



KIM FARRELL PHOTO

The Vashon Sheepdog Classic, the largest event of its kind on the West Coast, has been presented on Vashon for more than a decade.

As sales pick up at Misty Isle, Sheepdog Classic is a casualty

BY ELIZABETH SHEPHERD
editor@vashonbeachcomber.com

The organizers of the Vashon Sheepdog Classic have announced that the popular event won't be held in 2022 because the owner of the pasture that has hosted the competition since its founding 12 years ago will no longer make the site available.

The news, coming last week, was a sad surprise to many on the island and beyond who supported and participated in the event for years and looked forward to its full return in 2022. The event was canceled due to the pandemic in 2020 and held as a handlers-only event in 2021.

See **HERD**, Page 12

COVID Update: Vashon experts monitoring Omicron situation

BY VASHONBePREPARED

Vashon's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and our Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) have been closely watching the evolving situation regarding the new Omicron variant, which was discovered in Puget Sound area patients this past weekend.

This first monitoring step, known as "situational awareness," lays the foundation for whatever local action might be needed in the coming months. Now that it is

clear that Omicron has come to our state, the teams will be looking at a range of factors, including rate of spread of the infection, the severity of disease, and the potential for slowing the disease with safety measures and vaccination.

"Getting information is the key to making good emergency management decisions," said Rick Wallace, manager of the EOC. "We are concerned about Omicron because that's the right thing to do

See **COVID**, Page 3

Fire commissions approve levy and budget, discuss staffing

BY ELIZABETH SHEPHERD
editor@vashonbeachcomber.com

Vashon Fire & Rescue's board of commissioners has approved its 2022 budget, along with a levy that will collect approximately \$5.3 million from property owners at the rate of approximately \$1.36 per \$1,000 in assessed property value.

The levy, approved at a Nov. 24 commissioners' meeting, will bring in approximately \$300,000 more than the district's 2021 levy, and fund virtually all of the district's expenses for 2022, which the new budget forecasts at slightly over \$5.1 million.

In all, total revenues for the district, including the levy, are forecast to bring about \$5.9 million into the district's coffers. Given the difference between projected

income and expenses, the budget calls for \$550,000 in revenue to be transferred to the district's four reserve funds set aside for general, fleet, facilities and equipment costs.

As of Oct. 31, these four reserve funds already collectively totaled approximately \$3.7 million — funds that Fire Chief Charles Krimmert and commissioners have repeatedly said are needed in case of major unforeseen expenses including the replacement of extremely costly equipment and vehicles.

According to budget documents, VIFR's 2022 budget will increase 8.9% from 2021, allowing increased spending in some expense categories.

See **FIRE**, Page 4

Winterfest returns to Vashon



PHOTO COURTESY JIM DIERS

Santa and Mrs. Claus greeted onlookers as they headed down the streets of Vashon via a festive red pickup truck on Saturday. More photos of Winterfest are featured on pg. 10.

BY JENNA DENNISON
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After a year hiatus from normal Winterfest traditions due to COVID-19, islanders gathered in town on Saturday, Dec. 4, for the return of the Santa parade followed by the lighting of Vashon's Christmas tree at Vashon Village.

Santa and Mrs. Claus, seated in the back of a festively decorated red pickup truck, were escorted down the parade path by a Vashon Island Fire & Rescue truck. The Clauses waved to those who had lined the candy-cane-filled streets, even in the midst of the steadily falling rain. Familiar Christmas tunes were pumped into the streets as the parade passed by.

Upon the parade's arrival at

Vashon Village, Santa and Mrs. Claus took photos with children and families, before the event's emcee, Vashon Chamber of Commerce board president Cheryl Lubbert, welcomed everyone in attendance to Winterfest.

Community members Bettie Edwards and Lynann Politte also made special holiday announcements to the community.

Edwards, along with the Clauses, reminded children that they can write Santa directly and receive a response back. Letters to Santa can be dropped off at the Vashon Bookshop, and letters must have a return address.

"All I see is the rooftops, so I need the address," said Santa.

Politte, the gallery director at Vashon Center for the Arts (VCA), reminded the community that all entries in VCA's Gingerbread

Contest are currently on display in the lobby of VCA. Community members can vote on their favorite entries, and the three winners will be awarded a \$100 Thriftway gift card.

After these announcements, the Christmas tree remained unlit. However, this would not be the case for long.

"The final, important thing to do is to ask Mr. and Mrs. Claus to light that tree," said Lubbert.

Santa, encouraging the crowd to cheer louder before lighting the tree, lit the Christmas tree up in shining, white lights.

The crowd at Winterfest was then led by Kevin Joyce and Rebekah Kuzma in a sing-a-long of "Deck the Halls," "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," and "Jingle Bells."

"The louder you sing, the more likely it is to snow," said Joyce.

NEWS BRIEFLY

Water District 19 discusses new plan

Water District 19 will hold a public meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 14 to present a draft of its 2020-2026 Water System Plan. The plan — now in draft form and being reviewed by the state Department of Health — examines the adequacy of the district's supplies to meet its customers' demand for water, and provides a blueprint for more than \$4 million in capital investment by the district over the next decade. According to the draft plan, the district aims to replace aging water mains, thereby reducing leakage and improving the quality of the water delivered to the 1,500 households and businesses that it serves. The meeting will take place at the District's offices, 17630 100th Ave. SW. Masks are required.

Holiday Mercado at the Sheffield Building

Comunidad Latina de Vashon will present "Noche de Luces," an outdoor Latino market, from 2 to 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11, in the Sheffield Building's parking lot at 18850 SW 103rd Ave. (See story, page 8.)

Morning Prayers at the Burton Community Church

All are welcome to join in the singing of morning prayers in a Benedictine style, from The Mundelein Psalter, also called "Liturgy of the Hours." Prayers will be offered from 6:30 to 7 a.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at Burton Community Church.

Contribute to Voice of Vashon

Voice of Vashon's Old Man Winter fundraising campaign, running

throughout December, helps fund the station's Emergency Alert System. To support this vital community service and community radio programming, donate at VoiceofVashon.org or send a check to VoV, P.O. Box 2397, Vashon.

Open Space Holiday Toy Swap

Open Space for Arts & Community will host its first annual Holiday Toy Swap from 12 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11. Islanders are encouraged to bring clean, lightly-used toys to tables set up in the Open Space lobby or shop for new toys to gift and enjoy. Note that the following will not be accepted: dirty, broken, ripped, chipped, ragged, chewed and marked items, baby gear (car seats, strollers, cribs, play yards), anything with missing parts or in disrepair, items with possible cutting, choking, or lead hazards. Oversized items may be accepted at the organizers' discretion.

Chum Run 2021 Scholarship Fundraiser

For the month of December, participate in the Vashon Park District's Chum Run to raise money for youth scholarships. This year's event is virtual and can be completed anywhere, anytime. The Park District has also added biking and swimming so more of the community can participate. Register at: runsignup.com/Race/WA/Vashon/vpdchumrun.

Garden Club Meeting

The Vashon-Maury Island Garden Club will hold their first in-person meeting at 9:30 a.m. Monday, Dec. 13 at the multi-purpose room at Bethel Church. Join to hear from guest speaker, Kim Cantrell from Little Bird Gardens, as well as from club experts. Garden Club meetings are open to the public, though all attendees must show proof of vaccination and wear masks.



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Tax Parcels 122202-9051, 122202-9072 & 122202-9032: Three wonderful 4.82 acre level lots zoned Residential RA-550 in the heart of Vashon Island. The parcels are heavily treed with merchantable timber. A great location to build your dream home within a great Puget Sound Island Community.

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Cheryl Dalton
206/ 714-7281

Vashon Healthcare District unveils new levy and budget



IMAGE COURTESY VASHON HEALTHCARE DISTRICT
The Vashon Healthcare District commissioners passed a \$1.95 million levy and budget for 2022 at their Nov. 17 meeting.

BY JENNA DENNISON
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vashonbeachcomber.com

The Vashon Health Care District commissioners passed a \$1.95 million levy and budget for 2022 at their Nov. 17 meeting.

The new levy, up less than \$5,000 from the 2021 levy, includes a new levy rate of 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value on properties. In comparison, the 2021 levy, collected 58 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Because Vashon's assessed value has increased significantly, the taxes property owners pay to the district will see little change. Some islanders may pay slightly higher or lower property taxes to the district depending on the type

of property they own.

The budget anticipates \$2.04 million in revenues and \$1.73 million in expenses. The difference is budgeted to pay down a loan the district received in January 2020 from King County to pay its expenses before it could collect property taxes.

The district's largest 2022 expense is its subsidy to Sea Mar to operate the Sunrise Ridge clinic. The subsidy has not changed and has remained the same as 2021's at \$1.5 million.

The other significant source of revenue for the district is \$91,000 paid to the district by Sea Mar for the rent on the Sunrise Ridge clinic building. The district then passes on payments to Sunrise Ridge Health Services, as the

district leases the building from Sunrise Ridge.

The remainder of the district's expenses, subtracting clinic rent, will go towards administrative expenses. This totals \$137,000, which is up about \$4,000 from the 2021 budget. Most of those funds are allocated to salary, benefits and payroll taxes for the district's two part-time employees.

Commissioner Eric Pryne stressed that the new levy will not affect the tax collections of other island districts.

For instance, in 2021, the Vashon Park District experienced funding woes when higher levies than expected were passed by the Health Care and Fire Districts. However, new legislation was passed in April that prevents

this same thing from happening in 2022.

According to the Washington state Constitution, property taxpayers cannot pay more than 1%, or \$10, per \$1,000 of their assessed property value in regular-levy property taxes.

Of the \$10, up to \$5.90 is set aside for cities, counties and most special purpose districts. If their levies, in aggregate, exceed \$5.90, the tax collections of districts given the lowest priority in law are trimmed until the limit is reached, a process known as "pro-rationing."

That's what happened to the Vashon Park District in 2021. However, a bill was passed by the Legislature in April that moves the district out of the \$5.90 structure.

COVID

From Page 1

— be concerned and gather information. But, for all we know, this threat might end up like so many other variants we've seen, not as serious as it seemed at first. There's no way to determine the nature or size of the risk yet."

It is important to note that there is no diagnostic test for any of the COVID variants such as Delta or Omicron. Variant identification requires a sophisticated sequencing procedure in a laboratory.

Three Key Omicron Questions

To assess the Omicron threat, experts around the world, the state Department of Health, and our own Medical Reserve Corps experts are asking three key questions.

- How easily does Omicron spread? The speed of spread makes a difference, because a slower spread would give us all more time to develop response strategies. Omicron has already been detected in around two dozen countries, including the United States and Canada.

- How sick does Omicron make people? Some early reports suggest it is mild, but only a few hundred cases have been detected so far out of the world population of nearly eight billion people. That's not enough data to answer this question.
 - Do our vaccines work for the Omicron variant? If they work, how well do they work? Do the current vaccines at least prevent serious cases of COVID?
- "We hope there will be a lot more information on the answers to these three questions in just a few weeks," said Dr. Zach Miller, an infectious disease expert with the Medical Reserve Corps. "Just think how much better equipped we are today compared to the early months of the pandemic. We have surveillance tools, prevention techniques such as vaccines, lots of advantages we didn't have back then. Scientists are working around the clock and around the world to sequence the variant and study the significance of the many mutations embodied in Omicron. So, instead of waiting months for information, we will have a better sense of things in just a few weeks."

What Can You Do About

- Omicron Right Now?**
- Vashon Medical Reserve Corps has advice in several areas— things you can do immediately to protect yourself and everyone around you. These action steps work not only for Omicron but also for Delta, currently the most common COVID variant.
- Physical barriers make excellent infection protection. No matter the variant, we know them to be extremely effective: Mask, distance, and wash hands often.
 - Another form of distancing makes special sense right now, because it's the holiday season when people are traveling and gathering indoors because of the cold and wet weather. Think twice about attending any sort of gathering, and if you choose to go, take all the precautions described above. Ask if others in the group are vaccinated and enjoy small gatherings if the answer is yes.
 - Even at this early stage, most experts say existing vaccines will provide some level of protection against Omicron, even if the degree of protection cannot yet be measured. We already know that the vaccines work against















See COVID, Page 11

Have an announcement you'd like to share with the community?

Vashon-Maury
FYI

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COMUNIDAD LATINA DE VASHON

Noche de Luces

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MLS# 1867110 \$1,100,000

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Vashon man charged with sexual assault

BY ELIZABETH SHEPHERD
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A 43-year-old Vashon man was charged with third-degree rape, a felony, on Nov. 16, after he allegedly

assaulted a 19-year-old woman at a Vashon Island home where both he and the woman were present. Luciano Alvarado-Fuentes, who according to the documents and local sources goes by the first name of

Freddy or Fredy, was released on Nov. 13 after pleading not guilty and posting \$30,000 bail, according to charging documents. The King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office had sought a bail amount of \$75,000. Alvarado-Fuentes'

lawyer, Brett Purtzer, could not be reached for comment. In addition to bail, the State requested that the court enter a sexual assault protection order protecting the victim. This type of order can require an alleged

perpetrator to stay away from the victim or places where the victim works or lives and have no further contact with the victim. According to the charging documents, the assault took place on the evening of Nov. 12 at Alvarado-Fuentes' home on the north end of the island. Charging papers said the assault began after the

victim was awakened from sleep. Alvarado-Fuentes, who works as a landscaper on Vashon, does not appear to have a criminal record, according to a document filed by the prosecutor. His next court date is a case-setting hearing, scheduled for Dec. 14 in the King County Courthouse.

Fire

From Page 1

These include an almost \$19,000 increase in spending on testing and hiring of employees and just over \$363,000 in increased salary costs for firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). Line items for overtime allowance, retirement funding and payroll taxes are correspondingly up in the 2022 budget as well. For 2022, building and grounds costs and expenses are projected to decrease by about \$27,000; disaster preparation costs and expenses are also projected to decrease by \$10,500. According to VIFR's working budget document, which tracks and compares annual income and expenses for the department from 2016 through 2022, the single biggest expense for the department is personnel.

In 2022, personnel costs will comprise approximately 78.5% of the district's budget — with "personnel" defined as all employees, not only first-responders. VIFR's current paid staff stands at 15 full-time trainers and first-responders, eight part-time first responders and seven administrative personnel including the fire chief, assistant chief and facilities and maintenance workers. A total of 26 volunteers, including firefighters, EMTs and support personnel, also currently augment the district's force. At the two most recent commissioner meetings, representatives of the volunteer force have played a vocal role, with commissioners and the fire chief expressing their thanks and vowing support for the volunteer force. But at the same time, volunteer firefighter/EMT Lizzy Corliss has asked the board and administration to investigate how other fire

districts incentivize volunteers, suggesting that there are many resources to explore which could provide an improvement to the way VIFR works with its volunteer force. Another issue affecting all first responders including volunteers has also been discussed at the past two meetings — an increase in the number of "Zone 1 callbacks" in the past year. The term refers to the process by which off-duty firefighters and volunteers are called to return to the station when all on-duty personnel are engaged in calls, emptying the station of first responders to answer additional calls that may come in. Zone 1 callbacks also happen in the case of major incidents requiring a high number of first responders. At the Nov. 24 meeting, commissioner Camille Staczek reported that there have been more than 40 such Zone 1 callbacks in the past five

months, disproportionately affecting the volunteer force. She said the number of callbacks might be used as a metric to suggest VIFR is currently understaffed with career firefighters — a position with which Krimmert disagreed. However, commissioner Brigitte Schran-Brown agreed with Staczek and went further, casting the board's only "no" vote to the proposed levy and budget, saying that it needed to include a more robust plan to hire more full-time firefighters. Schran-Brown, whose commissioner term ends in December, also objected to line items in the budget in the revenues section for fees that would be charged to the insurers of those assisted in vehicle accident responses and structural fire responses. Although \$0 was entered for these line items, Schran-Brown said that even having the items appear on the budget sent a bad message to community members whose property tax dollars already well supported the fire department. Earlier in the meeting, Krimmert announced that VIFR had extended conditional job offers for four full-time firefighters positions, and that of those four offers,

three had been conditionally accepted. Three of the positions were new; the other was to fill a position vacated by a firefighter whose employment ended due to Jay Inslee's vaccination mandate. Two of the full-time offers, he said, were made to current VIFR part-time firefighters, opening up those positions as well. The board also discussed the hiring process to fill the post of the district's assistant chief, following Bob Larson's retirement, which will be effective Jan. 1. The process is expected to take three to six months, Krimmert said, and will likely involve hiring an outside consultant — the same head-hunting firm, Prothman, which assisted the district in Krimmert's hire as chief in 2016-17. Line items in the 2021 budget report for outside consultants was noticeably up in the past year, with VIFR spending almost \$34,000 for legal services in 2021, as of Oct. 30 — an amount 305% over the budgeted allotment of \$11,000. At the Nov. 26 meeting, Krimmert attributed that amount to costs incurred obtaining legal advice in contract and other negotiations with the firefighter's

union, as well as to issues that arose from Gov. Jay Inslee's proclamation that first responders be vaccinated against COVID-19 — a mandate Krimmert himself publicly opposed for weeks before deciding to become vaccinated in response to it. Legal counsel was also required to deal with another incident in September when both Larson and Krimmert were sanctioned by commissioners over misconduct involving a discourteous interaction with a member of the public. Professional services were also over budget from 2021, as of Oct. 31, at \$74,000 versus \$40,000 budgeted for the year — with the bulk of these services required for the sale of the Bennedsen house, owned by the department, which netted revenues of \$850,000 for VIFR. A final topic up for discussion at the meeting was a first look at a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy template, as mandated by federal executive order 14042. Adoption of the policy, which district secretary Rebecca Pollock said was recommended by the department's legal counsel, will be further addressed by the commissioners at future meetings.

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Go to: vippp.org to fill out an adoption application.

The Countess. Russian Blue, Female, 4 yrs. old

The Countess is a royal beauty. When her owner passed away recently, she found herself back at VIPP. The Countess is very sweet and friendly with a large purr for such a petite girl. She has been in a quiet home with an adult and she would likely do best in the same kind of environment. Contact VIPP if you have a suitable throne for her majesty. The Countess came back to VIPP on 11/27/21.

Bucket. DMH Tabby, Male, 2 yrs. old

Bucket has a Bucket List for his new family. He is looking for a home with lots of love and an occasional lap for him to snuggle in. He is looking for fun in his new home—his choice of toys is simple, boxes, bags and even buckets. An experienced pet owner is best for this guy, since he is prone to urinary blockages and needs to be on a special diet. Indoor home only. If you can fulfill Bucket's list, he is ready and waiting. Bucket came to VIPP on 11/5/21.

Head out to a lively Latino marketplace this weekend

BY ELIZABETH SHEPHERD
editor@vashonbeachcomber.com

Comunidad Latina de Vashon will present “Noche de Luces,” an outdoor Latino market, from 2 to 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11, in the Sheffield Building’s parking lot at 18850 SW 103rd Ave.

It’s a chance to support local Latino businesses and entrepreneurs on Vashon, in a festive, outdoor atmosphere that includes arts, music and a delicious variety of Latin American food.

The event is the third seasonal Mercado presented by Comunidad Latina de Vashon and organized in large part by youth and adult leaders of the organization. This summer, a Mercado was presented at the same location.

All ages are welcome to the event, which will be held outdoors and inside open tents. Attendees can also warm up by dancing some salsa or cumbias, or by finding a spot next to an outdoor heater.

Cindi Hernandez, who is part of the group, said that she hopes islanders will attend and partake of everything offered up at the event.

“Ever wonder what the holidays are like in our culture?” Hernandez asked. “Come celebrate with us, the spirit of Christmas — from twinkling lights to amazing homemade food that’s truly comforting, and crafts made with love, like my abuelita’s hug.”

At the event, Hernandez said, islanders won’t be able to resist moving their hips to the music that is being played on loudspeakers and also be able to share in the delight of kids lining up for the piñata.

“Come support the Latino community’s brilliance and hard, dedicated work,” she said. “Everyone is welcome, mi casa su casa.”



JIM DIERS PHOTOS

The upcoming marketplace presented by Comunidad Latina de Vashon is the second of 2021. This summer, another outdoor marketplace at the Sheffield Building also offered food, gifts, and community fun.

Comunidad Latina de Vashon works within a framework of consensus to celebrate and support the vibrant and accomplished youth and families of the island’s Latino community, building community leadership and power.

For years, the group’s efforts have been seen in lively ways including participation in Vashon’s Strawberry Festival Parade and other community events. But Comunidad also works behind the scenes in many ways to support Latino families on Vashon and beyond. During the pandemic, Comunidad has organized vaccination education, creating bilingual infographics with the Union of Concerned Scientists, which are now being used

nationwide.

In response to the impacts of COVID-19, the group also did outreach for local rent assistance efforts and created its own programs for economic development and transformation.

Comunidad’s youth-led programs include lively marketplaces, such as one to be offered on Dec. 11, get-out-the-vote efforts, and peer-to-peer tutoring and support services.

For years, with efforts increasing during the pandemic, Comunidad has also advocated for the improvement of equity practices within Vashon public schools.

Find out more about the group and “Noche de Luces,” at facebook.com/ComunidadLatinaVashon.



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EDITORIAL

A call for civil discourse

Journalism should be unbiased and factual, and we work hard to present local news content in this way, making sure that each of the many facts we state in our small weekly newspaper is accurate.

For instance, in this week's paper, you'll read stories about complex real estate transactions, the budgets of public agencies and a serious criminal charge against a local man. We've painstakingly fact-checked these articles with official sources.

We know we need to get things right — our credibility is at stake each time we go to press. And when we err, as we inevitably do from time to time, we print corrections, because facts are the essence of what we do here.

This newspaper also provides a format for opinion in the form of editorials written by our staff in the voice of the newspaper. We always strive to take a measured tone in these editorials and reflect the values of our community rather than our own personal opinions.

We also solicit thoughtful commentaries by community members, expressing a number of viewpoints which include both progressive and conservative voices. This week's paper is a case in point, with opinion pieces by local faith and environmental leaders. And of course, in time-honored tradition, we also print letters from community members.

This week's letters to the editor section show how thorny a task that can be.

We always have and always will print letters with strong opinions from a variety of viewpoints, but we must draw the line at letters that contain factual misinformation.

Even considering the time constraints presented by our two-person newsroom staff and our heavy workload, we attempt to work with letter writers to fact-check their contributions and correct factual misinformation and verifiable falsehoods. If letter writers decline to remove factual errors, we have no choice but to reject their letters for publication.

As readers might imagine, throughout 2020 and 2021, we have received a number of letters that contain factual misinformation about COVID-19 and COVID vaccines. It would be highly irresponsible of us to amplify, in any way, this type of harmful misinformation. But all misstatements of facts are harmful in that they chip away at truth.

Opinions are different from facts, of course.

Letter writers this week have taken exception to a letter published last week, which objected to a recent Beachcomber editorial that encouraged islanders to ask their healthcare providers and those who provide personal care if they are vaccinated against COVID-19. The letter writer, a longtime and well-known islander, compared The Beachcomber's stance to the actions of the German Third Reich.

We printed the letter after working with the letter writer to excise misinformation about HIPAA privacy laws, but realizing that his opinion, no matter how objectionable it might be to some, was simply that: an opinion. For all we knew, some other islanders might even agree with it.

But this week, we've heard from letter writers who felt his opinion crossed a line. We can see their point. But we also well remember printing extremely heated and even hyperbolic letters from those who opposed the Trump presidency. It seemed fair to us to print this letter writer's similarly somewhat purple prose.

In any case, in the spirit of supporting the emotional and social health of our community, we would now like to respond to this incident with a call for more civil discourse on these pages. This isn't social media, where it's possible to fire off a response and hit "send" without thinking. This is your local newspaper. Your friends, neighbors and their kids read it. More than that, our newspaper is a point of record for Vashon. Please thoughtfully consider what you write to us.

We live in tense times. We have all seen the harm

See **EDITORIAL**, Page 7

A Place for Sentimentality

It's that time of year again: a time for lights, garlands, trees, menorahs, peppermint mochas, exhausted Amazon workers, and iconoclasm.

We live in an age of conflict. It's no secret. We have the defenders of the old ways, whom we call conservatives. And we have the visionaries of a new tomorrow, whom we call progressives. They tussle each other on the internet, on Senate floors, in popular media, and occasionally even in the streets. One group looks to the past with longing. The other would like to see much of it burned down. It's easy to be sympathetic, and also to be angry, with both sides.

When it comes to the holidays, I'm a sentimental-ist. Maybe that means I'm a conservative, too. Growing up debt-poor from my mother's health, our family always cherished Christmas. It was, as the imagery suggests, a season of light in the darkness. We were Christians (as I still am), and the religious connotations were extremely significant. It was not until adulthood that I learned some Christians, of a particular stripe, avoided Christmas like the plague—considering it a mixture of paganism, Catholicism (to them, a bad thing), and greed.



MIKE IVASKA

I also knew, as a child, that not everyone celebrated Christmas. But as far as I was aware, growing up in Idaho in the 1980s, everyone either celebrated Christmas or Hanukkah. So we were all united in celebration, gift-giving, and lights.

Of course, as we grow up, we learn how life really works. Much of our emphasis on gifts, it turns out, really is just the feeding of greed. Late evenings shopping, and nice dinners out, might mean jobs for our neighbors—but

See **IVASKA**, Page 7

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

■ BEACHCOMBER LETTER

Letter did not encourage respectful, dignified conversation

In the Dec. 2 Beachcomber, "Luke" Lukoskie begins the second paragraph of his opinion piece stating that "The Beachcomber has become an instrument echoing the German Reich: Take down people who aren't like us." He continues by invoking an image of bodies carted away from the gas chambers. This is not the common sense language that honors divisions within a community and works to create the possibility for respectful and dignified conversations across deep divisions of belief, opinion and perception.

I take umbrage at the comparison of The Beachcomber to the German Reich and at the unnecessary mention of the gas chambers which invoke the horrors of hatred and genocide. Unfounded, hyperbolic comparisons and dire warnings of this nature have no place in civil conversation. Instead, they shut down opportunities for what is most needed in these troubled times — genuine dialogue that encompasses well-chosen words, open-minded listening, and respect for differences.

Merna Ann Hecht

Rhetoric was too harmful to print

Last week, The Beachcomber printed a letter in which the writer, W M "Luke" Lukoskie, compared the idea of "economically shunn[ing]" unvaccinated people to "the German Reich: Take down people who aren't like us. We are not carting away people from the gas chambers. But it all starts with the belief that some are lesser

humans." I'd like to encourage the writer, and all The Beachcomber's readers, to really reflect on whether it's valid to compare vaccination during a global pandemic to the Holocaust. In reality, it is a tired and disgusting repetition of antivax dogma so wrapped up in its own misguided self-righteousness that it thinks responding to a public health crisis is on par with Nazi atrocities. When we make such comparisons, whether in a letter to the editor or on the TV programs or social media we consume, we open the door to extreme ideologues that take advantage of our implicit acceptance of the analogy. I endorse the right to free speech, and I believe that local media should provide opportunities for community members to express their beliefs and opinions. But rights come with responsibilities: it is irresponsible to provide a platform for harmful rhetoric such as Lukoskie's.

Lindsey Gay

Agree with letter writer

We will be canceling our subscription to The Beachcomber after decades of support since it refuses to provide a balanced view of the "news." News is not presented in an unbiased fashion and is often fraught with opinion. News should be just that, news. Even letters to the editor are censored as I know from personal experience. Additionally, it appears some people are more worthy of having their letters published than others presenting almost identical messages. Case in point, Mr. Lukoskie's letter in the Dec. 2 issue with which we totally agree. My husband sent in a letter with a much less controversial tone yet it was refused. The Beachcomber is a private entity and as such many might point out, can run the paper as it wants. True enough. We will just be expressing our right to disagree with it by no longer supporting it.

Michelle Harvey

The absurdity of living with greenhouse gases

Reading a historian last week stimulated some ironic thoughts: In his 1921 edition of "The Story of Mankind," Hendrik Van Loon commented on heat engines and methods used to generate electricity. Admitting that he knew nothing about machinery, he opined on these heat engines as ugly, loud, dusty and dirty, and gobbling up large quantities of coal.

In contrast, his aestheticism encouraged him to prefer electric motors charged by water power. Why? Because it was a "... clean and companionable servant of mankind" while the heat engine, that marvel of the 18th century, was "... filling the world with ridiculous smoke-stacks, dust and soot, fed with coal mined at great inconvenience and risk to thousands of people."

So, how have we advanced since 1921? Versions of those original heat engines still propel most of our motor vehicles, and more elaborate versions, installed in large power plants, generate most of our electricity. The vehicle engines burn petroleum products. The generator plants burn coal or natural gas in boilers, creating steam to run turbines while spewing heat and greenhouse gases out their stacks. These inefficient systems have been the primary source of our nation's energy for more than a century.

Had Van Loon known more about the world of science, he might have mentioned Albert Einstein's 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics, given for describing the



WARD CARSON

photoelectric effect (in 1905) — the physical phenomena at work behind the solar panels of today. Imagine if we had followed Van Loon's suggestion, dumped the heat engines and gone instead straight to boats, trains, trucks, and personal vehicles, all charged with electricity from hydropower, wind turbines, and eventually solar panels. Would we have benefited by avoiding all those greenhouse gases? (A question I pose only because we know that the fossil fuels lobbyists are still claiming no!)

We've had our chances, and still do today, but instead these inefficient systems of the last century still fill our atmosphere with carbon dioxide. Such behavior fits Albert Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus* definition of "the absurd" — a quality or condition of existing in a meaningless and irrational world. (And, it should be added, a world where humans continue to contribute to their own extinction!)

Even today, with solar panel- and wind turbine-electricity costing less per kilowatt-hour than their fuel-burning competitors, our Puget Sound Energy utility burns more and more fossil fuels each year. According to our records, (see Fuel Mix Disclosure — Washington State Department of Commerce, at tinyurl.com/5n8ak54m) in 2007, when PSE was a publicly-traded company, 46% of its electricity came from burning coal or

See **CARSON**, Page 7

GREEN BRIEFS

Plastics — a good idea gone bad

Editor's Note: This commentary, by Susan McCabe with Tag Gornall and Steve Bergman, is part of an ongoing series of "Green Briefs" contributed to The Beachcomber by the Whole Vashon Project. Find out more at wholevashonproject.com.



SUSAN MCCABE

Every week, each American consumes a credit card's worth of plastic in the water we drink, the food we eat, and even the air we breathe. Plastics were introduced as far back as 1907 to solve problems but instead created a host of greater troubles. Today, plastics threaten life in the ocean and, some say, the very existence of humankind because of the dangerous "forever" chemicals used to create them. In fact, every piece of plastic ever created still exists, because the polymers used to make plastic break down into micro-plastic particles that can take up to 1,000 years to decompose.

Most plastics are made from oil, some from coal and natural gas — all fossil fuels. In 2012, experts estimated that 8% of oil production was used to make plastics. Today's usage has risen to 10%, largely due to the increased use of plastic during the COVID pandemic.

The manufacturing process uses excess energy, pollutes the air when it's burned, creates

microplastic particles, exposes workers to toxic chemicals and causes hormone disruptions in the general population.

What's more: Just 9% of the 35.7 million tons of plastic waste Americans create is recycled.

Packaging constitutes the majority of plastics in the waste stream — just 14% is recycled; 70% is landfilled and the remainder is incinerated.

By 2050, if we keep using plastic at our current rate, there'll be more plastic in the ocean than fish.

One estimate suggested that 107,000 to 730,000 tons of microplastics could be dumped on agricultural soils in the U.S. and Europe every year, compared to the 93,000 to 236,000 tons that enter the oceans.

All polyester garments include plastic; washing those fleece jackets causes microplastic particles to float into the air and water.

The "bad" plastics are those containing endocrine-disrupting biphenyl A or phthalates used to make hard, clear plastics like the linings in disposable food and drink containers and in shower curtains.

The "ugly" plastics are single use such as plastic bags and cups, which make up 50% of plastic production.

But the news about plastics isn't all bad. For

See **GREEN**, Page 7

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Editorial

From Page 6

done by angry and misinformed social media posts. We all have read about the rise of unruly and disruptive passengers on public transport in our nation, and about school board meetings attended by mobs of shouting parents.

We're fortunate that for the most part, Vashon is a civil, mannerly place. Let's keep our newspaper that way, too.

Ivaska

From Page 6

they also mean long and tiring evenings for those same neighbors, often poorly paid and away from their own homes serving us. All the shopping and giving create social expectations and the pressure to go into debt. And the packaging and cross-country shipping doesn't help the environment, either.

So maybe we should burn it all down. Maybe we should jettison the whole idea of Christmas. Or maybe we should make it so generic, and pack it with so much non-traditional imagery, that it really doesn't mean anything to anyone anymore. When even Santa Claus has become a symbol, in the minds of many, of white evangelical oppression, maybe the whole season really is a loss.

Maybe. But maybe we don't have to let go of Christmas. Maybe I don't have to let go of my sentimentality, either.

In the Christian tradition, the good things in life are looked at as both gifts and temptations. They are gifts if they

are used with gratitude, and are allowed to point beyond themselves to the source of good: God himself. They are temptations when treated as an end in themselves, or used as a means of harm.

If my love of Christmas causes me to resent my neighbor and her iconoclasm, then I'm misusing Christmas. I'm treating it as an end in itself, and am even weaponizing it for my little corner of the culture war. But if I treat it as what it is (for me as a Christian, at least)—a symbol of light entering darkness, of God offering friendship to humanity through Jesus—then Christmas (and all its warm, fuzzy feelings) can point beyond itself to something more.

It can point me to love and generosity. It can point me beyond darkness to light, and fill me with a desire for reconciliation and peace. The conservative in me can look back on the Christmases of yesteryear with joy and with sentiment, even as I join my progressive neighbor in looking forward to a better tomorrow.

Mike Ivaska is the pastor of Vashon Island Community Church.

Carson

From Page 6

natural gas. By 2015, after being purchased and privatized by an Australian investment firm, that percentage rose to 66%. By 2019, after years of political activism by the Sierra Club, some by our local Climate Action Group, and with help from our State legislators, that percentage

dropped to 60.

An improvement to be sure, but at this rate of change (around 0.01% per year), PSE may or may not reach 50% by 2025 (much of which depends upon the three, heavily lobbied, Commissioners of our State's Utility and Transportation Commission, which regulates PSE and ensure their profits.)

So, at their furtive rate of improvements (and with more help from recent legislation), PSE might offer a

50/50 fuel mix, half carbon-free and the rest from fossil-fueled electricity by 2025. Would this still force our absurd behavior? Yes, unless we drop PSE as our energy source, form a Public Utility District or a user-owned electricity co-op, and exercise our opportunity to purchase 100% carbon-free electricity from Bonneville Power.

Until then we are doomed to charge our electric vehicles, run our appliances,

and heat or cool our homes with fossil fuel-generated electricity, supporting PSE's irrational practice of dumping more and more greenhouse gases into our atmosphere.

Ward Carson holds a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Washington. An early member of the Vashon Climate Action Group, his interests include the energy sector of the US economy.

Green

From Page 6

instance, the market for recycled plastic is growing. Current research is yielding more ways to use plastic as raw material and in clean energy production.

"Good" plastics are those generally used in medical applications, cell phones, computers, construction components and others used to lighten vehicles, saving energy. Some grocery store chains are offering refillable packaging that can be used, returned and cleaned for reuse. Reusable grocery bags and refillable coffee mugs are making a triumphant return as panicked pandemic bans are lifted.

State and local governments are passing legislation aimed at reducing plastics use. Washington State's single-use plastic bag ban became law in October. Retail customers must provide their own reusable bags, or pay an \$.08 charge for paper or reusable plastic bags.

Washington State's legislature is among the most progressive in the US, working on and passing

multiple laws aimed at reducing waste, supporting clean energy development and promoting land conservation. Zero Waste Washington hosts a website outlining pending and passed legislation at zerowastewashington.org/legislative-work. The site includes opportunities to support this legislation with a few simple clicks.

That brings us to what we can do to make a dent in the damage plastics are doing to the Earth.

Stop buying bottled water! It's more than 2000 times more expensive than tap water and it's less regulated in most parts of the US. Seventeen million barrels of oil are used to make plastic bottles every year.

Other steps you can take fall under the four R's — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refuse.

Eat fresh foods to avoid plastic packaging. Buy in bulk and from our Farmers' Market. Bring your own reusable grocery bags, bulk food containers and

produce bags. Stick with bottled wine rather than boxed. Store food in glass jars and Pyrex containers instead of Ziploc bags. Use reusable water bottles; drink soda from glass bottles. Use cotton or hemp shower curtains, bar shampoo and conditioner, make your own toothpaste; use cloth diapers.

Check out these tips and more on page 87 of The

Whole Vashon Catalog (www.wholevashonproject.com/catalog). And write to manufacturers, demanding that they be responsible for disposing of the waste they create.

Now, play a plastics awareness game — try to spend a day without plastic or save all the plastic waste your family creates in one week in a laundry basket ... or two.



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Thankful & Grateful!

We are so thankful for the generous donations that family, friends and neighbors gave towards Shirley Burton's roof project. She has her new roof! We couldn't have done this without the support of wonderful people in our community like you. We raised enough money to get the roof completed and have money left over to give donations to both the Vashon Food Bank and World Vision as requested by Shirley. She is grateful and humbled by this outpouring of love from Islanders. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Shirley and Vashon Island Community Church



Vashon Park District wants to thank everyone who came out to visit Santa on Sunday at Point Robinson Lighthouse! We will leave the mail box up in front of Quarters A through the holidays.

Eric Wyatt
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JENNA DENNISON PHOTO
A collection of ornaments at the Garden Club event. Each handmade swag will be decorated with ornaments and a handmade bow.

Scene & Heard: Garden Club brings holiday cheer with handmade swags

BY JENNA DENNISON
jdennison@vashonbeachcomber.com

The Vashon-Maury Island Garden Club was hard at work on Thursday, Dec. 2, at the Matsuda Farms' greenhouse as they assembled approximately 60 swags for Vashon senior citizens.

These holiday swags will be distributed through the Vashon Senior Center's lunch delivery program and is part of the the Garden Club's efforts to "make things cheerful" throughout the holiday season, said club member Lynn Buscaglia.

The swags are formed with greens from club members' personal gardens, as well as trimmings from Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust properties, as the Garden Club works in partnership with the Land Trust. They are then topped with ornaments and a handmade bow.

In total, Garden Club boasts 120 members, who are "anxious to do things for the community," such as the holiday swags, said Buscaglia.



JENNA DENNISON PHOTO
A Garden Club member begins to assemble one of the swags.

A new play reading series starts with work by Kat Eggleston

BY SUSAN MCCABE
For Vashon Repertory Theatre

Singer, songwriter and playwright Kat Eggleston will premiere her newest play, "Dreolín" (an old Irish word for winter wren), at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 20, in the lobby of Vashon Center for the Arts (VCA) as part of Vashon Repertory Theatre's Incubator Series of play readings.

"Dreolín" tells the tale of a wintry Chicago night, in the Charleston Bar, when Eggleston met a man of no particular distinction except that his voice "could inspire roses to bloom through concrete."

Drawing on the very old tradition of "hunting the wren" in Ireland and other countries, "Dreolín" combines magic with mystery and Eggleston's unique brand of language to tell the story of a man's extraordinary — and musical — visit to a few select friends on a cold and dreary night.

Eggleston's lyrical



COURTESY PHOTO

Kat Eggleston, a well-known singer, songwriter and theater artist on Vashon, is the author of "Dreolín," the first play in Vashon Repertory Theatre's new series of play readings that will happen on the third Monday of each month, at Vashon Center for the Arts.

descriptions show up when she describes her home to the bar's other patrons, saying, "I grew up in the dark corners of conscious thought, where dreams collide with conscience to become passive-aggressive politeness and tentative driving. In other words...Seattle." Eggleston's latest one-act

illuminates the human world of contradictions with gentle humor and insights that sneak up on her audience. The reading cast will include some of Vashon's finest voices.

The reading is the first in a series by Vashon Repertory Theatre, which will present a staged reading of a new script by local island and Pacific Northwest playwrights at 7 p.m. on the third Monday of each month. The hope is that these plays, fully staged, will find their way into a future VRT season.

The second reading of the series, "Kichi in the Woods of Present Memory," by Bryan Willis, will take place at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 24, at VCA. Readings for March 21, April and May have yet to be announced.

All readings are pay-what-you-will at the door, with a \$10 suggested donation. All audience members must present proof of COVID-19 vaccination and wear masks.

Find out more at vashon-repertorytheatre.org/incubator.



PHOTO COURTESY VASHON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The cast of "The Nutcracker," at a recent rehearsal.

"The Nutcracker" returns to VCA's stage

BY JENNA DENNISON
jdennison@vashonbeachcomber.com

If it has felt like a long time since you've seen "The Nutcracker" on the stage of Vashon Center for the Arts (VCA), you're not incorrect.

It's been two years since VCA students have performed the ballet on the stage of Kay White Hall, due to the pandemic.

However, "The Nutcracker" is back for live performances this year. Vadne White, who is Vashon

Center for Dance's director of ballet, along with dance instructors Kathy Bonner, Gwen Burwell, Elise Erickson, Kate Guinee, Madeline Morser, Sana Tepley, Tricia Thompson, Arianna Vickers and Vanesa Wylie, have created a rich and whimsical production that tells the story of a little girl's dream come to life.

This year's production has also made changes to protect the cast and theatergoers. For the first time, "The Nutcracker" will feature a cast of dancers who are all 12 and older and vaccinated. A matinee performance will also be live-streamed for free, so all will be able to attend.

"The Nutcracker" has two performances — 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11, and a matinee performance at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12. Tickets are available for purchase at vashoncenterforthearts.org.

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Vashon's Devil Fish

By Bruce Haulman and Mike Sudduth



The giant Pacific octopus (*Enteroctopus dofleini*) occasionally receives mention in Vashon newspapers as the "devil fish." The nickname colorfully reflects the maritime lore of fishermen and seafarers who saw it as a threat. While once feared, the octopus is now known to be the most intelligent invertebrate in the world.

The photograph is labeled "Devil Fish, weight 100 lbs, length 7 feet, caught by Dockton fisherman Black Bart." There is no date on the photograph and no further information about the photograph. Bartol Ljubich was a Dockton fisherman born in 1919 and may possibly be the person in the photograph.

Accounts of large octopus caught around the island occur occasionally from the 1920s into the 1980s. "The devil fish weighed 100 pounds and it measured twelve feet across," commented Fred Sherman on his 1924 catch. Another, caught in 1936 at Lisabuela is recorded as "tip to tip measure was 11 to 12 feet across. Its weight was estimated at about 40 to 45 pounds. Local residents consider it an unusual specimen for this beach." Many others have been caught along island shores, but no ink made it to press.

Find the octopus den at *Natural Wonder: An Island Shaped by Water*, the special exhibit at the Vashon Heritage Museum. This den was modeled after the artificial reef that Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife created off the KVI sand spit in the 1983.

You can purchase Bruce Haulman's *A Brief History of Vashon Island* at the Heritage Museum and at the Vashon Bookshop.

This Feature Proudly Sponsored by: Tyler - Vashon Pharmacy
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Our Town: At the end of an era, Vashon remembers Kaj Berry

Note: This profile appeared in 2020 and Kaj was the first artist profile to be featured in the series of Vashon Island Visual Artists (ViVA) artist profiles. Written in Kaj's own words, this profile is a fitting end to 2021 and to recognize and honor Kaj, who was instrumental in fostering the arts on Vashon. The artwork pictured here now hangs for all to be inspired and enjoy at Open Space for Arts & Community.

Kajira Wyn Berry: calligrapher, photojournalist, poet
I grew up in New England and New York, but have lived in eleven different states around the country, and on two very different boats in the Caribbean and Vashon's Dockton Harbor. I was an aerobic pilot in my teens and twenties. In the mid-1950s, my family, with three

wonderful children, came to Portland, Oregon where I had read about Lloyd Reynolds, a calligrapher, who taught at Reed College. After studying with Lloyd, I also taught with him at the Portland Museum Art School, and in the first curriculum classes of italic handwriting for grades two through eighth grades.
From 1963 on, I was a photojournalist for decades, working as a Time/Life stringer on the West Coast, and won first prize for commercial photography in Life's International Competition. I also reported and photographed for many independent publications — including The Beachcomber, when I came to Vashon. I was also one of the "founding mothers" of Vashon Allied Arts, now VCA, and had the honor of naming The Blue Heron.



This large calligraphic work on silk by Kaj Berry hangs prominently at Open Space for Arts & Community.

Recently I taught history of writing to seventh graders here as one of our Artists in the Schools, and have taught many private classes in the Northwest, particularly here on Vashon, where I've calligraphed Hiway Haiku for years. And this year, Hiway Haiku has been honored by a grant from 4Culture for enriching the community with art and poetry. I am also now working on my second novel, the first

published under the title "Everlasting Sky." It's all been a joy!
A memorial service for Kaj will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 18, at Puget Sound Zen Center. Those wishing to attend in person should bring vaccination cards. Those wishing to attend on Zoom or to donate to Kaj's memorial fund at Puget Sound Zen Center should visit pszc.org/kaj for further details.



Kajira Wyn Berry, 1927 - 2021

ARTS BRIEFS



St. Ophelia will perform at Kay White Hall Tuesday, Dec. 21.

Head to Vashon Theatre

"East of the Mountains," an acclaimed new indie film starring Seattle actor Tom Skerritt, will have a screening at Vashon Theatre at 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 9. Skerritt, the film's director, S.J. Chiro, and its editor, Eric Frith, will attend and have a Q & A with audience members after the film. Starting Dec. 10, the blockbuster new film version of "West Side Story" will light up the big screen. Find out more and buy tickets at vashontheatre.com.

McMurray Middle School Winter Concert
Come celebrate the winter holidays and see the accomplishments of student musicians. The McMurray Winter concert begins at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 9 in the McMurray Auditorium/Lunchroom.

Bellydance Nutcracker at Snapdragon

Stop by the Black Cat Cabaret at Snapdragon Bakery & Cafe at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 10 to see "The Bellydance Nutcracker."

Alessandra Rose at Kay White Hall

Alessandra Rose, a singer with experience across diverse genres including rock, pop, and jazz, will perform holiday classics at Kay White Hall at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 17.
Rose's performance will feature Seattle-based pianist Christopher Jones and instrumentalist and vocalist David Nichols. Tickets are available at vashoncenterforthearts.org.

Classical pianist Asiya Korepanova at VCA

Described as a "pianistic powerhouse," Asiya Korepanova is the only

pianist currently performing Liszt's 24 Etudes as a single program and one of a few to tout a concerto list that features over 60 works.
Korepanova has received numerous awards for her abilities, including the Russian Federation's President Award for "Exceptional Achievement in the Arts."
She will perform at Kay White Hall at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 18. A pre-concert talk will begin at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are available at

vashoncenterforthearts.org.

Drama Dock hosts gala

Drama Dock will host a festival fundraiser from 5 to 7 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 19, at Vashon Island Coffee Roasterie. The event will include a reception from 5 to 6 p.m. followed by a performance of Broadway and other musical classics at 6 p.m. The event is directed by Drama Dock artistic director Lisa Peretti, with

Holly Boaz co-producing. The evening will also feature a special guest, award-winning actor Bill Epstein, in a poignant and funny scene from "My Life In Sports." Musical performances will be provided by cellist Rowena Hamill, baritone Hugh Davis, sopranos Alivia Jones, and Holly Boaz, plus highlights and sneak-peeks into Drama Dock's 2022 season, with selected songs from the new musical, "Winghaven Park," all wrapped in stories and poems to brighten the new year and celebrate Drama Dock's 45-year run as a vibrant community theater group on Vashon.
Masks and proof of vaccination are required to attend. There is limited capacity at the Roasterie.

St. Ophelia plays Solstice Concert

The popular island band, St. Ophelia, with special guests, will light up Kay White Hall at 7

p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 21. The group is a five-piece alt-folk rock band fronted by vocalist/guitarist Rebekah Kuzma, singer-songwriter Joe Panzetta, and pedal steel magician Dan Tyack. With a rhythm section of Wesley Peterson on drums and Chuck Keller on bass,

the band's original songs run the gamut from groovy to rockin' to spacious. Pedal steel player Dan Tyack will open the show at 7 p.m., but first stop by VCA, starting at 6 p.m., for free hot cider in VCA's atrium. Tickets are on sale at vashon-centerforthearts.org.



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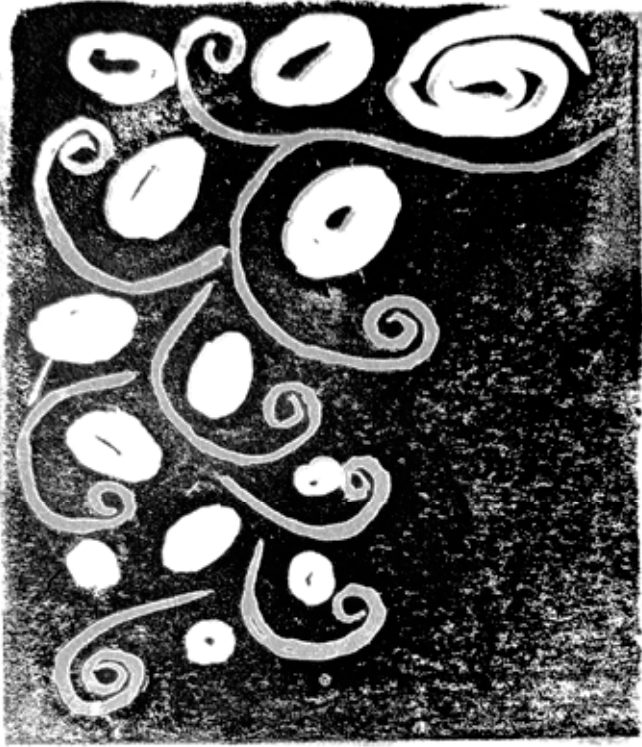
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Vashon celebrates the return of Winterfest

The community came out on Saturday, Dec. 4, to celebrate Winterfest, presented by the Vashon Chamber of Commerce. Winterfest began with the Santa parade, with the route starting at Vashon Theatre and concluding at Vashon Village. Shops and restaurants were open, and the scene was lively, despite a steady rain. After Santa and Mrs. Claus lit Vashon's Christmas tree, islanders joined a spirited chorus of Christmas carols.



JIM DIERS PHOTO

"Snow" fell at Island Queen during Winterfest, much to the delight of islanders.



JIM DIERS PHOTO

A large light display greeted islanders upon their arrival at Vashon Village during Winterfest.



TOM HUGHES PHOTO

Dre Neely and Pepa Brower, of Gravy, served up brisket and pulled pork sandwiches during Winterfest.



JENNA DENNISON PHOTO

From the roof of Island Queen, a snowmaking machine created a flurry of fake snowflakes.



JENNA DENNISON PHOTO

Santa and Mrs. Claus made their way down the streets of Vashon via a festive red truck.



JIM DIERS PHOTO

Families and children gathered to take photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus at Vashon Village.



JIM DIERS PHOTO

Santa and Mrs. Claus, along with Kevin Joyce and Rebekah Kuzma, led islanders in a chorus of carols.

And the winners are... very lucky indeed!

Below is the list of Open House lucky winners, and their prizes.

Pandora's Box
Shannon Flora
A case of dogfood and an assortment of treats and toys

Puget Sound Cooperative Credit Union
Wilson Hu
\$75.00 Gift Certificate to May Kitchen + Bar

Vashon Ace Hardware
Pam Godt
Nebo 1000 Lumen Flashlight

Vashon Thriftway
Stephen Harvey
\$100.00 Gift Card

Vashon Bookshop
Sara Filonoski
\$20.00 Gift Certificate

SAW (Starving Artist Works)
Michelle Reed
3 Beeswax Tree Candles

Casa Bonita
Eden Lyle
2 Dinners (drinks not included)

Island Paper Chase
Michelle Kline
A personally designed Origami Crane Mobile

Gather Vashon
Sara Filonoski
\$25.00 Gift Certificate and ornament of choice

Herban Bloom
Annalise Bogue
\$25.00 Credit To Herban Bloom

Windermere
Harper & Henry Balcom
\$100.00 Gift Certificate to SAW (Starving Artist Works)

The Hardware Store Restaurant
Michelle Kline
\$50.00 Gift Certificate
Amy Morrison
\$50.00 Gift Certificate

Northwest Sports
Tressa Azpiri
\$50.00 Gift Certificate

Kronos
Nancy Carr
A Kronos Gift Basket that includes Wooden Serving Spoons, Memory Glass Ornaments, Two pair of Hand Dipped Tapers, Two Star Candle Holders and a Holiday Tea Towel- (Valued at \$130.00)

Vashon Print & Design
Lea & Peter Heffernan
A Personalized Calendar for 2022

Treasure Island
Diane Nelson
\$50.00 Gift Certificate to Treasure Island

Vashon Pharmacy
Cindy Hoyt
\$50.00 Gift Certificate
Kristina Miller
\$50.00 Gift Certificate

Giraffe
Laura Beth Webster
A Basket of Giraffe Kitchen Goodies including Spices and a Hand Woven Towel from Guatemala and Chocolate from Ghana

The Beachcomber
Jeff Tobias
1 year Beachcomber Subscription

Vashon Recess Lab
Beverly Skeffington
3 Free Classes
Lea Heffernan
2 Recess Lab T-Shirts

Vashon Brewing Company
Sara Filonoski
\$25.00 Gift Certificate to The Pub

Vashon Market/IGA
Dawn Nelson
\$50.00 Gift Card



Thank you to everyone who participated!

Happy Holidays to All!

COVID

From Page 3

Delta, which is still our biggest challenge. So, get vaccinated, get boosted.

“We hope people will realize that taking these steps right now could make an enormous difference for your individual health, for your household, and the health of our community,” urged Dr. Jim Bristow, Co-Coordinator of Vashon MRC. “We want to reduce case and hospitalization rates as much as we can as we move through this holiday season. The lower the baseline case rate, the less likely that infection will spread in our community. Emergence of the Omicron variant makes this all the more pressing.”

Don’t Ride the Omicron Emotional Roller Coaster

“You are probably thinking ‘here we go again’ with all the talk about the Omicron variant, on top of the seemingly endless pandemic and the Delta variant and the rest of the Greek alphabet,” says Jinna Risdal, Coordinator of Vashon’s Community Care Team (CCT), which is the mental health unit of the MRC. “It’s important that people avoid getting on that emotional roller coaster, which has already been a stressful ride the last two years.”

Earlier this year, the CCT developed a “Creating

Strength” training for our community that will give you valuable tools to build resilience and deal with these stressful times. You can watch the 9 short videos at bit.ly/CreatingStrength.

Here’s a quick list of tips selected from the video:

- Don’t fight it, accept it as a problem. Take a step towards dealing with your frustrations by acknowledging they exist. For example: “I can accept this is more complicated than I thought.” “It is a setback.” “It’s not what I wanted.”
 - Lighten the emotional load by sharing your feelings with others so you can move on. Or, write about your feelings as a way to gain insight.
 - Take active steps to shift your attention away from the roller coaster emotions. Continue to safely gather with friends. Play with pets. Enjoy hobbies. Exercise. Listen to music. Read a fun book.
 - Step away and take brief mental vacations: Every five to 15 minutes, set your stress aside and do something that rejuvenates you. Take a walk in the fresh air. Close your eyes and visualize a soothing place. Stretch and breathe.
 - Take lessons from your life. Reflect on how you got through previous tough times. What has worked for you in the past?
- Vashon Community COVID Statistics
- 244 = Total COVID cases for Vashon residents since the pandemic began.
- 5 = New cases since last

More Infections = More Mutations = Longer Pandemic

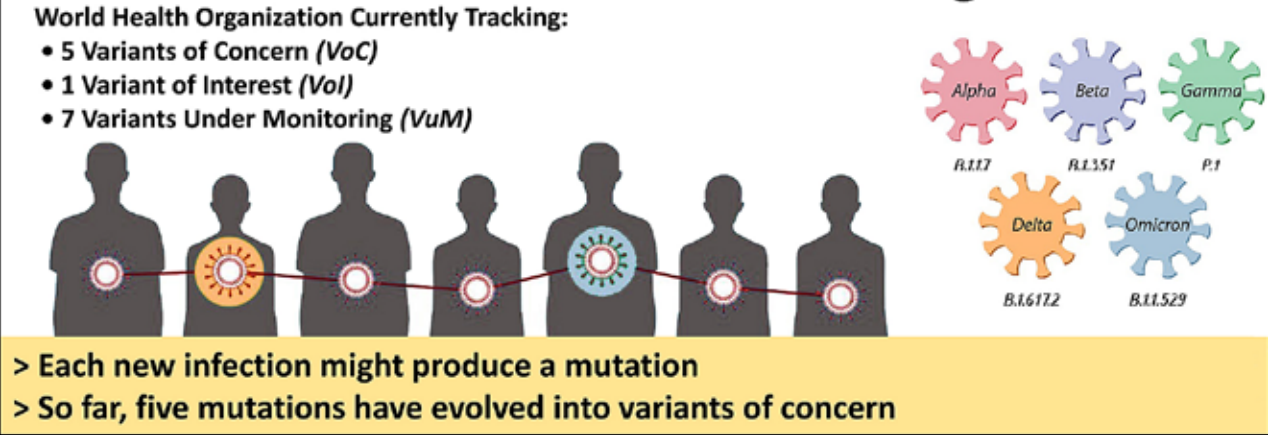


ILLUSTRATION BY VASHON EOC, WITH VARIANT DATA BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

The World Health Organization (WHO) tracks COVID variants that have appeared since the pandemic began two years ago. There have been dozens of them. Each person who becomes infected has the potential to produce a new mutation. So, containing the spread of COVID will reduce the number of mutations. That matters because each mutation has the potential to evolve into a new threat and that could keep the pandemic going even longer. WHO posts its variant tracking at bit.ly/WHO-Variants.

weekly report (7 new cases in 14 days)

4 = Patients hospitalized since the pandemic began.

4 = Deaths since the pandemic began.

91.6% = Vashon residents age 12 and above fully vaccinated. That compares to 84.8% of the total King County 12+ population.

For King County, the PHSKC statistic dashboard says unvaccinated people are 7 times more likely to get COVID, 36 times more likely to be hospitalized for COVID and 28 times more likely to die of COVID.

For more resources and information, visit Vashon-BePrepared.org. Sign up at tinyurl.com/4smk364m to receive email updates from the group, and/or visit Vashon-BePrepared on Facebook.

Life Lessons from Our Seniors: Joe Okimoto

by John McCoy

When **Joe Okimoto** saw the pictures of children caged at the US border and agents using whips on Haitian migrants, it outraged him. He was 3 when soldiers arrested his family at their San Diego home and put them in a converted horse stable where his mother gave birth to a fourth child. Two weeks later they were in a concentration camp in the Arizona desert with 18,000 other imprisoned Japanese Americans.

“The emotional memories are stored in my body,” says Joe, his eyes wet, his speech soft. “Trauma has been the center of my life without me realizing it.”

His parents came to the US from Japan in 1937 as Protestant missionaries to Japanese immigrants in San Diego. After the war, they resumed pastoring. They felt so much shame, Joe says, that they did not talk about their incarceration. Joe went to Pasadena HS, where he studied hard, co-captained the football team and was president of the Lettermen’s Club. His mother’s death of cancer convinced him to go to medical school, first at Dartmouth, then Harvard, with an internship at Harborview Hospital in Seattle. He joined the Air Force as a flight surgeon, married, had two sons, and did a residency in surgery at UC San Francisco. Anti-war activists and Black Panthers were marching in the streets. “It was a major turning point for me,” Joe says, “I became aware of racism and that I was one of its victims.”

He began a PhD at the UW School of Public Health but dropped out to join the civil rights movement. Divorced, he met and married a fellow activist. The governor named him to the Commission on Asian Affairs; King County hired him as medical director of its drug addiction program; and, after the UW certified him in psychiatry, he was medical director of a counseling program for Asian war refugees. Later he set up his own psychiatry practice.

Yet, only late in life, did Joe identify the pain in his soul: Childhood trauma “caused by my government.” Retired on Vashon, he facilitates a healing circle for Japanese concentration camp survivors. And he speaks out for caged children, jailed migrants and victims of racism. Why? “Because nobody spoke up for us.”



Lesson: Unlock the Trauma

Sponsored by Beth de Groen, WRE/Vashon-Maury Island

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Herd

From Page 1

The pasture where the dog trials were held, at SW 220th Street and Old Mill Road, is part of Misty Isle Farms, the sprawling estate of the late Thomas Stewart. In recent months, several other parcels of land that are part of the Misty Isle estate have been sold.

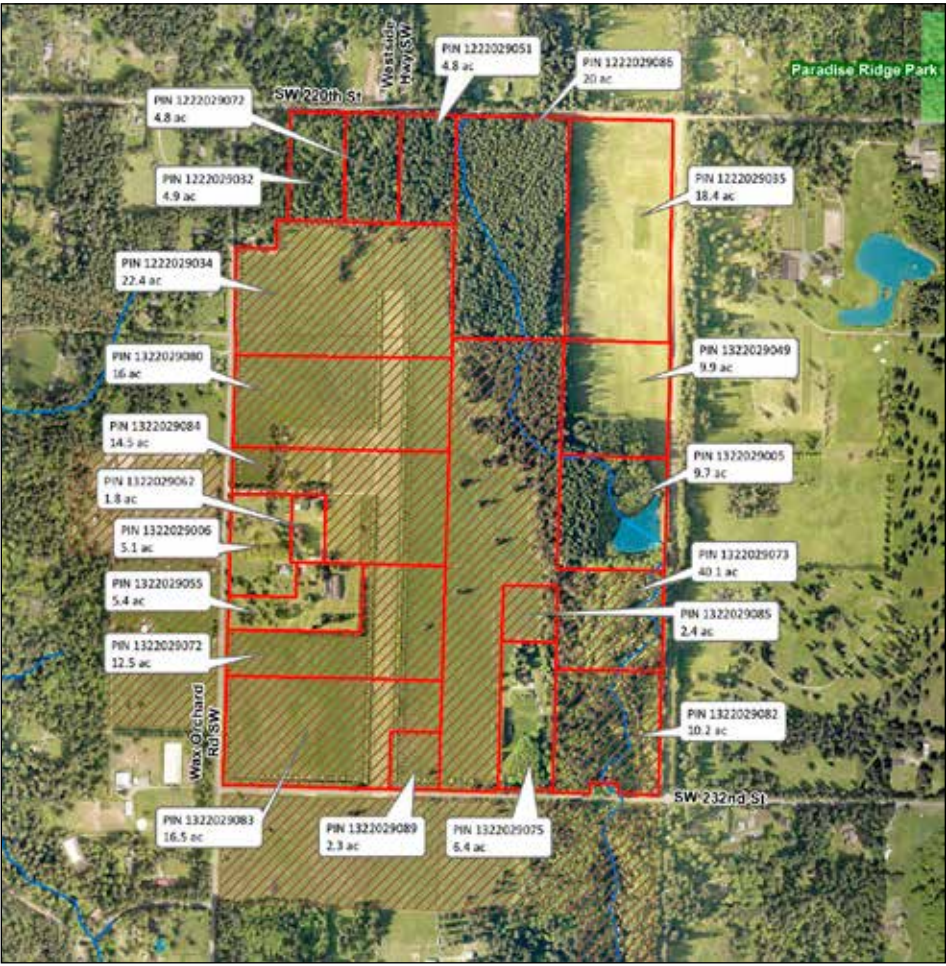
Richard Wilson, president of the Development Services of America, the Stewart-affiliated company that owns the property, told The Beachcomber that he would not discuss his company's decision made regarding the Sheepdog Classic and whether or not buyers were interested in the pasture.

But in an interview, Catherine Sullivan, executive director of the Sheepdog Classic, provided further detail to an announcement made on the organization's website last week — that the owners of the property had declined to allow the event to take place in 2022 due to “ongoing real estate opportunities.”

Each year, Sullivan said, the group has reached out to Misty Isle Farms manager Hans Youngmann to request permission to use the pasture for the event. Youngmann, she said, passes along the request to Development Services of America.

This year, in early November, she and her colleagues received a quick “no” to their request, she said. Organizers then returned with another question — would it be possible to hold the event for handlers only, as took place earlier this year?

The response to this request was more detailed, she said, with the group being told that because the company had had some recent success selling some lots of the Misty Isle property, company officials could not predict what would happen with the pasture between now



GRAPHIC SOURCE: KING COUNTY WATER AND LAND RESOURCES DIVISION

This aerial photo/map shows the west half of Misty Isle Farms, with Southwest 220th Street on the north, Wax Orchard Road to the west, Southwest 232nd Street on the south and Old Mill Road on the east. The meadow that has been the site of the Vashon Sheepdog Classic is at the northeast corner, tax parcels 1222029035 and 1322029049. Parcels 1222029032, 1222029072 and 1222029051, on 220th, sold last month. Parcel 1322029072, on Wax Orchard, sold in October. All the parcels between them sold earlier this year.

and the time of the event.

The pasture property is currently not listed as being for sale, but King County has targeted the western half of Misty Isle Farms, including the sheepdog pasture, for acquisition for conservation purposes.

In a 2019 application to the county's Conservation Futures program, which funds open space acquisition, the County Water and Land Resources Division said it hoped to eventually purchase 228 acres of Misty Isle — everything west of Old Mill Road.

The acquisition “would preserve farmland, increase recreational opportunities and protect ecological values,”

the application said, citing the property's habitats including pasture, streams and wetlands, as well as 75 acres of deciduous, coniferous and mixed forest.

However, the division's application sought money that year to help buy only 93 acres — mostly bordering Old Mill Road. These included the pasture that was home to the Sheepdog Classic as well as much of the forested corridor of Fisher Creek, a stream that supports cutthroat trout, coho and chum salmon.

Conservation Futures approved \$2.6 million toward the purchase in 2020.

Greg Rabourn, of King County Water and Land Resources Division, told The

Beachcomber last week that the county is still working with the sellers to buy all parcels approved for purchase that had not already been sold — a designation which would include the pasture on Old Mill Road.

“Our scope of interest has not changed from our previous efforts,” he said, declining any further comment.

Misty Isle sales have picked up in 2021

After years of unsuccessful attempts to find a single buyer for the entire, 525-acre estate — despite steep price drops — Misty Isle's owners have been successful this year in selling off smaller pieces of

the complex.

The most recent buyers purchased four parcels totaling about 27 acres this fall, bringing the total acreage sold this year to about 92.

County records show Taylor Wright of Deer Lodge, Montana, last month bought three heavily forested, adjacent parcels on Southwest 220th Street — each parcel 4.8 acres — for a total of \$750,000.

The parcels were among the Misty Isle properties King County wanted to buy for conservation purposes.

Wright is a member of Seattle's prominent Howard S. Wright family. Howard S. Wright Construction built the Space Needle — a family-controlled company still owns the landmark — as well as the 76-story Columbia Center, parts of the Microsoft headquarters campus and many other well-known buildings.

Another Wright family member, Claire Wright McShane, and her husband, Ryan McShane, bought 23 acres of Misty Isle pasture just to the south of Taylor Wright's three parcels in June.

County records also show that in October, Gregory R. Jette and Tinuviel M. Lathrop of Olalla, Kitsap County, bought 12.2 acres of Misty Isle pasture fronting Wax Orchard Road for \$550,000.

In Facebook posts, Lathrop has said they intend to grow peonies and other flowers commercially on the property. The couple has formed a company, Vashon Peony Co., and has already begun tilling and other work.

“The goal for the farm is to create a sea of peonies and other flowers that maintain the agricultural purposes of the Farmland Preservation zoning for this parcel and create a uniquely beautiful space for locals and visitors to enjoy,” Vashon Peony's website says.

Three other sales were recorded in the summer of 2021. Steven Jensen and Mark Grace of Vashon bought two parcels totaling 16.25 acres for \$1,139,900 — one including an older 900 square-foot house.

Adrianne and Matthew Williams, formerly of Tacoma, first purchased 5.15 acres with an older, 4,300-square-foot house for \$925,000, where they now live with their children. Two months later, the couple closed on an adjacent property that is the site of the old Wax Orchards fruit processing cannery, paying an additional \$500,000 for that 5.2-acre property.

Loss of Sheepdog Classic has big impacts

The Sheepdog Trials, founded by islander Maggi McClure as a nationals qualifying event for the U.S. Border Collie Handlers Association, had grown to become the largest event of its kind on the West Coast, drawing thousands of eager spectators of all ages to Vashon each year. Its attendance peaked in 2017 at 9,000 spectators, dropping to what executive director Sullivan said was a more comfortable level of 7,000 attendees in 2019.

It drew devoted attendees of all ages, she said, from both on and off the island.

The event, as founded by McClure and her cohorts, was also a major fundraiser for Vashon nonprofits. Over

the years, the Sheepdog Classic organization, in partnership with Vashon's Partners in Education (PIE) donated significant amounts of its net profits to island programs and organizations serving youth. The biggest beneficiary was PIE, a well-known group that funds special projects created by teachers and staff in the Vashon schools.

Karen Boyle, a PIE board member, said that the Sheepdog Classic partnership with PIE had been a valuable outreach effort for the group, widening its scope of potential donors beyond the island. Over the years, she said that the group had received \$30,000 in donations from the proceeds of the events, but also additional funds as well, through raffles, booth sales, and sponsorships sold in connection with the event. All these fundraising efforts garnered PIE a total of \$111,000, Boyle said.

Other beneficiaries of the Sheepdog trials, to name only some on a long list posted on the Sheepdog Classic's website, were Vashon Wilderness School; Camp Burton, Vashon Food Bank, Interfaith Council for Homelessness; UMO Youth Ensemble and Education; Safe Grad Night for VHS Seniors; Vashon Alliance to Reduce Substance Abuse (VARSA); The Harbor School; Vashon Girl Scouts; Vashon High School Debate Team; Vashon High School Cheerleaders; Vashon Youth and Family Services (VYFS) and Burton Adventure Recreation Center (BARC).

The Sheepdog Classic also had a close partnership with the island's vibrant fiber arts community, each year hosting a Fiber Arts Village that was home to many tents dedicated to fiber with an emphasis on wool — its preparation, creative uses, and final products. Demonstrations include wheel and drop spindle spinning, fiber preparation, weaving, rug hooking, knitting, crochet, embroidery, Kumihimo braiding, and needle felting. Most demonstrations were hands-on, at no expense to spectators.

Sullivan said that she and the group's small board of directors were now involved in discussions about what to do next with their organization. She said the group knew of no other island location that could accommodate the trials with spectators, but that the group was following a lead on a pasture where a handler's only event could be held. She said the board was considering two options: whether to disband or wait another year, in the hope that the pasture would once again be available.

I'm very sad,” Sullivan said, defining the Vashon Sheepdog Classic as a true community event that could not be separated from the island on which it was presented. “The first week I was kind of in shock — it feels like a loss for the community and all we offered.”

In a Facebook post, founder McClure struck a more hopeful note, saying the group was still “working behind the scenes to see if we might be able to pull off some sort of hybrid event for 2022,” and promising to keep supporters posted.

Places of Worship on our Island

Burton Community Church
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Worship via Zoom at 11:00 am
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Catholic Church

St. John Vianney
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Vashon Island Unitarian Fellowship
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Sunday services are being held virtually at 11am
The Zoom Link for all Sunday Services:
<https://www.viuf.org/sunday/>
If you are prompted to use a password, it is 2020
Lewis Hall
(Behind Burton Community Church)
23905 Vashon Hwy SW
Info: **www.VIUF.org**

Bethel Church
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You're Invited!
We have mid-week groups for kids (AWANA), teens and adults
www.bethel-efc.org
Office: **(206) 567-4255**

Vashon Friends Worship Group
(Quakers)
10 am Meeting for Silent Worship in members' homes.

Call for Location
567-5279 463-5255

Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit
Now open for worship on Sundays.
First service, Rite 1 is at 8 am.
Second service, Rite 2 is now at 9:30 am.
We are following all the protocols at our services for Covid-19.
Still live streaming Facebook at 9:30 am for congregants who cannot attend.
15420 Vashon Hwy SW

Vashon Island Community Church
9318 SW Cemetery Road
Worship Service 10:00 am
(Children welcome, nursery available)
Midweek groups for adults, youth, women & men
Office Phone **463-3940**
Pastors:
Mike Ivaska and Tyler Winters
For more info: **www.vashonchurch.com**

Vashon Havurah
Serving Vashon's Jewish community
Torah study is on Zoom: 9:30 am
Saturday mornings. Link on website.

15401 Westside Highway SW
PO Box 89, Vashon 98070
www.vashonhavurah.org

Vashon Lutheran Church
God's love is inclusive, abundant and to be lived and shared.
YOU ARE WELCOME
Rev. Dr. Joel Kutzke
463-2655
18623 Vashon Hwy. SW
www.vashonluthernchurch.org

Vashon Presbyterian Church
Sunday Worship 10:00 am
17708 Vashon Hwy (center of town)
Pastor Leigh Weber
Church Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
463-2010
www.vashonpreschurch.org

Calvary Full Gospel Church at Lisabeula
13107 SW 220th St.
Worship 10:30 am – Evening Worship TBD
Thursday Bible Study 7:00 pm
Call for location
Saturday Prayer 7:30 pm
Pastor Steve Sears
463-2567

Vashon United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Mark Wagner
10:00am on Sundays
Tues 10 am Men's Coffee • Wed 10:30am Bible Study
ZOOM via FB or Contact VUMC
office@vashonmethodist.org
www.vashonmethodist.org
(206) 259-1832

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jobs

Employment General



Vashon Park District is seeking attendants for BARC Skate Park. Up to 15 hours per week, including afternoon and weekend shifts. Please send a letter of interest for a complete job description or request an application by email to: ewyatt@vashonparks.org

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For Sale: Mongoose Bike, Bowflex, Nordic-trac, Goped, John Deere Seat, Expedition Child Pack, Guitar, Amps, Antique Violin, Banjo, De-jembe Drum, Ford Trailer Hitch Assembly. Contact Nick at txgm@yahoo.com Images on request

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Ken Zaglin
(206) 940-4244

SALE PENDING



A FRESH START THIS FALL

The ultimate fixer. View home located on south-facing Quartermaster Harbor. Watch the seasons change & the boats sail by. This is a rare opportunity to have a stunning view, excellent location w/high ceilings, a stone fireplace, & a large lot with easy waterfront access w/o wft taxes. This is being sold as-is & will require the buyer to complete all studies. **MLS #1859779 \$489,500**



Ashley Lisenby
(206) 290-7106

SOLD!



HIGH BANK WATERFRONT ON COVETED CRESCENT DRIVE

Whimsical 4.5 acres ideal for wedding venue or simplistic country lifestyle! The main house is 4 beds, 2.25 baths, w/ office, studio, living & family rooms, & gorgeous views of Colvos Passage & the Olympics. 4-stall barn w/ tack room & hayloft, blacksmith shop & 2-bay shop. Guest house w/ 2 beds, 1 bath, & full kitchen. Easy path to waterfront. **Offered at \$1,750,000**

NEW LISTING!



Crist Granum
(206) 419-3661



CAREFREE LIVING IN YOUR CORNER OF VASHON

Top-to-bottom updates, centrally located, super-attractive, move-in ready home! Freshly completed remodel inside & out. 2 beds, 1 bath. Fully finished, heated & insulated garage adding versatile space. New wood stove insert in living room, dining area off all-new kitchen, & low-maintenance single-level w/new flooring throughout. Sunshine filled parcel perfect for gardening or gatherings amongst multipurpose outbuildings. **MLS #1868578 \$639,500**



Len Wolff
(206) 300-7594

SALE PENDING



Nancy Wolff
(206) 300-7392

MULTILEVEL HOME ON 2+ PRIVATE ACRES

Secluded 4 beds, 2 bath home on park-like setting, offering serene privacy! Top level has open floor plan and sprawling deck. Indoor sauna. Detached garage & shop w/adjacent attached studio. Island living at it's best! **MLS #1857478 \$850,000**



Crist Granum
(206) 419-3661

SALE PENDING



ALKI'S LIGHTHOUSE POINT – COZY & MODERN CONDO

Newly painted & light filled second-floor unit w/ bamboo floors. Galley kitchen, Caesarstone[®] countertops, convection microwave & electric glass cooktop. 1 bed, 3/4 bath w/ walk-in shower. Quiet views of Alki's historic lighthouse, Puget Sound & the Olympic Mtns. Gated entry, covered walkways, laundry facility & storage. **MLS #1852244 \$300,000**



Len Wolff
(206) 300-7594

SOLD!



Nancy Wolff
(206) 300-7392

HOME ON WONDERFUL WESTSIDE

Coveted Westside location w/ west-facing view. Vintage 1900 homestead on 4+ acres features 3 beds, 3/4 bath, & 2 stories plus full basement. New on-site septic approved for 4 bedrooms, detached 2-car garage, & orchard. **Offered at \$679,000**



Hilary Limont
(206) 679-2145

SOLD!



SOLD REPRESENTING BUYER

Sitting above Dockton Harbor on sun-drenched meadowland is this NW facing 2 beds w/ water views in master, 1.75 baths w/ marble elements, & an upstairs bonus room. Kitchen features updated cabinetry w/ stone countertops, 4-burner gas range w/ grill top. Living room w/ river rock fireplace & soaring ceilings. **Offered at \$945,000**

FINAL 2 DAYS!



JOHN L SCOTT
Community
Challboard

TOY DRIVE

Please help give a happier holiday to our island kids during our "new normal."
To make everything safe and simple, we ask for donations in cash, checks or Venmo only.

We are grateful for any help you can give!

Please make checks payable to VYFS.
Mail to John L. Scott Vashon, PO Box 2009, Vashon, WA 98070
OR make a donation via the Venmo app to @Heidi-Grimsley-1.

NEED HELP to make the holidays brighter
for your kids? Contact Heidi at 206-660-6871
heidigrimsley@johnlscott.com



John L Scott Vashon (206) 567-1600
Heidi Grimsley (206) 660-6871
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Ken Zaglin (206) 940-4244
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