

Time to Underground Our Lines?

PSE's Planned "Blackouts" in Wildfire Season Will Shut Off Our Water

By Jenny Bell

Have you heard? Our utility company, Puget Sound Energy, is planning community-wide "PSPS" (Public Safety Power Shutoffs) or "blackouts" that PSE will use on Island "During high-risk wildfire conditions ... shutting off power lines to help prevent wildfires from starting."

These outages may last several days. PSE advises residents to mark their accounts for vital electrical medical equipment but "Life support status" is no guarantee of delivery/restoration priority. Our water supply is mostly electrically driven.

Undergrounding power lines almost eliminates wildfire risk. According to Pacific Gas & Electric in California, there is a "99% reduction in ignition risk at locations with lines undergrounded, [making it] one of the most effective ways to reduce wildfire risk at the lowest long-term cost to customers." I expect a power company that filed for bankruptcy protection after its aging equipment was blamed for series of fires would have great focus on costs, safety, and reliability.

Undergrounding came to my attention recently when PSE started easement acquisition/ eminent domain actions on my street, and I started researching. A KC/PSE 2019 Franchise Agreement requires PSE to plan to move all power poles and apparently clear all trees within 10 feet of the edge of the road, a safety measure to avoid off-road vehicle collisions with immovable objects.

KC says PSE has a choice to meet its "clear zone" requirements by easement acquisition, undergrounding lines, or asking for a variance. PSE chose to acquire easements, as discussed in my June



2024 article in The Loop. The generic easements give PSE exclusive rights to remove any trees/vegetation within the easement and the adjacent property if PSE felt they were a hazard.

With this plan, PSE will likely need to acquire thousands of easements across the Island. Property owners unwilling to enter into the easement agreement are subject to eminent domain. One

Island lawyer became concerned about the impact on private insurance and liability with poles on private property. With all the problems with PSE's approach, we naturally started to favor the undergrounding option.

It seems that Islanders are calling for PSE to conduct a feasibility study for our lines to be

Continued on Page 5

As Bob Dylan Said ...

By Dr. Steven Nourse

As Bob Dylan said, "Everybody has to serve someone." Regarding the Vashon Health Care District, it has to effectively serve both the healthcare clients it provides funding to and the taxpayers that pay its bills.

Several years ago, when healthcare on Vashon was in crisis, I was approached by two now-former VHCD Commissioners who were promoting the VHCD's creation. I was told emphatically that Vashon's healthcare was indeed in crisis, with two healthcare organizations leaving the Island and no longer providing services.

They were proposing a property tax to support creation of the VHCD to provide "primary care services." At that time, I asked specifically, "Are only primary care services the significant and main driver behind this proposal?" I was told, "Yes."

I have attended the last few VHCD meetings via Zoom, and as a result, have several serious concerns that our community and the VHCD need to address quickly. They are as follows:

1. Mission creep. The VHCD is expanding its mission far beyond what was originally proposed when we were in true crisis. Before we go

into unintended or unasked-for service areas, the current mission should be revisited, with a quality community evaluation conducted by professionals.

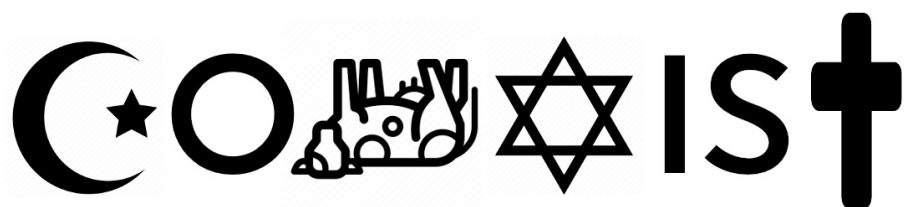
Since the time of crisis, and post-COVID, community opinions about the VHCD may be very different. Based on discussions with other Islanders, my experience is that opinions have changed drastically.

2. In looking at the proposed 2024 VHCD budget, and listening to VHCD meetings, there seems to be almost a sense of urgency - to my ears, the message was, we have the money (\$2 million annually), and we need to spend it, so let's throw it out and see what sticks!

The VHCD 2024 budget calls for \$1,387,000 for urgent care, behavioral health, outreach/health fair, and new programming. Without analysis, throwing money at a problem never works.

3. I am very concerned about any immediate entanglements with both the DOVE Project and Vashon Youth & Family Services. I don't intend to deny the need for behavioral counseling. The problem is, when asked, neither of these organizations had a clear concept of "expected

Continued on Page 2



CowExist III

By Marc J. Elzenbeck

*"All creatures great and small,
All things bright and beautiful;
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all."*

Sipping a second cup of coffee at around 10:00 a.m., the phone rang. The caller said, "So, your cow. She wrecked my truck." Stronger words may have been used. Bottom line, our girl really "liked" the rancher's truck, denting the front fenders and breaking out the grill.

Normally, you'd wonder how on earth that would be possible. Question motive, means, and opportunity, maybe presume your animal's innocence. Did the truck give its consent? Was it a case of entrapment? Was the suspension lifted? But I knew right away what had happened. Evasion was pointless. All I said was: "Yep. Is it an old white Ford?"


The cow in question, Leslie Lou "Minnie" Moo, a devious, double-

sized rescue Holstein I privately christened Cowzilla, had escaped again, only this time with her calf Nettie in tow. They went straight to the nearest bull in Paradise Valley, as if they looked up driving directions on their iPhones.

Farmer George kept a good-sized herd and agreed to let them stay for awhile. It was an extended spa visit for the cows, and a vacation for us. We basked in blessed quietude. Our diaphragms did not vibrate to cowntankerous and deep 100-decibel moos.

An hour after first arriving to our farm, Leslie had high-jumped a perfectly good fence. She aimed to reunite with her high school sweetheart, a handsome white Scottish Highland bull. Spooked by alarmed motorists on Cemetery Road, she took a fateful turn and fell down high-banked cliffs to the Colvos Passage. Shaken and scrappy, in the tricky rescue process, Leslie smashed a closed gate apart like a linebacker on a blind-side blitz. One of

Continued on Page 4

<h1>Headley Holistics, LLC</h1>	
Bringing You Holistic Solutions for Equines, Canines, and the People Who Love Them!	
 <p>Headley Holistics</p>	<p>17710 112th Ave. SW ♦ POB 868 Vashon Island, WA 98070 Hours: Thursday-Saturday, 9:00am-6:00pm www.headleyholistics.com Like us on Facebook and Instagram! @headleyholistics</p>
<p>Medicinal seed oils are gaining popularity for their many health benefits. Even with all the recent attention, many people still don't fully understand how powerful ancient super seeds really are.</p> <p>Black cumin seed (<i>Nigella sativa</i>) oil and seed press cake, for example, are useful for metabolic support, detoxification support, and immune system boosting. They are naturally calming and have powerful anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antifungal, and antiparasitic properties. Even the Prophet Muhammad consumed them and was the first to speak to the efficacy of black cumin seeds for many diseases and conditions, saying, "Use this black seed regularly, because it is a cure for every disease, except death."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Come see us if you want to learn more!</p>	

As Bob Dylan Said ...

Continued From Front Page

outcomes" or quantifiable expectations.

At the meeting, one of the VHCD commissioners kept asking about outcomes, and received only vague and nebulous responses like, a "great need" and an "oasis of service needs."

If you can't define it, you certainly will have no accurate accounting of value for anything done.

4. The VHCD is not a grants organization. This was not in the original plan that taxpayers were presented with and supported. The services these organizations are asking for are not sustainable without the VHCD and your taxpayer funding. Once you start paying, you might as well consider it an annual budget line item.

The surveys the VHCD ran for parents and students (no longer available online) seemed to address only the negative aspects of Vashon's behavioral counseling services. The results showed that the choir was singing to the choir, and was neither professional nor fair to the community at large. I also question how wide the range of responses were, demographically. These aspects alone can dramatically skew results to a predetermined and hoped-for result.

I can't see providing ongoing funding unless a professional, consistent, and quantitative system of evaluating outcomes is completed - before actual service money is provided. Otherwise, it will be only qualitative analysis, which is not good enough.

I speak from a standpoint of having a master's degree in social work and having done exactly this type of organizational research. I predict that the VHCD, one year later, with no evaluation, will start again at square one, having made no progress towards a quality solution.

If the VHCD is honest and wishes to maintain credibility with the Island, it has absolutely no business expanding its services into behavioral health, mobile health units, and other new programming. These are all components of a quality program that first need to be explained fully and transparently to the community of Vashon.

Unfortunately, the citizens of Vashon and Maury Island have been given the classic "bait and switch." We were promised one relatively simple goal - primary care - which has morphed into a wide range of, in my opinion, unsubstantiated, unasked for, unneeded, and already provided services. Simply said, we are not getting what was bargained for and what was agreed to.

I plan on continuing to attend VHCD meetings and I hope you will join me. They are held on the third Wednesday of the month, at the Presbyterian church in town, or you can Zoom in - you can find the address at vashonhealthcare.org.

When Dylan said, "You have got to serve somebody," he also meant you need to roll up your sleeves, be informed, and participate in the local politics that affect you and the community in which you live!

A question from Ellie:

"It's been on my mind ... the Vashon Loop is free to the community, and I just love The Loop ... How can I help support The Loop?"



From The Loop:

Thank you, Ellie! You can subscribe at our Substack (address below). You can also send donations to P.O. Box 2221, Vashon WA 98070.

If you'd like to write for The Loop, contact us at editor@vashonloop.com.

Subscribe at <https://vashonloop.substack.com>

Oneness Center Events

Every Monday in August, 5, 12, 19, and 26, please join our Spiritual Book Club at the Vashon Oneness Center, where we just celebrated our first year in operation in July.

We will meet from 5:00-6:00 p.m. on Mondays at the Vashon Methodist Church, to share "The Four Sacred Secrets for Love and Prosperity, A Guide to Living in a Beautiful State" by Preethaji and Krishnaji, available on Amazon.com.

For all ages, and all types of readers, by donation. Please feel free to contact Amy Huggins (amyhugs@icloud.com) if you would like more information.



Vashon Concerts in the Park 2024!

By Pete Welch

The Vashon Park District is excited to bring back Concerts in the Park this year in collaboration with Vashon Events. Join us every Thursday night in August from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM for a delightful evening of music.

Concerts in the Park is a family-friendly event series that gathers the community for free outdoor music performances. Held at Ober Park, conveniently located between the Vashon Public Library and the Vashon Park District, the park's grassy berms provide ideal amphitheater seating.

We invite you to bring a blanket or lawn chair to enjoy the concerts. However, you might find yourself on your feet as each concert features a different music genre that will have you dancing. Each week offers a new musical experience!

This year's lineup is as follows:

August 1st - Clinton Fearon (Roots Reggae)

August 8th - Incendio (Latin-based World fusion)

August 15th - Adrian & Meredith (Rogue-Folk/Americana)

August 22nd - The Jewel Tones (Motown)

August 29th - Trolls Cottage (World/Island Roots)

Opening each concert is the "New

Voices" program, which showcases emerging talent in the Vashon music scene. These solo performances start at 7:00 PM and feature "At Least A Dollar Coin" (Wyatt Bates & Jonah Cole), Matthew Rieger, Colette & Shawn Jones, Dianne Krouse & Rob Hotchkiss, and Natasha Popova.

The main act will begin at 7:30 PM, playing a 90-minute set. Sound equipment and lighting will be managed by Laird Gonter of Bandstand Music, with Martin Feveyear of Feveyear Master Mix handling the sound.

Enjoy live music against one of Vashon's most scenic outdoor settings. Bring the family, as there's plenty of grassy space to spread out your picnic blankets and soak in the music on a warm summer night. Please note that Ober Park has a no-dogs policy, and alcohol and smoking are not permitted.

The Concerts in the Park series is proudly presented by the Vashon Park District and curated by Vashon Events.

The Vashon Loop

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

Contributors: Eric Coppolino, Seán C. Malone, John Sweetman, Daniel Hooker, Marjorie Watkins, Michael Shook, March Twisdale, Anne Cotter Moses, Suzanna Leigh, Kathy Abascal, Stephen Buller, Alex Soriano, Ali Elsberry, Pete Welch, Jenny Bell, Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz, Diana Diaz, Dr. Steven Nourse, Cynthia Sadurni

Comments: editor@vashonloop.com
Placing ads: sales@vashonloop.com

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

<https://vashonloop.com/>
August 7, 2024

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

Loop Disclaimer

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

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.

Using Evil to Win Arguments

By Andy Valencia

In college, a friend of mine periodically ran a game called "Assassin." None of the players knew each other, and all were paired up: one target, one assassin. You were "assassinated" with a chalk mark, and the target could defend with chalk-filled small cloth bags. The rules favored the target once they spotted the assassin coming, and there were rules to make sure the game didn't disrupt classes and such.

I never played, but I knew people who did, and the changes to the target's behavior during the game were remarkable. They would never just leave a building, and would never leave it the same way twice. They were wide awake, always assessing their environment, looking for any new factor. A new face, vehicle, even a piece of tarp draped over a bicycle.

It was not any single behavior that changed, but rather the way they were intensely immersed in and aware of their environment. The best way to realize how you're mostly sleepwalking through life is to stand next to somebody who has every sense fully engaged. The assassin usually won if they got a "touch" early in the game. Otherwise, the target would realize the assassin's identity and take them out before they could get close enough to touch them.

The media is playing such a game against us now. They're moving in on us, trying to score "touches" of manipulation on the beliefs we hold in our heads. And just as in the Assassin game, once you start seeing them approaching, their job becomes difficult. You're now paying attention, and those attempted "touches" are no longer easy to score.

There are two basic ways to win an argument. You can make a compelling, logical, well-reasoned and factually supported set of statements. If somebody does you the courtesy of presenting such an argument, please do listen to it, even if you disagree with the conclusion.



We want more of such things; treat them with respect. The alternative is arguments based on dishonesty, misdirection, and manipulation. Recognizing dishonest forms of argument can warn you that you're being manipulated – not informed or convinced.

A very common form of dishonest argument is the "strawman," which starts by focusing on the foolish, incoherent thing the opponent supposedly said. It's then easy to show how your own argument is superior in every way. The catch, of course, is you misrepresent what the opponent said. You lie. An unwary listener comes away thinking they've seen a weak argument and its strong rebuttal. In reality, all they've seen is an argument against something that was never said. They've been fooled.

With any bitterly divided issue, look to each side to present its own case. Yes, this means you'll pay attention to the words of somebody with whom you perhaps currently disagree. Although you may never change your mind, it's eye-opening to see how often pundits on both sides of an issue will lie about what the other side says or wants. It's human nature to think one's own side is thoroughly good, but the tools of dishonesty are very tempting.

Another conveniently self-labeled form of argument is "debunking." The presenter of a "debunking" is telling you right in the title that they will not fairly represent an argument. Instead, they'll misrepresent or omit anything that weakens their argument, and overstate the strength

of their "facts" – some of which may be simple inventions, in order to create the illusion of an overwhelmingly strong argument.

A "debunking" presenter is, in a strange way, being honest. They're telling you that they will say whatever it takes to manipulate you into accepting their conclusion. I no longer read anything that sets out to "debunk" an issue. It's as if someone cleared their throat and said, "I am

substantial and unexpected annual income. Roughly speaking, there were two options for next steps – reduce the levy amount while backstopping savings for future primary care problems or maintain the levy and expand into areas identified by the VHCD as secondary priorities.

The VHCD decided to expand its services and to build its reserve fund. At the V-MCC meeting, Johnson focused on the VHCD's youth behavioral health initiative, a collaboration between the VHCD and several Island organizations.

This pilot initiative is approved for one year of \$268,000 in funding, with the potential for ongoing support. The money will be used to hire new staff: half-time counselors at both the elementary and high schools (to be managed by Vashon Youth and Family Services and DOVE), a social worker to provide case management and develop community needs assessments, and a part-time data specialist. These last two positions will be housed at the high school's Neighborcare Health clinic.

What's the Way To Talk to the VHCD?

If you have input for Vashon Health Care District, here's how to share it

By Caitlin Rothermel

In this issue of The Vashon Loop, Islander Dr. Steven Nourse gives his opinion on the Vashon Health Care District's new budgetary priorities. This article is an extended version of Steve's comments that were presented to the Vashon-Maury Community Council on June 20, 2024.

At that meeting (link available online), Tim Johnson, the Superintendent of the VHCD, gave an update on the organizations' plans for new programs, as well as guidance on how Island residents can communicate their interests to the VHCD.

The VHCD was established in 2019 with the mission of ensuring continuous operation of the Vashon primary care clinic. In the previous decade, primary care vendors couldn't maintain profitability here, and so didn't stay long. The VHCD's funding (about \$1.95 million per year, obtained from a property tax levy) was primarily used to provide an annual clinic subsidy.

But, as of 2023, the current clinic (SeaMar) no longer needed the subsidy, which gave the VHCD



Restore your body's flexibility, energy and comfort.

MELT and Stability workshops now enrolling.

Scan the code or call.



move better. feel better.

now about to lie to you." Tune them out.

In the next issue, I'll cover the final phase in the art of winning an argument. You've used good techniques, and possibly even evil ones. But you're not carrying the day! You are losing the argument, what's to be done? An honest person accepts the wins with the losses. A dishonest person has a range of nefarious techniques for driving such an argument off the rails.

may make sense, this should be put back to a vote of the people.

But that's not how it works. Islanders voted to establish the VHCD, but we don't get to vote on its priorities. The groups' five elected commissioners are responsible for any planned programming or levy resets. If you have something to share, you need to communicate with the commissioners.

The easiest way to do this is to attend VHCD business meetings on the third Wednesdays of the month at the Presbyterian Church from 7:00-9:00 p.m. (you can also attend by Zoom). All meetings have a public comment period, or you can contact

Tim Johnson at superintendent@vashonhealthcare.org to request discussion of a specific referendum item.

The commissioners also promise to start providing "office hours" again, in front of local supermarkets and coffee shops. Last, you can email VHCD commissioners directly.

I'll also add that, if community dissatisfaction persists, come late 2025, two commissioners' terms will be coming to a vote. Islanders have a range of views, and the leadership of our organizations should reflect this.

The Loop is grateful to Steve for his opinion article, and we invite other Loop readers to contact us (editor@vashonloop.com) with short articles summarizing their opinions on key Island issues.

Summer Gifts

By Michael Shook

As I write this, first spring and now summer have unfolded in a lovely manner. June was a delight, with some sunny days breaking up the deliciously cool and cloudy ones that were at times even a bit moist. The rhododendrons both on the Island and off seem to have bloomed particularly well.

I thought it might just be my observation (or imagination – and good luck?) that somehow I got everything right this year, and hit the jackpot on the weather as well, but other rhodie fans I've spoken with remarked upon the same phenomenon. Spring of last year was more than tolerable as well, in terms of rainfall, but the combination of frequent wet days and too much heat caused some blossom wilt on several favourite rhodies. Nothing like it this year. They came on wonderfully.

Apart from the excellent weather and bloom, June also presented me with an entirely unexpected gift, that of a dragonfly's company. I was sweeping off the patio on the south side of the house, and noticed a beautiful blue-eyed darner swooping about.

I said "howdy" to it, as it is my custom and pleasure to carry on conversations with the creatures and forms I share this place with (including, of course, the trees, rocks, dirt, sky, and water). One-sided though the talking at times might be, I appreciate that all are good listeners and don't appear to mind my rants, rambles, and repetition.

As to the dragonfly, to my surprise and delight, it landed on my shirtfront, just below my sternum. I remained still, while gazing upon it for some moments, afraid it would take flight before I could get my fill of its splendor. But it seemed quite content to rest where it was. "Well," I finally said,

Island Voices

"I have to get on with my sweeping. Adios, and take care."

I moved a little, thinking it would take off. Nothing doing. Gingerly, I put a finger under it, to shoo it away, but instead of taking flight, it climbed onto my finger, got a good grip, and settled down. I raised my finger up to eye level and looked carefully at the beast. I've never been so close to one, at least not one that was alive.

It was looking at me, too, which actually would have been impossible for it not to do, since dragonflies' bulbous frontal globular "eyes" have about 30,000 "facets" – simple, individual eyes – and they can see a full 360 degrees. Not surprisingly, most of their insect brainpower is devoted to processing what must be a staggering amount of visual information, taking in up to 200 images a second. For comparison, a human eye can take in a maximum of 60 images per second.

We looked at each other for several minutes. On this occasion, I felt it advisable not to speak. I've had butterflies land on me, petted bees, nearly been run over by a herd of elk, and been buzzed by hummingbirds. And once, when camped for three days in one place, an audacious chipmunk would regularly run up my back and sit atop my head, undeterred by my actions as I moved about the site. Perhaps he liked it as an observation post? But a dragonfly has never graced me so with its presence, and the momentous quality of the event moved even me to silence.

I swung my hand slowly this way and that, the better to look at the intricate patterns on its abdomen (the "tail"), the whole of the thing being quite stunning – huge blue eyes, translucent and broad wings, all of the body decorated with

striking displays of blue stripes and roughly square patterns, set off by a black and brown background.

I can't imagine what it was thinking. Perhaps I represented a different sort of moving, warm-blooded perch to rest upon. Or was it possible that the creature found me, in my human-ness, as interesting to look at as I found it to be? Doubtful. Maybe it was just tired, and I was the first thing handy. Whatever the case, both of us appeared reluctant to end the encounter.

At last, I walked slowly to the styrax tree at the edge of the patio, and held my finger near a leafy branch. The dragonfly clambered off me and onto a leaf. I backed away, still watching, and after another moment, it lifted off, hovered briefly, and zoomed away.

Such beauty in the world! It has never failed to move me, to throw me out of myself, and leave me both astonished and grateful. Here was what some might consider a lowly insect, or at least a common one – large as most insects go, but small in the scheme of other living things. Yet, it is a creature possessed of great beauty, as well as amazing physical attributes.

In addition to their visual abilities, which include seeing UV light, dragonflies can fly up to 35 mph, hover, go backwards, and fly upside down. Does their coloration, ecstatic in its blue-ness, aid in hunting? I can't see how. I suppose one might think it for mating, but the females are nearly identical.

Which causes me to wonder – is it possible that the forms on this earth, that the earth itself and all that is in it, on it, and around it, are beautiful simply for beauty's sake? I would like to think so. That has certainly been my experience, and my interpretation. Yes, there is the pure beauty inherent in the dragonfly's function, but that does not explain the other aspects of its splendor.

Is there a creator at work, besides evolution? And can anyone say that evolution either precludes or excludes God, or beauty, or both?

I don't suppose it really matters. It's enough to be a part of it, and enough to say, how delightful!

CowExist III

Continued From Front Page

its sharp edges caught her haunch as a blade, flaying deep and long.

Disoriented and drenched in bright red blood, things didn't look very good for Leslie. The Cow Rescue Posse mulled through several bad options. The torn gate had somehow not hit an artery in her thick shoulder, but it was hanging open, inoperable.

We considered the obvious: killing and eating her. Which might seem like a simple solution, but for a mammal weighing in at a ton and a half, it isn't. How long it would take to butcher, say, 20 deer?

More so, while I was led to expect a chaste, virginal Holstein, Leslie was pregnant on arrival. The first step was to wrangle her back into the pasture. But she had just jumped its four-foot high fence so easily the only trace was a tail-hair strand. We'd have to rope her in, then "beef up" the fence.

The patent for barbed wire was awarded in 1874 to Joseph Glidden, a widower in DeKalb County, Illinois. By vastly reducing the cost of traditional fencing, his invention sped up the settling of the West with livestock. Suddenly, ranchers could just sink shallow posts, string a few strands of wire across and go play banjo in the bunkhouse. When Glidden died aged 93 in 1906, he was one of the richest men in the Americas.

Barbed wire has a lot of pros, but one big con. It will seriously injure animals (or people) determined enough to pass through it, and the last thing we wanted was another gash. We upgraded the fencing with electric, attaching a sender box strong

enough to zap 40 miles of wire.

Leslie soon learned that her Olympic hurdling days were over, and grudgingly stayed put. In a few months she birthed a calf in a dense stand of stinging nettles. Hence, we called her "Nettie."

Things went well enough, but Leslie, being prone to powerful urges, was not about to retire. She spotted a weakness. The gate chain was hooked to a nail. She unhooked that chain with her tongue and used her head to lift the gate inwards, and it was off to Farmer George's, with Nettie. Life will out. Moo-tations will ensue. We were happy to let them do so, but as you might suspect, we were wrong yet again.

Farmer George's bull was a Dexter, bred for compactness. Whereas Leslie, well, she was a tall glass of water. By all accounts, and not for lack of trying, including climbing on rocks and stumps, their difference in stature disallowed mating mechanics. So, Leslie was even more frustrated than before.

Which leaves the truck. I knew what happened because she did much the same to my F150. On that tumble down the Colvos, Leslie detached her left retina. To her one good eye, an old white pickup looks like a big bull named Brad Pitt. One she greets with alarming enthusiasm.

Drive into the pasture to drop off a bale or pick up a tree branch, and you're faced with a Cow Torpedo. She'll jump in front of your truck, making pirouettes with her back hooves in the air, nudging the fenders and making dainty moos. And leave an old white pickup parked in her pasture? Especially if it's shiny, that's a temptation she just can't pass up.

Foster's Services

Licensed, 20+ years' experience in home care involving deep cleaning and organization services.




Specialize in biohazard (ie, pet mess, bathroom waste, roaches/rats [decomposition]).

Move-out and resale work; fine detail.

Contact Ethan, 206-513-4409





QUALITY PET PRODUCTS

206-463-2200

Pet boredom busters?

Yes, it's the latest trend in activity-based feeding. We now have a huge selection of lick-mats, slow feeders and interactive feeders.

Studies are showing these are also helpful tools for separation anxiety.

Come check them out!

17321 Vashon Hwy SW
Hours: Monday-Friday 9:30-6:30
Saturday 9-5, Sunday 12-5
pandorasboxpetproducts.com
Instagram: pandorasboxshopcat

Tales from the Sea to the Mountain

By Seán Malone and John Sweetman

When Seán and I talked about this story, the original intent was to reflect our adventures in sailing various boats. Things got out of hand in that Seán had his own darn good story to tell. His boat was a wooden rig ketch of indeterminate age powered by some vintage outboard and likely with much of the rigging being tarred hemp. The only navigational systems were a compass and old charts, plus a lead line for depth advice.

Can any of you imagine setting forth without GPS, a depth sounder, and a radio? Cotton sails, complicated lines, and all, and yet he managed to successfully navigate the San Juan passages, and later the complex Canadian islands. Listen to his story, and next month we will recount our repeat of the 1843 Wilkes survey of inner Quartermaster Harbor.

Tale from the sea: I looked over the stern of our 28-foot "gaff-rigged" ketch. They say that schools of dogfish follow a boat to bring bad luck. While I thought that they were waiting for scraps to be thrown off the stern, their dedication to life's needs doesn't deny their reputation for

bringing bad luck, which goes back 100,000 years or more.

There must have been a dozen dogfish. I was going to be very careful. The wind was coming up and we were south of San Juan Island, entering one of their famous riptides. Maggie and I shortened the sail. I got into my rain gear and started to go forward to retrieve the jib sail, while Maggie stood by the rudder to navigate us through the six- and eight-foot rips.

I was wrapped around the bowsprit as a wave crashed over the bow, and I was driven under the water. As the bow rose out of the wave, I grabbed a snaffle or two, releasing the sail from the guywire. The handrails secured to the top of the cabin gave enough support as another giant wave cascaded over the bow. I made it to the cockpit. We dropped the mainsail and motored up the east side of San Juan until we found Friday Harbor and anchored there.

Tale from the mountain: I was 18 years old and looking for a summer job when my father told me to call Jim Smith, his business associate. Jim had



a contract with the Forest Service to build a trail with a 24-inch tread between Hopkins Pass and the Canadian border, a five-mile section of the Pacific Crest Trail system, which stretches from the Mexican border to British Columbia. Jim offered me a job at \$3.50 per hour, which was good for an 18-year-old in the 1950s. I didn't tell Jim that I was packing two black eyes, a different story.

Mom drove me to the Pacific Crest Trail where it crosses the North Cascade highway at Ross Lake. It was a 16-mile hike to Hopkins Pass, the contractor's base camp. I had my pack, my fishing pole, and my 120-pound Labrador, Mike. I was halfway there when Charlie, the packer came up behind me with his pack-team of horses and offered me a ride to camp.

We had two Franks in camp,

Frank O'Brien was my tentmate and Frank Martin was the disgruntled old cook and powder monkey. We worked 6 days a week building trail. Every day, the hike to and from the trail became longer by 400 feet. The Forest Service employees, working in ten-man crews, were only expected to build 80 feet per day.

On Sunday, I went hiking and climbed Three Fools Peak. I took a stick of dynamite and a fused cap with me. When I got as far as I was going to go, I set off the stick of dynamite, signaling to the camp that I was returning. Upon returning, Frank, the mean old cook, told me that I hadn't climbed Three Fools Peak because I wasn't gone long enough. I got so mad that I split a stack of firewood five-feet high as the old cook laughed to himself in the background.

Time to Underground Our Lines?

Continued From Front Page

undergrounded. A petition has been started, and more than 800 Islanders have signed. To sign the petition and learn more, visit the Vashon-Maury Community Council PSE committee page at <https://www.v-mcc.org/pse-advisory-committee>.

There are many reasons why undergrounding on Vashon is a good idea, including almost eliminating power line wildfire ignition risk. No PSPS blackouts, no easements or eminent domain acquisitions. No Asplundh crews and tree specialists being paid for costly, ongoing maintenance. The aesthetics of whole trees are retained, with no overhead power lines. Our significant established trees are kept as an essential "decarbonization" strategy.

In the last month, PSE overhead wire upgrade projects on my street have seen the loss of at least five trees of significance. A letter from a fellow Islander to the V-MCC spoke of a PSE arborist's list and "many hundreds if not thousands of trees slated for removal."

I recently attended a KC Wildfire Strategy Roundtable. A number of important things stood out. I learned that more fire-resistant, larger trees (with a higher water content in both soil and tree) are much less flammable than the invasive species like Himalayan blackberry and Scotch broom that replace these trees when they are cut down.

I also learned that those I spoke with had not heard about PSPS. And they had not considered that turning off Vashon's electricity is turning off our water supply, which is almost exclusively supplied by electric pumps, leaving households unable to fight their own fires in high wildfire risk times.

I checked in with the Vashon fire station. The staff on duty had not heard of PSPS. Chief Vinci later told me he is concerned about the impact

of cutting off water supply and the Fire Department's ability to fight fires. I checked in with Water District 19. They were also not aware of PSPS.

For District 19, turning off the electricity leaves only one source of supply - a one-million-gallon gravity-fed tank that holds around 700,000 gallons in summer and pushes water at 200 gallons per minute ... which would provide water for only a very limited time to hydrants and households. District 19 has a priority fuel pass to run their generator, but this could be difficult with prolonged outages.

It seems a lot of decisions regarding important Island issues are being made without adequately informing or involving Islanders. The Director of KC Roads is attending the V-MCC meeting on August 15th at 7:00 p.m. at the Land Trust (you can also attend by Zoom). Please attend, and let KC know how important it is to acknowledge and address our unique Island needs.

Since there is an active and current plan triggered by KC to move our power poles, the time is ripe for us to consider undergrounding on our Island. It's great to see that the 2016 KC Roads Standards support undergrounding: "Underground installation of electric and telecommunication utilities will be strongly encouraged, particularly in urban development."

In addition to signing the petition, please consider emailing Dow Constantine (kcexec@kingcounty.gov) to express yourself. Yard signs are also available. Questions? Contact undergroundvashonmaury@proton.me.





THE MADRONA GROUP
John L. Scott
VASHON ISLAND REAL ESTATE

The Dog Days of Summer Are Upon Us!



**We live here, we work here,
we understand island real estate.
Give us a call for all your real estate needs.**

(206) 567-1600

Professional representation and expertise make the difference. Place your trust in our John L. Scott team.

vashonoffice.johnlscott.com • 13401 Vashon Highway SW

On the Rise – Fernhorn Bakery, Part 4

By Jane Valencia

Our conversation with Thomas Vroom and Jordan Ashley Beck of Fernhorn Bakery has ranged through many topics. From the origin of their bakery, to concerns regarding commodity wheat, to benefits and connection with the exciting prospects of Vashon grown-grains and possibilities for strengthening Island resilience, we return to where Fernhorn Bakery is now as a business, and how they hope to grow.

A surprise in growing the business has been around educating the public.

"When we first started the bakery," Jordan says, "we had this sense, we're making bread and bread feeds people, and that feels good. But as the business has grown, and especially including the Vashon Farmer's Market and having all the interface with our customers, we have education opportunities that I didn't anticipate being part of our business.

"We get to illuminate some of these areas that we as a society don't have a lot of common knowledge about, such as why people have so much gluten intolerance, or even that grains can be grown on this side of the Cascades or on the Island. There's a lot interesting new information that is so enjoyable to relate to people."

Sharing information extends to sharing relationships. In our discussion of Washington-grown wheat in Part 2 of this series, we mentioned Chimacum Grainery. At the Farmers Market, Fernhorn Bakery sells Chimacum Grainery's pancake mix, which is made with the Grainery's spelt flour.

"Customers have the opportunity to take home grain and make something with it," Jordan says. "They come back and tell me, 'That was amazing. It wasn't like Bisquick – this was incredible.' And now they

Island Resilience



have their own relationship with Chimacum. So these little relationships, these bits of information we're giving to people – that's been really exciting."

For Thomas and Jordan, fostering connections between customers and local growers and food producers, and having partnerships where their bread is sold in farm stands, benefits the Island in longer-term ways.

Jordan explains: "Maybe somebody stops because they see a sign for bread, but then they realize, now that I'm here for bread, what else is here? And they pick up vegetables. Or it's the other way around: People are stopping in their favorite farm stand, and then are introduced to Fernhorn, and now they're buying bread. There's a reciprocal nature to that, and also a continuous bolstering of our food economy that, hopefully, one day will be more than charming and be sustenance for more of us."

Fernhorn Bakery's expansion into a larger baking space opens possibilities.

"We're not totally sure what it's all going to look like," says Jordan. "We're looking forward to being able to support an Islander through employment, and being able to reach more markets we've been in contact with. We anticipate that we'll be able to meet Island demand within the year. And as long as Islanders keep liking bread, we'll keep making it."

"That is my favorite part of dropping off at Thriftway. It's always a surprise interaction where I'll be stocking the bread, and someone says, 'Oh, I just love your bread.' It's a little bit of feedback that let's us know we're doing it right. We're feeding people, and they are enthusiastic about the bread."

"Another aspect of our business involves reach," Thomas says. "Go to a grocery store, and the average price of anything is \$7. It's ridiculous that food is an item that, if you can afford it, you can eat well and have nutritious food, but if not, then you get to eat crap. That causes a whole list of health concerns. And that's hard."

Fernhorn Bakery contributes in several ways to providing bread to those who can't afford theirs. One is by way of their Solidarity Loaf. You can make a financial contribution on their website, which covers a loaf for someone in need. For the last couple years, Fernhorn has done an occasional big bake exclusively for the Vashon Food Bank, which is partly supported by Solidarity Loaves.

"Our other way of trying to make some of the loaves more accessible," says Jordan, "is with our 'Sandwich Loaf, under the Approachable Loaf Program through the WSU Breadlab, which aims to make more nutrient-dense bread available to more folks in a way that is approachable, familiar."

What is the Approachable Loaf Program? WSU has a specific set of guidelines and a mission to get people more familiar with this program: "The Approachable Loaf is tin-baked and sliced, contains no more than seven ingredients and no non-food. It is at least 60-100% whole wheat."

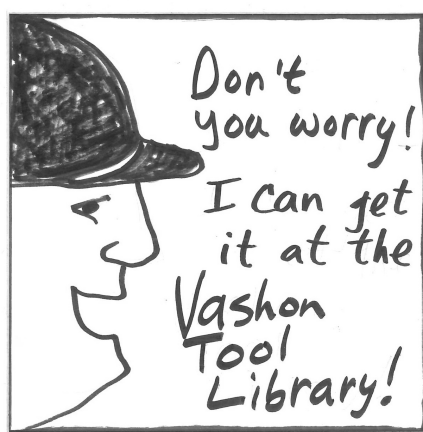
Jordan continues, "We wanted folks who aren't familiar with the robust flavor of whole grains, and the nutrient availability of naturally leavened breads, to have something that wasn't a far cry from what they were used to. And it tastes pretty fantastic too."

"It is on a sliding scale. You pay what you can, or if you can afford more, you can also subsidize somebody else's loaf. We're trying to do more of that. We hope that people have access to EBT from the state, but at least for the Farmer's Market and online sales, that's one way we're trying to address the inequity. We also accept VIGA Farm Bucks, which have been tremendously helpful for folks."

From a desire to provide delicious bread to their family, to growing a business that offers excellent breads, to expanding rings of community, Fernhorn Bakery's story is a quintessential Island tale. Interwoven with values of resilience, accessibility, and personal connection, is a commitment to using wholesome Washington-grown grains, and sharing their love of what they offer. We hope you have enjoyed this series.

For a list of where to purchase Fernhorn bread on-Island or to order loaves online, visit Fernhorn Bakery at <https://fernhornbakery.com>. You can also purchase Solidarity Loaves – gifts of bread for someone in need. See the website for details.

Visit Fernhorn Bakery on Saturdays at the VIGA Farmers Market.



They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.

~ Andy Warhol



Mud. Truck included at no extra charge.




**VASHON ISLAND
COMMUNITY CHURCH**

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

**Sunday Service at
10:00AM**

Melanie Farmer
Archetypal Astrologist



ayurvedicastrologer@gmail.com
206.370.4394

End the Fed

By Stephen Buller

The cry has fallen on deaf ears for many years, but as the Fed struggles on both sides of its “dual mandate” to promote maximum employment and stable prices, more and more Americans are becoming aware of our central bank, what its role is, and its impact on our daily lives.

It’s important to understand the power and influence the Fed has: 99.9% of the world’s population live in a country with a central bank, and their monetary policies are affected – if not dictated – by those of the Fed. For as long as the United States dollar remains the world reserve currency, that is unlikely to change.

The Fed is the United States’ third central bank, created when Congress approved, and then-President Woodrow Wilson signed into law, the Federal Reserve Act of 1913. The Fed operates under a board of directors whose seven members are nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

With a name like “the Fed,” you might assume this central bank is part of the federal government. It is not. It is a private institution, owned by its member banks and their owners. The board are federal employees, but other Fed employees are paid by their member banks, which have operating expenses like any organization. Member banks also receive dividend payments.

If anything is confusing yet ... yes, it is – I would argue intentionally so. Sometimes, specific language is required to describe complicated concepts. Sometimes, it is used to

obfuscate reality: “Liquidity” means cash, “quantitative easing” means currency creation, and “monetary policy” means manipulating the quantity of currency and interest rates.

I don’t cry “End the Fed” because I see poor management of a good system. I see mediocre management of an inherently broken and evil system. The Fed’s goal – to promote maximum employment and stable prices – sounds positive, but it results in a loss of purchasing power, malinvestment, and warped markets.

Every time the Fed creates new dollars to bail someone out, every other dollar loses value. This steals from everyone through the stealth tax of inflation, and discourages the basic human value of saving for the future. The result is out-of-control household, corporate, and government debt.

Every time the Fed bails out a company, mortgage, or treasury, they reward that entity with a purchase price nobody on the free market would have paid. This manipulates market prices and promotes moral hazard by incentivizing market participants to take extreme risk, knowing their gamble will either win big or be insured by the Fed. The result is higher stock, bond, and real estate prices relative to current wages, and widening wealth inequality.

A large society certainly needs systems to manage its currency, but as soon as a fiat currency is implemented, the true cost of products, services, investments, and even wars, is lost. When you introduce the human element – corruption and bias – the choosing of



VASHON ISLAND
BUSINESS ESSENTIALS

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

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

Need a Controller?

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

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

favorites is inevitable.

To bail out an organization with new currency is to make everyone pay for the failure of an entity whose prior profits were distributed only to its owners. We’re told this is a good idea because they were “too big to fail.”

Failure is a healthy part of the business cycle – and life – clearing unprofitable ventures and making way for smarter entrepreneurs, more efficient business models, and better visions for the future. Besides, if we don’t let them fail now, the problem will only get bigger.

The truth is, we live in a world of finite resources, and we need to intelligently allocate our capital, labor, and passion to be as prosperous as possible. How we view money can help: First, we need to go back to sound money, a gold standard, so that money once again serves its paramount role as a store of value. This allows individual merit and hard work to be saved for future use.

Second, we need to disallow our government from choosing favorites

through bailouts. National defense or other extreme situations may call for exceptions, but in general, the needs of a country are more easily found where its citizens freely choose to spend their hard-earned money rather than where its various “representatives” think it will get them reelected.

Because money is one side of almost every transaction, we should demand fair and sound money. This would elevate values such as planning and saving for the future, reducing income and wealth inequality, and allocating our cumulative resources for the greatest prosperity.

You can write your “representative,” of course. More importantly, educate yourself on the importance of sound money, and help educate others. The more people who understand how their wealth is stolen through these smoke and mirrors, the louder our collective “no” will be toward the next bailout.



Vashon is Rockin’ the Cash!

By March Twisdale

Dear Vashon Island Visitor, Tourist, and Summer People,

Roughly one year ago, I began a series of articles about “Bank Taxes.” This is what I call the predatory and increasingly ubiquitous money extraction technology also known as “transaction fees.”

Wherever you live, these are impacting you negatively and directly, but even worse, they are a “resource extraction tool” meant to siphon money out of your community. Forever.

I aim to reverse this trend on our Island, and hopefully in your communities, as well. It is my hope that you will accept my invitation to return home as an ambassador for greater fiscal resiliency by sharing these ideas (and my past articles) with your locally owned businesses. Trust me, they will thank you.

Here on Vashon, as we pass the one year mark of articles about this issue, local banks tell me there has been a very large, noticeable increase in cash moving through their ATMs. Local business owners report a shift in customer purchasing habits, with many instances of customers saying, “Oh wait, let me pay cash! I’ll dash over to the ATM and be right back.” Also, those businesses that are passing transaction fees back to their customers report great support, no complaints, and very often, a shift from plastic to cash, right then and there.

People care. People are concerned. People are listening and thinking and seeking a better option. Cash is that better option except in cases where the government and police are failing to protect local business owners from chronic theft and break-ins.

But does it really matter?

Yes! And the biggest reasons are “personal

privacy” and “the cost of doing business.” We, as consumers, have been groomed to believe that “the system” is inherently trustworthy and a true boon to society, or else it wouldn’t exist. This has resulted in most consumers simply accepting transaction fees as an inevitability, meaning we don’t track it, we don’t notice it, and if we do, we shrug. It’s just fifty cents, right?

Vashon Island has a mere 10,800 residents (according to the 2020 Census), yet our 10,800 residents are exporting well over \$160,000 a week in transaction fees. You can read the full breakdown in my September 2023 article: How to Avoid Being Nickel and Dimed.

Yes, I said “every week.” For 52 weeks out of the year, our community exports \$160,000 (or more) to distant big banks, and for what? For the sake of “convenience?” Convenience isn’t worth that much.

Here’s a question for every reader who lives elsewhere, “If your home community has 80,000 residents or 360,000 residents or 10 million residents, how much money are you all losing? Every single week?”

I encourage you to grab a calculator and do the math. Then, take this article home with you and start talking to the local business owners in your community. Their responses may surprise you, because small business owners tend to be hesitant to offend customers. But the truth is we care and

just need to be informed.

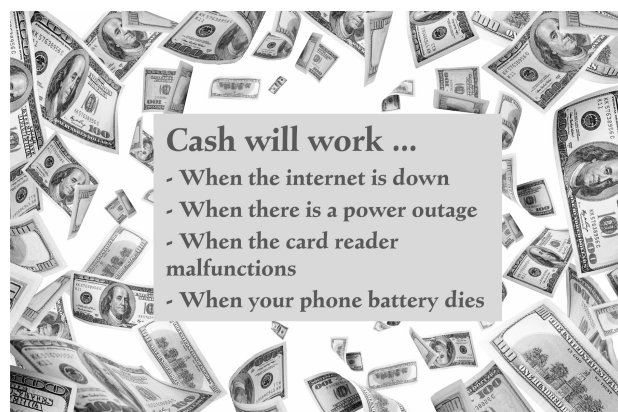
Here’s an example of how cash beats plastic hands down. In 2021, we lost our only assisted living facility for financial reasons. Their operating cost shortfall was \$4 million a year, and after covering that gap for four years, Transforming Age (their parent company) decided to close the doors on this much-needed facility that had served islanders for almost a century.

What is \$160,000 times 52 weeks? \$8,320,000. More than enough to have kept our Vashon Community Care facility up and running. And the other \$4,320,000? That would be more than enough to cover the start up and operating costs of a Community Center, which we don’t have but we might be able to afford if we were more careful with our resources.

The poorer members of our community (adults and children) have only one community space that’s warm and dry and FREE during the six months of cold, wet weather we experience each year. The Public Library. I raised kids on this Island. We need an indoor community space, and we could more easily fund one if we flipped our purchasing habit from primarily plastic to primarily cash. Which, we are in the process of doing!

As consumers, we have far more power than we might expect. The cost of doing business (transaction fees) has a direct impact on the costs of goods and services. We directly increase (or decrease) the overhead / cost of goods and services, with each purchase, depending on how we pay. So, let’s make the fiscally wise choice, and pay cash!

This year, I invite you to become a part of the solution. My articles are relatively brief, to the point, and clearly examine the issue from multiple angles. Please read them at Vashonloop.com and share them.



Time Together – Pressed Flowers



By Ali Elsberry

Editors Note: Last month several paragraphs of this article were inadvertently left off. We apologize for the error, and are reprinting the article in full.

Warm summer mornings are my absolute favorite; a quiet stillness in the air, the birds out singing messages to one another, and plants that seem to be so much more alive in those early hours.

I have walked around my yard noticing things in the morning that appear to speak with more personality than at other times of the day, and it always inspires me to find a way to capture that moment.

A few years ago, I found a wonderful little German-made leaf press; quite basic, but solidly built, and small and light enough to throw into a pocket and take out for a hike.

Over the years, I have acquired other, much larger leaf presses, but this one is still my favorite because it is just so simple and easy to take on an adventure.

If you do not have a leaf press, I highly recommend you get one; it affords endless craft possibilities and weaves you through an entire process with the plant. You can find them at many online and brick-and-mortar shops, but you can also make them without too much fuss (written and video tutorials are easy to come by online).

If making your own, try using heavier-weight paper than standard print paper so that your plants have more backing while drying. And of course, in a pinch, you can just place your pressings between book pages, which works just as well, as long as you remember they are in there ...

Once you have a plan in place for pressing, you can start collecting pretty much anything you want. The more solid the specimen, the harder it can be to work with once dried – woody stems and thick flower buds are not as versatile – but I have had

some amazing results with some of those things.

I really encourage you to try a wide variety of plants and flowers, to experiment and have fun. The whole process, from finding things in the wild, to the end result of a flattened and dried object, is so fascinating, and is very engaging for children. Mine have selected some plants and flowers I probably would not have picked myself, but they pressed out to the most beautiful and unique shapes and images, so definitely let everyone participate.

Two of our favorites for color and texture are dandelions and buttercups, they both press out beautifully!

You want to use the entire plant, freshly picked, and try to dry the whole thing – from the base of the stem to the top petal – but also break off those parts to dry individually, say for example choosing a uniquely shaped leaf or just a small part of the budding flower. You can refer to Jane Valencia's plant-friendly harvesting tips in previous articles in The Vashon Loop.

I have found it usually takes about a week in our house to achieve the desired dryness, but this can vary depending on moisture levels and time of the year (summer plants are going to require less external dry time than something you collect during the rainy fall), as well as the thickness of the paper inside your press (if you have just placed things in between book pages it will take longer for them to

dry than if you are using heavier-weight paper). Or, if you are like us and you fill the press with things you collected while on a trip, you might occasionally forget until a month later when you are ready to press a new set of plants. You would rather over dry than under, so it's not really a problem.

I cannot possibly list all of the things you can make with your pressings, but one of our favorites is to make bookmarks by laying the flowers, leaves, etcetera onto a piece of cardstock and laminating it. We have used them to decorate brown paper bags (the small kind that you would pack a lunch into) by gluing the pressing onto the outside and placing the gift inside; we make gift cards in the same way. We have created images of animals and landscape scenes by piecing together different pressings, both by themselves and in combination with colored pencil drawings.

The possibilities are endless, and



I hope this inspires you to see a few of them the next time that warm summer light rises up and calls attention to the plants in your own yard!



New Breastfeeding Support Group

By Dr. Leigh Siergievicz

Shortly after I finished my naturopathic degree at Bastyr, I took a 45-hour course to become a certified lactation educator to round out the women-focused practice I planned on starting, as well as for my personal future plans to have children. Two years later, I had my first child and learned first-hand what a formidable task breastfeeding really is.

It's incredible how much scrutiny women get for the way they feed their babies. Some use formula alone, others combine milk and formula, some women nurse from the breast exclusively, and still others pump exclusively and bottle feed, all for various reasons. A smaller number nurse for years, until the child stops on their own, which is called natural term weaning.

What is biologically normal and what is socially accepted are at odds. Many people are shocked to learn that most health organizations recommend a minimum of two years breastfeeding. Despite this recommendation, women are scrutinized for nursing for what some uninformed people think is too long. Others are criticized for stopping too early, but they may have wanted to continue if they had the necessary support.

I only discovered how common (and normal!) it is to nurse both a toddler and a new baby at the same time after I unexpectedly found myself doing it. My own breastfeeding journey has left me frequently surprised at where it can lead.

I know a lot of women travel off-Island for breastfeeding support, so I decided to start my own drop-in monthly support group. Women and their nursing of any age can come for support and community. I can help with the basic mechanics of nursing, discussing nutrition for moms, solid food introduction for babies, and supplements and medication safety while nursing.

Finally, this group is meant to build community for women, normalizing their own experience and giving the information needed to fact-check the busybodies in your life who need to mind their own business if your baby-feeding is working for your family.

Occasionally, some women or babies have very complex difficulties that are beyond my expertise. In that case, seeking out further help from an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) is helpful. They are the most comprehensively trained experts in


lactation.

I've been nursing more time than I ever expected I would, and although it is hard, it is incredibly special, and I want to support women to continue (or stop!) for whatever amount of time is best for them.

My monthly group (and my office) is at the Tree of Life Wellness Center, across the street from Subway. The next group is August 31, 11 am to 12:15. For future months, check their website at

vashonislandtreeoflife.com, under "Classes and Events," for the most up-to-date times. Cost is \$5-20, sliding scale.

Dr. Leigh Siergievicz is a naturopathic doctor practicing independently since 2018 working with women and children. She moved to Vashon in 2021 when her husband wanted to return to his home island to raise kids near his family. Visit her website: Betulanaturopathic.com.



BREATHING MANDALA

Do you feel stressed? Stuck? Anxious?

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

Contact Tracey Stover, 206-769-0040

Breathwork sessions, Access BAR's sessions
Coaching/energy sessions, Bemer rental
www.breathingmandala.com

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

We want to hear from you!



Contact us at
editor@vashonloop.com





selah

health

NAET® Allergy Elimination Treatments

Foods • Chemicals • Pets
Environmental Factors • And More

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

SelahHealthFreedom.com 720-289-1761



island chiropractic

health awareness center



Book Here
Expanded Hours!



-  253-922-0450
-  www.myislandchiro.com
-  17917 Vashon Hwy SW #7, Vashon, WA 98070
-  Open Tue, Wed & Fri 8:00am-4:00pm

Swollen Legs and Varicose Veins

By Kathy Abascal

Do your ankles sometimes swell? Do you have varicose veins or hemorrhoids? Personal questions, but important ones. Because, if you do, you could end up with chronic venous insufficiency, or CVI.

I am sure you know that the heart pumps blood out to the hands and feet. But have you ever wondered how the blood manages to get back to your heart? There are no pumps in your feet moving the blood back "uphill." Our circulation relies on the mechanical squeezing that comes from moving your calves and thighs. This, along with valves in the veins that (if working properly) prevent the blood from flowing back downwards as the muscles move it up the leg, squeeze by squeeze.

Unfortunately, this system malfunctions in many people. As the return circulation becomes sluggish, blood pools and proteins leak out of the capillaries. Water follows to dilute the protein, leading to swelling of the extremities. This is an inflammatory condition that slows the delivery of nutrients to, and the removal of waste products from, the swollen area.

No one really knows what causes CVI, but we do know that too few flavonoids in the diet, inflammatory foods (sugars, white flour, chemicals, bad fats, etc.), too much standing and sitting, combined with too little walking and exercise increase your chances of joining the 15 to 35% of Americans who suffer from CVI.

People with CVI usually end up with varicose veins, swelling of the ankles and legs, and leg pain. The swelling usually begins around the ankles and moves up the leg as the condition worsens. The legs feel heavy or achy; these symptoms often occur after the person has been standing for a while. If both the superficial and deep veins are involved,

Health Matters

intense leg cramping can occur. In the later stages of CVI, slow-healing leg and foot sores may appear.

Western medicine usually treats CVI with compression stockings. These stockings reduce the swelling, but most people find them so uncomfortable that they end up not wearing them. In Europe, some doctors prescribe herbs along with compression stockings. Most of these herbs are rich in interesting flavonoids that prevent capillary leakage. Their mechanisms of action vary, but all improve venous tone, venous blood flow, capillary permeability, and lymphatic drainage.

Ruscus aculeatus (butcher's broom) is one of my favorites for CVI. This prickly little shrub could easily be cultivated in many parts of the United States, but so far is not. At one time, butchers used its branches to clean meat stalls and keep flies at bay, which is how the plant ended up called butcher's broom.

Many studies show that butcher's broom improves the symptoms of CVI. In one, 82% of treating physicians found it to be excellent for CVI. The remaining 18% thought it was a good treatment! In addition to helping reduce lower leg swelling, butcher's broom is a good treatment for hemorrhoids, minor sprains and bruising, as well as PMS water retention. It is my first choice to prevent CVI from developing in clients showing symptoms of poor circulation in the lower legs.

Aesculus hippocastanum (horse chestnut) seed is another good herb for CVI. This medicine grows on a beautiful tree that has been planted in many places on the Island. While its fruits make good medicine, they are not edible. In Germany, horse chestnut is the most widely used botanical for venous edema; it helps with heaviness, nocturnal leg cramping, and leg itching and swelling. And,

believe it or not, a Western scientific study found it to be an effective and safe short-term treatment for CVI.

The only drawback to butcher's broom and horse chestnut is that they are far more useful in the early stages of CVI than later in the game.

Oligomeric proanthocyanidins, or OPCs, are also useful supplements in CVI. OPCs are found in the bark of some trees, in some seeds, and in most berries. OPCs are primarily known for their antioxidant activity, but they also quiet inflammation and prevent excessive platelet aggregation and capillary permeability.

The best-studied OPC is pycnogenol, which is extracted from a particular species of pine bark. Unlike butcher's broom and horse chestnut, it seems to work well, even in severe cases and advanced stages of CVI. At the other end of the spectrum (in those who have not developed any signs of CVI), OPCs may also help prevent clotting during airplane flights. The initial studies, though small, look good, so I think it makes sense to take some pycnogenol a few days before, during, and a few days after a flight - to help your circulatory system cope with the pressure changes that come with flying.

Almost all berries contain OPCs, although they are not identical to pine's pycnogenol. Still, they are very good for your veins and capillaries. All fruits and vegetables have flavonoids that strengthen the circulatory system. I suspect you know where this is heading. If you have, or are likely to get, CVI you should eat as many colorful vegetables and berries as you possibly can. You should walk often and avoid sitting or standing still for long periods of time. Finally, you might want to add butcher's broom and/or horse chestnuts to help protect and repair your capillaries and veins, and maybe add some pycnogenol if your veins have been troubled for some time.



Pratipaksha Bhavana



By Diana Diaz

Pins and needles, needles and pins, a happy man is a man that grins.

You know how we get those physical signs of stress and anxiety? We might feel tired or have random aches and pains that we can't really pinpoint? We stretch, we breathe, and we feel rejuvenated right afterwards. But after a few days, the same aches and pains are back, and sometimes accompanied by new ones.

One reason is because stress shows up in the body, but starts in the mind, and if we don't address it in our mind, our bodies will keep tensing until we do something about it.

I know - "stress" is a catch-all word. Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. It's a feeling, and feelings tend to be very personal. So the little things that stress you out can be as individual as you are.

I tend to be an obsessive thinker. I can remember times when obsessive thinking distracted me from work and studies, movies, and conversations, and I even told myself, "Hey, you're sabotaging your own fun!" But then I'd go back to obsessing.

And the stuff I obsess over is often ridiculous. Like, "I let that 40% off coupon expire!" And that spirals into, "See ya shoulda set an alarm to use it," or "I can't believe I forgot!" I can ruin my whole

day.

Enter Sutra 2.33: When disturbed by negative thoughts, opposite, positive ones should be thought of. This is Pratipaksha Bhavana.

As it turns out, it is impossible to hold two thoughts in your head at once. That's right. You may think you're multitasking, but in fact, you are rapidly switching focus from one thought to another.

So when I catch myself obsessing, I'll deliberately think of something pleasant, or something I actually accomplished that day, and I'll repeat that to myself instead.

This week, when I was upset that I didn't get to save on those expensive Ghirardelli chips for my cookies, I replaced it with the thought that I successfully baked gluten-free cookies that didn't crumble or suck.

Sometimes it works like a charm right away, and sometimes it takes some effort to replace the aggravating thought ... something like - wasted coupon - cookies! - wasted coupon - those Ghirardelli chips in the cookie are delicious!

I can do this all day, so I try to amp up the pleasant thinking a little. I thought about the cookies I did make and how many people enjoyed them, then how good they tasted, and guess what? That's so much more fun than obsessing over the coupon, and they're gonna' send me another one in a couple of days anyway.

I definitely feel emotionally better the more I practice. But I hadn't expected that, when I think about lighter things, I don't feel achy or heavy. I literally feel lighter.

And you can test it out for yourself - if you tell a story about something, your body punctuates those emotions. Watch yourself or someone else tell a story about something that makes them happy, and see how their body moves with the energy of that emotion. Also watch as the body reacts when speaking about something unpleasant or upsetting.

And it's definitely a practice, as is all of Yoga.

Diana Diaz is a friend of Vashon and an advanced certified yoga teacher (RYT500) specializing in Yoga for Stress Management, Sound Healing, and Yogic Philosophy.



Dr. Cori Bodily-Goodmansen

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

**VASHON
CHIROPRACTIC**

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



St John Vianney Parish
Vashon WA

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



Get more Vashon Loop online!

Read our back issues at vashonloop.com

MINGLEMENT

ORGANIC MARKET EST. 1972



Island Epicure – Cold Meals for Hot Days

By Marj Watkins with Suzanna Leigh

This summer is predicted to be the hottest ever! Who wants to cook when the temperature is soaring?

When she lived in the desert, Suzanna learned to do her cooking in the morning before the heat set in. So, roast a chicken in the early morning and use the meat in a chicken salad in the evening.

This classic chicken salad, often served as a zakuska (a substantial Russian hors d'oeuvre item) specialty, isn't usually made with chicken, but traditionally with cold cooked game and vegetables. It was created by Olivier, Czar Nicholas II's French chef, and named by the Czar in his honor.

The ingredients vary, but generally they are a rich medley combined with a flavorful sauce and garnished ornately. In the Caucasus, the salad is a restaurant specialty and served for luncheon in some city homes.

Chicken Salad

- 1 diced cup of cold cooked white meat of chicken
- 3 medium potatoes, boiled, peeled, and diced
- 1 cup cold green peas

6 scallions, sliced, with some green tops

½ cup mayonnaise, preferably homemade (we like the "Joy of Cooking" blender recipe)

About ½ cup sour cream (optional)

2 tbsp drained capers

1 tbsp snipped fresh dill

Salt and pepper to taste

Garnishes: Pitted black olives, tomato wedges, hard-cooked eggs

In a medium bowl, combine the chicken, potatoes, peas, and scallions. In a small bowl, mix the sour cream, mayonnaise, capers, and dill. Add to the chicken. Season with salt and pepper. Mix well. refrigerate, covered, for 4 hours, up to 8 hours. Serve shaped as a mound or pyramid on a plate or in a bowl, covered with the garnishes.

You can also serve this with Alora's salad.

Alora's Salad

Cut into pieces:

Cantaloupe

Cucumber

Strawberries

Dress with lemon juice, honey, mint, and basil



Get Island Eyes on Your Business

- A great advertising value
- Runs all month
- Put your business in front of the Island
- This ad costs only \$36!

Contact us at sales@vashonloop.com



This Could Be Your Ad!

Benedictine Morning Prayer from the Mundelein Psalter



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

Come Chant!
Benedictine Morning Prayer
6:30-7:00 am
Burton Community Church
Every Monday, Wednesday, Friday
and
Evening Prayer
6:00-6:30 pm
St. John Vianney Catholic Church
1st, 3rd, and 5th Wednesdays
First Fridays



Classic Flan (With a Twist)

By Cynthia Sadurni

There are many versions of this classic dessert. Custard came to the new world via the Spanish Conquest and then transformed into the sweet, caramel-rich dessert we know today in the Americas.

I have heard often that this dessert is finicky and difficult. Nothing could be further from the truth. With a little magic extra ingredient (enter cream cheese), you can achieve a delicious dessert with a creamy and smooth texture. One word of caution – be careful when handling the hot caramel.

I learned this method of making flan from a magazine in Mexico. I've been using it for a long time with great results. It is my hope that you will enjoy it as much as I!

Classic Flan (With a Twist)

Instructions and Ingredients

You will need a deep turkey pan filled one-third of the way with water to use as the bain-marie. This needs to preheat at the same time as the oven. Just place it inside. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

For the caramel:

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp water

In a small pot, mix the sugar and the water. It is important *not to stir* from this moment on. Place on medium-high heat until you see the sugar begin to bubble. Once this happens, bring the heat to low and wait until the mixture is melted and turns a light amber color. Watch it like a hawk, as it goes from yummy caramel to burnt sugar pretty fast.

Making sure you handle the pot carefully, pour the liquid into an 8 by 8-inch baking pan (I always use a baking pan made of tempered glass, but that is optional). Coat the bottom and the sides of the baking pan with the liquid.

Or, you can use individual ramekins and pour a bit of mixture in each one, making sure the caramel coats the bottom. You have to work fast, as it sets quickly. Once done, set it aside for now, to let it cool.

For the custard:

- 6 whole fresh eggs
- 1 can condensed milk
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 or 2 tbsp good vanilla
- 4 oz cream cheese

Place all in a blender and blend until smooth. It's OK for it to have bubbles. They will go away once it cooks. Pour over the baking pan with the caramel. Cover with aluminum foil and carefully place inside the bain-marie.

Bake for about 45 minutes, then carefully check the center with a toothpick. It should be firm, but still have a light wiggle. If not yet set, leave in 15 more minutes, and check again. Repeat until done.

Take out of the oven and let it sit on a cooling rack. Once it's lukewarm, place in the refrigerator and cool completely. It's better to prepare this overnight, as the caramel will dissolve and mix a bit with the custard.



ANU RAJA'S HEALTHY KITCHEN
Fresh made, grab and go!
Vegan, gluten-free meals
Authentic Nepali cuisine

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

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

Vashon! Do you have a favorite recipe you'd like to see published in The Loop?

Share it with us at editor@vashonloop.com

Friends of Mukai



Studio Ghibli Festival at Vashon Theatre

This month:
Princess Mononoke
Tues, August 20th, 7pm



August in Collioure

By Marc J. Elzenbeck

It's true that when you travel
you're never free of Woody Allen.
Every sidewalk artist knows him
and four score more sketchable actors
who'll ambush you from here to Thailand
icons of the monoculture from which we come.

Such harbingers. It reminds me how the prophets
said the ends of earth express a single sum.
Some foretell of molten glass and crystal seas,
the rest are happy with brimstone and great heat;
I would agree, but their visions only seem to me
like the airports in which we find our selves undone.

Asphalt this might all become, but in Provence with Caitlin,
finally on vacation, the prophets may all kindly
pilgrimage to celebrate St. Vincent. We're staying
in Les Templiers, much older than our country,
near an inconvenient border in a forgotten city.
Its fortresses decay in ever more strategic ways.

The hotel claims to have two thousand paintings
by fauvists who wintered with Picasso and Braque.
Painted fast for drinks and dinners, traded on the spot
to the famous fish soups of Rene and Pauline Pous.
I don't believe two thousand, but Pauline was a beauty,
Matisse did her justice in the hallways and the rooms.

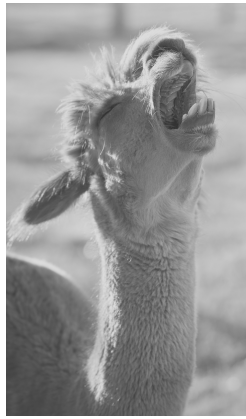
O'Brian the Author chose wisely. Machado the Poet
presaged refugees who have not forgotten. In morning
above preserved alleyways we'll wake to each other
two or even three unhurried times. We'll throw open creaking
bleached-blue shutters to admit a southern sun, and ascendant
diesel fumes and fresh baguettes will sit down to breakfast.

They'll bring guilt and disinfectants. Listen, you prophets,
this is no Disneyland. Many are the hidden hands that plied
genocides and silenced honest speakers. The hilltop castle
floating picturesque at night on nothingness, it was bewitched
and much besieged. Real heads have hung and rolled on down
right where we dance to 'Ghost Riders' on the shore.

Here were the heretics who exported their most sacred
acts of apostasy to Britain. Here is where we learned
the first words for cold and hot, and can still feed
state-subsidized circus goats tobacco and old enemies.
They asked for more. Here is that terrain your forebears
fled from and never stopped to tell the children why.

We had our first fight. These miles take long to drive.
There will be a town named for a dead pig at Carcassone,
and past Cahors, another for a beloved embraceor.
Yet tonight there was a gentle man, deaf and mute,
peddling lighters in the cafe outdoors; he left a note
explaining those predicaments in his language at our table.
We bought it for two Euros in the absence of America.

It's curved like an Algerian dagger, a shiny cerulean blue:
when we try it yet again at 3AM there shoot out two
jets of honestly dangerous flame, one for each cigarette
in the addicted couple that we've become. They illuminate
the unframed paintings and hiss like dying Cathars, splaying
out in the welcoming angles of some great Horned One.



Laughing Llamas Chronicles

By Daniel Hooker

Q. You want to know what the longest word in the English language is?

A. Smiles! The first and the last letter are a mile apart.

~

Q. What do you call a retired cowboy who is too crazy to go out on the trail anymore?

A. De-ranged!

~

If a priest gets defrocked, shouldn't a bad electrician get called delighted?

~

I entered ten times in a contest to see which would win, but not one time in ten did.

~

When I got a new dog, I got a new leash on life.

Island poetry in these pages

How about yours?



Submit your poems to
The Vashon Loop!

Write to: vashonloop-poetry@janevalencia.com



Vashon! Sign up for health insurance and fix problems!

¡Regístrate para un seguro médico y solucione problemas!



Meet with Miguel from King County Public Health

12 p.m. – 3 p.m.,
at Vashon Library
(inside at the back)

Saturday, August 17
Wednesday, Sept 18

Se habla español

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

This is for health insurance that will start the following month

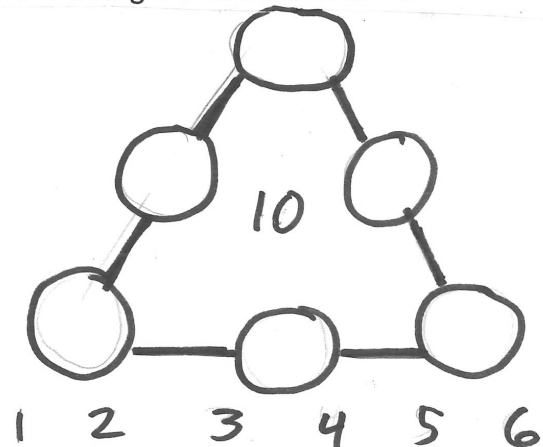
You can also apply for food stamps and the ORCA Lift reduced fare program

Math Puzzle

By Anne Cotter Moses

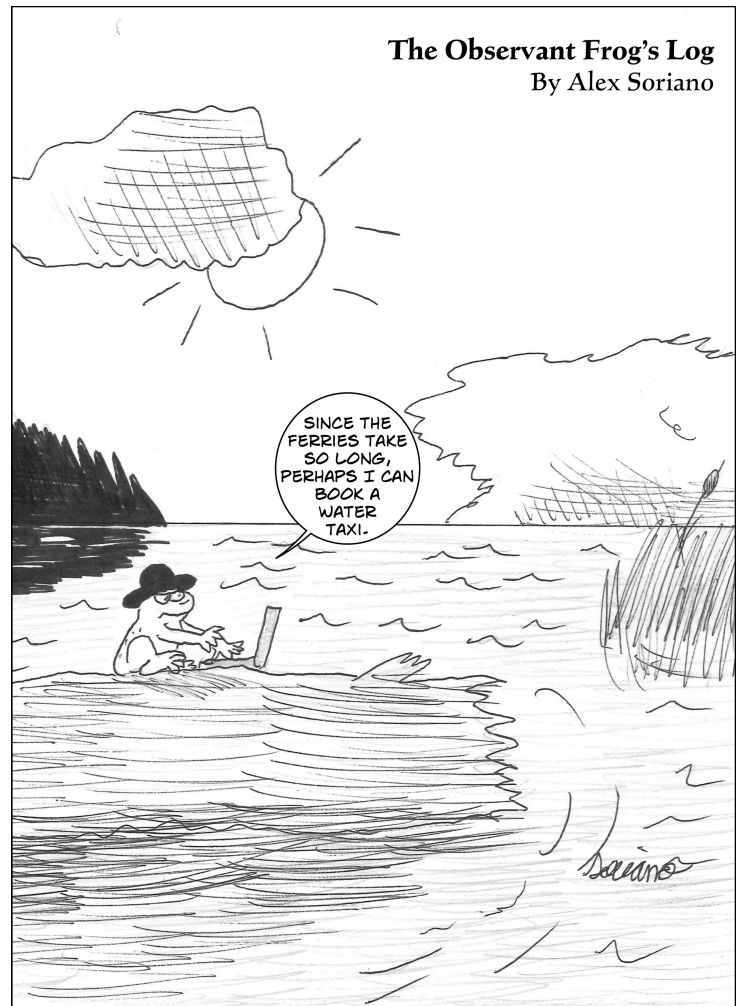
Magic Triangle

Put the numbers 1 to 6 in the circles, using each number once. Each side of the triangle should add to 10.



The Observant Frog's Log

By Alex Soriano



Top-quality lawn, tree, and landscape care

Beautifying Vashon properties for 25 years.



Efficient, thorough, skilled, and trustworthy.

Contact Randall Snowden, 206-578-2614

News You May Have Missed

The problem with Wifi based security

Maryland EV schoolbuses

A dead bear cub in Central Park

These and more at:
vashonloop.com/missed

Can't stop drinking and want help?



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Online Meetings: SeattleAA.org

AA Phone: 206-587-2838

Local Vashon Contact: 206-849-1980

Aries (March 20-April 19)

A combination of factors is offering you one of the most social and creative times of the year. I suggest you do all the playing and exploring that you can, and learn how to make these things a priority. Truly appreciate the subtle things in life, and give yourself room to experiment. One year from now you're going to be living under very different influences, arranged around a high priority on growth and personal responsibility. These may represent a total transformation of your self-concept and life circumstances—if handled well, for the better. At the moment, you're under little pressure to be or become anything other than who you are. Yet you have plenty of room to explore your possibilities, to make friends and to experiment with business and creative projects. Play with seeing and feeling what is possible, and then trying it out. Develop your game—well before the 2025 astrological Olympics.

Taurus (April 19-May 20)

You may be in one of those restless moments where it seems like the whole world is stirring inside you. Your chart looks like you may be worried but know there is nothing to be concerned about; you may be feeling deep desire but are unsure what you want. You could be feeling like something is missing, though you're not sure what it is. You could just as easily align with your inner drive and channel all that energy—it would take no time. All you have to do is step out of your own way and admit what you want, and recognize how much you have to offer. Note that having is not for its own sake, but for the purpose of sharing, extending and increasing. And if you are in possession of some truth about yourself, recognizing your nature and living out loud will help you feel like you're living with purpose—the rarest spiritual quality of our times. As for your means of personal expression: gentle, slow and methodical are the way.

Gemini (May 20-June 21)

The message of the forthcoming Mercury retrograde (Aug. 5-Aug. 28) is to get your home in order, then get your mind in order. The two are related, and the order of operations is logical. Start with little clumps of wires near your television or monitor or router, sort them carefully, dust and wipe them off, and move on feeling better. Then move onto stacks of paper, or even one of them. Do your filing. Organize and back up your disk drives but do not make any permanent changes (such as deletions); save that for September. It's difficult for you to feel good, think clearly, or be creative in any form of domestic chaos. Make note of interpersonal situations that arise over the next few weeks, with the intent of evaluating whether they are healthy for you. Assess the nature and origin of communication breakdowns. Note how you may contribute to these situations; it will be fairly easy to see—if you're looking.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Transform any concerns you may have about money directly into business ideas, or a plan to be more visible and accessible. Retrieve pre-existing plans you may have set aside, dust them off and consider their potential value. Use any anxiety you may experience and transform it



Planet Waves

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



immediately into some form of creative action—such as working on your business plan, or some form of establishing and developing your value. Your sign has Leo on its money house—the sign of gold. Always remember that. Note that for the past few weeks, important planetary indicators suggest that you are more vulnerable to a kind of free-floating anxiety, and that at times it may be exaggerated. The issue with this kind of fear is that it can graft onto nearly anything, and make it seem like that thing is the source, rather than a kind of projection. This same astrology can stoke your creative imagination, though it may feel edgy. Yet if you work that edge, you will see where you can push some boundaries and go beyond limits that are purely mental.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

The Sun, the Leo luminary, has entered your sign as of a few days ago, and this is serving as a reminder of all that you desire and want to accomplish. But first, take a moment and thank yourself for your devoted efforts of the past year, which have taken you a long way from where you were a year before that. You now have the new influence of Pluto in your opposite sign to drive you. Such can manifest many ways, from challenges to group pressure to public visibility. As Pluto makes its way through early Aquarius over the next year or so, you will find yourself living in a different world than you ever have. Some factors that have been present for a long time will be removed; others will manifest; and you will continue to go through a series of transformations that bring out deeper and more authentic expressions of who you are and what you are capable of.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

How much can you take for granted? Make a list of everything of real value and consider carefully whether it's a sure thing. See if you can determine exactly what the guarantee is, who made it, and how you're entitled to collect. I realize this describes features in transactional relationships, though that is what our personal affairs usually become. Often people serve the role of someone who can be held to account, who owes you something, or who may have taken something from you in the past. None of this has anything to do with love, respect or affection. If you want those experiences, then a different approach will be necessary. It's fair to ask why anyone who is in your life is there.

Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

The way you learn what is true is you find out—personally and directly. You do this by entering your life situations with your mind open, ready to converse with the people you meet. You can take steps to gain experience by going somewhere, rather than just seeing a video about it. You can guide yourself toward the unfamiliar and stay there a while. To know a place, you need to spend some time there—and you may get a clear idea about where you simply must go from events and developments this month. Do not forget. Do not put it on your bucket list. Determine when and how to get

there, and then go, making as few plans as possible. Travel alone or with one other person—not a group.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

The Sun has entered your fellow fixed sign Leo, which is a stabilizing force in your chart. Leo inspires you to reach upward, and to aspire to do great or even greater things. You want steady, lasting, durable accomplishments. You want to provide heat and light for the world around you. Therefore, set the example you would see others follow. Think of the Sun holding all the other planets in orbit. At the moment, Vesta is also in Leo, and this is a factor that describes someone or something that defines space. Homes are best designed around the kitchen or the hearth; then everything finds its purpose and location around it. This serves your purposes many ways—including putting you in a position to observe. This central function puts you in a position to work with others, make decisions and offers you something all-important: a sense of immediate purpose. And you get to have as much fun as anyone else.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

You have reached a point in your growth and maturity where it's appropriate to ask the big question of what you're really doing on Earth. That so many people squander their purpose and their potential is not proof of reincarnation; it's evidence of confusion. This life is not about getting it right the next time. You have accepted the mission of living with purpose today, now, in this experience of life. Yet to enter this territory requires you to confront difficult questions, many of which have their roots in the distant past. It's ridiculous that people are dragging XXX around the unresolved conflicts with their parents even into their 60s and 70s. Yet the answer is not to avoid them. It's as though you've reached a final test of whose values will guide your existence—those of your ancestors, or you, making your decisions today. To stand in your ultimate truth, stand in your reality today, and ask yourself what you would change if you could; what you would create for yourself, if you could.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

Pay special attention to your health this month, by which I mean your general state of wellbeing. You may feel like you've got superpowers, and that is true—to an extent. The way the Capricorn solar chart is set up, most matters of health and wellness come back to your mental state. So take care of your mind, much of which means taking care of your body. Be careful of wanting to accomplish everything all at once—Mars is very active for you right now, providing more motivation than you can handle. You may not realize it, but you're carrying a lot of responsibility right now, and your quality of life depends on your ability to handle it deftly. Much of it is invisible, or out of sight. However, an urgent matter may slip into your awareness at any time. Therefore, be careful what you take on. Make a point of leaving extra bandwidth (time, money, energy, physical space,

mental space) so that you have room to process any unexpected developments.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

You may have to do some detective work this month to find out what partners are thinking, and where they are coming from emotionally. Part of that can involve asking them about their inner situation, though I suspect you will only get a partially-formed response. So you might want to inquire at a series of intervals, and contrast the responses without calling out any inconsistency you hear. If you try to play 'gotcha', you may win mentally, but you will lose emotionally. You must be observant, and listen between the lines. There is another matter to consider, which is the nature of how you perceive your original commitment to someone, and theirs to you. It's likely that you have different concepts of what this commitment is, and what it means. I wish these things were easier to discuss. They would be, if people were more assured that their food supply, home or companionship were not threatened by the fickle whims of the ego. Therefore, in ways real and symbolic, be reassuring of your presence, and open-minded about the needs and desires of the other.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

People are unlikely to live up to your expectations this month, so it will be better not to have any. And invitations or seeming openings into intimate relating would best be taken with healthy skepticism and a wait-and-see approach. The fact that someone may seem to have a high standard is not a promise or an offer. It's not necessarily a sign of integrity. Therefore, stay in good standing with yourself, and recognize your own needs, intentions and desires. And at the same time, you have a lot to offer. However, your own emotional situation is already complicated, and there are many factors suggesting that you've reached a new depth of commitment to your healing process. If this involves taking a step back from the world, then use the opportunity for some well-needed solitude. Listen carefully and thoughtfully to what people say to you—and imagine every word they utter is a statement about themselves. There will be a few times when it's difficult not to take things personally. Maintaining your objectivity will present you with significant opportunities for growth, if you stick with them—by which I mean, stick with yourself.

The art of life
lies in constant
readjustment
to our
surroundings.

~ Okakura Kakuzo

