtually no line. Island disposal also means no ferry fee, no ferry wait, and no excessive consumption of carbon-producing fuel by a county truck having to commute all the way here, to a distant city transfer station, and back to King County Local Services.

Maybe we could do a better job ourselves? Let’s pause and consider our demographics. On an island with 5,500 people over the age of 55, we have at least 3,000 solidly retired, still vibrant and healthy Islanders. Given this, how do we inspire and motivate people to return to what was normative in the past? Before “Big Government” said, we’ll do it all for you, people compared their towns and villages to others, resulting in a natural form of community competition that was later inculcated into government school sporting culture. Why do we cheer for the Pirates, and wish for them to win? It’s a form of “community pride,” or to put it another way, an extension of our “ownership of the commons.”

However, to be honest, trash is different. It’s dirty. Maybe stinky. Often, it’s on the ground. And if it’s a bag of someone else’s trash, it’s mysterious. And not in a good way. There is stigma attached to trash, which is why “trashy” is used to describe people in a negative way. Yet, we touch trash every day. When we take that last sip of our morning coffee and toss the cup (it becomes trash). When we crumple up a wrapper and drop it in a bin (it becomes trash). Not to mention, we all have close friends and family who empty trash at their place of work every day.

Here’s the challenge, Vashon Islanders. Can we live up to our bumper stickers and be “weird

enough” to manage our own town’s trash on our own? Even better, can we make it fun? Yes, I think we can.

Imagine a monthly “Town Clean Up Party,” maybe on the morning of the last Friday of the month, so town is sparkly clean for First Friday? For two hours in the morning, anyone and everyone is invited to show up and form teams that will go out and clean specific sections of town. Bags, gloves, and pick-up tools could be provided by The Chamber of Commerce, along with drip coffee and simple snacks by a different “host” business each month. Of course, many clean-up crews will decide to order fancier drinks or grab lunch while in town, so on the whole, it’ll be a win for Island businesses.

These teams would be looking for all the trash that gets tossed under bushes, blows into corners, and otherwise shows up for unknown reasons. Friendly competition to see who comes in with the heaviest bag and other forms of “work party fun” will evolve naturally, and the stigma associated with bending down to pick up trash will be eliminated by a sense of camaraderie that normalizes the activity. What a great opportunity for families with homeschooled kids, high schoolers earning their community service hours, community-oriented senior citizens, and others to get together and experience the joys of a work party!

And, if we really want King County Local Services to help us out, then let’s ask for vouchers so we can dump our town trash for free at the Vashon Recycling and Transfer Station!



Illegal dumping in VCA trash can

It’s obvious that the can mounted in front of the Vashon Center for the Arts is worse than unnecessary. It remains empty except for the people who regularly dump their household garbage, old paint supplies, mechanical trash, toxic waste, and other inappropriate junk. See the online version of this article for images of inappropriate dumping at the VCA in just the month of February alone.

As for the cans in town, since our article came out, they’ve remained almost entirely empty. Whether this is due to extra vigilance in an effort to make the Trash Can Trial look good, or simply due to the absolute lack of need for them during the winter months, is anyone’s guess. I remain of the opinion that we do not need these trash cans during the non-tourist season, making them both a waste of tax dollars and a persistent invitation for people to engage in illegal dumping.

Have ideas? King County Department of Local Services wants to hear from us. Contact Bong Santo Domingo (bong.stodomingo@kingcounty.gov). You can also send your thoughts to the Vashon Loop (editor@vashonloop.com).

Gold, Bitcoin, Money, and Currency

Continued From Front Page

through taxes. This potential is where its incredible price growth comes from, and the prospect of a private, digital currency we can all transact with is appealing.

However, if there is a perfect money, it won’t be one that makes a tiny fraction of the population ultra-wealthy overnight, while leaving everyone else in poverty.

Gold is money. It is real. It is atomic number 79, and it will be here long after humanity has gone – or in a “Mad Max” dystopia. Bitcoin isn’t really a currency yet, but it was designed to become one that plays a major role in the empowerment of individual rights – and a utopian future. There is a reason gold was confiscated in our recent history. There is a reason that cryptocurrencies are facing heavy regulation, as well as being copied by world governments to achieve the exact opposite of Bitcoin’s aim. Because we can’t see the future clearly, we might be wise to hedge our bets.



Two Vaccine Injury Stories

By Daniel Hooker

I have been given permission to share two experiences of COVID vaccine injury. The stories are from an Islander and a former Islander who lived here many years.

Story 1: “A few months after the vaccines came out, I took the vaccine (Moderna) knowing I would soon be required to anyway (since I am a teacher). I was staying with my 90-year-old parents in the summer, so wanted to be cautious.”

This person had some issues after the first shot. “Several months after the vaccines, I manifested a heart murmur and my vision got blurry. It would take half a year or more to get appointments with experts like eye doctors and neurologists. Insurance would not cover the heart ultrasound my doctor ordered, saying it was ‘exploratory.’”

“I think my heart valves are not too bad, so I am not worrying about that, but the visual impairment has nearly ruined my life. Both eyes independently see three images (binocular polyopia – where headlights look like three-leaf clovers with overlapping leaflets – as if seeing several halos). No eye doctor has an explanation – my eyes are physically fine. Glasses do not fix it. The MRI did not show any issues that explained it (but it would not have been able to capture tiny alterations).

“Neither of the two eye doctors I spoke with admits to having heard of the vaccine impairing vision, though opticians (e.g., at Costco) say that they hear it all the time. The neurologist says, though, that it’s more common with long COVID patients. All sorts of sensory organs are affected (hearing, taste, touch, inner ear/balance etc.).

“One friend lost hearing in one ear and has restless leg syndrome-like feelings all over their body, which started right after the vaccine. Another friend’s bipolar medications got totally messed up after the Omicron booster, as well as severe heart issues that I am not aware were there before. I cannot ask more about it, as they died from the heart issues six months after the booster.”

Story 2: “To begin, I never had any wrist problems leading up to what happened after receiving my COVID vaccines. I got my first vaccine, which was a Pfizer, and within 30 to 45 minutes of receiving it, my left wrist started hurting and it just kept getting worse.

“Then I got my first booster, which also was Pfizer, and that sent my right wrist into pain. I went to the doctors here on-Island, and got a steroid shot to help with the pain, which gave me less than 24 hours of relief. I kept going back to see what could be done, and eventually got a referral for an ultrasound. The ultrasound showed a large amount of inflammation and bony calcifications on both wrists.

“That got me a referral to a hand surgeon. My options were to live with the pain or have surgery to cut the tendons, all while being told it was just a coincidence on timing with the vaccines. I managed to fix my tendon without surgery and have been without pain for a while. I have given up on the vaccines due to not wanting to deal with more pain.”

From Daniel:

I’m also interested in getting stories from people who have injuries from the COVID virus itself. If you’d like to confidentially share your story about either vaccine injury or long COVID, please contact me on Facebook messenger or phone me at (707) 771-1999.



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Myocarditis by the Numbers, Part 1

By Caitlin Rothermel

In May 2021, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention drafted, but did not publicly share, a national alert describing a link between COVID-19 vaccines and a heart disease called myocarditis. We know about this now because of documents obtained from a Freedom of Information Act request.

Described by the American Heart Association as “serious though rare,” it was estimated in 2014 that 14.4 per 100,000 people in the United States developed myocarditis each year – that’s the same as 1.6 people on our Island of about 11,000.

Myocarditis has become more common with the pandemic. In early 2020, it was first proposed that SARS-CoV-2 infection could lead to myocarditis, and by February 2021, United States physicians were seeing myocarditis cases following the mRNA injections – which had then been on the market for one month. The likely culprit is the spike protein – present on the SARS-CoV2 virus and in the injection, in a modified form. (As always, you can find source documents for this story if you visit us online at vashonloop.com.)

Myocarditis happens when the myocardium – the thick muscle tissue in the middle layer of the heart – becomes inflamed. Pericarditis is a related condition that affects the outer heart layer. Historically in the U.S., the most common cause of myocarditis has been an infectious disease, like a virus. The virus penetrates the heart muscle cells – the myocytes – where it spreads, replicates, and can ultimately kill cells. The immune system is also activated. Progressive myocarditis involves more serious responses, involving chronically inflamed myocytes and/or autoimmune myocyte destruction.

While myocarditis is uncommon, and although it can happen at any age, it has always been a

Health Matters

particular risk for younger people, particularly young men. It’s also one of the more common causes of sudden cardiovascular death in competitive athletes. In 2003 in Minnesota, sudden cardiovascular death was shown to occur in 1 in 200,000 high-school athletes.

Historically, myocarditis has also been caused by vaccines, including smallpox and influenza. And it is accepted medical knowledge that myocarditis can happen after mRNA injections. We were initially and repeatedly advised that injection-delivered spike protein stayed in the arm, but this is not correct. Long Covid research shows that the spike protein can enter circulation and remain there for months after injection, with technology able to distinguish whether the spike protein measured in the body is due to infection or injection.

Right now, we need better clarity on how often post-mRNA injection-related myocarditis occurs, and what this means for us and our young people. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control labels the condition as “rare.” Two recently published reviews estimate that cases are at 0.3 to 5.0 per 100,000, as seen in the ≤41 days following injection.

Already, with these numbers, we are in uncharted territory in terms of what’s considered an acceptable safety profile. Our threshold for risk was once much lower: In 1976, the Swine Flu vaccine was pulled from the U.S. market because of 1 additional case per 100,000 of Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a potentially serious neurologic disease.

When considering these myocarditis case rates of 0.3 to 5.0, it’s important to remember that this is an averaged risk for everyone – including people at very low risk. So, these numbers don’t address our primary, societal concern. The risk story changes a lot when you look at young men, especially after the second injection:

In an evaluation of four Nordic countries, 9 to

28 additional myocarditis cases were seen per 100,000 men (aged 16 to 24 years); case numbers in two national studies from Israel (also per 100,000 men) were 15.1 (16-19 years) and 5.5 to 18.4 (16-29 years). So, in twice-injected young men, the number of myocarditis events may be more than double what we have been told to expect for people overall.

Most recently, two new studies have received substantial national attention. Just published, the “99 million” Global COVID Vaccine Safety Project looked at how often 13 types of adverse events happened in the 42 days after injection. The study was thorough: It included 10 sites in 8 countries, and the sites did independent research to determine their local rates of myocarditis in the years before COVID – this made for a clear “before” and “after” story.

Of all events studied, myocarditis and pericarditis consistently had highest safety risk after the first and second mRNA injections. News sources have reported that this increased risk was “small” or “slight,” but in fact, this analysis found that myocarditis and pericarditis after injection are now happening 2 to 7 times more often than what was normal in the past. In this case, these data are for everyone, not just young men (this study didn’t report the numbers by patient age).

There is more to say, but too much to say about myocarditis to cover in one article. Next month, we will look at the second new myocarditis publication. It studied events reported to our national vaccine database tracking system and compared post-COVID numbers to historical patterns. We will also dive deeper into the evidence behind widely stated claims that the benefits of the injection “outweigh the risks,” and that myocarditis rates are actually higher following COVID infection.



Dandelion

By Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz

Dandelions (Taraxacum officinale) are considered a weed by many, but if you have them, rather than toss them in the compost when you pull them up, use them as free food!

Take them from clean yards or woods; they may accumulate a lot of exhaust and roadside gunk if you take them from a busy street. (This general principle should apply to all wild food harvesting.)

Dandelions are healthy for the earth and for people. They aerate and replete minerals in the soil, they supply essential micronutrients, and can help support natural detoxification mechanisms. They are in the aster family and originated in Europe and Asia, but now grow in temperate regions all over the world.

All parts of dandelion are edible, but certain parts are best for specific uses. The most commonly used parts are the leaf and root, but flowers are sometimes used in recipes. For maximum effect, dandelion is best used medicinally over longer periods of time. The leaves can be cooked or used in salads, or dried and used as tea. The roots can be oven-roasted or dried and used in tea; some people consider dandelion roots an acceptable substitute for coffee.

Try eating the greens in salads or sautéed, or roasting the roots for yourself. After digging up and washing the roots, chop them into half-inch pieces and roast them in the oven at 350 degrees for about 40 minutes until crispy. For tea, use a tablespoon of roasted root per cup of

boiling water.

As part of a comprehensive, whole-person treatment plan, dandelion can help with liver and hormonal health, edema, skin and digestive health, promoting healthy blood vessels, cholesterol levels, and immunity, as well as anti-inflammation and blood sugar stabilization. The root is good for beneficial gut bacteria. Caution should be used in people with gallstones, as dandelion can promote bile flow, which could potentially cause obstruction of the bile duct. People who are allergic to other flowers in the aster family should not use dandelion.

It is difficult to emphasize the extensive health benefits of dandelions in a short article. A comprehensive review of the benefits of Taraxacum officinale on human health was published in 2021 – it is a lengthy summary of the most current scientific studies. I encourage further learning and self-reliance in foraging and experimenting with dandelion yourself!

Additional reading

Di Napoli, A., Zucchetti, P. A comprehensive review of the benefits of Taraxacum officinale on human health. Bull Natl Res Cent 45, 110 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42269-021-00567-1>

Tilgner, S. (2009). Herbal medicine: From the heart of the Earth. Wise Acres.

Wood, M. (2008). The Earthwise Herbal: A Complete Guide to Old World Medicinal Plants. North Atlantic Books.

Breathe Through Your Nose

By Emilia Flor

Spring is the season of Air, so I am focusing on the sacred breath of Life.

Using my breath to reach stillness.

Disconnecting from the external world.

Disconnecting from my mental chatter.

Getting still. Being quiet. Going deep within. And listen, listening.

In the deepest moments of stillness and presence, it’s all there.

Peace, love, safety, and so much more.

We spend our entire lives looking for those things in external matters, only to one day realize, it’s been within the entire time.

Our opportunity is to go on an internal journey to return to wholeness from the inside out.

Breath through your nose!

Nose breathing is 22% more efficient.

Working muscles receive more oxygen

Your nervous system is balanced

It enhances lung function and improves nutrition and oxygen intake.

When we breathe through our nose, we release nitric oxide, which contributes to an anti-inflammatory environment in our bodies.

The nose is one of the first formations an embryo develops in the womb.

When we mouth-breathe, we change the amount of bacteria and the types of bacteria in our system, which can lead to other health issues.

Often, children who are struggling in school and who have allergies and other ailments are mouth-breathers. Complications of mouth breathing are found at every age. One complication, sleep apnea, predisposes someone to a range of diseases, from cardiovascular disease to cancer, and is associated with an 8-10 years’ shorter lifespan. Other contributors to mouth breathing are alcohol, nasal surgeries, deviated septum and other blockages, obesity, and pharmaceutical drugs.

Check to see if you breathe through your nose while sleeping. If you are a mouth breather, you should also check for sleep apnea. Products such as mouth tape or devices to widen the palate can help to encourage more nasal breathing. You can add years to your life expectancy and radically improve your quality of life.

Just sayin’...Breathe through your nose!



MINGLEMENT

ORGANIC MARKET EST. 1972

MINGLEMENT APOTHECA & ORGANIC GROCER

Est.1972

“Herbs, spices, teas and simple first foods are rooted in ancient systems of nourishment, healing and ritual. Each plant is unique to its bio region and peoples and their use, unique to each person”. eva

THE VASHON ISLAND COFFEE ROASTERIE

We use a time-honored rustic roasting style and have roots that stretch back to the origins of specialty coffee in the Pacific Northwest.
Simplicity perfected – The coffee fresh roasted.

19529 Vashon Hwy SW, Vashon, WA



Island Epicure – Interview at 99

Continued From Front Page

Marjorie: Oh, I probably did. Something like that. I probably read it somewhere. It gives your spirit a lift.

Suzanna: So, how long do you expect to stay around this world?

Marjorie: Oh, I should live to be over 100. I told my doctor that my father lived to be 105, so I expect to live a long time. She said, “You’ll make it!”

I always take a 4 o’clock nap. It is important to get enough sleep.

The recipe for the magic potion is available in a previous column of “The Island Epicure” in the Vashon Loop, but quickly: Put 2 sticks of cinnamon and 1 tsp to 1 tbsp whole cloves in half a saucepan of water; bring to a boil and simmer for awhile, until the color of tea.

Here is a gluten-free recipe for Quinoa Sour Cream Scones, for a good gluten-free vegetarian breakfast with plenty of protein (contains dairy)

Makes 8 large or 12 small squares. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Combine:

1½ cups quinoa flour

½ cup garbanzo flour or almond meal

½ tsp baking soda

½ tsp salt

2 tbsp coconut sugar

Work in:

½ cup soft butter

Beat:

1 egg

½ cup sour cream

2 tbsp honey

Stir liquids into dry mixture. Turn out onto a floured board or counter. Knead into a ball. Flatten or roll into a disk ½ inch thick. With floured knife, cut into wedges or squares. Place on a baking sheet.

Bake 12-15 minutes until golden brown and tests done (stick in a toothpick; if it comes out clean, it is done). Cool slightly on a rack. Serve with tea, hot milk, or coffee.

Note: This recipe is from “Wholegrain and Gluten Free, An Island Epicure Cookbook,” by Marjorie Watkins. The book is currently out of print, but a new edition is in the works.

Pickled Onions

By Craig Bailey,
“Fiddlehead Bistro,” Saranac Lake, NY

Ingredients

- 2 cloves garlic, halved
- 1 star anise
- ½ tsp anise seed
- 1 tsp coriander seed
- 1 tsp cumin seed
- 4 peppercorns
- 1 tsp mustard seed
- 1 very small piece of cinnamon stick
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 kefir lime leaves
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup salt*
- 1 cup rice vinegar
- 1 cup water
- About 1 qt red onion

* Diamond Crystal kosher; other salts may have higher salinity, so will need to use less.

Instructions

Slice onion (julienne) and put pieces in 1-quart jar.

Put spices, herbs, sugar, salt, and liquids in a pot. Bring to a simmer and cook for a few minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes. (You’ve basically made spiced tea.) Strain the liquid over the red onions.

Ready to eat in ½ hour.

You can add some ginger, if you go that way. Chiles can be fun. Ajwain seed gives a nice umami undertone.

Yields about a pint. Use them on tacos, and to accompany meat, salad, or cheese (especially blue cheese).



Llaughing Llamas Chronicles



By Daniel Hooker

Before crowbars were invented, crows used to drink at fresh streams and rivers!

~

Q. What do you call two crows fighting on a fence?

A. Attempted murder!

~

Our family name is Hooker, but it used to be Baker. For obvious reasons, we were into baking. But eventually we had to change our last name because we were in-bread.

One of us suggested we take our name from a Civil War general, because he was the most decorated general of the Civil War. It was another “doh” moment.

~

Humor helps us deal with the uncomfortableness of reality. It takes something that is uncomfortable and transmutes it. It helps us address the elephant in the room, or things that are political in our world. When we’re not laughing about it, we’re not digesting it. When we laugh about it, we start dissecting the truth internally, and creative thought can arise.

As a Cherokee native, I offer the following one-liner from Vaughn Eaglebear, a native stand-up comic:

An Indian can walk out of a bar sober – a salad bar!

~

I don’t know why we make such a big deal about cow’s milk being homogenized. After all, it’s pasture-ized before it even gets to us.



St John Vianney Parish
Vashon WA

Vashon's Catholic Church

Noon Mass Wed-Fri
Sat. 5:00PM, Sun. 9:30AM
<https://stjohnvianneyvashon.com/>

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

Vashon! Sign up for health insurance and fix problems!

Meet with Miguel from King County Public Health

1pm - 3pm,
at Vashon Library
(inside at the back)
Wednesday, March 20

This is for health insurance that will begin the following month. Miguel can also help with food stamps and ORCA Lift

Se habla español.

Wednesday not convenient?
Call or email Miguel Urquiza
206-477-6965
or 206-491-3761
miguel.urquiza@kingcounty.gov

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

Vashon-Maury Clothing Drive



Where: Vashon Food Bank

When: Wednesdays, 10AM–2PM

(except the first Wednesday of the month)

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

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

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

The Ladder

By Claudia Hollander-Lucas

I love how history can teach us – if only we’d remember it for current times – especially with rising tension around the upcoming presidential election, (re)surging wars on a global scale, and democracy under threat. This alphabet poem is in remembrance of the twentieth century when modernist art-invention, feminism, two world wars, a global depression and the Spanish Flu co-existed – new freedoms and dangers to threaten life as people once knew it.

This Ladder

~ a modernist abecadary for Gertrude and Alice during hard times

A
Book-ending of century wars, the
Catastrophes link, overlay invention – people
Do look up, check cellars the clever knots as
Each bird flies itself struck blind numbed see
Flocks gilt in lace cuffs rat-a-tat-tat the
Gas and honk overhead –
Have you not heard them ?
I
Joke not about pits, the masks to cement division
—
Keep politics in your own soup cellar! some say.
Listen.
Mmmm (the moon...)
N (nuanced)
Or not. Ezra Pound dined on Mussolini
Pasta, punctuated craft and the quickening
Quick –hide those guns! the brandy! the cheats!
Reason finds tender buttons wrote Stein, while her brother
Scarcely changed. Moved to Italy, scalded: warned:
Tell the judge you’re Perfectly Innocent
Under Any circumstance. Yours is a story of ubiquitous
Values. Capital un-well. poised under Construction. Here is
Where weeds turn edible –the Survivors connect (remembering)
X-actly. EX-act leeeeeeY.
You wake between counties of Loyalty, Love, Fame. No
Zebra stripes in cargo cars, the ones G and A cunningly avoid, here again:
A is for one (perfect) soldier his own Prime number
Brave. Alone. as moral a mind can be in a time of
Catastrophe that may bend him a traitor, a medal, or sentenced to
D – – – – or E – – – –

Claudia Hollander-Lucas

Gradually I came to realize that people will more readily swallow lies than truth, as if the taste of lies was homey, appetizing: a habit.

~ Martha Gellhorn



The moon awakes me
Now the skies are clear and blue
Morning smells of spring

The day awaits me
What tasks can I accomplish?
Do I care that much?

I have commitments
That I have not met, when will
I learn to say no?

"No" is a hard word
For me to say and let down
People who have needs

What about my needs?
When will what I need and want
Count in my mind too?

~ By Hilary Emmer



Southbound From Donbass

By Ivan Snowa
Translated by Marc J. Elzenbeck

I see you on the beach so healthy
with umbrella yellow and the sun
heating strong and rolling over
into my skin with pleasant panic.

You’re with the babies smiling
laughing but beckoning me back
from the waves where I’m drowning
I snap awake and grab the wheel.

Scraping the mile marker post
47 just north of Ogden I don’t
lose the trailer or kill anyone
all the way to Salt Lake City.

Have to stop and get some coffee
sip and think about old countries
until I meet a sweet young couple
who know Dostoevsky at my destination.

We talk about the great revivals
drink stinky beers and begin quoting
The Big Lebowski and news from Ukraine
writing down our numbers and change.

Come Chant!
Benedictine Evening Prayer
6-6:25 pm
St. John Vianney Catholic Church
1st, 3rd, and 5th Wednesdays
First Fridays

Mukai Launches Fifth Annual Haiku Festival And Contest

Mukai Farm & Garden’s fifth annual Haiku Festival will kick off on April 1, 2024. Each year, the event draws hundreds of haiku submissions from Vashon residents and poets from abroad. In 2023, Mukai received over 500 hundred haiku submissions from Vashon residents, as well as poets from 13 countries.

According to Leah Mann, Mukai Farm & Garden Executive Director, “The Haiku Festival is an expression of Mukai’s mission, to celebrate the contributions Japanese Americans have made for over 100 years to Vashon’s economy and community.”

Haiku submissions will be accepted over a two-week period, closing on April 15. Winners will be announced at the Festival Finale on April 28th.

Visitors to the Festival Finale will hear famed poets Shin Yu Pi and Tom Pruiksma read from their work. Ms. Pi is best known for her award-winning podcast “Ten Thousand Things” on NPR. Mr. Pruiksma, a Vashon resident and teacher, poet, and author, recently published a translation of a classical Tamil masterpiece on ethics, power, and love.

Haiku is an ancient style of Japanese poetry, structured into three lines with the pattern of 5-7-5 syllables. Haiku categories are:

Heritage Award: Most eloquent portrayal of the history or some other aspect of the Mukai Farm & Garden

Nature: Most elegant and poignant depiction of some aspect of nature.

Social Justice Award: Shedding unique insight on social equity

The Young Poet Awards: Best haiku for children (grades K-6), and young adult (grades 7-12)

According to Kay Longhi, Festival Organizer: “So many people enjoy strolling the garden to read the haiku each spring and summer, but the large number of submittals has become overwhelming. We are asking people to limit themselves to just one entry each this year so we can better display everyone’s creative work.”

Find more details and the online haiku submission form at mukaifarmandgarden.org. Donations are gratefully accepted.

News You May Have Missed

Get paid to not go to college
Tucker Carlson interviewed Putin
No More Bargains
These and more at:
vashonloop.com/missed

Benedictine Morning Prayer from the Mundelein Psalter



Monday, Wednesday, Friday
6:30 - 7:00 am
Burton Community Church

Aries (March 20-April 19)

This is a big time in your life—perhaps one of the most significant in many years. Do you feel it yet? You will by the time the Sun arrives in your birth sign on the 19th, and the April 8 total solar eclipse in your sign comes into focus. And this is no ordinary eclipse: it’s conjunct Chiron, which has been provoking changes going back to 2018. Planets in Pisces before then may act as a kind of diversion, lulling you into a dreamy state. Don’t fall for it; you want to be standing at the helm of your existence from this moment forward. Eclipses have three main properties. One is that there is an acceleration of events. Second is that there is a karmic or fated quality (which may or may not be true, but it’s there). Third is that you will seem to reach a point of no return. You can prepare for these things now by reducing your commitments, and lightening your load generally. Claim yourself for who you are, using your actual name, city, state and zip code. Practice the truth that you have nothing to hide.

Taurus (April 19-May 20)

You know that new and different things are coming, though their scale depends on how you think of yourself. Your self-perception is the mediating factor of what is possible. You struggle with this sometimes, in a way that is not readily apparent to others, even those close to you. It’s way too easy for you to decide your worth or estimate your potential on the basis of what others think. Yet other people—your friends included—are not the world’s best method of evaluating your potential. People tend to be either cynical or overly idealistic; and many are jealous. Your inner relationship is the only thing that can actually teach you who you are. You must, however, be willing to learn, and to let go of old self-concepts that held you back. Your “public image” cannot be a factor in living your life your way. It’s nothing more than a trap, and you would be deceiving yourself if you believed that anyone really cared anyway.

Gemini (May 20-June 21)

Success requires focus, discipline and effort. Older people know that; younger people may think that billions of dollars are randomly delivered to people’s doorsteps. Then they find out that this thing between them and what they want is: focus, discipline and effort. You have the advantage of those very things being easily available to you now. You may feel like you have to sacrifice leisure or pleasure. If you do, it would be one kind for another. There is tremendous pleasure possible in living with purpose, and devoting your energy to what you know must happen. So, theme one of your chart this month is taking action. The second is recognizing the powerful example you set by the actions that you take. The two are closely related, since a great deal of the value of action is its teaching role. This is no time to be taciturn or to conceal your perceptions. Please, speak up.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

One theme of the moment is understanding the power of belief. You want to be the master rather than the slave in this relationship. Belief is a psychic force that gives momentum to ideas. Invest it in valid concepts and you get a constructive result. Invest in what’s deceptive and you can find yourself trapped in a world that seems not of your own creation. Over the next few weeks, notice when you’re acting



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



on anything other than a documented fact. You’ll have help making these discernments. As you peel back the layers, some things will make you happy (such as when a belief helped you transcend a limit) and others will make you angry (such as when a belief placed a limit in your path). There is such a thing as truth, and for you, this orientation matters. Truth tends to be steady and unwavering, rather than redefining itself every day. Think of it as a direction in which you are pulled rather than an object or a set of facts; a disciplined orientation of the mind; and the constant quest for understanding. That will guide you and feed you.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

The garden of worldly chaos is a comfortable resting place for many people—though it’s not for you. But it works for so many because it absolves them of the need to observe, to reason, and to relate to others in a coherent way. If nothing is true, why do all that work? It’s much easier to disappear into a haze of ambiguity. Except not for you. Your astrology describes you looking at life through a polarized lens, and seeing contrasts clearly. One of those is the contrast between what you believe and what everyone else seems to believe. This is not about the content of the belief—rather, the real information is from the psychic posture of the belief. Keep looking for something deeper. Pay attention to the people who want to connect with one another because that is the thing to do. Get yourself to gatherings where financial transactions (tickets, souvenirs, etc.) are not the main property of the event. Notice the magnetism that is drawing some individuals out of the psychic chaos, and toward a state of cooperation.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

The fog continues to clear, if you want to see clearly. Part of that clearing will come in the form of slowing down the movie, and even examining single frames. The direction of your life trajectory is toward your individuality: the separate, private person that you have been at other times. This is a necessary response to being so overwhelmed for so long by everything coming at you all at once. Developments over the coming few months will guide your awareness inwardly and take hold of what is yours, and only yours. Yet this is not about being alone, or lonely—rather, what’s changing are the terms on which you connect to others. You are not, inherently, a tribal being. But you have, and need, an alternative, and that’s about stoking and maintaining contact with your core being. From there, you’ll connect to others who are doing something similar. One way to spot such people is that they often like to read books. They will be present in (physical) community spaces, but may not say much. Another clue is people who embrace making decisions rather than avoiding them.

Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

Much depends on your concept of where power meets responsibility. There is a mystery involved, and that centers on the matter of what it means “to be important.” Why might someone respect you, or not? How do you handle yourself when you’re in the presence of people you consider more powerful or influential than you are? Two themes

emerge from your chart over the next month or so. One of them is privilege, which has become a nasty word—and the concept is misunderstood. At its roots, this idea is about some authority or favor granted to an individual or a group. I suggest making an inventory of what actual privileges you have, how you got them, and what you do with them (which matters most of all). Then, there is the matter of service. The Pisces angle of your chart is thriving right now, and this is calling you into the humble servitude of taking on tasks for their own sake. What is not often recognized is that to offer your service is itself a privilege—one that few people take advantage of.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

Constraint and limitation have a way of helping the creative process. If you have a canvas, you must work within its confines to create a painting. If you want to complete a project, you might only have so much money—and you discover that your creativity can compensate for most of what you seem to be lacking. There is also potentially a scenario in a romantic situation where a limit of some kind has been reached, though where the problem can be resolved by a series of honest conversations. The thing to look for are ungrounded expectations, and a 1970s encounter-style discussion of completing the sentence, “I expect....” could be revealing and helpful. Be aware that events of the spring are going to proceed quickly, and there will be little time or energy for needless burdens or unresolved emotional tensions. You are on a mission that you cannot refuse, because it so intimately involves your growth and the claiming of your life. There will be room for others, though there must also be room for you and your most cherished goals.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

You might feel like you’re denying someone something by turning down the lights and making a series of homely evenings with your cat, your dog or a good book. What used to be a dependable, sanctified inner temple is something many younger people have no concept of and many older ones have forgotten. Gather your strength and your personal resources. The next few months are going to come with an enormous amount of emotional and creative throughput. You simply must have your inner bearings in order to fully enjoy and experience the series of events that begins with the March 10 Full Moon, followed by a total eclipse, followed by a fantastic conjunction involving your patron planet Jupiter and high-energy Uranus. So if you have time to retreat and withdraw a little, by all means take it. Creativity proceeds from within, out to the world. Therefore, refresh your inner resources, and take the time to ask yourself the questions you have not had time for in recent years. Please don’t rush the answers. They will come in their own time.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

Pisces time (through March 19) is usually one of the best seasons of the year for you. Yours is secretly a water sign (your pet goat has a big fin like a mermaid). Your social side emerges and you might want to do something like have some friends over. While the social world is a little weird right now,

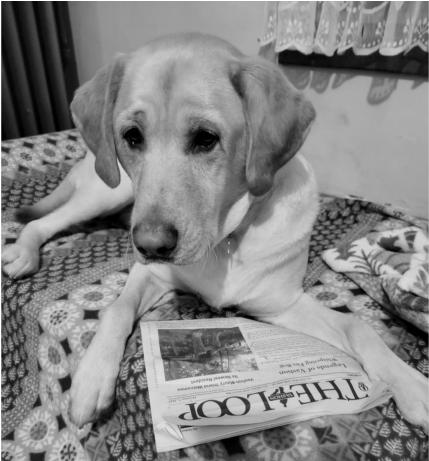
you are a point of attraction, and can help people forget the prevailing chilly hostility of the world. Even if you don’t know for sure that it’s the thing to do, please give getting together with others, in your home, a try. One of the boldest themes of the currently-unfolding season is grounding in your sense of place. Who you are and where you are merge into one concept the next couple of months, and you have a discovery to make. This is a spiritual message about self-actualization: your home is your artwork. To take care of your inner space is not mere solipsism. You have many important roles to serve, and you’re aware of the dirty deal going down on the planet in our times. Feel good, be strong, and be available.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

You have ideas about who you are, and some of them are coming on strong, as if you’re discovering yourself for the first time. This could be big, though the weak spot in self-discovery is generally the matter of whether you translate principles you hold into the choices you make. ‘Who you are’ has a lot to do with ‘what you think you are’, and this is expressed through your actions. Major personal revelations and awakenings must match with ‘by their works you shall know them’. In a way unlike the usual descriptions of fixed sign Aquarius, you need a flexible doctrine: the ability to adapt to your circumstances. You are the one who must moderate between your principles and your actions, and determine whether you’re being truthful with yourself. Most people find it so difficult that sooner or later, they betray their professed principles in some radical way. This is a sign that what must be a wholly conscious process of evaluation has gone numb or zoned out.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Place your emphasis on your business and professional goals with greater gusto than ever. Saturn is blessing your sign, and is in grand form this month. This is exactly the support that will help you muster the discipline to meet your goals. Much of this involves the use of time. It’s your birthday season, but the supportive aspects that are approaching will never pass this way again. These are in your solar chart (my articles and especially STARCAST will cover them in more detail than I can here) and they describe the qualities and opportunities for a whole year. Get a running start now, and commit to yourself by acting on what matters to you the most. It’ll be helpful if you set up your projects in advance. Break large tasks down into smaller ones, and get them ready. Most of all, focus on clear communication with partners and collaborators. Make sure you know what you’re talking about, and what they are talking about.



We read to know
we are not alone.
~ C.S. Lewis