

EDITORIAL

Charlie's choice

In the past week, Vashon has roiled with the news that our fire chief has not been vaccinated against COVID-19, and has thus far refused to become vaccinated in response to Gov. Jay Inslee's mandate for firefighters and EMTs to do so by Oct. 18.

Instead, Chief Charles Krimmert has asked fire district commissioners to release him from his duty to serve as an emergency medical technician (EMT) so that he can continue to serve as the district's chief.

In a phone call with The Beachcomber, Krimmert said bluntly that the commissioners' other choice was to fire him.

After a hastily convened commissioners' meeting last Friday, held in closed session, Chair Andy Johnson said that the commissioners had not discussed Krimmert's ultimatum, but that the district would be in compliance with the governor's mandate.

This means, of course, that even if the commissioners decided to keep Krimmert as fire chief, and he remains unvaccinated, he would not be able to respond to any fire or medical calls — something that is in his job description for a reason. While working on a ferry-dependent island that is not home to all of the district's firefighting force, Krimmert has, in fact, responded to calls many times while serving as chief.

One also wonders how Krimmert's \$162,750 annual salary would be adjusted with that change in his job description, and if additional staff would have to be hired to fill his role as an EMT and firefighter.

Krimmert won't say why he is not vaccinated, other than the fact that he does not have a medical or religious reason, leaving the question open to speculation.

Certainly, it is possible that Krimmert objects to the governor's mandate, even though Inslee clearly has the legal right to impose it, under the broad provisions of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW 43.06). Krimmert is also a highly paid government worker; one would expect he would respect his employer's rules.

But opposition to a new mandate wouldn't explain away why Krimmert isn't vaccinated.

Vaccines have been widely available for months now, and Vashon's Medical Reserve Corp — which Krimmert has overseen as Incident Commander of Vashon's emergency response to the pandemic — has repeatedly encouraged all eligible islanders to get the shots, citing the safety, efficacy and public health benefits of the vaccines.

Recently, with the rise of the highly contagious Delta variant, an avalanche of statistics from states hard-hit by the current spike in cases has shown that unvaccinated people are at the highest risk of severe outcomes and death from COVID-19.

During that time, Krimmert has risked those outcomes not only for himself but also for other unvaccinated and immunocompromised others with whom he has interacted — he has gone on medical and fire calls and met indoors with commissioners, community members and his staff. Though masked in all these situations, this behavior, to many, is worrying.

It is deeply unfortunate that Charlie's choice has also now divided our community and eroded confidence in our fire district. On social media, some islanders have even speculated that their criticism of Krimmert might result in the district not responding to their calls for assistance.

This should never be in question. We are confident that our heroic firefighters will continue to act with urgency to serve everyone on Vashon. But the fact that some islanders now even wonder if they are safe from retaliation is beyond troubling.

Facebook threads about Krimmert's unvaccinated status have also devolved into heated arguments between the pro- and anti-vaccination camps, with many islanders demanding that Krimmert be fired and some others praising him for refusing the vaccine and calling on him to stick to his guns.

It is hard to see a way forward for Krimmert to continue to serve effectively as fire chief on Vashon, after all this.

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Statement: Pandemic leaders respond to Krimmert controversy

We have been working to keep Vashon safe from the COVID menace for many months, side by side with hundreds of fellow volunteers.

Vaccination has been — and continues to be — the most effective tool we have. That's why vaccination is more important than ever as we face a rising number of cases from the Delta variant and from the desire of so many to "go free" and relax safety precautions. Science has been our guide through all this and numerous studies show vaccination reduces infection, hospitalization and death from COVID-19, including for the Delta variant now circulating among us. Get vaccinated. It's more important than ever right now. We say again: COVID is not done with us.

We were as surprised as anyone to hear about Chief Krimmert's decision. We worry for his safety just as we worry about all our other neighbors who are not yet vaccinated. Sadly, we also worry that some may seize on his position as a rationale against vaccination. Although we disagree with his choice, we also feel we are duty-bound to recognize our work with him over the pandemic months and for years before that. Whatever his views, much of what has been accomplished would not have happened without his support. It is a simple fact that no other Chief we served has done as much to support the work of the Vashon-BePrepared coalition.

What's next? It's not our job to decide that. We can, however, promise this: We continue to work hard to

help the island beat the pandemic and we look forward to many more years of effective collaboration with VIFR.

These are, of course, our personal views. We choose to speak as individuals and we will not be inserting the groups we lead into whatever controversy arises from the Chief's decision. The next steps are up to the Fire Commission and the Chief.

Vicky de Monterey Richoux
Rick Wallace
Dr. Clayton Olney
Dr. Jim Bristow
Jan Milligan

Editor's Note: These individuals responded to a request for comment from The Beachcomber. They have been leaders of Vashon's effort to fight the COVID pandemic.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

■ VACCINATION

Chief must go

People are dying who are not vaccinated. For the Fire Chief to publicly announce that he refuses to be vaccinated is cause for termination. He needs to set a good example for the community and he is not doing that. Get rid of him. It is outrageous and I am so tired of people not paying attention and prolonging this pandemic.

Valerie Vigessa

■ AFGHANISTAN

Make your voice heard

I am heartbroken and appalled by what is happening in Afghanistan. I know many of you must be as well. I have felt deeply conflicted over the years by our presence there, and I struggle to know what to think about the decision ultimately made to leave the country. However, one thing seems clear: The United States has a profound and urgent moral obligation to aid the people who betrayed the Taliban to work for us by getting them out of the country.

Special visas for such people have been created, but as many sources have reported, these have been mired for years in paperwork and red tape.

There seems to be a lack of political will, largely linked to the fear that these people present a national security threat. As an American citizen, the only power I feel I have is to call my representatives and emphasize to them in the strongest terms possible how important this issue is to me, and how I want it to rise on their list of priorities.

I know that doesn't fix the terrible situation in Afghanistan for the people being left behind, and I'm not sure it can even surmount the political apathy that is currently providing a barrier to issuing these visas more expeditiously. But it feels like the only thing I know to do.

Of course, I also cannot stop thinking about the plight of women being forced back into such a draconian, misogynistic, fundamentalist regime. An opinion piece in the Washington Post, at tinyurl.com/2sxc32bd, advocates for four concrete actions the U.S. could take to help female activists in the country — who have risked their lives over the past 20 years, advocating for the rights of women and are now in terrible danger. I am planning on advocating for these to my representative as well.

If you are feeling similarly, I hope you'll join me in calling your representatives with the same message.

Martin Koenig

■ CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Commentary was well-researched

Thank you, Ms. Lisovsky, for your well-researched, informative article on Critical Race Theory (8/12/21).

I like to clarify this concept by taking the word "theory" out and substituting the word "facts." Seemingly, a theory is something that can be argued, one way or another. Facts are facts. Black people have never been truly "free" in this country. There has been little if no opportunity for "life, liberty and the pursuit of

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Finding purpose and meaning in the bleak seasons of life

C.S. Lewis, the British writer and professor, wrote, "We must stop regarding unpleasant or unexpected things as interruptions of real life. The truth is that interruptions are real life."

Everyone has experienced events that seem to knock us off our feet. The past 18 months have felt like a major interruption for all of us. We were thrust into the dark days of a global pandemic, stuck at home at first in an unprecedented lockdown. Businesses were shuttered and we were literally banned from human contact. Now, here we are, many months later, wondering what the world will look like when we emerge from the days of the virus which shall not be named.

But sprinkled among the many days of depression and loneliness, there have still been times of joy for my family. My wife and I welcomed a new child into our family, we became "yogis," I wrote and recorded a new album, my wife learned how to make sourdough bread (and she's really good at it!), and our family discovered a new



MARK WAGNER

love for paddleboarding. I must also admit, we watched the Netflix series *Longmire* for the fourth time, fell in love with *Ted Lasso*, and we bought a VW Eurovan named June that has become our "home away from home." These little bright lights of happiness have illuminated the good that can emerge in the midst of challenging times.

The truth is, though we try, we cannot avoid hard things. Whether it's a job loss, the death of a loved one, a tragic accident, or a global pandemic, unpleasant intrusions are inevitable. The question then becomes; how do we keep going? How do we survive these painful moments and rise up on the other side; stronger, fuller, brighter? My theory is that the only way to gain strength in the weak and bleak seasons of life is to charge through them with a vision for what could be on the other side. Instead of getting angry at God or others for causing this hardship, we ask God (or the Universe; the Spirits), "What are you up to,

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Reporting a perfect audit

Each year, Vashon Island School District supplements its state and federal budget with tax dollars from our community.

These supplemental levy funds account for 14% of our approximately \$26 million budget and ensure we are providing Vashon students with an exceptional educational experience that shapes their lives forever. Your tax dollars are critical to this mission and they must be spent within the guidelines of both state and federal laws. As such, the Vashon Island School District recently underwent an annual state audit and for the sixth audit in a row over the past eight years, in all areas evaluated, the District is reporting a clean or perfect audit to our school community.

We take our jobs seriously as stewards of our community's trust and this means we count every penny. The pandemic created additional challenges in managing the district finances over the last 19 months. These challenges were varied, from a plethora of accounting changes required by the state to account for COVID-related expenses, delays in funding, a declining enrollment, and even



MATT SULLIVAN

having a remote (distanced) audit. Starting in April of 2021, members of the Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO) started examining school district records and worked remotely on the audit for more than eight weeks. This year was one of the largest audits the District has had and focused on two areas: (1) financial statements, looking at how the District complies with the standards of accounting and (2) the Federal Single Audit. Audit findings or problems are common for public agencies and many school districts.

A Federal and/or Single Audit is when a school district spends at least \$750,000 in federal assistance or grant award dollars annually. The District is assessed on internal controls over federal programs, tests of how those controls are working and tests of compliance with federal requirements. This year the audit examined two areas: Special Education and Food Services (Child Nutrition).

The audit report, completed July 1, covered Sept. 1, 2019, to Aug. 31, 2020. The auditors focused their attention on the

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CAC SOUND PUBLISHING INC.

Wagner

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really? What lessons am I learning? What knowledge is there to be gained in this season of struggle?" This simple shift in perspective will change everything. We stop focusing on the mountain of misery and catch glimpses of sunlight peering through the clouds. Those tiny rays of light will guide us on the long path towards wisdom. They are walks on the beach, holding hands with a loved one, laughing at an episode of *Schitt's Creek*, or losing track of time reading a great book. They are the moments of peace and stillness that surprise us, even in the midst of a pandemic when we are forced to abandon our busy schedules to embrace new opportunities.

While we cannot avoid adversity, we can learn through it. In the end, we grow wise not by solving problems but by allowing those problems, and the experience of surviving them, to shape us and to give us a new perspective on life.

The Rev. Dr. Mark W. Wagner is the pastor of Vashon's United Methodist Church.

Editorial

From Page 6

Neither camp would be happy if Krimmert changes his mind, and decides to comply with the mandate after all. For those who oppose the vaccine, that would be a capitulation; for those who now want him fired, it would be too little, too late.

And only those who oppose the mandate and/or vaccination — a demographic we suspect is a minority fraction of our population, given Vashon's 83% vaccination rates — would cheer the commissioners' approval of any plan to let him stay on as an unvaccinated chief.

Either scenario would need to be accompanied by a highly polished public relations campaign — and doesn't our fire district already have enough to do right now?

This turn of events is surprising and deeply disappointing, as many of Krimmert's past actions as fire chief — in particular his long and vitally important collaboration with VashonBePrepared — have been those of a highly effective public servant.

But that is not what we have seen in the past week. Andy Johnson, chair of the commissioners, said that the board does not face an immediate deadline in this situation, as the mandate will not go into effect until Oct. 18.

Still, we hope this can be resolved quickly. It is weighing on many islanders' minds. They are the ones who pay for Krimmert's handsome salary, and they elected the commissioners who oversee his work. We here at The Beachcomber hope for the best — that whatever happens, our Fire District will be one that islanders can support and be proud of.

Sullivan

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areas that represented the highest risk of fraud, loss, abuse or noncompliance. As noted above, those included our financial statements (reporting) and federal awards to include: Special Education and Food Services (Child Nutrition).

As it pertains to our financial statements the auditors, "reported no

deficiencies in the design or operation on internal control over financial reporting that we consider to be significant deficiencies," the report states. As it pertains to the Federal Awards they, "reported no deficiencies in the design or operation of internal control over major federal programs that we consider to be significant deficiencies." For the auditors, this language is high praise indeed.

Vashon Island School District strongly believes that we should always strive for a clean and perfect audit. We

are committed to high levels of transparency and fully complying with both state and federal laws that govern our district. Audits of this size, scope, and time commitment are not easy on a public agency or the staff, but necessary. The total cost of this year's audit was \$23,208; copies of the audit reports are available online through the Office of the State Auditor at sao.wa.gov.

Matt Sullivan is the executive director of business and operations of Vashon Island School District.

Letters

From Page 6

happiness." There are countless academic articles, books, and websites to research the actual history of this country. To all people who are still scratching their heads about this, read the books "Between the World and Me" by Ta-Nehisi Coates and "How to be an Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi. If they help you understand how we got here and how we can get out of this cesspool of racism, then hallelujah. If you feel white guilt, know that it is not helpful. As my friend once said to me, your tears are not helping us.

Barbara Thal

■ CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Education doesn't lack lessons about discrimination

Whenever The Beachcomber takes issue with a letter to the editor, which is limited to 300 words, they then search out "guest columnist" who is given unlimited space to counter. This was the case with Jessica Lisovsky's recent column, which responded to Douglas Larsen's challenge to Critical Race Theory (CRT).

Ms. Lisovsky, obviously feels that CRT and the 1619 Project should be taught to our young as a way of depicting the reality of our history, our founders, and the nation's awful historical truths. I don't know where she was educated, but I learned about slavery, indentured servitude, and the way Black people, Chinese, the Irish, the Italians, the Japanese, and the Germans were discriminated against and treated in the United States at different times in our history. How the constitution, the Civil War, the civil rights movement, and the Amendments were created to protect and make discrimination illegal. None of these "ugly truths" were missing from my education.

What I wasn't taught, however, is that I am a racist simply by virtue of being white. I categorically reject this assertion. Do not try and have me accept or my children accept that they are racists or oppressors, because they are not. These are well-documented terms used in CRT training venues. We were all taught to judge everyone blindly, as Martin Luther King suggested, based on character not on race. I don't see color, I see people. To do otherwise is the definition of racism.

The unfortunate truth is that racism still exists, as does anti-racism racism, but recent proof sources like President Obama, VP Harris, Senator Tim Scott, Clarence Thomas and Oprah, to name just a few, demonstrate the fallacy of the systemic racism claim. Gratefully, most Americans will not accept this label, or CRT being taught to our young.

Andy Amstrup

■ CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Cost of asking questions is being labeled racist

Doug Larson wrote a letter to the editor (July 15) addressing the dangers of Critical Race Theory (CRT), and how it has crept into every institution.

Jessica Lisovsky responded in an editorial saying that fear is unwarranted. Ms. Lisovsky included a definition of CRT from the Encyclopedia Britannica which states that CRT is an "intellectual movement." I agree. I also agree with Mr. Larson that CRT calls for race-based solutions to vesting societal problems.

My concern with CRT centers around its role in our schools. The fact that CRT is an intellectual movement means it should be studied in schools as one among many. CRT should not be the "lens" we use to evaluate curriculums, what books are stocked in the library, teacher hiring and assessment, and to create equity trainings.

Our schools have adopted CRT in all these ways to varying degrees under the guise of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

There is a process for deciding on school curriculums that includes community input. This process has not been followed in the adoption of DEI. This is representative of the lack of debate invited or even allowed around how we teach DEI curricula can be done well but becomes dogma with the influence of CRT. Works that teach "whiteness" as a negative trait are hardly what we would like to devote programs to without scrutiny.

The fact is, many teachers and students fear openly questioning the tenets of DEI. Some may genuinely disagree, and some may merely have uncertainties. But if the cost of asking questions is being labeled a racist, shunned by peers, penalized through grades, or fired, then only the bravest or most foolhardy will take that on. If you are unaware of this problem, ask yourself: if people are afraid to speak, how would you find out?

Celina Yarkin

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COMPASS

Summer 2021 Speaker Series

September 2 @ 11:45 am - 1:00 pm Chautauqua Elementary School

Jim Bristow MD, from the Vashon MCR (Medical Reserve Corps), will talk to us about why our Vashon Covid case rate is 25% of King County, and what the MCR believes our business community should be doing to keep it that way.

Rotary Club
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You can come in person, or attend via zoom:
Zoom online meeting number: 81780259124

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It's Your History August 26, 2021
Strawberry Harvest
By Bruce Haulman and Mike Sudduth

This 1981 Jim Burke photograph of Jim Reinke and Wes Kameda collecting picked strawberries into flats at Tok Otsuka's farm, represents the end of eight decades of large-scale commercial strawberry harvests on Vashon. By the early-1980s commercial strawberry farming on the island was coming to an end. Within five years the major strawberry farms - Otsuka's, Matsuda's, and Takatsuka's - were no longer growing commercial berries and had switched to you-pick operations or changed to other crops.

Forty years later, in 2021, a number of smaller farms are beginning to offer fresh picked Vashon strawberries through their farm stands, but the days of Vashon's commercial strawberry farming are now only memorialized through the annual Strawberry Festival.

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

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BEACHCOMBER

EDITORIAL

Vashon isn't an island when it comes to real estate

This week, we chronicle the frantic pace of the Vashon real estate market — an emotional topic for all of us who care about the economic and cultural diversity of our community and want it to remain affordable for people of different backgrounds and incomes.

For our story, we talked to realtors who share the same deep concerns. Vashon's real estate community is known for its extremely generous support of many worthy local causes — we cannot doubt that they care as deeply about this community as we do, and like the rest of us, hope the market will correct itself in time.

So here is a reminder as we think about this issue: we are islanders, and islanders should always remember to look at what is happening in the world beyond their shores.

We hope all will have the perspective to realize that what Vashon is experiencing right now, in terms of skyrocketing prices amid excruciatingly short supply, is a huge regional and nationwide problem.

Home prices have shot all over the United States, but particularly in metro areas and more rural areas directly adjacent to them. Rents have also risen in proportion to home prices.

Last week, The New York Times reported on this issue in its "The Upshot" column, laying out the problem in succinct terms:

"Many of the forces driving up prices today aren't temporary, or easily fixed," wrote journalist Emily Badger. "This isn't a story of overstretched buyers and risky mortgages. Rather, it's a story of way too many people, with plenty of money to spend, chasing too few homes."

The pandemic, which has slowed building everywhere and also changed the way that people make decisions about relocating, has exacerbated an already existing national crisis of supply and demand — one that won't be easily fixed.

Here on Vashon, we are fortunate to have Vashon HouseHold, a visionary organization that has long been dedicated to creating affordable housing options for islanders. We must all support its work, now more than ever, before it is too late.

We are also fortunate to be home to activists like Hilary Emmer, whose work with the Interfaith Council

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Corrections

After publishing "New Federal legislation concerns air ambulances," in our Jan. 13 issue, The Beachcomber received additional information regarding Medicare and Medicaid patients transported via Airlift Northwest. Medicare patients will have a deductible and Medicaid could possibly have a deductible, which is dependent on their plan. This information is now included in our online version of the article.

A photo by island photographer Terry Donnelly accompanied the article "Officials, legislators look for ferry fixes as woes mount," published Jan. 13. Donnelly's last name was misspelled in the photo credit and has been corrected online.

The article, "County considers a local compost facility, seeks input," published Jan. 20, contained a broken link to complete a survey from King County online, which will gauge islander's interest in building a composting facility on Vashon and other services. The correct link is tinyurl.com/ya85de9. Please note islanders should only take the survey one time, either online or via a postcard received in the mail. We regret the errors.

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Levy makes essential parts of island education possible

As you may have read in The Beachcomber's editorial last week, in the school district's new proposed strategic plan there is a "Vashon Promise" — "Every student in Vashon Island School District is welcomed, known, and treasured, and graduates with the confidence and competence to thrive in a future they imagine."

Many islanders worked on the strategic plan and while we worked two foundational ideas kept coming up — student voice and community engagement.

Vashon Island School District does not exist in a bubble on the island. The district is part of the community; the community is part of the district. While there are many community organizations who help make the education on the island as incredible as it is, not every islander usually gets an opportunity to participate directly with student education. Except when we vote.

Voting "yes" on the upcoming levy is the community's way, your way, to say "Yes! We support student learning, we support the teachers, we support the staff."

The Educational Programs and Operations Levy renewal proposition that we will be voting on is not a new tax; it is a replacement of the levy approved in 2014.



ZABETTE MACOMBER

The proposed levy rate is \$1.50 per thousand of home value for each of the next four years, similar to the current local levy rate for schools. The estimated rate, given the value of homes on the island, will be approximately \$1.10 or less.

Every four years, our district proposes

this "Educational Programs and Operations Levy" to the voters. The levy represents nearly 15% of our total operating budget or, for 2022, \$3,927,557 of a total operating budget of approximately \$26,500,000.

This levy provides crucial support for many of the programs and services that our students and families assume will always be a part of the VISD experience.

What are some of these programs and services the levy helps support?

The levy pays for the actual costs of meeting special education students' educational needs that are mandated by state and federal law, as well as training and professional development for our faculty and staff. Several support positions in our district are paid out of these local levy funds including many paraprofessionals, school secretaries, and counselors.

It pays for programs that enrich the academic and extra-curricular experience of our students including arts,



TOBY HOLMES

music, theater, AP courses, sports, clubs, field trips and other enrichment programs.

It helps to pay for keeping schools and grounds safe, functional, and clean.

It helps recruit and retain a highly qualified and effective teaching staff — and provides financial stability, with assurance to our faculty and staff that they will enjoy stable employment and they

can expect to build a career in our schools. And it provides resources for ongoing professional development and training which enhances job satisfaction and the strength of instruction in our classrooms.

When we say, "every student in Vashon Island School District is welcomed, known, and treasured, and graduates with the confidence and competence to thrive in a future they imagine," we need the support of all islanders to make this a reality.

Please vote YES on Feb. 8 to continue to support our young islanders.

Information about the history of our levy, the current levy proposal and answers to common questions are available on the district's website, at vashonsd.org/Page/543.

Zabette Macomber and Toby Holmes are the chair and vice-chair of the Vashon Island School District board.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

■ KAJ BERRY

Artist was a motivating force

I was so pleased to see the lovely obituary honoring Kajira Wyn Berry. I feel very privileged to have been Kaj's calligraphy student on Vashon. I can still hear her kind words as a disciplined instructor when she would come to me and say, "I'm not criticizing you, Leanne, I'm criticizing your work." I'm still a calligrapher, thanks to her. As a photographer, she also took wonderful portraits of our young family. She was such a motivating force in everything she took on. She recently came to me in a dream and I know she is well and free.

Leanne Chattey, Santa Fe, NM

■ PARKS

Do the right fling

Don't forget Disc Golf in the new BARC Project. It might come back to bite you.

As an avid disc golfer, involved community member, and educator, I am surprised and disappointed in the plans for RJ's kids at BARC.

The disc golf course and indoor skate parks were the first attractions establishing this park after the closing of Burton Elementary School.

As the popularity of the park increased, I served as a steward for BARC, working with the skating and biking communities to plan a recreation area for all activities to coexist.

Disc golf's popularity has steadily increased over the past decade, both nationally and locally. If you visit BARC any given afternoon, you will see groups of people playing the course, rain or shine.

So it surprises me to read about the plans for RJ's kids' project with little coordination or input from the disc golf community. The first any of us heard about it was through a spread in The Beachcomber on Christmas Eve, a time when most of us are concentrated on family here and abroad. Then in the extensive article in the January 20 edition of The Beachcomber, there is no mention of the disc golf course that will be displaced by two holes with the construction of the new pump track and walking paths. It is in the best interest of the parks department and

RJ's kids to work with the disc golf community, the largest contingency of park users, before moving forward on their project. The disc golfers on this island have started forming a strong alliance that looks forward to working with the other stakeholders in maintaining our established course.

It may seem paradoxical, but we take our frisbee seriously.

Tim Heryford

■ ENVIRONMENT

Lesson in hubris

The sinking of the Titanic in 1912 revealed the hubris of nearly everyone connected with the ship.

Fortunately, there is no hubris in the face of global warming. Everyone is scurrying about attempting to reverse climate trends — in my dreams.

The sinking was 110 years ago, more than enough time to forget lessons learned. The builders and owners of the Titanic, knowing it could not sink, furnished it with nineteen lifeboats, enough to hold about one-third of the people on board. Knowing it could not sink, no effective lifeboat drills occurred. Knowing it could not sink, the captain had the ship traveling at 22 knots, an irresponsible speed through an ice field. 1500 people died, many of whom could have been saved if the lifeboats had gone back for them.

With respect to global warming, we are where the Titanic was, speeding through the North Atlantic, just prior to striking the iceberg. But our failure will not be evident from one event, but rather a series of events. The storms, fires, and floods will continue to worsen until we reach the tipping point, the point when global warming is no longer reversible.

Scientists say it is less than ten years away. Everyone from the President to the Congress, to the news media, down to our own Beachcomber are filled with hubris. They pretend to care, but what's being done? Life goes on unchanged on Vashon with gas-guzzling SUVs and people burning firewood for heating. In Washington, DC, Republicans continue opposing any legislation combating global warming.

The spirit of the Titanic lives, except now it's called earth. Shelley Simon

What Gandhi Said ...

Note: This "Green Briefs" commentary is part of regular series contributed by The Whole Vashon Project.

I live simply so that others may simply live," is one of Mahatma Gandhi's most famous quotes.

When he first made that comment, Gandhi was encouraging us all to limit our accumulation of riches and material things so that there would be enough to go around and excess wealth could be shared with others who didn't have enough.

That's still a good idea. But there's another, perhaps more compelling, reason to live simply now and that is to help save our earthly home. Those "others" who will benefit from our simpler lives are the living beings with whom we share this home



SUSAN MCCABE

— the four-leggeds, the flying, buzzing, swimming, crawling and rooted beings. So much of what we consume in our modern lives is acquired at the expense of Earth's other inhabitants. And, by extension, ourselves.

We currently measure our standard of living by how many "things" we have amassed, how much money we make to acquire those things, and economic growth in general. That growth is largely achieved by depleting nonrenewable natural resources and damaging the environment. The good news is that there is a growing trend built on the urgent understanding that we need to preserve and heal the environment, consume less to conserve those finite resources and use what we

Foster stays are much-needed way station to forever homes

Even though it sometimes seems like the dog-to-human ratio here on Vashon is higher than anywhere else on the planet, with a population of just 11,000 people we're lucky to not have many dogs without homes.

But dogs do sometimes appear who need help from Vashon Island Pet Protectors (VIPP) to find loving adopters - and foster families represent an important bridge to attaining that ultimate goal of a "forever home." Fostering can be very rewarding, as I can attest. My wife, Yulia Ivashchenko, recently became volunteer coordinator of the VIPP Dog Foster Program — and that made her (and, by



PHIL CLAPHAM

extension, her lucky husband!) a go-to person for urgent placement of dogs who either strayed from their owners or were surrendered by their owners.

In early December, a large and very friendly dog was picked up wandering around near Tahlequah and was taken to Fair Isle vet clinic. Since the clinic couldn't keep him for the night, Yulia rushed into town to pick him up. It all ended happily: the dog's owner eventually connected with VIPP two days later, but in the meantime, he settled happily into our household and proved to be a 90-lb snuggle bunny with whom we quickly fell in love.

Reuniting lost dogs

Homes

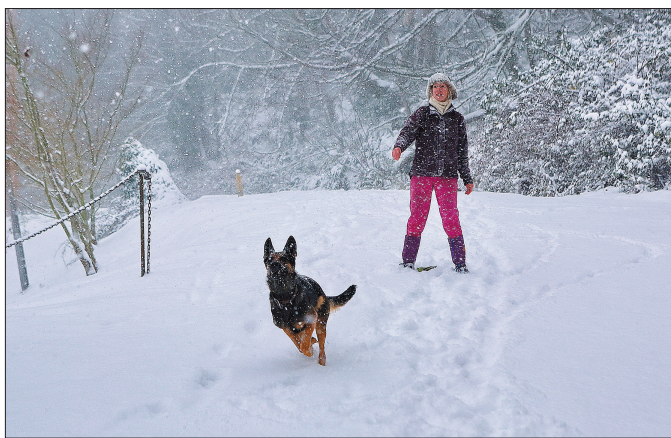
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with their owners is a service that VIPP has long offered on the island, but that sometimes creates an urgent need for an overnight foster home.

Then a week later a young female German shepherd named Luna and her two puppies were surrendered by an islander. VIPP found foster homes for the puppies and — you guessed it — you were the mother. After our own dog pointedly explained to Luna her position in the house, she quickly became integrated into our life and home; after two days you'd never have known she hadn't lived with us her whole life.

She's a wonderful animal: beautiful, playful, affectionate, and goofy. We're working to correct her reactivity to people and other dogs, but like most shepherds she's super-smart, learns quickly, and wants to please.

Add to this a sweet old pitbull named Petey who



PHIL CLAPHAM PHOTO

Yulia Ivashchenko, the volunteer coordinator of the VIPP Dog Foster Program, enjoyed the recent snow with her foster dog, Luna.

was the subject of an article two weeks ago, and our small house currently has a lot of dogage.

Right now, VIPP is looking for families who are interested in potentially

fostering dogs while we search for their lost owners or for suitable adopters. We already have a list of such kind animal-loving folks on the island, but we need to find at least a few more. Not

all such families can foster just any dog, and we recognize the restrictions some dogs have.

Size, breed, activity level, and compatibility with kids and other pets are all

factors that must be taken into account when pairing a dog with a potential foster home, and this is reflected among the foster families we currently have on the list. By the way, VIPP will

pay for the food and medical care of any foster dog.

One important role of foster families is to have the opportunity to assess a dog's personality. By learning more about the true nature of the dog (and identifying any issues), VIPP can better understand the animal and thus find the best home for him or her.

If you're interested in being considered as a foster home for dogs, we'd love to hear from you. Please email Yulia Ivashchenko at foster@vipv.org and she'll get back in touch with further details. Alternatively, you can find a foster application form on the website at vipv.org.

(By the way, Luna is available for adoption — but she needs a home with someone who has experience with shepherds, or who is prepared to continue her training. If your idea of a pet dog is something like a labradoodle, she's probably not for you! To see more of Luna, go to vipv.org.)

Phil Clapham is a retired whale biologist who lives on Maury Island.

Green

From Page 6

waste to create what we see as the necessities of life on earth.

In other words, we need to shift our societal promises from "more for everyone, eventually" to "let's take care of what we have."

It's time to look at how we measure wealth or success. In his essay "Wealth, Illth, and Net Welfare," author Herman Daly, an ecological economist, and emeritus professor at the School of Public Policy of University of Maryland, says, "Well-being should be counted in net terms, that is to say

we should consider not only the accumulated stock of wealth but also that of 'illth,' and not only the annual flow of goods but also that of 'bads.'"

He's suggesting that we, as a culture, need to subtract the negative consequences of production from the positive consequences. US Congressional representative Ilhan Omar has proposed using a GPI (General Progress Indicator) instead of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) to measure our economic/social health.

Robert F. Kennedy said it coming in 1968. Here's what he had to say about the mania for production and consumption:

"Too much and for too long, we seem to have surrendered personal excellence and community value in the mere accumulation of material things...Yet the Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile."

For most of history, nature's bounty seemed endless, and we took it for granted. With moderate numbers of people using relatively primitive technologies, the planet was practically impervious to harm from human activity. But, like the frog in the slowly boiling pot, humans continued operating on the idea that increasing production and consumption were good, ignorant of the fact that nature's bounty is finite.

So, what do we do? We can start by measuring

the cost of our daily habits against the benefits. Buying locally produced food saves fuel emissions and supports our Island farmers. Checking out consignment store fashion can mean adventures in style that save new fiber production and child labor. Repairing appliances saves money while conserving precious metal resources, and reducing plastics production and landfill volumes.

Our Island's Fixit Café is a great resource for repairs, and if you need tools for

any project, the Vashon Tool Library probably has them available to borrow. The Whole Vashon Catalog has lots of additional ideas.

Living simply for the earth can also reduce the pressure to earn more and allow more free time for those most important things. Perhaps today's Gandhi would say "Live simply so that YOU can simply live."

Susan McCabe, principal for Hannah Ink, lives and writes on Vashon.

Editorial

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to Prevent Homelessness has kept many renters in their homes throughout the pandemic. The charitable efforts of St. John Vianney's St. Vincent DePaul Society also deserve our regular support.

Looking to the immediate future, we all need to keep our eyes on what happens

next at Vashon Community Care — a place with a storied history of providing homes for those in our community who need them most. The facility should and must become that kind of refuge again, and soon.

But beyond getting behind these local efforts, we must all also work to elect leaders — in our county, state and country — who make affordable housing a priority.

The current overheated market serves so few, and there are so many of us. We truly are all in this together.

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