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Summer Is Here



Photo by Marc J. Elzenbeck

The Island Epicure – Marj Watkins Is Retiring

By Suzanna Leigh and Marj Watkins

Marj: Now that I am 100 years old, I think I will retire.

Suzanna: Have you enjoyed writing “The Island Epicure” column over the years?

Marj: Yes (big smile).

Suzanna: You’ve been writing it since the early 1970s. I remember you told me you went to have lunch with some teachers at son Steve’s school ...

Marj: Oh yes! Their menu wasn’t very healthy. So then I went to the newspaper, and I said, I would like very much to raise the level of nutrition (on this island). Jay Becker, who owned The Beachcomber at the time, allowed me a column. I told him, you don’t have to pay me anything. If you publish what I write you will raise the level of nutrition on the Island. In the next issue, my little article came out, and lots of people wanted to subscribe to the paper! Then he said he didn’t feel good getting my article for nothing, and so he would start paying me.

Suzanna: You wrote your Island Epicure column for the Beachcomber as long as Jay Becker owned it?

Marj: Um hm. Then when he retired, I started writing for The Loop for free. I should think up something to write for The Loop now.

Suzanna: Well, that’s what we are doing.

Marj: Oh good! Now that I am 100 years old, I should have some wisdom to depart.

Suzanna: Dispense?

Marj: Yes. Dispense.

Suzanna: You do.

Marj: Good. Tip me off (laughs).

Suzanna: We are in boating season now. What did you cook when you and dad were cruising the Puget Sound and San Juans in your sailboat?

Marj: It was a long time ago. I don’t remember. I do remember catching a fish once.



Suzanna: I remember when my son James and I went cruising with you, we put down a crab pot beside the boat where we were tied up at the dock in Mystery Bay, not far from Port Townsend. We caught a crab and ate it!

Marj: Wow. When we lived in Maine, we got big lobsters at a restaurant under the bridge.

Suzanna: I remember. We could choose our lobster from the tank and they would cook it for us.

Marj: Sometimes we went to a little lobster shack on an inlet where we ate the lobsters that the lobsterman caught.

Suzanna: Oh yes! One time Dad invited a young airman, that I think he wanted me to date, to join us at the little lobster shack. The airman suggested eating mussels off the pilings. We thought that was strange. We hadn’t heard of eating mussels then! Here, you can get them cooked for you in a restaurant, as a side dish or in a cioppino. Cioppino would be a very special dish to make at home, providing we could get the mussels. Crab cakes, though, we could make at home or on the boat.

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Toyota’s Prime Plugger

By Marc J. Elzenbeck

My friend Valeo put a deposit down for a RAV-4 Prime, a ride in more demand than a Lamborghini. After waiting unfulfilled for almost 2 years, he sprang for a 5th-Gen Prius Prime. Both these plug-in vehicles are huge upgrades on Toyota’s solid hybrid tech, real game-changers in convenience and flexibility. Each packs an easily replaceable battery the size of a small travel suitcase (13.6 kWh for the Prius), providing 3-in-1 capabilities, with electric-only, conventional plus electric boost, and conventional engine modes. The Prime has 44 miles of EV ready and recharges overnight on a standard home outlet.

Due to travel logistics having to do with Iceland, I met Valeo at the Portland airport to pick up his battleship gray (“Guardian Gray”) model and drive it back to Vashon. In brief: you can take an all-EV trip to Costco in Tacoma, dawdle over to South Tacoma Way, then whoosh back from Point Defiance with range to spare. If for some reason you want to explore Puyallup, no worries: switch to hybrid mode and get a 75 mpg trip equivalent. Decide to extend your drive to Ellensburg and you’ll not touch a gas pump to nor fro, making only a dent in the 570-mile range. As the hardware goes, this car will probably last for over 300,000 miles, and it just doesn’t stop getting better from there.

The thing is fast, with a 0-60 time of 6.6 seconds, almost 4 seconds quicker than the Gen4 model, once publicly nicknamed “The Slowmobile.” It’s comfortable, with a supple yet sport-tuned suspension that swallows even Vashon’s jiggy roads with ease. Its distinctive, swoopy, great-looking styling manages to be both angular and ovoid. Any red-blooded kid from the 90s would instantly recognize it was built for go and beg for the keys. And they’d be right.

The Prius was, in fact, made by highly competitive young racing engineers following a

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We at the Loop thank Marj Watkins for her many years writing The Island Epicure and sharing recipes and her life in these pages.

Best to you, Marj!



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Music Mends Minds (MMM)

By Rich Osborne

Eight years ago, my buddy Karen Dale came up to me and said "Rich, you have got to come out next Tuesday afternoon and sing and play guitar with this group of musicians at 1:30 at the Vashon Community Care Center (VCCC). We have a sing-along for folks living with Alzheimer's or Parkinson's Diseases. Any kind of dementia."

I responded, "I would love to, but I work on Tuesdays. I don't have time to take off for this."

She replied, "So come anyway."

I grimaced and said, "I'll try."

She said, "Don't try. Just come. It will be perfect for you."

I responded, "Okay." And so I went. And so it began.

The premise is simple. Sing along with folks with memory issues. Sing the music we learned when we were kids. That music will bring these folks back from wherever they have drifted off to. It works. Every time. Like clockwork. Every week on Tuesday at 1:30 p.m., Music Mends Minds happens at the Vashon Senior Center. Clang, clang, clang, goes the trolley. Ding, ding, ding goes the bell. Sing, sing, sing go our heartstrings. We sing and sing and sing. We are doing mental pushups to keep our brains in shape.

The first time I came to MMM, I met our Fearless Leader, Amy Huggins. Her husband died of early-onset Alzheimer's disease. Amy vowed to change things. To do everything in her power to end the scourge of Alzheimer's.

Amy met Carol Rosenstein, who had a similar experience with her husband, a gifted jazz pianist. Carol gathered a group with similar challenges, and MMM was born. They started a band in Los Angeles, The Fifth Dementia. Amy decided to start a Vashon MMM. The Island Rockers.

A Rotarian, Amy spoke to her Rotary brothers and sisters. The

Vashon Rotary Club immediately supported this project. They donated the funds and labor to assemble the songbooks. MMM started at the Lutheran Church, then moved to the VCCC. Shortly after this, I joined up. Soon after that, I joined Rotary as well.

After a few months, Amy told us. "I am burning out. Week after week is too much. I want to use my energy to start more MMM clubs. I need someone else to lead the band." Long story short, I volunteered. Seven years later, I am still here. But to me, Amy will always be "Fearless Leader."

I have so many stories to tell. Like the time I was standing in line at US Bank to make my weekly business deposit. A woman came up to me, "You there!"

I looked around. She barked, "Guitar Guy!" I had never been called that before, but I nodded. She said, "I just want you to know that when he comes and sings with you is the only time I hear my husband's voice all week." She then gave me a rib-cracking hug and said, "Thank you." We cried.

I melted and whispered to God. "I'm in. For as long as you need me."

When COVID hit, VCCC closed for several weeks. MMM came back. Singing out in the garden. Rain or shine. When VCCC closed down, I called my friend Catherine Swearingen and asked her if we could move to the Vashon Senior Center. She replied, "Of course, Rich. Next Tuesday work for you?"

People told me, "Changing location is a big deal. You will have to start from scratch. What will you do if nobody comes?" I replied, "I will practice on my guitar. I never have enough time to practice." We restarted, inviting the rest of the band. Ina Oppinger came the first week, with her ukulele. Pamela Godt came the next week, with her violin. I tell people, "I have worked with a lot of fiddlers. Pamela is a violinist." She is a pleasure to play music with. She is

Wanted: Program Coordinator and Assistant for the Vashon Old Friends Club

The Vashon Care Network and Vashon Senior Center, in partnership with the Presbyterian Church, are launching the Vashon Island Old Friends Club, a daytime program for adults living with dementia or cognitive decline.

Based on the successful Old Friends Club model (www.OldFriendsClub.org), the program offers engaging, meaningful activities for participants while giving family caregivers consistent, scheduled respite—practical chunks of time to recharge and tend to other needs.

The Club's mission is to cultivate joy in the lives of adults with cognitive challenges and nourish the well-being of their caregivers. The program will begin in September, meeting once a week for five hours.

The OFC coordinating team is seeking two contractual positions:

Program Coordinator

Starting August 2025 (8-10 hours/week, \$45/hour), the Coordinator will lead the program, supported by an assistant and trained volunteers. Responsibilities include developing and leading activities tailored to Members' abilities, creating a welcoming and safe environment, overseeing staff and volunteers,



devoted to MMM. She travels quite often, but every Tuesday that she is on Vashon, she is with us.

I am incredibly grateful to all our supporters. I have people who come up and say "Where do I pay/donate?" I respond, "MMM is free. If you want to help financially, you can donate to Vashon Rotary Club, earmarked for MMM."

I do not take a salary, stipend, or honorarium of any sort. It is my joy to do this. Taking money changes things, and not always for the better. I'm doing fine financially.

We have roughly 50 people in our MMM family. Everyone can't come every week. People have lives, kids, grandkids, medical appointments off-Island, vacations, the thousand things that make up our lives. Vashon MMM averages 15 to 20 singers attending every week. MMM has now gone worldwide, with over 50 clubs in a dozen countries. But Vashon was the first to recreate LA's success. (We're #2! We're #2!)

At this point, I must say, "God Bless the Vashon Senior Center." They are our rock and our foundation. I am so grateful for their continued support.

And Vashon Rotary. My service family of positive, successful men and women who, when I ask for help, check their egos at the door and say, "Absolutely, Rich. How can we advance the mission?" BTW, if you need a service club, please check out Vashon Rotary. They are amazing.

So there it is. If you have anyone in your life who is drifting, bring them over. It's our weekly miracle, 1:30 every Tuesday. As we walk in, the clouds part. The sun shines down on us as we come out to play and sing.

Come join us, won't you?

participating in member intake, and maintaining communication with caregivers. Experience working with people living with dementia and strong communication, organization, and leadership skills are required. Basic CPR certification (or willingness to obtain it) is also required.

Program Assistant

Starting September 2025 (7 hours/week, \$25/hour), the Assistant helps run weekly Club sessions and fosters a supportive, engaging atmosphere. Duties include assisting Members with activities, encouraging social connection, supporting volunteers, and helping with setup and cleanup. Ideal candidates will have experience with older adults or people living with dementia, enjoy collaborative work, and bring warmth and patience to the role. Training is provided.

If you have questions about the positions or are interested in volunteering, contact Carol Spangler at carolspangler@gmail.com / 206-708-4153 or Wendy Noble at wnoble619@gmail.com / 608-317-3310.

To apply, send an email to contact@vashoncarenetwork.org with OFC Program Coordinator Application or OFC Program Assistant Application in the subject line. Please attach a resume and a cover letter addressing:

- Why you're interested in the position
- Relevant skills and background
- Personal strengths or interests you'd bring to the job

Thank you for your interest!

The Vashon Loop

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Toyota’s Prime Plugger

Continued from Front Page

“love at first sight” design ethos under the leadership of Satoki Oya. You feel it right away – effortless, seamless, economical speed. Oya’s ethos may also explain a roofline (lowered by 2 inches) that made me hit the top of my head on 90% of ingress/egresses. But his team succeeded. Many a shopper will leave Tesla and Kia EVs far behind on dealership lots, in dark garages, or stranded near highway charging stations.

Here, unavoidably, is where a thick and gooey layer of software frosting comes in. Just after hopping onto I-5, the car’s first urgent warning jumped onto the uppermost line of the dash display. It read, “Attention: Please Check Rear Seat,” decorated with three blood red seat-beltedimps. Frowning, I checked for stowaways. Nada. As I did so, the car started dinging sternly at me with by far its

most common message: “Driver Inattention Detected. Look Forward.”

Among the car’s other ploys, the rear seat challenge would play often. Should I check for puppies and Russian ninjas in the back, or keep my eyes glued to the road? Which is it?

All new 2025 Toyota Prius Prime models come standard with Toyota Safety Sense 3.0 (TSS 3.0). This suite of advanced safety features includes a Pre-Collision System with Pedestrian Detection, Full-Speed Range Dynamic Radar Cruise Control, Lane Departure Alert with Steering Assist, and an endless supply of admonitions and anxieties.

I’m not sure how they pulled it off, but Toyota duplicated, with exquisite fidelity, the experience of driving with my mom. Somehow, they shrank her and put her right into the dashboard display. She sees all.



From the Editors

She knows all. She forgives nothing. By the time we’d hit Tacoma, I had christened it “The Nagmobile.” The software soon got its own name, too: The Nag-O-Matic. I like driver aids and safety. Just not when they’re overbearing, clumsy, and largely ineffective. Others do this much better.

To convey how fully MomSense 3.0 intrudes, I decided to try driving it insane. How about putting a can of Pepsi on the back seat? (Steady

disapproval. After you park, if the can shifts an inch across a seam, the car alarm goes off.) Playing dead while driving, tongue out the side of my mouth? (Oddly, nothing special. Many others must have tried this.) Wandering between the lines? (Scolds, then claims you’ve used up your limited supply of Lane Departure Corrections.) What if you refuse to buckle your seat belt? (Increasingly fast beeps progress to a steady screech, flashing images of headless drivers. After two minutes of hysterics, it goes silent and sulks).

To me, it would be an actual improvement if the dash randomly announced, “You deserve a speeding ticket! Wait until your father gets home!” By reading the owner’s manual, you can turn a few of the most annoying things off before a longer trip, but then they all reset when you start it back up. Combining a stunning achievement with the Nag-O-Matic makes for an at times jarring, strange, and downright sad experience. Like putting a Corvette convertible on xanax and thorazine. Why?

My friend got his gray battle-axe back without a scratch. I confessed to driving it much more than intended, and to an insatiable love-hate relationship.

The constant abuse lets you know it cares. After it freaks out when you pull up too close to your mailbox, you have to take an extra joy-ride around the harbor to decompress. A little smile sneaks up and you catch yourself thinking, “I’m not emitting carbon! I’m saving The Earth.”

Valeo grabbed the key fob to leave, and said as he went out the door, “I wish there was some way to turn that damned software off.”

Doctor Parobek

A remarkable provider puts Vashon on the map with her recent award

By Andy Valencia

This might seem like a charming local story: Vashon has a practitioner whose advanced studies in psychiatric nursing are a great benefit to Islanders. But the old saying, “if you want to change the world, start locally” could not be more applicable. Just recently, Dr. Marli Parobek APRN DNP FNP PMHNP, was recognized by her professional association, the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. The 2025 State Award for Outstanding Contributions recognizes not just excellence in clinical work, but also work to advance the state of nursing in society.

Healing Islanders and changing the world. It sounds like the sort of sound bite a corporate PR team would use. And yet, it’s the literal description of what Dr. Parobek does on Vashon. How does one get singled out for statewide professional recognition? In Dr. Parobek’s case, it took first-rate nursing, a tireless commitment to her patients, mentoring the next generation of professionals, and contributing to health care policy in Washington State.

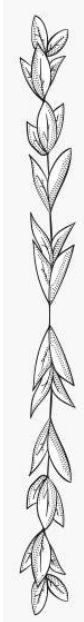
Dr. Parobek started as an ER nurse in Ohio. Even as she worked her “day job,” providing care in this demanding environment, she saw that a nurse’s experience and perspective would be better used if the scope of responsibility was expanded. Supported – even urged – by her husband to pursue the training, in 2005 she was certified as a Family Nurse Practitioner. She continued working in the same hospital system, which she still remembers as holding the highest standards of care and ethics. It was the perfect place to grow into her first major step in advanced nursing.

But the bigger world presently beckoned, and with an economic slump in the Ohio area, she and her husband looked west. This is where Dr. Parobek’s innovative self-reliance came to the forefront. When her husband identified Yakima as a promising destination, she called the local hospitals, only to discover that there were no positions that would match her skills. Undeterred, she called her chosen Yakima hospital and acted as if there were such a position!

This opened the path to conversations with the right people, and presently Dr. Parobek was hired into a position that existed only by virtue of her own imagination and force of personality. Being the first ER nurse practitioner at the hospital, she had to help them determine her pay scale. And thus began another recurring pattern in her career – helping an institution put together new protocols and procedures – in this case, guiding them in how to use their first ER nurse practitioner.

Dr. Parobek flourished in her position, receiving her first major statewide award in 2009. When she identified a need for an urgent care facility, she worked with a physician at the hospital to open one in some unused space at one end of their facility. It was recognized as a financial success by the administrators and was eventually funded and upgraded to a fully built-out clinic.

In addition to the Yakima ER and urgent care responsibilities, on an occasional basis, Dr. Parobek would also work at a local Resident Care Facility, Yakima Valley School, in Selah, WA. An old building once used to care for tuberculosis patients, the RCF now served patients with acute medical



needs, such as those who could neither communicate nor feed themselves. In 2009, the Department of Social and Health Services recruited Dr. Parobek to take responsibility for the overall delivery of medical care at the facility. Once again, she was defining protocols, policies, and procedures – except it was now for an entire

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News You May Have Missed



- DoJ sues WA on breaking seal of confession
- Turning an old 727 plane into an exhibit
- CA rolls back Reagan-era environmental regulations

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The Vashon Loop Health Disclaimer

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

We remind our readers that your health is your personal responsibility, your body and situation are unique, and information in The Loop is for educational purposes only. Any health-related content is the opinion of the author alone and should not be used to diagnose or treat medical conditions or prescribe medicine. Consult with an appropriate medical resource or healthcare provider when making healthcare decisions.

Vashon Island Fire and Rescue offers free Narcan kits and fentanyl test strips to anyone in the community.

In addition, VIFR hosts free trainings to teach you how to administer Narcan and respond effectively in an overdose emergency.

To request a Narcan kit or sign up for a training, please contact VIFR at 206-463-2405 and ask for the Mobile Integrated Health team, or email mih@vifr.org



The Epic Battle of MPH, Vashon Style ...

By Dave B.

MPH. What does this acronym mean and what does it mean on Vashon?

Theatrically, in the Washington State Driver Guide, crafted carefully by our genius government officials, it means miles per hour. Posted on signs all over our great country and Island are suggested speed criteria for our gas-guzzling and hybrid, semi-hybrid, all-electric cars, trucks, scooters, skateboards, boats, trains, and whatever type of transportation you use to get to and from your home, office, playground ... OK, you get the picture.

But what does it mean, and how do Vashonites interpret said suggested speed law? Well, I am here to tell you. You may not agree, you may get mad, you may have your own opinion. I can live with all of that, so here goes my interpretation:

Drive within your means and skill level so you can get to where you are going safely and within a reasonable timeframe around the speed limit posted on that street, highway, alley, driveway, walkway, etc. In other words, be sane.

Please consider this: "Do I really need to get there, is there a time limit on this particular trip? Is this a hot date? Am I late in catching the next ferry? Do I need to eat ASAP?"

Island Voices

I realize there are thousands of reasons someone must speed or go as slow as possible on Vashon Highway, depending on your mood or need for a drink at Sporty's. Maybe Bambi is lurking out there ready to destroy your car at a moment's notice, just to piss you off and ruin your day, so maybe keep that in mind (let alone the pain you cause Bambi).

It could be such a nice day that you do not have a care in the world, or you feel you need to slow everyone down because the sign says "35 MPH." And you feel that is enforceable by you? No, it is not. Please don't do that.

How does the law define "35 MPH?" Well in my limited law-enforcement background (two tickets, one of which I took to court and lost), it means you can watch that speedometer on your dashboard and go 5 miles an hour over without looking for Johnny Law to pull you over and screw up your day.

Vashon highway is a two-lane road from start to finish, so being aware of what you are doing on it affects everyone else, especially coming off the ferry.

We as humans look at things, ideas, and laws in

a slightly different way, and I know it can be confusing. Add in very few streetlights, no traffic lights (see my wonderful article on stop signs in last month's Loop') makes Vashon both unique and scary to some city people or Island newbies.

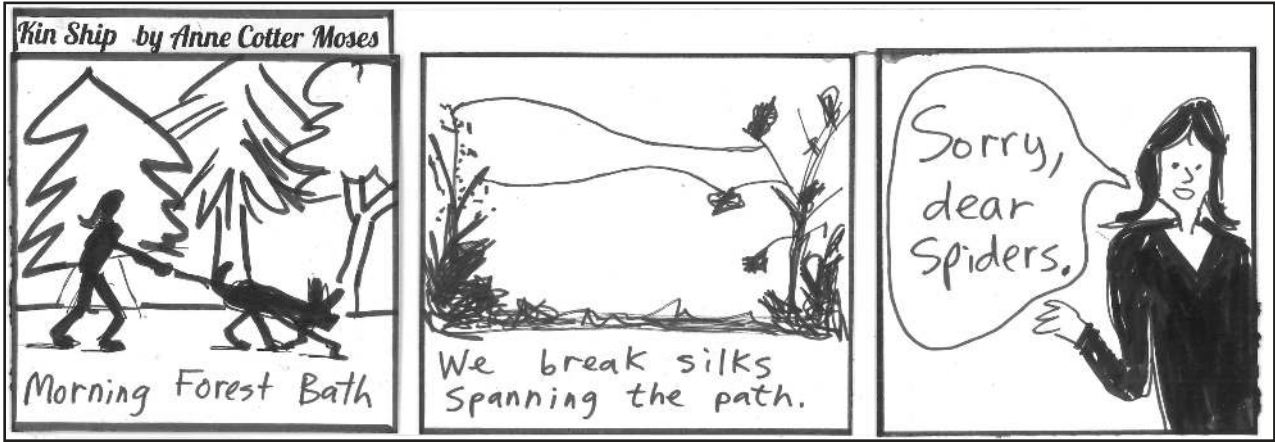
I have in my many years living on Vashon understood that drivers ages ranges from 16 to almost dead. Is the posted speed limit too fast and dangerous, or too slow? Should I let someone who needs to fill their Island Queen fix pass me by? Should I pass the person who feels it necessary to go 30 MPH because Bambi was on the side of the road 5 miles back, and is therefore a threat to all drivers on our 14-mile stretch of highway?

I cannot say, so maybe you should decide. After all, we do get into our cars daily and always must make decisions on the autobahn.

We all live with two-lane country roads and lots of wildlife that feel it necessary to cross over to get to their destination. (The nerve!) We all need to understand that 35 MPH or 45 MPH (or what the sign says) means not too slow and not too fast.

Consider the weather, time of day, other Vashonites moving toward and away from you on multiple missions from God (I think I am ready for Island Queen now), and adjust to what you need to make it safe on our roads.

If you see me in my Ford truck doing 40 MPH in a 35, no worries. I can handle it! And remember to wave. I would appreciate it ...



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Some Reflections Upon Re-Entry

By Michael Shook

Civilized. While wandering the streets of Paris back in May, that was the word that I thought of. Why civilized? Goodness knows, France has as many misguided actions as any other nation, but that only places them with humans in all countries and cultures. If we were to disqualify a nation on the basis of their faults alone, none would be thought of as civilized.

I found that three things contributed primarily to my perspective; food, architecture, and work. And I realized those three rested further on one principle, beauty. An appreciation of beauty, the notion that beauty is an essential part of a good life, that it may provide the soil from which a life, not just an existence, may grow.

It's my impression that France calibrates its culture to enhance one's life, rather than to try to direct it solely or predominantly for commerce, as we too often do here. Of course, there are a good many benefits to ordering things as we do in the States, but I do think we've taken the whole materialistic thing too far. And it seemed to me that, if things in France have to bend, they bend in a way to ease life a bit, to accommodate the humanity of a person as a living being. To me, that constitutes a form of beauty.

A ready example of this is the food. French cuisine has, of course, a (deserved) reputation as the epitome of culinary delight. And we certainly

ate our fair share of scrumptious meals, followed by desserts whose ratio of simplicity to deliciousness defied description. And croissants, and bread (I did not eat a bad piece of bread the entire time we were there). And chocolate! At a tiny shop of a master chocolatier in Lyon, I had the best chocolate I've ever eaten. And wine, of course. The wine was fabulous, no matter where we were, whether a small cafe, or posh restaurant. The markets also deserve a good word. I have never seen such a tantalizing variety of produce, meats, and fish, all of it so vibrantly fresh, it seemed to glow.

What lay at the bottom of this amazing cornucopia was and is the bedrock principle that food is important, that it's not just fuel to be sucked down in between tasks. It's important enough that France has strict standards that guarantee the quality of the food, whatever it is. For example, a Twix candy bar in France has five ingredients. In America? Fifteen, depending on how one counts. Blech.

The architecture of Paris, and of the other cities and towns we visited, was almost uniformly beautiful. Regarding Paris, it helps that the city was laid out at a time when automobiles were not in existence, so that many of the streets have a friendly, pedestrian feel to them.

It also helped that, in 1853, Napoleon III gave Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann unrivaled power to remake the city. It took 17 years, but the result was (and is) marvelous.

The Paris of today owes its boulevards, its housing style, and its sewer system, among many other benefits, to those two (there's something to be said for a mostly benevolent monarch's ability to cut through red tape).

In addition to the man-made architecture of stunning monuments, exquisite public buildings (la Bibliotheque Nationale comes to mind), and the housing, there exists as well a living architecture: trees. Paris, and every town and village we visited, is adorned by English Plane trees, a hybrid between European sycamores and Oriental sycamores. I found them enchanting, more so than our American sycamores. The hybrid is slightly slender compared with its cousin from the colonies, and has, I think, more interesting exfoliation of its bark. The French keep them carefully pruned, emphasizing a broad, open crown that casts ample shade. Streets everywhere are lined with them, and each square as well has them situated so that one may sit comfortably out of the bright sun, sipping wine or coffee, and enjoying a pastry.

Last of this triad is work. Needless to say, work is important everywhere, but in France, it's rarely the sole focus of one's life. The 35-hour work week is mandated for blue-collar workers, though white-collar and independent business people routinely put in more than 40. All French have five weeks of paid vacation each year, plus 11 national holidays. And the minimum wage comes to about \$20 US. Lunch break is usually two hours, often accompanied by wine.



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In spite of, or perhaps because of, such a human-scale lifestyle, France's economy is second only to Germany's in terms of GDP and general economic health. And in terms of physical health, France is a good place to be. A World Health Organization survey, though somewhat dated now, rated France as having the best overall health care in the world - currently spending 11.3% of their GDP on health care, while the US spends 17.1%. Everyone is covered, even those (legally) waiting to become citizens.

A healthier work/leisure balance results in more time and energy to enjoy the precious gift of being alive. More time with family, friends, and community, more time to think, to pursue interests, to savor a good meal, and a good conversation.

France, as mentioned above, is hardly perfect. But civilized, in the best sense of that word? It is a thing of beauty.

The Glorious Headline Challenge – A New Way To Search

By Cynthia Delgado

While one may imagine that the Vashon of yesteryear was an innocent and bucolic existence marked by wholesome and simple endeavors, the truth is our little green Island has always been eccentric and touched by controversy. Why, just a glance at these headlines from 1905, 1922, and 1908, respectively hints at just how much truth lies in the slogan “Keep Vashon Weird:”

“Mystery coffin found on beach north of Aquarium.”

“F.E. Gilbert’s 5 hens break world’s record, laying 1,421 eggs in one year.”

“Leroy Lander, 82 years old searches for child-wife and 18-month-old baby and \$3000 in gold coins.”

While pursuing Island history, I was struck by the charming language of the headlines and the jaunty flourish with which even bad news was conveyed.

The news cycle as it exists today is an oppressive, hyperbolic onslaught of negativity. We are all having our consciousness herded by algorithms into different “camps” that drive despair and fear and hatred through clickbait and sensationalist reporting. Where is the world wide web that was meant to delight and inspire us and expand our minds and understanding? Wasn’t that the promise of the internet? Wasn’t it going to make us smarter and more connected to our brothers and sisters across the planet?

We can know anything, learn anything, be exposed to everything, but in truth most of us are just making a loop around our echo chamber to reinforce “our” ideas, which are actually guardrails put in place by Big Tech to keep us endlessly circling back.

Quite dear to our hearts are a myriad of tragedies, dilemmas, and wounds both personal and political in nature that we can research endlessly and minutely, much to the detriment of our health and ability to respond humanely to ourselves and others. Discouraged and in fear for

our mental health, some turn away from our screens. We shut out the news only to awaken at night with our worries renewed and a desire to binge watch nonsense or doomscroll the latest daily atrocity of the war machine we Americans built and paid for.

It’s time to reclaim our agency and do what we can to beat back the outrage and apathy that the search engines serve us up ad nauseum. I offer a gift and challenge to each of you, and extend an invitation to be my cohort in creating good trouble for the hyper-materialists and sinister forces that seek to control all the world’s resources, including consciousness and imagination. Let’s turn the tables with a simple technique inspired by those old-timey Vashon headlines. Join me as a true explorer as we teach our algorithms to offer us the best the world wide web has to offer, and train our minds to envision a vibrant future full of healing and hope for every creature on Earth.

Begin by asking yourself, what is the glorious headline I long to read? Once you have your headline thought out, type it into the search engine of your choice, and the journey begins towards positivity and hope. We all have general wishes for peace, safety, and happy personal outcomes, but often our ideas lack clarity and detail. What would an end to war and suffering truly look and feel like? If we cannot even imagine it, the chance that we could create it is decidedly slim.

The power of our imagination and creativity can be cultivated and strengthened. As Catherine Austin Fitts says, “It’s time to stop worrying about the future and start creating the future you want.” Visualization is a powerful tool that enhances outcomes and creates possibilities. Our most pressing concerns are not addressed by following well-worn technological tracks laid down to drive division and confusion. Whatever is on your heart or troubling your mind can inspire a wonderful, positive headline.

“Massive Uptick in Compassion Leads to Mass Walk-outs as War Machine Grinds to a Halt!”



“Stargazing Surges as Worldwide Hobby as the Habit of Wishing on Stars for Peace Gains Traction!”

“Local Woman finds Love and an Affordable Apartment!”

Fair warning that the algorithm will fight back and spit out terrible contortions of the words that lead to depressing factoids. Keep searching, and four or five pages in, there will be gems to be found and old abandoned websites full of beautiful prayers, cool ideas, and films you’ve never heard of!

The fruits of my glorious headline approach thus far include: a full .pdf dictionary of all medicinal plants with names, properties, and indications; an audio library of Sufi stories; the website of the only Zen Buddhist cooperative on the African continent, which offers all their classes for free; and the complete text of Chief Seattle’s speech from 1854.

I invite you, dear reader, to flesh out the best outcome you can possibly imagine to whatever your heart is broken over and what pains you about the times we are living through. Make up your glorious headline and search! We can retire forever the typical approach to using the internet and instead train ourselves to imagine beautiful outcomes and envision solutions and abundant healing for our world-weary souls.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable – if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy – dwell on these things.” Philippians 4:8

Condo Time?

By Pam (Gates) Johnson

Sometimes, living in an apartment doesn’t seem like a bad idea. Let me give you a little backstory.

I’ve been living on my little farm since 1975. It has a house (duh), a barn, an orchard, a garden, a big lawn, and fenced pastures. My life-long dream was to live on a farm, and I got it. It was a perfect place to raise my kids in a rural setting. No close neighbors. Dead-end road. Access to acres of woods and canyons. Room to raise cattle and let the kids have horses. We also had dogs, goats, and a pony named Debbie.

My at-the-time-husband and I had a hay-baling business in the summers. We put up hundreds of bales of Island hay every year. At about five years old, my son was rolling hay bales out of the way of the baler. At 12, my daughter was driving a one-ton flat-bed truck loaded with hay down Beall Road. It was my dream life.

But most dreams come to an end, as did mine. Husband left, hay equipment sold, kids grew up and moved out, which left me here to hold down the fort. In order to keep the farm and pay the bills, I had to work a full-time job. That didn’t leave much time to keep up, much less work, my little farm.

Moonbeam, our milk cow, had died of old age. When the kids left, the horses left. I really didn’t need to

raise and slaughter steers, as it was just me here. So, the farm life part wound down, but the property upkeep remained.

For a few years after the kids moved out, I did okay on the property upkeep. I got a John Deere riding mower and managed to keep the grass down. Found a guy to prune my trees for a reasonable cost. Even talked a friend into going halvesies on raising a couple of cows. But the fences started to go bad, and the cows got out. Hay and grain got pretty expensive. Did I really need half a cow in my freezer? Winding down gradually, but still winding down.

Life went on. I got older, retired, and noticed my activity level and stamina were on the downslide. That’s when I realized I couldn’t do all the things I used to take for granted.

I also learned that, when things started to go south on the house, I was the one who had to take care of it. At my age, taking care of house stuff means finding someone to do it for money. My daughter got married, had a kid and moved to Onalaska (which is not in Alaska). My son got married, had a kid and built a very successful business. My nephew and his wife moved onto the property, but both had full-time jobs and busy lives. That left me.

Retirement cash flow was pretty

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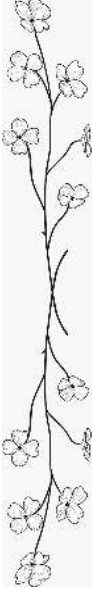
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Get Well Soon, Isabel!

Isabel Forest was in a car crash on June 22nd right near Chautauquah. She’s fine! But there’s some doctor stuff and some healing in her near future.

So best wishes from all of us at the Loop, along with everybody at Luna (and heck, the rest of the Island, too). We miss you!





Condo Time?

Continued from Page 5

good. I had enough to put a new roof on the house. Then, all the 1952 windows needed to be replaced. The original-install oil furnace finally died, so there was a heat pump that needed to be installed. The bathroom really needed to be upgraded. All of those things got taken care of, which left the next list: things that need to be done, but suddenly got prohibitively expensive.

I found good workers to help with the lawn-mowing and weed-eating. Bill and his protégé kept my fruit trees pruned and looking beautiful. My nephew took my garbage to the dump. Herb mowed my fields every year. The place looked like someone who took reasonable care of the property lived here. But ...

The deck needs new boards. Do I replace them with cedar or Timber Tech or Trex? The barn is starting to tilt. Do I try to find someone to repair it? Is it too far gone for repairs? Do I replace it with a pole building or just let it collapse? Do I really need a barn?

The fences need repair. Do I need fences if I’m not planning on raising livestock? If I repair the fences and get a calf, will it be safe from the coyotes?

The kitchen is really dated. Should I bite the bullet and get new cabinets, new counter-tops, new appliances? Does the cost outweigh the amount of time I will be around to use it? Should the house get painted again? The last company that painted it did a horrible job.

All that brings me to the next quandary. If I choose to go ahead with some of the big projects, who in the heck will do them? Have you tried to find a contractor lately? I have. After reaching out to several

companies about replacing my deck boards, many either never returned a call, or they came out and looked at the job, never to be heard from again.

I finally found a guy who said he could put me on his list, but the work would be about two years out! In total frustration, I said, “Put me on the list!”

Now, as I sit in my front room, looking out my window at the beautiful yard and pastures I have loved for years, I wonder how long I can keep this up.

This has been my home for 50 years. The trees I planted have grown so tall, Asplundh has to trim them away from the power lines. The flowers are in bloom. The grass is green. The birds are chirping and the woodpeckers are pecking on my metal mailbox. The Shinglemill hikers are trudging up and down my street with their dogs. The neighbor has cameras and floodlights everywhere. The apple shed next door has gone from apples, to a winery, and now a coffee roasterie. The local coyote pack has regular meetings, very loud meetings, in my front yard. Things, they are a changin’.

All this circles back to the start of this piece. “Tell me yes or tell me no. Do I stay or do I go?” Am I ready to give up on my life in the country and trade it for a life of ease in an apartment?

What would I do with my time? Where would I move to? Westport or the Oregon Coast are on the top of my list, but both are awfully far away from my grandkids. And ...

Just the thought of going through 50 years of stuff in the house, basement, and barn gives me a bad case of the hoobo-jeebies. Guess I will stay where I am for now.

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Cranked Ice Cream

By Seán Malone & John Sweetman

Seán and I grew up on different islands, but shared so much of the same experiences. We always knew the “warning signs” of summer, which arrived in July, not June, which was typically a gloomy month.

The signs of summer were not merely longer daylight hours, warm days, and the end of school, but the change in the color of eggs from winter’s pale yellow to a brilliant orange. Milk changed, as well. In the fall and winter, milk was pale, but still rich in cream. Years ago, most of us had dairy products from very local small herds that were Guernsey or Jersey breeds. They gave 15 to 20 percent butterfat.

No one had the now-common Holstein breed. My dad said, ‘I won’t milk a cow when you can see the bottom of the bucket.’ Holsteins produce massive amounts of milk, but low butterfat content.

As the red clover bloomed and the cows ranged in rich pastures, milk took on a yellow, and then almost an orange, color. Today, “Annato” is added to get that color, but years ago it was a natural sign ... that “ice cream was coming!”

As one knows, ice cream is made with “cream.” Lots of it, and thankfully there were a number of small kids around to do the hard work involved in those days. This is how later we learned about the concept of “unpaid junior interns.” Or incentivized child labor. This was because making ice cream was tedious, and the supervisory adults were off smoking cigars and tasting cocktails while we kids did the work.

Loads of rich cream, vanilla, and other secret

additions, and all we kids had to do was crank the handle of the ice cream maker. One secret addition my mother added occasionally was full cream fermented buttermilk. It turned out we liked that combination.

Of course, we played games while doing the tedious work of cranking the ice cream maker for what seemed ... hours.

“How long can you put your hand in the salt and ice mixture?” Salt was added to chipped ice to drop the temperature of the outside mix, and in those days, one got a big block of ice that had to be chipped by hand.

“I’ll crank now!” That was the response after your hand turned blue ... a deft way to not admit you couldn’t take it anymore. And all this led to “ice cream.” This was the true start of a Northwest summer ... as Seán relates ...

It was the 4th of July and the family gathered at the Homestead at Portage to take in the fireworks. Brother Mike was sitting on the lawn, cranking the ice cream maker. Mike complained, “It’s getting too hard to crank.” That’s how we knew that the ice cream was ready.

Seán was four years older than Mike’s six years, and stepped in to help crank. Turning the crank was getting harder, but not too stiff yet. When he couldn’t turn the crank anymore, Mom came over and removed the crank from the two-foot high wooden ice cream maker. She carefully removed the stainless steel container from the bucket of salt and ice. She opened the container and removed the wooden paddles, dripping with ice cream.

We always fought over who got to lick the

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paddles, so Mom made us line up, youngest first, and each of us got to lick the paddles in turn.

The ice cream maker was a wooden barrel, two feet high, with the stainless steel container mounted in the middle and the crank for turning it on the side. When the milk and cream mixture was added to the container, it was closed and placed in the wooden barrel. Ice chips were then added to the barrel in layers with rock salt added to the top of each layer to cause the ice to melt faster, making things even colder. Water was added to the barrel to aid the melting and a notch in the top of the barrel allowed the excess water to escape.

Grandma Ada and Papa Jim had 22 grandchildren in total, with 11 living on Vashon, mostly at Portage. Grandma Ada wore a gold bracelet with gold medals hanging from it. A medal for each of her grandchildren.

Each run of the ice cream maker only produced a couple quarts of ice cream, so there had to be three or four runs to provide enough ice cream for all the Carahers and Malones.

Community Healing With St. John's Wort

By Jane Valencia

A few months ago, in a conversation between herbalist and frequent Loop writer, Kathy Abascal, and co-editor Caitlin Rothermel and myself, we spoke about the ability of plants to work on the entire spectrum of our health from the physical, psycho-emotional, to the spiritual. We speculated: if herbs can address dis-ease on many levels of our being, might they possibly help on a community level? If so, what herb might we suggest for our Island community, and how might one apply this remedy?

We observed that many Islanders feel severe stress and anguish in response to current events and politics. A sense of despair, anger, fear, and doom pervades our zeitgeist. Any herbal help for this state?

One plant that came to mind is a sunny herb in bloom now and through the rest of summer, and found in fields and field edges, roadsides, and in wet meadows: *Hypericum perforatum*, more commonly known as St. John's Wort. Named for St. John the Baptist, whose Nativity Feast day is June 24, this plant is sometimes referred to as St. Joan's Wort or Solsticewort. Note that any species of *Hypericum* that stains your fingers red-purple when you crush the buds or flowers has medicinal properties and can be used accordingly. However, the large-flowered, ornamental St John's Wort planted in garden beds is not used for remedies.

Like St. John the Baptist, the medicinal plant generally has a rangy and ragged appearance. It proclaims "good news" in the form of numerous flowers - golden stars made up of five sun-hued petals each - on opposite branched stems. The paired oval leaves contain "perforations" - tiny pinhole-like translucent glands. These glands - and the darker ones near the leaf edges - produce some of the constituents like hypericin and the hyperforin that make up the herb's potency.

The flowers are 3/4" or so wide, and the plant grows 1" to 3" in height. The flowering tops, bud, flower, and leaf are used in teas, tinctures, or are infused in oil, and have a slightly bitter, pungent, sweet taste.

Medicinally, St. John's Wort is wound-healing, calms inflammation, relaxes and nourishes the nervous system, tightens tissues, is a liver-cleanser, repairs damaged nerve cells, and more. The herb is well known for treating certain kinds of depression, cold sores, herpes, and other viruses, alleviating nerve pain, and stimulating and improving liver function.

The physical actions of an herb often affect the psyche and spirit in corresponding ways. For

Island Resilience



example, in cleansing the liver of toxins, St. John's Wort can cleanse harmful emotions.

Herbalist Michael Moore suggested St. John's Wort for those who have a good, happy life, with some struggles they are able to meet, until they hit a bump. Then they find it difficult to cope.

This description might indeed apply to many of us in response to the larger events of recent years, from COVID to now.

Since our conversation, I have continued to ponder St. John's Wort for community healing.

Michael Moore wrote, "I think of using *Hypericum* [St. John's Wort] when someone whose circumstances have changed is unable to alter his ways of acting and responding. Such people follow the previously reliable responses and strategies, but their life needs new approaches: they are stuck in a rut, spinning their wheels, and feeling growing frustration and depression with their problems. *Hypericum* ... is for normal folks whose strategies have failed and are temporarily adrift."

On a community level, the "bump" mentioned previously is more like choppy waters in a once smooth and predictable sea. On a grand scale, decisions and events outside of our experience and control are in play, and collectively, we find ourselves in emotional upheaval. As we check in with our digital media of choice, yet another event, decision, or speech by a public figure contrary to our perspective punctures our psyche like a needle. Our sense that the world is dangerous and doomed amplifies with each attempt to stay informed and do something. Oppression and intensity builds with every outrage we hear or read.

I'm reminded that St. John's Wort has a long folk use for spiritual protection against demons, witches, being snatched by the fairies, and against the evil eye. Our modern times are entwined in

their own "spell work" - harmful forces and speech under new guises. An endless onset of bad news, along with manipulative strategies in various spheres serve to heighten volatile emotions and a sense of helplessness. We leave behind ideals of loving one another and seeking and cultivating peace within ourselves and with others. And we fall further into social patterns in which we demonize as an outlet for our pain and anxiety (cancel culture is an example).

Our minds are captured, our hearts hijacked, and the intense darkness grows.

How might a simple, summertime herb possibly make a difference in such a landscape?

Let's return to just ourselves and the plant.

Herbalist Kiva Rosethorn writes that St. John's Wort "drives away sadness and unwanted melancholy, calms obsessive anxiety, feelings of vulnerability and unsafeness, emotional hypersensitivity, and a sense of doom that refuses to lift."

And again: "When life has shoved you down, turned off the lights, and made you feel alone and afraid and like you'll never find the light again, this is a good time to turn to *Hypericum*. Tea, tincture, flower essence, even a small pouch of the plant hung around your neck or carried in a pocket."

Herbalist Matthew Wood notes: "Remedies which act on the solar plexus are often psychological in their influence because they improve the gut level instincts, and this helps people deal with unconscious phenomena in their lives."

How might we work with St. John's Wort as an Island community? Each of us is different, and herbalism understands that there is no one-size-fits-all remedy. Some of us might want to work with the plant medicinally, in which case one should research this herb (see this article on vashonloop.com for links to resources) or consult with an herbalist or naturopath in order to figure out the form, dosage, and strategy that is right for you. Taking medicinal doses of St. John's Wort can interfere with the intended actions of pharmaceuticals.

One can also work with St. John's Wort in ways that offer balm, insight, and other qualities that may lighten the spirit and encourage a calm strength and joyful disposition in our hearts. Consider seeking out the plant to sit with in nature and appreciate, and as a focus for meditation or reflection. If the plant is away from roads and in a toxin-free area, you might taste a leaf or a flower. Be sure you correctly identify the plant before doing so, and observe plant safety basics (see my August 2023 article on vashonloop.com). With thanks to the plant, you might break off a sprig to keep with you.


We have heard that "peace begins with me." In many ways, these dark days are a deception, firing us up or weighing us down, and isolating us from one another. Allow St. John's Wort to shine a light for you, helping you reground and reroot, even - or especially - in soil that may now seem inhospitable. This summertime herb reminds us that generosity resides along every wayside - within our Island nature and community, and in the larger world, and that we are meant to serve as medicine for one another. In our rebalance, we, like a rangy plant can make a difference in the life and health of what matters to us.

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



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Doctor Parobek
Continued from Page 3

medical facility, serving a diverse and very vulnerable range of patients.

Advanced certification and degrees at this point in her career called for a university-level nursing degree, and this is where Frontier Nursing University entered Dr. Parobek’s life. Founded in 1939 as Frontier Nursing Service, it trained and sent out nurses and midwives – sometimes on horseback – to reach and serve the rural communities of Kentucky. Continuously operating ever since, even as it has modernized, FNU has kept that spirit of fearless commitment to rural and underserved patients.

A program originally for nurses on horseback, FNU has always trained its students to identify the appropriate medical care, and then ensure its implementation, no matter what challenges existed. Given their rural focus, remote learning was a requirement, and FNU first offered distance learning in 1989 – mailing lessons and receiving completed work in return. When the internet became available, FNU dropped the mailings in favor of online teaching, all while carefully preserving the fundamental nature and quality of their programs.

Periodic visits to the main campus by students, along with a mentorship program using “preceptors,” ensured that students truly mastered their subject area. The upheaval of COVID in 2019 let all of FNU’s strengths come to the fore. Their training already integrated the internet and remote learning. They already taught service in the face of adversity and uncertainty, even in environments where the practitioner could only count on themselves. Ironically, a university founded under the shadow of a world war emerged as powerful resource of medical hope and competence – precisely what was needed in 2020.

And Dr. Parobek was in the middle of it. She received her Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner degree from FNU and immediately continued towards her Doctor of Nursing Practice. The highest level of educational achievement in the nursing profession, the DNP is a true PhD-level doctoral program with coursework and dissertation. Dr. Parobek completed her defense just one day before the nation locked down due to COVID.

Dr. Parobek and her husband had been personally aware of Vashon as far back as 2010, and had enjoyed many vacation visits. In 2018, she noticed a “Vashon Youth and Family Services” sign, and thus began her campaign to get hired at

Health Matters

VYFS. Her contact at VYFS continued to tell her “no, we’re not hiring” as she checked in every six months or so, but in 2021 it became a “yes.” Dr. Parobek knew Vashon needed its own prescribing psychiatric nurse practitioner, and finally it would have one. She and her husband packed up and moved, taking on eight monthly hours of VYFS work, continuing remote consulting with her existing client base (along with periodic in-person travels back to Yakima), and starting to build her Vashon-based practice.

The move was a success. Dr. Parobek’s work at VYFS has grown, and she’s a part of a robust regional network of referrals for patients with psychiatric needs. Her alma mater FNU has also remained in her life, and Dr. Parobek gives back by helping its students prepare for a new level of responsibility and self-reliance. While FNU students all have experience as registered nurses, they often have never been “out in the world,” providing psychiatric medical care one-on-one in a small office, or right in the patient’s home.

As one of FNU’s preceptors, Dr. Parobek takes FNU students with her into actual appointments, helping them begin to find in themselves what it takes to be the provider. A nurse at a hospital has a number of fellow professionals available; on Vashon, the next nearest medical expertise might be hours away.

Winning the 2025 State Award for Outstanding Contributions is a milestone in Dr. Parobek’s professional life. The president of FNU, Dr. Brooke A. Flinders DNP, RN, APRN-CNM, FACNM, was on Vashon just recently, visiting with Dr. Parobek as a part of her multi-state tour to recognize and honor outstanding practitioners. Dr Parobek can guide the medical response to a psychiatric crisis. She can prescribe and refine a treatment regimen. She can design the protocols that run a medical care facility. (This author also guesses that she can also still do stitches.)

But, as FNU’s Dr. Flinders pointed out, a DNP is even more than that; a DNP is prepared to also work in the world of policy. And indeed, Dr. Parobek has made some initial contacts over in Olympia, hoping to use her experience to guide lawmakers in areas as diverse as nursing compensation, credentials, and treatment standards. In addition, Drs. Flinders and Parobek are collaborating to create a new preceptor program that will enable Family Nurse Practitioner students from FNU to connect with psychiatric nurse practitioners in Washington.



Photo courtesy Spencer Barrett at frontier.edu

How does Dr. Parobek measure her success? It’s not the degrees, neither is it the money. It’s not the policies she’s written, nor the awards she’s won. Her true measure of success will never fit into a corporate metric, because it’s the people she’s helped. To her, the ultimate indication of success is when her patients trust her so much that they recommend her to their own family members, and even trust her with their own children.



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Island Epicure – Marj Watkins Is Retiring

Continued from Front Page

Cioppino, an Italian Seafood Soup

- Basic ingredients:
- 2 tbs olive oil
 - 1 large onion
 - 1 cup thin sliced fennel or 1 tsp fennel seeds
 - 3 cloves garlic
 - Pinch of chili flakes
 - 1 bay leaf
 - 1 sprig fresh thyme or ¼ tsp dried thyme
 - ½ cup dry white wine
 - 1 cup clam juice, fish stock, or seafood stock (From Suzanna: I use chicken stock)
 - Fresh herbs: ½ tsp thyme, 1 sprig oregano, a bay leaf, parsley
 - Unsalted butter
 - Tomatoes – 1 can, crushed
 - ½ to 1 cup or more Marinara sauce, as needed (I buy it pre-made)
 - 25 small clams – fresh, still closed
 - ½ pound shrimp
 - 1 quart mussels – fresh, still closed
 - Crab or lobster tails to make it special
 - ½ pound fish – any white fish



Make the stock:

Saute onions and spices in olive oil, add clam juice, tomatoes, and wine.

Add seafood, first the mussels and clams. Cover and cook 5 min. When they just begin to open, add shrimp and crab. Add fish and cook until shrimp and fish are opaque. Add marinara sauce to taste. Serve with fresh-baked garlic bread.

Crab Cakes (gluten-free)

Mix together:

- 1 can of lump crab meat , or about ½ pound fresh crab meat
- About ¾ of an apple, diced
- 1 tsp dill salt
- ⅛ tsp cayenne
- 2-3 tbsp sorghum or oat flour
- 1 egg
- Juice of ½ lime

Heat griddle to medium. Spoon crab mixture onto oiled hot griddle, forming 3-4” cakes. Cook about 5 minutes, until crab cakes can be turned without falling apart. Cook another few minutes until firm. Makes 6 crab cakes. Serve with a slice of lime or a touch of your favorite hot sauce or tartar sauce. We like “Sweet Heat,” from All Things Rich at the Waterfront Market in Ruston.

Boat-Baked Bread

By Suzanna Leigh

It was the summer of 1999, and we had just set the anchor in Longbranch, a little bay in the South Sound. We hadn’t taken the sails down yet when a gust of wind caught the mainsail and nearly sailed us into an odd collection of boats rafted together. The anchor held, and the anchor line stopped us six feet from a 50s style motor cruiser. The cruiser was tied up to a gaff-rigged ketch (a two-masted sailboat with the smaller mast in front of the tiller) with a whole line of dinghies tailing behind it like a string of goslings. A long banner flew from the main mast of the ketch, putting me in mind of a pirate ship.

As we took the last bites of our dinner, a man who looked to be in his late forties rowed up and offered us a small loaf of home-baked – or rather boat-baked – whole wheat bread. “Doug” told us he lived on the 30-foot sloop, From Above, anchored aft of us, and had just finished baking the bread on his stepfather’s boat, moored to our starboard. Then, he pointed across the bay to the Catalina 27 where his son lived. The pirate ship, the string of dinghies, and another sloop tied in the bundle all belong to “Cap.” Cap loves boats, collects boats, and occasionally sells a boat. He lived in the pirate ship/ ketch, where the motor cruiser was visiting.

From Above was built by the owner out of plywood and fiberglass, but the owner only sailed it once before he died. The boat sat in a bayou off the Columbia River in Oregon for 20 years before Doug rescued it and restored it. I wonder how Doug even found it!

Doug lived minimally, simply.

Boat living uses a lot fewer resources than living in a house – less water, less electricity, less space to heat. Doug’s staples were whole wheat, whole-grain rice, rye berries, and lentils, which he cooks in a pressure cooker. “Perfect for boat living,” he told us. “If salt water gets into it, you just dump it out and keep eating.” He eats this year around, summer and winter, buying grains and lentils in 25-50 pound bags. His goal was cheap living – and it turned out to be nutritious as well! He gave us two of his bread recipes, sans time and temperature.

Did his step dad’s boat have an oven? Doug didn’t say and I didn’t think to ask, but I suspect he did, or he would have cooked his bread on the stove top in his own boat.

Doug’s Basic Bread

- 4½ cups fresh ground whole wheat flour
- ½ cup honey
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 4 tsp yeast
- Water (he didn’t say how much)

To make **Walnut Bread**, you add

- 1 cup walnuts
- 1 cup raisins

Omit the olive oil (the walnuts have enough oil)

The last time I was in Longbranch, the Cap’s boats were all gone, and From Above was nowhere to be seen. Living aboard in a small, out-of-the way bay is rather frowned upon these days, what with all the regulations. The state owns pretty much all navigable waters, and boaters are not allowed to stay on anchor in one place for more than 30 days.

Pity.

White Chocolate Chip Cranberry Oatmeal Cookies

By Chef Julia

This cookie recipe has a special place in my heart ... and my kitchen. I originally taught it during my time at Le Cordon Bleu, and it never failed to win over even the most refined palates. These cookies strike a beautiful balance: the hearty chew of old-fashioned oats, the sweet creaminess of white chocolate chips, and the tart burst of dried cranberries all come together in one bite. They’re nostalgic, but elevated ... rustic comfort with a touch of elegance.

Perfect for holiday gatherings, after-school treats, or just cozying up with a warm drink, these cookies are as versatile as they are irresistible. I love baking them with my family or sharing them as gifts; they hold up beautifully and taste even better the next day (if they last that long).

What they pair well with: These cookies shine alongside a hot cup of Earl Grey or spiced chai tea, but they also play beautifully with a glass of cold milk or a bold French press coffee. For a more indulgent twist, try serving them warm with a scoop of vanilla bean or cinnamon ice cream. And for the grown-ups: a glass of tawny port or a buttery chardonnay makes a surprisingly delightful pairing.

White Chocolate Chip Cranberry Oatmeal Cookies

Ingredients:

- 3 cups white sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 cups softened butter
- 4 large eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 6 cups quick oats
- 3 cups cranberries
- 1.5 lb or 24 oz white chocolate chips



Instructions:

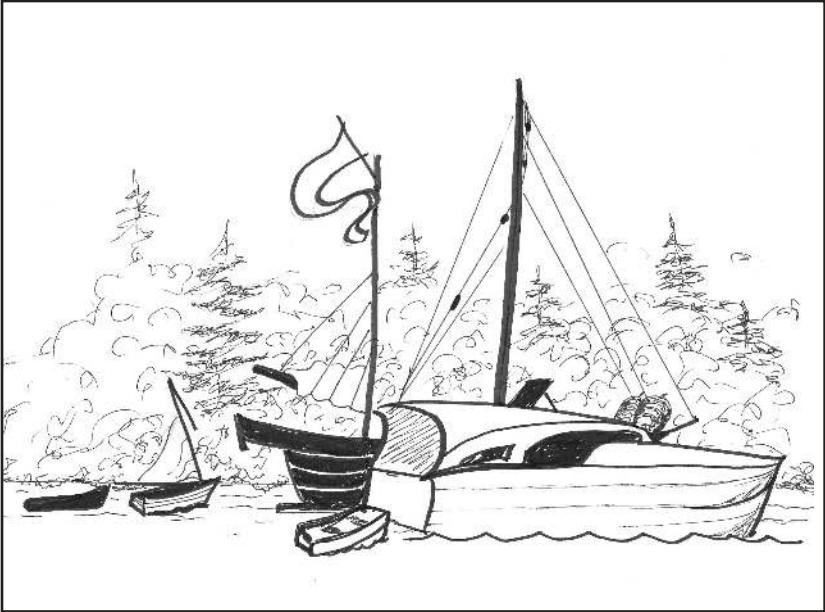
- 1.Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, combine the sugar, brown sugar, and butter; mix well to cream together.
3. Add in egg and vanilla extract and mix until combined.
4. Add the cinnamon, baking soda, salt, and flour, and mix well.
5. Fold in the oatmeal, dried cranberries, and white chocolate chips, making sure all ingredients are uniformly distributed.
- 6.Roll dough into 1-inch balls; place them 3 inches apart onto a greased cookie sheet and bake at 375° for 10-12 minutes, just until the edges are lightly golden.
- 7.Remove from oven and let cool for 2-3 minutes on the cookie sheet, then transfer cookies to cooling rack.

Vashon!

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



Share it with us at editor@vashonloop.com



Cap’s boats, Longbranch – Illustration by Suzanna Leigh

Confetti

is not spaghetti
concocted by Betty.
It's a paletted flurry
a joy up in wonder—
to be lit as a child again!
open-mouth'd pollen
on shoulders this night
Alive! so alive in fireflies!
in its jumping sparks
and out flaring glow
the cook-outs, brownies, and beaches
it's finally peaches—
Summer! oh SUMMER!!!!
it's loft in jasmine and roses,
gasping long sunsets,
the weeks of newly mown hay—

no need to huddle before boxes
of burning cinder, no need
to fuel the long night paradox.
Rather, it's Betty who sweetens
her blushing, her ripening foot
for each these briefer yet
sun-lit days— a gifting bowl
of plump fruit
for each and every table.

O Lord, oh Betty, we pray
slow down slow down
these wonder days.

Claudia Hollander-Lucas



Swimmers

By S. E. Reid

lake-cold is its own moment,
a sleeping aquifer yawning underfoot
invisible
but we can feel it;

this water
is thousands of years old
and yet we—
finite things—
swim unaware in eternity,
dragonflies dodging
in the heavy summer stillness.

the dogs shake,
glitter flies,
fish dart away from our kicking feet,

and up high,
the humming planes look down on us
swimming breast-stroke through the blue

unable to comprehend
our quiet
small
pleasure.

About the Poem:

The little marshy lake walking-distance from our house is a hidden gem on forgotten property—a rural relic—and every year in the summer we take the dogs and go swimming there as often as we can. It's a welcome break from the hot days, a healthy interruption of our normal routine. The lake is fed by an aquifer, and though you can't see it, you truly can feel it as you swim over it: a strange yawn of cold from hidden depths. It is a humbling thing to know that the water holding you up is ancient and alive. A shift in perspective that I so often need.

There's truly nothing quite like the pocket of calm created by a good swim on a buzzing summer afternoon, the surrender to something greater than ourselves, the courage to drift and sway. It's a pleasure best captured in poetry, I think. So I wrote this one.

S.E. Reid is a freelance writer, editor, and poet living on a patch of wooded wetland in the Pacific Northwest with her craftsman husband and her two big goofball dogs, Finn and Huck. She loves to hear and tell stories about nature, history, ghosts, and God, and when not writing she loves to cook nourishing food, read widely, and tend to her vegetable garden. You can find more of her work at <http://sereid.com>

Math Puzzle

By Anne Cotter Moses

Jackson and Fiona have seven pets between the two of them. Steve has twice as many pets as Jackson. Steve has five more pets than Fiona. How many pets do the three children have all together?

Island poetry in these pages

How about yours?



Submit your poems to The Vashon Loop!

Write to: vashonloop-poetry@janevalencia.com



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or 206-491-3761
miguel.urquiza@kingcounty.gov

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



Llaughing Llamas Chronicles

By Daniel Hooker

This joke comes from Bob at Ace Hardware:

A customer is at the checkout stand, and the cashier asks, "Paper or plastic?"

The customer answers, "You choose."

The cashier replies, "Baggers can't be choosers."

~

At the Olympics I saw a guy carrying a long stick. I asked, "Are you a pole vaulter?"

He said, "No, I'm German. But how did you know that my name is Walter?"

~

Did you know that the guy who invented the ferris wheel never met the guy who invented the merry-go-round?

They traveled in different circles.

~

There's a new term for people who have insomnia and who sleep-eat: Insom-num-num-num-numia.

~

What are the strongest days of the week?

Saturday and Sunday. The rest of the days are week days.

~

If you turn over a canoe you can wear it as a hat – because it's been capsized.



Aries (March 20-April 19)

Your patron planet Mars is in Virgo, which is mental, and it's also potentially pushy--the most masculine actor in one of the most feminine signs. Pushing will not work; understanding is what you want. And you're fortunate in that this transit is bestowing you with both curiosity and persistence. Large forces are at work, in a way that can truly be described as once in a lifetime. Saturn and Neptune are working together to help you form entirely new elements of who you are; new underlying structures and means of expression. So keep your mind on your larger movements and greater goals. No part of this is competitive, though Mars will tempt you with situations where you think you have to beat others at their own game. You are far greater than this, and you know it.

Taurus (April 19-May 20)

At a certain point you're going to need, or want, to throw yourself into the transition the world is going through. Yet you must do so in your own way for your own reasons. And what is apparent is that your direction runs contrary to the prevailing trends. You are moving toward protecting others while the tendency is to outcast people, even those closest to us. The emphasis on Aries has the potential to push you into a state of extreme self-absorption. While you need to maintain your inner awareness, do whatever you can to remain a member of the human race. Speak in whole sentences about what you want; do not expect them to read your mind when you can't read it yourself. If you said it, you just might mean it. The universe awaits you finally taking action on your true intent.

Gemini (May 20-June 21)

Uranus, the planet of inventions, revolutions and revelations, arrives in your sign in a couple of weeks, and will help you consciously rearrange and recreate the patterns of your life. If you've been caught in habits of any form that you've faced challenges shifting, you will suddenly find that these things give way to new approaches to existence. The discoveries you make will push you out of a shell you may have only recently noticed that you were in. Jupiter, newly in Cancer, is offering you financial stability that is unusual for you. This will look like a stabilization of the cycles that too often seem to run your life. And meaningful developments in the most social angle of your chart represent yet another way that you're in an essential position of social leadership. Most people are lost right now; you seem to have your orientation, so this is more important than you may recognize.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Jupiter in Cancer is inviting you to live your blessings rather than count them. Expand into your



potential, and dust off a few of your long-cherished though neglected personal goals. The more you aspire to, the more you will accomplish. Implied here is thinking large in a way that you're not accustomed to; usually you fit into the space allotted and do your best from there. Yet the stretching point involves the realization that your life is not just about you. Raise the quality of your work and you will find out that you possess abilities you never imagined you have. Let go of your obsession with planning, at least as an experiment. The only real learning comes from experience, and to grow is to change. Good fortune comes in many forms, including being willing to dare--then doing so.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

You may think you've gone as far as you can, and accomplished as much as is possible under the current conditions--though you have not even begun to access your true potential. There have been all kinds of fireworks in the planetary patterns for the past month or so. Yet the Sun, now at Solstice and about to enter cardinal sign Cancer, is here to power up the new structure that has been built by the hands of destiny. All you need to do is stay awake in the presence of overwhelming pressure to drift off to sleep and forget who you are. Take a look at a picture of our galaxy, or one of those images of a galactic cluster. Ask yourself where you are and how you got here. Ask yourself sincerely what you truly want and need to do in the face of such overwhelming mystery. There is something, and it's larger than just you.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

There are times you are looking at life as if through the wrong end of binoculars. Instead of a close and intimate perspective, it's like you're looking down a tunnel at a distant location that you cannot see. Only what you're looking at is yourself. You were taught to look this way; an example was set for you, and you picked up the worst traits of those who had not forgiven themselves. So set the binoculars down; you do not need any special tool to perceive your reality. Relax into who you are. When you're doing this, you will feel better: that's your clue. Anger is not going to make you feel better, though you may have the option to tell certain elders how you felt then and feel now. If they've departed the earthly realm, write them a letter and drop it in the nearest mailbox without a stamp. You cannot live on guilt and resentment. You can only live on love and goodwill.

Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

Is there tension in your life between the seeming categories 'relationship' and 'career'? If so, map it out using paper and pencil--so you can sketch, write sideways, and draw what's in your mind (which will not fit on any electronic device). Nearly all relationship partners will feel a world of good if you so much as express your affection and appreciation in words spoken and actions taken. Nearly all employers will be grateful that you show up and do your best in good faith. Love and work are the two foundations upon which any sane life can be built in the Western world. If you have children, that's a third category that's related to both. Children thrive on positive attention and the opportunity to show you who they are. They may be the missing element that needs to be prioritized, and any intimate relationship you are in needs to work in their favor. Neither your children nor your partner can be a lever against the other.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

You seem to be drowning in mixed emotions. Please, get over yourself, and step into a larger world. How you feel is the perfect glue that binds you from having a broad and encompassing perspective. Your emotional life and all of its complexity makes it seem like you'll exist in a small world where everything matters and nothing makes a difference. Jupiter in Cancer is calling on you to look all the way out to the horizon, and when you've done that, to get a higher perspective and take another look. The wisdom element of this transit will help you make peace with having been wrong about important things in the past, and let that go in favor of a different approach. Retrograde Juno (and other factors) in your sign are calling on you to let go of the bone of contention. You are such a powerful projector of emotion and psychic energy that others are affected. You have what you need. You get through the day in pretty good shape. Allow yourself the privilege and the gift of loving and caring freely in ways that you act on.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

For someone so independent, you depend on people a lot. And at the moment you're the beneficiary of their goodwill and your shared good fortune. However, this alone is not a formula for happiness. Relationships are sold as the source of fulfillment and the promised land, and this never works out to be true, or at least not for long. But this might be a good time to ask what happiness is; it's a strange concept, evocative of an 8-year-old at his birthday party. It's something else for adults, which I think is about being present in what you're doing and the people you're with. There is an unusual planetary setup at the moment involving your ruling planet Jupiter, plus Saturn and Neptune. Jupiter is only offering you what you think you want; Saturn and Neptune are offering you the

potential to challenge yourself by doing something you've never done before. Your spirit is craving learning, growing and a quest for understanding yourself. Such will not happen in a comfort zone, though it'll definitely make you present to yourself.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

It's time to ask yourself what role relationships serve for you. This counts whether you are in a relationship or have the idea that you want one. There are many ways that you can and do gain from connecting with others, but what is their emotional basis? This is an excellent moment to size up the role you play in the lives of others. What is it, really? This is actually a question about existence. How you respond to these questions describes more than one-on-one partnerships. Your responses describe something about how you perceive the nature of your being. Other questions of a spiritual nature are arising for you now, and you're being called to go into some detail in your inquiry. Do you require proof in order to have faith? Is prayer something that should be specific, or general? And the most significant one of all: do you think God is critical of you? The answer to this is likely to be shaping all of your values and expectations of life and of love.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

Now is the time to bring forth the humanitarian spirit of Aquarius. Sadly, this is one of the most under-emphasized attributes of your sign, though people sometimes dream that it's true. Therefore, imagine that your role on the planet is to be of service to those around you who are in need. Such would not be about being charitable or 'doing good'. I'm talking about instinct on the level of an animal taking care of its young. Only this instinct is about taking care of the world--the highest vibration of Aquarius. The temptations to give into other frames of mind are simply too great for most people to resist. And there would seem to be no rewards--as in material benefits, which often seem to be the only value left in the world. I assure you it's not, and yet what stands in the way is the human ego. Digital consciousness has created a false notion of a tribalism that squelches perception of shared or common interests. Stay awake, and do what you can. 'All for one, one for all' is a cosmic law.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Pisces is the most pleasure seeking sign, and you need to honor this in wholesome ways. Your soul is aching for creative freedom of a kind that is not readily offered by the environment we're all captured by right now. The most beautiful and beauty-loving aspects of your nature are summoning you. Find something that gets your attention for its own sake. Something you want to do or feel drawn by that does not need to happen. This is the access point of your creative mind; and it's the antithesis of the digital state of mind. Here is another secret: if you find yourself being bored, cherish the moment and see if you can make it last. You will benefit from some emptiness, some drift, or any absence of purpose. This is a state of mind that verges on poetic: a listless feeling, a sense of emptiness, coupled with the sound of rain gently striking the window.

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Russ Baum: COVID-Era Connections Lead to Vashon Show

By Caitlin Rothermel

What’s brought Russ Baum, a central Indiana-based touring musician, to Vashon’s Strawberry Festival? It started with a long-distance friendship formed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and is part of a bigger story about the ways musician-audience engagement changed, quite suddenly, during that time.

Baum describes his music style as “folk-rock, Skamericana,” that also combines punk, hip hop, and island influences. He cites Willie Nelson, Green Day, Jack Johnson, and Kendrick Lamar as inspirational. “I like full sound. I like raw sound or full sound, one or the other.”

In recent years, Baum has toured across the United States, and in Mexico, the UK, and Honduras; this is his first time in the Pacific Northwest.

The circumstances leading to this show began in early 2020, when COVID shut down most live music venues. At the time, Baum was at home with his wife, two school-aged children, and elderly in-laws. “We got real scared. We kind of broke down and shut down. I canceled all my shows, just like everybody else.”

About a week in, he decided to try livestreaming – a format he hadn’t used before. “I was really afraid and alone and didn’t know what to do about music. So, I decided to go on a livestream.”

That livestream became a daily series called On the Rise, which eventually ran for 380 consecutive days. According to Baum, “The whole vibe was: Wake up. Hey guys, we’re still alive. If you’re listening right now, I know you’re still alive.”

One of Baum’s many livestream viewers during that time was Jewels Shepard, The Loop’s “Chef Julia,” who lived in Texas then, and lives on Vashon now. According to Shepard, “It was a really interesting time in music. Some artists were absolutely not doing livestreams. Others were like, ‘This is the way to be.’ It allowed a lot of fans to connect with the artists in a way that had never been.”

Through On the Rise, Baum built relationships with fans and supporters from around the world, some of whom later helped organize shows, or hosted him while touring: “Jewels said, ‘one day, we’ll get you a show where I’m at.’”

Baum said his COVID-era livestreams helped him grow as a performer. “The biggest thing it did was get me used to playing to empty rooms. It developed my ability to talk, to interact, and to not judge myself so harshly for making mistakes.” He



still uses the livestream format under the name Digital Dopamine.

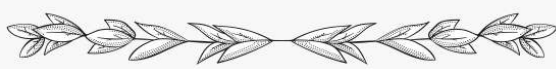
Describing what an audience can expect, Baum said: “I love to tell stories in song. And I have a good vibe that’ll kind of move the body, too.” Baum’s current single, “Our Age” (available by following the QR code), is a collaboration with South African hip hop artists Max G and Major Killer RSA, and emerged from connections made during the COVID era. According to Baum, “It’s got a total island vibe and an old school hip-hop beat.”

“Our Age” marks the beginning of a broader collaborative project called Unite, planned for release next year.

Baum will perform at Vashon Times, which is located just outside the main uptown festival area. According to Shepard, this setting may appeal to those seeking a different kind of festival experience – especially on Sunday afternoon, when there’s a natural lull in other events. “We’re going to have a tarot reader. We’re going to have food. We’re going to have lots of vendors,” she said. “It’s going to be our own little shindig.”

Megan Baum, an accomplished folk singer-songwriter, and Baum’s wife, will open the show. The two met on the music scene and bonded over their shared passion for songwriting and performance. “I really looked up to her before we got together,” Baum said. “She’s amazing.”

The free performance will take place on Sunday, July 20, from 2:00 to 4:20 p.m. at Vashon Times (19001 Vashon Hwy SW). The event will also feature food vendors, tarot readings, and other community offerings.



In Memory of Weslie Ann Rodgers

Weslie Ann Rodgers passed away on June 23rd, 2025. Perhaps best known for her “Please do not eat animal” sign campaign, her touch can be found almost anywhere you look on Vashon. She and her husband Saul first reached Vashon in 1979, and have been permanent residents for the last 30+ years. The smile dispensers are hers, as were the peace rocks found around the Island in past years. If you get your lunch at the Senior Center, that slip of paper with the saying is hers. She had dozens of other secret projects.

Over the years, Weslie volunteered at almost every place that involved volunteers. She pitched in at the Food Bank, the Senior Center, the Vashon Community Care Center, and the showers and dinners offered by the Vashon Interfaith Council. She even tutored students for the legendary math teacher Mr. Lopez.

Her husband thinks Weslie was a Southern Belle born a century too late. Her loving approach to the world was bound to an iron determination to hold to what she considered right. She never drove a car, neither did she ever own a cell phone.

Weslie had experienced a number of health issues after a lifetime of dodging cancer, especially in this last year. Even with these, her force of will was such that she walked to town with her signs right up to the week before she passed. She even achieved one of her last wishes, passing away peacefully out in the open air with the sun shining on her face. Hundreds of people attended her green burial and held her deep in their hearts.

If you want to honor her memory, consider having a vegetarian – or even vegan – day. And we can all raise a cup with her favorite drink:

Water



Scan this QC code to listen to Russ' new single, "Our Age."



Weslie Ann Rodgers

Where’s the ASTROLOGY?!

We’ve redesigned.

The astrology page is still here, just one page earlier!

Turn back one page to see Eric Francis' readings.

Russ Baum’s Advice for Young Musicians Who Want to Perform and Tour

Indiana-based touring musician Russ Baum has a few things to say to young artists trying to make it work:

Love what you do. “If you don't love what you're doing, it's not going to carry you through the hard parts. That's what gets you through — the passion.”

Take time to plan. Don't rush. Slow down and get organized — it makes the work more sustainable. “The more you organize, the more you can focus.”

Tour smart. Instead of booking random shows, Baum plans around timing, personal connections, and places he wants to be. He often stays with friends or family to keep touring affordable and build community.

Stick to your plan. Don't let outside opinions derail you if you know what you're aiming for. Baum says that letting others throw you off course is one of the biggest things that slows artists down in this industry.

Find your voice. Livestreaming during the pandemic taught Baum how to perform without relying on audience response. “I was singing to an empty room. Every single day, I got up and I went live. I didn't know who was watching. It helped me learn how to communicate clearly. I learned to be myself.”

Keep your balance. Know how much you can take on – and when to pull back. “Once I found myself balanced and organized between knowing what's a proper amount of touring and not, I became much more productive and a much more successful artist.”



The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion.

~ Albert Camus