



THE VASHON LOOP

Vol. 23, #02

SERVING VASHON AND ITS NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES ~ FREE

February 7, 2026

The Seahawks Soar

There are fireworks over Vashon. It was a game of Small Domination, of monkey-off-the-back vindication. The Seahawks won the Super Bowl. They became the best team in the National Football League by winning little battles, by making a long string of right decisions. The losers, the New England Patriots, took an almost certain Super Bowl victory away in 2015. This time, the Patriots had to play above their heads to win. The Seahawks only had to do the same things they had all season.

They did, winning 29-13. It wasn't that close. When Paul Allen passed away in 2018, it was easy to assume the usual sports franchise fate – heirs making a few bad moves before selling out. The management of the team passed to his younger sister, Jody Allen. Technically, Jody does not own the team. If she did, she'd be praised as the smartest and most respected owner in the NFL. It's time to fix that. She is the architect, the real hero of this story.

As Microsoft founder Paul Allen's younger sister, Jody Allen became the

executor of his estate and manages the affairs of the team. Many fans, myself included, drastically underestimated her abilities in that regard. A low-key mom, manager, and investor who grew up in Seattle's Wedgwood area, she is the daughter of an elementary schoolteacher mom and UW librarian dad. Her mission is long-term charitable impact in the Northwest, but her lifetime passion is nature.

She loves elephants and whales, and leads the Wild Lives and SeaLife Response, Rehab, and Research (SR3) foundations to ensure the health of their ecosystems. Fortunately, she also loves Seahawks. As we have long suspected, the NFL does not.

Jody must have studied how to build a dynasty. The quarterback for the Seahawks, Russell Wilson, approached her with a deal: fire Pete Carroll, the most successful coach in the team's history, and we'll get back to the Super Bowl. In 2022, she traded away Wilson's league-high salary and shipped his bloated ego to the Denver Broncos, getting a boatload of



premium draft picks in return.

The Seahawks used the picks to address problem areas—a porous offensive line, underwhelming pass rush, and expensive, oft-injured players. They drafted Charles Cross, a stellar offensive tackle at #9 overall, Nick Emmanwori the nickel back, a

little later and then got a host of other players who won this game. They fit a pattern.

Jody Allen had the wisdom to let Pete Carroll go with dignity after Russell Wilson's departure. She let him stay on as an advisor after she

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Sheriffs in Modern Societies: An Interview with Sheriff Keith Swank

By Marc J. Elzenbeck

North America was raised on Sheriffs standing up for the rights of their constituents, for modest pay plus risk to life and limb. Hollywood regaled us with their tales, often in Western movies.

As the highest law enforcement officer in a county, Sheriffs had a tough job. Sometimes they had to solve deadly problems alone (“High Noon”), with deputized recruits (“Rio Bravo”), or a whole community's combined decency (“The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance”).

In every story, the Sheriff has to thread the needle between law, business interests, ambitious governors, and above all, a voting jurisdiction's supporters and detractors.

But what if the very concept of an elected sheriff is outmoded in the 21st century US? Washington State is set to pass Senate Bill 5974, which appears to allow a vaguely defined committee to de-certify sheriff's elections. We caught up with Pierce County Sheriff Keith Swank to learn more.

Sheriff Swank was elected in January of 2025, the first county outsider to be elected sheriff in local history. With long experience as a former Seattle police captain, Swank has been making waves ever since.

Swank's first face-off with the State? Not patrolling for expired car tabs. We'll get to that.

I asked Swank to outline the basic pros and cons of elected versus appointed sheriffs. “First off, the sheriff is answerable to the people like any other politician, because I was elected. It's a very responsive political position. Of course, taking 911 calls and crime prevention are major, but my job is also to listen to citizens. People reach out to me for

various things – property disputes, constitutional rights. Even whether they can mine for gold on their property.

“If you're an appointed sheriff or police chief, you'll do the bidding of the mayor or whomever appointed you – the county or city councils. You'll do what they say, or you won't have a job, so you're not independent. You won't be able to say, ‘No, mayor,’ or ‘No, council, that's wrong.’

“We can say that, which is why it's so important to have the sheriff as an elected position. To be able to push back for the right things for the people.”

Swank made the point, persuasively, that a primary responsibility of his non-partisan office is to exercise good long-term judgment. Is an ordinance good for the community? Is it compliant with the Constitution? Sheriffs typically serve as a bridge between local, state, and Federal laws and their enforcement, but also as a potential check and balance. I asked for an illustration.

“People often say, ‘You're just supposed to enforce all the laws passed in Olympia, or by the county council.’ And I tell them, ‘No, that's not correct.’ And they say, ‘Yes you are!’

“OK. What if Olympia passed a law this session that said, police no longer need to have a warrant to enter your house? They can enter whenever they want to, or under some broad pretext.

“Of course that may be farfetched. But just say they did. In that case I ask, ‘Would you want me to abide by that law, or would you want me to push back?’ And people always say to me, ‘No, you can't come to my house without a warrant.’”

As for expired car tabs? Swank has stated publicly that he has directed deputies in Pierce County to not cite them as a primary offence. Currently, the Legislature is set to pass higher fines for expired tabs, including on parked vehicles in private garages, with escalation to criminality for

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At Stillpoint



By Caitlin Rothermel

There is something we can probably all agree on. Even right now. It's something you may or may not think about.

You want to take care of your nervous system. You want to be able to calm it down. You don't want it running on high all the time. You may be running on high all the time if – more often than not – you feel tense or on edge.

It happens more easily the older you get, and it takes a progressively greater toll.

Fortunately, here on Vashon Island, we have a number of spaces where you can slow down and let your body learn to rest. One is Stillpoint Studio, a community yoga center at the corner of Vashon Village.

Abby Lawson, the owner of Stillpoint and a longtime Vashon resident, first came to the studio as both a student and teacher, when it was still Claro. The transition happened quickly. “The

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What Language Can Do: A Student's Experiment

By Sri Lakshmi

Happy New Year! May every day be filled with beautiful fuel for your next trip around the sun.

It's a great time to be a student. An even better time to study communications. Last September, our president inspired me to enroll in college. As part of this communication study, we students chose a communication theory as a template for the application of current events.

I chose Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Theory, because it helps take apart hate speech with 5 points: Who, what, where, how, and why. I added the work of psychologist Marshall Rosenberg's "Living Nonviolent Communication."

My question of study was, "How does language affect our environment?" I chose a research project that can be easily duplicated by anyone, an experiment Masaru Emoto first described in "Messages from Water."

Letter to the Editor

2 cups cooked white rice
2 clean dry clear glass jars with lids
Blue painters' tape
I placed one cup of cooked white rice in each jar and tightly sealed with lid.

I labeled Jar #1 with a phrase president Donald J Trump used during his speech delivered at the United Nations Assembly in New York last September: "Your countries are going to hell."

Jar #2. I labeled Jar #2 with a phrase inspired by Marshall Rosenberg's lifetime of conflict de-escalation: "I Respect You."

At end of 12 weeks, I compared the jars of rice. Jar #1 became diseased and ugly. Jar #2 showed no change, remaining white in color.

To me, the study proved that hate speech negatively affects the environment. And it proved the power of Nonviolent Communication.



Jar #1: "Your Countries Are Going to Hell"
Jar #2: "I Respect You"

I received high marks for my presentation. I was told that I am in the wrong school and I received a referral to Washington State University, where undergraduates are conducting similar research in Nonviolent Communication. Food for thought.





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The Vashon Loop is published monthly

The Vashon Loop

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Distribution: The Vashon Loop is a monthly newspaper, with 3,000 copies printed per issue; the paper is distributed to multiple sites throughout Vashon-Maury Island, and all content is also available at our website.
<https://vashonloop.com/>
February 7, 2026


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

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2026 Salish Sea Early Music Festival
Early chamber music on period instruments
We're pleased to announce our 15th annual Salish Sea Early Music Festival on Vashon Island.

Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit
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Suggested donation: \$20 to \$30
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Monday, February 16th, 12:00 noon
France and Italy: Pardessus, Gamba, Flute and Harpsichord

- Susie Napper (Montreal), viola da gamba
- Olena Zhukova (Kyiv, Ukraine), harpsichord
- Mélisande Corriveau (Montreal), treble viol & viola da gamba
- Jeffrey Cohan, renaissance & baroque flutes



The program for this most unusual and sonorous ensemble of instruments (that would have last been commonplace during the early decades of the 18th century in France) will include music by Louis-Antoine Dornel, Louis and Françoise Couperin, Archangelo Corelli, and André Cheron. It will demonstrate the stylistic chasm between the French and Italian styles debated so vociferously in France during the early years of the 18th century.

The rarely heard pardessus de viole is the highest-pitched member of the fretted viol family of stringed instruments, corresponding to the violin but played in the lap, alongside the viola da gamba or bass viol, also fretted like a guitar and with a range approximating the cello.

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At Stillpoint

Continued from Front Page

owner pulled me out for a coffee one day to let me know she was selling the business,” Abby said. “And then within a week, we made a decision that I would be the one to buy the studio.”

Stillpoint offers several types of yoga classes, to meet different preferences – Hatha, Morning Fire, Restorative, and Vinyasa (see graphic for details). According to Abby, some people come looking for a workout, while others prefer something slower and more restorative.

At Stillpoint, the goal is to create a calm, welcoming space where people can slow down and feel supported. Having a range of classes under one roof offers variety and consistency, particularly for students looking for a range of instruction within one booking system. Abby said, “We’re one unified platform, with a range of classes and a range of teachers.”

Abby sees yoga as both physical and calming – a way to slow and focus the breath, restore the nervous system, and pay attention to what’s right here now in front of you. She described one simple pose – Tadasana, or mountain pose – standing with both feet planted on the ground, to illustrate that yoga doesn’t only have to happen on the mat: “Just standing with your two feet on the ground ... we can touch that pose while waiting in the line ... while our family member is having a meltdown. We’re here doing it in class, but this one you can use when you’re off the mat.”

In addition to yoga classes, Stillpoint hosts monthly and seasonal events, including sound baths, sensory meditations, breathwork, Reiki, and qigong. For example, the studio hosts a quarterly sensory meditation led by sound practitioner Diana Garrett. This event mixes sounds and scents – like teas, chocolates, or raspberries – small sensory cues meant to gently wake up the body before participants settle in for a longer, quiet meditation. All accompanied by a soft sound bath.

Community building is part of Abby’s background and shapes how she runs Stillpoint. “We want to get to know people and we want to be part of their lives.” She described “playing



the weaver” by introducing people to each other and encouraging conversation after class. Access also matters, so the studio has free community classes, a free kids’ program, tiered memberships, and sliding-scale pricing.

It was important to know for myself, so I went to Restorative Yoga, also known as “lay-down” yoga. I went on maybe the perfect day. A couple of hours earlier, I’d had a stressful dental procedure, and my nervous system was definitely activated. I was wary about doing anything that night, but knew this would be slow and easy.

What we did: some very straightforward but powerful breathing practices, plus a few supported positions with blocks. Beyond that, absolutely no yoga pressure. I won’t get into the details. But it was lovely, and I left with more energy than I came in with.

Afterwards, it felt like my feet were planted more firmly on the ground. I could look around and actually see the people around me instead of feeling a little trapped inside myself, buzzing like a live wire. More like a centered observer of my own life again.

In other words, I got a bit of a still point.

Here is how Abby explained how the studio got its name: “The name Stillpoint is speaking to wanting to be this kind of calm in the storm of the day-to-day on the Island – that there is a moment of serenity here inside of the studio, but also ultimately there’s this peacefulness that resides under the kind of scattered layer of the mind too, and that yoga and meditation or even just coming and being in community and chatting can help us to find that.”

Types of Yoga at Stillpoint

Hatha

A traditional form of yoga where postures are held for longer durations. Abby describes this class as “really powerful” for dropping into the mind while building strength and endurance, and highlights the Stillpoint instructor’s deep knowledge of anatomy, fascia, and how the body works.



Morning Fire (Heated Strength Class)

A strength-building, heated class held in a warm room, described by Abby as “a little bit of a butt kicker.” The practice emphasizes power, endurance, and heat generated via the environment and sustained movement (but not at the extreme temperatures of traditional hot yoga).

Restorative (Lay-Down Yoga)

A slow, non-weight-bearing practice focused on long, supported poses held for several minutes at a time. Abby describes this class as being “all about restoring the nervous system,” with deep breathing, stillness, and silence as central elements. It is her personal favorite.

Vinyasa

A flowing practice that synchronizes breath and movement through traditional poses. Abby describes this as the style “most people think of as yoga.” These classes can be playful and creative, with an emphasis on movement, rhythm, and exploration.

Sheriffs in Modern Societies

Continued from Front Page

repeat penalties, including up to one year in jail. The law is reportedly expected to recoup \$25.6 million in revenue per year, a seeming speck in a budgetary tsunami. I asked the Sheriff about the subject:

“What if they pass a law and said your tabs are expired and the police can arrest you? That’s a good legal question, but the community impact is horrible, terribly short-sighted – 600,000 people are running around on expired tabs. They have many reasons.

“Now, Washington voted for \$30 flat tab initiatives three times, so some are coming from a civil protest angle. Then you’ve got the underprivileged, off-book drivers who are just trying to get to work. Then we have the elderly. So, it hits disproportionately and we would say that’s an overstep, with actual arrests for that being an overreach of government.”

The sheriff’s role is perhaps the deepest root of American legal tradition. It has relied on local, democratic enforcement, which in turn extends back into 400 years of established English Common Law. The US has generally employed direct elections, harnessing community involvement (including posse and deputies), but accountable to higher constitutional constraints. Appointed systems offer professional selection, greater oversight and control, and closer bureaucratic and political alignment.

Do we want to keep election choice going for strong but less predictable mavericks who can stand up to bullies like Liberty Valance? Or has the time come for Appointed Sheriffs of Nottingham?



Vashon Mourns the Death of Dr. Steve Nourse

Steve was born on April 30, 1948, and married the love of his life Barbara on June 13, 1971. During their honeymoon, Steve fell ill with transverse myelitis, an event that resulted in a permanent disability. He faced this with great resilience and built a deeply engaged and connected life.

Steve earned his bachelor’s degree in education from Central Washington University and spent many years teaching special education. He later continued his studies at the University of Washington, receiving a master’s degree in social work and a doctorate in special education.

Steve was known to many on Vashon. He hosted on The Voice of Vashon, volunteered with numerous local organizations, wrote regularly for *The Loop* and other community papers, and was a lively presence on local social media. Steve cared deeply about his community and was never shy about speaking up when something mattered.

That same generous spirit defined Steve as a neighbor and friend. For the past 11 years, two of *The Loop*’s editors had the good fortune to live next door to Steve. He worked closely with all of us on neighborhood projects, helped create a sense of connection and cooperation, and was always ready to lend a hand. In turn, we were all always happy to lend him a hand. Steve will be deeply missed.

Steve is survived by his wife, Barbara; daughters, Jenn and Lisa; granddaughters, Junie and Zara; other beloved family members, including Lucas and Lubna; and his dear dog, Maya. A service to honor Steve’s life is planned for March 2026.



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The human microbiome is composed of trillions of microbes that are fundamental to human health and affect how our bodies react to environmental conditions and substances. Our gut microbiome, skin, mouth, eyes, and nose all have unique environments composed of various microorganisms serving essential functions.

Bacteria in the microbiome are essential in the digestion of food, immune system regulation, protection against disease-causing bacteria, and production of key vitamins. To build a healthy microbiome, strive to consume a diverse diet rich in plants, limit sugar and processed foods, incorporate fermented foods in your diet, reduce stress, and get enough sleep.

Giving Up Hopelessness for Lent

By Mike Ivaska

The church I pastor has historically had, at best, a tenuous relationship with the church calendar. The generation before me was iconoclastic in every way. Many were former hippies and, in their own words, “recovering Catholics.” When I started at the church, we practiced Advent (the season leading to Christmas), Christmas Eve, Palm Sunday, and Easter. Some folks weren’t even sure we should do that much.

Time has passed, however, and this year our church is coming at things a bit differently. We have decided to follow a document called the Revised Common Lectionary in our Sunday services, primarily to incorporate more Scripture reading into our worship. Lectionaries are structured selections of Scripture readings, designed primarily for use when the community is gathered to worship. They generally follow a plan, and allow a wide range of readings to take place in a given gathering. The use of lectionaries predates Christianity by way of the synagogue. Lectionary use among Christians was adopted early, and lectionaries provide some of our earliest copies of Christian Scripture.

As a product of ecumenical labor, the Revised Common Lectionary follows the western Christian calendar. This means the readings are arranged according to the logic of the Christian year. And this means our church is about to, in one way or another, experience Lent.

In our culture of overabundance, Lent is primarily associated with deprivation. “What are you giving up for Lent?” Because of the history of our little church, I have no intention of prescribing that sort of thing to our people. But all that fasting and relinquishing of simple pleasures has a point: Remembering what Jesus gave up for our salvation ... Entering into a season of repentance and death,

Island Voices

so that we can emerge with Jesus into resurrection and new life Easter Day.

The majority of ancient cultures experienced time as a circle. It was the Hebrew experience of God that gave time the feel of a line, or of an arrow that’s going somewhere. If time is measured by seasons and the passing of moons, it’s a circle. If time began at a certain point somewhere “back there,” and continues off into a promised future, it’s a line.

Most ancient culture’s stories and celebrations, therefore, were ways of explaining the circle – the endless and inescapable cycle of life and death. The events that were told didn’t happen only once, in one place, on a given Tuesday. They happened in the primordial past, outside time. The telling of the stories, and especially the enacting of celebrations, brought these events to the present. The dying and rising gods died and rose every year.

In the Hebrew-Christian imagination, however, things are different. The stories aren’t metaphors for the circle. The circle contains metaphors for the line. While every generation that celebrates Passover speaks as though present at the Exodus themselves, the Passover celebrates an event that took place at a certain place, at a certain time, that created a certain people. The remembrance makes the salvation experience present. But it also celebrates a past event that made the celebrants into a people. And it gives its celebrants hope for their common future.

Similarly, Christians celebrate their salvation every year in the events of the church calendar.

Many have said that Christians took over winter solstice in their celebration of Christmas, and the vernal equinox for their celebration of Easter Day. While not only the history, but also the

dates these days are celebrated, undermines this theory, the incorporation of winter themes into Christmas and spring themes into Easter is filled with meaning. As I said, the circle (fall-winter-spring-summer) is filled with metaphors for the line (the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ).

On Christmas Eve, our church lighted candles. We sang of a light that entered our darkness. Near the darkest night of the year (though not actually on the winter solstice, take note), we remembered when the darkness of this world was pierced by the light of God’s love. We remembered the birth of God’s Son.

Similarly, on Easter Day, many Christians will rise before the sun. They will ring in the day with songs of Jesus’ resurrection. The arrival of spring (not technically the same day as Easter Day, take note) will remind us of the overcoming of death once for all. The darkness of our spiritual winter (hopelessness and spiritual alienation) will have passed to the flowering of new life in a spiritual spring (Jesus’ resurrection to new life, our new life through faith in him, and the promise of our own and the whole world’s resurrections one day, too).

This year, as my church tentatively observes the season of Lent, I look forward to remembering the events that gave me salvation. I look forward to remembering that to follow a crucified Messiah is to allow myself to be crucified with him every day. I haven’t decided if I will give anything up for Lent. Perhaps I will give up my reasons not to hope.

Mike Ivaska is the pastor of Vashon Island Community Church.



Vashon’s Prehistoric Fossil

By Seán C. Malone and John Sweetman

I suppose Seán’s story of the “Turtle Rock” might have begun years ago when we both lived in the obscure eastern Washington town of Republic.

I had been the mill manager of the Day Mines for a time. It had been one of the only gold mines allowed to operate during World War 2, as it was so rich in vital ore. That was when gold was \$32 an ounce. Later, it became one the most productive mines in the country as Hecla Mining took it over in the mid 80s.

Hecla Mining was basically a Wallace, Idaho silver mining company with no experience at all in gold mining. Their mine in Wallace was named “The Lucky Friday,” and they sure were lucky in Republic as they looked over old drill logs and found that the early miners had missed a deposit that returned well over 2 million ounces of gold in what they named “The Golden Promise.” I personally saw nearly pure epithermal gold ore come out with large visible lumps from the 2,000-foot underground level.

Naturally, Seán and I reverted to our much earlier gold-seeking days since I had panned gold with my mom on the Cispus River in Lewis country, to little avail, and Seán has even tried panning gold on Vashon! And so, we looked for gold ore outcrops while pursuing other activities in the Colville Forest, not so much for profit but as for fun. Both of



Turtle Fossil

us were out in the rugged country looking for wood, hunting, and me looking for my lost cows on the range.

We eventually staked over 30 claims in that area and actually found enough modestly high-grade locations to lease our claims to the Hecla Mining company for what we considered a small profit ... some of the “profit” was dissipated in a bottle of Laphroaig Scottish malt whisky.

But the good thing about our claims was the side benefit of finding some fine firewood, and then Seán actually found an abandoned raven chick that became his good companion until he crapped on Seán’s vintage TV that never worked well anyhow ... and it blew up.

In addition to the finding of the raven, we also ran across ledges of fossils from what was identified as the “Klondike” formation. An old Miocene lakebed that had fish ... dawn redwood ... ginkgo, and numerous bugs in thin layers of old clay bottom.

Turns out, these fossils became well-known and distinctive, and today there is a small center in Republic devoted to them. Some of its samples came from our collection. The center is called Stonerose, after numerous fossils of this early rose were discovered and sent to the Burke Museum.

It did help that Seán was a caretaker of a mine at the time, and he discovered a ledge of the deposit that was detached from the rather elusive main body and yielded some unusual examples of early birch seeds. My main contribution, among others, is displayed as a rare type of “stinkbug.” Indeed not impressive, since after 45 million years, they have come back to Vashon in force.

So, Seán was pleased to see a new fossil appear as a gift from brother Mike, this Christmas, naturally. I think this gift will appear in the coming rock show at the historical society. He claims it’s a “turtle,” but it could be a mutant clam. I go for the turtle explanation. We are not going to contribute our high-grade gold samples from our prospecting days to the event ...

Seán tells the story of his “turtle” fossil.

Grandma Ada and Papa Jim had 23 grandchildren living on Vashon, most near Portage. Grandma Ada was Danish and her father was a naturalist doctor who had gone back to medical school in South Dakota to become accredited in this country. After that, he purchased some property at Portage and moved his considerable family there in 1892. Fast forward 60 years and you have Papa Jim winning



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10:00AM**



the clam-digging contest, sponsored by the Vashon Sportsmen’s Club.

In fact, our grandfather won the clam-digging contest several years running, until the Sportsmen’s Club presented him with a gold cup that declared him the World Champion Clam Digger. He never used a shovel, though. Papa Jim’s tool of choice was a cultivator with five eight-inch long tines. His secret was to drag the cultivator through the gravel to find the Littleneck or Butter clams, his favorites for steaming. The other competitors dug holes in the sand down the beach toward the tide.

It was in 1952 that Papa Jim made a find on that same Tramp Harbor beach across the road from the Portage store. His prize find was a 3-inch petrified turtle that could be over 250,000 years old.

My Brother Mike gave me that fossil for Christmas. I’m wondering if this fossil has commercial value? Brother Mike pays me \$5.00 for every rat I trap at the homestead.

Well, this “turtle” find gives us more hope when we are beachcombing these days. For one thing, fossils are easier to carry and not as heavy as the neat pieces of driftwood we used to carry home.

Make America Kind Again: Building Momentum for Prison Reform in Washington State

By John Bean

In “House of the Dead,” Fyodor Dostoevsky reveals his conviction that the quality of a civilization can be judged by how it treats its prisoners. If you believe in a strongman society ruled by force, then prisons might look like El Salvador’s notorious CECOT – a site for Kristi Noem’s appalling photo-op in front of caged prisoners. In contrast, if you imagine a society that honors human rights and is marked, even occasionally, by love of neighbor or compassion or kindness, prisons might resemble those in, say, Norway or Finland, where guards and staff respect the dignity of prisoners and where the goal of prison life is rehabilitation. It is said that in Norway, “People go to court to be punished and go to prison to become better neighbors.”

This contrast between force and kindness has been on my mind lately as our Episcopal Church Outreach Committee thinks about prison reform. For the past three years, we have mounted projects to oppose mass incarceration. In Washington state, the driving cause of mass incarceration is the 1983 Sentencing Reform Act with subsequent amendments, which reflects the 1980s mindset of “hard time for hard crime.” The Reform Act mandates long sentences, often beyond the demands of justice, focuses prison life on punishment rather than

rehabilitation, and disproportionately targets communities of color. Despite evidence that offenders age out of crime and despite enormous cost to the state, our laws needlessly incarcerate persons who could safely and justly be reintegrated into their communities.

Currently, there seems to be no public momentum for system-wide revision of our criminal justice system. Progressive legislators must resort to piecemeal reform bills such as limiting solitary confinement or reducing prosecutors’ use of weapons enhancements, but these bills get little press coverage or public attention. In recent years, our Outreach Committee has lobbied for several of these bills by organizing informative webinars and following up with letters and phone calls to our legislators. But none of these bills even reached a floor vote.

Given our state’s commitment to human rights, why isn’t there more public pressure for prison reform? A common answer is that legislators – even the most progressive ones – don’t want to appear soft on crime. But there may be a deeper psychological reason worth exploring. From my observations, an underlying cause for public hesitation on sentencing reform is the fear that violent offenders are public threats forever. This is the “myth of the monster” that fuels mass

incarceration. Many people are OK with reducing prison sentences for non-violent offenders. But not so with violent offenders, whom we tend to dehumanize as irredeemable “others” hardwired for crime, untouched by pangs of conscience, incapable of change.

The impetus for prison reform, I now think, depends on a society’s belief in the inviolable worth of all human beings. This belief might come from a religious tradition (we humans are made in the image of God or possess an inherent Buddha nature) or from non-theological rationalism (Kant’s injunction never to treat another person as a means to an end or secular humanism’s belief in inviolable human rights).

Perhaps a way to build momentum for prison reform is to share stories of people who have formed networks of love and care to help incarcerated persons turn their lives around. I have had the opportunity to observe two such networks. The first is Vashon-Maury SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice), which brings white people to stand in solidarity with minority families impacted by our carceral system. Members of SURJ create a supportive presence at re-sentencing hearings, actively write letters of support for clemency cases, and do the work of making personal connections for social justice.

Through SURJ, I learned about another network, “Families Shoulder to Shoulder,” founded by Tacoma reform activist Ginny Parham. How this organization got founded is the

subject of a remarkable documentary, “Pathway to Freedom,” which has made a lasting impression on me. It shows Parham’s tireless persistence and love during her campaign to secure her son’s release (after 25 years) from a 96-year prison sentence. Her advocacy for her son helped her build communities with other families with incarcerated loved ones. The film also focuses on two incarcerated persons with remarkable integrity, courage, and resilience – Willy Nobles (Ginny’s son, who killed someone in a gang shooting when he was 18) and Marriam Oliver (who committed her violent crime at age 14). The film shows how they transformed their lives in prison, revealing why people cannot be defined by their darkest moments.

Discussion of this film led our Outreach Committee to decide our next project – to invite Ginny Parham and Willie Nobles to Vashon for a screening of Pathway to Freedom. Because the film is short (about 25 minutes) it leaves room for panel presentations and interactive discussion of prison reform. A member of SURJ will be on the panel, as well as a defense attorney from the “End Mass Incarceration” project. We invite the Vashon community to join us for this event and help build momentum for comprehensive prison reform that signals a kinder nation.

This prison reform event with film screening will be held on Sunday, February 22, 2:00 p.m. at the Land Trust Building.

John Bean is a retired professor of English at Seattle University and also a member of the Outreach Committee at Vashon’s Church of the Holy Spirit (Episcopal).



Parallel Lives / Wayside Concerns

By Richard Odell

Did I imagine Daisy’s? My father liked to circulate. He had me in tow, at age three or four, deep in the 1950s. I remember an interior scene where today is Minglement. The presence of several adults, their voices like treetop murmurs above me. Canned goods lined on shelves which rose high upon the wall. I would someday learn this old-time arrangement of grocer’s items would give rise to the baseball phrase, “can of corn,” meaning an easily caught fly ball.

I came away thinking I had been to “Daisy’s,” but since no such local appellation has survived the ages, I had come to doubt my memory. But now my friend and classmate, and local history buff, Mike Sudduth, has solved the case, having sent me a photograph, via Candace Brown, of Tige and Daisy Leamer outside Leamer’s Shopping Center. They look able, bright, and content with their enterprise – an enterprise not long for the world.

Gone, too, as the supermarkets arose, would be the other wayside concerns: Franke’s at the North End; Mackie’s, aside Beulah Park on the Westside; Jack’s Corner; Lavender’s (later the Portage Store); the Tahlequah and Dockton stores. The whole lot, with their wooden floors, rattling, aged coolers, and their rusting signage for Hire’s, Nesbitt’s, and Carnation, would wink out one by one, though the process of elimination took years.

It was only Franke’s Cash & Carry, the one concern that might have survived, as the ferry lines grew past its door, that buckled and fell more or less in one act.

Ralph Franke, a broad-set man who spoke through a moustache, lived in a farmhouse on the bluff atop Parking Lot Hill. One night, he took his rifle out to the barn, bent upon some troublesome raccoon, yet through confusions, misalignments, and plain hard fate, the bullet breached the wall of his house and found his wife, instead. They managed to commune a short while, the two of



Tige and Daisy Leamer outside Leamer’s Shopping Center - Photographer: Howard Willisie
Courtesy of Candace Brown

them, in the hospital before she died.* (*Vashon Island News Record)

I never heard of it at the time. I was small, and the talk went over my head. But sent down the hill, one day, for a loaf of Wonder Bread, I found Franke sitting in the sun outside his store, his head bent down and a bottle on the ground beside his chair. He waved me away, groaning incoherently, before I got too close, and I went home and told my mother of the strange encounter.

Some days later, possessed of a dime, I sought to buy myself a pair of Hostess Twinkies – yes, a mile downhill and back, on foot, for a Hostess Twinkie – but Franke, nodding on his feet behind the counter, shoved the package at me for free. I had no idea, of course, of his torturous fix: possessed both of life and inventory which in his eyes, now, held no value, and perhaps searching, through his clouded grief, for some anodyne through alms.


Soon abandoned, the empty blockhouse store was parted out by intermittent waves of scavengers. The last wall came down maybe 15 years back. Today, a couple of electrical transformers and some deer-chewed cypress mark the old site, just off the highway. A series of long-haired freaks would occupy the farmhouse Franke had either lost or quit, and Franke took to walking the roads in an end-stage that went on for years,

such that even this once small boy would wind up, someday, giving him rides in my car.

He might have had regular matters to attend to in the city, for often one found him scaling the main highway near the ferry, past the relic of his store. I don’t recall, from our car rides, any scent of alcohol, only the damp redolence of long and impoverished solitude emanating from the dark torso that blocked all light from that side of the car. Always, as the ride neared its end, somewhere in town, he’d ask if I’d ever seen a copy of a newspaper from the day President Garfield was shot. I’d say no, of course, and from his shopping bag he’d bring out a copy of Leslie’s Illustrated, with the shocking news, as promised, and thus the ride was paid for by Franke’s one last stock in trade.

His heart grew weak, but still he would climb the hill from the ferry in slow, hard-won steps, as though he were about to die on Everest. Subsequent boatloads of the Island’s ever-swelling commuter class would pass him by, until one among the few drivers who still knew him came along and opened a door, and until there were no more hills to climb. A remnant of his farm yet remains.

God rest his soul.



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Week Seven (Almost) In Lockdown

By Pam (“Gates”) Johnson

Almost seven weeks in of staring at the four walls of my front room. My back surgery went well, but I came out of it looking at a couple of months of recuperation.

When getting discharged, I was given the option of going to a rehab place or going home. Since my daughter had blocked out two weeks to stay with me, I opted for home. That was not necessarily the best decision. Had a little medical problem at the end of the first week. Had to call 911. I don’t remember what went on, only that there was a lot of pain involved.

Everybody thought I should have opted for rehab, but apparently once the hospital discharges you to home it is very difficult for them to change their minds and send you to rehab. So, I stayed home and gutted it out.

The last few weeks have been spent moving from one recliner to another recliner to the sofa. I even started sleeping in my bed, which I haven’t done for years. In March, I bought new furniture. Knew I was probably looking at a back surgery, so I got a big cushy power recliner that I could sleep in. The furniture arrived and it was just what I wanted. Until ... the power recliner broke at the end of August.

There was a year-long factory warranty, plus I purchased a five-year extended warranty. I thought there wouldn’t be a problem. I was wrong.

The chair broke in the reclined position with me in it. Funny thing I never thought to ask about, there is no kill switch to un-recline. Hadn’t had my

surgery yet, so I managed to wrestle my way out and called La-Z-Boy repair. I was certainly under warranty, but they couldn’t get a repairman out here until October 30th.

A five-month old chair that could not be used. I was not happy. October comes and almost goes, and the repairman shows up, fixes it in five minutes, and leaves. A month later, the power chair quit again while I was reclined. Had to call my nephew, who came over and got me out. My surgery was scheduled for December 4th.

About a week post-surgery, the chair broke again. By this time, I was fully incapacitated. No bending, no twisting, and no lifting anything over five pounds. I called La-Z-Boy. Their response to my getting stuck in the chair was to tell me to just climb over the arm. I told them I had just gotten out of the hospital with major back surgery. Their response? “Oh.”

I needed a power chair so I could stand up from a sitting position. Fine, says I. Bring me a chair to use while you get my chair fixed or give me my money back. Oh no. They can’t do that, even though they have about 852 power chairs on their showroom floor. Their response was to send a repairman out to see what broke. That took a few weeks. The repairman took one look and said, yup, it’s broken.

Of course, he did not have the parts needed. Parts would have to be ordered and would take two weeks to get here. Once they arrived, I would need to call and schedule the repair, which would take at least three weeks. I told them it was an urgent medical situation. Their response? If

someone cancels, we will try to get out to you sooner. Otherwise, February 11th.

I threatened them with lawyering up, but can’t find a lawyer. Someone suggested I send a complaint to the Washington State Attorney General’s consumer complaint department, which I did. Now I wait. I either want a new chair because I think this one is a lemon, or my money back, which is almost \$3,000.

The chair situation took up a lot of time and energy. Lots of friends have dropped by with soup and cookies. They are what has kept me from going bat-guano crazy. I’m watching too much television. Got tired of watching YouTube videos of lawnmowers and police bodycam footage and political junk. I have even begun watching Japanese udon food truck videos.

My melon is so foggy, I can’t concentrate on reading or puzzles. One good thing is my inactivity has led to a totally decreased appetite. Having to ask people to get groceries for me has also cut down on eating. My jeans are getting a little baggy.

Dr. Jones called me yesterday and said if I was off the pain pills I was good to drive! Yay! My little black Bronco has been looking awfully lonely. It might take me a few days to get my driving confidence back, but I will power through that.

Vacuumed the house today. Might try to go to the store tomorrow if my grandson can come with me to carry the bags. Remember, I still can’t lift over five pounds. My next doctor’s appointment is February 4th. I think he will then give me the okay to go back to the pool (just walking, no twisting). This has been a journey.

Oh, the chair is still broken.







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I was a late bloomer.
But anyone who
blooms at all, ever,
is very lucky.



~ Sharon Olds

The Spiritual Warrior Manifests

Tropical Interpretation

By Melanie Farmer

Neptune’s Transition: From Pisces to Aries

As Neptune exits Pisces, a significant shift occurs in the collective consciousness. This transition signals the cessation of the victim mentality – there are no rescuers on the horizon and no cavalry arriving to save the day.

Empowerment in Aries

With both Neptune and Saturn entering Aries, a new paradigm emerges. In this phase, individuals are called to recognize that they are the heroes they have been waiting for.

Self-reliance and personal strength take precedence, as the spiritual warrior within each person comes forth and manifests.

When individuals marshal and harness their power and inner resilience, they are able to join their community as contributing members of a larger collective, as represented by Aquarius.

The Aquarius Lineup and its Tense Dance with Uranus

On January 29th, a notable astrological alignment occurred as Pluto, Mars, the Sun, Venus, and Mercury all took up residence in Aquarius. This rare grouping intensifies Aquarius’s influence on collective themes and experiences.

As these planets continue moving forward, each one moves by degrees through Aquarius. This journey brings them into a critical angular relationship with Uranus, currently

positioned in the later degrees of Taurus. In astrological terms, this relationship is called a “square” – a 90-degree angle between planets that typically signals periods of tension, challenges, or abrupt shifts.

History Rhymes

Uranus is currently moving through Taurus and will shortly transition into Gemini. The planet last passed through Taurus between 1934 and 1942, a period defined by the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and the start of World War II, all of which brought major changes to finances, resources, and security.

Uranus’s next journey through Gemini begins in April 2026 and lasts until May 2033. Its previous transit in Gemini was from 1941 to 1949 – during World War II and the dawn of nuclear technology – which also saw important breakthroughs in early computing. Traditionally, Uranus in Gemini aligns with sweeping changes in communication, technological progress, and international and geopolitical affairs.

The sequence of squares formed between the planets in Aquarius and Uranus in Taurus throughout this time is especially significant. These planetary interactions often mark times of disruption and transformation, making this period one of heightened unpredictability and change. As each planet in Aquarius squares Uranus, the potential for sudden developments and shifts increases, both individually and collectively.



Sing Back Into the Places You Love

By Monica Schley

I was listening to Ada Limon, our nation’s former poet laureate, being interviewed on NPR’s Fresh Air. My ear caught a phrase she said, “sing back into the places you love.”

By chance, I have been reading her book, You Are Here, which is a culmination of a larger project, a collection of poems on picnic tables around the America’s treasured national parks. Limon said that she thinks these times we are living in could define humanity forever. She collected some 50 poet’s responses to that idea in, You Are Here, inviting readers to take a closer look at the present moment.

I love this phrase! Singing back into the things that bring us most joy, that we find most beautiful, will get us through these turbulent times. When the DMV, passport office, SNAP benefits, and air traffic control are not working as they once reliably did, remembering to hold space in the day for what we love can get us through.

The word “back,” singing back to, is not backwards. But rather, I think of remembering back to who we truly are, remembering what we love to do with our lives. I have been working hard at this, especially this year. It is a challenge borne not out of nostalgia, but out of remembering.

The great Sufi poet, Rumi wrote: “All beings stream at night / or during the day / into some absorptive work / into the loving nowhere.”

I have long been a fan of this verse because it’s the original streaming platform! What he is saying is that we can connect to the divine flow anytime we sleep, love, or work on the things we lose ourselves into with joy. (Getting into this streaming zone is a brain wave pattern.)* When we get there, time does not exist. It becomes expansive. After this experience, we feel happier and renewed. And the most beautiful thing of it all – it’s free! And it’s right inside of us!

This season, I sing back into the places I love by walking in the forest, listening to one of my children read to me, and improvising / playing music. I feel both renewed and relaxed (or as my son pronounced it when he was 4 years old, rah-wax), which makes me think of waxing like the moon, ebbing and flowing. Either way, so at peace, it hardly matters to speak.

If we were to all practice that which we most love, I think the world would feel more renewal than heartbreak. If we all could just tap into that which sings our heart awake just a little bit more, then I think we as a collective would be more unbothered by that which does not awaken us. And let’s be honest: there’s a lot of activity in the outer world of what can harm us.

By singing into the places we love – there isn’t anyone or anything that can take that experience away from us. It’s non-material. It doesn’t require a transaction. It is something that each individual and only each of us can create ourselves. It is not given. It is within.

Being given the idea to sing into a place you love unlocks the human spirit more than a news headline, more than what government legislature says it is or is not accomplishing. Or, in the words of William Carlos Williams:

it is difficult to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack of what is found there

As for me, one of the things that lights me up is poetry. What places would you like to sing into?

*See: <https://monicaschley.com/how-to-make-practicing-music-a-healing-process/>

Monica Schley is a musician and writer. She lives on Vashon Island with her family and can be reached at www.monicaschley.com. Let her know about the places you love to sing into at harpppoet@gmail.com.

The Planetary Procession: A Cosmic Receiving Line

Imagine the current movement of planets as a receiving line at a galactic gathering – a momentous shift affecting the collective. In a traditional receiving line, guests briefly greet hosts or guests of honor at formal occasions like weddings, funerals, or official functions. Each interaction is quick yet carries significance as pleasantries and acknowledgments are exchanged.

In this celestial context, the planets are the guests moving through Aquarius, each taking their turn to interact with Uranus, the host of unpredictability.

Remember, Uranus acts as the great destabilizer, introducing elements of shock, surprise, and the fundamental disruption of established structures.

Expect unpredictable changes as planets square Uranus throughout February.

Mercury (February 5th) may bring communication or travel issues.

Venus (February 8th) could prompt financial or relationship surprises.

The Sun – leaders and government – (February 16th) squares

Uranus just before major lunar eclipse.

Mars (February 27th) might trigger global conflict or disasters.

Uranus signifies revolution, inspiring collective (Aquarius) action against corruption (Pluto) and outdated systems (Saturn). As current structures collapse, including the dollar’s global role – we should not fear change, but work together to rebuild better systems.

Now is the time to become a spiritual warrior who contributes skills and ideas; everyone has a purpose in shaping what comes next.

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Monica Schley. Photo by Colleen Zickler.





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Fork in the Road

By Dave B.

What does it take to be a Vashon Island restaurant?

I have noticed many things over the years here on Vashon and one is the number of restaurants that have opened and closed. What I find interesting is that, as diverse a population as there is in the Pacific Northwest, we on Vashon are not.

We are a burgers and fries and beer crowd, it seems. I bet a lot of you disagree and that is fine, but think about it. Beyond May's Thai food and Mexican food, there is not much variety. On top of that, as I have pointed out in the past, we have a large amount of pizza places, burgers, and sandwich shops.

Let's analyze who has left the playing field.

Green Ginger, which I felt had some of the best Asian food in the area, closed after years next to the licensing office. Angela was a gem and the portions were generous and flavorful.

Bramble House has had multiple owners, and I liked it with farm-style entrees. Now it's the Ramble Restaurant. Fun food and a great new lunch menu.

Saucy Sisters was ANOTHER pizza place and is now Colvo's Tavern. The food was marginal, but I still felt bad when they closed, as it was someone's dream. I recall it has been a few other's dreams as well, only to close for various reasons.

The Red Bike was Bishops for a long time, and a gas station years ago. Now it's the Pop Pop Bottle Shop. The Bike had the ONLY sushi in town and even though Sushi Chief Ki was as temperamental as it comes, at least we had sushi. Joe from Green Ginger would come into the Bike and bring food during the winter and we would eat and drink at the bar (usually with Bobby and Wilson). Bar drinks and Asian food – a perfect combo!

Homegrown was also located where Sam opened part of the Pop Pop, and I miss the

wonderful breakfasts there.

Our current Island Queen has also been Zombies and Zoomies. It was once a real Dairy Queen.

Gravy had been Gusto Girls, and before that I cannot remember, but it has turned over several times. Even Gravy itself has changed two or three times in order to figure itself out.

On the north end, you had Megan and Adam start the Wild Mermaid and before that, for many years, it was ANOTHER Mexican restaurant with a great outdoor patio to watch the ferries come in. Now, it is a small store like it was back in the 1950s (with no gas).

Snapdragon has had several names, including Monkey Tree and one other I do not recall.

Ruby Brink has been an Italian restaurant, twice an Indian restaurant and a cocktail/bar meeting place, but with no parking has been an issue to some.

My point here is that, currently we have no good Italian food, no Asian food, no Indian food, no Sushi, no Greek, Ethiopian, African, or French, although we do have Syrian food trucks, thank God. Why?

Even when we did, why could they not make it here on Vashon?

I am not a businessman in the sense of managing a kitchen (even my own) and I know it is a lot of work, but why are we just not supporting foreign eateries? Why are we not more diverse in our palates?

Even on Monday, half the restaurants are closed. I get it, everyone needs time off but why Monday? I like eating on Monday ...

What do you think?

Vashon!

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Champurrado Tradicional, Traditional Chocolate and Corn Masa Harina Beverage

By Cynthia Sadurni

It's during the winter months when we all need something warm to keep us going. As the cold weather settles in, and frost is on the ground, a nutritious and comforting drink is just what we want. Champurrado may just be the thing to do the trick!

But wait, what is champurrado and corn flour in a beverage? Hmmm, intriguing, I hope! This traditional Mexican drink uses nixtamalized corn flour (also referred to as masa harina) to bring both nutrients and a smooth, silky texture. Most of the ingredients in this recipe have become easily available, either at a Mexican grocery store or at your local supermarket. It may seem like it takes a while to make, but is so rewarding once it's done! Also, the smell of the cinnamon and spices in the morning is so enticing and heart warming.



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Champurrado Tradicional Traditional Chocolate and Corn Masa Harina Beverage



Ingredients

- 1 cone of Mexican piloncillo. If you can't find it, just add brown sugar to taste at the very end.
- 4 cloves
- 1 piece of Mexican cinnamon bark (Ceylon will work, too)
- 1-2 tablets of Mexican chocolate. If you can't find it, any good quality cocoa powdered may be used (in this case, you will need to add sugar to taste at the end)
- 4 cups water + 1 cup extra, slightly warmed, to mix in with the masa harina
- 1-2 cups milk. Either regular or alternative milks will do. I have successfully tried this recipe with almond milk.
- 2-3 cups corn masa harina. If you can find blue corn masa harina, this variety has more nutrients and a subtle nutty flavor.
- 1/8-1/4 tsp vanilla extract, to taste

Directions

In a pot big enough to accommodate the total liquid, start by adding the water, piloncillo, cinnamon, and cloves. Bring to a boil and then lower the heat. Cover and simmer gently for 15 minutes.

Just before the 15 minutes are up, mix your corn masa harina with water until it resembles pancake batter. At this point, you can pass it through a fine mesh sieve to avoid any lumps. Reserve.

Add the chocolate tablets and stir until dissolved; keep the mix simmering gently. If using cocoa powder, mix in a separate jar with little water, shake vigorously to completely dissolve, and add to the pot.

Slowly add the masa batter, stirring constantly with a good whisk to avoid any lumps.

Bring the heat down to a low simmer and cook for 20 minutes more, stirring constantly to avoid the mix sticking to the bottom of the pot. You will notice it will start to thicken slightly.

Add the milk and leave it on the fire until warmed through, but do not let it come to a boil. Check for your preferred amount of sweetness. Add a bit of brown sugar if necessary, or more milk to taste.

Turn the heat off and add the vanilla. Remove the cinnamon and cloves before serving. The mix will thicken slightly as it cools down.

Champurrado is also delicious if you choose not to add the piloncillo or sweetener and opt for a sugar-free version. The spices and vanilla give it enough of a hint of sweetness and depth of flavor. In ancient times, this drink was prepared like this and without milk.

I Love Strong Borders

By March Twisdale

I recently got a new job. During the hiring process, I filled out government forms warning me of severe consequences should I answer the questions dishonestly. Falsifying my identity is (and should be) a serious crime. Even my new boss could get in trouble! As I signed my name, feeling the weight of the act, it hit me that immigrants working illegally in our nation must lie. How does that feel? And, why do we set them up for that?

Immigrating to America is challenging enough. Why make it harder by allowing people into our country under questionable circumstances? Why set people up to fail? That's what happened during the Biden Administration, and millions of people around the world suffered.

Over the past 30 years, my ex-husband's family have shared their stories of immigrating from Mexico. Those plus conversations with my housemates and myriad other friends who have immigrated from the Philippines, Vietnam, Pakistan, Ukraine, Syria, France, Australia, Mexico, Canada, Honduras, and Cuba (to name a few) have given me insight into why immigrants come to America.

We live in a land of material opulence, so many Americans automatically assume people come here for economic success. Maybe. Sure. But the immigrants I have listened to have a different answer: "America is a nation of laws, applied equally to everyone. Where I'm from, if you know the right people or have enough money, you can get away with anything."

I believe most immigrants, especially the good type of people we want to see more of in our nation, are searching for greater stability, less corruption, and more fairness. That is what we're talking about when we say America is a land of opportunity.

Opportunity, however, cannot exist without fairness. And fairness cannot exist without laws, faithfully upheld. Lawlessness (by individuals, organized groups, the police, military, or politicians) is a peaceful society's Kryptonite.

Island Resilience

Unlike radicalized American protesters devoting their weekends to "recreational activism," most immigrants do not find "revolution, rebellion, or violent uprising in the streets" appealing. That's what many are trying to escape.

There are powerful actors and influencers at play in America. These extremely well-funded and organized "chaos-makers" are experts at riling up native-born Americans itching for a cause. Be careful how quickly you accept what they offer. It may not be as clear cut as it seems; those you follow may not deserve your trust, and you could end up hurting the very people you're trying to help.

When it comes to immigration, the good people are usually hoping to provide their family with the best life possible. The bad people are really bad. They are leeches on society, predators pursuing new hunting grounds, rapists, drug dealers, and murderers fleeing the consequences of their crimes, cartel members following orders, domestic abusers, and ill-contents with no intention of working hard, sacrificing for others, or contributing to a better society.

This is why I want strong borders that thoroughly vet people before they enter our country. Not after. An efficient, well-run process will increase support for "the good people" we want here, while firmly turning away "the bad people."

Between January 2021 and January 2025, our borders were severely weakened from within, tempting millions into the greedy grasp of International Human Trafficking Cartels. Our failure to properly maintain border control led directly to a blended transatlantic/transpacific human trafficking disaster that dwarfed anything ever seen before.

We will never know how many people were skimmed off the top, sold into sex slavery, forced labor, coerced to serve as drug mules, murdered by the knives of organ harvesters, or lost forever to

other unspeakable horrors. We do know the situation is extremely bad. In September 2023, the United Nations concluded that the United States-Mexico border was the world's deadliest land route for migrants, and in 2022, nine (9) Mexican cities rank among the ten (10) deadliest cities on Earth.

If you've ever read "The Jungle" by Upton Sinclair, you know how bad it can get. This is the dark side of the immigrant experience, and it's about 100 times worse for people at odds with our immigration laws, because they are forced to hide from the very people who could help protect them.

Bottom line: Non-Americans illegally living in our country are especially vulnerable to abuse of all kinds. And that doesn't look like compassion to me. So, what do I want?

I want our national borders to be absolutely controlled, all relative laws to be crystal clear and adhered to thoroughly, and I want no wiggle room for states that might become an open wound in what I view as the skin of our body politic. I want changes to our immigration laws to occur legislatively, legitimately, and lawfully - reflecting the expressed will of American citizens.

In Proverbs 31:8-9, King Lemuel's mother is quoted as saying: "Speak up for the people who have no voice, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak out for justice! Stand up for the poor and needy."

There is a problem. It exists outside of our border, at our border, and within our border. If 330,000,000 people consider the issue, we're going to have more than just two ideas of how to solve it. I want to live in a country where people are encouraged to offer up their ideas for public consideration and discussion. I want my fellow citizens to appreciate the effort. I want our duly elected representatives to bring these ideas to the halls of Congress, where a decision will be made. Do it? Don't do it? Amend it? Send it back to committee for further review? Repeat.

That is America the beautiful, and that's why so many people want to become Americans. Let's not ruin it before they even get here.

The Evolution of Humanity's Spirit

By Daniel Hooker

Right now, the stories we are being fed are conflicting and dividing us. We are just human beings, trying to have happy daily lives, enjoying the peacefulness of our communities. Vashon Island, with its diverse cultural and artistic nuances, is our home, and our neighbors are our friends. We have to remember that.

We've been fed scenarios of good and bad for so long that we tend to take team sides, like high school football. Shouldn't we be paying attention to the players and their talents instead of taking sides? At a high school football game, we're just enjoying the sport and how it's being played, and that's what we should be doing with each other.

It's important to pay attention to the quality of the messages that we focus on. For me, music, art, meditation, and visualization are key instruments. They move our hearts in the love and compassion that unifies us as humanity.

This is embodied in a kahuna prayer of forgiveness called Ho'oponopono. When we ask for forgiveness, it's not from anyone above us, or around us. It's about forgiving ourselves and taking responsibility for and learning from our experience. Without true forgiveness of our actions and reactions, we can't let go of our ego. Forgiving ourselves leads to

understanding with compassion.

When you witness the results around you, you realize that forgiveness is quite powerful.

Dr. Ihaleakala Hew Len's life story is an example of changing the world around us through self-forgiveness and taking responsibility for our perception of life around us. Hew Len was the director of an institution for the criminally insane in Hawaii. Just by doing this act of forgiveness in his office, Ho'oponopono, all 38 inmates were eventually released back into society. These results had never been witnessed in any other institution for the criminally insane.

Here is the Ho'oponopono:

I love you

I'm sorry

Please forgive me

Thank you

The words of the Ho'oponopono are intentions for clearing the energies that surround us in a negative way, opening up the door to compassion for ourselves as well as others.

When we pay attention to clearing and cleansing our thoughts and intentions, there is a collective weight lifted from our hearts and souls.

I encourage you to read or go to YouTube to hear, watch, and learn from Dr. Hew Len's and others' examples of inner change that

changes the outer appearance of how we see ourselves, which in turn, changes the world in which live. When we don't see the love that we are, we are looking for love elsewhere. When we are looking for love in others, we are forgetting that we are the love that we are seeking.

Love is that water of life in each one of us. Just as water flows from a spring, love flows downhill into the sea of humanity where it is collectively felt.

We discover: I don't have to put myself through negative emotional potholes. I can take the smoother road.

I hope these articles help lift your hearts to a different level. May we no longer feel like an Island isolated by the heavy gloom of fog, but an Island

that has the fog broken up by the sunlight that surrounds us.

Heart's Desire

I am the pebble of Love and Peace, dropping into the world's conscious desire. Its pond rippling in its effects changing its surrounding shores This is the heart of my beating drum's music This is the color of my palette of peace Join each other to create a new picture - The canvas is yours.

~ Daniel Hooker



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The Story of Tomtomtidimiddletom

Part 6: Tom’s Big Crash

By Andy Valencia

Previous parts of the story are available at vashonloop.com/tom/

Tom is a weed who has grown up on the bumper of a car, rooted onto a bit of dirt he found caked in a crevice. He has traveled widely as a stowaway, but recent months have been peaceful.

Tom was familiar with his car’s trips to a terribly busy place which a tree had once told him was called “Seattle.” They’d drive until they reached the wet-salty smell, then bounce along, then drive among uncountable crowds of other cars and trucks. He didn’t like it, but presently they’d be back to wet-salty, then bounce along, and then he’d be safely back home.

Today, they were done bouncing on their way home. The road climbed steeply upward when suddenly his car slowed and stopped. He was pressed flat against the bumper by how quickly they had stopped.

“Whew!” Tom said to himself. And then he stared at the car that had been following right behind them. It wasn’t stopping – it wasn’t even slowing down. It came right at his car, until it was so close he couldn’t see anything else.

CRUNCH.

It smashed right into his car, pushing it to the side even as parts of it crumpled under the force. Now the other car stopped, but Tom was so dazed that he could hardly follow what was happening.

There were people out by his car now, moving about and talking. They were looking at him! No, they were looking at all the crushed parts of his poor car. Presently his car was moving again, and they got home without any more excitement.

Tom spent the rest of the day sharing his adventure with the other weeds around the driveway. One told about once having the car drive right on top of him, smashing him flat – he’d never been the same since. Everybody agreed that Tom was lucky to be alive.



He hoped that was the end of it, but the next day, they went out driving again. It was far, and through Seattle, and then they parked in among lots of other cars. He’d seen this before, but this time was a little different – all the cars had parts scraped, or smashed, or even torn right off. His people got out of his car, and walked off. They didn’t come back. The sunlight fading, he fell asleep among all the hurt cars, with not a single weed for company.

The next day, some people came – but not his people. They pulled and hammered at his car, tearing off this part and that. Some of the parts were right above him, which was scary. Then the men stopped, studying the results of their work. Then one turned to the other.

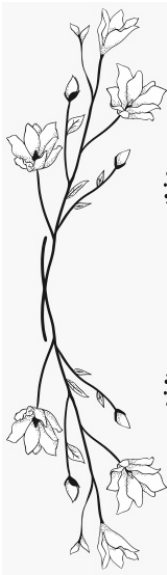
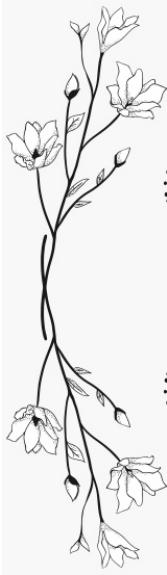
“Totaled.”

(Tom didn’t know it, but that meant the car was so broken that it wasn’t worth fixing.)

The men went away, leaving the car even more broken than it was before, and here he was, alone again. There were no trees nearby, and the ground was all lifeless pavement. The sun was hot, and he wondered about his friends back home. Night came, and then day, and then night again. He was so lonely!

Day came again, and Tom even let his leaves wilt. He feared that he would just sit here on his poor, damaged car until he faded away and died. There was nothing but broken cars and unbroken pavement, and he stopped paying attention.

Tom will be OK! Read the happy ending to his story in the March issue of the Loop.

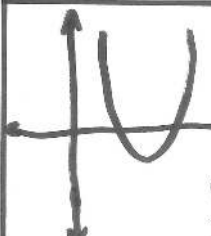


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Llaughing Llamas
Chronicles

By Daniel Hooker

Does anybody remember the chiropractor joke I told?

It was about a weak back.

~

Everyone knows that Albert Einstein was a genius.

But did you know that his brother Frank was a monster?

~

I met a friend the other day with my dog. And I was telling her a joke, when she reached down to pet Falkor. He backed away, because she was wearing alpaca fingerless gloves.

“Interesting,” She said, and she took off her gloves to pet him. “I had

a similar reaction from a cat the other day. It hissed at me until I took off the gloves.”

I responded, “So you mean, the cat had a hiss ta mine reaction?”

~

As I get older,

it’s easier to roll my joints.

I sprained my ankle today.

~

Q: What kind of pants does a psychic wear?

A: They wear para normal pants.

~

Someone tried to submit some old jokes. They were so old that the Donner party cannibalized them. And they were so old, they were bare bones, and had no taste left.

~

A pirate walks into a bar with a paper towel on his head.

The bartender asks him, “What’s with the paper towel?”

The pirate says, “Arg, I have a Bounty on my head.”

~

My father was a conjoined twin. We used to refer to my uncle as “my uncle on my father’s side.” When they were surgically separated, we changed that to “my father’s brother, once removed.”

Do you have a joke you’d like to see in the Llaughing Llamas Chronicles? Submit yours for consideration at: vashonloop-jokes@janevalencia.com.



Math Puzzle

By Anne Cotter Moses

Fill in the missing digits.

$$\begin{array}{r} 4 \blacksquare \\ \times \blacksquare 1 \\ \hline \blacksquare \blacksquare \\ 860 \\ \hline \blacksquare 03 \end{array}$$




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4. No purchasing privacy
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- Stinging nettle eating competition
- Europe rediscovers cash

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Aries (March 20-April 19)

Belief is dangerous, except for one possible use: believing in yourself. Even that can be dangerous, but ultimately if you want to succeed, you must do so, actively. That includes having faith in your intentions, as long as you are reflective about what you're doing and checking back with yourself on all matters of personal ethics. I say this because your belief in yourself is going to get results. You may need to push, pull or squeeze your way to the future, though ultimately your message to yourself will have a strong daily dose of "be what you came here for." Your success is more a matter of faith than of data. Faith can move mountains. Just be sure you're moving the right one.

Taurus (April 19-May 20)

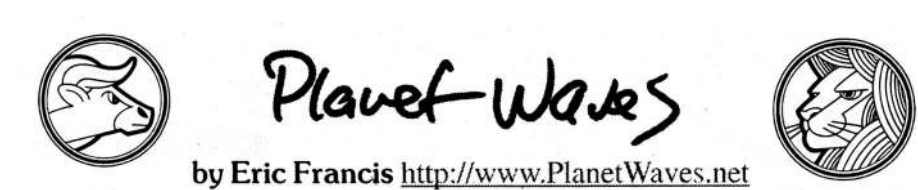
The way your solar chart is set up, it's easy for you to go into denial about who you are. This can have the uneasy feeling of walking on a greasy, wet floor and somehow not slipping. However, the astrology of the next two months is packed with self-discovery. And for many people, that's a problem; they don't want to know. Recent years have brought many disruptions to the ways you previously thought of yourself, and the ways you imagined yourself to be. Most were superficial, requiring various shades of adaptation. What you're experiencing now is a shakeup of your self-understanding on the deepest levels. You will discover that you want different things than you did in the past, and be willing to openly admit your desires. In summary, you have lived much of your life with a secret identity, and now that secret is about to be revealed.

Gemini (May 20-June 21)

The true power of the human creature is social. This should be obvious, and it would be, except for all the ways that the most basic fact about humanity is being distorted, bought, sold, digitized and used against us by technocrats, marketers and industrial psychologists. Social is your superpower. You have abilities that others do not possess, which include the ability to make your way in the world in any society, on any level of "class" or type of culture. Over the next two months, the entire nature of your social world is going to evolve rapidly. It's essential that you gravitate toward warmth, toward in-person conversation, and toward unfamiliar situations. Let your curiosity guide you, and pay attention to other curious people in your environment.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You are entering what may be the time of your life for the professional sphere of your existence. But that sphere may in fact be all of you. What has always been true, and has never been more true, is that you aspire to do what is real about who you are. Your work must provide you with ongoing opportunity for personal growth and not just advancement, power or fame. This is one of the defining features of your solar chart at all times, and especially now that the action is coming to a boil in the sign Aries, at the very top of your chart. You must hold yourself accountable for your actions and choices, and always remember that the only leadership is by example. Your current enterprise depends on a



combination of total awareness, having a vision and applying discipline. All the same stuff as in centuries past, though currently about you, right now.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

You must balance self-focus and the needs of others. Whichever way that proportionality tends to go, pay attention and make sure you have the balance right. You must know when to stand firm and when to negotiate. For individuals, the most important matter is determining who is operating in good faith and who is not before you sign anything. Good faith means always being honest, in every facet of the discussion, whether a personal matter or a business matter is involved. I suggest a "one strike and you're out" when it comes to matters of personal integrity. And for you to be able to work, live and breathe in the high-pressure environment that is on its way, you must hold that energy field. Remember that you're growing and changing fast. You must practice foreseeing the effects and consequences of your choices. The world just isn't so into this right now; but you must be.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

Saturn and Neptune moving out of your opposite sign Pisces and into Aries will have two main effects. One is to help you see your partnerships more clearly. The other will be to solidify your sense of your own being and firm up your resolve to live your life your way. As the next couple of months unfold, you're likely to feel that who you are and what you want are more important than anyone or anything. You may, therefore, feel justified in ditching anyone or anything that does not align with your plans. This would be a mistake, and it would carry consequences. So the first step is to be real with people about your situation, and let them be real about theirs. There's likely to be plenty of room for mutual alignment and acceptable compromise. When in doubt, go back to the original terms of your agreements with people and see whether and how your current situation reflects them.

Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

One of the great shows in astrological history comes to your relationship house over the next two months. This will cast you in equal measures as witness, participant and alchemist. Of course your partnerships reflect you in important ways, though something much bigger than you and your individual life is happening. And so you will benefit from doing something that most humans find rather difficult, which is seeing yourself in a context far greater than yourself. And then, at the same time, you must do so without losing yourself. In fact, your presence and your awareness have far more influence than you may imagine. Regardless of what's happening in your world or the world, show up and pay attention to what your senses are telling you. Notice how the digital environment skews people's view of themselves and everyone. You may possess a real measure of immunity to this epidemic of unconsciousness.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

What do you do every day? I mean especially between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm. Those are the times when people usually write off a third of their day to do what has to be done. For you, those prime hours must be what feeds your soul and motivates you to fully be yourself. Yes, that sounds like long odds. But in the game of life, you have to take a chance in order to win. And the chance you must take is on yourself. As spectacular events begin to take shape in your house of work and wellbeing, you're likely to feel an urgent restlessness to do something meaningful. Either your work environment will change and lead you to rise to the occasion, or you will get fed up with activity that is just not personally meaningful enough and do something that is. You are changing and the environment around you is as well. If you are strategic and creative, you will find the perfect meeting point between the two.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

The next few weeks and months will be one of the busiest, most productive and most fulfilling times of your life. You're in one of those times when neither effort nor creativity will suffice on its own. Be aware of the one idea that's going to win the day. It's the thing that does not exactly fit the scenario, but which is sitting there off to the side without a job. It may represent a collaborator or small group of them. They may seem to bear no relationship to the task at hand, or lack any specific expertise. That's the outsider's point of view that you want. It's a bit like asking a little kid for an idea because their mind is uncluttered and uninhibited by expertise. Take the same approach yourself; a beginner's mind is the right mind.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

Your fire comes from within you. This is the right place to find your source of motivation. The deeper question is whether you're acting in accord with your personal constitution. Your personal constitution may include a provision that the money is not the point. You have what I would call a humanitarian clause that you're likely to invoke. That means that you do things for their own sake, and for the sake of a community in which you have some longterm involvement. More than anything, you are leading some people around you to challenge some ridiculous public norms and do

what is right even if it's different. People are looking to you for the example you set as a grounded and rational person who believes there is a difference between right and wrong. You and the people around you will be navigating an important set of circumstances together.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

You may change your mind about something you've long held fixed views about. The situation seems to have been the difficulty involved in seeing beyond your own personal interests. Yet this entirely contradicts the evolutionary necessity that humans have to cooperate with one another, to share resources, and to respond to collective needs. Whatever conditioning you may have survived, at your core, you're a humanitarian. Listen carefully when someone tells you that they're struggling. Imagine that the way to fix the world is to start within your direct reach, whether that means feeding the birds or taking care of someone in a difficult situation. There's the notion that this is "bad luck" and that once you start, you're never going to stop. It's not bad luck but it may become the basis of a way of life that is true to your nature.


Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Though the activity level and overall intensity of the planetary environment are on the rise, you can breathe a sigh of relief. Two massive planets are ending longterm stints in your sign: Neptune in late January and Saturn in mid-February. These combined factors will take a lot of pressure off of you, and though everything seems to be thrusting forward, you're in an important time to reflect and consider all that you've accomplished both the past decade and the past three years. If you've learned nothing else in the many years that Neptune was in your sign, and the few years that Saturn has been in your sign, take away this one message: You can handle it. You can afford to take care of yourself so that you can take care of those around you. And you can afford to be confident enough to say no, and to ask for help, when you're in a little deep.

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Vashon! The DSHS Van will be here



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At the Vashon Food Bank
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Seahawks

Continued from Front Page

hired a young defensive genius named Mike McDonald. She had the wisdom to keep on one of the best long-time General Managers in the game, John Schneider, and to let him do his magic.

Making the right decisions not only lead to winning small battles, it's also what leads to sports dynasties. In his opening address to the Seahawks, Mike McDonald said, "Imagine you're facing a tough opponent in the NFC Championship Game. Now imagine you're going to the Super Bowl and you're going to win that."

I could quote advanced analytics that didn't exist when the Seahawks detonated the Denver Broncos and a current Hall of Fame quarterback in the 2014 Super Bowl. This team is better than that one. It beat the second and third best teams in the NFL, the Rams and the 49ers, who happen to be in the same division, four times during the regular seasons and the playoffs.

Mike McDonald isn't going

anywhere soon. Neither is this core of talent. There is still plenty of open salary cap for next season. But like I said, the Seahawks are not the NFL's favorite team. On Monday, the Wall Street Journal reported that the NFL wants to force the team's sale. That's how much the club, or cartel, of other owners hate it. They're saying Jody Allen isn't eligible as an owner because she doesn't have a 30% ownership in the team.

Here is what she released as a response:

"We don't comment on rumors or speculation, and the team is not for sale. We've already said that will change at some point per Paul's wishes, but I have no news to share. Our focus right now is winning the Super Bowl."



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Benedictine Morning Prayer
from the Mundelein Psalter



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It's been our honor and pleasure to bring The Vashon Loop back to our community. Thank you for your support!

There's something grounding and reverent about the process of cleaning skulls - carefully removing the layer of tissue to study the animal's bone structure. Each skull has its own anatomy, subtle differences that make every one unique. It becomes a quiet moment of respect, curiosity, and reflection.



This one is my blacktail buck from last year, which makes the experience especially meaningful - recognizing the brief moment of life I took, processing its body to provide meals, and now carrying it through this step. I'm constantly learning new techniques for creating Euro mounts, and I love working with all kinds of skulls, each one telling its own story and holding a unique, understated beauty.

~ Lyndsey Braun-Palmer

Kin Ship by Anne Cotter Mose

You are so Beautiful to me!

So Serene, steadfast and AWE-INSPIRING !!!

Back atcha!

Mount Tahoma

Poem From "Grief Age Love"



We continue to feature poetry from "Grief Age Love," a new anthology written by over 30 Vashon poets, and edited by Jeanie Okimoto.

tail end of winter
lighting the wood stove
with the obituary page

~ Michael Feinstein

Michael Feinstein is a writer and poet living on Vashon Island.



Island poetry in these pages

How about yours?

Submit your poems to The Vashon Loop!

Write to: vashonloop-poetry@janevalencia.com



To know that we know what we know, and to know that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge.

~ Confucius