

## You Might Be Meditating

By Diana Diaz

In high school in New York City, I had an after-school job at Train, Smith Counsel. The late John Train was a well-known investment advisor, and he was also a pioneering writer. He gave me writing advice and shared some of his more whimsical books with me.

I was paid \$5 an hour, which, in the early '80s, was awesome. And unlike my prior babysitting gig, I got paid in checks, which made it feel like a real job. Mr. Train and I never talked about finance, but there was a comfortable lightness with money that I had never experienced before, even as the City was in a panic over a sudden flood of counterfeit money. I loved working there.

And I loved the little newsstand in the lobby of the building. I would stop in for a few pieces of Mary Janes or Goldenberg's Peanut Chews and my afternoon cup of coffee before heading upstairs, or maybe on the way home. The coffee was always freshly brewed. I enjoyed chatting with the owner; his unrushed, genuine attention to preparing the coffee reminded me of my dad. In these few minutes, I learned he was Indian, that this was his stand, and that he didn't believe in serving old coffee.

One day, I came straight from the bank into the lobby for my coffee, and as we were talking, I retrieved my velcro wallet from my backpack and flipped through the bills from my newly cashed check. It was then I noticed that the bank teller had given me all twenties. I handed him a bill, in sheepish anticipation of him holding it up to the light to examine it for the hidden owl or whatever telltale marking the evening news had taught us to look for that week.

But he didn't.

"You didn't inspect it!" I was more shocked than relieved. I asked him why.

He smiled. "When you come in for your coffee in the afternoon, I am here. And if you want another cup after work, I am here. And on the days that you come in the morning, I am also here, correct?"

I hadn't thought of it, but it was true. He was always there, no matter what time I came by. "Yes."

"And what am I doing here, all that time? I'm making coffee and I'm handling money. I've been doing this for years; for most of your life. When you do something you love regularly for a long

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## WA State Legislature 2025

### Control, Acrimony & Taxes!

By Caitlin Rothermel

Washington state politics are absolutely lit this year.

To start, we are broke. As a state, we are broke. Only after the November election did we learn that Washington has at least a \$12 billion deficit – maybe more like \$15 or \$16 billion. On his way out the door, 12-year former Governor Jay Inslee made a plea to not go "backwards," and recommended increased spending and a \$13 billion tax hike.

Next, newly elected Governor Bob Ferguson (state attorney general for the past 12 years) acknowledged a growing affordability problem in WA state and struck an unexpected, bipartisan tone in his inaugural speech by acknowledging the deficit, and suggesting up to \$4 billion in cuts.

Then, on January 13, the WA State Legislature 2025-2026 session opened in Olympia. Based on its actions, the Legislature is sticking with team Inslee; based on interpretation and rumor, they have zero tolerance for team Ferguson's more moderate approach.



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Last I heard, more than 1200 bills had been introduced by 147 representatives to cover in this 105-day session. As with many other areas of life right now, things are moving very quickly. To facilitate this need for speed, the Legislature ended a 132-year-old practice requiring a two-thirds supermajority to terminate debate on any bill – now, only 50% of votes are needed.

House Bill (HB)-1296 proposes a number of changes to the Parents' Bill of Rights. Formerly known as Initiative 2081, and originally planned to be voted on by Referendum, Initiative 2081 was instead adopted as law in 2024, and relates to parent rights in the WA state public education system.

A number of changes have been proposed in HB-1296, some quite controversial, and all of which I encourage you to learn more about. A couple are so striking that WA state recently came to national attention as an example of exactly what not to do.

As originally written in Initiative 2081, schools were required to immediately notify parents of incidents like assault or sexual misconduct. Now, schools will revert to a prior policy, allowing them to wait up to 48 hours. Since we are regularly learning about new instances of teacher-on-student sexual misconduct, it's easy to see why this would be a concern.

Also, students are increasingly receiving healthcare at school, and HB-1296 will curtail requirements to share information on students' confidential healthcare decisions with parents and guardians. Talking about adolescent mental healthcare, Senate Majority Leader Jaime Pederson was clear regarding intent: "... Parents don't have the right to have notice; they don't have the right to have consent about that."

To be concerned about these changes is to HB-1296 is not a sign of intolerance. On a personal note, in my teen years, I was a ward of the state. I had a stable living situation but also spent a good deal of time thinking about issues just like this ... It's a terrible thing to deny confidential healthcare to teenagers who have abusive or absentee caregivers. But it's also terrible to indiscriminately block parent access.

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## A Storefront in Vashon Town

### Vashon Bikes Reaches Six Years



By Andy Valencia

As Amazon eats the world, it's an interesting exercise to walk the town of Vashon and see what sorts of businesses remain. Most have something to do with eating or drinking, and Vashon Bikes makes a fine exception to the rule. Next door to Cafe Luna, they offer a range of new bikes, along with a full repair department in the back.

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## Lushootseed: Language from the Land, Part 1

By Jane Valencia

*Author's Note: Participating in Island life, we hear Land Acknowledgments at events, from organizations, and see them posted at businesses or on websites. Each year, we welcome the Blue Heron canoe family to our shores at the Low Tide Festival at Point Robinson. Up and down the Island, colorful yard signs in both English and the indigenous language of the Puget Sound region, Lushootseed, announce the "Land of the Swift Water People."*

*Many Islanders care about the First Peoples of this Island and region and want to learn and do more in support. Language can be a door to that wish. Please enjoy this conversation with David Turnipseed, a language teacher with the Puyallup Tribal Language Program.*

David is a Puyallup tribal member on his father's side, with Scottish, Irish, and English ancestry and his red hair from his mom. Lushootseed has always been part of David's family. It was something that came up frequently in his family, that he should learn their language. But it wasn't until 2018 that David had that opportunity.

"The Puyallup Tribal Language program was putting on these Saturday community classes, leading up to us hosting the Canoe Journey 'Power Paddle to Puyallup 2018.' They were helping the community with some basic vocabulary, and how to welcome the canoes in, and stuff like that, and it

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# A Storefront in Vashon Town Vashon Bikes Reaches Six Years

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The shop is small, cozy, and neat as a pin. The front has an impressive range of bicycles and bicycling accessories, and you can peer into the back where they've built a first-rate service department. Many of the products they stock reflect their pride in being a small, local, independent business. For instance, they are the only USA retailer carrying the "dirtlej" brand of German whole-body "dirtsuits." Waterproof and easy to clean, you can wear it in comfort through rain, dirt, and snow. Better yet, dirtlej is a small company, and a perfect fit for Vashon Bikes' philosophy of using a mix of local and independent suppliers whenever possible.

Existing for several years before taking their current shop front, the move into town has been great for business. Ideally, they'd be right on the highway, but even a half block back gives them abundant exposure. No doubt having Cafe Luna as a neighbor helps as well.

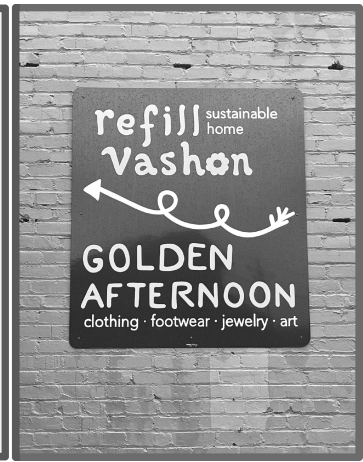
If you drop by and can't find a bicycle within your price range, be sure to talk with the owners. They don't currently stock any used or consignment items, but that's simply due to space constraints. They're happy to note down what you're looking for, and connect you with any sellers who show up with a matching item. And yes, they'll work on your bike no matter where you bought it.

One unfortunate trend the owners have noticed is the reduction and even loss of product lines serving kids. They've kept up the search, and have finally found some new products which help fill this gap. Children riding bikes! It's almost the perfect antidote to the video game generation.

Here in the winter months, bike usage does drop, but keep in mind that Vashon Bikes' service department can handle ski and snowboard repairs, as well. Be sure to drop by, take a look, and thank owners Brian and Deja Starr for being such a resource for Vashon.

The Loop made an error in our last issue! **Golden Afternoon** is a separate business from Refill Vashon.

Located down the hall behind Urban Bloom, Golden Afternoon carries thoughtfully sourced clothing and footwear, as well as jewelry and art, all local or from the PNW.



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This series is coordinated by Jane Neubauer. Topics to be covered include health care directives and other planning documents, hospice services and medical aid in dying, legacy, and burial options.

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To request an event for your group, volunteer with us, or request a speaker, contact:  
Susan Pitiger 206-818-4232  
Jane Neubauer 206-584-9463

## WA State Legislature 2025

Continued from Front Page

Laws like this effectively reject the primary importance of capable and loving parents, and they literally create a bureaucratic underlayer of medical and non-medical staff with unreasonable control over families.

HB-1296 contains an "emergency" clause that would put it into effect immediately and ensure no Referendum could be held to request future changes.

And by the way, HB-1296 will still bill parents and their insurance for any of this healthcare.

Now, on to two tax bills.

In 2024, Kamala Harris suggested that unrealized capital gains were a great strategy - one that could both fill the United States coffers and make us more financially equitable. Others, even her supporters, described this plan using terms like "economy killer."

With HB-1319, Washington State proposes to play this story out by "enacting a wealth tax on the ownership of stocks, bonds, and other financially intangible property."

Effectively, this would place an annual "property tax" on the intangible wealth of the tangibly wealthy - those with \$100 million or more in intangible financials - maybe two or three hundred WA state families.

Another way to think about the intangibly wealthy is that they are a



small, select group who will promptly move out of WA state if this bill is passed. Recent history supports this - in 2023, after the WA state capital gains tax (on gains over \$250,000) was ratified, both Jeff Bezos and Fisher Investments (one of the largest employers in Clark County) left for other states, and made it clear why they did.

HB-1319 opens with frothy language about how socially supportive WA state is, although still so regressive in its lack of proportional taxation distribution. Although HB-1319 will not decrease middle- or lower-income tax burden, it does take steps towards ensuring that the well-off start to pay as much, proportionally, as the poor.

At one level, this sounds fair - eat the rich, call them plunderers, and judge them to high heaven! But pragmatically speaking, the rich are massive contributors to the purse of the state, and also the most agile beings alive in terms of their ability to basically dump everything and start all over.

Moving on to property tax, HB-1334 would increase the annual property tax revenue growth limit. By voter initiative, since 2007, the rate of property tax growth has been capped at 1%. HB-1334 would allow for yearly increases of up to 3%, based on a formula that combines population growth and inflation.

There are a couple of immediate points of confusion here; 1% may seem pretty small compared to the dual-digit property tax increases in King County between 2020 and 2023. Those were due to an inflated real estate market and provided KC with a 17.3% bump in property tax revenue in the same timeframe. But that financial windfall is over.

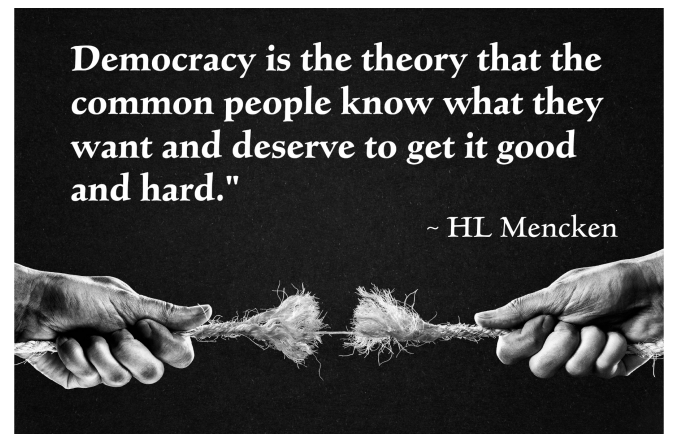
Also not included in this 1% are funds from voter-approved levies. According to the Seattle Times, these "... have become an increasingly used way to raise local revenues without running afoul of the 1% cap."

Nonetheless, KC officials have made it clear that the 1% limitation prevents them from *really* getting things done. Last year, when KC

Road Services spoke at a Vashon-Maury Community Council Meeting, they cited the 1% limitation as the main barrier to being able to respond more quickly to certain road projects.

In early February, the KC Sheriff wrote to her staff stating their support of the property tax increase to prevent proposed department funding cuts. Interestingly, reports indicate that staff at the KC Sheriff Office are not necessarily in favor of this. There's a tipping point where taxation becomes politically unsustainable, even for the beneficiaries of state spending. We appear to be there.

HB-1334 bill has passed out of the House and will have a hearing with the House Committee on Finance on February 11th. Last year, a similar property tax bill was introduced and never made it out of committee because so many comments against it were submitted. You can comment, too. Search online for "HB-1334, Washington, 2025."



## Headlight Encounters of the Third Kind

By Marc J. Elzenbeck

Once upon a time, cars all had identical headlights. From 1940 to 1984, there was a United States sealed beam standard. While the adage, "You can't stop within the reach of your low beams, young fella," was mostly still true, safety had improved.

By 1978, lights could come in both rectangular or round cases; you could add a few extra and mount them higher or lower, but they were all yellow incandescents set in the same parabolic aluminized reflectors. When one burned out, you couldn't replace the bulb or filament - you tossed the whole thing and plugged a new glass insert into the car's empty socket, from Ford to Ferrari, Buick to Volkswagen Bug.

In 1979, 17 years after Europeans got them, halogen bulbs were approved in the US. Produced by passing electricity through quartz-encased tungsten, the extremely hot chemical reaction can be excited even further, by 25% or so, by adding exotic accelerants like bromine, iodine, or (maybe) sea slug venom, but these all shorten bulb life.

Drivers were satisfied with brighter halogen lights going further down the road, and in most conditions, you could finally stop within the distance of your low beams. Which was more than nice: in the 5 years following 1979, US motor vehicle fatalities dropped by one-third.

Then, in 1984, deregulation hit. The Lincoln Continental Mark VII would become the first new car with custom body-integrated cases and replaceable bulbs. This kicked off freedom of styling, innovation, and a lumenology arms race we're still experiencing. We have the full spectrum of colors, xenon, light-emitting diodes (LEDs) and, at long last, lasers. Using the old panel of metrics to measure the new brightness and frequency - lumens, lux, kelvins, candles, melvins - is a lot like using TNT to measure nuclear bombs.

No, it is not our imagination. Headlights are blinding.

They come in several levels of pain and disorientation, each of which is added to the previous indignity. First, there's Level One: Ouch. The white of an LED is usually set at a death-like 6,000 kelvins, utterly devoid of red or green tones. Even if the lumens are only slightly higher than the strongest 1,400 or so possible from a 2,500+ degree halogen bulb, no evolution prepared human retinas for this new trauma, so it feels like they're being scoured with Liquid Plumber.

Level Two: Stun. In which we must quickly either shield or avert our retinas or have holes burned into them. This means steering by using spatial waypoints such as the line by the side of the road, or ditches and mailboxes, with the occasional reflexive glance risked back at the 3,000 oncoming lumens to make sure we're not going to do a head-on. Vision loss is transient, crash risk moderate.

Level Three: Free cataract surgery. This occurs when you are suddenly confronted with 4,000 or so lumens and can't look away soon enough, such as when tricked by headlights coming around a corner, over a rise, or up out of a dip. A partial second's stare into the lights will result in 15 or 20 minutes before vision returns (or not) to the cataritized areas.

"Thank God," you'll usually say a half-hour after hitting the brakes and veering somewhere off to your right. "The lime-purple floaties are still pulsing on and off, but I can make out the road again."

Level Four: UFO abduction. It isn't a function of lumens alone, but also of color, angles of focus, and numbers of lights. If a driver has an SUV with 5,000-lumen headlights, chances are good they'll also have a couple of 3,000-lumen foglights deployed, plus maybe an after-market roof-mounted rack seven or eight feet higher than the road. These lights can be green, purple, yellow, or ice blue, and can easily add up to over 20,000 total lumens. Even from a considerable distance, the array combines to make a sort of beautiful,

## News You May Have Missed

- EV school buses in the news
- One of the biggest UK banks was completely offline for almost two days
- Google quietly removes ban on militarized AI



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disorienting kill box, not unlike having a fabled close encounter.

With LEDs now available on Amazon claiming 36,000 lumen output, where the headlight Wild West goes next is a good question, but there are signs of push-back. Porsche was just forced to recall 2,941 of its 2023-2024 model year Macans for having headlights too bright for the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. Dialing back their headlight control unit software commenced on January 24th.

One might expect other vehicle manufacturers to follow suit in response to complaints. An Oregon-based non-profit called the Soft Lights Foundation was founded in 2021, with a Facebook group, "Ban Blinding LEDs." And the Department of Transportation is mulling certification of aftermarket LEDs, which implies regulation.

Finally, European manufacturers are once again in the lead, and already have adaptive LED arrays, described as "2 million intelligent mirrors," which sense oncoming lights and create a polite shadow for drivers. In the meantime, for US driving incidents at night, we can always claim to have been bedazzled by LEDs, saying, "There were lights in my eyes, they were horrible, and suddenly I noticed the deer on my hood."

Who wouldn't believe it?



## Crows Remember

By Seán Malone and John Sweetman

Seán has always fed birds, and his deck has been full of them ever since he began to live in the cabin. At first, I noticed at least one crow would be very skeptical if Seán poked his head out the patio door. Seán's story explains why.

We were working on a complex wood project, and I noticed that some of the "cutout" pieces of clear cedar sort of looked like birds, and one piece just appeared to have a crow hidden in the rough shape. I fooled around, carving and polishing this for some time, and after several tries, mounted it on a small platform with crow-like legs and carved crow eyes.

Right away, after mounting this piece on the rail, the crows noticed and were eager to check it out, although still a bit skeptical of Seán. They would alight on the rail without the previous "slink" eye glance toward Seán, although there was still a certain wariness.

I think, after 75 years or so, Seán, if not actually forgiven for his youthful transgressions, has at least been granted a temporary dispensation. Crows have long memories. They now alight on the rail and seem to hold more of a grudge towards the squirrels than Seán.

Seán related this following story to me as we

## Island Voices

polished the wooden crow and fixed the legs after a severe storm.

In the old days, there was a 25-cent bounty on crows because of the damage they did to the farmer's crops. I never collected, but hunted the crows for sport. Dad told us to stay hidden and try to wing a crow, because their cawing from the ground would bring the whole flock, providing a chance for a lot more shots until they figured out where you were.

If you were lucky enough to kill a crow, the flock would gather in a nearby tree to silently recognize their dead friends.

Crows are so smart that, if you pointed a stick at them and went "bang-bang," you would be ignored. They recognized the threat if they could see your gun.

When I was 14 years old, I went to McCormick's Hardware and picked out a single-shot Stevens 20 gauge shotgun for \$24.50. I also bought a \$2.50 crow call, and when Earl McCormick handed it to me, he had tied a white string around it, so it hung around my neck and away from any dirt that would interrupt the



fluttering reed that imitated the call of a crow. Two years later, I added a foot to the string so I could get it over my head and make another successful crow hunt.

I was at the mouth of Raab's Lagoon and well-hidden in the brush while I called the crows. One flew over; we called him the lookout, as he perched above my head and started to call the other crows. As Dad had taught me, I shot at the lookout, causing him to fall to the ground, where he continued to call in frantic bursts that drove the flock to a flurry of dives at my position, giving me multiple shots.

The flock then retired to a single tree out of range of my shotgun, and remained there for 10 or 15 minutes while they mourned their fallen comrades.

Crows have remarkable memories that are passed over generations, to warn other crows of a dangerous person.

My great-grandfather, Nels Mattson, was a Danish doctor who settled at Portage in 1892. There were flocks of crows in the 1950s that numbered in the thousands; now you might see 20 or 30. We never shot at them near the homestead at Portage, and even now they fly to the deck rail for bread scraps with no fear. While I live on the outer harbor and can't stand up to feed them, that doesn't cause the crows to fly away. They remember my face.



## Post-Christmas

By Gates Johnson

What does one my age do when the holiday chaos has passed? Remember all those appointments and meetings and lunches and whatnot that got put on the back burner while attending to more pressing things? Well, the time has come. So, here I go.

First off, those visits to specialists that were referred by my GP. One is a consult about a little heart thing that sprung up when I had COVID last fall. That should be fun. Luckily, I have a good friend, a retired nurse no less, who will accompany me and hold my hand during the visit. She will also ask the questions I am sure to forget. It sure is great to have friends who will step in when needed.

Next are two visits to a sleep clinic in Gig Harbor. I had my first visit via a Zoom call, my first ever. Those calls are sick! This doc was a good guy. When I told him I go to exercise class three times a week, he asked if I went to the Vashon Athletic Club. I said yes. He then told me that he keeps getting pop-up ads for the club on his computer, even though he lives in Gig Harbor. Darned algorithm.

Anyway, it seems that now a sleep study can be done in the privacy of your own home. No more trying to sleep in some clinic office hooked up to a bunch of machines that have to be unhooked every time you have to pee. The downside is a trip to Gig Harbor to pick up the machine, and another trip the next day to return it. The upside is there is a Costco near the sleep clinic!

I did have to reschedule a physical therapist appointment due to the sleep appointment. I will keep doing my exercises until I can see him again for a new slate of things to do and not do.

I have to drive to Onalaska to meet up with my daughter and granddaughter to get my belated Christmas present. This probably won't shock those who have known me for a few decades, but the present is ... they are gifting me getting a tattoo! My daughter offered me a choice of gifts: a beautiful painting by a close friend, or a tattoo. I chose the tattoo.

A couple of my personal idiosyncrasies and obsessions: I love cows and I am sure there are aliens in spaceships out there. So my daughter suggested that since I have a knee replacement scar running down the front of my knee, why not get a flying saucer at the top of the scar and a cow being beamed up at the bottom? I LOVE IT! I have the pictures all printed out to show the tattoo guy what I want. Side note: if it turns out like I hope, I may never wear long pants again.

Back on the Island after the tattoo adventure, I will have more put-off

appointments. Counselor. Dentist. And perhaps a trip to the foot doctor, just so he doesn't feel neglected.

Once my calendar has cleared up a bit, I may have time to schedule some social activities. There are at least three, if not four, meal get-togethers that have fallen by the wayside. Times like these, I really miss the old Chinese restaurant and the Red Bike. Sporty's and Casa Bonita are good for lunches, but some good old American Chinese food and Red Bike fish and chips would be welcomed to the mix. If you want to really deep-dive into the past, the Alibi made kick-ass real French dip sandwiches and real milk shakes in the 1970s. The good old days.

Oh, if The Rock would make pho again during these cold, rainy winter days, that would be a treat, too. Another side note: I wish there was someone who could teach me how to make real pho. If you are out there reading this and know how to make real pho, let me know if you are willing to teach me.

That about wraps up my current ramblings. Now, back to knitting an afghan for my granddaughter. It's almost done, just working on the border. Problem being that the border is an intricate cable pattern that I keep goofing up. Have ripped it out three times and counting. Let's see how far I get his round before I make a misstep and have to start over once again.



**Oh! If The Rock would make pho again during these cold, rainy winter days, that would be a treat, too.**

~ Gates Johnson

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# Let's Save Our Democracy, Together

By March Twisdale

"Please do not come to my house to clean. I can't have someone in my home who supports this administration and the destruction of our democracy. I am not open to any discussion."

This is the text I received two days after President Trump's inauguration. To be clear, I worked for this woman for roughly four months, with zero problems, plenty of compliments, a few tips, and we had just confirmed the next three months of house-cleaning dates. I certainly NEVER brought up or discussed my political views or any controversial topics. I have no idea how she learned of my political leanings.

According to her text, I was fired because I voted differently than she did, and by doing so, I was apparently "supportive of the destruction of our democracy." However, in my book, democracy is dismantled every time an American becomes accustomed to "casting out" their neighbor, sibling, co-worker, or friend over a difference of opinion.

I honestly value, treasure, desire and am deeply relieved by the diversity of thoughts, ideas, solutions, and opinions expressed across the spectrum of our melting pot society. It is through traveling the world that I

have come to realize just how wonderful and rare it is to live in a country where so many different people live side-by-side, in peace.

To spend my day, engaging in commerce, conversation, trade, work and good neighborliness with people of all stripes - fits my definition of a strong democracy. And, it's no surprise I think this way. My generation was raised on Sesame Street, Mister Rogers, and Schoolhouse Rock!

Of course, I fully support our right, as Americans, to decide who we do, and do not, want to hire. But, I have a question. Are we nurturing our democracy when we fire someone for their personal or political views? Especially if, over the previous months of employment, they've proven their ability to perform the work asked of them with a cheerful and positive attitude?

When I grew up, I learned that American democracy worked because a Republican wife and a Democrat husband could be happily married, in spite of their political differences. Myth or not, the idea was beautiful and I fully absorbed it as a child. The result? My friends come from every segment of society and, rather than making me uncomfortable, our ideological differences inspired my

curiosity and appreciation for all sorts of interesting and thoughtful conversations.

If we want to "save our democracy," do we not need to do it "together?" Is that not the very definition of "preserving" our diverse society? Do we not all have something of great value to offer? Yes, yes we do. But, we won't discover what those gems are if we cannot restrain ourselves from leaping to assumptions based on the labels and stereotypes we assign to them.

Actions have consequences, and this is why there are laws and common cultural mores surrounding the idea of firing a person for their personal beliefs. In general, Americans know our lives are made better (not worse) by the uniqueness of the people around us. Vashon Islanders are of every faith imaginable, we have the greatest density of queer-identifying homeowners in Washington State, and we warmly welcome neighbors of many nationalities and backgrounds.

We are also very politically

diverse. This might surprise you, but it's true. And, it's not a problem. How do I know this? Simple. Every day, when Islanders go into town for groceries, banking, coffee, pastries, pet trimming, laundry, the post office, and more - they are served, helped, educated, encouraged, and entertained by people who voted differently in November.

I speak up a lot about my own opinions, but when it comes to what other people tell me? Well, what goes in my ears rarely leaves my mouth. This is a life skill when you live in a small community, and this is how I know that Republicans and Democrats, Christians and Atheists, Vegans and Hunters, and Pro-Lifers and Pro-Choicers are all getting along quite well with one another, whether they realize it or not.

In other words, if you think you can't work with someone based upon a difference at the ballot box, let me reassure you. You can! How do I know this? Because you're already doing it.



Reality is a harsh mistress when you've spent years insulting and mistreating her.

~ Jim Kunstler

But merciful Heavens, there was Danny! He saw me as he drove by and stopped to help. He fiddled with the truck and discovered the problem; the old battery was dead and wouldn't hold a charge. He drove me to the nearest auto parts store where I bought a new battery. He drove me back to the truck, installed the battery, and got the truck running again.

I was able to finish my shopping and head back up the long hill to Oatman in time to have dinner on the table when Davey got home from work. I looked at Danny a little differently after that, and I am less likely to look down my nose at people who aren't living their lives the way I think they should.

We have so many stereotypes we want to judge people by, based on what they are wearing, what they look like, their race, religion, financial situation. I think we do that because we are lazy. If we judge people and situations by outward appearances, we don't need to go to the trouble of getting to know who they really are or what is really going on. Trouble is, when we do that, we are often wrong and we can make bad decisions. It can lead us to putting our trust in the wrong people, or to giving people grief who don't deserve it, if we only knew their backstory.

Like mom always told me, "Don't judge a person until you have walked a mile in their moccasins."

## Oh, To Be 80 Again!

Marj Watkins at age 100

By Suzanna Leigh

"How do you spend your days, now that you are 100 years old and retired?" I asked my mom, Marj Watkins.

Waiting patiently while she struggled to find the words, I resisted the impulse to fill in the word I thought she might want. I thought she would start with, "Oh to be 80 again!" Instead she said, "I ... watch the little ... the little ... creatures, and I wonder what their little lives are like," referring to the squirrels and birds she feeds on the deck outside her window. "And I remember ... things." She pointed to a wicker basket resting on the old treadle sewing machine, filled with her now-unused art supplies. "I bought that from ... from a ... gypsy girl in France."

Mom told me how, many years ago when we were stationed in France, a gypsy girl came to the back door "like a proper merchant," selling baskets her mother had made. They were well-made baskets, and mom bought one, over Madame Ochone's objections (Madame Ochone was the French woman who helped mom with the housework).

"You shouldn't buy from her!" Madame Oshone admonished. "She is a gypsy. Gypsies steal!"

"Well, if you won't buy from them, how else will they live?" Mom asked. "They have to steal!"

Mom still treasures that basket, and I treasure her lesson in non-judgement - a lesson I am still learning. For example, there was Danny, back in Oatman, AZ, the little "ghost town" I lived in with Davey during the 70s. Danny was a drinking man with six kids and a wife, who had trouble keeping a job. At least that was my perception of him. And



Journal Entry by Suzanna Leigh

he was known to lie. I didn't have much use for him. In fact I thought he was ... some sort of low-life.

Until one day ...

It was 30 miles down a rough, narrow road from the small community of Oatman to the nearest grocery store, an hour's drive away. That's where my truck broke down. Thirty miles from home. This was back before cell phones, so I had no way to call for help. There I was, standing beside the road with baby Atom in my arms. I was stranded. I didn't know what to do.

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# The Planting of a Monastery

## Part 3: Further North Again

By Abbot Tryphon

### Holy Week in Seattle

Contesting the constitutionality of an Oregon county's zoning law was not the beginning foundation we wanted for our monastery. We saw this zoning code as a possible sign that this farm was not the place God intended for us. With Great Lent nearing completion, we decided to put off any further decision until after Pascha. Invited to participate in the Holy Week and the Paschal celebration at Saint Spiridon Cathedral in Seattle, we drove north into Washington State.

Holy Week was particularly special. We slept on the floor of the old rectory, now serving as the parish office, and attended all the services leading up to the Midnight Paschal Liturgy. On Bright Monday, with Holy Week behind us and Paschal joy in our hearts, we took the ferry to Vashon Island, accepting an invitation to spend two nights in the home of an Orthodox couple we'd met a year earlier.

Vashon proved to be one of the most welcoming places I'd ever visited; two days on the Island were enough to convince us this was the place God had called us to be. Before heading back to Medford, Oregon, Father Paul and I visited a realty office, and arranged to rent a small house above Tramp Harbor. I had dreamed of living on an Island, nestled in a forest, for much of my life, and now God was granting me my wish.

The two-bedroom house was up for sale, and the agreement was that we would move out within 30 days once they found a buyer. Since there were no other houses within our price range, it was possible we'd have to leave in a matter of months. The constant flow of prospective buyers worried us a bit, and I took to donning my kamilavka to greet them. With a ceiling only six feet five inches high, the look on people's faces upon seeing me with my hat's top just an inch from the ceiling was priceless. But presently the house was sold, and our search for a home location started again.

The Island's weekly newspaper had an ad for an old farmhouse that caught our eye. We signed a rental agreement, packed up, and moved within 60 days of first having come to the island. The house had been built in 1906 by a Norwegian shipbuilder during the days when Dockton had been the location of the largest dry dock north of San Francisco.

Since this house was a long-term lease, soon after moving in, we drove

back to Santa Rosa, and retrieved the monastery's library, icons, and furniture out of storage. Receiving a blessing from my spiritual father, Archimandrite Dimitry, we said goodbye to our many friends and benefactors in the Bay Area.

Back on the Island, we turned a small room on the main floor into a chapel, with the living room, complete with fireplace, becoming our community room and library. The second floor had two bedrooms, the largest of which we separated into two cells by constructing a wall and turning the extra bedroom into a guest room. An old school bell from Montana, a gift from Father Paul's dad, was hung from the front porch, completing our move.

Islanders welcomed us warmly, making us feel as though we'd always been a part of the community. A neighbor left flowers and fresh farm eggs on our doorstep, and another Islander gifted us with a large basket filled with smoked salmon and fresh garden vegetables. When walking out on a pier to view close-up a commercial fishing vessel, the captain gave us three freshly caught salmon, all the largest I'd ever seen. A woman who worked in one of the two Island grocery stores would approach us monthly, in the store, with a check written out in the amount of \$200.00. Complete strangers would approach us at the post office, welcoming us to the Island.

### Finding Our Permanent Home

About a year after moving to Vashon, we took a month-long trip to Greece, including 10 days on Mount Athos. The return to the United States, was a major culture shock, with mounting bills, rising rent costs, little income, and my personal desire to return to Mt. Athos to continue my monastic struggle. I went so far as to ask a blessing from my spiritual father to return to the Holy Mountain. Much to my surprise, Father Dimitry told me that my "salvation was on Vashon Island."

It seemed, given our near financial ruin, to be utter nonsense. How could this possibly be true, living as we were in a rental house, with no prospects of owning property, and no viable way of founding a monastery in the Puget Sound region? However, I knew as a monk I was bound by my vows in obedience to my spiritual father. I also believed, as did many, that Father Dimitry had been blessed with the gift of clairvoyance, and that he could see something in the future that was hidden to me. So I withdrew my request and committed myself to Vashon Island as the place God had chosen for me to work out my salvation.



### Common Orthodox Christian Terms

**Pascha** – Easter Sunday

**Holy Week** – The week leading up to Pascha

**Kamilavka** – A stiff, tall monastic hat

**Mount Athos** – An autonomous region of Greece containing many monasteries and chartered with rights to self administration. A major religious site since roughly 300 AD.

**Monastic struggle** – The efforts of a monk to work towards Christian ideals in their thoughts, prayers, and actions.

**Monastery Pilgrimage** – An annual feast hosted by a monastery.

On August 1st, 1992, having exhausted all our resources, we announced during what was to be our last Monastery Pilgrimage, our decision to leave Vashon Island. The monthly rent for the old farmhouse had risen, our chief benefactor had a series of setbacks in his personal fortunes, and we were faced with just enough money to pay two months rent. We resolved to sell our old truck and car, pack our icons, holy things, and library in the attic of a friend, and leave the country. If Jerusalem didn't work out, we would go to Mount Athos.

Seventy people joined us on that Saturday. Among them were John and Georgia Ratzenberger (John played Cliff in the television comedy "Cheers"). After announcing we would be leaving the Island, John approached us with an offer. Would we consider staying if he donated five acres of land, just south of the farmhouse we were renting? They owned 16 acres, meant to be an investment, and the uppermost corner would be ours, if we agreed to stay. We accepted the offer as God's will.

On Monday, August 3rd, James Bryant, a recent convert to Orthodox Christianity, called the monastery with the offer to serve as our architect, free of charge. Thus began what was to become a fruitful and productive friendship. From the very first meeting, James proved to be the perfect architect for us and helped me realize my long-standing dream to

design a monastery that would look like a small Norwegian village. The church, which we would dedicate to the Protection of the Holy Virgin, was to be patterned after the historic stave churches of Norway.

### Postscript by Andy Valencia

And so they designed it and built it. In subsequent years, the monks purchased the rest of the 16 acres from Mr. Ratzenberger. Early ad hoc solutions like a battered old single-wide gave way to permanent buildings. The site holds the original chapel, the current church, a library building, social and dining hall, a shop with a bookstore, and a set of tiny standalone buildings which serve as monastic "cells."

People come from across the country and beyond to attend services, and then sit down at trapeza, a post-service shared meal. As Abbot of the monastery, Father Tryphon has introduced countless young men to the possibility of a monastic vocation. Sitting with Father Tryphon or the other fathers and brothers of the monastery, young men often for the first time can see for themselves the reality of a religious life.

See for yourself. Visit their website, vashonmonks.com, and then call ahead to arrange a visit. Peruse their bookstore with its exquisitely curated collection of Orthodox books, along with candles, incense, icons, beard oil, and coffee. Oh yes - the coffee. It's crafted based on Father Tryphon's roasting and brewing experiences going all the way back to his grad school days in Berkeley.

If they have the time, you may be able to experience the interior of an Orthodox church. Color and light, churches of the East try to suggest "heaven" with the visual feast of their decorations. Be prepared for a treat!



Aprendo espanol by Anne Cotter Moses

El conejo parece muy triste.

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# Lushootseed: Language from the Land, Part 1

Continued from Front Page

was finally my opportunity to be able to take a language class."

At the time David, was pursuing a Master's in teaching, and planned to teach English as a second language, perhaps traveling around to do so, or teaching at a local university.

"But when I did my first language class here at the Puyallup tribe, I was like, oh my goodness, forget about all that. I want to come home, and I want to learn and teach my language."

Program director Amber Hayward recommended that David start learning - and teaching - at the tribe's early learning center with the three-year-olds, the idea being that, if he taught as he was learning, he'd be one step ahead of the children.

"I absolutely fell in love with working at Grandview Early Learning Center and working with little kids. It's such a joy; it's such a treat."

From there, David moved to the central Language department of the tribe. He now teaches all ages, with classes online and in person, and with different tribe departments.

In David's family, the last speaker of Lushootseed as a first language was his great Grandma Hattie Cross. "Back in the 70s, my family was wise enough to go over to Hattie's house once a week. They would sit down and record conversations with her, asking, 'Hey, Grandma, how do you say, Who's going to make the coffee? How do you say, I'm going to the mountains to pick berries? How do you say this? How do you say that? And there are about 11 hours of those recordings. If you were to hand me a suitcase with a million dollars, or those recordings, I would take the recordings every time. Such a priceless treasure from my family."

Lushootseed was spoken as a first language up until the 80s and 90s.

"Hattie was part of that last generation of first-language speakers," David says, "Then the last first-language speakers started to pass away. Somewhere around 2010, the status of Lushootseed in the wider Puget Sound community was at an all-time low." The number of people speaking Lushootseed in daily communication was almost zero.

"That being said," David points out, "it's not that the language was ever extinct or dormant. People still had words and phrases, memorized speeches and prayers that they had in classes. But as far as using Lushootseed as a language of daily communication in the home, with your kids, with your family, with your friends - unfortunately, almost no one was doing that, as far as we know."

"Around 2014, our language consultant Zalmi ʔəswəli Zahir (Zeke), along with Amber Hayward, Chris Duenas, and others, started using a methodology here at the Puyallup Tribe called language nesting. The idea is that you choose a place within your home - typically, people start with their bathroom - and you say, 'In this space I will not speak English. I'm creating a nest for the language, and I'm breathing life into the language in this space.'"

"So, it can be as simple as posting up a sign that says, xʷiʔ ləpəstəduciɪ. "No English." In that space, you make a commitment that you will only speak the target language - in this case, Twulshootseed. Then we do a thing called reclaiming domains.

"You reclaim areas of your life for the language; you say, 'All right, I'm going to self-narrate out loud in Lushootseed every time I wash my hands.' And you print out and post up these pieces of paper that have English on one side, the txʷəlšucid translations on the other. And word by word, sentence by sentence, you start reclaiming these areas of your life for the language."

Taking a shower, getting ready for the day, doing laundry or the dishes - these are all opportunities to reclaim domains and self-narrate aloud in Lushootseed. From there, learners connect with a conversation project where they meet in groups, asking each other, "What did you do today?" They then describe in great detail what they did throughout the day.

The result? The past ten years have seen an exponential growth of speakers within the Puyallup Tribal Community and other Lushootseed-speaking communities in the area.

David continues, "Right now, we are doing some research with the University of Oregon, and with social network analysis of our language community: Who's talking to whom and how

much? We estimate that there's something like 500 plus people who use the language an hour or more per day. Going from almost zero 10 years ago to now 500 plus, if not more, is a huge, huge victory for the language and for us here at the Puyallup Tribe."



David Turnipseed

To be continued.

View a video where David teaches how to say Swift Water People in Twulshootseed: <https://youtu.be/lwof31-4YxA?si=ty8aTXBT9-kKf3F>

For more information, and to begin learning Twulshootseed, please visit:

<https://www.puyalluptriballanguage.org>

## Bird Language: A Window into Nature's Secrets

By Anthony Latora

In the pursuit of tracking hawks and raptors, I've found it to be relatively straightforward. Casting one's gaze upwards often reveals these majestic birds perched atop lofty branches, diligently scanning their surroundings. Their occasional vocalizations break the serene atmosphere, a stark contrast to the songs of their smaller counterparts, the songbirds.



Cooper's Hawk  
Photo by Anthony Latora

However, amidst this simplicity lies a captivating complexity - the intricate language of birds. While their calls may seem simple at first, they serve as a gateway to understanding the hidden dynamics of the avian world. Each location boasts its own unique avian vocabulary, with deviations such as alarm calls, mating serenades, and territorial disputes offering valuable insights into daily life and interactions.

One memorable encounter involved a Cooper's hawk, where the assistance of smaller songbirds played a crucial role. During a leisurely stroll through Canyon park in Southern California, the baseline chatter of the songbird community provided a soothing backdrop. Yet, as I approached a grove of eucalyptus trees, a persistent and aggressive alarm call caught my attention - a stark contrast to the tranquility of the surroundings.

I ventured closer to investigate; my eyes scanned the canopy until

they alighted upon a majestic Cooper's hawk, its presence betrayed by the frantic warnings of the smaller birds. It was a curious sight - a delicate dance of communication and survival unfolding before my eyes. Why would these songbirds risk revealing their location to a potential threat? Perhaps it was a display of solidarity, a collective effort to safeguard their community against danger.

Taking a moment to appreciate the beauty of the Cooper's hawk, I couldn't help but marvel at the intricate web of communication that had led to our encounter. In the grand tapestry of nature, the language of birds serves as a whimsical yet profound reminder of the interconnectedness of all living beings.



### What Is Lushootseed?

Thirteen different tribes in the Puget Sound region in Washington state speak Lushootseed. The predominant dialects are Northern and Southern. The Puyallup tribe speaks Southern Lushootseed, and in that dialect, they call Lushootseed - txʷəlšucid.

Linguist Thom Hess coined the term Lushootseed, which was easier for non-Lushootseed speakers to say. According to the Puyallup Tribal Language Program, the term Lushootseed "References all of our language. Each tribe calls our language something different. Some call our language xʷəlšucid, dxʷlušucid and txʷəlšucid. Some call it their tribal language, suqʷabšucid - Suquamish language. And some of our elders called it speaking Indian."

All the above terms are correct to use.

From <https://www.puyalluptriballanguage.org>. See "What Is Twulshootseed" page for more in-depth information.

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# Terrribly Terrific Tariffs

By Stephen Buller

Tariffs are a tax imposed on imports into a country. They have two main effects: First, like all taxes, they raise revenue for the government; second, they discourage imports from the relevant country by increasing the price of goods.

Are they good or bad? In short, they're bad, just like every other tax a government imposes on its citizens - because, make no mistake, the consumer always pays - to fund ineffective and unpopular programs. But it's never that simple, is it?

There are two good reasons I can think of to impose tariffs on another country: First, if the country has imposed a tariff on your exports to them, it makes sense to level the playing field by mirroring the tariff. Like in so many areas in life, reciprocity and the golden rule is a good principle.

Second, tariffs can be used to protect certain domestic industries by making it impractical or impossible for foreign countries to compete. National defense is the easiest example of an industry that should be protected from foreign interests, and tariffs could play a role in ensuring relevant parties use domestic goods.

The problem is, like everything in government, taxes seem to expand over time. I don't know where the perfect line is, where government should just stay out of it, but it must be somewhere between guidance systems for our nuclear arms and tennis shoes.

I would argue the line is much closer to the nukes. Whenever a government imposes tariffs, it warps prices in the market. The results of this are higher costs to consumers and a less predictable environment for businesses to navigate.

When the United States imposes a tariff on Mexico, Mexico doesn't pay a bill of any kind. The bill is paid by the car manufacturer who imports vehicles from Mexico to sell to US consumers. Even calling it a bill is misleading, because the US government sees their cut (the tariff) when goods pass through customs, before the manufacturer sees their goods.

If the manufacturer has to pay more for their goods, they must increase prices to their customer to maintain a profit - all else being equal. If a company doesn't make a profit, it goes away, and then there are no goods for prices to go up on.

If you find yourself saying, "Those giant corporations could lower their ridiculous C-suite bonuses!" I agree. Unfortunately, tariffs will be

# Island Resilience

easier for larger companies to absorb, because of their infrastructure. Tariffs make it harder for smaller companies to compete, which is also at the expense of the consumer.

Right now, US companies are "frontloading" inventory, stockpiling goods from countries threatened by the Trump tariffs. The goal is to lock in today's price and have enough inventory to operate for a period of time while budgets are analyzed and operations adjusted as necessary. Businesses plan for their costs months or years in advance, so a sudden change in the direct cost of goods can have a catastrophic effect.

In the long run, prices will have to go up. In the immediate term, some importers purchased goods before the tariffs were announced, and may still owe them when their goods arrive at customs. This could cause huge, unexpected costs.

The result of tariffs is simple: Additional tax revenue for a government, a less predictable environment for businesses, and more expensive products for consumers. Arguing when and where this is good or bad is far more complicated.

Should the US government impose tariffs in the interest of national defense? What about to protect a specific industry and support higher wages for workers therein? Or penalize another country for amoral behavior such as using slave labor to produce their products more cheaply?

Global trade is generally a good thing because it creates interdependencies between everyone, and

this disincentivizes war. But it also encourages pollution from shipping goods around the world. It allows countries to specialize and focus on industries and products they have a competitive advantage in, but this also erodes their resilience and knowledge of the full picture.

Trade between 195 countries and 8 billion people is complicated. That's why I would err on the side of less government intervention and more free market discovery. Tariffs should be used to level the competitive business landscape and to protect national interests. If they're overused, our Earth neighbors will go trade with someone else.

If you're keeping track of all the taxes you pay - income, social security, Medicare, property, sales, excise, gains, inheritance, transportation, paid leave, long-term care, wealth, gift, and more - you might wonder why the US would need more tax revenue. This is why our broken monetary system and irresponsible government spending is important.

The US government has raised taxes on its citizens so high for so long, the average person is struggling to keep up. But because it's never enough, your government also steals from you through inflation, a tame concept through much of our history that has become a much bigger issue in recent years.

With its citizens tapped out, our government needs to steal (more) from the rest of the world - we've been exporting our inflation via the US dollar for many years. The bottom line is this: If we don't get government spending and debt under control, we will be a less desired trade partner and a less prosperous nation in the future.





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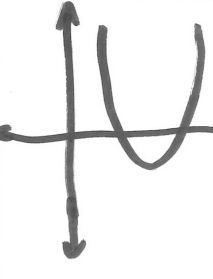


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## You Might Be Meditating

Continued from Front Page

time, there are some things that you know. I know when the coffee is done, even if the pot is still brewing. I know the feel of a real dollar bill, and I know the feel of a fake one in my hand. I know the weight of the ink."

Now, what does this have to do with meditation? Contrary to popular belief, meditation isn't just sitting still, or even emptying your mind. There are many ways to meditate. My coffee-stand buddy was probably practicing a few throughout the day. One that seems pretty obvious in retrospect is moving meditation.

Moving meditation is being super conscious while engaging in simple movements. It can be as easy as being as mindful as you can of your external surroundings and internal sensations while performing simple, often repetitive tasks, like walking or making coffee.

It is a way of calming the mind and creating awareness. Instead of letting your mind carry you away, you pay attention to where you are, what's going on around you, and how you feel. When your mind wanders, and it will, just gently nudge it back, without judgement. It dawns on me that my friend was very present whenever we spoke.

Another is "object meditation," where you concentrate all of your focus on an object. Meditating on an object comes from the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, an ancient text on the theory and practice of yoga. Patanjali lists many things on which to concentrate that will have different results. In Sutra 1.39, he explains you can meditate on anything that is elevating to you: your breath, a mantra, loving-kindness, body sensations, a candle flame, or whatever's grabbing your attention right now (that's Vipassana). Through mindful concentration, my coffee friend was actually meditating on money.

## Health Matters

In meditation, you link your mind with the qualities of the object. According to the Sutras, if you do so with wholehearted, enthusiastic, regular practice, eventually you will know all there is to know about that object. Like a super power. In yoga, we call those Siddhis.

Many people pour coffee and handle money every day, yet burn the coffee and can't tell an arcade coin from a quarter by feel. It's the intentional mindfulness, the absolute focus and concentration, becoming one with the action, that makes it meditation.

And, like everything else, it can be more easily achieved in the proper environment. Frantic, anxious surroundings are not conducive to steady, easeful focus. What better environment to not worry about money than Park Avenue? It wasn't just the office where I worked, but the whole building. I smelled it in the fresh brew and tasted it in its richness. I felt it as my pumps clicked across the marble lobby floor, then sank into the carpeting of the office. I saw it in my friend's entire demeanor.

And perhaps the most important factor: His heart was in his work. I never saw him look like he didn't want to be there. Mothers can interpret a micromovement in their child. Musicians can hear their instruments speak to them. Skiers communicate with the snow. When your heart is in something, you're open and receptive to every nuance, and when you add that singular focus, you might find yourself in meditation.



## Island Epicure – The Happiness Foods

By Marj Watkins and Suzanna Leigh

Chocolate of course! Who doesn't love it? Choose cocoa for a temporary boost to your brains' serotonin, the happiness chemical. It won't give you lasting happiness, but it will—for a little while—make you smarter.

There are many components in chocolate, especially dark chocolate, that help to lift our mood. Tryptophan, for example, helps our bodies make the neurotransmitter serotonin, which makes us happy.

Phenylethylamine, which is released in the brain when we fall in love, acts as an antidepressant and increases our heart rate as well as our alertness. Aha! So that's why chocolate is so popular on Valentine's Day!

Theobromine relaxes us and relieves stress. Theobroma literally means "God Drink;" the Mayan people considered chocolate to be the drink of the gods.

A quick cup of hot chocolate made with milk and a stack of cinnamon toast made with whole-grain bread, could fire up those brain cells, make balancing your checkbook easier, and even lighten your mood. Make French toast, and you will have a higher-protein breakfast, one that stays with you longer. Or make chocolate crepes for a special Valentine's Day breakfast!

### Chocolate Crepes

Makes 15-18 crepes, 5-6 servings  
Stir in mixing bowl:

- ½ cup almond meal
- ½ cup rice flour (my son uses

mochi rice flour, which is finer than typical rice flour)

- Scant ¼ cup cocoa powder
- ⅓ tsp salt
- 3-4 tbsp sugar, or sugar substitute
- Beat together:
- 3 eggs
- ½ cup almond milk
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Stir liquid ingredients into flour mixture. Spoon onto heated, oiled skillet, 2 tbsp at a time. Turn and tilt skillet to spread batter. When bubbles appear all over, turn to bake on the other side. When steaming stops, turn out onto platter. Place in warm oven until all crepes are done.

Spread with cherry or strawberry jam or orange marmalade. Fold. Eat!

This recipe is from "Gluten Free Baking," by Marj Watkins. Unfortunately, I can no longer eat chocolate, so please let me know how these turned out for you! Email me at leigh.suzanna@gmail.com to let me know or to order copies of "Gluten Free Baking."

Fish is another happiness food. To keep your spirits up as the darker days of winter close in, try for a serving of salmon, mackerel, or tuna twice a week. A less expensive choice is cod, which is splendid cooked this Greek way:

### Baked Cod in Tomato Sauce

- Makes 3 servings
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- 9-12 ounces true cod
- ½ lemon (optional)
- 3 tbsp olive oil



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- 1 cup chopped onion
- ½-1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 15-ounce can of tomato sauce
- Salt, pepper, and oregano flakes to taste
- Butter
- Butter a baking dish. Cut the cod into approximately 3-inch pieces. Sprinkle it with lemon juice (or not). Arrange the cod pieces in the baking dish.

Heat oil in frying pan. Stirring occasionally, fry the onion and green pepper. Stir in salt, pepper, and oregano. Strew over the cod pieces. Pour the tomato sauce over all. Bake 25 minutes. Serve with steamed brown rice or millet. Of course don't forget your vegetables, and maybe a salad!



# MINGLEMENT

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## From Minglement – Roasted Acorn Squash with Squash Risotto

This delightful and elegant vegetarian entrée or side dish was created by Cat Rose, a staff member. Acorn squash is stuffed with an herbed risotto, speckled with delectable chunks of butternut squash, then baked until meltingly sweet.

Serves 8

### Ingredients

- 4 acorn squash
- 3½ tsp extra virgin olive oil
- Salt to taste
- 6 cups water or gluten-free vegetable broth
- 1 cup finely chopped leeks
- 2½ cups peeled and cubed butternut squash
- 2 cups uncooked Arborio rice
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 tbsp plus ½ tsp finely chopped sage, divided
- ¾ cup pine nuts
- ½ tsp finely chopped thyme

### Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Cut each acorn squash lengthwise in half (from tip to stem) then scoop out and discard any seeds and stringy flesh. Brush insides of acorn squash with 1½ tablespoons of the oil and season with salt. Place acorn squash, cut side down, in a baking pan and roast until tender but still firm, about 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, start the risotto by

bringing the broth just to a simmer in a small pot over medium-high heat. Heat remaining 2 tbsp oil in a heavy 3-quart pot over medium heat. Add leeks and cook, stirring often, until soft, about 5 minutes. Add butternut squash and cook for 3 minutes. Add rice and cook, stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes, or until grains are fragrant. Add wine and stir constantly until almost completely absorbed, about 2 minutes.

Add ½ cup of the hot broth to rice and cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid is almost completely absorbed. Continue adding broth, ½ cup at a time, making sure that most of the liquid is absorbed before adding more. Continue until rice is almost tender, but still firm to the bite, about 20 to 25 minutes. Stir in 1 tsp of the sage and season with salt.

Meanwhile, put pine nuts into a food processor and pulse until coarsely ground. Stir in thyme, remaining ½ teaspoon sage and ¼ teaspoon salt. Set aside.

When acorn squash is cooked, remove from oven. Reduce heat to 300°F. Carefully turn squash over and fill each cavity with about ½ cup of the risotto. Gently press about 2 tbsp of the pine nut mixture on top of the risotto in each squash half. Return squash to oven and bake until topping begins to brown, about 20 minutes. Transfer to plates and serve.



## English Muffins

By Andy Valencia

If your store-bought muffins have become flat little pucks of shrinkflation, bake them for yourself and get the classic muffin you remember, while saving some money.

### English Muffins

#### Ingredients

##### Dry mix:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 2 tsp salt
- 2¼ tsp active dry yeast

Mix dry ingredients together in large mixing bowl.

##### Wet mix:

- 1¾ cup whole milk
- ¼ cup water
- 1 tbsp butter

Pour wet ingredients together in saucepan, with butter cut into chunks. Put on medium-low heat, stir until butter entirely melts into liquid. Pour wet mix gradually into dry mix, stirring. Beat at low speed for a couple minutes. Add:

- 1 egg
- 1 cup all-purpose flour

Beat at high speed for a couple more minutes. Add flour until mixture can be kneaded without sticking aggressively to your hands. Knead until smooth and stretchy. Don't knead so long that it becomes tough!

Form a ball, put it back into mixing bowl, cover with damp dish towel, and put in oven set to "bread proof." If your oven doesn't do this, put it somewhere draft-free at room temperature or a little warmer. Let it rise until double in size, about an hour.

Punch down, form ball, and let rise again until double, about 45 minutes. In the meantime, put out a pair of cookie sheets dusted with corn meal. When the dough is ready, dump it out onto a floured surface and roll out to ½ inch thick. Use a 3¼ inch circular cutter to cut out each muffin – by eye with a knife is fine if you don't have one. Put each muffin on the sheet, spaced at least ¼ inch apart (they'll spread out a little bit during the final rise).

Dust each muffin top with some corn meal. Cover with plastic wrap. (Alas, the damp towel here would bond with the muffins.) Put back into the proving drawer and wait for them to double in height, about 45 minutes.

Heat up a griddle, or whatever you have with a large, flat surface (our flat cast-iron skillet works well). You want medium-low heat. Coat it lightly with oil or grease. Use your widest spatula and put the muffins onto the hot surface. Move them gently, as they're very soft and want to collapse. It should take about 9 minutes per side; each will get brown and sound hollow when tapped.


Your oil/grease will dry off as you progress, so refresh as needed. It helps with non-stick, but also helps transfer heat into the muffin. After one muffin finishes both sides, move it to a cookie rack and put another uncooked one in its place. It's an assembly line! Your muffins won't have all raised at the same rate, so take the tallest uncooked ones first.

After griddling, use a fork and split one open. If you find the outside is quite brown, but the inside is pretty soft, damp, or even still raw, preheat your oven to 325 degrees, and put them all in for about 20 minutes until baked through. Next time try for a lower skillet temperature and a slower brown on the muffins, that way the heat can bake them all the way through.

Let cool, fork split, toast, and enjoy.



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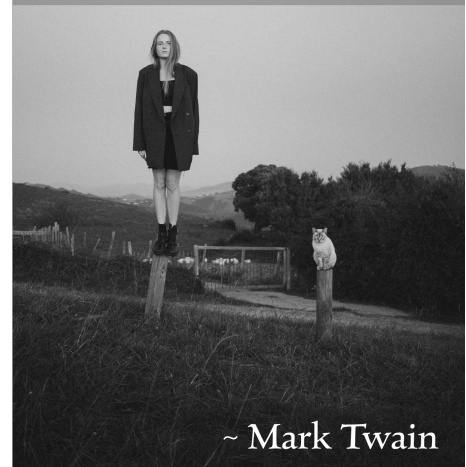
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A thing long expected takes the form of the unexpected when at last it comes.



~ Mark Twain



# Ode to Island Time

By Nova Berger

There's an orchestra on the Island, hidden deep within the wood.  
And if you have a whimsy mind and eager ears, go out and find it.  
(For nearly everyone really should.)

It's a show for those who stop in ponder,  
Who, like gulls, follow the wind of their wander.

For the breath of the Island is not one of quiet  
She whistles and puffs in bird song.  
As the bush tits hop and skip and bop,  
The whole island sings along.

The sea hums softly as it laps the rocks,  
And chirping choruses come from every bright red fox,  
And the treetop crows sing of sweet romance,  
Of finding lost love in the wood - ah, yes, perchance.

And the crows serenade ballads in the tree tops,  
To the symphony of twinkling raindrops.  
But when it rains, it's never blue  
Mist collects like moss, in every soft green papery hue

For the stage, the woods, a New World of the fairest.  
Of pink florets, Marion's berry, and, perchance, Zalusianskya  
(the rarest).

And the wind through ancient ferns tells whorls of stars  
Of whispery deep dark nothings, the secrets of Mira and Mars.

And if the Perseids did fall, they would rest on branches of birch  
And just like Mars's two moons, alight in their wondrous perch.

Indeed, the woods know the stories, and reflect the songs of the sea,  
Each humble cedar branch wrapped in green, a forest of sea anemone.

So come join the show,  
Let every breath be your song.  
Why, to live day by day by the rhyme of the sea,  
how could life ever go wrong?

*Nova Berger is a human evolutionary biology student and curiosity enthusiast dedicated to breaking the "Seattle freeze." Guided by Alice in Wonderland's philosophy - "You can do six impossible things before breakfast" - Nova embraces the unique opportunities Seattle offers. With a perspective that views the world as a cabinet of curiosities, Nova is passionate about sharing stories and helping fellow Seattleites discover their own distinctive "nooks" along the way.*

## Math Puzzle

By Anne Cotter Moses

Find two numbers that multiply to 60 and ...

- a) Add to 16
- b) Add to 17
- c) Subtract to 17
- d) Add to 23
- e) Subtract to 28

## Island poetry in these pages

How about yours?



Submit your poems to  
The Vashon Loop!

Write to: vashonloop-poetry@janevalencia.com



## Laughing Llamas Chronicles



By Daniel Hooker

- Q. What do you call a man who has been digging all day?
- A. Dug.
- Q. What do you call a man who hasn't been digging all day?
- A. Dug-less.
- ~
- Q. What do you call a cow with a twitch?
- A. Beef jerky.
- ~

I injured myself last month playing with radio waves.  
It still hertz.

- Q. What do you call an overweight psychic?
- A. A four chin teller.
- ~

I bought a wig at Granny's the other day for 25 cents.  
It was a small price toupee.

- Q. What kind of exercise do lazy people do?
- A. Diddly squats.
- ~

A dung beetle walks into a bar and asks the bartender, "Is this stool taken?"

I have this urge every day to sing the Lion King.  
But it's only a whim-away.



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

Your ruling planet Mars finally ends its retrograde on the 23rd. Yet along the way, it will form a tense 90-degree angle to Chiron in your birth sign. The result may be a need to control your feelings as a matter of integrity. It's not your feelings that need modulating but rather what you do in reaction to them. Being justified in what you feel is not justification for conduct—and that includes toward yourself. While it's dangerous to rationalize your emotions, you can learn a lot from observing them; and it's possible to use wisdom or understanding to work them out. Feelings often have a source; and it's usually not the thing we believe. The lesson from A Course in Miracles, "I am never upset for the reason I think," is good for limitless help here on Planet Upset.

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

Mars turns to direct motion on Feb. 23 after a 10-week retrograde—and that is an urgent caution against making any important commitments before then. Simply put, you could find yourself feeling very different on Feb. 24, and be left having to keep a promise that you made earlier in the month. Mars is also the planet that represents your relationships (via its connection to Scorpio) and your secret, inner, hidden self (via its connection to Aries). So that packs a lot of variables into one highly energetic planet (of motivation and drive) turning around in a sign so fickle as Cancer (think: the cycles of the Moon). Knowing and understanding what you want is very important to getting it; it's not your usual MO of "let things come to you and see what happens." You need an actual, winning strategy—not random chance.

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

Your financial scenarios are of top priority as Mars turns to direct motion in your house of personal resources. The money-related challenges for Gemini all involve dealing with cycles that seem to have nothing to do with you. Yet it's a fact that they do; these involve your energy level, your priorities, the value that you hold of yourself, and your willingness to dare—all these run like the tides, and that can be frustrating. But if the water recedes, eventually you know it's coming back. However, another factor is in play right now: the planet of motivation and desire is coming to a halt right in your 2nd house. This takes us to a larger issue: knowing what motivates you right now, at this point in your life. Events of the next few weeks will reveal the truth that you must have a meaningful emotional connection to anything related to your finances.

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

Retrograde Mars continues to dive backwards in your territory. This involves meeting Chiron in a crucial, structured 90-degree angle. This is yet another moment where your professional ambitions and plans will benefit from analysis, review and contingency planning. You're heading into entirely new territory as a contributor to culture or to society. And if this bug has not bitten you yet, it's almost certain to. It's fair to say that this calls for a measure of impeccability. You don't want too much integrity—you want just enough, and just enough flex. A "probe" is an experiment that involves dropping something into your environment and listening for the response. It's a gentle



# Planet Waves

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



process, which involves taking a conscious action and listening for the echo. Even a mistake you make can serve as a probe. This is like using sonar to make a map of your surroundings, including who and what is there. Then develop a map of your total workspace.

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

A close relationship may be presenting you with a diversity of mysteries, though you would go a long way by addressing two questions: what do you want, and what does a close partner or associate want? By "associate" I mean that this could pertain to a business-related partnership, though it's more likely to be about a personal contact. There is another way to live, which is to take it all as it comes. However, your relationships have a profound influence on you. You have other commitments. You have other responsibilities, and you have other interests. So it therefore makes sense to have the nearly impossible conversation about what we want and what we are doing, which begins with understanding individual intentions. There is something about your own intentions that you may not understand quite yet. To discern that will take some inner reflection, and some time to work out. A slow, steady inquiry will be the most helpful.

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

You will probably be happier if you allow your relationships to take their own course for a while, and focus instead on your creative pursuits and work-related projects. The Sun's movement through Aquarius, which lasts until Feb. 18, is the perfect time for this. Mercury, Pluto and many other factors will lead you into spaces where you can express some of your many excellent ideas. Part of the creative instinct is to lead you beyond an existence where that is your limitation. You must have something better, and that something must be meaningful to yourself and others. However, there is a catch, which is not letting any personal or social dramas distract you. There is no justification for jealousy or envy, professional or otherwise. And you owe it to yourself to work out the tendencies toward self-judgment that you may have picked up as a child from adults who should have known better but somehow did not. In a word, your remedy is gentleness.

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

You are being invited to widen your creative horizons, gently. Seen one way, you want to soar to some new height. But I recommend against that, if you want some fulfillment for your effort. Work within a container where you can express yourself. That might mean working in a specific room, or a defined project that you feel is manageable. The metaphor for your existence right now is that kind of containment: a fire burning in a fireplace rather than running out of control. However, you may be running into the idea of some kind of sacrifice—that which you feel you must give up to have something that you want. This is a commonplace issue as people develop their creative or financial discipline (or both). Yet concentrating your power is the only way to do

something productive with it.

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

In this new stage of your world—the one defined by Pluto in Aquarius—matters of family will be delicate, fragile and subject to disruption from forces that seem outside of your control. What is in your control is how you handle those influences. That's all about your response to what you see and feel. Your response will serve as an example to others and thus as a kind of amplifier or echo chamber. Do you have it in you to be magnanimous, forgiving, open-minded, patient, tolerant and demonstrably caring? Your situation in full is calling for those very qualities. You need them as much as anyone; this is about peace of mind and a sane environment for the young ones. There is a rising tide crashing against the feet of the clay of humanity right now, and you must be strong. True strength can only be grounded in love—not the romantic kind, but the kind that is rooted in something much deeper and more enduring. One of its qualities is forgiveness.

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

Your idea of integrity must include a great deal more flexibility. Much of the stress you've been experiencing involves pressures exerted on elements of your psyche that don't want to bend. Another word for bend is to give, and in order to have anything, you must give a little. Much of what you're certain of does not lead to helpful outcomes or conclusions. A diversity of developing factors indicate that without some intervention, your mind may be in a tense, anxious state. What would your mother be worried about right now, if she was in your situation? This is a thought exercise. Nearly everyone is dragging their parents around by the hair, though this often conceals itself as a practical approach to life. When you leave the house, imagine you have safely stashed your mom and potentially both parents with a babysitter and you don't have to worry about them. I suggest you concern yourself with the contribution that you want to make to society, and leave the idle worrying to others.

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

With Pluto now solidly in Aquarius, the responsibility is on you to find your own way. It's all too easy to allow others to set your priorities on a kind of committee basis. The question now is how much you've learned from the Pluto in Capricorn experience, which spanned early 2008 through late 2024—which was a major investment of time, personal challenge and inconvenience. What did you give up and what did you gain? Among the most intense pressures the world puts people under are to give up their priorities and their values. This goes beyond the ad that tells you how much you simply must have that diamond ring and is well into the territory of terrorism: believe this, or else. I could ask something like, "So what or where has this got you in the past?" And you could say, "It's got me to where I am today." The follow-up question, of course, is: where exactly is that? And how do you feel? Are you able to make decisions you can live with?

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

You seem to have a choice of going high, or going deep. But what you might really be looking for is a peak experience of inner awareness. The whole nature of the digital environment is to take people out of direct experience of ourselves. The nature of your astrology now strongly favors living from your core outward, and not letting the outward part of the experience distract you from the core part. It takes practice; people respond to you, and you're more emotionally sensitive than you let on. So you may need a routine of clearing your energy field of disturbance. This can also involve a practice of engaging with people close to you in specific and structured ways, such as regularly asking them, "So what's on your mind?" There is a measure of immunity in insisting that people be on the level—and being so yourself. The benefit is that you get to focus on what really matters, rather than being distracted by drama, gossip, and other forms of social games. Just remember, those games serve their purpose—toxic though it is.

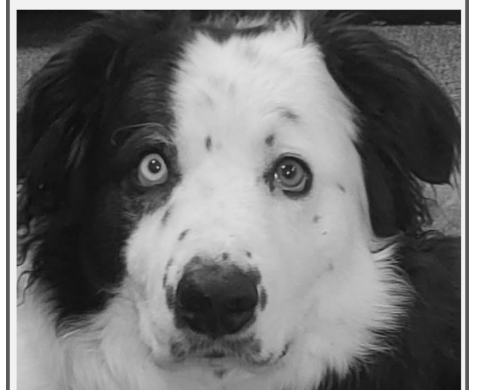
**Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)**

The theme this month is not just taking personal responsibility for your life, but also claiming the rewards that come with it. I raise this issue in a time when the role of "victim" is exalted and rewarded; when it is unassailable. Whole empires are built on the notion of the victim (Oprah) and it's the easiest way to take a rocket ride to one's 15 minutes of world-fame. And, it's wholly self-defeating. I'm talking about going back through your history and doing some cleanup work on what has happened in the past (by whatever means) and taking full ownership. Hence, a history of childhood abuse calls for therapy (not raging against or blaming others). Bad relationship choices call for making better ones. And the ways in which your neglect or self-interest have hurt others also call for a reckoning, which may include making that difficult phone call to apologize. Our society is in a grotesque state right now, largely because nobody wants to take responsibility for anything—and is not encouraged to do so. The upshot here is that in your life, the buck stops with you.

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**If you are asking if I need you, the answer is forever.**

**If you are asking if I will leave you ... the answer is never.**



**If you are asking what I value, the answer is you.**

**If you are asking if I love you, the answer is I do ...**

~ Rumi