

THE VASHON LOOP

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APRIL LOOP! ALL THE TRUTH EXCEPT WHERE IT'S NOT THE TRUTH ~ FREE

April 1, 2026

Elon Musk in Talks to Buy the 'Hawks



Go
S P A C E H A W K S

Image by Anne Gordon, www.annegordonimagery.com

Washington State to Discuss Equitable Ferry Initiative

By Loop Editorial Team

Olympia lawmakers are poised to begin discussions of a proposed "Equitable Ferry Initiative," with plans to pursue legislation in 2027 to increase revenue while balancing personal responsibility among Washington State Ferry system users.

Washington State is unique in that its ferries are part of the state Department of Transportation highway system. Known as the "marine highway," ferries receive about 7% to 10% of the transportation budget, while physical highways get about 35% to 40%.

Depending on how you define it, between 1% and 5% of state residents are reliant on WSF services, with rider fares covering about half the system's operating costs. But structurally and financially, WSF faces overlapping dilemmas: Ridership overall, but especially passenger ridership, declined sharply after COVID-19 and has not fully recovered. This is the case even as vehicle ridership has risen in the last couple of years due to more people moving to communities with ferry access. At the same time, an aging fleet and delays in new ferry construction have created vessel shortages across the system.

This has led to growing consideration - and some burgeoning disagreements - about whether targeted pricing changes could move the system closer to fairness and stability.

Some view ferry riders as disproportionately affluent, particularly riders in communities like Vashon Island. According to local activist Hoo Alvarazieni, "Ferries deliver mobility to a comparatively small slice of the population. It is time to acknowledge

that there is a severe inequity in terms of access to or to even desire for this experience."

In a detailed email exchange, Alvarazieni suggested that ferry-dependent living is an entitlement worthy of redistribution through collective economic obligation: "There is something inherently unproductive about "Island Living." It does not seem like it should be a human right to live on an island."

Others argue that where a person chooses to live is a deeply personal decision, tied to family, work, culture, community, and quality of life, and not something to be treated as a luxury deserving special financial penalties. According to one Vashon resident: "People who live here already pay more for a lot of things than people on the mainland. It is hard to not feel frustrated when policy changes seem to assume that everyone who rides the ferry is wealthy."

Speaking on background, one Olympia official praised the initiative, saying, "A more targeted fare structure recognizes that not everyone has the same ability to absorb higher costs." When questioned as to whether this approach could be perceived as replacing one imbalance with another, the official

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Vashon Rules of the Road
- Anything you do with your emergency blinker on is legal.



By Loop Editorial Team

One week before winning this year's NFL Super Bowl, Jody Allen, long-time manager of the Estate of Paul G. Allen, a family trust that owns the Seattle Seahawks, issued a statement saying the team was not yet for sale.

On February 18th, only ten days after a triumphant victory in Super Bowl LX, the estate kicked off a formal sale process. The Allen & Company investment bank and Latham & Watkins law firm have been designated to handle negotiations. As Paul Allen's will stipulates, all proceeds will go to philanthropy.

But there are some important caveats. NFL rules require one person to own at least a 30% majority share of any team, and to pass a rigorous vetting process. Additionally, 24 or more of the 31 existing team owners must vote to approve the purchase. Assuming a sale price of (a widely rumored) \$11 billion, a 50% or more ownership stake, plus current residence in North America, an already thin field of potential new buyers narrows to 9 people, 4 of whom dislike football.

The remaining 5 are Larry Ellison, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg, and Elon Musk.

As editors of the Vashon Loop, we reached out to all of the above for comment. Only Elon Musk has so far responded, and he confirms strong interest in buying the team. Per his preference, we interviewed @realElonMusk on X, his privately owned social media platform (formerly Twitter):

The Loop: Hello Elon! Thanks for responding so fast. You and Jeff Bezos have both been rumored to be vying to buy the Seattle Seahawks. Is there any basis to that speculation?

Musk: Bezos is a putz. He won't be buying the Seahawks or any other franchise.

The Loop: What about Bill Gates, Larry Ellison, or Mark Zuckerberg? Gates grew up in Seattle.

Musk: Zuckerberg? LOL. They're all has-beens. It's sad. Epstein's buddy is trying to run some [expletive deleted] digital ID scam on Europe right now and Microsoft Outlook just crashed the Artemis II voyage around the moon. Thank God NASA wasn't using Teams.

Seattle is synonymous with innovation and tech leadership; it fits perfectly with where we're going. Actually, we're already there. The 500,000 square-foot SpaceX factory in Redmond puts out 100 Starlink satellites every week.

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The Vashon Loop is published monthly



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Too Bad the Roads Aren't Go-kart Friendly

Pictured is the go-kart my brother and I named "The Purple Ass." The picture was taken in December 1978. My brother, Jim, is driving, doing about 80 mph up the hill on SW Point Robinson Road.



Letter to the Editor

As boys growing up on Vashon, we played with go-karts among other things. My grand-father bought us a Montgomery Ward Fun Kart in 1969 so that we would want to see him in Lacy. Grandpa left for Arizona in 1976 and gave us the Fun Kart.

The Fun Kart was powered by a 3-horsepower Briggs & Stratton engine. It could go about 22 mph. Before long, we disabled the governor so it went a bit faster; however, it still couldn't climb hills.

Later, we came up with a Yamaha 90cc motorcycle engine. With some modification to the kart, we replaced the Briggs with the new engine. Now we could do over 40 mph, and with the gear-shifting capability, hill climbing was possible.

We still weren't satisfied, so we traded the Yamaha for a Honda 350. Now with about 35 hp, "The Purple Ass" could reach speeds up to 90 mph.

Us boys had a lot of fun zipping around Vashon's back highways, always wary of the cops. We did ask the police if we could get a license for

the go-kart. We were told, "No way." I eventually contacted the state patrol and asked about building a custom car. I was assured, "Yes you can; there are rules for doing it."

The rules weren't unreasonable, so Jim and I set out to build a street-legal go-kart. The project took a lot longer than we thought. After years of neglect, I was able to finish the machine. I got the license in 2004. Some of you might remember "The Micro-Sport." It went in the Strawberry Festival parade several times and also the Engels car show.

I stopped buying tabs in 2010. After five years driving around on Vashon's busted-up roads, I had had enough. Back in the day when Vashon was a Republican town, the roads were well-maintained. Dips, cracks, and potholes were nonexistent. Before 1980, the roads were chip-sealed on a regular basis. After Vashon turned Democratic in the mid-80s, the roads fell into neglect. Sadly, the people that used to do the chip-sealing have passed away.

It's OK to drive giant pickup trucks and heavy SUVs or impede traffic with bicycles. It's just too bad our roads aren't go-kart friendly.

~ Jeff Schnelz



Let's talk about kids and plastic!

From sippy cups to toys – what we're exposed to every day and what that means for our health and our children's health.



A free talk by pediatrician Dr. Sheela Sathyanarayana who leads research focused on environmental exposures and children's health risk at Seattle Children's Hospital Research Institute.

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The Vashon Loop

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Elon Musk in Talks to Buy Hawks

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The Loop: We have to ask. If you buy the Hawks, will you keep them in Seattle?

Musk: Of course that would be my intent. But a wise man said that everything in life is a negotiation. Owning a team provides certain leverage over government, and we have to move Falcon Heavy rocket production away from California soon. Despite some low-level dysfunctions, Washington has basic energy advantages. Move the team? Well. Issaquah is interesting, or Boise.

The Loop: Hmm. That's somewhat reassuring. Obviously you're famous for thinking big and following through. In that vein, what innovations might you bring to the Seahawks?



Musk: Exactly. So watching the Super Bowl with my kids and the clones, I thought, wow. This team is Other Worldly. They should be called the Spacehawks. Or maybe the X-Hawks. That's where it started.

And then I thought, what if we installed Neuralink in the players? Think of the incredible data we'd collect with that. We could feed

patented analytics back into improved performance and upgrade (sic) the entire sport while we dominate. We'll make it the Neural Feedback League.

The Loop: That truly would be innovation. You've been a controversial figure, some might even say an outspoken one. The not-yet Neural Football League is kind of the opposite. How would you pass the vetting process and gain the necessary approval of the other team owners?

Musk: Easy! Money. If they unwisely attempt to thwart my will, I could just buy the entire league organization. It's a profoundly corrupt monopoly based on questionable legal status.

Speaking of which, Commissioner Goodell, Central America and South America both presently lack football leagues. I would just hire the top players away to Mexico City and Sao Paolo. Presto. The players leave their tax problems behind.

The Loop: Well, look at the time. We're sure you're very busy as always. Do you think the rumored figure of \$11 billion is too expensive? The last team to sell was the Washington D.C. First Peoples (formerly Commanders) for only \$6 billion in 2023. When would you anticipate getting this deal done?

Musk: A billion here, a billion there, it's not about that. What matters is where you go with it. It's about trillions and whatever it takes. The Spacehawks will be the first team to integrate AI into every play, right down into every coach and every player.

Every move, every decision will add to the excellence, all protected under the Digital Millenium Copyright Act. The alternative buyer is a lame Shanghai-based private equity consortium. I see no reason we can't get a deal done by April First. Go Spacehawks!



Washington State to Discuss Equitable Ferry Initiative

Continued from Front Page

emphasized the need for an adjusted perspective: "Public services that primarily help low-income people get called 'entitlements,' while public services that inconvenience wealthy homeowners get called 'urgent infrastructure priorities.'"

One proposal currently being floated is the ferry "equity card." Similar in appearance to the purple "V" cards placed in dashboards by some Vashon residents to indicate their planned destination, the equity card would retain and make mandatory the directional "V" while bringing in new color-coded and electronically embedded options. This would enable a individualized cost structure based on destination and the driver's unique disenfranchisement status.

According to local policy experts, a person's status could be based on race, sexual orientation, income, or female gender. But there are complications with this approach because multiple intersecting forms of disadvantage may exist within one person's experience. Recognizing this issue - alongside the fundamental

unfairness of possessing too many equity cards - proponents suggest the card should reflect a person's most significant form of marginalization.

To these barriers, The Loop would also add - unless a person's status is based solely on self-report, such measures would have to deal directly with thorny issues like photo ID and possibly income verification.

Most concerning to local residents is that some alternate fare structures propose higher fares on people who travel to islands or other locations lacking direct access beyond a ferry. For Hoo Alvarazieni, this feature is non-negotiable:

"The electric ferry was our last effort to try and save this system from itself. We need to look at who benefits most here. Not workers in Seattle paying more for groceries every month. Not tenants in Tacoma whose rent rises faster than their wages. No, the beneficiaries are those whose primary hardship is the emotional burden of living in relative, peaceful isolation while still insisting they are 'in Seattle.'"



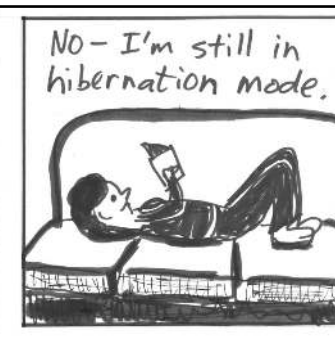
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- Ant smuggling is a thing?
- Two more lost Doctor Who episodes recovered
- Lab gloves are skewing microplastic research

Healing and The Last Three Chair Squats

By Deborah H. Anderson

Three weeks ago, I was introduced before preaching on "Fasting as a Practice of Calling Down Justice" at an Ash Wednesday service. The Sister of the Cloth said "... And when she sings, it comes from a place so deep inside of her."

I was so grateful to hear that the source of my voice shows. Since I first sang in public at the age of two, that place has been a deep belief that healing is possible and healing happens.

Vashon was the wrong place for me and my four children to land in November 1992. I believed the little slips of paper I was handed that said the tiny country church wanted a full-time pastor and for real, a woman. I brought my expertise and spiritual practice.

But I needed sophisticated wrap-around social services for my two children adopted at age five after a horrific beginning to their lives. I needed AP classes for my other two birth children and a solid music program, both vocal and instrumental, for all of them.

Myself, having found my voice and stood up to my abusive husband, needed advanced domestic violence support like I had Overtown. There were few social services, and I was told AP classes would be bad to have in the schools as it said some students were better than others.

For sure, I did not need to bring my kids to a place where, as the county had determined, a higher than usual rate of recreational drug and alcohol abuse existed among teenagers. Those deficits were severe enough to focus Vashon as a place for targeted funds and programs to remediate toxic traditions. As Lisa Bruce, executive director of

Island Voices

VARSA recently stated, "Because of the data, Vashon was chosen for a (prevention) coalition."

Shepherding 25 congregants while single-parenting four kids with special needs was easier because I was scaling down. I had come from conducting a children's choir that was three to four times the size of the country congregation. I could play the piano when the organist told me she wanted to quit. I was a pre-school teacher, so holding Sunday School and creating a mid-week after-school opportunity were no problem.

When it all fell apart, I was mysteriously and wondrously invited into the golden secret circle of goodness and love on Vashon Island. A mother came to me and said, "God told me you're supposed to work with my son." I thanked her, and gently told her God hadn't told me anything about that. But I would think on it, pray about it.

Sure enough, I was meant to work with them, and so it was I walked into 25 years of supporting parents, children, and families with specific, particular, or demanding needs. Myself, horrifically disabled having been hit by a drunk driver when I was nine, found I was uniquely qualified to offer support in navigating social and medical systems. I was able to help people take a breath and do some self-care, and I enjoyed the fun of playing with, serving, and teaching kids who had frequently been given the message "don't be" or "your needs are too much."

Ableism on the Island was King, Queen, Judge, and Jury, adding many stones to the baskets of care parents and kids carried. Like sexism, racism,

classism, ageism, any of the isms, ableism is the institutional, systemic, interpersonal and internalized belief that being able-bodied is the gold standard for what services and supports should be provided for all persons. Simply put, it means if you have a disability, or disabilities, the provisions for accommodations and accessibility are judged according to the needs of an able-bodied person.

Recently I saw that ableism is still ruling the roost in the school district. Unconscionable cruelty was thrust at a mom too tired to parry. So not OK. So time to dismantle that beast.

This past Tuesday, I completed over 20 years of rehab, particularly focused this past 13 years, with a medical team who fixed everything done poorly after my original accident.

Supposedly I am going to be 75 years old. But parts of me are very young. Establishing a baseline for my new exercise goals, my physical therapist timed my chair squats. For the first time ever, as I neared finishing, he urged, "Push it! Really push it!" Those last three chair squats had a new vivid core energy I haven't enjoyed or been free to release in decades. Healing happens. Surely it does.

There is strength in transparency. It's a good thing. It's time. Truthfully, my family and I were pretty much destroyed by Vashon's weaknesses. But reach back and pull it forward, and lend strength and input positively, and ableism can be addressed and dismantled. No more shaming special needs parents on their last exhausted breath or denying services that have been approved. Vashon has made positive changes in social services and the culture to address educational and social deficits in supporting healthy living for teenagers (and adults). I'll keep you posted.



How I Became Gates

By Gates (Pam) Johnson

I have been asked this question about eight million times in the last, I'm going to guess, three decades. Not sure why it is such an interesting topic. Is "Gates" that odd a name that people wonder from whence it came? Well, it's time to put this hot topic to bed.

Lots of acquaintances seem to think the name came from back in the day when I was very involved with the horse community. Both of my kids had horses and were members of 4-H and Pony Club. I spent innumerable hours leaning on fences watching them go round and round. Walk, trot, canter, reverse, walk, trot, canter, halt, back up. They rode western and English, did equitation, pleasure, stadium jumping and cross county.

Horse shows, county and state fairs. Two kids, lots of horses added up to many hours leaning on those fences. Out of boredom, I jumped in to help where I could. Many times, helping involved opening and closing gates, at home, Paradise Ridge or various horse shows. Putting two and two together, people assumed the name Gates came from those activities. Au contraire.

Here is the real story of how I became Gates:

It started way back when I was a little kid. Never a girly-girl; always a tom-boy. I hated the name Pam. It just never seemed to fit. It made me think of frilly dresses and black patent leather shoes. If you know me at all, you know that's not me. Jeans and sweatshirts all the way. I wanted a nickname, but again, never seemed to find one that fit.



Kids at school made fun of me. "Pam the ham from Alabam." Teachers called me Pam-ella. One of my dad's friends called me Freck because of my freckles. I hated it! But Pam was the name I was saddled with, so I lived with it.

Fast-forward to the 90s. I was going through big life changes. My marriage had ended in divorce, and not pleasantly. I was left with very minimal family and close friend support. Had changed jobs, from working at Burton Elementary to McMurray Intermediate. Stress. Depression. Financial uncertainty. Lost a bunch of weight. Life was not fun.

One night, I was sitting in my front room watching Star Trek, The Next Generation. As the credits rolled, I noticed the name Gates McFadden. Hmmmm. That name struck me. I thought, maybe this is the time I shed the old Pam persona and move on to the new Gates era. So I did.

Don't recall exactly how I transitioned to the new name. It may have started when I came back to work after a summer break. I just started calling myself Gates. It fit. I signed unofficial documents as Gates. I was listed in the school directory as Gates. Pretty soon, people began to

call me that. It felt pretty good. Made me feel like a snake that shed its old skin, in a good way.

As time progressed, fewer and fewer people called me Pam. Often, new people thought Gates was my maiden name, so they called me Pam Gates. They wondered if I was related to Bill Gates. Nope. Just plain, old

Gates Johnson.

Fast forward once again. Most everyone calls me Gates now. The only people who call me Pam are my sisters and those who have known me for several decades. At this point in life, it doesn't much matter what people call me. But when I look in the mirror I see to Bill Gates. Nope. Just plain, old Gates, not Pam.

Vashon Island Used to Be

By March Twisdale

Vashon Island used to be,
a land for you and me.

Then Cancel Culture came,
and we were wiped away.

What's a girl to do,
who's been raised Red, White & Blue?

Speak up, express, explain:
"A free thinker I remain, no matter what you do."

For all who were, who are, and those yet to be.
I will not drop our flag, for cheap acceptance offered me.

Nor will I wither or hide, my tongue stuck and dry.
How could I yield? Thy honor denied!
Should I weaken, wilt, and comply.

I will speak from my heart and stand my ground.
Always of thee, grateful and proud.

"Here is a gift. My thoughts, written for all to see.
An ever free mind, I offer to thee."



*Dedicated to my Granddad, who volunteered to fight in WWII.

March Twisdale is a lifelong advocate of independent thought. She believes there are as many right choices as there are people in the world. Find March on Substack.com by searching "Our Thoughts Matter."

The Paradox of Karl Marx

By Michael Shook

Last month, we had a brief look at the history of human efforts to live communally, and how those did, or did not, work out. This month, we assess some of the life and work of the man perhaps most associated with modern Communism, Karl Marx.

Marx was a man of prodigious intellect, with a narcissistic ego to match. And, like others throughout history similarly endowed, he dismissed any and all criticism of his vision of the world, the people in it, and the way life "should" be. His life was defined by dramatic contrasts, and while he lived – in spite of his genius, his relentless commitment to the development of his ideas, and his valuable insights regarding economics, sociology, and philosophy – he never achieved the fame and status he felt he was due.

As a student in Berlin, Marx was deeply influenced by the work of Georg Hegel, earning his Doctor of Philosophy at age 23. He eventually dismissed Hegel's work for its emphasis on abstract spiritual matters, but adopted and utilized a form of Hegel's dialectic analysis. While the dialectic method was originally a conversational back and forth of questions and answers, whereby one arrives at a truth, Hegel used dialectic to demonstrate contradictions inherent in ideas. The contradictions would inevitably lead to a resolution of themselves, and a new idea, both negating and preserving the original idea.

Marx applied the dialectical method to material reality, the literal ways in which, for example, the bourgeois and proletariat contradict each other. This would lead to the negation of each, out of which would emerge a new way. Both men believed that this confrontation between forces would "... take the form of violent, cataclysmic leaps, destructive revolutions... which establish a new order upon the ruins of the old."

Marx initially thought to seek a post teaching, but that door closed as his theories evolved and his activities

became more politically provocative. He had joined a group of intellectuals who railed against the King, the bourgeoisie, and religion, and was forced to leave Prussia (Germany), emigrating to France. From there, again because of his radical politics, he decamped to Belgium, and then, finally, to London. There, he lived out all but the last few years of his life, supported as usual (and just barely) by his long-time friend, collaborator, and financial benefactor, Friedrich Engels.

Beginning in the early 1800s, workers across Europe, caught between job losses from mass industrialization, dislocation due to land enclosures, and enduring famine from failed crops, rose up and demanded change. The right to vote, the re-establishment of guilds, and access to land were among their demands. When the governments refused, riots, and eventually, armed attempts to gain power ensued. However, most of the uprisings were poorly organized, lacking coherent leadership, and were crushed.

For Marx, each failed uprising of workers, most notably those in Germany and France in 1848, only hardened his resolve. Early in his career, he had worked tirelessly to raise the consciousness of the proletariat through his writing, believing they would "see the light," and advance their cause themselves. But in the aftermath of so many losses, he was convinced the only road to success was via an international organization, with himself at the head.

He was fiercely uncompromising in this, seeing the world in black and white – one was for him, or against him. To those who praised his work, or sought his advice in supplicating ways, Marx was genial, jocular, and indulgent. Those deemed unsympathetic to his vision of the Communist cause were bitterly attacked. Any who spoke of another path, or who complained about their physical struggles, or their emotional suffering, or who had concerns of spiritual morality, were viewed as indulging in bourgeois sentiment. In

acid polemics, he poured his contempt on them.

Eventually, Marx decreed that the working class would have to be forced into acceptance of the principles of the Communist Manifesto, speaking of the workers as "asses," "the rabble," and "the mob." Engels shared that view. In a letter to Marx in 1851, Engels agreed that, "... the people are of no importance whatsoever."

Not surprisingly, Marx had few friends, and his family formed a bulwark against the world. His wife, Jenny, was devoted to him, and for his part, he leaned on her as his rock. He could be sincerely affectionate, showing great tenderness toward their three daughters, playfully calling them by nicknames: Qui-Qui, Quo-Quo, and Tussy (four other children died before age nine). Sundays were often spent in a park where Engels might join them, sharing in a picnic lunch, poetry readings, and games. Yet for all that, he willingly sacrificed his family's health and well-being in the relentless pursuit of his goals, depending on others for income. Marx himself felt that the ongoing dire poverty his family endured caused the death of at least one of his three sons.

Sundays aside, Marx worked seven to nine hours a day, sometimes at home in his study, more often in the British Museum Reading Room, poring over history books and economics records. Marx came to believe the institutions of human society are solely the outgrowth of its economic activity and class relations, its material base.

This was the core of his (and Engels') theory of historical materialism. Hence, the true driver of all human history was not ideas – spiritual, intellectual, or otherwise – but empirically demonstrable material things and conditions. He wrote, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their *social being that determines their consciousness*" (his italics).

This profoundly reductionistic approach to humanity permeates Marx's work. The idea that one might be able to make choices for one's life,

independent of one's social standing, or the work one performs, was for Marx an impossibility. Indeed, the notion of one person making any kind of significant impact upon the world was equally so, since he regarded the individual as a near non-entity, important only as a member of one class or another.

Philosophers fared no better. Marx wrote, in 1845, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world ... the point is to change it." His work is filled with such declarations, no small number showing insight and utility. Even one marginally acquainted with philosophy would agree that such work throughout millennia has radically changed and enlightened the world, and the way we think about our lives, our work, and indeed the cosmos. A philosopher himself, Marx was, ironically, blind and deaf to it all.

His philosophy of class relations was explicitly rooted in destruction. In "The Communist Manifesto," he wrote, "The Communists ... openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions." In 1849, as publisher of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" newspaper, he wrote, "We have no compassion and we ask no compassion from you. When our turn comes, we shall not make excuses for the terror." And in a statement praising the Paris Commune, issued after its demise, he wrote, "Should we not ... reproach it for not having used it [terror] freely enough?"

Marx was a bundle of contradictions; a so-called champion of the worker, who derided the same, and who never worked a day in his life in any manual capacity; a man who loved his family honestly, who felt deeply the loss of four of his children, yet who thought nothing of exhorting society-wide violence and death for political ends. His world was one of interior abstractions, lived in the purity of thought alone, untethered from reality.

Next month, we'll examine some of the fruit of humanity's longing for the perfect society, and how that was manifested in Marxist-Communist ideologies and actions.

Holy Vashon

By Dave B.

I almost hit a deer the other day. The deer was in a pothole. All I saw were antlers as I slammed on my brakes just in time. Luckily for me (and the deer), the pothole was deep and saved its life.

After the deer got out with great effort, I had to slow down. Cedarhurst has 5,000 (or more) potholes out to Westside Highway and could hold any number of vulnerable creatures trapped below the asphalt.

Is it me or do we have a lot of potholes? My Audi Quattro Z6Q4ACSS has everything under the sun in features, but if it had pothole detection it would never let me leave my driveway. Why is it that, as our streets get more and more beat up from wind, rain, trucks, cars, and occasionally snow and ice, the best King County can do is fill them in sometimes? And not even all of them, as I have seen in past years.

I have watched the road crew move up and down Burma Road, 250th Way, and Shawnee Road with incredible speed, filling 10% of the surface until they are exhausted in 70°-degree weather, then have a smoke and go home for the day.

I have nothing against county workers, but can you at least FILL IN ALL the potholes that are in front of you? Do not pass go, do not collect \$200 dollars, right? What would happen if you brought onto the Island some paving equipment that PAVES the surface of the road and fills in the potholes that you have been asked to fix?

What a concept. I know, I know, I ask a lot of questions, but really.

I am smart enough to know this would be a slow and painful process for our Island population, but my Audi would thank you for all the damage it does to my beautiful car (which I only fantasize about since I don't really have one). I don't even have a driveway!

We pay \$6,000 a year in property taxes for our tiny house and yet someone OK'd and spent taxpayer money on flashing red lights around our stop signs. Whose idea was that? If you cannot see a big red stop sign at an intersection, then you should NOT be driving!

So, do I have a solution? How about this (a radical idea, but could it work)? Maybe stop paying for poor workmanship from King County? I don't think so, as we have no choice. Maybe secede and become unincorporated in Kitsap County, which I know has lower tax rates? That way we could live

with and not bitch about our poor road conditions.

As the fantastic reporter/writer that I am, I decided to find out what "unincorporated" actually means for Vashon. The definition is "A region located outside the boundaries of any city or municipality, meaning it lacks its own government (city council/mayor) and is instead governed by the county in which it lies."

That translates to: we are at the mercy of King County and pay high taxes for less than ideal services. If anyone has another, option please let The Loop know.

To King County: Be as it may, please fix our ##% +#&% roads!



~ L.M. Montgomery

On the Beach

By Seán Malone and John Sweetman

Seán and I grew up on the beach and spent a lot of days just wandering aimlessly looking for edible or merely interesting sealife and valuable beach treasures, which our moms generally classified as "junk."

We had other diversions beside combing the beach. One was riding our bikes to the landfill on Bank Road to hunt for usable garbage. Shorty Grimalski was always at the garbage dump, collecting food for his angleworms. If we found instant coffee, Shorty required you to give the coffee to him. The most plentiful instant coffee was found when the soldiers at the AA battery were required to eat C-rations once a month for training purposes. A lot of their C-rations ended up at the dump. We fought when we found the unopened cans, especially the cans of pemmican.



R.J. and Ada Malone

Decades later, we still have that beachcombing propensity, although now we no longer wade into the tide to scoop up crabs, nor do we fill our pockets with stinky found objects because we have a ... skiff type boat. It has a name ... "The Crabber" and has a motor and things that still resemble oars, which have come in handy when the Johnson failed to run.

We got this boat from Danny Cadman 25 or so years ago. It was apparently a derelict item found on the beach and was one of the first fiberglass models, which means it is very heavy and stable enough for both of us with two dogs, crab pots, and loads of found items.

We keep it at the marina, and over the past few years have neglected to haul it out and clean the bottom. We should do this at least every five years, whether it needs it ... or not. The last time we started the motor and took it out, a suspicious trail of marine debris seemed to follow our very slow movement through the harbor, even at full throttle.

In 1841, Lt. Charles Wilkes was tasked by Congress to map Puget Sound and surrounding areas. His map of Vashon was quite clear. As an exercise, we decided to follow his soundings of inner Quartermaster Harbor by using a lead line to see if the bottom had changed much since 1841.

Judd Creek had spewed much bottom material onto the bottom of the harbor, which our soundings reflected as an 18-inch decrease in depth near Burton. Otherwise, the depth of the harbor has remained about the same since 1841.

The Crabber has had many adventures over several decades. Seán and I ran the rapids of the Raab's Lagoon outfall more than a few times. The Crabber has participated in various "rescue" operations.

Once our boating friend, Craig, found himself in his Coronado sailboat tight against a rock reef near Raab's Lagoon. It was a result of a bad ignition coil and the tides. We geared up and set out to save him. It was a sunny, windless day. Actually, he had suffered the misfortune of not merely engine trouble and desultory navigation ... but had run out of beer. A quick stop at Sandy's Burton Store solved the beer problem, and we gathered some sturdy lines and set out to rescue our intrepid mariner from a rock that was later marked on our charts as "Craig's Reef."

Arriving at the scene of the tragedy, we assembled our lines and very ... very ... slowly towed the boat back to the marina. The slowness caused by the excessive marine undergrowth on the bottom of both The Crabber and the Coronado was nature's warning sign of "deferred" maintenance.

Shortly after that incident, we hauled both boats out and cleaned the marine life from the hulls. Our local resident marine biologist, Bill, was somewhat amazed by the generous variety of accumulated species, some of which he claimed to have never seen in the inner harbor.

The Crabber eventually towed many other potential maritime derelicts back from typical misfortunes, including our old wooden sailboat that lost engine control cables at Dockton one year ...

Seán and I used The Crabber for actual crabbing for many years. In the good years, we had so much crab that we gave them away. We had so many crab that neighbors would lock their doors, as they often did in zucchini season. Lately, crabbing has been poor, but we still have our secret crab spot which is not far from the lost lake rock and the pink house. But we won't tell you where it is. If we told you, it would not be secret anymore.



Embracing the Power of One (Self)

By Daniel Hooker

Recently a friend/acquaintance passed, Country Joe MacDonald, a Navy veteran honorably discharged who served from 1959-1962. Joe's service to his countrymen/women continues through his gift called music. It has been documented in a film called "Woodstock" where between 400,000-600,000 "hippies / peaceniks" gathered to celebrate life, liberty, and not just the pursuit of happiness, but the joy of music, and enlightenment in a gathering of love.

Country Joe MacDonald gave a voice in his song to how crazy the world had become over war.

To me, his performance at Woodstock evoked the same sort of feeling that you get when you go into church and you're singing hymns with a bunch of people. But just imagine that you suddenly have hundreds of thousands of people singing that hymn, questioning authority and media-driven realities, and asking, "What am I fighting for?"

That feeling and question infused our country.

If you look at the documentary, you recognize that the festival didn't have enough food and water to cater to the people. Suddenly, there were volunteer lines and the town brought in food. And when the concert was over, the cleaning-up effort was taken up by the Woodstock-goers themselves. They picked up after themselves and left the land as clean as they found it.

Consider that a farmer, who didn't necessarily share their political views, said, "Yeah, this freedom of expression, this freedom of song, this freedom of speech is going to be held on my property." To find that even today? He wasn't worried about the constrictions of: "Oh, someone gets hurt. I should have insurance." All these little things that we have to leap over today, weren't there.

A community effort ensued to continue that several-day concert to the point that the whole town stepped

up to feed these young people. No one was telling them what to do. The energy from this festival spilled over into the community. It wiped away prejudices, conclusions, and categorizing people as "hippies or peaceniks." It replaced such notions with the realization: "Hey, there are human beings here who are in need."

That's the sort of spirit we still need today.

The success of that concert wasn't in the money or in the fame, but in the power of Oneness - the unity of the people coming together - for this expression of peace and freedom. This was the festival's hallmark.

The farmer offering his space, the community creating the sustenance, Jimi Hendricks who played his version of the "Star Spangled Banner" (probably the most celebrated version of our anthem in history), the music of Country Joe MacDonald and the other Woodstock musicians - all demonstrated the power of One. The effect of this three-day event carried on into people's lives, changing the way we live and the way we approach the ecology of our land and each other.

A wonderful expression of what it is to be a Washingtonian and a part of the Vashon-Maury Island community is that we show we care for each other. When individuals facilitate change, our neighbors' lives are transformed. Making a community gel, coming together, leaving difference of gender, beliefs, and politics all behind, is how we grow together in this tapestry, where our weaknesses become our strengths.

Our Island (world) expresses a colorful, vibrant life of creativity that weaves a tapestry of strengths that most flags cannot interpret in a single panel.

As an example, Bruce Phares, an accomplished musician and bassist,

brings wonderful artists to this Island by way of Vashon Center for the Arts. His lifelong partner and wife, Donna Bertolino, read an article in The Loop about the Clothing Drive and immediately donated clothes, blankets, shoes, and finances. Granny's Attic also jumped on board after one of the managers, Berry Cooper, read about my efforts. I've retired from the four-day a week Clothing and Bedding Drive, but I did pass the torch, and six people took my place, including a 93-year-old Girl Scout named Carol.

We as a community think outside of the box. We play outside of the box. Living as examples by spontaneously participating, we inspire others to be engaged. This completes our needs, too.

The stars we witness are in the night skies, as well as in the eyes of the people, who, being just caring individuals, joyfully reach out, brighten and touch each other with the sincerity of heartfelt action.

For more about Country Joe MacDonald and Daniel's connection with him, read Daniel's article, "Art and Music - A Meditation That Affects Our Hearts and Collective Minds," published Dec. 2025 on vashonloop.com.



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Parallel Lives – Bill Robinson Saves the Farmer's Market

By Richard Odell

Identifying points of origin is like picking up ice cream with one's fingers. One never gets all of it. It might be said, however, the Farmers' Market we have today began with some now forgotten young man selling oranges by the drop-off box at the post office. This marketing genius was soon joined by Mary Hutchinson with her baked goods, along with several others, and soon the whole lot was in need of more space.

Mary Brown, the realtor, generously offered her vacant lot north of the bank, and soon, like flies on a dead squirrel, the place was filled with all manner of local and itinerant tradespeople – bakers, wool spinners, plant vendors, aspiring farmers, fortune tellers, and even two Orthodox monks who provided coffee and books, that all might be wakeful. Thus was born the Saturday Market.

In the midst of this circus was a plywood booth – something I'm sure Mary Brown never saw coming – that housed the neophyte farmers of the newly formed Vashon Island Grower's Association. I was not quite a charter member, but I did help hoist the sign atop the booth, and, having not yet found my stride in flower growing, brought my own weekly offering of beets and lettuce – two things I didn't particularly care for.

And one Saturday morning, inching towards our enclave with all hope of inclusion (there's a saying – I don't know from where – "the hero enters last"), came one Bill Robinson, in his late 70s, I think, who with his wife Ida had founded Robinson Furniture, where today is the VoV. He was also an experienced farmer, something we were in dire need of, working a sizeable home garden on Beall Road. Among various crops, he grew raspberries, by the sale of which – stay seated for this – he paid his property taxes. Announcing to us that he didn't want to step on anyone's toes – we interrupted him, "Dude, get in here."

Bill had given my brother his first paid job in life, helping with furniture deliveries, and Ida had provided me my first paid job in life, mowing the lawn at the library, now the Senior Center. Bill was robust and busy, even finding time to take his tractor on the road to mow hay, as needed. Ida was

Island Resilience



Mary Hutchinson was one of the Old Saturday Market's first vendors. Photo by Richard Odell

honest and blunt-spoken. Bill's kinda girl. As Norm Matthews, Bill's good friend, once told me, "I always know where I stand with Ida." Yeah. And your standing maybe contrary to her position didn't diminish her fair-mindedness and hospitality towards you. An attitude the Island could use more of, these days.

VIGA was mostly college types, with a few rough characters like myself thrown in. New School, organic, Wendell Berry adherents. The whole nine yards. Our seasonal group dinners usually featured wine, gourmet entrees, chocolate mousse, mixed with conversations about slugs, manure, and how many different ways you could kill the same chicken. Bill, our senior in age and experience, with his ties to the Island's agricultural history, was Old School, all the way, but the differences never came up, as far as I recall. He once looked upon my own operation and asked, with sincere curiosity, about the raised beds. Hadn't seen those before. The old man both shared and learned.

Well, long story short, the Saturday Market ran afoul of the landowner, and for good reason. The whole ungainly mess had grown beyond expectations. The last nerve snapped at Christmas season, when an enormous tent, complete with hobo-style burn barrel, was erected without warning, and holiday shoppers were invited in to muck up the lot to a muddy mess. Plug pulled, marketeers scattered. Mary Brown had had enough. A new growing season approached, and

our little booth was marked for demolition, with no alternative in sight.

We gathered at the home of Michelle Crawford, of Pacific Potager fame, with Bill in attendance, to brainstorm the situation. No solutions occurred. Finally, someone piped up, "Maybe if there was someone who could influence Mary Brown. Talk to her, convince her to let us stay." Someone put their arm around Bill, and everyone laughed. No stranger to thorny business issues, and the personalities involved, Bill hung his head and muttered, "What have I got myself into?" But he went forth on our behalf. And he prevailed.

For the next few seasons, the VIGA booth stood alone on the broad lawn, a dozen of us, or so, huddled together in all manner of weather. Often things were slow, but we were a stubborn bunch. As market manager, I made a contest of trying to beat Bill as the first one to show up in the morning. Rarely did I win, and when I did start to win, it was because Bill's health had begun to fail. The Big C had shown up at his door.

VIGA's resiliency paid off, in time. With grants and community contributions, we were able to buy the property, to erect the building that stands there now, and to bring back the craftspeople, now all local vendors. Bill died not long before the new market he helped make possible opened up to a new era. But shortly before he died he requested that VIGA's members should play a role in his memorial service. Dare I say it? I think he loved us.

I've no idea what Bill said to Mary Brown on our behalf, and I don't think it matters. I've no doubt it was more about Bill's standing in the community than anything he had to say. It was not about persuasion or assurance, but a lifetime lived in the eyes of his neighbors. If we were okay with Bill, we were okay with Mary Brown.

As for Mary Brown, she, like Bill, likely got the short end of the thank-you stick. She had nothing to gain and much to lose by letting us use her property. More often regarded in trepidation than in gratitude, she remained the cornerstone and benefactor of our efforts.

Special thanks, as well, are due those patrons of the Market's early, plywood booth days (you know who you are) who came out in the wind and rain, and even the snow, to support us. Like Bill and Mary, you saw us through to more prosperous times.

Into Place

By Anthony Latora

As I prepared to move to New Mexico in June of 2016, I searched for an herbal book about the local plants I might encounter. After a bit of digging, I settled on "Medicinal Plants of the Mountain West" by Michael Moore. Little did I know that moving to New Mexico and studying this book would lead me to places I couldn't have imagined while living in cozy Southern California.

Those first steps into herbalism shaped who I've become today. In the spirit of the proverb often attributed to Lao Tzu, "The journey of a thousand miles begins beneath your feet," the journey of herbalism begins right where you are.

Not all of us live in – or frequently visit – forests, deserts, river valleys, or mountains, and that can make this idea feel out of reach. But if you take a look around – local parks, gardens, or even your backyard, if you're lucky enough to have one – you may be surprised to find plants that have long been used as medicine, food, tools, and textiles. What grows around you is enough to begin with, and cultivating a relationship with those plants may itself be part of the healing that is sought.

Plants survive and thrive in specific environments based on their needs. Just as it would be difficult to find a saguaro cactus in a marsh, it would be challenging to find devil's club in a desert. These plants are deeply adapted to their environments, producing phytochemicals that help them meet the challenges of their landscape while working with what the land provides. When observed more closely, we begin to see that plants carry medicine that supports their survival – and those same qualities can often support balance within our own inner terrain.

As I settled into the high desert of New Mexico, I began cultivating relationships with the plants around me. Some were familiar – nettle, dandelion, peppermint. Others, like sagebrush, yellow coneflower, vervain, and burdock, caught my attention.

"Why does everyone despise burdock?" I remember wondering. Despite the effort it took to dig up, it quickly became one of my favorites – not only for tea, but also eaten raw or pickled. Later, I understood part of its reputation: the burrs cling stubbornly to fur. One of our dogs, Mo, once came back completely covered, the



Photo by Anthony Latora

burrs embedded deep in her coat. What an effective way to disperse seeds.

And so I went – walking, hiking, observing. I took pictures of plants I encountered and flipped through my field guide, trying to match what I saw. Once I felt confident in an identification, I would harvest small amounts and begin experimenting. In the dry desert air, plants dried quickly, and within days I was making teas, tinctures, and other preparations. My first tinctures came from those local plants, and slowly, my small apothecary began to grow.

Like anything worth learning, I wasn't good at herbalism at first. I made terrible-tasting teas, botched tinctures, messy salves, and questionable ferments. But those mistakes were my teachers. Over time, things began to shift – teas

tasted better without needing loads of honey, tinctures became clearer and smoother, salves less chaotic, and herbal wines actually began to resemble wine.

The trial and error started to pay off, and with it, the seed of herbalism was nurtured, and the tree began to grow.

For anyone just beginning their journey, hearing the

stories of other herbalists can be a source of inspiration and guidance. I want to share that I am very much still on this path myself, which unfolds with each passing day and season. My curiosity and intuition lead the way, and while the lessons don't always make sense at first, their purpose reveals itself in time.

This is my personal invitation to you. I'll share from my own experiences learning herbalism, hoping to inspire you to start or deepen your own journey. We'll explore the core concepts that shape my understanding of plant intelligence, ecological awareness, cosmic influences, and the profound, innate healing potential of the human body that plants so generously support.

Why Am I Always Waking Up at 2:00 A.M.?

By Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz

Why are you waking up between 2:00-4:00 a.m. every night?

This question is incredibly important to answer and it is related to your overall health. Around this time, we are supposed to be in REM sleep with our brains and bodies doing very important cleanup and repair work. Frequent interruptions in the early morning hours are a sign that your metabolism and hormones need support so that you can reduce your risk of developing diabetes and other chronic diseases. Solving this problem can improve your day-to-day energy levels, memory, cognition, stress management, and long-term health.

One of the most common reasons for early morning wake-ups is low blood sugar. If you wake up between 2:00-4:00 a.m. feeling fully alert for seemingly no reason, what you ate during the day likely caused a blood sugar spike that led to a very low blood sugar drop around 2:00 a.m. Alcohol in the evening is a common reason for this, but an imbalanced diet alone can cause the problem.

Cortisol dysregulation from chronic stress can also cause waking at this time - this makes your heart race and leaves you feeling amped up when you'd rather be asleep. Cortisol is supposed to be high in the morning, to wake us up, and to decline as the day goes on. Under chronic stress, the normal curve becomes erratic and the highs and lows are at the wrong times. Dysregulated cortisol often causes daytime fatigue and difficulty getting to sleep, as well as 2:00 a.m. wake-ups. I often order a saliva test that looks at cortisol four times in a day to see what an individual's cortisol curve is doing.

Many people are unaware that they have blood sugar imbalances or pre-diabetes. A single fasting glucose test doesn't give much useful information. A hemoglobin A1c test is a 3-month average of your blood sugar, and a fasting insulin level can tell us whether insulin resistance is a problem. A prescription continuous glucose monitor that tests your blood sugar every 5 minutes for 10 days is immensely valuable in learning to prevent blood sugar spikes and crashes.

For women, estrogen and progesterone imbalances can contribute to waking, but often their contributions are related to imbalances of cortisol and/or insulin. (This is why some women go through menopause with little difficulty, while others need lots of support). As we age and estrogen declines, our blood sugar gets more difficult to manage because estrogen helps improve insulin sensitivity. A mild blood sugar problem becomes exacerbated during perimenopause.

Health Matters

Chronic stress creates too much cortisol, which causes progesterone to decline. Progesterone is not just a pregnancy hormone; it keeps us asleep when we want to be. Hormone testing isn't always necessary, but when done correctly it can help people see the whole picture to understand their health better.

For women who are still having regular cycles, estrogen and progesterone need to be tested on particular days (day 3 for estrogen and 7 days before menstruation begins for progesterone). Getting them tested on any random day doesn't provide as much useful information.

There are some changes that anyone can make to help themselves feel more stable throughout the day and to sleep all night. Individual fine-tuning may be necessary to fully solve the problem, but here are some basic starting points.

Try to eat at least 100 grams of protein every day. This is a big adjustment for a lot of people, but once you get in the habit, it's not so hard. That means between 30-40 grams at three separate meals. Read labels and add up your grams. An egg has only 6-7 grams, so eating two for breakfast isn't enough. Have three eggs with Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, sausage, or protein powder in a smoothie.

If your morning starts with minimal protein and mostly carbs, you will increase your blood sugar and it will crash by mid-morning, causing more hunger and an all-day spike and crash cycle that continues in the middle of the night. When I eat around 35 grams of protein for breakfast, I can completely forget about food until 1:00 p.m.!

Eat two more palm-sized servings of fish or meat, and some cheese or nuts for snacks. Don't eat carbs alone, as this causes a larger blood sugar increase. If you have a meal with chicken, potatoes, and broccoli, eat the chicken first, then the broccoli, then the potato. Eating the potato first (or alone) would cause a much more significant blood sugar increase. For some people, a very small protein snack at bedtime is necessary to prevent a blood sugar drop-off in the middle of the night. A spoonful of nut butter or a piece of cheese can help you stay asleep.

Walking after meals can help pull glucose into your muscles instead of causing a blood sugar spike. Increasing overall muscle mass is extremely important for metabolic health because larger muscles are more metabolically active. Low muscle mass increases the risk of many chronic diseases and poor health outcomes. I go to Vashon Strong right in town because nothing makes it easier to


build muscle than having a fun group and an instructor. I immensely appreciate that I don't have to come up with exercises myself; I just show up at class time and receive guidance.

For cortisol management, help re-set your cortisol curve back to normal by reminding your body what time it is. Shortly after getting up, even if the sun isn't up yet, go outside and look at the dawn light or face the sun. Don't wear glasses, contacts, or look through windows; give your eyes and skin the natural sunlight they expect. During the day, take breaks to go outside and remind your biology what time it is with some sunlight, and again in the evening. Even just a few short breaks can make a big difference for people who are used to being inside all the time. The first and last lights you see in a day should not be an artificial screen.

Coffee should be saved for after your protein breakfast. Let your wake-up cortisol do its thing before you push it with caffeine. When your body is properly fueled, it won't overshoot cortisol when it receives caffeine. Don't have any caffeine after noon.

Waking up every night in the early morning hours is a solvable problem. Properly nourishing your body with enough protein, building muscle, and getting natural sunlight can help you adequately rest. These suggestions are a starting point; some people require a few months of troubleshooting to help their bodies re-set to sleeping for 7-8 hours straight. Fixing this problem is worth the huge quality of life improvements from getting adequate rest.

Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz, betalunanaturopathic.com, 253-330-8708.



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~ Joseph Campbell

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Some Thoughts on How to Manage Migraine, Part 2

By Cynthia Sadurni

Welcome to part 2 of this article about migraine and how to minimize the frequency and severity of attacks. Last month, we talked about what changes can be beneficial to reduce potential triggers. Today, we'll explore some holistic ways that have worked for me.

First, it is important to take into account that the way we care for ourselves both physically and mentally has a great impact on the severity and frequency of migraine attacks. Mind and body are one unit, one team. What can we do to keep them both balanced? Here are some ideas I hope will work for you.

Now yourself: What is it that causes migraines in you? Many doctors suggest keeping a migraine diary. This is a record of what you were doing at the time an attack started. Did you eat something in particular? Was it windy, was it hot, and so forth. This way, you can start to map out what your triggers are.

Be kind to yourself: We live in times that demand us to perform, to meet the expectations and demands of society. Work, children, social meet-ups, the list can go on forever. In this chaotic world, knowing when to stop and rest can be as, if not more, important than performing. If you feel tired, give yourself a little time to unwind. Migraines are your bodies' way of telling you that it has had enough.

Be mindful: Mindfulness allows the brain to take a breather from all its activity. This is the way our brain rests. This doesn't mean you have to become a yogi or spend hours trying to attain a perfect level of meditation. It is as simple as focusing on your breath for a short period of time, or purposefully taking a walk, fully enjoying what is going around you in present time. There is a great book called "The Miracle of Mindfulness" by Thich Nhat Hanh that has a wonderful way of exploring and explaining this topic.

Be proactive: You are your best advocate. Believe that you can do this, and take small, yet meaningful steps towards a life with fewer migraines. Do a little research. There are many supplements that are beneficial in the treatment of migraines. Also, if you prefer a more natural approach, they are a good option to explore. I encourage you to do some research on this topic, as it may be useful to know more about them. As always check with your health practitioner before trying any herbal or over-the-counter medications.

Regarding natural options, I have had good results with ginger. Whether it is fresh (simply steep a piece of peeled ginger root in hot water for a few minutes to make an infusion), in a prepackaged tea or in pills, this little powerhouse of goodness is a tried and true remedy for nausea and migraine pain. Feverfew is another herb that has helped me and is worth researching. While it doesn't help with the pain during a migraine attack, it does wonders to reduce the frequency of said attacks. However, any herb can have potential side effects and interactions with other medications. Therefore, they should not be taken without professional guidance and proper research.

On the pharmaceutical side of things, constant research is bringing new and improved treatments to life. There are new-generation medications that are real life-changers. For more information about this, reach out to your general practitioner or neurologist. They can better guide you to find the best treatment for your individual needs.

Also, there are several devices, similar to a TENS unit, that are a great, substance-free option. Some devices work by using neuromodulation, while others target the trigeminal nerve. (This nerve happens to be the largest one in the head, and very active in the migraine process.) In my case, I have had great results with an external trigeminal nerve stimulator. If used at the very first sign of pain, it effectively eliminates the migraine 80% of the time and reduces pain the other 20%.

I have also tried biofeedback with a device that helps regulate breathing, pairing it to your heart rate. This is achieved by clipping a sensor to your

ear or your index finger, similar to what is used to measure oxygen levels when you visit your doctor. This is great for relaxation, but it does not address pain. Rather, it works by prevention. Unlike the TENS units that work best if used at the very first sign of migraine pain, the biofeedback device can be used any time, with or without symptoms. Personally, I find that a well established routine of 10-20 minutes before bedtime works best. Not only does it help relax the mind, but allows me to have more restful, deep sleep. As it centers around the use of breath and heart rate, it helps to consciously reduce tension, and lowers stress.

Believe in yourself: It is hard to see clearly when you are in a constant cycle of pain, but the moment you take action, even if it is in little steps, your mindset begins to shift. Yes, the road is long, and yes, it takes trial and error, but you will find a way to prevent and/or reduce the number of migraine episodes.

Let nature be your ally: We live in a place that is blessed with greenery and forests. It is well-known and scientifically proven that being out in nature promotes healing and also calms the mind. Fresh air, even on a rainy day, can make a big difference. A walk in the morning can boost your energy and promote better sleep by helping to regulate your circadian rhythm. Early morning blue light is best.

Of course, in the winter months, light can be dim, but even a little time outdoors on a balcony or a deck can work wonders. In Japan, they have coined a wonderful term: "Forest Bathing." It is a concept that has at its core enjoying the woods in a meaningful way by being in the moment. Immersing yourself in the experience by appreciating the sounds, scents, and beauty of the forest promotes mindfulness and health. It helps us disconnect from the constant avalanche of media and technology. It lets us breathe, helps us reduce stress and learn better. If the woods are not easily available, a garden or a park work, too.

At the end of the day, the journey to a better, migraine-safe life is very personal. I hope that some of these ideas will resonate with you.

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Celebrate Nettle Magic – It's a Piece of Cake!

By Jane Valencia

On a glorious day one May, Laurel made a nettle cake, and wished to share it with friends. I love nettles, and the thought of a cake made with this vibrant green and generous herb delighted me so much, that, before I'd even tasted it, I composed a piece of music.

I asked Laurel about the cake and its making, and she shared that the recipe was from Miss Wondersmith and her article, "Nettle Cake: An Ode To Moss Gazing" at <https://misswondersmith.com>. Go visit that page! The photos reveal the stunning and magical nature of this cake, and Miss Wondersmith shares her own inspirations surrounding the recipe for "Stinging Nettle Moss Cake."

Laurel, who loves nettles too, told me, "I followed the deer trails across the hillside covered in nettle. I pick the ones that sing to me." This was what a plant-loving friend had guided her to do.

"My friend had called them 'singing nettles,' not stinging nettles, and told me: 'Follow the creek and when you hear the plants singing, that's where the nettles are for harvesting.' Their buzzing vibrancy is like a song."

Laurel's young son assisted by cracking the six eggs and watching her use the mixer for creaming together butter, sugar, and eggs. "The whole process took quite a long time. It was a big project in which I'm delighted in every step. Two cups of nettle puree takes a lot of nettles! The cake is bright green, and tastes of earth and harmony. Slightly sweet, but not too much so. Also, there is a bit of lemon juice in the cake."

When I received my piece of nettle cake, I discovered that my own musical piece "tasted" indeed of the actual flavor of the cake and tale.

This past month, Laurel brought nettle cake to the Vashon Wilderness Program's "WILD Bug Ball" fundraiser. Our whole table agreed that this was the dessert we wanted, and lucky us, we won it. We all loved it. Moist, unique, delicious!

Nettle is a beloved herb to so many on Vashon, including many of you, dear readers, that I now continue the gift of "singing nettles" and this delicious cake. Miss Wondersmith has kindly agreed to share her recipe with us. Thank you, Miss Wondersmith! I also include my own musical piece of cake. (View this article online at vashonloop.com to listen to my "Nettle Cake" music).



Nettle Cake Photo
by Laurel



Nettle Harvesting Notes

- ~ Look for nettles that are growing in a large patch.
- ~ Before harvesting, learn or review some plant safety basics. Read my August 2023 article, "Herbs with Kids - Plant Safety Basics and a Few Summer Remedies." at vashonloop.com.
- ~ Avoid getting stung by moving carefully around the nettles, and by wearing gloves. Use scissors or clippers to cut off what you want. Harvest just the top three pairs of leaves, from young plants before they flower.

From Miss Wondersmith, misswondersmith.com

Stinging Nettle Moss Cake & Douglas Fir Grapefruit Buttercream

Cake – Ingredients

- 1½ cups shortening or unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1½ cups sugar
- 6 eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 4 tbsp lemon juice
- Zest of 2 lemons
- 2 cups nettle (or spinach) puree – see below
- 4 cups flour
- 4 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt



Directions

Preheat your oven to 325°F and prepare 2 (9") cake pans and 1 smaller pan (any shape) by lightly greasing and dusting with flour. Cut out and insert two circles of parchment paper to fit the pan bottoms; grease them, as well.

In a large bowl, cream the shortening and the sugar. Add the eggs, one at a time, until they are well combined. Add the vanilla, lemon juice, and lemon zest and mix well. Add the nettle puree.

In another bowl, sift the flour, baking powder, and salt. Mix well, then mix into the nettle mixture.

Pour into baking pans and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, or about 25 minutes.

Buttercream – Ingredients

- 1 cup shortening or butter, at room temperature
- ¼ tsp salt (if using unsalted butter or shortening)
- 1 tbsp ground fresh Douglas Fir needles
- 1½ tbsp grapefruit juice
- 4-5 cups powdered sugar (1 lb.)

Directions

Cream the shortening, salt, and fir needles until smooth. Add 4 cups powdered sugar and mix at low speed until incorporated to make a stiff dough. Add the grapefruit juice and mix until smooth. Assess the consistency and add more powdered sugar or grapefruit juice as desired.

To ice and decorate the cake, first allow it to cool completely. With a long bread knife, trim the tops of the cake so they are flat. Place one cake onto a serving plate and place strips of waxed paper around the cake for easier clean-up later.

Spread a layer of frosting over the top of the cake, then carefully set the other cake on top. At this point, it can be helpful to place the cake in the fridge for an hour or so for it to firm up. Meanwhile, crumble the scraps from the tops of the cake and the smaller extra cake into coarse crumbs using your hands or a food processor.

Spread the rest of the frosting over the entire cake and press the crumbs into the surface to look like moss. Remove the strips of waxed paper and serve!

Notes

1. To make stinging nettle puree, pick off all the leaves (wear gloves!), then boil them for a couple of minutes. Strain and immediately plunge into an ice bath to cool. Puree the cooked leaves into a smooth paste in your blender – you may need to add 1 tbsp of water to get them to grind properly. To make a spinach puree, just blend raw baby spinach leaves in the blender with enough water to form a smooth puree.
2. Make sure to note the lower baking temperature of this cake. Baking it at a lower temperature for longer helps it retain the fresh green color.
3. If you are unable to forage or purchase stinging nettle, spinach works just as well! And don't worry about your cake tasting like salad – the green veggies add a very subtle flavor that is accented nicely by the bright citrus. You'll barely notice them.

Nettle Cake
Jane Valencia

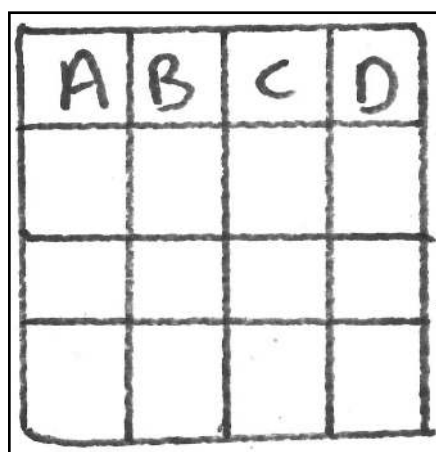
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Math Puzzle

By Anne Cotter Moses

Arranging Letters

Place four As, four Bs, four Cs and four Ds into the grid such that no two of the same letter appear in the same line, horizontally or vertically, nor along the two main diagonals. (The top four are filled out for you.)



Laughing Llamas Chronicles

By Daniel Hooker

From Lin Simpson:

Q: What did the Italian fisherman say when he caught an eel?

A: That's a moray.

~

Q: Why can't chickens make more than one sound?

A: Because they can't think outside the boks.

~

I have a cousin who collects a lot of magazines. He's got a barnful.

Yep, that man's got a lot of issues.



Aries (March 20-April 19)

Your sign has the reputation for being the assertive go-getter of the world, though you personally may be the kind of person who waits for an invitation. It's essential that you attenuate your energy to the situation you're in, and use the minimum of effort and energy to get the result that you want. The fact that you would take initiative is itself meaningful. Yet the energy is going to be so powerful over the next six to eight weeks that you must work with intention, and also consider the law of unintended consequences. It will help if you remember all the time that you're working with far more energy than you usually are (which is a lot). Make sure you want to finish anything that you start, and consider the follow-through necessary - the effort and energy required in maintaining anything that you establish.

Taurus (April 19-May 20)

Venus and Ceres newly in Taurus describe factors that are taking off a little of the internal pressure you've been feeling. Both are earth-centered planets that will provide grounding influences. Both planets speak of some blend of luxury and nourishment, and of having some real experience of springtime and a sense of the seasons changing. There's a deeper layer, though. The current struggle of the world seems to be about technology, wars and billionaires, but these are the result of alienation from ourselves. Venus and Ceres, and later in the season Mars and Mercury, are advents of Chiron's long-anticipated arrival in Taurus on June 19. This is a bold invitation to the sanity of centering yourself in physical space. Chiron's arrival is about the frame of mind that allows you the privilege of existing in the tangible world.

Gemini (May 20-June 21)

Mercury, the Gemini planet, is picking up speed in Pisces after what seemed like an endless retrograde. For Gemini, Pisces is the chart angle associated with your professional activities, your reputation, and certain family matters - all of which are now having the pot stirred. Mars is also present, and that is keeping the pot hot. This is all cautionary. Honesty is essential but so too is knowing when to keep mum, understanding the difference between public and private. This boundary has been



Planet Waves

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



entirely breached in the digital age. I'd go so far as to stop posting to social media for several weeks, or keeping your posts stone cold sober and P.R.-approved. Uranus enters your sign later this month, and that is going to accelerate every facet of your life and shake up the known order of your existence. It would be wise to delay your reactions and responses to new life situations.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Jupiter in your birth or rising sign is providing you stability and protection. Aspects that might signify risks for others offer you opportunities; what might indicate gossip to some can manifest as fodder for sincere contemplation for you. Now is the time to focus on your professional aspirations as if nothing could possibly get in your way. This is a rare time for you, on a scale of your whole life (if you're young) or many decades (if you're older). The only condition is that you be true to yourself and your purpose. The gift of the twin conjunctions in Aries (each rare in themselves), occurring in your house of professional reputation and accomplishment, is going to be something entirely new and seemingly impossible. Along with being true to yourself, you must add faith in yourself - which means fidelity. Once you get the hang of it, this will be easier; and one success will lead to the next.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)

Often "spiritual" is calm, reflective and breathe, breathe, breathe. Sometimes it really does feel like the old East-West Books in Greenwich Village where everything vibrated with sacredness and smelled like frankincense. Sometimes discovering who you are is thrilling, and at other times, letting go of who you are not is emotionally wrenching. At the moment you are going through a profound rebirth, which is likely to be calling on you to devote all of your energy to it. And sadly, part of the challenge of existing now is that there is rarely time to pause, think and feel. Yet this time in your life is so distinct, so unusual and moving you so deeply that it would be wise to focus. The

real challenge is maintaining your self-awareness in an environment that is designed, by engineers, to make you forget who you are. The air seems thin; it is an act of will to stay focused: inwardly.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)

The paradox that is your life at the moment: the situations you find yourself in where there is no easy answer - particularly in your relationships. It is the quest of Virgo to maintain your personal integrity while at the same time being present for the people around you. Yet this can be extremely challenging when you are growing, becoming and emerging so quickly and with such inner determination that there is no stopping you. Right now is a time for both. You may feel like you need to manage both sides of a certain equation. Rather, it will help if you're aware of everyone's situation, and what they are and are not saying; or at least track their silence.

Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)

You're currently witness to the weirdest show on Earth. I trust you're doing your best not to get dragged in. This is mostly an emotional matter, one of not getting hooked into the dramas that others are using as survival tools. Yet everyone has a right and I think a responsibility, to be concerned. People are antsy these days, and some you know are a little mean. It will help if you keep sidestepping any volatility and not let it knock you off-balance. You may not be aware of the amount of energy you emit; you may not be aware of your magnetic power. While you are observing how people treat you, be conscious of any undue demands you may feel entitled to make. Be diplomatic with others while you're being honest with yourself.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

The disembodiment of the digital plane has intensified the meaning and experience of any sincere, in-person human contact. One might think this makes it more available, but it will not, and we are slowly being driven mad by emotional asphyxia. There can be no agenda in order to have honest contact; no quest for power. The willingness to be vulnerable is as necessary as being present for whomever you are with. You may get a glimpse into what has been bothering you as the Full Moon lights up the inner sanctum of your chart - a place that you rarely care to look, but will soon see in a gentle light. You are a water sign; you exist as part of the deep element, and must learn how to feel each movement and point of contact.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

Jupiter, the Sagittarius planet, will be in the sign Cancer for about three more months. For you, this is a study in partnership, resources and agreements. Use this season as an opportunity to get these things right. You have every advantage and are likely to be able to find deep points of contact with someone close to you. Do what you can to settle debts and ensure that your financial assets are secure. Money is a difficult topic to talk about for nearly anyone - and

most people avoid it. But it is often the point of contention in any partnership, so I suggest you get the discussion going. I think any shaky feeling you have about existence will find some relief in devoting yourself to creative activity and self-care. The planets describe you being involved in life and taking pleasure in what you do.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

The twin conjunctions that have become new cosmic cycles are taking place in the angle of your chart associated with home, grounding and security. How are you feeling amidst the turbulence of the planet? Are you feeling safe? Are you feeling grounded and stable in yourself? You may be feeling like a new person is emerging from within you. The power of these transits cannot be overestimated. You exist within yourself in a deep place, and there has been much mysterious transformation that you have not caught up with. So if you feel like staying in your proverbial shell or hobbit hole, honor that need. Look around and you will see that very few people on the planet are grounded in themselves. The entry of Uranus into Gemini, for you associated with work and wellness, will provide some new reminders of who you are and what you're capable of.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)

You are about to experience a burst of energy as Uranus enters your fellow air sign Gemini. The past year or so has been a nonstop experience of rethinking and revising many facets of who you are and how you think of yourself, and the pressure has been full-on. Uranus changing signs will give you an outlet for your ideas, and the willingness to take chances. You will feel like you have the opportunity to express your brilliance in new ways. However, neither Saturn in Aries nor Uranus in Gemini bestow sensitivity or empathy. (A word too often used, empathy means the ability to feel the pain or the circumstances of others.) The problem with genius in any form, minor or bold, is that it is usually interested only in itself. Uranus comes with all kinds of amazing developments, but the human cost is rarely if ever measured. Sharing really is caring, and intelligence can lead to sincere understanding.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Recent planetary activity in your sign has been a real case of agita lately. How many times have you lost your phone? The recent Mercury retrograde was a monster, and it's still gradually working out - take it slow. Meanwhile, Mars is finally making its way out of your sign and into Aries. Early in the month is a good time to complete important tasks that require both focus and creativity. The next big move is Uranus entering Gemini, which is your home and security angle. There are a lot of ways to read it. You may be questioning your living arrangement; if it's not copacetic, now is the time to make it so. We live in an increasingly isolated world, and your home can be a center of social activity. Such would make productive use of this transit, which lasts seven years and connects to many other developments that will give you the power to shape your life your way. But you have to do it - so take the initiative.



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New Poetry Book by Jessika Satori

Jessika Satori's newly released publication, "ROY G BIV: Astonishing Poems of Science and Spirituality" is a compilation of poetry, organized by disciplines of science, such as astrophysics, geology and engineering.

ROY G BIV, a mnemonic of the colors of the rainbow, highlights the meetings of the author with eminent scientists such as Carl Sagan, Edgar Mitchell, and Roald Fryxell. Other poems celebrate science education, wonders of the natural world, spirituality and memoir. Some were written on Vashon, such as *Billions and Billions: I wrote Carl Sagan a Letter and He Wrote Me Back*, written near Frog Holler on Wax Orchard Road, and *We Had a Talk About Your Brains*, written on the ferry from Fauntleroy to Vashon.

Of *Wrinkles* Jessika notes: "This poem was written in Island Center Forest during a poetry workshop by Margaret Roncone. I can't divulge the location of the poem's story, but readers will know where by the last line."

Wrinkles

"Breathe deep even if it means you wrinkle." Aimee Nezhukumatahil

Breathe deep even if it means you wrinkle.

Wrinkles are life's rivers that mark your time on earth.

You've lived,

You're living!

Don't waste time with us. I mean, come visit but please, don't dawdle!

Stay the length of a bird's song,

tell us the truth, maybe some lies.

Leave your offering of daisies, dahlias, or daffodils,

smile at a memory we shared,

then go.

Leave this place where the stones mark us.

Live your life!

And—don't worry about wrinkles,

we never do.



Living in the Chicken Coop

Part of a memoir

By Suzanna Leigh

It all came crashing down in early February.

There was magic, living in the chicken coop on Maury Island. There were still a few cabbages in the big garden in December, when five year-old James and I moved in with Davey, Phil, and Phil's girlfriend.

There was no electricity; we cooked on an old blue camp stove. Dinners after dark, we gathered around the table with light from the kerosene lantern reaching only as far as our faces. It was cozy. A wood fire in the 50-gallon drum kept the room warm in the evenings. The bare wood walls and oriental rug on the floor gave the place a homey feeling when daylight filtered through the windows. We felt like pioneers, pumping water with the old iron hand pump from the well a few feet up the hill. Even trudging through the snow to the outhouse was an adventure. I loved it.

True, it was cold in the mornings. Water left in the sink overnight was frozen in the morning. I slept with my clothes under the covers to keep them warm enough to dress in. We ate our oatmeal quickly before heading out for the day. Davey and Phil cut cord wood and sold it by the truckload uptown or in the city. I took a hot shower at my friend Lindy's house in town before heading to the nursing home to cook for the old people. We still had a nursing home on the Island then, before it was torn down to build the Care Center, which has now gone out of business and is being remodeled for a new purpose.

James stayed with Lindy while I worked.



The coop was solid and clean; I doubt it ever had chickens in it. And it was spacious. The back room was as big as the living area and used only for storage. Set on a hill in the woods, the front door was level with the ground while the back hung over the slope and was held up with poles, leaving space for chickens and goats under it. Perfect for the farm I always wanted. This is where I am, I thought, so this is where I will have my farm and goats.

We spent Christmas there with little or no celebration, just a small cedar tree I believe we cut across the road, or perhaps the guys brought it out of the woods. In early February, Davey decided to insulate the walls, so he began nailing up blankets.

And then we were asked to leave. I never did find out why.

That night, Davey and I went uptown, Davey to the tavern, and me to Lindy's house a few doors down. Davey got drunk. Lindy read me a letter from our friend Ananda, who was in Hawaii. Lindy and I decided we needed to go to Hawaii.

I wanted to be warm.

I wanted to go back to school and finish my college education, which was interrupted when I got pregnant with James and married his father, a low-ranking Navy man (perhaps I will tell you THAT story someday).

I wanted a closer walk with God. I wanted to raise my son in a Christian Community.

James had been born in Pearl City, on Oahu. I had started my college education at the University of Hawaii. Hawaii called me, and I wanted to go back.

Davey told me I could store my stuff at the chicken coop, but I declined. Another boyfriend gave me contact information for his brother in Honolulu. I gave my notice at the nursing home, sold Ladybug to Davey, and with my last paycheck, bought plane tickets for me and James. I had \$200 in my pocket.

We ended up staying almost a year in Hawaii.

Our Apologies!

Last month, a section of Jessika's poem, *Looking*, was inadvertently left off. Thus, we are reprinting the poem - in full. Enjoy!

The following poem was published in "Grief Age Love", a new anthology written by over 30 Vashon poets, and edited by Jeanie Okimoto. *Looking* was written in Burton, on a bus ride from Tahlequah.

Looking

Looking over my blue denim'd shoulder
My conclusion is:
I have stayed in too many places for far too long.

This applies to:
the slurry of sour relationships
funky financial promises
shady deals by devious ne'er-do-wells.

Yet,
there have been times of
supple sweetness:

The mountains climbed when
everyone said I couldn't - or shouldn't.

Holding families close when a loved one
lay dying.

Saluting the California Sequoias.

Turning around,
I look forward to the expansive
universe still in my soft yet
steadfast grasp.

Times of laughing
times of crying
I'd still choose living
over dying.

Island poetry in these pages

How about yours?



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Dr. Jessika Satori is an educator,
entrepreneur, poet, consultant
and adventurer.

**Book reading: Thursday
April 16, Vashon Bookshop,
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For more information, contact:
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Let There Be Light!

Living in
the Chicken Coop

Illustration by
Suzanna Leigh



As we know,
There are known knowns.
There are things we know we know.

We also know
There are known unknowns.
That is to say
We know there are some things
We do not know.

But there are also unknown
unknowns.
The ones we don't know
We don't know.

~ Donald Rumsfeld