

## High Above!

Mabel Moses takes joyful ease on a towering branch.

Photo by Vera Moses

Story  
**Island to Island, Forest to Forests, Part 2**

Read on Page 7



## Pinball on Vashon: Den of Pin

By Andy Valencia

What happens when a place to digitally detox meets a museum? That would be a great description of the Den of Pin, the latest Vashon hangout. Pay a small cover charge, then step away from the relentless world of 5G, AI, and social media. In their place, enjoy playing vintage pinball machines. And we do mean vintage; an electrician from the 1920s would have no problem understanding and then servicing any one of these games.

We sat down with owner Mo Davis, who – while not a 1920s electrician – has mastered all the ancient skills of electronics in order to bring this roomful of pinball machines to life. He offered us a drink, and we requested the cheapest, yellowest beer on his menu. Placing the bottles in front of us, he recommended we finish them before they warmed up and their full flavor came through. He has much better beers available, but it felt right to drink something that hearkened back to the era of smugglers and bathtub gin. Over our cheap beers, we learned about Mo’s labor of love.

Modern pinball machines, like all the rest of the world, are chock full of CPU’s, LCD or even OLED screens, and all sorts of software. The generation before them was “solid state,” which meant there were transistors and logic circuits. Keep going back and you’re finally standing shoulder-to-shoulder with that 1920s electrician – the game’s bell rings because an electromagnet pulled a clapper against it. A “bumper” thrusts the ball away with another electromagnet – and it detects the ball because it bumped into a finger of metal, which closed a contact to activate the bumper.

All the rest of these games are also built from the same basic electronics. An electromagnet advances your score counter. A weighted piece of metal hangs straight down; if it touches the circle of metal surrounding it, the machine ends your game. That’s the so-called “tilt” sensor, to keep you from physically lifting the game to keep the current ball in play – that is, to keep you from cheating.

We came across one machine, powered off and with its play table lifted up so you can see the electronics usually hidden inside. The game wasn’t broken; Mo just likes to leave one like this to let customers appreciate the complexity and ingenuity behind one of these pinball games. So many sensors, and electromagnets, and lights – each in its precise place, with bundles of wires reaching along tidy, purposeful paths to connect all the items.

One could trace each wire, but that’s not necessary. Amazingly, there are manuals and wiring diagrams for every single pinball machine at

## This Getting Old Stuff is Not for the Faint of Heart

By Pam (aka Gates) Johnson

Oh yeah, everybody says it’s better than the alternative, but I’m not sure. Nobody I know has tried the alternative enough to give me a firm evaluation on the pros and cons. I’m not saying that I am ready to shuffle off this mortal coil just yet, but again, getting old stinks.

First off, my body seems to be turning on me because of the not-so-kind things I did to it in days gone by. I hauled hay, ran the tractor, mowed the acre of lawn, hoisted sacks of grain and dog food, and toted kids on my left hip while doing whatever was needed with my right side. Being young and strong, I gave no second thought to what might happen to these muscles and bones in the long haul. Now I know.

The old saw, “No good deed goes unpunished” is true. The constant carrying things that were probably too heavy resulted in two hip and one knee replacements, with the possibility of the second knee coming soon. Typing, calligraphy, and pie-making turned into carpal tunnel and trigger finger syndrome. Hay crew diet and eating too much of everything became type 2 diabetes. Back stuff just goes without saying.

It might sound like my aches and pains were caused by my farm lifestyle and bad choices. To the contrary, my city-raised friends are also in the throes of aging. Maybe their long walks on the beach and European walking tours caused, or exacerbated, their worn-out hips and knees. Those “ball-type” sports resulted in shoulder problems. Eating good-for-you nuts and granola wore out their teeth. Who knows, maybe all those facts they crammed into their heads filled up the space and some stuff started falling out their ears.

It’s hard watching family and friends start to show the effects of aging. Some previously very

## Vashon’s Animal Massage School, and a Cosmic Retreat for the Modern-Day Cowgirl

By Caitlin Rothermel

Since 2001, the Northwest School for Animal Massage, run by Lola Michelin and her husband, David Cota-Robles, has trained students in the art and science of animal bodywork. In 2011, the school relocated to a scenic 12-acre property north of Vashon town, and now welcomes between 80 and 120 students each year.

Some students are career changers. Others are groomers, farriers, trainers, or vet techs. And then there are local animal lovers, who want to learn how to work on their own horses or dogs. “It’s primarily a career training program,” Michelin says, “but students come from all walks of life.”

The school offers a hybrid model – students take online courses and also come to the Island for hands-on training. “The foundation level is 200 hours,” Michelin explains. “In Washington State, we have a minimum of 300 hours and some specific requirements to get the license.” Most students complete their training in 8 to 12 months, depending on their pace.

Over time, the school has created ripple effects across the Island. “We do have a number of graduates on Vashon who either have their own practices or help with the school,” says Michelin. Community members often volunteer their dogs or horses for practice sessions. “People from all over Vashon bring their dogs for class. It’s really fun for us because we get to know the community through their dogs.”

The practice of equine massage has deep roots. “Horse massage is probably as old as horses,” says Michelin. “The first evidence we have is in Chinese texts, when they would prepare horses for battle

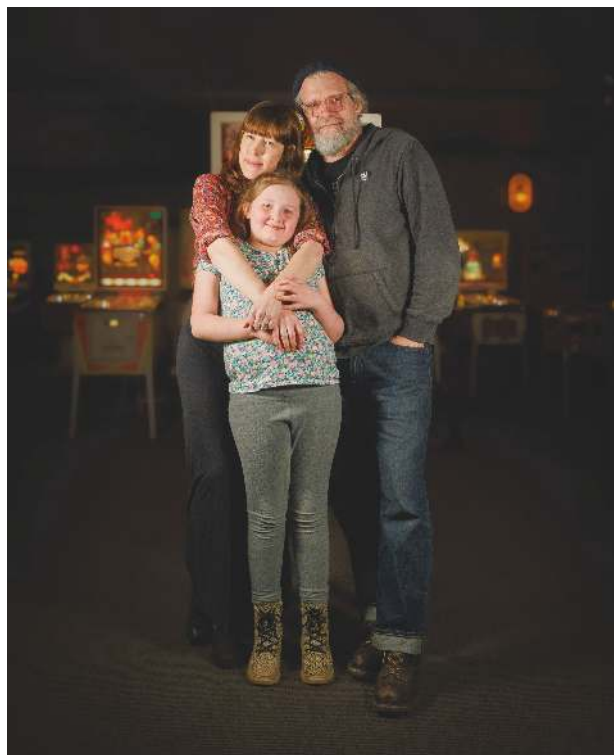


Photo by Steve Rocketkar  
[www.rocketkar.com](http://www.rocketkar.com)



Let’s Learn  
Twulshootseed

By Jane Valencia

This month, let’s learn to say:  
ʔəsʰid čəxʷ How are you?

To hear how to pronounce the  
phrase, use the QR code or go to:  
[www.puyalluptriballanguage.org/  
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For Loop articles about Twulshootseed, visit  
[vashonloop.com](http://vashonloop.com).



Hear how to  
say ʔəsʰid čəxʷ



This Getting Old Stuff is Not for the Faint  
of Heart

Continued from Front Page

active friends now can’t walk without  
pain. People I’ve known for years  
can’t remember my name. Sometimes  
words just disappear, even though  
you’ve used them all your life. You  
forget where you parked your car, if  
you still drive. Eyesight and hearing  
are on the downhill slide.

The most difficult thing to watch  
is seeing the light in their eyes slowly  
dim. And it’s hard to realize that it’s  
happening to me, too. If not now, it is  
waiting in the wings. There is no  
manual telling me when things will  
really start to decline. What do I look  
for? Are there signs I am ignoring or  
things I should be doing? Should I get  
more active, join more groups,  
become more friendly and outgoing?  
Should I give up my favorite foods?  
Stop drinking soda? Go to church?  
Volunteer for worthy causes? Donate?

There are some steps I am  
working on, like keeping up with  
doctor’s appointments. Making sure  
my will and associated documents are  
in order. Keeping my bills paid.  
Calling my family members and  
friends just to check in. Continuing to  
go exercise classes. Cleaning the  
house, doing the laundry, and  
washing the dishes.

Some things that were put off for  
too many years I now have time for.  
Finally, I have an outlet for my  
writing (thank you, Vashon Loop). I  
can teach my grandson how to cook. I  
can make the home improvements

that were unaffordable before. I can  
knit. Watch whatever TV show that  
sparks my interest. I can, and did, get  
a tattoo.

A real positive that has come with  
age is the “I don’t care or give-a-shit”  
attitude that can now be turned loose.  
I can say what I want and not care if  
someone doesn’t like it. I can voice  
my opinions. Right or wrong, they are  
MY opinions. If you don’t like it,  
don’t listen.

I can go where I want. If I want to  
go to Costco at 7:00 p.m., who cares?  
If I want to have ice cream, and only  
ice cream, for dinner, I can! Nobody  
can tell me what to do or when to do  
it. If I want to curse at other drivers  
while I am in the car alone, let ‘er rip.  
And if I want to stay up all night  
watching bad TV, then sleep all the  
next day, I will do it. Liberating.

I guess the crux of this rant is:  
Aging is inevitable, there is no getting  
around it. The choice is: Do you want  
to go out being remembered as  
someone who was meek and mild,  
who followed the rules and never  
rocked the boat? Or do you want your  
legacy to be that person who stood up  
for what they believed in and wasn’t  
afraid to say shit if they stepped in it?

I think I am somewhere in the  
middle. Rules, generally speaking,  
should be followed. If you rock the  
boat too furiously, it might tip over,  
so be thoughtful of your “rocking.” I  
will scream and holler and do  
everything I can to keep your boat  
afloat. I will defend you as long as  
your position is defensible. And if I  
step in shit, I will certainly call it what  
it is.

The Vashon Loop

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# Vashon’s Animal Massage School, and a Cosmic Retreat for the Modern-Day Cowgirl

Continued from Front Page

using massage and acupressure techniques.” you.”

Later, in the early years of English horse racing, grooms were responsible for getting horses ready for the race, and helping them to recover, using massage. “They would sometimes even wrap towels around their hands like boxing gloves to work over the horse’s muscles,” Michelin says.

At Michelin’s school, students learn to tailor massage based on an animal’s temperament and body type. One elective course, for example, teaches horse temperament typing through the lens of Chinese medicine; see the figure accompanying this article for a summary.

These days, the school offers training in foundational as well as performance massage for sport horses and dogs, acupressure, and rehabilitation for animals recovering from injury.

This summer, the school will host a new kind of gathering: the Cosmic Cowgirl Camp.

The idea came to Michelin in a dream, following a retreat studying equine-assisted learning in Arizona, “I had this vision that there are women who, as adults, don’t get to go to camp and just have fun like we did when we were kids. Even if you’re not a cowgirl, there’s a cowgirl in

As Michelin sees it, the cowgirl spirit blends nurturing with resolve. “We all, as women, have to be strong sometimes – but strong in the soft way that we’re capable of. Firm, but very nurturing. That’s a cowgirl trait.”

The horses will be present at Cowgirl Camp, not as the focus, but as companions and guides. “You learn so much from a horse ... how you handle space, how you can influence something in your environment,” Michelin says. “Horses are unique in that they have tremendously large electromagnetic fields. From 30 feet away, you’re already influencing them, and they’re influencing you. For a lot of people, horses are a calming presence.”

What can Cosmic Campers expect? Yoga and meditation with horses in the background, trailblazing, knot-tying clinics, foraging walks, fence-mending. And of course, campfires and reflective time on the land. There will also be a cosmology component where guests will learn their personality archetypes and explore their inner “Cosmic Cowgirl,” using historical figures like Annie Oakley. “She was a sacred rebel,” Michelin explains, “She was an earth-tender, a protector of horses.”

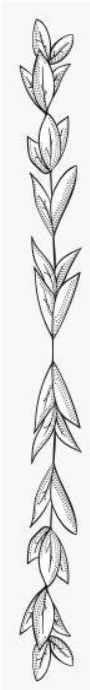
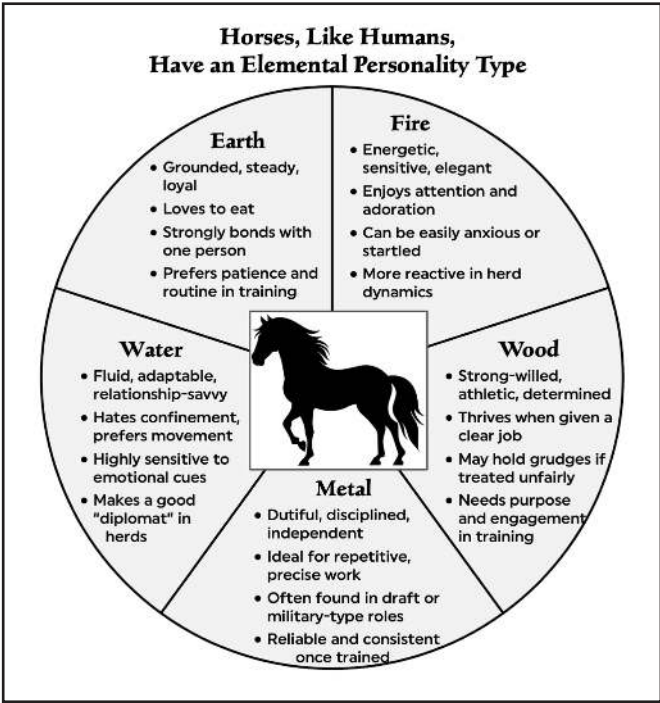
The one-, two-, and three-night



worrying about the past and looking ahead to the future, or thinking about obligations that we have and not taking the time to just be fully present.”

Platform tents are provided, bunkhouse-style, and no horse experience is needed. The goal is for participants to rediscover the cowgirl spirit inside. “Even if you’ve never touched a horse in their life, you can still recognize that strength, that courageousness and grit that we think of when we think of the iconic cowgirl.”

Early bird camp registration is open through June 15th, and you can visit <https://cosmiccowgirlcamp.com/> or [nwsam.com](https://nwsam.com) to learn more about the camp or massage school.



## Pinball on Vashon: Den of Pin

Continued from Front Page

Den of Pin. Even the oldest machine – made in the 1940s – has had its documentation preserved by a worldwide community of pinball enthusiasts. Those enthusiasts are surrounded by a community of pinball players, and of course pinballmap.com lets them find pinball parlors anywhere in the world. Mo’s place is listed, and he believes it’s the only parlor featuring exclusively electromagnetic games.

Mo’s parlor has already drawn in its share of visitors – not just from the US, but reaching all the way out to Norway and Japan. The Norwegian player loved the parlor so much that he cancelled his Seattle-side hotel and relocated to a rental right on Vashon. It’s not just individuals; Mo’s parlor hosts actual tournaments, with competitors lined up at the machines to demonstrate the ancient skills of pinball wizardry. Even as we sat and talked with Mo, a 10-year-old boy right across from us broke the record for that particular pinball machine.


Mo is still dialing in his parlor’s design. We

interviewed at a table with a view of Bank Road. At one point he broke off to examine the new window treatments going in – blackout curtains. “I want this to be its own little world; you can come in and play, and when you go back out to the street, I want you to be a little uncertain about what time it is.”

An island of retro tech right in the heart of Vashon Island.

About that digital detox. Ironically, Mo said he’s reluctantly going to start accepting digital payment options at the door. He hates letting big banks take a cut of his business’s success, but too many people would rather walk away than break out a \$10 bill. Maybe a couple hours soaking in the electro-mechanical ambience of Den of Pin will help bring them back to a world where computers are neither needed nor wanted.

Visit Den of Pin at 9919 Bank Road (across from Luna). Roughly 29 machines available to play. Available for events! (503)381-3923



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# His Bark is Worse than His Byte

By Seán C. Malone and John Sweetman

Seán and I have always had dogs of one kind or another in our lives, and we have a lot of “dog” stories to relate. Getting older, it would appear that we have “downsized” a bit, as we now both have members of the Terrier clan.

Seán’s little dog, “Duffy,” is a Jack Russell “rough coat,” while my wife and I have a Cairn. When Seán first got Duffy as a small pup, we had two Cairns, Robby the older one and Liam, a pup the same young age as Duffy. In theory, terriers are “ratters,” but only Duffy seems to have been serious about his genetic “ratting” heritage.

The older Cairn, Robby, preferred to chase squirrels who would taunt him just out of reach in our birch tree. He then graduated to chasing crows, who would also fearlessly taunt him. Somehow, he got crows confused with jets when the flight paths changed slightly to put them directly overhead, and he would chase them.

The only thing Robby ever caught was a raccoon, late one night. The consequences of that act were unfortunate, but only for me as I was the one who had to drag him out of a blackberry patch while wearing pajamas.

Liam was more into the pursuit of rats than the actual catching. He would dig endless holes in hopes of, well, whatever dogs hope for at the end of the tunnel. Mainly, the only thing he brought back was loads of dirt, debris, and stinky stuff from the

# Island Voices

compost pile. He ended up with a lot of baths as a pup.

Duffy, on the other hand is a natural ratter! He gets into the tightest corners and will not give up. Of course, Duffy received training in the ratting arts from “Victoria,” Seán’s cat when Duffy first came. She was a master hunter, and at first resented the competition, but came to mostly get along with him. Occasionally, Victoria would discipline the Duff with a swift sharp paw across the nose, which is why when Duffy visits our house, our cats are completely at ease.

Seán has a story about one of his most memorable dogs.

Her name was Pan, after Seán’s Black Panther of Vashon. My income consisted of selling her Black Lab pups, \$75.00 for the males and \$35.00 for a female. She had nine pups in one of several litters.

We lived one-half mile south of the Cove store on five acres that ran all the way to the beach. Our creek, which we called “No Name Creek,” was a favorite spot for fishing for cutthroat trout and hunting ducks.

One day after school, I unlimbered Mom’s 20-gauge Remington shotgun and Pan and I headed for the beach. By creeping through the brush, we got close to where we heard a flock of Widgeon feeding in the creek.

I jumped up and fired two shots into the flock as they rose from where they were feeding. I dropped six ducks, which Pan began to retrieve from the cold and fast-moving Colvos Passage. One at a time, Pan retrieved the ducks, except for one that continued to swim far from shore. Pan was an extraordinary swimmer and would not give up the chase.

I was afraid that Pan might drown, as she was almost halfway across the mile-wide passage, about 20 feet behind the swimming duck. I tried calling her back, using my Acme Thunderer dog whistle, to no avail. I could barely see her when she finally caught up with and gingerly began to retrieve the duck. I was worried sick that Pan wasn’t going to make it to shore and called to reassure her. She finally walked out of the cold water and retrieved the duck to my extended hand, the way she had been intending to do.

We preferred Mallard ducks to the Widgeon, as the Widgeon tasted fishy if they had been on the sound more than a few days in their migration from the wheat fields of Saskatchewan.

Duffy and I were invited to the Vashon Heritage Museum’s 2025 Spring Gala by the Engles Family, and because one of their guests brought his terrier, I was able to take Duffy into “O” Space on his leash. Every time the audience clapped at a remark by the speaker, Duffy would bark continuously until the clapping stopped. He added his to that of the audience, helping to raise money for our museum.



## McMicken Bay

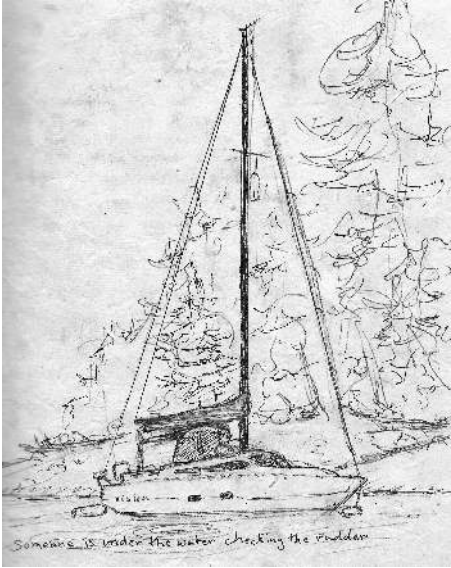
By Suzanna Leigh

During the dark days of winter, my boat sits alone at the dock, the leak I neglected to fix last summer dripping enough moisture into the cabin to encourage mold on the walls and rust on the stove. Her keel sports a beard of sea algae. She needs some work to get her ready to sail again, and Oh! I so don’t want to spend my limited time and energy on boat maintenance! Best, I think, to clean her up and sell her.

But then comes warmer weather. A breeze plays on the water as I look out over Tramp Harbor, and I long to play in it, to feel the push of wind on sail as it carries me north to adventure, or south through the Narrows to a cozy little cove I know. A cove such as the little bay behind McMicken Island.

~

It was quiet when we dropped anchor in McMicken Bay, between an island about the size of a city park and Hartstine Island. No sound but the cries of crows. There were two or three sailboats with couples lounging on deck. Someone dropped a crab pot. A few people dug clams on the beach. The water was thick with jellyfish called sea nettles. Their name answers the question about what would happen if Bob came in contact with one while he was in the water.



Sailboat at McMicken  
Sketch by Suzanna Leigh

Bob plans to dive under the boat tomorrow morning, to check out an annoying rattle. We think it might just be a loose “zinc,” a zinc disk on the propeller shaft that draws the electric current away from the metal shaft. An electric current forms between the different metals on the hull and engine, causing the metals to be eaten away – unless there is a third metal that gets eaten away more quickly, usually a disk of zinc. The zinc is sacrificed to save the propeller and shaft.

The next morning, with fewer sea nettles in evidence, Bob and I planned

how he would get back up on the boat after his dive. The water, even in July in this shallow cove, was so cold, it took his breath away, and he wouldn’t be able to get his foot up to the boat ladder. If our plan A didn’t work, our plan B was that I would load blankets into the dingy and tow Bob to shore to dry and warm up before coming back to the boat on the dingy. It’s easy to get onto the boat ladder from the dingy.

Plan A did work, though. Bob connected the jib halyard – the end that connects to the jib sail – to his life jacket. The other end wound around a winch that would make it easier for me to haul him up just as though I was hauling up the sail. We strung a line from the bow to a pulley at the

stern and from there to the other jib winch and cleat, making it secure. The line sank far enough below the water surface that Bob could get his foot on it. From there, he could get his foot on the boat ladder, when I hauled him up. I used the winch handle to give me more leverage, and it worked!

And yes, it was the lump of zinc turning loosely on the propeller shaft that was rattling. Bob determined that it was doing no damage and we could wait until we were at the home dock to fix it.

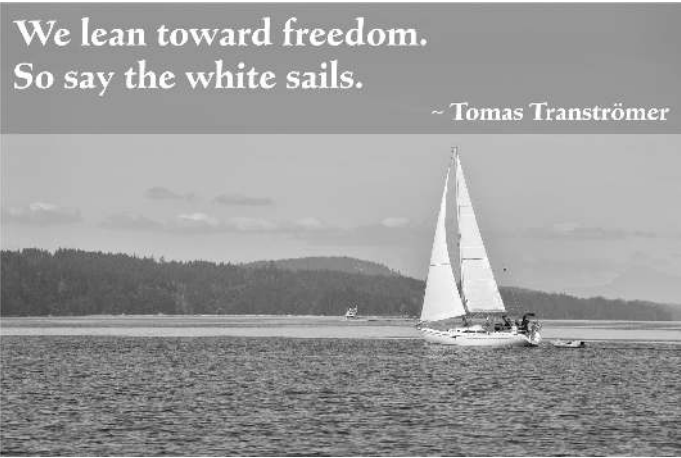
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Remembering McMicken Bay, I think maybe there are more boating adventures ahead. Maybe I don’t want to sell the boat quite yet.



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Melanie Farmer  
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# From Thirty Dolls to Three

By Steve Lane

I don't disagree with the President: we should rein in consumption. But that is certainly a departure from the new era of prosperity that he campaigned on. And it demonstrates the disconnection of Privilege from what normal people experience. Yes indeed, there is a lot of fat to be trimmed. But is my access to healthcare part of the fat to be trimmed? Is it the everyday person's access to affordable housing, or a career? A pension? Food and transportation?

Why does the weight of the belt-tightening always fall upon those who are already struggling?

Why are we attacking our field workers, taking away their basic human right to due process, liberty, and justice?

The huddled masses want to know.

Who has 30 dolls, anyhow?

It is the height of gluttony to rendition legal AND illegal residents to the prisons of a foreign dictator. The fat does not reside within our migrant workers and their children, it resides within Elon and Trump and their ilk. It resides within those who steal the futures of hard-working laborers.

I went to elementary school in the early 1970s in McAllen, the deep south of Texas, 7 miles from the border with Mexico. At school, we white kids were far outnumbered by the children of migrant workers. Nobody batted an eye. We were good friends and our parents were fine with educating the children of those who brought us our food.

When I was 18 and married, I worked at the produce terminal in San Antonio driving and unloading trucks. My mentors were Mexicans. The guy I worked for had come to this country from Mexico decades before, illegally. He lived in a dump and worked hard and gained legal status and prospered. He provided for generations of his family and created jobs for multitudes of others. He

appreciated hard work as much as anyone, ever.

Celebrate labor. Reward it. Respect it. Do not worship Privilege, you are not a part of it; the Privileged know this better than you do. All that Privilege will do is incite honest, hard-working, everyday people to fight with other honest, hardworking, everyday people. Because if we are busy hating each other while the Privileged steal our future, soon enough it will be you with your future stolen.

When there are food shortages, it will be the fault of the family farmers. When there is not enough water to sustain the lawns of the rich and famous, it will be the fault of those who drink water.

The script that these folks are following is the same narrative that informed the National Socialists in the 1930s and 40s in Germany. Almost verbatim. Instead of questioning the guy who inherited \$400 million and never worked a labor job in his life, they want you to question those who are least able to protect themselves.

Don't ever listen to cowards who could not have survived your life. They are selling you snake oil and they are carnival barkers.

They are the Pied Piper.

Don't buy into the fear. Don't buy the crypto coin. You are here to stand up for those who can't. That is life, and it's better than what they are offering you.

By Dave B

Here is one we all find troublesome. The famous, or infamous, four-way stop sign. Prominently displayed from the bar seats at the Hardware Store where people drink, eat, and watch headstrong or unconcerned drivers navigate into downtown alongside 200 other drivers, all coming off the ferry to discover the Island, and trying not to crash at 10 mph into a fellow pedestrian, dog walker, family function or jaywalker.

So, let's look at the Washington State Driver's Guide. How should octagonal red sign that says "STOP" on it to be interpreted? I believe, in my infinite wisdom, it means to stop your vehicle from going any further.

OK, so far so good. Now what? Ohhh, now we have to decide who goes first, since four cars came to a stop at the same time. I have a bumper sticker on my car that says "You go, no you go" because Vashon residents tend to be courteous and let other cars go first. My wife chastised me because it was supposed to go on

# Stop or Don't?

the FRONT of the car, but to me that is silly. Who reads bumper stickers on the FRONT of your car unless you are about to get run over?

Back to the dilemma. Who goes first? I believe it is the person who got to said stop sign first or the person on your right. But is everyone at the intersection on your right at some point? Sooooo, what do we do?

Let's look at this logically. Who needs to get to Island Queen for a chocolate sundae? They go first. Second, who has the biggest truck? Next, let's let the oldest person or a veteran go out of respect. Lastly, it would be me.

BUT, what if everyone in the area is young, has a Prius or Outback, and is not hungry? How about just common sense? Not everyone got to the stop sign at EXACTLY the same time, really. Who goes first is who REALLY got there first. No yelling, no hand gestures, just a calm breath and let the one on the right go - ha ha!

If you see a green truck with a shell on it, let him go first. He will thank you!



## Island Voices Speak

When you send letters to the Loop, we read them! In this issue, we have collected a few distinctive Island voices.

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# Changing History/Greatness

By Scott Harvey

In a recent issue of The Loop, a January 17th Seattle Times article was quoted by author Michael Shook. According to Rev. Leslie Braxton, "[America's] reality was enslavement and injustice and discrimination. America was founded and grounded in racism. And anybody who says differently is being intellectually dishonest."

In the present day, I believe most people would agree enslavement, injustice, discrimination, and racism are wrong and unacceptable. However, what about historical slavery, injustice, discrimination, and racism? If you consider the last 6,000 years of history, you discover that such behavior was not good or bad, it just was. Every "great," powerful empire acted in this manner on the way to becoming powerful.

Let's start by substituting easy-to-recognize empires instead of the United States in the paragraph above. Today we have Russia and China. In the 19th-20th centuries, you had the Japanese and German Empires. Before America existed, you had the British, Spanish, and French Empires. The Viking Empire (Scandinavia) was smaller, but still formable from the 8th to 11th centuries. The Holy Roman Empire, covering most

of Europe, also was happening.

The mega-empires were earlier, with the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) lasting six centuries and including North Africa, East Asia, and Europe, and the Mongol Empire extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the Pacific Ocean. Of course, don't forget the ancient civilizations of Rome and Egypt. What was a major source of resources for all these empires? Slavery, which created injustice, discrimination and racism.

We also should be clear about indigenous peoples. The Incas and Aztecs used slave and even human sacrifices. Slavery also was common among many Native American and first Nations tribes to the north, via tribal warfare. It should be noted that most of the slaves for the New World were provided by black Africans.

So, in reality, all civilization is based upon slavery and its related injustices. While it is important to note historical slavery, should people or persons who employed slavery have their historic, sometimes heroic, efforts be diminished because they participated in what was "normal" behavior at the time?

Let's consider America. While racism and discrimination still exist, it continues to decline.

What of this country is "grounded in racism?"

America welcomes more documented immigrants every year than any other nation, averaging over one million annually, most of whom are people of color. If not for America's participation in the two World Wars, there would be no socialist countries in Europe, which would be entirely under fascist German rule. Afterwards, America rebuilt Europe using The Marshall Plan. Since then, America's defense spending of 3.4% of GDP, and participation in NATO, has allowed European countries to spend more on social programs, while investing less than 2% of their GDP in defense spending.

And what about charitable cash donations by individuals in different nations? According to a report by the Charitable Aid Foundation in 2016 titled, "Gross Domestic Philanthropy," the US was the number one country at 1.44% of GDP, with New Zealand second at 0.79% of GDP. Individuals donated over \$258 billion, more than three times the total donated (\$81 billion) by the next 23 nations (UK, Germany, Russia, China, etc.) COMBINED. Keep in mind these figures do not include the billions spent by the federal government.

There is no perfect country, and the US is far from it. However, in modern history America has remained "Great" for more than a century, regardless of who was president.



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Rat poison in pet food? One of the biggest and most heavily contaminated agricultural by-products in the U.S. is widely used for two things: rat poison and pet food.

Ethanol production is big business, and corn is the most common raw ingredient used. The process by which corn is transformed into ethanol results in byproducts called “corn gluten meal” or “corn distiller’s grains.”


The problem? Because these grains are earmarked for ethanol production, they receive dangerous amounts of glyphosate throughout the growing cycle, making them extremely effective as rat poison. Unfortunately, these byproducts have also found their way into low-quality pet foods as fillers.

Check your labels before you buy!

Beauty and Peace

Editor's note: In our May issue, we printed this image in grayscale, but we at the Loop love it in color. Enter the garden!

Photo by Jo Ann Herbert.



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



Contact us at  
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The happiest of all things is when an old friend comes and greets us as in former times; the heart is comforted with the assurance that some day everything that we have loved will be given back.




Johanna Spyrki

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## There’s No Place Like Home, Part 2

By Daniel Hooker

Olga and I met at our Vashon Library, to complete the second part of her story (“There’s No Place Like Home.”) I listen to Olga and the details of her intensive caring for two raccoon cubs. From the after-meal belly massages (feeding being done with a small eye dropper of a bottle), to sprinkling water on their reproductive areas to promote urination, I realize all the love, caring, and compassion that she instilled upon them would be passed on to the individuals visiting in the bomb shelter she converted into the Raccoon Cafe. The raccoon’s playful interactions would have a calming, grounding effect upon those who were in need of such a meeting of nature’s beautiful creatures.

Olga’s support of her community under siege extended to supplying transportation to an international organization that brought food to those who are hungry, specifically to civilians trapped on the front lines of war-torn countries. I’m in awe of this heroine before me, speaking to my heart of the human condition, and the needs that she filled, as she watched her society crumble.

She made this statement: “What should I do in my life. Should I wait for the missile to drop on me, or participate in helping people in my community?”

Olga continues her story. She speaks of herself and others rescuing people during the random

bombardment of missiles, ushering people to safety, into the Raccoon Cafe, down below the city streets of Central Kharkiv.

Olga’s journey soon changed as she continued to pursue her studies in Barcelona to achieve her Masters Degree in Business.

Before moving to Spain, Olga visited Barcelona, and was able to convince herself to enjoy the moment of being just a human, enjoying the richness of the Spanish, and the relaxed state of living for which the Spaniards are so renowned.

Olga felt guilty about enjoying herself in Spain as the war raged on in Ukraine. She gave herself the license to live in the present.

She purchased a discounted ticket (50 Euros, instead of 100 Euros) to witness the architectural wonder and artistry of the Basilica de la Sagrada Familia, the most ornate cathedral known to mankind in present times, still under construction through several generations.

Olga’s description of this cathedral is incredible. Her eyes, face, and being light up angelically as she describes the feelings, the atmosphere of peace she felt as she soaked up the essence of the light streaming through the colored ornate windows, reflecting natural sunset hues streaming into this inner sacred cathedral, of homage to a spiritual figure, promoting peace, compassion, understanding, and brotherly love.



*In Ukraine: Olga and one of her raccoons*

Olga says, “Each wall and section where I looked was the story of Jesus, from his birth, the time of his teaching his disciples, to his crucifixion, as well as his resurrection from death.”

All of which is just a template of what we as humans aspire to.



## Island to Island, Forest to Forests, Pt 2

By Jane Valencia

*Mabel Moses, a graduate of University of British Columbia’s Faculty of Forestry, now lives on Haida Gwaii. Part 1 of this series appeared in our April 2025 issue. In Part 2, we spend some time in the forest.*

All quotes in this article are from Mabel Moses.

In Part 1, Mabel spoke of the tensions among perspectives in Forestry that she encountered in her studies at UBC, and in her summer work in the industry. What may seem like contrary views appear even with Mabel’s life.

Going into the Forestry program, Mabel acknowledges, “I was definitely a bit of a tree hugger.” That said, “When we built our house, we cut down all those trees and got them milled on Vashon. And I got to watch all that happen. I’ve always loved building things and carpentry. So I think I’ve also always been kind of excited when I see logging because I’m like, oh, that’s where all the wood comes from.”

This perhaps nurtured her ability to understand the different perspectives and relationships that people can have with the forest. “It’s a living thing, but we also need to kill it to live.”

But within this need to harvest, is a field dominated by the impersonal.

“One of the foundational things in my degree is learning how we decide how much logging is sustainable for our forests. The basic philosophy underlying these decisions comes from math equations made when Europe figured out they were running out of wood. These equations will tell you how to harvest your forest so you have a consistent supply of 80 or so year-old trees. ‘Sustainable Forestry,’ meaning you sustain a supply of wood. It feels sort of like farming.

“It’s my understanding that a lot of forestry is still following these

equations, which is the idea that if you’re harvesting at or below the rate that trees are growing back, you’ll be fine.”

In BC, loss to wildfires is accounted for in how much harvest is allowed.

“In my value system, it’s kind of a gross way to look at it. ‘How much can we possibly take from the forest without depleting this as a resource for ourselves?’ is how it’s looked at.

“Can we go a step further? And ask, What is a forest? Is it just trees? Is it a monocrop of a single tree species, planted so densely that understory plants do not have light to grow? Because if a forest is more than just trees, if a forest is a diverse community of plants, animals, insects, then I don’t think we are being very sustainable maintaining our ‘forests.’ We are logging diverse forests and replanting them to densely packed trees with little habitat for mammals, amphibians, and insects.”

Mabel describes another difference between old-growth and newly planted forests. Something she didn’t expect would hit her so dramatically until she experienced it:

“Last summer I was working during a heat wave. I’d get into the old growth in the morning when it was still cool, work there all day and feel happy, relaxed, surrounded by good smells and soft moss. And then as soon as I’d walk out, either into a second-growth forest that’s growing up, or sometimes into a clear cut, the heat just hits. We’re actually in a heat wave. And I wouldn’t even realize it when I was in the old-growth forest because they’re just built to be resilient. They’ll be a lot more cool and feel a lot more normal. The plants will still be healthy, while outside of them the second-growth and clear-cuts feel much drier, with wilted plants, and more effects of the heat wave.”

Mabel reiterates that this is just her observation, but “It’d be cool to

do more studies on this since heat waves are more and more common every summer around here.”

Not only do the old-growth forests seem to modulate temperature, they offer other benefits and gifts, both quantifiable and not.

“When I’m in them, my science mind is going, ‘Oh, this is so exciting. Look at all these species, look at all these homes for birds and other stuff too.’ But under all of it is a feeling of being taken care of. I feel calm and that it’s going to be okay. I am surrounded by thousand-year-old beings, and it feels like being a little child in your mother’s womb.

“The sensation is different in second-growth forests. It feels like there are a lot of struggles in there. You can tell that all the trees are just doing their best, but it’s not the same.”

The experiential and spiritual side of old-growth forests is what’s most important to Mabel personally, and this can be very painful.

“It’s hard because, a lot of the time I’ll be working in old-growth forests where the reason we have access to them is because there’s a logging road to them. A lot of the time, they’ll have a cut block boundary around them, and you’ll be in them and having these amazing experiences. I do a lot of digging in the soil and you’ll be a meter down into thousands and thousands of years of soil, and you just feel kind of euphoric. It might be the methane. Sometimes when I’m digging, the soil is the best smell in the world. So full of history and life.”

Mabel notes that there are studies about how soil makes you happy, and indeed that is the effect for her.

“And then I’ll wake myself up and recall, I’m in a cut block right now. Right next to me there’s a road right-of-way tag, and within a year it’s all going to be gone.

“There’ve been moments with my whole team where we just cry. Afterwards we’re like, this is so devastating.

“Because so many of the old-

growth trees, you just look at them and know that as soon as they’re cut, they’re going to splinter into a million pieces. Old-growth cut blocks are filled with splinters and chunks of thousand year-old trees that were too rotten to even make shingles out of. We drill tree cores into them for our studies, so we know they’re hollow on the inside; they’re half-rotten. I look at them and wonder, how much monetary value can you actually get out of this? Most of the old growth that’s left isn’t the solid ‘healthy’ trees you see in old logging photos; it’s the scraggly, gnarled, and rotten stuff that wasn’t cut yet because most of it isn’t suitable for lumber.

“But they’re beautiful and hold so many stories. This is a living being that is over a thousand years old. I can say that because I’ve gone on stumps and counted over a thousand rings. And I’ve laid on stumps and stretched my hands above my head, and not been able to lay across the entire thing, feet to hands.

“Sometimes it feels like the most that you can do is just sit with a tree and just be like, ‘I’m the last person who is going to sit with this tree.’ That’s where I get emotional.”

Mabel adds that most of her experience and knowledge of the old-growth industry centers around British Columbia. In Washington State, forestry practices are a bit different.

“There are not many temperate rainforests in the world, even less old-growth temperate rainforest; they are so special and they’re so much more than wood products.

“But they also are wood products, and I love using wood. It would just be nice to create a culture where we use it and grow it back more intentionally.”

*To be continued.*





# Save, Invest, Spend

By Stephen Buller

Save for a rainy day. Invest for the future. We all know these nuggets of wisdom, so why – by recent surveys –do one in four Americans have less than \$1,000 in savings and only around half feel ready for a \$400 emergency expense?

The obvious answer is wages are too low and costs are too high. This is one symptom of our broken monetary system, but it’s an oversimplified view of a complicated issue. Because you and I have no real influence over our monetary system, let’s look at something we can influence in our daily lives – our culture around money.

Disclaimer: I’m not a money manager or financial planner. I can’t give advice, and you should take my perspective with that grain of salt. I am a certified public accountant, business owner, and avid researcher of all things money.

Are you still keeping up with the Jones’s? Or perhaps the Kardashians? Social media has warped our perception of how “successful” other people are as much as debt has. That friend who posted their Ferrari outside Caesars Palace? Don’t envy them; they’ll be paying off that expense long after the feeling of “success” has worn off.

But if you’re honest with yourself, you probably know when you’re spending too much on something you don’t really need. The most important thing you can do on the expense side is avoid, like the plague, putting charges on your credit card you won’t be able to pay off in full. This is the beginning of a downward spiral because of the power of compounding interest.

Einstein called compounding interest the eighth wonder of the world, and if you understand why, you may be motivated to use this power to your advantage: If you’re paying \$100 interest on your credit card each month, and you’re able to pay down the principal so you only owe \$75 interest the next month, you haven’t just saved \$25 – you’ve saved \$25 you could use to pay down the principal further, and further, until you’re out of debt.

# Island Resilience

Once you’re out of debt, you’ll have disposable income that used to go to the credit card company you can now spend on more dinners out, a nicer car, and all kinds of toys! Or ... you could live the same lifestyle you have for years and make your money work for you. This is called investing.

Now that we’ve covered spending, let’s distinguish between investing and saving: It’s a good idea to have some funds readily available in a “savings” account, but the interest you earn there will be less than the loss in value of the currency through inflation. In my opinion, precious metals are savings. They don’t earn interest or pay a dividend, but they also don’t lose value from inflation. They are real money and a store of value.

If you’re out of debt and have an emergency fund or comfortable savings level, now it’s time to invest. This order of operations is paramount. You could get a 25% rate of return by paying down your credit card. This is nearly unheard of in investing.

But how to invest? Warren Buffett, arguably the best investor of our time, has a simple rule: Invest in what you understand. This is why he doesn’t own Bitcoin. Even though he admits there could be something there, he doesn’t understand it. How can you make a smart investment if you don’t know what you’re buying?

This is where the current investing landscape quickly becomes a quagmire. If you invest in a 401(k), do you know what you own? If you have a 60/40 portfolio, do you know what this means? If you invest in an index, have you looked at the specific vehicles purchased? And for all of these, do you know what fees you’re paying?

Like any industry, investments have become more and more complicated over the years. I think the main thing to be careful of is owning something you don’t actually own. For example, if you think you should own some gold, and you purchase some GLD, you may find out the hard way that the

ounce of gold you think you own has been sold to 180 other people – by recent calculations.

GLD is a “derivative,” meaning it represents something real, but is not the thing itself. Indexes are derivatives, so are options, and so are leveraged funds. Just like our entire monetary system, there are far fewer of the real thing than notes and IOUs. Because of this, I think it’s smart to own the real thing.

Instead of buying the SPX (an index meant to follow the S&P 500), consider becoming a shareholder in a company you believe in. Then, you own an actual piece of the business itself. Better yet, start your own business which you own and control completely.

Instead of buying a REIT (real estate investment trust), buy a single property and rent it out. This may be more work, but you have more control over the success of the investment. You understand what you own and can make intelligent decisions because of it.

There are financial planners out there who spend their entire careers studying investing. They will know better than I the choices available. My perspective is that most choices are overly complicated to the point that individual investors will be violating Mr. Buffett’s rule.

In summary, personal finance doesn’t need to be complicated. Start by spending less than you make. Avoid debt unless it allows you to achieve a greater rate of return than its rate of interest. Build up an emergency fund. Then put your money to work for you. If you can save a small amount each month, and put it to something that generates income for you, this compounds and makes life easier over time.

If you have \$30K in credit card debt, \$300K in student loan debt, and you bought \$500 in Bitcoin, I’m sorry, you’re not investing. You’re gambling, hoping, and praying. It’s okay if that’s your intent, but set goals for yourself, and be honest with your progress towards them.



# On the Go With Jean-Jacques Rousseau

By Marc J. Elzenbeck

“I have never been so much my own self as when I have set out on foot and alone. There is something about walking that animates and activates my ideas. I can hardly think at all when I am still; my body must move if my mind is to do the same. The sight of the countryside, the succession of pleasant views, the open air, a good appetite, the sound health that walking brings, the relaxed atmosphere of an inn, the absence of everything that makes me conscious of my dependent situation, of everything that reminds me of my circumstances – all these serve to free my soul, to lend a greater boldness to my thoughts, to project me, in some sense, into the vastness of things, so that I can combine, select, and appropriate them as I please, without constraint or fear. I dispose of all nature as its sovereign.”

Excerpted from “Confessions” (Oxford University Press, 2000, translated by Angela Scholar). Rousseau was an influential Genevan philosopher and author of “Discourse on Inequality” (1755) and “The Social Contract” (1762). He argued against property and the divine right of kings, making a strong case for individual sovereignty. Less rebelliously, he believed that solitary walking liberated his mind, allowing him to think freely and engage with the world in a profound, unencumbered way.



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# Does Digestive Distress Have You Down?

By Dr. Lisa Morse

Digestive Distress is a common condition – it’s estimated that 10-15% of people suffer from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). I’ll admit this isn’t a pretty topic to talk about – gas, bloating, constipation, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. But these symptoms are plaguing too many people, causing pain and discomfort, an inability to eat without fear, and even limiting a person’s activities in life. I suffered for many years with IBS and I’m happy to say that I’m past it and passionate about helping others get past it, too. IBS is often multifactorial and it’s important to address all the causes in order to get relief.

One of the major factors in IBS is the health of the small intestine. Did you know that the small intestine is lined with millions of finger-like projections called villi? There are approximately 6000-25,000 villi per square inch. The small intestine is 25 feet long – that’s a lot of villi!

On the surface of those villi are little hairlike projections called microvilli. Those microvilli contain digestive enzymes that are important for digesting your food. If the microvilli are damaged, you won’t be able to digest your food! As a result, the bacteria in your digestive tract will digest the foods, leading to gas (particularly trapped), bloating, abdominal pain, diarrhea, or constipation. If you have digestive discomfort, it’s important to improve the health of your villi and microvilli.

If you have been diagnosed with IBS, your naturopathic or conventional doctor may have investigated and diagnosed you with SIBO (small intestinal bacterial overgrowth) or SIFO (small intestinal fungal overgrowth). This is when there is too much bacteria and yeast growing in the small intestine. Oftentimes, treatments for SIBO will be aimed at trying to kill the bacteria or yeasts using antibiotics or herbal antimicrobials. While this can

# Health Matters

be helpful temporarily, it doesn’t fix the villi or microvilli, and the symptoms often come back after treatment.

In order to move past the symptoms of IBS, you have to repair the villi and microvilli in your gut so that you can digest your foods properly. Then the yeasts and bacteria will not be able to flourish and cause you discomfort, allowing you to gain freedom from IBS.

Another major contributor to IBS is a disruption of the gut-brain axis, which is a communication system between your digestive tract and your brain. This pathway is bi-directional, which means that your gut sends signals to your brain and your brain sends signals to your gut. When there is an imbalance in this communication, symptoms of IBS are more likely to occur. Normal sensations of food moving through the digestive tract can be interpreted as pain or discomfort.

One reason for a disrupted gut-brain axis is the health of your microbiome. The microbiome is the collection of bacteria, yeasts, and viruses that live in your intestines. If the gut microbiome is imbalanced, the chemicals produced by the bugs in your gut can travel to your brain. This is why conditions like anxiety and depression often coexist with IBS. It’s hard to say which one comes first – the mood disorder or the imbalanced microbiome since the communication is bi-directional. In any case, addressing the health of your microbiome can help with both IBS and mood disorders.

One of the biggest reasons that the gut-brain axis can become imbalanced is due to excessive stress. Stress can come from daily life or past traumatic experiences. When you get stressed, a certain branch of the nervous system called the sympathetic nervous system gets activated. This causes the release of stress hormones, which diverts blood away from your digestive tract to your heart,

lungs, and muscles in order to respond. This can result in diminished digestive function and symptoms associated with IBS. Stress can also cause changes in motility of the gut, which can result in diarrhea or constipation. It cannot be overemphasized how essential it is to address stress as part of a treatment plan for IBS.

In summary, addressing the health of your small intestine, gut-brain axis, microbiome, and stress are all important for helping overcome IBS. These are most certainly not the only things to consider, but some very important factors. If you are suffering from IBS and need help, I would love to support you on your healing journey. Even if you have been suffering for decades and have tried many things, I am confident that I can help you find lasting relief from the nagging symptoms so you can finally enjoy eating again without fear, feel truly comfortable in your own body, and reclaim joyful moments with friends and family.

To find out more, contact Dr. Lisa Morse via her website [www.drlisamorsend.com](http://www.drlisamorsend.com) or via phone at 206-693-4143.

## Correction

Last month, in Dr. Lisa Morse’s article, “Address Your Physical Health Through Subconscious Work,” we edited one sentence in error. We have corrected the sentence, and include the whole paragraph here:

“Releasing the big six emotions – anger, sadness, fear, hurt, guilt, and shame – can be a powerful exercise to free up our bodies’ healing energy and restore physical health. This exercise can also be used for limiting beliefs and phobias, which also usually come from events in our childhood. It is amazingly powerful, and can produce a quick shift in mental, emotional, and physical health.”

Read the entire article at [vashonloop.com](http://vashonloop.com). We apologize for the error.

# I Feel Like My Hormones Are Out of Whack

By Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz

Women tell me all the time they think their hormones are imbalanced; they are tired, have brain fog, digestive issues, hair-shedding that seems excessive, carbohydrate cravings, and poor sleep. These symptoms could be caused by many different things, and with a full evaluation we can identify the cause. Even if hormones are imbalanced, the root cause could be something else. Treating hormones without looking for another underlying cause is using a temporary band-aid.

What hormones often need treatment?

The thyroid is a gland in your neck that regulates metabolism in the whole body; if it isn’t functioning properly, it can cause digestive disturbances, hair loss, brain fog, temperature dysregulation, and difficulty managing weight. My patients often come in already having had a basic thyroid screen, a TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone), with another provider. I go a step further and test T3, T4, reverse T3, and screen for thyroid antibodies that indicate thyroid autoimmunity.

Cortisol, the “stress hormone,” is important to have in balance. Normally, it should be high in the morning to help us wake up, and should smoothly decline as the day goes on. Chronic stress can cause cortisol to be elevated or depressed at the wrong times of day, which often causes mid-afternoon fatigue and high energy late at night. I use a lab test my patients can do at home to test their cortisol four times in a day to see if their cortisol curve is normal.

The sex hormones estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and DHEA are all important for women. Imbalances can cause many different issues at different ages, ranging from period problems, to infertility, to the common symptoms of perimenopause. When testing these hormones in women of childbearing age, it is important to test them on the correct day of an individual cycle for

accuracy.

What common underlying causes make women feel like their hormones are imbalanced, but are actually the root cause?

*Insulin resistance:* People who are not diabetic can still have blood sugar dysregulation that contributes to poor sleep, sugars cravings, weight gain, and low energy. A test called hemoglobin A1C measures your average blood sugar over the last 3 months and can diagnose pre-diabetes and diabetes. A fasting insulin test is also helpful to see if your body is having difficulty keeping your blood sugar stable.

Poor sleep can contribute to insulin resistance, even when eating a healthy diet.

*Digestive issues:* Many different digestive issues can contribute to feeling uncomfortable symptoms elsewhere in your body. Undiagnosed celiac disease is a common and very important one, along with others that cause poor nutrient absorption.

*Food sensitivities:* A temporary trial of eliminating common foods can make a dramatic difference in overall health, while allowing the intestines to heal. Skin issues, weight difficulties, brain fog, and digestive changes are all possibly related to food sensitivities.


Environmental factors: Mold in your home or exposure to pesticides and endocrine disruptors found in plastics and other modern materials can contribute to hormone imbalance.

Some people exercise, eat healthy, and seem to be doing everything right but still need extra support to optimize their health. For many, individualized nutrition and lifestyle guidance can help support you in feeling your best.

Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz is a naturopathic doctor practicing independently since 2018. Visit her website: [Betulanaturopathic.com](http://Betulanaturopathic.com) or contact her at 253-330-8708.



Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz,  
Naturopathic Physician




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# Island Epicure – The Boy Who Lived Under the Bridge and a Trout Recipe

By Suzanna Leigh and Marjorie Watkins

These days Marj’s words come slowly and painfully, as she sometimes tells us a story she has told many times before, and sometimes a new one. Today, she told us about a boy she knew who lived under a bridge.

It was back in the Depression days. He lived under a highway bridge near Rockaway, Oregon, with only his father (his mother had died) and went to Marj’s school. In spite of living under a bridge, he was the top student in her class, with straight As. Mom was second.

I asked Mom if the other boys were jealous of him, living wild like Huckleberry Finn, only more so. She told me they thought he got such high grades because he got all the attention from his father, or that the teachers were lenient with him because they felt sorry for him. I wondered how he could do his homework with no table and no chairs to sit on, and what would he do for light?

Maybe the bridge was over a stream, where they could just sit in their “home” under the bridge and drop their fishing lines in the water to catch their supper, probably trout.

Which put us in mind of this article I adapted from the archives:

## A Fanfare for Fishes

All fishes help your heart and your brain function. To my surprise, I found that trout gives you even more Omega 3s, fat, protein, and selenium than salmon, with about the same calorie count. Besides, trout costs considerably less per pound than salmon.

An easy cooking method is to bake it in a 350 degree oven in a glass or ceramic baking dish. (I can imagine the boy in mom’s story frying his fish in a pan over an open fire, or maybe impaled on a stick and roasted like a marshmallow).

In a pan long enough to hold a ½ lb trout, melt a pat of butter. Tilt the

dish so that there will be melted butter beneath each whole trout. Choose fish that do not have sunken eyes; flat-eyed fish will do if eaten within hours of purchase. Our Chinese relatives only buy fish that are still flopping.

Slip the fish into the dish, turn the fish over, and tuck a green onion and a parsley sprig into the tummy of each. Salt and pepper are optional. Bake about 7 minutes, depending on the thickness of your fish. You want the meat to be opaque. A half-pound trout serves one hungry person or two with smaller appetites.

For a more elegant dish with very little more effort, give your trout a garnish of butter-toasted sliced almonds. Preparation takes only 5 minutes. Cook the fish no more than 10 minutes per 1-inch thickness. A skillet on the stove top, over medium heat, works fine.

### Trout Almondine

- Serves 2-4
- 4 tbsp butter (½ stick), divided
- ¼ to ½ cup sliced almonds
- 2 trout (½ lb each)
- Salt to taste
- Minced parsley or cilantro
- Lemon juice, optional

In a 12-inch skillet, on medium heat, melt 2 tbsp butter. Add almonds. Stir-cook until slices are golden. Pour with the butter into a cup or small bowl. Reserve.

Melt the remaining 2 tbsp of butter in the skillet. Add the fish. When brown on one side, about 5 minutes, turn and brown the other side. Cook up to 5 minutes more for 1-inch thick fish. Sprinkle with salt. Garnish with minced parsley. Serve from the skillet with a small wedge of lemon on the side if desired. Fresh trout is so good it doesn’t really need lemon.

*Marj should know. Her father fished for trout into his 80s, driving his green pickup truck with the home-build camper on the back, up to the hill streams where the best fish were.*

# McSheehy’s Disappearing Summer Pasta Salad

By Dr. Slade McSheehy

In our house, no graduation party is complete without a big bowl of McSheehy’s Disappearing Summer Pasta Salad. It’s perfect for large groups, forgiving on ingredients, and pairs well with speeches, sunburns, and proud tears.

Guaranteed to vanish faster than your last free weekend in June.

## McSheehy's Disappearing Summer Pasta Salad

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb rotini or bowtie pasta
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cucumber, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 cup mozzarella pearls
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley or basil
- ¾ cup homemade balsamic dressing



### Instructions:

1. Cook pasta until al dente. Rinse with cold water and drain.
2. Toss with all other ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Chill at least 1 hour before serving.
4. Serve in a large bowl with a serving spoon.
5. Watch it disappear while someone tells a story about when the graduate was “this tall.”

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Cash on Vashon!

Why do we need cash? Because without cash, there is ...

1. No giving to the homeless
2. No roadside booths to sell local produce
3. No lemonade stands
4. No purchasing privacy
5. No money available without the internet and a power source



# Mukai Haiku Festival 2025 Winners

Mukai Farm & Garden is proud to announce the winners of the Mukai Haiku Festival 2025.

The festival received over a hundred haiku from twelve countries around the world. The prize winners and their haiku are below.

## Category: Youth 5-13

1st: Aiden Hermmans  
**Jungle**  
Green, leafy, wet, cool  
It is an ecosystem  
Canopy of life

2nd: Peter T.  
Colorful koi fish  
Leaves under a floating log  
Deer skip in the road

3rd: Qorxi Goertzel  
**Pandas**  
In bamboo forests  
black and white furry creatures  
fuzz balls in China

## Category: Youth 14-18

1st: Antonia Chersan  
Cherry petals  
all the dolls dressed  
in wedding dresses

2nd: Amalia Cojocariu  
Kite in the wind  
the waving  
of wheat ears

3rd: Carter Harmon  
**The Truth Pond**  
I stare at the pond  
The water ripples and moves  
I know my truth

## Nature

1st: Richard L. Matta  
Fireweed  
the pink stitches  
in hillside ash

2nd: Robert Keeler  
**Crows on a Wire**  
Four crows on a wire  
properly separated  
all wearing black masks.

3rd: Benjamin BIAsi  
On the rocky trail,  
bluer than the entire sky:  
resting butterflies

## Reflections

1st: Margaret Chula  
Forget-me-nots  
I leave them in the garden  
with my memories

2nd: Matthew Fontaine  
**The Brass Band**  
Saxes honk, drums pop  
trumpets soar, trombones slide show  
the tuba chugs in time

3rd: Shiva Bhusal  
Autumn dusk  
an artist paints  
his own shadow

## History

1st: Jeanie Berwick  
Ramshackle relic  
becomes bustling Food Hub  
Blossom to Berry

2nd: Ma Ra  
**Sweet Sunshine Laughter**  
Grampas' strawberries  
strong hands churning vanilla  
sweet sunshine laughter

3rd: Sebastian Chrobak  
Heritage preserved!  
stories from the past still fresh  
just like strawberries

## Social Justice

1st: Ibrahim Nureni  
Refugee camp  
a child builds a house  
out of snow

2nd: John S. Green  
Social justice  
I wash whites and darks  
together

3rd: Horst Ludwig  
A homeless woman  
a feather in harvest breeze  
stuck against a wall

## Correction

In our May Issue, Jo Ann Herbert's poem was incorrectly printed with a title. The poem is actually untitled. We regret the error.

**Vashon! Sign up for health insurance and fix problems!**

**¡Regístrese para un seguro médico y solucione problemas!**

♦ ♦ ♦

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July 6<sup>th</sup>  
August 16<sup>th</sup>

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*Can't stop drinking and want help?*



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AA Phone: 206-587-2838  
Local Vashon Contact: 206-849-1980



### Math Puzzle

By Anne Cotter Moses


Bob has 25 coins (quarters and nickels only) worth \$3.45 in his pocket. How many of each type of coin does he have?

### Math Puzzle Solution

Answer to puzzle: 11 quarters, 14 nickels

**Island poetry in these pages**

How about yours?



Submit your poems to The Vashon Loop!

Write to: [vashonloop-poetry@janevalencia.com](mailto:vashonloop-poetry@janevalencia.com)



## Llaughing Llamas Chronicles

By Daniel Hooker

Q: What do you call a lazy opossum?  
A: A pouch potato.

*Editor's note: This is a correction of this joke printed in the May issue.*

~

Q: What events do spiders like to attend?  
A: Webinars.

~

Q: What type of bat loves doorbells?  
A: Ding bats.

~

Q: How did Vikings send secret messages?  
A: By Norse code.

~

Q: What is a snake's favorite subject at school?  
A: Hissstory.

~

Q: What dog always knows what time it is?  
A: A watch dog.

~

Q: Did you hear about the dog that ate a clock?  
A: He got ticks.

~

Q: What do you call a cross between a sponge and an electric eel?  
A: A shock absorber.



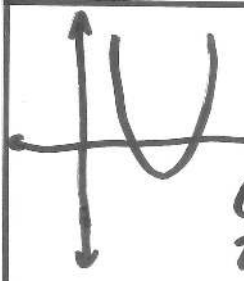
**The Observant Frog's Log**  
By Alex Soriano

WHILE SOMEONE TOLD YOU TO BUZZ OFF, I TELL YOU TO BUZZ ON OVER.





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Aries (March 20-April 19)

Saturn entering your sign is the astrological equivalent of moving to a new continent, or, more accurately, the continent coming to you. New commitments, new responsibilities and a world of new possibilities will be open to you. You will need to let go of many methods, values and ways of life that have not served you. Saturn can have a serious cast; Neptune has also recently entered your sign, and this is calling for some idealism and a bit of vision to go with your newfound capacity for achievement. Another factor is that Jupiter is about to enter the home and security angle of your chart, and that means you must take the time, space and expense to live well. Your home must be a comfort zone, and a place where you are free to be yourself at all times. Many factors in your chart describe living boldly in your truth. This will influence your relationships, and so you must summon the skill that comes least naturally to Aries, which is negotiation.

Taurus (April 19-May 20)

The general direction of your existence is one of bold self-discovery. While often portrayed as an exciting outer journey where you meet lots of interesting people and go exotic places, that is something different. This is the kind that requires true courage and persistence: the inner experience, where you discover who you are without the encouragement or assistance of others. Since yours is among the most relationship-oriented signs of the lot, this will require a reversal of many of your usual tendencies. And at the same time, the whole direction of the world is to externalize everything, from thought to memory to imagination. Your original instructions are now calling you to confront and experience your innermost being in bold ways, and to accept whatever you find as a fact of who you are. You will have the ability to make adjustments, though only after you take the step of total sincerity with yourself.

Gemini (May 20-June 21)

Regardless of the state of the larger economy, you are set to experience a financial renaissance. Your finances run in cycles; this you know. It would be worth studying them, though know that Jupiter's arrival in Cancer is the biggest and most generous planet arriving in the area of your personal resources. You have more than you may know, of many kinds of assets—particularly emotional capacity. However, you will only understand this intuitively if you work the territory. It's easy to turn away, to keep walking, to keep scrolling, and to pretend that you feel no calling to take care of the world. Yet this value is innate to your nature; it's the foundation of who you are spiritually. Yes, your astrology is calling you to be a warm creature in an increasingly chilly world. What are the principles guiding your building process? For most, the honest answer to that question would be "none at all." But that is not your karma. Yours is a path of sincerity and service.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Jupiter and Saturn are said to be planets, but really, they are miniature solar systems. Between them, they carry most of the potential that we have in this life. They represent the principles of expansion (Jupiter) and structure (Saturn). Think of them as



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



God's hands on the potter's wheel. Jupiter is the hand inside the pot, pushing it outward. Saturn is the hand outside the pot, making sure that it holds its form and offers some resistance to infinite expansion. And you are the pot on the wheel, who would spin infinitely and meaninglessly without the strength of cosmic guidance and intervention. Jupiter entering your birth sign this month is about your idea of yourself experiencing rapid expansion. This will influence all aspects of your existence, since you are the thing they all have in common. Saturn is entering your 10th place of mission, responsibility and reputation—which have in common the theme of taking action. You may be embarking on the most significant time in your life so far, and it's best that you live that way.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

The issue of long-term planning has become complicated for all of us, and you need a guiding principle. Fortunately, Saturn making its long-anticipated move into your fellow fire sign Aries will provide you with the basis for that. The message here is to use time wisely. This calls for planning and flexibility. People really struggle with this—it's important to know when to change your plans rather than cling to them, and when to stick to a program even when there is temptation to veer. The question is: what is your motivation? What do you want? What is guiding your decisions? Too often it's a petty agenda that undermines your sense of your potential. You simply have to get out of your own way. Part of mastering planning and flexibility means knowing why you are making any particular decision.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

You seem to be caught in a contradiction between where you're at and where you want to be; between your sense of what is possible and your worst fears. Saturn in Aries describes being contained by your circumstances. This potentially involves shared financial conditions associated with a relationship. Yet Jupiter is about to arrive in Cancer, which describes many ideas, including collaboration. The result could be frustration: much that you want, yet limited space to maneuver. Jupiter is saying rather boldly, you must be true to yourself. Yet this will not amount to good karma if you abandon your commitments to others. So you're in a situation where you must think in terms of "whole system". It works out that your personal truth is closely related to your sense of community and your emotional bonds with others. Once again, you are in a situation that calls for negotiation—and identifying common ground and mutual goals.

Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

Jupiter enters Cancer this month—your 10th, and one of your most powerful houses that describes your drive to achieve something real. This has not happened since 2013 and before that, in 2001. The top line and the bottom line and every other line say: you must think boldly. You must think large. Your reach must exceed your grasp, as you aspire to what you're not certain you can attain.

Jupiter is full of potential, though you must make it real through taking action. And this would best be based on a vision you hold, something you can imagine so vividly you know it must be true. I know it's difficult to be aspirational these days, as we all become increasingly lost in the maze and matrix of digital existence. To have Cancer on the midheaven angle is about experiencing a calling, and then doing what feels right.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

Jupiter's change of signs later this month (on June 25) represents you opening up your horizons and taking a broader view of your life and the world. Of course, how you see and think of the world says something important about "your life", and describes the circumstances where you find yourself. I suggest starting with seeking an actual view of the horizon, whether from a high place, or from the shores of an ocean or large lake. You want an unobstructed perspective so that you can consider the possibility that creation encompasses much that does not yet exist. Jupiter entering your fellow water sign Cancer also encourages a more spiritually-centered approach to life (compassion and seeking the wisdom of your inner teacher) than a transactional one (measuring life and love using a this-for-that approach). Spiritual does not mean better. It does mean sincere. Consider what you owe to the world and to the people around you for your considerable success and privilege.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

Your solar chart is bursting with the potential for achievement. The only catch involves your motivation. Within that general heading I am including your reasons for taking action, and the crucial matter of whether you're being true to yourself. If you find yourself rationalizing—that is, making excuses—you may have an issue to check out. If you find that you're hung up on the details of something rather than seeing the bigger, wider goals, you may have an issue. If you're seeing only greatness or the grand scheme and ignoring the annoying details, stop and make an inquiry. In your professional life, the best motive is getting the job done for its own sake. That means not trying to impress anyone for personal purposes. Focus your attention inward on your relationship to the task at hand.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

Jupiter enters your opposite sign Cancer this month, and that looks and feels like people around you being more emotionally available. You may find yourself in one of the most supportive environments in many years. Yet you will only experience that up to the capacity of your ability to exchange and receive love and attention. A great many relationship scenarios involve an uptake deficiency (a kind of celiac of the soul). And then there is also another struggle, which is a tendency to be cheap with one's emotions and attention. This way they (or you) don't give anyone the "wrong idea", that you might actually care—and then they will want more from you. Keep your ears on and other senses open to this potential and do what you can to go the other way. Stay

around people who understand the loving nature of sharing food. Cook for yourself instead of ordering in or eating out. All of these suggestions involve the exchange of nourishment and feelings, which are slowly becoming "not a thing." But they are, and we can't live without them.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

While Aquarius is usually considered the sign of the brain, you are emotionally sensitive, and your body needs special care. Just in time, Jupiter is making its move into Cancer, calling you to take a mature approach to nourishing yourself. The first thing to evaluate is your work environment. Your ideal workspace is connected to a kitchen, so you can keep an eye on the stove at all times. If you work in someone else's business, do what you can to cozy it up. More significantly, you know that your work must benefit others directly (which sadly is not the story of capitalism). And if you feel your job is lacking in this respect, look for other ways to serve humanity. I don't mean "working for charity", but rather being supportive in your immediate environment. You must be able to see or at least know about the results so that the whole exercise is not an abstraction.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Any decisions you made through late May into June are likely to be works in progress. Numerous major planets are moving in your favor, and their effects will manifest in a series of stages through July. While this will seem to carry you along, you want to guide your ship in the direction you truly want to go. Make every decision consciously, as if it really makes a difference. We are all being overwhelmed with how fake and meaningless and transient everything is. I suggest you resist by focusing on what means the most to you, and grounding your attention right there. Your current astrology is greatly enhancing the principle that what you focus on increases. It will surely increase within you, which is the part of the universe that you have the most influence over. Even if things have been the same way for a long time, you can now intervene in your own life path and make the changes that are so long overdue.

Read extended monthly horoscopes plus a wealth of extra material at  
**PlanetWaves.net**



**Give, always give what  
you can.  
Even if your allies  
draw lines in the sand.  
~ Nahko Bear**