



DARALYN ANDERSON PHOTO

The accident took place at 188th Street and Vashon Highway, on Wednesday, Feb. 16 .

Flaming mail truck stops traffic on Vashon Highway

By ELIZABETH SHEPHERD
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A postal truck burst into flames at 188th Street and Vashon Hwy. in the mid-afternoon of Wednesday, Feb. 16, after an accident involving another vehicle.

Despite the dramatic conflagration, no known injuries resulted from the accident, according to Vashon Fire Chief Charles Krimmert, who described the fire district's response. King County Sheriff's officers also responded to the accident.

Krimmert said that initial first-responders en route to the accident

noticed a "thermal column," at a distance, rising from the scene of the accident, and called for a fire truck to be added to the response.

The fire truck arrived and began to douse the flames at 3:37 p.m., he said, with the fire completely put out by 3:42 p.m.

Postal spokesperson Ernst Swanson told The Beachcomber that the postal truck had been rear-ended prior to the fire. Some of the parcels on the truck were damaged and destroyed, he said, and other mail and advertising mail got wet. He added that

any mail that could be salvaged would be delivered. The truck, he said, was a complete ruin.

Swanson said he did not know the age of the truck involved in the accident, but that generally, post office vehicles are kept in service for a number of years.

Later in the afternoon, a Beachcomber reporter drove by the scene of the accident, as dusk fell, and observed two postal employees clearing the area around the truck of charred mail and putting it into a postal bin. The entire interior of the truck appeared to be blackened and charred.

Sleep

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and no happy hours longer than an actual hour. I'm sure those rules help millions of people who are not me, but wasting time on them meant I was getting older. An estimated 40 to 70% of older adults have chronic sleep problems, and I began to worry that worrying about sleep was feeding the dragon.

I started trying alternative treatments I found on the internet.

The following is a real list of my experiments, each technique attempted a minimum of seven times: CBD, yoga nidra (aka progressive relaxation that included body parts I had previously considered to be insensate), acupressure point tapping, valerian (and other herbal remedies I'd endorse as...ways to spend money), marijuana (which didn't put me to sleep but did make lying awake more interesting), three weights of

comforters, five different sheet fabrics, 25 brands of pillows (including a brief stint wearing one belted onto my stomach to keep me on my back), binaural music (two low-hertz tones of different frequencies played simultaneously), ASMR (sounds of whispering, paper tearing, water sprinklers, etc.), and even unboxing therapy (where you watch or listen as people open things they ordered by mail). Most of these things worked on some nights, but not on most. (Your mileage may vary. I hope it does.)

I have made a few happy discoveries. SleepPhones are a pair of wafer-thin speakers embedded into a headband that can double as an eye mask. The Bluetooth model is nice if you're a fellow dervisher. I use them for the playlists I've created on an app called Insight Timer that has a broad (some might say too broad) selection of guided meditations and nature sounds along with music and ASMR tracks. It's free, but I like it enough to pay the \$60 per year subscription fee.

If I'd rather be read to

sleep, there are podcasts like "Listen to Sleep," "Drift Off: Bedtime Stories," and "Nothing Much Happens" (which includes twenty-minute play-by-plays of someone going to buy a stamp). Many free versions are front-loaded with ads, so I fast-forward to get to the feature. Also good: really, really boring audiobooks.

When all else fails, I take two Nature's Bounty melatonin tablets (no other brand works, for some reason), turn on the box fan and play a half-hour of Solitaire on my night-filtered iPad.

I just said "when all else fails," but there is one last tool in my arsenal. I hesitate to mention it because...well...it's not for everyone. But if you've exhausted every other option, search YouTube for "Hypno-Toad 10 Hours." Even if you weren't a "Futurama" fan, you might be surprised how effective this can be!

Cindy Hoyt is a humorist who knows a thing or two about sleep — her upcoming novel, "Lucid," is about the effect dreaming can have on your waking life.

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