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Letter from the Publisher

A dear friend's shared experience has stayed with me as an endearing and meaningful example of a life well lived. It was simple, really, but its power cannot be overstated. For many years, he told me, he and a group of friends met for coffee at the same Starbucks for 20 years straight. Four or five of them met every single day at 8 o'clock in the morning, gathering for conversation and connection.

Over the course of time, they would lose to life's end one and then another. But those 20 years were made more meaningful, more full, because of that rhythm of life.

Eventually, my friend was the last man standing, and the gift of the daily moment was not discarded. It was continued. This time, though, the connections that filled his mornings were with the "young folk."

It may come as no surprise that this part of his life was also very likely extending his longevity, keeping him mentally and physically healthier.

Many of this issue's stories reference the strength of our community, the individuals who have worked to build connections and the opportunities for "communal effervescence," as our wine columnist calls it.

In our exploration of wellness throughout this issue, come with us to discover the artists, entrepreneurs, chefs and authors whose vision for a better world is fulfilled through passion and commitment. We hope you, yourself, step into the coffee shops and storefronts, and experience community amongst friends and strangers.

Enjoy time with old friends and maybe meet a few new ones!

Fawn Clark, Publisher

WELCOME
Magazine

Paine Field Airport | Snohomish County
PNW Region | Travel | Business & Leisure

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Photo by Auston James



Photo by Christine Mitchell

(left) Once Upon This Island at Village Theatre. (above) Geoff Tate and band performing at Edmonds Center for the Arts.

Let's Put On a Show

Why we love them, where to find them and how to get involved

BY JEFFREY TOTEY

So, you're watching one of your favorite TV shows on a streaming service. When the show aired originally, it was recorded live. Now imagine watching that same TV show in real time. Which experience was more enjoyable? I'm guessing you said the latter and there is a reason for that.

Earlier this year a study involving a group of 3,500 participants found that when they were watching a live performance, they enjoyed the performance more. According to Stage and Cinema, these people felt more connected to the experience. When this group watched content that was labeled "pre-recorded," they didn't enjoy the content as much.

The researchers call this a "liveness lift."

"The content didn't change. The perception of liveness did," says Susan Hall. "Our brains assign more value to moments we believe are unfolding right now. There's a fragility to live performance, an awareness that anything could happen, and that vulnerability is part of the magic."

THE POWER OF AN AUDIENCE

I love watching movies, but there is just something unique watching a play performed live. Even though you are surrounded by strangers you still experience the presentation together. The comedic lines are funnier, the dramatic pauses are more effective, and you might even be on the lookout for mistakes knowing that whatever wrong happens, the show must go on.

Those sensations go both ways. As a former community theater actor, I can attest that the more engaged the audience is with the performance, the better that performance will be.

Another study conducted by researchers at University at Buffalo found that attending live music concerts can have lasting effects that can affect your mood long after you've left the venue.

The study, which was reported last February, offers insights that suggest that these effects "are not derived entirely from what the musicians give to the audience, but also what the audience unwittingly shares amongst themselves," says Bert Gambini. "This is collective effervescence, and it has an important role in concert settings."

What is collective effervescence? Gambini says it's a "sense of connection to others," and a "sensation of sacredness" that is felt among those in the audience enjoying the same shared experience.

"It builds off our need as social beings to be connected to others and to be connected to something perhaps larger than our day-to-day lives," adds Nicole Koefler, a doctoral candidate at the university's UB psychology department.



Photo by Christine Mitchell

Enjoying a show at Edmonds Center for the Arts.



Look for Seattle International Comedy Festival at Edmonds Center for the Arts and various theaters in the region.

LAUGHTER REALLY CAN BE THE BEST MEDICINE

Glenn Rockowitz is a former local comedian (and Saturday Night Live writer), but he didn't always find the funny during his four stints of fighting cancer. Today he serves as Director of Support Services at Cancer Pathways, and he still believes in the healing powers of laughter.

When I asked him about his observations, he said, "One thing I noticed after years of performing was that people almost never talked to me afterward about a specific joke. They talked about how they felt. I think people don't remember every joke. They remember how they felt when they walked out.

"Live performance creates something that's hard to replicate anywhere else," he continued. "I think for a little while, a room full of strangers becomes a community. People laugh together, react together, and leave feeling a little less alone."

It might be easy to conclude that by attending a live performance, one is only enjoying a momentary distraction, but it goes deeper than that.

"After my own cancer diagnosis, those conversations took on a different meaning. People would wait after shows to tell me about their own cancer, a loved one's illness, or a recent loss. The laughter hadn't erased any of that. It had simply made it easier to talk about. That's something I've come to believe deeply – laughter doesn't erase suffering; it loosens its grip."

WHERE TO GO NOW?

If you're ready to dip your toes into the artistic waters, we know of a few places that can help you on your journey. Snohomish County has become a thriving arts community with places to watch performances or become a performer yourself!

BEST PLACES IN SNOHOMISH COUNTY TO WATCH A SHOW:

ANGEL OF THE WINDS ARENA
2000 Hewitt Ave., Everett
AngelOfTheWindsArena.com
Home of high energy concerts and family shows.

APEX EVERETT
1611 Everett Ave., Everett | ApexEverett.com
The beautifully restored venue is home to the elevated 16Eleven Restaurant, El Cid Cocktail Lounge and King's Hall concert hall.

DRIFTWOOD PLAYERS (Wade James Theatre)
950 Main St., Edmonds
EdmondsDriftwoodPlayers.org
Driftwood Players have been putting on community theatre shows since 1958.

EDMONDS CENTER FOR THE ARTS
410 4th Ave. N., Edmonds
EdmondsCenterForTheArts.org
Large venue where you'll find concerts, jewel-box theater presentations, ballet, etc.

NEW EVERETT THEATER
2911 Colby Ave., Everett | EverettTheater.org
The 124-year old theater is just coming off a huge remodel and reopening on September 12th. A great place for stand-up comedy and tribute bands.

THE ATTIC THEATRE
14654 148th Ave NE Sammamish Valley Grange
Woodinville, WA | TheAtticTheatre.org
A community theatre and platform for diverse voices and stories to be heard. Wonderful performances challenge and inspire audiences with thought-provoking and innovative performances.

TIM NOAH THUMBNAIL THEATRE
1211 4th St., Snohomish | ThumbnailTheater.org
The "cozy home for performing arts" offers family-friendly open-mic events and concerts.

VILLAGE THEATRE (Everett Performing Arts Center)
2710 Wetmore Ave., Everett | VillageTheatre.org
A leading producer of excellent productions of musical theatre since 1979.



Photo courtesy Matt Baker

Stunt performer Matt Baker.

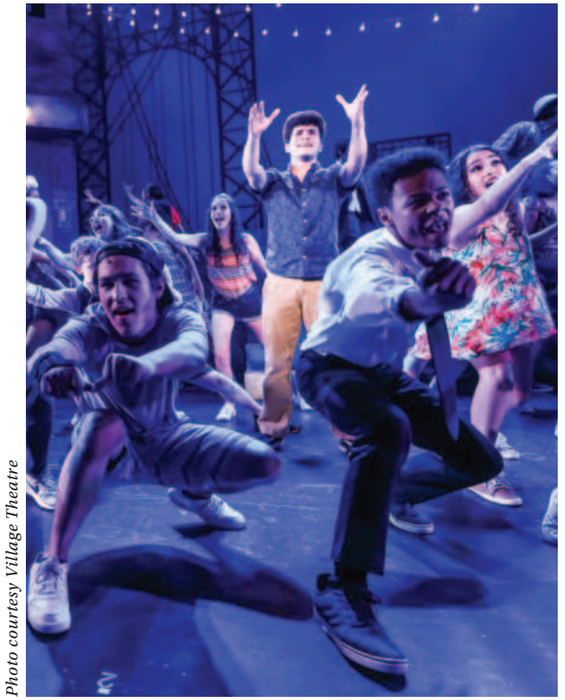


Photo courtesy Village Theatre

KIDSTAGE performance at Village Theatre.

INSPIRATION FROM THE STAGE

Pacific Northwest Stunt Performer and comedian Matt Baker has appeared on TV on "America's Got Talent" and some late night talk shows. But for a guy who can catch a bowling ball with his face, he can get surprisingly sentimental. In a recent conversation he told me, "As a professional performer, I hear many kind comments after a show, but the ones that stay with me are when someone explains how the performance truly affected them.

"Just last week, a man told me he had brought a friend who had lost his wife two months earlier. He said, 'I haven't seen him laugh like that in a very long time. Thank you for giving him a reprieve from what he's been going through'."

"Moments like that remind me why live performance matters. For a little while, people can step away from their daily struggles, share an experience with others, and enter a world filled with laughter, wonder, or possibility."

Sometimes Baker's shows inspire his audiences to take the leap and try performing themselves. Baker has just authored a book, "The Academy of Unusual Skills," which teaches readers over 100 silly tricks.

"I've also had people tell me my shows inspired them to take an improv class, try stand-up comedy, or even become professional performers themselves."

Sometimes the best medicine is to just get busy.

NOT FOR ADULTS ONLY

This probably goes without saying, but children can benefit from live performances just as much as their parents. And yet, it is so tempting to plop them in front of the TV to keep them busy while we attend to something else.

"Unlike passive digital media, live performances such as theater, storytelling, music, puppetry, and magic shows create an interactive and immersive experience that enhances children's attention span, emotional intelligence, memory retention, and problem-solving skills," says Phevenos Kytas from Whitneyfox Medium.

According to the author, live performances can help with:

- *Enhancing attention and focus*
- *Developing empathy, self-awareness and emotional regulation*
- *Stress relief and psychological well-being*
- *Strengthening problem-solving and critical thinking skills*
- *Enhancing memory and learning*
- *Language development and verbal expression*
- *Encouraging imaginative thinking*



Photo courtesy Christine Mitchell

High energy Gaelic Storm performing at Edmonds Center for the Arts.

SOOTHING THE BEAST WITHIN

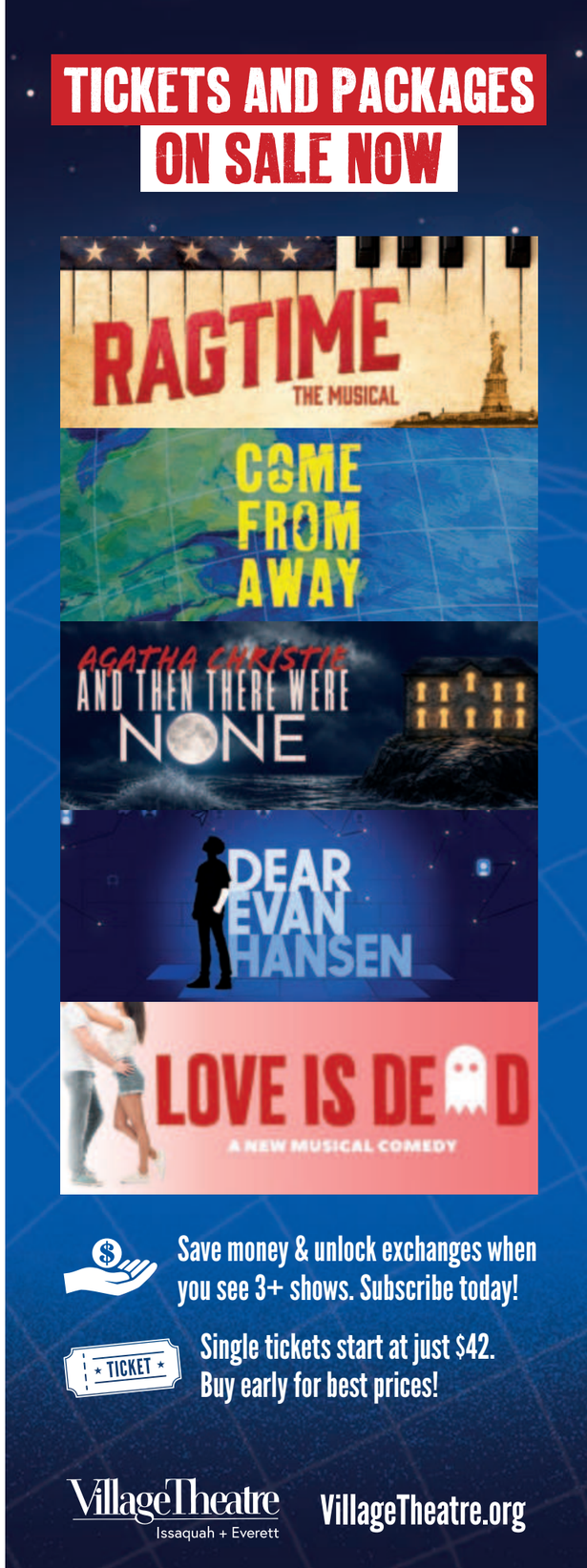
William Congreve wrote "Music has charms to soothe a savage breast." The adage describes music's calming effect on anger or difficult emotions. In fact, all forms of art can foster positive changes in our lives.

The term "NeuroArts" refers to studies that measure how the arts can help change one's brain and behavior and improve one's health, well-being and quality of life.

Cat Martin, a representative for Allen Family Philanthropies reports of a recently funded joint study by Johns Hopkins University's International Arts + Mind Lab and Seattle's Path with Art. The study measured the impact of community-based arts programming on mental health, and the results are very promising.

The participants attended online and in-person classes for two months. They were given a choice of classes that were centered on different artistic disciplines such as dance, choir, theater, visual arts and more.

The attendees came from all walks of life, but they shared similar backgrounds. All were in active recovery from one or more traumatic experiences or conditions such as homelessness, domestic abuse, mental health challenges or substance use disorders.



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The company of Grease at Village Theatre.

The surveys conducted before and after the classes showed that:

- *More than 90% of the participants said that the programs increased their self-efficacy (or their belief that they had the ability to accomplish their goals).*
- *Nearly 90% reported improvements in their mental health.*
- *More than 80% said they felt less lonely since engaging in the eight-week session.*
- *69% said they had made new friends, which suggests they have made improvements in social connection.*

"We are SO lucky to have [Path with Art] in our state leading the national movement for nueroarts," says Martin.

Actively engaging with the very many forms of art in our region helps us all stay heal, grow and connect in community.✦



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Photos by Marcus Badgley

(left) Michael Johnstone's cigar shop has become a gathering place for men who meet for hour-long walks and human connection. (above) Friends gathered at Wick-Ed Wine Social Club in Everett.

Community is Calling

Finding human connection in community spaces

BY ELLEN HIATT

"The secret to longevity, as I see it, has less to do with diet, or even exercise, and more to do with the environment in which a person lives: social and physical." — Dan Buettner, author of The Blue Zones Solution.

There is no greater ecosystem of community than its communal spaces… all a reflection of the people, their values and interests, and their need to connect. Open the map on your phone, type in "café," and within a few blocks or few miles is a place where locals gather. From Puget Sound to the foothills of the Cascades, this region is like any other – full of places where people give everything they have and are to create space for each other. But it's not always easy.

Judi Ramsey says she's been at it for four years, building Artisans Books & Coffee in Everett. It and its sister shop next door, Artisans PNW, share a century-old building downtown and were created for community. Specifically, for the neurodivergent and LGBTQ+ community. The lights are low, the bathrooms aren't gender specific, and the tables are ready for board games, artist gatherings and book readings. That was her vision when she began. Her family and friends needed a safe space like it. But it takes time to build community. More than that… it takes intention.

"It really, really, really does," she agreed.

There is a strong inclination to self-isolate, wrap ourselves in a blanket and open a good book, or get lost alone in the next episode of our favorite show, and beg forgiveness for declining the invitation to meet a friend.

But community is calling.

And sometimes, the community finds you.

“It isn’t that I have built a community. It’s that I built a place where others felt comfortable building a community.”

— Judi Ramsey, Artisans Books & Coffee

In Snohomish, Michael Johnstone opened Humidity Cigars & Tobacco because retirement from his tech career was lacking something for him. And for his wife, who told him he needed to find something to do. So he pursued a personal interest: cigars.

In May of 2026 he opened a shop, and put a bench outside. The bench sits more than 25 feet from the shop’s entrance, the distance state law requires to keep smoke away from a doorway — a rule written to move people along that has instead given them somewhere to stay. It usually has a customer on it, gathering friends. His customers are the community, built around a common interest.

The cigar shop works the way a car club does. Volvo lovers (or insert any model of automobile, wine varietal, beer drinker, or sports genre) will easily find themselves another enthusiast – whether they’re helping another work on their Volvo or gathering at a car show to admire a restored P1800.

“You are never going to see a group of folks sitting around smoking cigars, staring at their phones. It’s not going to happen. It does not exist,” said Johnstone.

Like any hobbyist, the cigar — or the wine — isn’t the reason for gathering. It’s just how you got there in the first place. Building communities is always about finding what you have in common.

“I’m not going to pretend in any way that cigars are good for you physically. I would never make a statement like that,” said Johnstone.

But the community that gathers around the cigar shop? That’s another kind of medicine. Buettner has called busting loneliness the next blockbuster drug — no prescription required.

Ramsey is finding communities are making her café their third space. Mia Hanson intentionally gathers her creative collective there every Wednesday.

Hanson is a weaver who runs Mia’s Handwovens, and she organizes Spark Creatives. Two years on and it’s a standing Wednesday art group, seven or eight people some weeks, as many as 22 others.

“When Sparks started trying to build our community, I knew that if we could bring business into Judi’s shop one evening a week, that would help them but it would also help us. We both were passionate about having a creative community meeting point. It took a few months for it to take hold and now it really runs itself,” said Hanson. “The core of it all is the community and the creativity and being around other makers who want to be together. Sometimes people show up and they don’t say a word. They just need to be around other humans.”

“Their mantra is to bring people into their circle,” Ramsey said.

“It isn’t that I have built a community. It’s that I built a place where others felt comfortable building a community,” she added.

Ramsey’s intention was to create a place where people who build community can go. The community builds itself.

At tap houses, like Tapped Public House in Everett and Mukilteo, the after-work crowd and regular game nights are an attraction.

The success of the Way Hospitality Group’s community-focused restaurant models with Tapped has led to their sixth property, Tapped Social downtown Everett. It boasts an Italian American themed restaurant with 16 cold craft taps, pool tables, dart boards, and a professional golf simulator.

Jeff “Wick” Wicklund, *Welcome’s* wine columnist, sees community gather, as well, in the sunny courtyard of his Wick-Ed Wine Social Club, where the attorneys come to hash out the day around the fire over a glass of wine from Sicily. “I don’t think it’s so much the wine that is the motivator,” he said. “It’s the idea that they’re going to a comfortable place and kind of dealing with the events of the day.”

He has a “Wickism” for what happens when they do: communal effervescence. “It’s like going to a concert,” he said. “When it’s you by yourself, it’s one thing. But when you add everybody else, it just kind of takes it to another level.” Wine helps, he allowed, because “it has so many nuances and layers. There’s a lot to talk about.”

Johnstone sees the same thing, by a different route.



Mother and daughter find it a treat to enjoy a board game at Artisans Books & Coffee in Everett.





Tapped Public House restaurants bring a warm, neighborhood spirit to all locations. The new Tapped Social on Grand in Everett is no exception. Enjoy scratch-made Italian American dishes — house-made focaccia, Wagyu meatballs, handcrafted pastas, Nonna-style pizzas, and shareable plates. Plus, pool tables, social darts, and a golf simulator. Relax, share a laugh and stay awhile.

"Men aren't going to say, hey, let's go talk about your problems and the things that are troubling you. Men don't do that. What men will do is, hey, let's go have a smoke," Johnstone said, noting that he finds veterans groups often form around cigar culture.

They won't go straight into the wife, the family, the kids, the hardships or the joys. "They're not going to start there," said Johnstone. But light a cigar and they'll get there.

On Johnstone's bench, a stranger will sit down beside a stranger, and "20 minutes later, they're exchanging phone numbers."

"Every morning before I open my shop," said Johnstone, "I come in early, maybe an hour and a half early, and I go to one of the coffee shops, and I grab a coffee, and I walk for an hour, hour and a half." He invited his email list to join him Thursdays and Saturdays. "We meet at the coffee shop, everybody brings a cigar, and we walk and talk. A leisurely stroll. It's the reason that we got together. It's not why we stayed together."

Third spaces like the humidor or the bookstore "come and go," noted Ramsey, "due to being able to afford being in business and the exhaustion from creating something from nothing against the odds. So you might find your perfect space and then lose it too soon."

Or you might gather your friends for a weekly gathering over something you love. And discover it's the friendship you love most. And support a local business while you're doing it.

"The third place has always been an important part of civilization," Wick said. "But I think it's even more important these days." ✦



GRAB A FRIEND AND FIND YOUR THIRD SPACE

According to Visit Everett, the city loves coffee so much that it ranks fourth in the nation for cities with the most coffee shops per person, boasting 4.5 shops per 10,000 people. Whether it's fresh brewed coffee or a frothy brew in a cold mug, the whole region is packed with gathering spaces like tap rooms, bakeries, coffee shops and more. Here's a few places you can keep in mind for your next gathering of friends.

COFFEE

Walnut Street Coffee — Edmonds

A block off the bustle of Main Street, Walnut Street opens at 6 on weekdays and is rarely without someone who came for a friend rather than a to-go cup. The room is small enough that regulars recognize each other and the baristas know the orders.

410 Walnut St, Edmonds 98020
(425) 774-5962 | walnutstreetcoffee.com

Narrative Coffee — Everett

Four skylights, exposed rafters and tall brick walls make this 1921 building bright even in a Puget Sound February. It pulls a genuine cross-section of downtown — courthouse staff, students, parents with strollers.

2927 Wetmore Ave, Everett 98201
(425) 322-4648 | narrative.coffee

Moe's on Olympic — Arlington

This is the sit-down Moe's, the one the company itself calls a place to meet friends and stay a while. It anchors a walkable stretch of downtown storefronts, and weekend mornings fill with people who came to talk.

434 N Olympic Ave, Arlington 98223
(360) 209-4346 | moescoffee.com



Neil Sturgeon from the band Acquired Taste, enjoying a moment with fans after the show at Watts Brewing Company.

TAPROOMS & BREWERIES

Watts Brewing Company — Woodinville

Founded in 2015 by homebrewer Evan Watts, the taproom spreads from a main room facing the tanks to a covered beer garden and a fireside patio, dogs outside and kids throughout. The calendar offers the convening: cornhole leagues Tuesdays, country swing some Wednesdays, line dancing every Thursday at seven with an instructor and a floor of beginners.

15510 Woodinville-Redmond Rd NE, Ste E110, Woodinville 98072 | WattsBrewingcompany.com

Sound2Summit Brewery — Snohomish and Port of Everett

The original of Sound2Summit's two rooms runs on a rhythm the regulars have memorized: trivia every Tuesday at six, music bingo the first Wednesday of the month, prizes for the top two teams either way. It took Best Lunch and Best Burger in the county's 2025 readers' awards, which tells you people are settling in.

1830 Bickford Ave, Ste 111, Snohomish 98290
(360) 294-8127 | Sound2Summit.com

Salish Sea Brewing Co. — Edmonds

Three blocks from the ferry dock, Salish Sea takes no reservations at either Edmonds room — you walk in, find a seat, and talk to whoever is beside you. Come for King Trivia on Wednesdays and live music most weekends.

518 Dayton St, Ste 104, Edmonds 98020
(425) 582-8474 | SalishBrewing.com

U-Neek Brewing — South Everett

Community hub with fun activities suitable for all ages. From Bricks and Brews to engaging painting and planting workshops, plus weekly Monday rotation of pinball, trivia, board/card games, and music bingo.

909 SE Everett Mall Way Ste D440, Everett, WA 98208
(425) 374-7293

WINE

Rustic Cork Wine Bar & Bistro — Lake Stevens and Pot of Everett

All ages welcome, dogs on the heated patio, five new Washington wines on the flight each month. Thursday is trivia at 6:30 and Friday brings a local musician, no cover either night.

901 Frontier Cir E, Lake Stevens 98258
(425) 263-9616 | RusticCorkWineBar.com

Port Gardner Bay Winery — Everett

A downtown tasting room that behaves like a neighborhood living room, all ages, no cover, a glass or a four-wine flight for the same 10 dollars. Thursday is open mic and weekends bring live music, which has made it a landing spot for local musicians and the people who follow them.

3006 Rucker Ave, Everett 98201
(425) 339-0293 | PortGardnerBayWinery.com

Randolph Cellars — Snohomish

A family winery on Snohomish's antique-shop main street, pouring Horse Heaven Hills and Red Mountain reds with a kitchen working alongside the bar.

1007 First St, Snohomish 98290
(360) 243-3994 | RandolphCellars.com

Snohomish County offers a tremendous selection of breweries, wineries, coffee shops and authentic meeting places. We encourage you to discover, support and share these amazing spaces! ✦



Photo by Nick Shekeryk/Discover Snohomish County

Vaunt Gallery founder and curator Vincent Ball creates immersive experiences and features art from international contemporary artists.

Cure & Curation

Meet Vincent Ball. He's the art curator who blends art, food, wine, and nature into unique immersive experiences at Vaunt Gallery in Woodinville.

BY NICK SHEKERYK FOR DISCOVER SNOHOMISH COUNTY

Farm-to-table dining is more than just a dining craze. It's a movement in response to conglomerate grocers and supply chains pumping us full of processed and genetically modified foods. It's a curiosity to know exactly where our food comes from. It's a desire to connect with the ground, trees, and plants that sustain us.

To experience farm-to-table dining is to be immersed in a sustainable ecosystem that often includes farming and cultivation, harvesting, local distribution, and timely kitchen prep. It concludes with nutritious and delicious consumption.

So, what does a former graphic designer and techie turned art gallery curator have to do with farm-to-table dining?

Vincent Ball is many things. A design innovator. A global collaborator. A cultural leader. An engaging storyteller. But most of all, he's a man who likes to have fun—and he's bringing his joy for creating immersive experiences to Vaunt Gallery.

Located at Harvest Woodinville in the heart of Woodinville Wine Country, Vaunt Gallery is Snohomish County's newest gallery and destination for contemporary art. Vaunt Gallery opened in August—and it's a reflection of Ball's passion for discovering bold, conceptually rich artists from around the world and bringing their artistry to the Pacific Northwest. His collection includes art created in the same spaces as Claude Monet and Paul Cézanne, and by an artist who shares a familial lineage with the "father of Impressionism," Camille Pissarro.

The gallery's exhibitions are thoughtfully curated to create immersive encounters for collectors, patrons, and visitors alike. One of Ball's most ambitious experiences is Forage and Form—a two-day excursion combining art, food, and nature like never before.

Like its founder, Vaunt Gallery is many things—and the best way to capture every detail is to let Ball share his vision in his own words.

In a *Welcome Magazine* first, we joined Ball at his gallery for a glass of local red from DiStefano Winery and a Q&A-style conversation on art, food, and the allure of immersive experiences.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Welcome Magazine: What is Vincent Ball's origin story?

Vincent Ball: My entire career is essentially art and experiences. A nd that's why it's so important for me to think about experiences here.

I don't consider myself an artist per se, but I've done art my entire life. After college I did graphic design. Then I went into design management and got to be around physical, tangible devices. After 18 years I left and started a design engineering company focused on developing consumer electronics and experiences.

I sold that company then realized I needed to get back to fun. And that's when I thought I have to do this. Bring some art back into my life.

WM: How did you come up with the idea for Vaunt Gallery?

VB: Four years ago, I decided I wanted to open an art gallery, so I started traveling the world and thinking about how great it would be to visit artists in their studios.

I wanted to put together a trip of 15-20 people and go around Europe and visit these artists in their studios. I also wanted to understand the food and wines and culture. And what I realized is I can do that here. There's nowhere in the Seattle area, that I'm aware of, doing what we're doing. I think that's exciting.

WM: Vaunt Gallery is located in the heart of Woodinville Wine Country. This means you're never far from good wine, good food, or healthy creative energy. How does this area inspire your vision?

VB: This area is so integrated into what we're doing and the concept of Vaunt Gallery.

Once I knew I wanted to start a gallery, I thought about where I wanted it to be. I wanted an elevated experience for my guests because the artists that I have are elevated. We have pieces that are $1,500, but I also have artists up to $1.5 million.



Photo by Vaunt Gallery

Vaunt Gallery is located at Harvest Woodinville in the heart of Woodinville Wine Country.





Photos courtesy Vaunt Gallery

(left) Vaunt Gallery's latest solo exhibit features the work of Portuguese artist Fernando Gaspar beginning in August. Gaspar visited Vaunt Gallery for an art and dinner collaboration with The SOMM Hotel and Spa. (right) At Bin 47, Executive Chef Maximillian Petty brings creativity, innovation, and a true sense of place to every plate.

I discovered this space at Woodinville Harvest. I thought about how incredible it would be to showcase wines from this region and incorporate them into the experience. At that point, it becomes more than a gallery.

WM: Vaunt Gallery uses experimental and immersive experiences that go beyond the gallery. What makes it a truly unique place to experience art?

VB: We've built Vaunt Gallery into a cultural destination. We create menus with elements from the artists' home to make it thematic with the art. It brings together multiple sensory experiences. We developed this concept with The SOMM [Hotel & Spa] and they're selling it to their guests.

I'm trying to build these experiences and it's more immersive that way. It's more interactive and exclusive because the artists are here for a short period of time. And people get to connect with them in a unique way.

WM: The connection between food and art seems to be a theme for Vaunt Gallery. Tell us about your partnership with The SOMM Hotel & Spa and how it fits into your immersive experiences.

VB: SOMM's head chef [and James Beard Award finalist], Maximillian [Petty], is very creative. We just have a great connection.

He jumped right in to come up with new ideas on how we can connect with the artists and build something meaningful. I'll give you an example. We were talking about how to create a connection between food and wine. And one of his ideas was tea tattoos instead of wristbands. It's a tea-based tattoo of art using natural elements like flowers. He thinks outside the box.

And his food is outstanding. He thinks deeply about what he's making. And he sources a lot of his food locally for his farm-to-table menu.

WM: One of your featured experiences is a multi-day immersive food and art experience called Forage and Form. How did you come up with the concept?

VB: I met [botanical] artist Grace Duda through another gallery. She's very unique in that she does foraging. But not necessarily just for food. It's to create her art. I went foraging with her, and it evolved from there.

We go out to the Snoqualmie trailhead to meet Grace and she explains how to forage, how to do it responsibly. Then we forage together for an hour before and after we have a lunch created by Chef Maximillian. He prepares a meal like poached salmon with beet salad, and we eat by the river. Then we come back to the gallery. We have wine



Photo courtesy Grace Duda Art

Grace Duda creates unique botanical art using natural elements. She creates two new pieces for each Forage to Form excursion.



Botanical artist Grace Duda leads Vaunt Gallery's Forage to Form—a multi-day immersive food and art experience.

and people share what they found with the artist.

That night, Grace stays at the hotel and creates two pieces with the elements she collected from the group. The next evening, everyone returns to the gallery, and we have a four-course meal inspired by Grace's work. Then she unveils her latest pieces.

WM: Is there a specific moment during Forage and Form that stands out as a favorite among participants? Yourself?

VB: I think it's the reveal, right? It reveals the work she did from the pieces that people contributed. It lets them be part of the art process. Maybe they add a pinecone or a leaf. It makes the unveiling fun for everyone.

WM: How can our readers sign up for Forage and Form or any of the other immersive experiences offered at Vaunt Gallery?

VB: Go to my website, find me in the gallery, or find it through SOMM. The SOMM is exclusively selling Grace Duda's experience.

WM: Any final thoughts?

VB: Every three weeks we will have a new and completely unique experience. We're always expanding. The best part is that we work with international artists, so it's going to be different every time.

Website: vaunt-gallery.com

Social: @vauntmodern (IG) /vaunt-gallery (Facebook)

To learn even more about art galleries in Snohomish County, visit discoversnohomishcounty.com or follow @discoversnoco on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.✦

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The Sisters Restaurant | TheSistersRestaurant.GodaddySites.com
Café Wylde (Vegan) | CafeWylde.com
John's Grill | JohnsGrillMukilteo.com

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Pace Kitchen | PaceKitchen.com
Roger's River View Bistro | RogersRiverView.com

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Harvest Kitchen | HarvestKitchenSkyValley.com

WOODINVILLE
Barking Frog | WillowsLodge.com
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Port of Everett | Waterfront Place @ Port of Everett

Seasons of Celebration at Waterfront Place

Waterfront Place is a year-round destination, and fall and winter bring some of the most festive reasons to visit the Port of Everett. As summer winds down, the waterfront shifts into a season of cozy outings, holiday traditions and events made for exploring the marina.

Fall kicks off with Yachtober Drink Bingo, inviting visitors to sip their way around participating waterfront restaurants and collect stamps along the way. Then, as Halloween approaches, Haunted Harbor brings a spirited seasonal celebration to the waterfront with family-friendly fun and a festive atmosphere by the bay.

As winter arrives, the marina begins to glow with holiday lights throughout the waterfront, creating the perfect backdrop for dinner, drinks, and an evening stroll. Winter Drink Bingo adds another reason to visit local businesses and make a day of exploring all od what Waterfront Place has to offer. When the Christmas Ships arrive, the celebration moves onto the water, with brightly decorated boats lighting up the bay.

The holiday season continues with Holiday on the Bay, one of the Port's signature community celebrations, along with the Holiday on the Bay 5K for runners and walkers looking to add a little movement to the festivities. Families can also enjoy Holiday Hooves: 12 Days of Reindeer, offering the chance to see reindeer up close and experience a little holiday magic in person.

From Halloween happenings and waterfront dining to reindeer, holiday lights and seasonal traditions, fall and winter prove there is plenty to experience at Waterfront Place long after summer ends.

Learn more at portofeverett.com/visit.

@portofeverett



Yachtober Drink Bingo | Oct. 1-31



Winter Drink Bingo | Dec. 1-31



Haunted Harbor | Oct. 23



Holiday on the Bay | Dec. 5



Winter Lights | Mid-Nov. to Mid-Feb.



Holiday on the Bay 5K | Dec. 6



Christmas Ships | Nov. 29



Holiday Hooves | Dec. 13-24



Photo courtesy Port of Everett

Waterfront Place's 17+ restaurants offer plenty of opportunities to nourish your body with fresh ingredients and delicious plates.

Wellness on the Waterfront

Port of Everett's Waterfront Place offers daily nourishment

BY LISA LEFEBER, PORT OF EVERETT CEO / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Wellness is more than exercise – it's about creating a life that feels good to live. It's getting outside, moving your body, nourishing your body and mind, connecting with others and finding ways to rest. The Port of Everett's Waterfront Place makes incorporating wellness into your daily life a little easier.

MOVE

Waterfront Place offers four miles of paved waterfront trails for visitors to stretch their legs, whether walking the dog, strolling with family or simply taking in the view. Moving your body becomes something to look forward to when you have views of the marina, the Cascade and Olympic mountain ranges, and marine life to enjoy. Multiple walks and runs like Walk To End Alzheimer's (Oct. 10), Making Strides Against Breast Cancer (Oct. 24), Holiday on the Bay 5K (Dec. 6), and Milltown Marathon (Mar. 27) turn movement into giving back to the community. You may even find that you start to recognize and connect with other visitors enjoying the space – because connection is an important part of overall health, too. Looking for other ways to move? The Port of Everett Marina, Jetty Island and other recreational opportunities nearby offer plenty of ways to get outside and stay active like kayaking, sailboat races, windsurfing, kiteboarding, and more.

NOURISH

Waterfront Place's growing collection of restaurants offers plenty of ways to nourish your body – and reasons to linger. Try the fresh catch of the day at Anthony's HomePort Everett or The Net Shed or enjoy cultural fusion dishes like birria ramen at Marina Azul Cocina & Cantina and jalapeno dumplings at Fisherman Jack's. Find favorites like smash burgers and sweet potato waffle fries at Tapped Public House, brunch at Jetty Bar & Grille, or fish & chips at Scuttlebutt Family Pub. For those needing to grab a quick bite, an espresso from Wood's Coffee, a deli sandwich from Seas the Day, or a clam strip basket from Woody's gives hungry visitors plenty of options. Lombardi's Italian promises homemade pasta and more in a beautiful waterfront setting. Washington wines at Rustic Cork Wine Bar, a wide selection of whiskeys at Muse Whiskey & Coffee, small-batch spirits at Bluewater Organic Distilling, and a rotating menu of brews at Sound2Summit Brewing offer multiple options for libations. And a sweet treat from South Fork Baking Co. or Menchie's at the Marina ensures that there is something on the waterfront for everyone to enjoy.

"Perhaps one of the most important ingredients of a well-rounded life is connection, and that may be one of Waterfront Place's greatest strengths."

CONNECT

Perhaps one of the most important ingredients of a well-rounded life is connection, and that may be one of Waterfront Place's greatest strengths. Throughout the year, the Port is home to 90+ waterfront events, including concerts, festivals, walks, community gatherings and more, all of which transform the waterfront into a place where people come together. Upcoming community events include Haunted Harbor (Oct. 23) and Holiday on the Bay (Dec. 5), drawing thousands of people to Waterfront Place. Beyond structured events, Waterfront Place's gathering spaces like parks, plazas, restaurants, docks, and marina





Whether walking the dog, or out for an evening stroll (or sail), Waterfront Place offers many opportunities to move your body – a key ingredient for wellness.

vistas on the esplanade encourage people to put down their phones and connect with the world around them and the people in it. With more than 2.1 million site visits so far in 2026, Waterfront Place has become a go-to spot for community connection.

REST

Although Waterfront Place is a community hub of activity, it also offers opportunities to slow down and rest – a key ingredient of wellness. Hotel Indigo Seattle Everett Waterfront and Port Gardner Inn offer a chance to rest your head along the waterfront. Blue Adirondack chairs dot the walking paths and invite visitors to sit down and stay awhile. The sound of gentle waves encourages visitors to take a break from busy days, and watch barges, sailboats, fishing vessels and other boaters cruise the Snohomish River from the overlooks at Boxcar Park or Jetty Landing Park. As the summer sun fades into fall, the beauty of the waterfront continues year-round with changing autumn leaves, stunning winter sunsets, and the blooms of spring soon to return, offering visitors a beautiful spot to rest throughout the year.

The Port of Everett's Waterfront Place offers opportunities to move, nourish, connect and rest – everything you need for daily wellness. Go to www.portofeverett.com/visit to plan your next visit to the waterfront. ✦



The Port of Everett's annual Holiday on the Bay festival, tree lighting, and lighted boat parade is a community favorite that drew 12,000 people last year. Mark your calendars for Saturday, Dec. 5, 2026.



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(left) A towering Welcome Figure greets all who enter Lumen Field's north plaza. (above) Super fan George Montero and his legendary conche shell. "It brings echoes of the past, and resonates the vibrations of victory on game days," he declared proudly.

The Seattle Seahawks Unite Coast Salish Country

BY MICHEAL RIOS

Photos by Michael Rios

On any given Sunday during football season, living rooms across Snohomish County become gathering places. Families crowd around televisions. Jerseys, face paint, and the unmistakable cry of "Go Hawks!" fill neighborhoods from Everett to Stanwood, from Mukilteo to Tulalip.

For many, it's simply football. But for the Tulalip Tribes and Indigenous communities throughout Coast Salish Territory, the Seattle Seahawks represent a rare example of professional sports serving as a bridge between modern fandom and Indigenous identity.

Sports have always possessed a unique ability to bring people together. They erase differences in age, background, and occupation for a few hours each week. Whether celebrating a game-winning drive or enduring a heartbreaking defeat, fans experience the emotional journey together.

That collective experience builds stronger neighborhoods, creates traditions, and reminds people that community still matters. Few organizations embody that spirit in the Pacific Northwest quite like the Seattle Seahawks.



Coast Salish tribes routinely remix Seahawks imagery via a variety of art forms, including traditional hand drums and canoe paddles.

Long before Lumen Field became known for its deafening roar of the "12s," the artistic traditions of the Coast Salish and neighboring Northwest Coast peoples had been telling stories through bold lines, flowing forms, and powerful imagery.

When the Seahawks unveiled their iconic logo in 1976, its design drew inspiration from Indigenous art of the Pacific Northwest. Decades later, the organization has made meaningful efforts to deepen that connection. Not merely acknowledging the inspiration, but actively building relationships with the Native communities whose ancestral homelands encompass the region.

"Great things inspire imitations. In the same way that so many Native people and white people and Asians are inspired by hip-hop, an art form created by Black people, many people are inspired by our beautiful art," said Native advocate, criminal defense lawyer, and Seattle resident Gyasi Ross (Blackfeet). "Native people have some beautiful artwork; of course, it inspires people to want a piece of it. The Seahawks logo is a perfect example of that. And we love it."

For the Tulalip Tribes, whose reservation lies just 40 miles north of the Hawks Nest, those efforts have transformed what could have remained a visual connection into an authentic partnership.

In recent years, the Seahawks organization has worked alongside Coast Salish nations to celebrate Indigenous culture in highly visible ways. Cultural ambassadors have welcomed fans into the stadium. Tribal artists have shared their work with thousands of visitors. Youth football initiatives have brought professional players into Native communities, inspiring the next generation while creating opportunities that extend well beyond the playing field.

Those moments matter. Representation is powerful, particularly for Native Americans who have historically seen few reflections of themselves in professional sports outside of outdated stereotypes.

"The Seahawks have given back to our community in so many ways and really made a difference in the lives of our youth," shared lifelong fan Josh Fryberg (Tulalip). "As for the connection between the Seahawks and Coast Salish art, the roots definitely run deep. For my family, we have a lot of Seahawks-themed artwork created by very talented Native artists, both from Tulalip and other tribes. More than art though, the Seahawks mean family togetherness. Every 'Blue Friday' we rock our jerseys and every game day we gather as a family to cheer on our Seahawks."

When Seattle captured its second Super Bowl championship earlier this year, with a decisive 29-13 win over the New England Patriots, celebrations stretched far beyond downtown Seattle. Across Tulalip, families gathered for watch parties that brought together grandparents, parents, grandchildren, cousins, and neighbors. Some were lifelong football devotees. Others admitted they only tuned in for the biggest games. But everyone celebrated together.

The Super Bowl LX championship showed how sports have an extraordinary ability to create moments of shared joy that ripple across entire communities. That same sense of togetherness unfolds every season. Walk through Tulalip on a game day and you'll find Seahawks flags waving from homes, children tossing footballs in front yards wearing navy and action green, and conversations at local businesses revolving around playoff hopes, standout performances, and Monday morning quarterback debates.

Indeed, for the Seahawks diehard fanbase, football has truly become a common language.

"My dad and I moved to the Seattle area in 1991, but he had already been rooting for the Seahawks since their inception in 1976," recalled Seahawks fanatic and devout 12th Man member Trisha Montero (Tlingit & Haida). "My dad took me to my first Seahawks game in 1993, when they still played in the Kingdome. I became a fan for life that day.

"It's impossible to say how many games we've been to, but what I can say for certain is we are truly immersed in everything Seahawks," she continued. "A lot of people recognize my dad come game days for his legendary conch shell. He's been bringing it to games for over 30 years. We are loud and proud '12s' and we will bleed blue and green forever."

For residents visiting Snohomish County, understanding the relationship between the Seahawks and the Tulalip Tribes offers a richer perspective on what makes this region unique. Here, football intersects with culture. A professional sports franchise has become part of a larger story about honoring Indigenous heritage while embracing a shared future. ✦



The inspiration for the Seahawks logo is a Kwakwaka'wakw transformation mask. Carved in the late 19th century, this mask was on display at UW's Burke Museum in 2014.







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The property is accessible directly from a main arterial, is gently terraced, and accommodates ample parking and outdoor entertainment for up to 50 guests. A covered stage serves up live music, dining or dancing, while the adjacent lawn yields yard games and event tents. Native plantings and vegetable gardens soften the landscape and provide dramatic colorful backdrops. Adjacent baseball fields offer hours of summer entertainment.

For 24 years, Jack's Tractors operated a successful farm and lawn equipment repair shop from the original house and outbuilding until retirement in 2014. The next 5 years turned the main house into a community tap room, and the workshop to a wine tasting room. In 2019, the property was acquired to intentionally repurpose the 1.5 acre parcel for compliance with its residential-zoning.

The Sammamish Valley remains deeply connected to its roots. A dozen organic farms operate within a mile in either direction. Recognizing local culture, Hollywood Manor took shape on century-old architecture. In early 2024, the completed 5,200 square-foot add-on to the 1,700 square-foot 1950's rambler became the largest permitted residential addition in the region. Designed to double as a showroom of installed product for their home-based remodeling business, the entire home is adorned with a variety of interior and exterior finishes into every room. Bespoke details resonate throughout the common areas and in each of the themed 5 suites for a comfortable stay.

Exploring the area on foot is encouraged as parking is somewhat limited. Over 20 wine tasting rooms and 12 restaurants are within a 15 minute walk. The neighboring Harvest development features the Somm Hotel and dozens of boutique shops on the square. If dining-in is your thing, local chefs are on hand to perform in Hollywood Manor's gourmet kitchen. However you enjoy your visit, this magnificent home is designed for memorable gatherings.









Photo by Amber Dawn Schultheis

Farmer Jerry's hands, weathered and strong, harvesting late-season rhubarb stalks.

Intentional Gatherings

How local ingredients create lasting memories.

BY AMBER DAWN SCHULTHEIS

I remember peeling apples with one of those old-fashioned, counter-fastened peelers at my grandmother's house. Peeling a Granny Smith in one long, endless strand brought so much joy and satisfaction. As the brightly colored peels piled up on the counter, we would break pieces off in strips, coat them in sugar and a little cinnamon, and gobble them up between turns of rolling out pastry and slicing uniform wedges. I can still imagine the way my grandmother's house smelled, before Papa's hard-working hands became soft and when his infectious laugh still filled each room.

Growing up, the produce stands in Washington were abundant with crates of end-of-season fruit. Buying 25 pounds of apples for 50 cents a pound felt like a steal (because it was!) and driving away with a backseat full of aromatic, seasonal bounty was a gift. It also meant a day or two of slowing down, spending meaningful time in the kitchen to the tunes of the local blues station, pausing for a spirited kitchen dance, and sharing a thoughtful drink.

I've thought a lot about what makes gatherings special. And while there's a time and place for store-bought desserts and pre-constructed cheese platters, the intimacy that comes through when a meal is thoughtfully sourced and made by hand with time and care is something that cannot be found in most generic grocery aisles.

Living in Snohomish County means we're surrounded by people who make extraordinary things with their hands. Farmers wake before sunrise to harvest vegetables and ranchers to herd cattle. Beekeepers bottle honey just miles from our homes. Potters, bakers, and florists all contribute something meaningful to our tables.

My curiosity about farmers and makers is endless, and learning how and why they began farming, potting, or beekeeping has become one of my favorite parts of shopping small. Every product has an origin story, shaped by the hands and heart of the person who made it.

When we source from our neighbors, we also benefit from the story behind the product; we support their dreams and become part of a community rallying behind their efforts. It's the hand-molded beeswax candles crafted by a Lake Stevens beekeeper, the rustic ceramic platter from the Monroe sculptor who opened an amazing art center so she could make art and help others do the same, and the Snohomish beetroot farmer sharing hand-sketched recipes determined to turn even the biggest skeptics into believers. The intentionality shared among local farmers and makers carries through to our kitchens and dining spaces. It is felt when we bring their treasures into our homes, set the table, and spend time with the people we love.

When we look for ways to make gatherings feel special in every season of life, locally-sourced ingredients are a wonderful place to start. Let's take a stroll through a local farm stand or holiday market and let their passion inspire us to imagine a simple, seasonal dinner with a friend or two, and then make it so. And let us remember that when we serve our loved ones food with a story, it's an invitation to linger a bit longer and to savor the moment. This moment is fleeting.

In thinking about the most memorable meals I've had the joy of experiencing, one of the things that stands out as a consistent measure of delight are the scratch-made, hand-made details. Perhaps that's why I still think about those afternoons spent peeling apples. A reminder that the meals we remember most are rarely the fanciest—they're the ones prepared with care, shared with intention, and enjoyed around a table where everyone feels truly welcome. ✦



Photo by Amber Dawn Schultheis

The joyful satisfaction of peeling an apple in one long, twirling strip. Apple pie baking is a most certain way to invite nostalgia in for a visit.



Old Fashioned Apple Pie with Cardamom & Ginger

(A Variation of Great-Grandma Mary's Apple Pie Recipe)

Developed by Amber Dawn Schultheis
of The Host Notes

INGREDIENTS

2 premade pie crusts
¾ cup Sugar
2 tablespoons All-Purpose Flour
1 tablespoon Cinnamon
2 teaspoons Cardamom
1 teaspoon Ginger
¼ teaspoon Kosher salt
5-6 cups Granny Smith and Honeycrisp apples, combined, peeled and sliced ½ inch thick
1 tablespoon Lemon juice, freshly squeezed
3 tablespoons Butter, unsalted

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1 - Roll one of the pie crusts into a circle, about 9-inches in diameter, to fit your pie pan. Gently place in the pie pan and set aside.

Step 2 - In a large mixing bowl, combine sugar, flour, cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, and salt. Spread about ⅓ of the mixture on top of the pastry-lined pie pan.

Step 3 - Arrange the apples in the pie pan in an even layer and sprinkle with the remaining sugar-spice mixture over the top evenly. Drizzle the lemon juice over the apples and dot the top evenly with ½ inch cubes of butter.

Step 4 - Roll the second pie crust out into a circle large enough to fully cover the apples. Crimp the edges using the back of a fork or the "finger clamp" method to completely seal the apples into the crust. Using a sharp knife, create 3-5 vents in the top crust.

Step 5 - Bake on the middle shelf at 375° for about 50 minutes or until the pie is visibly bubbling through the vents in the center of the pie. If it's not quite bubbly in the middle, continue baking for 5-minute increments until it is.

TO SERVE

Allow the pie to cool so it sets properly. Serve with fresh vanilla whipped cream or your favorite ice cream and enjoy with people you love.

LOCAL AND SEASONAL FARMS AND MARKETS

A Bit of Taste Olive Oil Co.
ABitofTaste.com

Sky Valley Farms
SkyValleyFamilyFarm.com

Monroe Creamery
MonroeCreamery.com

Sunnyside Up Farms
facebook.com/SunnyideUpFarmWa/

Silver Maple Farms
SilverMapleFarmofWashington.com

Garden Treasures
GardenTreasuresFarm.com

Sno-Isle Food Co-op
SnoIsleFoods.coop

Sea to Shore Sea Food Co.
SeatoShoreSeafood.com

Skagit Gourmet Mushrooms
SkagitGourmetMushrooms.com

Maries Bee's
MariesBees.com



Photo by Amber Dawn Schultheis

A Simply set table with a light grazing board for guests to enjoy while dinner simmers on the stove. Finds from the Snohomish Harvest Holiday Market bring ease to a casual dinner gathering.

Holmquist Hazelnut Orchards
HolmquistHazelnuts.com

Chuckanut Beef
ChuckanutBeef.com

Fire Trail Farm
FireTrailFarm.com

Hogstead Family Farm
HogStead.net



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Photo by Marcus Badgley



Photo by Marcus Badgley

(above) The author and *Welcome* editor Ellen Hiatt share a wine tasting together. (left) The art of wine is both inside the bottle, and outside.

Wine is an Art Best Shared

BY JEFF "WICK" WICKLUND

I can confidently assert that wine has had a direct correlation with many other forms of art since antiquity – whether on the label on the bottle, the cork that seals it, or even the foil that covers the cork. The artisans involved give considerable consideration to recognise and complement the art form of the bottle's contents.

Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece, "The Last Supper," didn't depict Jesus and his besties drinking milk.

Closer to home, I remember back in the mid-'90s when I was building out my first wine shop in downtown Everett, I had a friend and fellow local business owner come in and ask, "Wick! What are you doing? This is Everett. You should 'stack it high and watch it fly' and offer discounted prices. This looks like you're trying to build a museum." I simply replied, "That's not how I see it. I believe wine is a vast and beautiful art form, and it needs to be respected and portrayed as such (and I think I added, "damn it!").

One of my favorite movies happens to be written, produced, directed, and acted by avid Eonophiles. "Sideways" is a dark, relationship comedy centered entirely around the wines of northern Santa Barbara County. Factual and hilarious, this viniferous art form takes you on a thought-provoking journey and contains perhaps my favorite movie quote. No, it wasn't the one about Merlot. It was Maya (played by Virginia Madsen) who said, "I started to appreciate the life of wine, that it's a living thing, that it connects you more to life. I like to think about what was going on the year the grapes were growing. I like to think about how the sun was shining that summer and what the weather was like. I think about all those people who tended and picked the grapes. And if it's an old wine, how many of them must be dead by now? I love how wine continues to evolve, how



The branding of a bottle of wine begins and ends with the label.



Photo by Marcus Badgley

Chateau Ste. Michelle launched its Artist Series of labels in 1996.

if I open a bottle, the wine will taste different than if I had uncorked it on any other day, or at any other moment. A bottle of wine is like life itself – it grows up, evolves, and gains complexity. And it tastes so f***ing good."

The branding of a bottle of wine begins and ends with the label. Historically in Bordeaux, a Châteaux simply had, and continues to have, a pen-and-ink depiction of the architecture of the Châteaux. Châteaux Mouton Rothschild, which has "First Growth" or " Première Cru" status, has been dedicating their label design to the world's most celebrated artists since 1945, including Miro, Chagall, Dali, Picasso, and King Charles.

These "Artist Series" labels have caught on all over the planet. Here in Washington State, wineries such as the trail-blazing Chateau Ste. Michelle and Woodward Canyon have had and continue to have amazing local artists design their annual labels for decades. Chateau Ste. Michelle launched its Artist Series in 1996 to celebrate the collaboration between artisan winemaking and fine art, with the inaugural 1993 vintage featuring glass Artist Dale Chihuly.

Rick Small, Owner and Winemaker at Woodward Canyon Winery in Walla Walla, told me recently, "I was at a wine dinner in Portland, Oregon, and was seated next to an artist named Jenny Mark. With an artist series in mind, I called Jenny and our Artist Series had its first label. She was delighted to be the first, and we still have the art in our home. It's been a great part of our portfolio, and I would not have changed a thing in doing it. I've always believed that wine is a living art form and should be recognized and celebrated as such".

Rick began the Woodward Canyon Artist Series Cabernet Sauvignon in 1992, featuring renowned artists to emphasize his belief that wine is, indeed, art in a bottle.

While art is the throughline between vintner and graphic artist, the ultimate tribute is in the act of appreciation. The shared bottle with friends. The moment of recognition when the wine lingers over the taste buds. Wine is an art best shared. ✦

"The moment of recognition when the wine lingers over the taste buds. Wine is an art best shared."







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Photo by Cascadia Art Museum

The Cascadia Art for Schools program educates and inspires the next generation of artists.

Art as Salve: The Medicinal Benefits of Creative Spaces

The Schack Art Center and Cascadia Art Museum are among the many creative destinations in Snohomish County delivering a dose of wellness though artistry.

BY NICK SHEKERYK
FOR DISCOVER SNOHOMISH COUNTY

The digital age continues to innovate the way we gather information and connect with others. The rapid rise in technological advances gives us unprecedented and endless access. All the things. All the people. All the time.

The vastness of our virtual footprint brings us together in many ways, but it often comes at the expense of our collective connection to the physical world. When combined with the countless lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the result can be profound social isolation and loneliness.

According to the World Health Organization Commission on Social Connection, loneliness affects one in six people around the globe. What's more concerning is that loneliness is linked to 871,000 deaths per year. It's even recognized as a public health epidemic. Despite all our digital connectedness, it's possible that we're living in the loneliest time in human history.

Solving our widespread loneliness seems like a job best suited for medical and mental health professionals. And while the experts certainly have a hand in curing loneliness, some of the heavy lifting as of late is attributed to the arts.

JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

What role does art play in inching us toward the end of the loneliness epidemic? It's becoming increasingly clear that each paintbrush stroke, music note, or dance rehearsal has the power to heal the mind, body, and soul. But don't take my word for it. Consult the experts.

A growing phenomenon in clinical practice is prescribing art to improve mental and physical wellbeing. Art is one of five activities – including movement, nature, belonging, and service – clinically proven to improve overall health and boost moods while also reducing depression and anxiety. It also plays a key role in reducing the impact of conditions like ADHD, addiction, and dementia. Art and its activity-related counterparts have even been known to help relieve pressure on healthcare systems by getting people out of emergency rooms and into safe, connected spaces.

If the thought of prescribed creative expression seems daunting, fear not. Prescribing art is for everyone – whether you're into creating or appreciating art. So go to the cinema, grab a bucket of popcorn, and watch that film you've been wanting to see. It might just be exactly what the doctor ordered.



Photo by Schack Art Center

The Schack Art Center's hot shop is a world-class glass-blowing studio that's open to the public.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY THRIVES AT THE INTERSECTION OF ART, INNOVATION & WELLNESS

Snohomish County sprawls more than 2,000 square miles between the Salish Sea and Cascade Range—but inspiration is never far away. Whether it comes from our fertile farmlands, vibrant urban hubs, or historic towns forged by riverscapes, the creative energy in Snohomish County is as vast and diverse as the land and its inhabitants.

It's a place where people think differently. It's a place where people are passionate about creating, interacting with, and facilitating art. This robust creative ecosystem lends itself to needing art spaces—and the county has dozens of prominent museums, galleries, cultural centers, and community arts organizations that allow the arts to flourish.

We'll explore two of the county's most coveted art institutions—the Schack Art Center in Everett and the Cascadia Art Museum in Edmonds—to discover some of the ways in which they contribute to the health and wellbeing of Snohomish County.

SCHACK ART CENTER

The history of the Schack Art Center bringing accessible art to Everett dates back more than 50 years. Since 1974, this nonprofit art center has been a cultural hub featuring contemporary exhibits, youth programs, community art classes, a gift shop, and a world-class glass-blowing hot shop that's open to the public.

The Schack is a grant-funded, community centric art center with an admission-free model that invites 100,000-plus visitors into the world of visual art each year. It facilitates group art experiences, studio space rentals, educational opportunities, and even hosts the annual Fresh Paint Festival which allows audiences to interact with artists and

"Investing in the arts is an investment in not only art, but also public health. It builds economic vitality and makes Everett a place where people want to live and be engaged."

— Raedle Alburn
Executive Director
of The Schack



Photo by Schack Art Center

Raedle Alburn was appointed the new Executive Director of the Schack Art Center in April 2026. Alburn was previously the Schack's Director of Development and Education.

art during the creation process. The Schack also partners with several local organizations that prioritize and promote the positive impact of art on marginalized and underfunded communities.

"The arts are part of the health infrastructure of a community," said Executive Director Raedle Alburn. "A huge part of our mission is identifying groups that we can serve with our programs. Groups we know will really benefit from leveraging the power of art."

Alburn was appointed as the center's executive director in April 2026. She previously managed community outreach and educational programs as the center's Director of Development and Education. Alburn's passion for promoting accessibility and belonging in the arts fuels her vision for the Schack's present and future.

"That feeling of safety and freedom, and security that comes in the arts classroom—I'm passionate about what the arts can do for bringing that sense of belonging to more spaces," said Alburn. "The Schack is a larger representation of that. It creates that feeling for our community."

Among the Schack's biggest contributions to positivity in the community is its Art Alternatives program. This diversion program provides weekly visual arts classes and outreach efforts to at-risk, incarcerated, and homeless youth in Snohomish County.

"Our goals are relationships, skill building, and recognition that's meaningful to the kids," said Art Alternatives Coordinator Henri Wilson. "A lot of kids don't have an entry way into art or positive expression, so we offer access to other possibilities."

Wilson has been with the Schack for more than 30 years. She helped start the program in 1991 and has been instrumental in its continual development. The program aims to increase protective factors by creating environments that offer youth exposure to connections with trusted adults, meaningful community engagement, and tools for building constructive emotional regulation. Wilson uses a variety of mixed media to lead process-oriented projects that focus on mindfulness and positive brain activity.

"We want to help these kids become more civically engaged and to get on the path that leads to a healthier life through art," said Wilson.

Amid the success of Art Alternatives, the program faced a major setback when massive cuts to federal arts funding threatened to end the program this year. However, it received a lifeline when the Schack became one of 10 organizations in Washington state to be awarded $515,000 for creative youth development from the Allen Family Foundation. The much-needed funding directly supports Art Alternatives in areas such as staffing, supplies, and the continuation of its alumni program and associated paid teaching assistant position for a former program member.

The funding secured from the Allen Family Foundation has given new life to Art Alternatives, but it's just the beginning of more great things to come for Alburn, Wilson, and the Schack. And it will take many hands from the arts community and beyond to make measurable progress.

"I would love to see our community and policymakers make funding for the arts a priority," said Alburn. "Investing in the arts is an investment in not only art, but also public health. It builds economic vitality and makes Everett a place where people want to live and be engaged. The Schack is fully committed."

Web: Schack.org

Social: @schackartcenter

CASCADIA ART MUSEUM

Since 2015, Cascadia Art Museum has brought critical focus to the visual art and design traditions of Northwest art for the period of 1870-1970. The museum aims to shed light on the artistry of women, minorities, and other marginalized peoples who have contributed to the region's vast cultural identity.

"There's so much richness and uniqueness in Northwest art," said the museum's Marketing Manager, Sydney Kaemmerlen. "An important part of our mission is not only displaying amazing works of art, but to explore the stories and impacts of our region's artists and preserve their legacy for future generations."



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Photo by Schack Art Center

Guests enjoying the Garden Soiree hosted by Schack Art Center.

In little more than a decade, Cascadia Art Museum has featured 50 exhibits dedicated to lesser known, but highly influential Northwest artists. The museum is also the region's top publisher of academic books on Northwest artists. Museum curator David Martin has published nine of these books, with the latest being on the groundbreaking Seattle Camera Club.

"The books are a great way to help establish these artists and share their history," said Kaemmerlen. "It ensures their story is heard and learned and passed through generations."

Cascadia's thoughtfulness toward art education extends beyond its exhibits with programs that create space for artists, children, and people with dementia.

The Cascadia Art for Schools program offers K-8 students and their teachers access to the gallery. The museum also provides transportation and hosted more than 1,700 students last year.

The museum also features a local contemporary artist each month. The featured artist gets their work promoted in the museum store, and they do an in-house creative demonstration in conjunction with the monthly Edmonds Art Walk.

Another unique and free program happening at Cascadia is Artful Moments—a self-guided museum visit for people with dementia and their caregivers.

"Every month, we close the museum to the general public for a couple hours to create a quiet, peaceful, and safe environment for this group to enjoy and explore art together," said Kaemmerlen.

All these programs and more are kept afloat by the museum's dedicated staff and more than 100 volunteers.

"We have such a passionate group of ambassadors that help in the museum store, give tours, and monitor the galleries," said Kaemmerlen. "We are so lucky to have them all in service of the arts.". ✦



I love seeing families delight in the places and experiences we've helped create. I don't know this family, but I love that they made an Everett memory beneath a mural that says exactly what I hope our city always does: welcome you.

Growing, Everett

Recognizing generational commitment to extraordinary

BY TYLER CHISM

Looking out the window from my tenth-floor office in downtown Everett is something I never take for granted. I've worked, and for much of my adult life lived, in or on the edge of downtown.

As I enter my 40s, I'm tempted to think I've discovered something profound about life and love. But if I'm fortunate enough to read this again at 60, I suspect I'll smile too and think, You knew so little.

One of life's greatest gifts is realizing there is always another layer of wisdom waiting for us. Another way to see the world, another perspective, another chance to appreciate what we once overlooked.

For now, here's what I think I know.

Loving a place, just as with loving a person, isn't about wishing it would stay exactly as it is. It's about growing alongside it.

Just as I am not the person I was 20 years ago, the Everett I fell in love with in my twenties isn't the Everett I know today. Downtown has grown. The waterfront has transformed. New housing has risen. Restaurants have opened, closed, and opened again. Public spaces have been reimagined. New traditions have taken root. A new generation has stepped into leadership.

Cities don't become extraordinary by accident. They become extraordinary because generation after generation decides they are worth loving.



In Memory of Paul Roberts. Paul Roberts devoted decades to public service and to making Everett a better place. He believed deeply in this community and in our responsibility to leave it better than we found it. I was fortunate to know him, learn from him, and call him a friend.

Every welcoming café, every neighborhood park, every restored historic building, every mural, every thriving small business, every trail, every community event, and every tree casting shade over a sidewalk exists because someone invested something of themselves. Time. Talent. Creativity. Hard work. Resources. Vision. Hope.

Everett's growth and transformation is the result of countless ordinary acts of love.

When we admire what Everett has become, we're seeing the harvest of seeds planted by people we'll never meet. The shade we enjoy today was planted decades ago. The festivals we look forward to each year began as someone's hopeful idea. The storefronts we admire exist because someone believed this place was worth investing in. Our strong economy exists because generations of engineers, machinists, entrepreneurs, and risk-takers believed they could build something extraordinary right here in Everett.

The changing seasons remind us of that, too.

Summer is joyful and energetic. Everett hums with activity. Visitors fill restaurants and hotels. Festivals, concerts, farmers markets, and neighborhood events create a rhythm that carries everyone a little faster.

Then, almost imperceptibly, the pace changes.

The air cools. The light softens. Leaves begin their quiet transformation. We trade our T-shirts for puffer jackets, yet still insist on dining al fresco whenever the weather gives us half a chance.



Photo by Kyle Evans for Port of Everett

There's something special about watching families make memories in places that once existed only as someone's idea. Everett's waterfront has been shaped over generations. The places we create today become someone else's memories tomorrow.

"Everett's growth and transformation is the result of countless ordinary acts of love."

Autumn invites us to harvest perspective. It reminds us that growth isn't measured only by what is new. It's measured by what has taken root. It reminds us to keep the soil healthy for the next growing season.

Working in economic development, it's easy to become preoccupied with what's next. New businesses. New housing. New investments.

Those things matter. But the more my hair grays, the more I find myself appreciating what already exists because someone cared enough to build it, protect it, or imagine it before I ever arrived. Communities thrive not because they chase change for its own sake, but because each generation accepts the responsibility of leaving a place a little better than they found it.

That's the Everett I see outside my window.

It's not simply a collection of buildings, streets, and unfamiliar faces, but a living community shaped by people who have loved this place enough to keep investing in it. Some have devoted decades to public service. Others have opened businesses. Some have raised families. Others moved here to begin new ones. Some planted trees whose shade they knew they would never sit beneath. Our engineers, tradespeople, educators, artists, entrepreneurs, volunteers, and neighbors are all helping build a future that is difficult to imagine today but one future generations will simply call home.

I don't know what Everett will look like 20 years from now.

But I know it will be different.

So will I, if I'm lucky. I hope I'll still be discovering new reasons to love this city.

Because that's what it means to truly love something. Not asking it to remain the same, but cherishing it while growing alongside it through every season.

The Everett I inherited is a gift.

The Everett we leave behind will be our gift to the next generation. ✦

Dedicated to Paul Roberts, Everett's passionate advocate, civic leader and committed citizen.





Photo courtesy of Kathy Coffey Solberg

Kathy Coffey Solberg worked as a "community weaver," connecting the threads for organizations.

The Warp and Weft

Before you rebuild, unweave

BY ELLEN HIATT

When Kathy Coffey Solberg first saw the loom named Penelope in the corner of an Oregon shop, she had to stop and touch it. She didn't yet know it had a name, and she didn't know why touching it brought her to tears. "I started crying," she writes in her new book, Reweaving What Matters: Practical Tools for Workplace Transformation. "Not gentle tears – a rather surprising and consuming sort of crying in the middle of a weaving shop."

The loom came home with her. She learned tapestry weaving, and she read the story of Penelope, Odysseus' wife, who kept her suitors waiting for three years by weaving a shroud by day and unweaving it by night, taking her destiny into her own hands, weaving the life of her choosing.

Months later Solberg was working on another loom when she made a mistake that ran through a dozen rows of careful work. She had two choices: accept the flaw or undo it. She started pulling threads, and as her fingers worked backward through the pattern, she thought of Penelope. And she thought of the book she had been drafting for two years, called simply Reweaving. "That's when it clicked," she writes. "Unweaving was the path to Reweaving."

The revelation, in her words: "I'd been starting in the wrong place. You can't reweave on a broken foundation. You can't create new patterns without first examining — and often undoing — what's already there.

"That loom knew before I did."

Solberg calls herself a community weaver — she has been one for 25 years, working with leaders in business, government and nonprofits — who only lately became a fiber weaver. Before she works with any group, whether a city council, a board or a planning team, she calls every member for 20 minutes first. She has turned down contracts from clients who won't allow it.

She came to community, she writes, "through the absence of it." Adopted at birth, she lost both her parents by the time she was 18 and had no living relatives on either side. She's spent 16 years in higher education, including Bastyr University's school of nutrition; nine years leading Leadership Snohomish County; and, since then, her own firm, CommonUnity Consulting.

Her framework begins with a step she calls Notice: seeing the fabric as it actually is, not as the org chart says it is.

I, too, spent time in a community leadership development program, as the one-time manager of Leadership Skagit. The perspective the program provides is a stunning window into community – the kind that Solberg has devoted her life to building.

Any given fall, the Leadership Skagit group convenes its newest cohort to learn the impact of the power company, the farmer, the tribe, the state, and the county on water quality and salmon runs. By spring they've talked with public agencies and nonprofits about collaborations to reduce incarceration and lift people out of troubled lives. In the year I managed the program, led by the local college, I witnessed participants' personal transformations and the lightbulb moments of a deepened understanding of their community.

Most people don't sign up for a community leadership program to explore the warp and weft of a community's fabric. Most of us learn these things secondhand, if we learn them at all — from a neighbor, a public meeting, or the local newspaper reporter who bothered to sit through it.

A leadership program is one way a community learns to notice itself. But the load-bearing threads, Solberg writes, are rarely the ones with titles.

"The person with the title may have less influence than the grandmother who knows everyone's story, the shop owner who translates documents, or the coach who mentors youth. These informal weavers hold communities together in ways that formal leadership rarely recognizes," she writes.

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Photo courtesy of Kathy Coffey Solberg

Kathy Coffey Solberg is author of *Reweaving What Matters: Practical Tools for Workplace Transformation.*

I cannot help but see the weaving of community in this issue of *Welcome Magazine*. When Solberg writes about the two-hour meeting that everyone attends and no one needs, I think of Thomas Amano at Seattle Paine Field International Airport ("Everything You Did Created That Moment," p. 84), who built ownership of the terminal across every department. Staff turnover is negligible and people talk about teamwork, not silos of work.

Noticing needs a witness. When the reporter disappears, as this issue's story about The Daily Herald ("125 Years of Showing Up," p. 94) puts it, the school board meets with no one taking notes and the county council votes with no one asking why. The paper is how a community sees itself whole — the shared understanding you have to reach before you can build anything on it. You cannot unweave what you cannot see.

Solberg doesn't pretend the work is easy. On a loom, tension is what makes cloth possible, and she writes that the same is true anywhere people are woven together: "Too loose, and the threads slip and tangle – nothing holds, commitments drift, accountability dissolves. Too tight and the threads snap…"

I told her it reminded me of the body. If we look for ease everywhere, we become slack and systems actually break down. We need the tension. We need the resistance. It makes you think harder, makes you work harder, makes you do better.

"You cannot unweave what you cannot see."

Sociologist Ray Oldenburg called the coffee shop and the barbershop third places — neither home nor work, but the spots where regulars know each other's names — and Solberg says that is where the weft of community gets woven. Snohomish has one in a cigar shop ("Community Is Calling," p. 22), where a bench outside the door does the work of a town square.

Solberg pushes one step past belonging. "Belonging says: 'You're here, you have a seat at the table.' Mattering says: 'Your presence changes what's possible. Your contribution is valued, not just your compliance.'" A seat is where it starts. Mattering is when the room is different because you're in it.

She ends nearly everything she writes with a question: "What does support look like?" The answer is different for everyone. The book's own answer, the line she returns to on its last page, is this: "There is more of me when I am connected to you."

A whole woven cloth. A community of weavers. A warp and a weft. And every thread matters. ✦



Photo courtesy of Kathy Coffey Solberg

The communal act of weaving is as important as the "unweaving."

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Photo by Richard Porter/Seattle NorthCountry



Photo by Rebecca Grant

(left) Tulalip artist master carver James Madison displays a hand-carved orca head at the Hibulb Cultural Center. (above) Learn a new skill like knitting and build community with likeminded crafters through cultural programming at your local library.

Slow Down and Fill Up

The case for reading, wandering, learning and doing absolutely nothing productive

BY RICHARD PORTER FOR DISCOVER SNOHOMISH COUNTY

Do less. Time to read, learn, and explore.

Summer can be a frenzied time of social activities, outdoor adventures, and general go-go-go. Which means that you can arrive at fall feeling somewhat depleted. During the slower, quieter months, it's okay to chill hard for a few months and reassess where you're at and what you're doing (dare I say, who you are).

Sometimes self-care isn't about trying to achieve more; it's about pausing to feed your brain, clear out internal space for curiosity, and recharge by spending time with a good book and a big cup of coffee.

Now's the time to be unproductive.

Press the big pause button on hustle culture, put a block on your work calendar, unplug, and find time to engage with the world around you. Curiosity is free and following it can lead you to unexpected places and sometimes reveal facets of yourself that you previously didn't know about.

Make time to read, learn, and experience the world around you in Snohomish County. You won't be sorry.

READ TO RECHARGE: TOP INDIE BOOKSTORES IN SNOHOMISH COUNTY.

Let's talk about self-improvement through "shelf"-improvement. Supporting local bookstores is not just a cute and nice thing to do; it's an investment in both your own well-being and a way to improve your brain while having fun.

LOST THE PLOT BOOKS

lostheplotbooks.com

Frequently popping up in Mill Creek and Bothell (but also Everett and Seattle), Lost the Plot is a vibe-worthy bookstore neatly contained within a large, converted delivery van.

This mobile bookstore is full, floor to ceiling, with stories, many of which are written by marginalized voices such as authors who are BIPOC, queer, or disabled.

Coming soon to a cupcake store or boutique market near you!

UPPER CASE BOOKS

1010 2nd St, Snohomish, WA 98290

Over 50,000 books make a cozy addition to a charming log cabin in Snohomish. Upper Case mostly specializes in used books but also features some new books by local authors. The upstairs provides a delightful reading nook with wingback chairs. You can also reserve the loft for a date night (available Fridays and Saturdays with advance booking and deposit). Meet-cute much?

EDMONDS BOOKSHOP

111 5th Ave S, Edmonds, WA 98020

An arts hub within an arts-oriented town, Edmonds Bookshop is located within the boundaries of the state's first Creative District. The bookstore is part of a walkable downtown, near plenty of art galleries, breweries, cafes, restaurants, and the Salish Sea. Pick up a good read, tuck it in your tote, and take it on your next cultural adventure in our neck of the woods. It's never a bad idea to bring a good read for slow moments.

WE BE BOOK'N

19602 US-2 E, Monroe, WA 98272

Home to genre fiction, manga, a play area for kiddos, gifts, a cafe, and community events, this relatively new bookstore is set up as a hub for a community for and by bookish people. Their literary-themed cafe drinks are pretty great, too. This bookstore is conveniently located right off the freeway, so you can load up on books before road tripping on State Route 2.

THIRD STREET BOOK EXCHANGE

1615 3rd St, Marysville, WA 98270

Long a staple of the Marysville community, this family-owned bookstore is housed within a unique building with diagonal siding. Two floors of books invite you to slow down your busy day, turn your phone on "do not disturb," and peruse at the speed of print. Dig into the stacks to find the unexpected, then pair your new find with a baked good or coffee from nearby small businesses on Third Street.



Photo by Eliott Reyna



Photo by Jake Campbell

(left) Get lost in a good book. That's called "shelf care." (above) Cozy up at Uppercase Books in Snohomish. Located in an old log cabin, Uppercase has great fall and winter vibes, perfect for a slow day with a choice novel.

LIFELONG LEARNING: TRY SOMETHING NEW, THANKS TO THE LIBRARY

Your local library offers great cultural programming and most of the time it's free. Below are some great selections for upcoming offerings. You can find more by visiting the websites for the Sno-Isle Libraries (sno-isle.org) or the Everett Public Library (epls.org).

SOUND SCREENINGS FILM AND DISCUSSION

Mukilteo Library

Presented by Scarecrow Video, this admission-free series encourages adults to gather and discuss a curated selection of films. Coffee, tea, and popcorn will be provided, but you can also bring your own blanket, snacks, or cushion to make your experience complete. Perfect.

Upcoming films in this series include Rebecca (1940), Planes, Trains, and Automobiles (1987), and The Man Who Came to Dinner (1941). Learn more at the Sno-Isle Library events webpage.

MAKING SUGAR SKULLS (CALAVERITAS DE AZUCAR)

Sultan Library

Saturday, October 17, 2026, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Celebrate Dia de Muertos by decorating brilliant sugar skulls. The library will provide bright paints, tissue paper, papel picado, paper flowers, and sequins… you'll apply your artistic inspiration to this cultural celebration. This program, presented by Amarantha, a South Seattle-based visual artist and educator, is available to children ages six and older.

LYNNWOOD LIBRARY PHOTO GROUP

Lynnwood Library

This monthly group teaches the basics of photography for all skill levels. Learning new technical skills and techniques is only half the fun. Constructive feedback, connections, and building community are a great way to both enhance your skills and grow your circle: double enrichment.

CROCHET AND KNIT CLUB

Everett Public Library Evergreen Branch

This monthly meeting happens every third Thursday of the month from 3:30–7:30 p.m. To learn the ropes of yarn (so to speak), you're encouraged to bring a ball of sport or worsted weight yarn and a size H or J crochet hook. Or, if you'll be knitting, a pair of size seven or eight knitting needles. You'll have fun… and probably be hooked!

CELEBRATE CURIOSITY: MUSEUMS SPARK NEW IDEAS.

Museums are cultural repositories, stewarding our collective cultural assets and inviting us to examine the present through the lens of the past. Which, of course, generates inspiration for the future. These museums offer a cozy day indoors. You'll walk away with a deeper, richer understanding of the world and the creative and cultural fabric that brings Snohomish County residents together.



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A little girl's curiosity at play. Learning is fun at Imagine Children's Museum.

IMAGINE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
1502 Wall St, Everett, WA 98201

Foster curiosity and wonder at this ultramodern, multi-floor museum designed with families in mind. Through hands-on STEM activities and sensory-rich exhibits, kids can explore, experiment and burn off some energy while discovering the world around them—no screens required.

The museum is also a love letter to Snohomish County, with exhibits and artifacts that bring the region's natural and industrial history to life, from actual whale bones and local geology to nods to railroads, buses, maritime industries, and aviation. It's an engaging indoor experience where kids and parents can learn, play, and discover together.

HIBULB CULTURAL CENTER
6410 23rd Ave NE, Tulalip, WA 98271

The story of the Tulalip Peoples is told by tribal members themselves at the Hibulb Cultural Center, where the past meets the present and folkways are preserved for future generations. Learn about the Indigenous culture of the local Coast Salish tribes that have called Snohomish County home since time immemorial.

MONROE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
207 E Main St, Monroe, WA 98272

This volunteer-operated museum is a love letter to a valley town with roots in the timber, railroad, and dairy industries. From boxing gloves and cleats to movie posters, every object here has been carefully selected and preserved to tell the story of a self-reliant small town on the frontier to a modern, family-friendly community. ✦



38-foot artist-designed Center Bar & Lounge with seating for 60, a stylish social hub blending comfort and hospitality.

Your Fall Escape at Tulalip Resort Casino

Enjoy luxury lodging, award-winning dining, spa indulgence, gaming and live entertainment — all in one newly expanded destination.

With cooler days and nights upon us, it is the perfect time to move indoors to share good times with friends and family, along with some overdue pampering. Tulalip Resort Casino offers all this and more in one destination.

With the completion of a glittering renovation and major expansion, this globally recognized resort casino offers guests an unmatched variety of dining, gaming, entertainment, spa and shopping options. Conveniently located 20 minutes from Paine Field and a short drive from Seattle, Tulalip Resort Casino features a landmark 12-story, 370-room luxury hotel and 270,250 square feet of Las Vegas-style gaming excitement including more than 2,600 slot machines.

The resort casino has been designated as a AAA Four Diamond resort every year since 2009. Honors include top tier rankings on Condé Nast Traveler Gold and Traveler Top 100 Resorts lists, and a 2026 Travelers' Choice® award for Top Accommodations by Tripadvisor® placing the resort casino in the top 10% of global listings.

The dazzling new interior sets a welcoming tone. Honoring Tulalip Tribes' culture and traditions, the rich color palate and use of natural materials are woven into design elements representing the dynamics of the nearby Salish Sea, coastal shorelines and forest environments. A major focal point is the 38-foot tall, artist-created Center Bar and Lounge. With seating for up to 60 guests, it's the perfect spot to meet friends and strikes the perfect balance of comfort, style and convivial hospitality.





(left) Unwind in the serene sauna at T-Spa, enjoying warmth, calm, and relaxation. This experience is available to guests with spa services of 50 minutes or longer, offering the perfect complement to a restorative visit. (right) Grammy-nominated, multi-platinum, award-winning artist Taylor Dayne performed in the Orca Ballroom, bringing her powerful voice, dynamic stage presence, and heartfelt performance to an unforgettable night of music.

For a well-deserved respite from shorter days and seasonal drizzle, T-Spa offers among the most comprehensive array of services and amenities of any spa in the Pacific Northwest. With 16 treatment rooms, this luxurious 14,000 square-foot sanctuary indulges guests with native-inspired spa rituals, body treatments and skin therapies. Inspired by nature's beauty with its river rock accents, wide bamboo flooring, serene candles and natural foliage, T-Spa's surroundings contribute to the renewed feeling of inner peace and calm.

T-Spa offers the perfect setting for an expert massage, including Deep Tissue, River Rock Hot Stone and Mother-To-Be massages. The popular T-Spa Signature Massage combines relaxing Swedish massage techniques, a cooling foot ritual and soothing aromatherapy.

Fresh culinary choices abound at Tulalip Resort Casino, where Blackfish Wild Salmon Grill & Bar and Tula Bene Pastaria + Chophouse are known for offering locally sourced seasonal ingredients with regional wines and craft brews.

Award-winning Blackfish highlights the bounty of the Salish Sea ranging from freshly caught seafood to steaks and chicken accompanied by regionally produced ingredients from area farmers and growers. In keeping within the cultural traditions of the Tulalip Tribes, the signature Heritage Salmon is traditionally prepared and roasted over Alderwood coals on hand-carved ironwood sticks.

Tula Bene features pastas, steaks and seafood and an extensive wine list of more than 200 local and international selections by the bottle and 30 wines by the glass. Highlighting local seafood, "Chef's Specialties" regularly feature seasonal Fresh Catch of the Day offerings.

To please all tastebuds and mood, the casino resort features 9 additional dining and beverage venues featuring Asian-inspired dishes, high-quality casual fare, whiskies, craft beers and out-of-this-world ice cream confections.

Fall means plenty of pro and college football, European soccer and other sports action in the DraftKings Sportsbook. Gather your friends for multi-event viewing on the impressive 800-square-foot LED television screen with wagering conveniently available at four over-the-counter ticket windows and 30 betting kiosks. Betting resources include odds boards, scrolling tickers with live score updates and more.

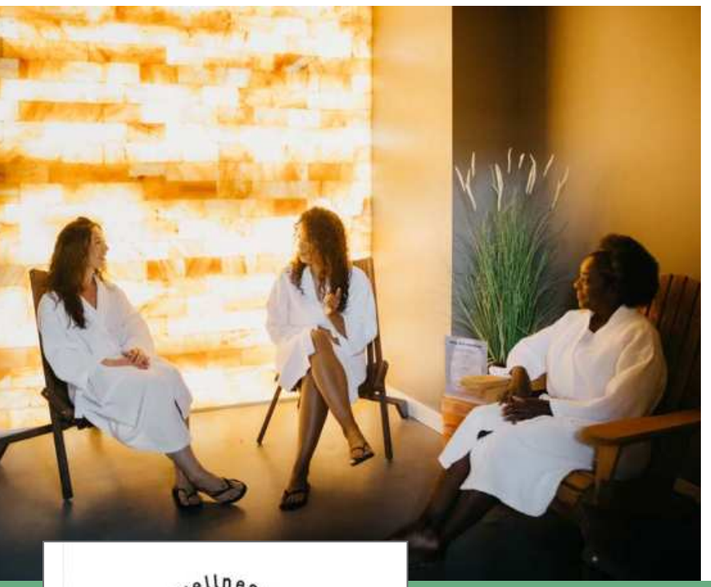
Stepping out for an evening of outstanding entertainment? The 1,200-seat Orca Ballroom is the Northwest's premier venue for memorable, up-close entertainment performances by national artists and Canoes Cabaret is Snohomish County's premier live entertainment venue with '70s funk, '80s new wave and comedy, as well as classic rock tributes and today's hits.

For more information about Tulalip Resort Casino visit everythingtulalip.com or call 866.716.7162. ✦



A signature Heritage Salmon experience, traditionally prepared and slow-roasted over Alderwood coals on hand-carved ironwood sticks. A time-honored preparation that brings the rich, distinctive flavors of the Northwest to the table.





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Photos by Marcus Badgley

(left to right) Danielle St. Amand, Dr. Paula Mitchell, Dr. Ludwig Mantay and Catharine Griffith, all are working to fulfill the legacy of Dr. Lester Griffith, former Lynnwood naturopath and co-founder of Bastyr University.

A Gentle Curiosity

Dr. Griffith's legacy lives on in a clinic where exploration is exquisite, and the conversation is medicine.

BY ELLEN HIATT

The weeping willow hung low against the late summer sunshine at the skirt of Bastyr University's ethnobotanical garden. Outside its canopy, the season had dried the seed pods of the rich collection of native plants growing along the nearly mile-long Sacred Seeds Trail. Catharine Griffith walked the trail, brushing her hands across the sun-kissed fronds, pausing at a residence hall named for her late husband and the plaque that acknowledges him as one of the university's four co-founders. Inscribed on that plaque is a line from Nietzsche:

"There is more wisdom in your body than in your deepest philosophy."

He lived by that, Catharine agreed. "The answers are within us — within our own bodies, which tell us what care we need, whether that's self-care, naturopathic medicine, or Western medicine. We also know the relationships we need to nurture." And so, when her husband passed suddenly this year, she and the clinic's staff knew what to do. They had each other. They were the team he built.

Dr. Lester Griffith was always building something. He began his career as a U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman, serving as an admiral's writer, onboard a ship, and in Vietnam as a young man. After earning his naturopathic doctorate, he opened his first clinic in Lynnwood, where a patient soon asked him to deliver her baby—the first of more than 4,000 infants he and Catharine would go on to deliver. He earned a nursing degree, met and married Catharine in the process, became a midwife, led change in Washington State legislation to make it among the most progressive in the country for naturopathic care, and co-founded Bastyr University. He served on Bastyr's Board of Trustees for years. By the time he opened a clinic in Gig Harbor, he was in his late seventies—still studying peptides, exosomes, stem cells, and most of all mitochondria; caring for patients, researching, speaking, and writing until his last day.

"He was curious about everything. He was a lifelong learner," said Catharine. "We call it a gentle curiosity… He was an observer."

That curiosity shaped not only his practice but the people he gathered around him. Dr. Ludwig Mantay ND/ MPH — known simply as Dr. Ludwig to everyone in the clinic and to his patients — arrived at his first meeting as a freshly credentialed doctor, expecting to discuss joining the practice. Dr. Griffith shook his hand and welcomed him as a partner. Like Dr. Griffith, Dr. Ludwig had served as a Navy corpsman, retiring as a Chief after 21-plus years of active service, before a loved one's declining health drove him to seek answers — answers that led toward naturopathy, which then led to him earning his Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine at Bastyr in 2025. Before graduation, a teacher-mentor had advised him not to seek a residency in a clinic run by doctors younger than him, and Dr. Griffith — decades his senior — fit that bill perfectly. He was the "OG" – the Original that Dr. Ludwig needed. "The greatest gift Dr. Griffith gave me was the space to be myself," Dr. Ludwig stated.

"He could have picked anybody he wanted to pass on his clinic, but he chose you," Catharine told Dr. Ludwig.

The choice proved to be one of Dr. Griffith's keenest. Patient Care Coordinator Dr. Paula "Pauli" Mitchell points to Dr. Ludwig's years of emergency medicine, clinical and research

"There are days when the conversation is the medicine. A lot of what we do with people changes their world pretty dramatically."

— Dr. Paula Mitchell







Dr. Ludwig Mantay (top), and Catharine Griffith (middle) recently honored Dr. Griffith (bottom), Catharine's late husband, at a memorial service at Bastyr University.





(top) Dr. Paula Mitchell says conversation can be the medicine. (bottom) Danielle St. Amand, the clinic's medical assistant, was empowered to "not take no for an answer" for her own medical care.

lab experience in the Navy as foundational. "It gives him such insight and such understanding that, as a diagnostician, I don't know too many people who can touch him. Because even Dr. Griffith said, 'He is one of the best diagnosticians I have ever seen.' Just flat out."

One of their own employees knows this as well as anyone. Medical assistant and receptionist Danielle St. Amand, who had served Dr. Griffith at the clinic for over four years, routinely monitored her own labs every six months and, in November 2025, handed the results to Dr. Griffith for a second opinion. He read them, said nothing, and told her to take them to Dr. Ludwig. She asked, half joking, whether she was dying. He didn't answer. He just gestured toward the door — go.

Dr. Ludwig recommended more tests, then sent her back to her own doctors to insist they order them. "He gave me power — internal power — not to leave until I got these tests done, and not to take no for an answer," she said. The labs confirmed what Dr. Griffith had already seen and quietly passed along. He had handed it to his partner. Dr. Griffith empowered everybody, she said, and respected everybody's opinion, including hers. She misses him greatly.

That spirit of exploration—enthusiastic, rigorous, and deeply personal—runs through the entire clinic. Dr. Mitchell is straight-up giddy with it. She first encountered Dr. Griffith as a student at Bastyr, when he lectured on the endocannabinoid system. "It's one of those exquisite things," she said. When you look at the biochemistry of the endocannabinoid system, and what it does and how it moves — it is like watching a beautiful symphony, each part contributing to the whole. It's so fabulous. She marvels that Dr. Griffith championed that system and worked with peptides in ways others hadn't yet touched, long before either became a wider conversation in medicine. "Dr. Griffith was always pushing like that. It was beautiful to watch him."

Dr. Ludwig carries the same quality of curiosity, in a louder key. He tells the story of watching a four-year-old eating lunch with his father by a grocery store waterfall; all of a sudden the little boy noticed the waterfall and eagerly went to it — hand in the water, hand out, hand in again, calling excitedly for his father to look at the water flowing over his hand. In that moment, Dr. Ludwig decided that was exactly how he wanted to meet the world for the rest of his life: with excited, childlike curiosity.

But curiosity at this clinic doesn't stop at the biochemistry of life. Dr. Mitchell sees it turned toward something harder to measure than a lab result. "There are days when the conversation is the medicine," she said, describing appointments where patients come in to talk — to gain perspective on themselves and their world. Because what the clinic asks of people is not small. "A lot of what we do with people changes their world pretty dramatically," she said. It requires radical shifts in how you eat, how you socialize, how you see yourself. "And everybody doesn't want to change with you, or doesn't want you to change."

Caring, she noted, is "extraordinarily complex." Much of their work at the clinic, she said, is helping people figure out how to be different and how to facilitate change to a healthier version of themselves. The clinic becomes both doctor and support system—a community built on the belief that the body already holds its own wisdom.

Dr. Griffith's plaque says as much:

There is more wisdom in your body than in your deepest philosophy.

The body knows what it needs. Sometimes that's a nutrient, a peptide, or a lab drawn a second time because someone was curious enough to look again. Sometimes it's community—friends, neighbors, and our own doctors lifting us, empowering us to care for ourselves, and reminding us to ask for what we need. Stay curious. ✦

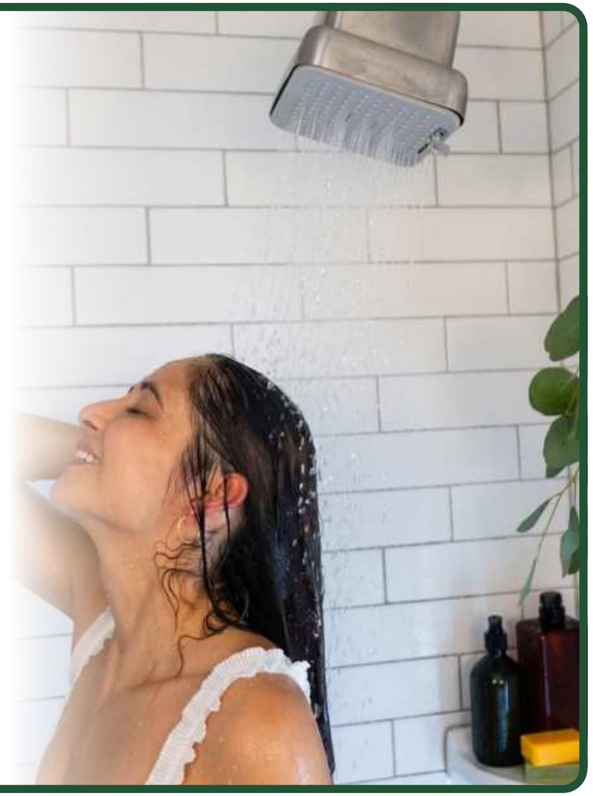
The Dynamic Regenerative Care Clinic in Gig Harbor, WA (253)509-0424 provides naturopathic care focused on whole-person regenerative medicine. The clinic continues its practice in honor of Dr. Lester Griffith, ND/RN, Midwife, loving husband, loving father, and co-founder of Bastyr University.

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PAE's Thomas Amano, VP of Terminal Operations, (second from left) developed his leadership skills in the military, including tours in Iraq.

Everything You Did Created That Moment

Airport's teamwork makes room for serendipity

BY ELLEN HIATT

Fog rolled into Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and a dozen planes diverted to Paine Field. It was one of those moments when the stress could have been high, and mistakes made. But every member of the Paine Field team knew what to do when Seattle's planes arrived, even though it was just PAE's first year of operation, and they were already managing their own full slate of flights.

Thomas Amano, Vice President, Terminal Operations for Propeller Airports at Seattle Paine Field International Airport , said "The whole event took a few hours from beginning to end. It was carefully coordinated with Airport Operations, McGee, Castle & Cooke FBO and Alaska/Horizon Airlines.

"It was a lot of aircraft arriving in a very short period of time," he added. "But these are the kinds of situations we plan and prepare for. We had already talked through different scenarios, coordinated with our partners, and understood how we would respond. Unexpected events are going to happen in aviation. The important thing is that when they do, we're prepared and everyone knows how we're going to work through them together." And our preparations paid off. Our flights stayed on schedule. Everybody just executed the plan because it had been rehearsed and communicated effectively." Amano described it as highly developed teamwork, strengthened through continuous training and careful coordination. They developed "contingency after contingency after contingency," he emphasized.

The next morning, the team gathered for their usual 9 a.m. meeting to recap: "You guys did a fabulous job handling this. We even handled things that we didn't plan for," he told them. The kudos were well placed, the team had thought out of the box on the spur of the moment,

"That's the type of environment I wanted to create. And it wasn't just me. It's all our stakeholders, all our managers, constantly talking and having conversations and creating a clear line of communication."

Whatever the unusual event may be — abrupt weather, unexpected "diverts," an unruly traveler — Amano's staff is prepared. "When passengers show up, we're ready and we already have a contingency for whatever may come," he said. "And that's the way we want it. We don't want passengers to see the complexities of the operation. We want passengers to enjoy the experience without any problems."

The moment a dozen planes showed up off-schedule was the Aha! moment that, for Amano, solidified that the culture he wanted to create had taken hold.

That culture has been a lifetime in the making. Growing up as the son of an airline professional, he dreamed of attending Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, but the cost of tuition was beyond what his family could afford at the time. So he joined the Navy at 17 years old, with a waiver signed by his parents. He was offered a commission but there were no available aviation billets, and he chose to work on the flight deck instead, making Chief Petty Officer in nine years and running OLF Coupeville's ARFF operation while teaching aircraft firefighting at Naval Air Station Whidbey.

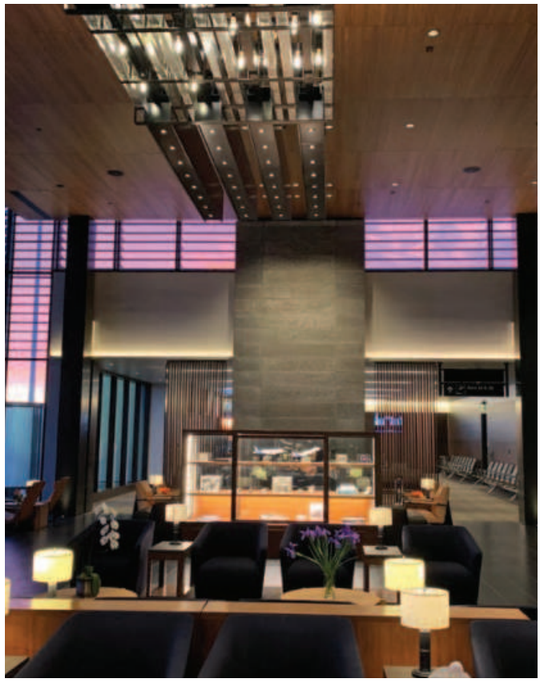
Commissioned as a Naval Officer after a 10-month post-9/11 deployment on the Lincoln, he decommissioned the Kitty Hawk which was homeported in Japan, spent a year in Iraq training Iraqi corrections officers, and completed his last sea tour aboard the Nimitz as Flight Deck Officer all while finishing an Embry-Riddle degree in Aeronautics and airport management online along the way, from posts in Japan and Iraq.

When he heard Paine Field's terminal was being developed by a private company, he sent in an application. Propeller, the company selected to operate the terminal, responded shortly after receiving his application. After the interview, they asked when he could start. With nine months remaining before his Navy retirement, Amano joined the company as a consultant before transitioning into a full-time role. After more than 28 years of naval service, he retired on a Friday and began his full-time role with Propeller the following Monday. With the





Thomas Amano's Naval experience was instrumental in recognizing the value of good leadership.



The purple irises matched the purple sunset hues, a serendipitous moment.

terminal preparing to open, he transitioned directly from military service into the next chapter of his aviation career.

Amano has learned that staying calm sets the tone for the entire team. It reinforces that not every challenge is a crisis, most are simply problems that need to be worked through, and the best solutions usually come when everyone remains calm and focused. He said it's important to recognize and accept risks, while minimizing them as much as possible. "You have to be deliberate in every decision you make. When people see consistency and confidence in your leadership, it can change the entire operation. I truly believe that."

Knowing that every individual's perspective matters is at the center of Amano's success as a team builder. Those daily team meetings are intended to raise awareness of the operational challenges of the day for the managers of every stakeholder group, whether it's the janitorial staff or the ground crew of a partner airline.

"Everyone wants to know what's happening each day because we all play a part in the operation," he said. "When we come together and share information, everyone has a better understanding of all facets, throughout the terminal and across the airfield. That allows us to work as one team while respecting and supporting each other's responsibilities so we're not siloed."

That openness, Amano said, is essential to maintaining a healthy workplace. "If people are afraid to bring an issue to leadership, that issue usually becomes a bigger problem." For Amano, one of the clearest signs that the approach is working



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is employee retention. “Our retention has improved because we’ve created an environment where people feel valued, supported, and comfortable speaking up. When employees feel like they’re part of the team and know their voice matters, they want to stay.” I want to be approachable, I believe in an open door policy. That same open-door approach extends to our partners. For example, an Alaska Airlines team captain asked Amano whether a second printer could be added at the gates to help speed up the boarding process for our 737 flights. “I don’t know why we didn’t do this in the first place,” he said. There are now two printers at every gate. “That one person, a team captain who’s not even in my organization but is part of our operation, can come to me, and all of a sudden their input is executed.”

One example was a snow event when everyone pitched in to clear the terminal, including Amano himself. “I would never ask someone on my team to do something I wouldn’t be willing to do myself,” he said. That same sense of teamwork was evident during the government shutdown. The entire airport community came together to support federal employees, providing groceries and free lunches from a different local restaurant each day. “And it wasn’t just pizza,” Amano said with a smile. It was a small gesture, but one that showed people they were valued and that the airport community was there to support them.

Amano credits Brett Smith, CEO of Propeller Airports, for that culture — starting with the first Christmas party held at the nearby flight museum. “We invited everybody. And I mean everybody. The tower, the airport, TSA… And it really created a culture where everybody feels included. That made a huge difference. And that culture has continued on over the years and has only gotten stronger and better.”

“When the CEO of the company is busing tables and picking up trash and walking the ramp – that has a big impact,” he said. “Our culture is built on the belief that we’re all in this together, regardless of what title you hold. We’re determined to make this terminal the best terminal in the country. And I think we’ve done that.”

“When we had United here when we first opened, it was not uncommon to see United employees helping Alaska and Alaska employees helping United. You would never see that in any other airport. It’s all because of the culture we created here at Paine Field. We work as a team.”

It’s that way every single day, and it’s working. How many airports do passengers intentionally show up three hours before their flight so they can relax before they hit the skies, he asked. Travelers will even stop in the center holdroom after their flight so they can let rush hour go by while they relax in the restaurant or bar.

Amano has a photograph he took of the airport one evening, with the sunset glowing hues of a purple goodnight kiss to the equally purple flag irises standing tall in vases throughout the terminal. He couldn’t have created that moment if he wanted to. But everything Amano and Smith’s team does every day led to that serendipitous moment of alignment. ✦





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Photo by Raechel Morera, EASC

Kaiser Permanente celebrated a newly expanded Everett Medical Center with a ribbon cutting in May 2025.

Vital Signs of a Economic Development Creates Healthy Communities

BY PABLO COLINDRES MORENO
FOR ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY

The Washington Department of Commerce asserts this thesis in their page dedicated to economic development:

"Creating a prosperous, sustainable economy goes hand in hand with building world-class communities."

At Economic Alliance Snohomish County (EASC), we happen to believe in that thesis rather strongly. For us, a sustainable economy and vibrant community in Snohomish County are the vital signs that measure our region's overall health.

As the Associate Development Organization (ADO) for the county, we were designated by Commerce to be Snohomish County's primary care provider, so to speak.

Washington's 39 counties are each represented by an ADO that champions each region's economic development goals. Since 2011, EASC has been our county's ADO. It began in 1985, when the Economic Development Council of Snohomish County was first designated as ADO following then Governor Booth Gardner's "Team Washington" initiative.

EASC formed after "Project Concentrus" merged the EDC with the Everett Chamber and South Snohomish Chamber of Commerce, with the stated goal of unifying Snohomish County's business voice. "Critically, the ADO designation passed from the EDC to EASC without a single day of interruption," said Ray Stephanson, EASC President & CEO.

Throughout the past 40-plus years, EASC's work has remained generally straightforward: collaborating with our



Photo by Pablo Colindres Moreno, EASC



Photo by Alyssa Jackson, EASC

(top) The Port of Everett hosted 18,000 for as an official FIFA World Cup® Fan Zone in the summer, an economic development win for the region.

(bottom) Local business and economic development leaders tour Zap Energy facilities during 2025 Fusion Week, highlighting a growing innovation economy in Snohomish County.

county's stakeholders to retain and grow existing businesses, recruit new players to our region and presenting the county's unified voice in Olympia and DC through effective advocacy.

"We are a public-private economic development organization with a specific county-wide mission," said Daniel Tappana, director of economic development at EASC. "The ADO designation isn't just a bureaucratic detail. It's what makes EASC the official conduit between state resources and local businesses."

This work is what helps create the ideal environment for our region's health to remain strong. Like any health and well-being plan set up by your health care provider, our region's vital signs only strengthen and improve with a strategy that uplifts a region's quality of life so that the people who drive growth and innovation — today and in the future — will stick around. "What happens if Snohomish County doesn't have a plan?" asks Tappana. "It's not a rhetorical question. The honest answer is someone else wins."

Through a unified economic development strategy, the Alliance, the county, and each individual municipality and business is critical to maximizing the assets we have.

The nearly 850,000 residents in our county comprise one of the most sought-after experienced workforces in the world. With the right partnerships and a strategy that includes education, housing, transportation and business policies that incentivize local investment, we can ensure that the workforce pipeline can continue to feed the innovation that builds the future, right here in our region.

In 2025, the Alliance and their partners were critical to over $287 million in direct economic impact, including strategic wins in our key industries, small business activation, government contracting assistance and education.

Economic development means taking advantage of what we have, and building on it to create a sustainable, impactful future. Jobs, education, growth and investment into our communities are what have built the unique environment Snohomish County enjoys today.

As the future begins to take shape, and we see emerging industries grow in our backyard in the form of advanced manufacturing, quantum computing, alternative energy and much more, we can appreciate the economic development work happening to ensure Snohomish County is the premier place for businesses to innovate and a community people will want to work and live in — a healthy, world-class region.

"Snohomish County has extraordinary assets," concluded Stephanson. "We have Boeing and its supply chain. We have the Port of Everett and Naval Station Everett. We have four-year universities, community colleges, a growing innovation economy and a community of people who genuinely want to see the region succeed." ✦



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Photos by Marcus Badgley

Newsrooms across the nation continue to write their community's story, despite the financial challenges.

125 Years of Showing Up

Loneliness is climbing as local reporting thins — two symptoms of one condition. The *Daily Herald* is still connecting a county to itself.

BY ELLEN HIATT FOR WASHINGTON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Of all the work I've done, nothing has given me a deeper connection or greater understanding of my community than my years as a journalist. Charged with understanding the people and events, and telling their story, it was an honor and a responsibility. Today, dramatically fewer reporters are doing this work, but the responsibility hasn't shrunk in tandem. Interestingly, there is a parallel between the loss of local news outlets with the public's rise in loneliness and self-isolation. It's a correlation worth exploring, as we ask what kind of society we want to create for ourselves and future generations.

When Everett's paper, The *Daily Herald*, turned 125, publisher Carrie Radcliff said the celebration was packed with advertisers, subscribers and donors — more than she expected, and among them former employees who still speak of it as their paper. She made sure the newsroom staff wore name tags: "They want to talk to you. They're here to talk to you," she said. People arrived looking for a byline: where's Eliza? Oh, there's Eliza.

Before the turn of the last century, nearly half a dozen newspapers could be found in every valley of this county — Everett alone once had four competing papers. The *Daily Herald's* newsroom in Everett is down to 11 fulltime staffers. Radcliff says it is stable now, with no layoffs planned, but even fully staffed there are stories they don't have the bandwidth to tell. The *Herald* is not unusual. Papers across the state, indeed the nation, are operating with the bare minimum. In King County, the *Courier-Herald's* sole reporter in Enumclaw has watched the same thing happen over that paper's own long history.

"When I started here 11 years ago, we had a newsroom of 12 to 13 people — four writers, ad designers, salespeople, office managers. Little by little, here I am, last man standing," Editor Ray Miller-Still said.

The internet and its many facets, from social media to digital advertising, have steadily picked off revenue streams that once made newspapers a profitable business. Say nothing of today's unscrupulous scraping of copyrighted content and regurgitation and hallucination of the same in AI models. Since 2001, 43% of Washington's newspaper operations have closed or consolidated, and newspaper jobs have fallen 78%.

The decline in local news outlets is simultaneous to increasing alienation. Half of American adults now report measurable loneliness, and the U.S. Surgeon General has likened its toll on our health to smoking fifteen cigarettes a day. Neither decline causes the other. Human connection is the victim of a bevy of cyber connection — that's the throughline of loss shared by people and our news outlets. We're isolating ourselves from each other and from the shared information that binds our human experience to each other's.

The loss has a shared driver. Newspapers and neighbors alike are struggling to connect meaningfully against the powerful distraction of manufactured "news" and human connection made at arm's length of a digital device.

That fracture is already a working condition. Julia Tellman, a reporter at *Cascadia Daily News*, sees it in the people she covers. "So many of us are living in realities that do not line up with each other… so it is hard for us to find basic common understandings. That's one of the biggest challenges we as local journalists face."

And it's why local news, and local news read by locals, matters more today than ever before.

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It's no accident that local news — information produced by trained journalists who research, verify and vet the facts — doesn't resemble a social media page's conjecture and banter. Radcliff has watched a social media page break a story her newsroom was still holding. "We're just waiting on this one piece," her editor tells her. "We're not going until it's confirmed." Of course her team would like to be first, but not at the cost of being wrong. That decision — made on deadline, by people whose names are on the work — is the difference between a newsroom and a feed.

The loss is not abstract. When the reporter disappears, the school board meets with no one taking notes, the county council votes with no one asking why, and the levy on your ballot arrives unexplained. Researchers have found that when a local paper closes, government waste and municipal borrowing costs rise, and illegal activity increases even in private industry.

In Winthrop, where 90% of fourth and fifth graders will shoot up their hands to report that they've seen themselves or a family member in the newspaper, local news builds community.

"A newspaper should connect people, it should communicate with people, it should get them civilly involved, and it should celebrate the community," publisher Don Nelson said.

Jennifer Henrichsen, Assistant Professor and Research Director with the Washington News Ecosystem Project, has documented that progression and the efforts to shift it, including the WSU Murrow–Report for America partnership to place a reporter in every county by 2029.

At the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association (WNPA), we mark our 139th year this fall in Everett — two blocks from the *Herald's* newsroom — with an annual convention and the Better Newspaper Contest, recognizing the good work of newspaper people across the state. We are steadfast that we can create a future where local news is valued, supported by readers, and part of building stronger, healthier communities.

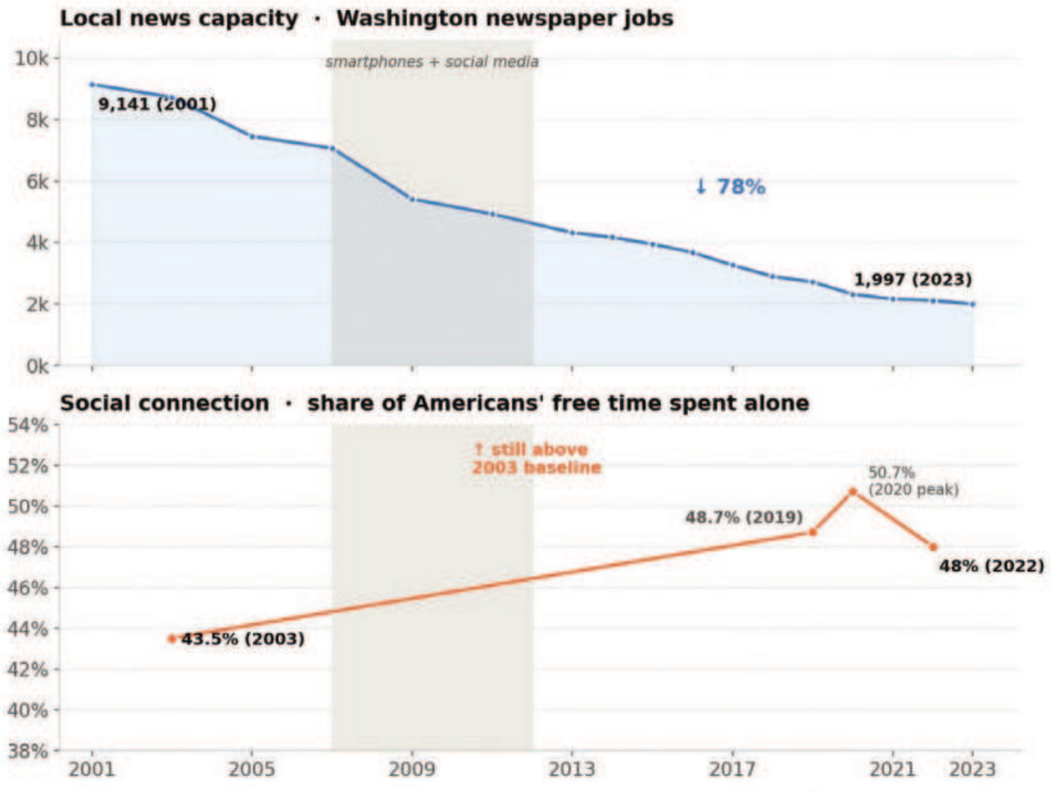
Radcliff saw a version of that future with her 29-year-old daughter, who collects vinyl. Michelle Nedved of *The Newport Miner* passes along a phrase for the hope in that: "Print is the new vinyl." Radcliff won't oversell it — her own children grew up with the paper in the house and it isn't where they go for news. "I work on that every day," she said. And while some studies indicate Gen Z is looking for more in-person connection with others, and growing distrust of what they read online, it's not enough to stave off the successive closure of papers on the horizon.



A growing number of innovations in funding and delivery are reaching new audiences and finding new revenue.

If accurate local news is important to you, ask yourself how you are supporting it. If you're a teacher, are you sharing the news with your students, connecting them to their neighbors through a shared experience? If you're a business person, consider what your advertising says about the paper as much as what it says about you. Print and HeraldNet ads are what the community sees, Radcliff points out; the email campaigns and programmatic display that carry much of the revenue are invisible. A thin paper reads as a dying paper. "We don't look like we're as viable as we really are," she said. Your ad is a vote of confidence the whole county can see. And wherever you live, are you subscribing or donating to the paper that covers your town so it can keep a reporter at your city council and school board?

Together we will build the community we want. I don't believe the trend line toward increased loneliness and decreased access to information will continue in perpetuity — because being on the verge of losing something so central to our health and happiness makes us work harder to restore it. ✦





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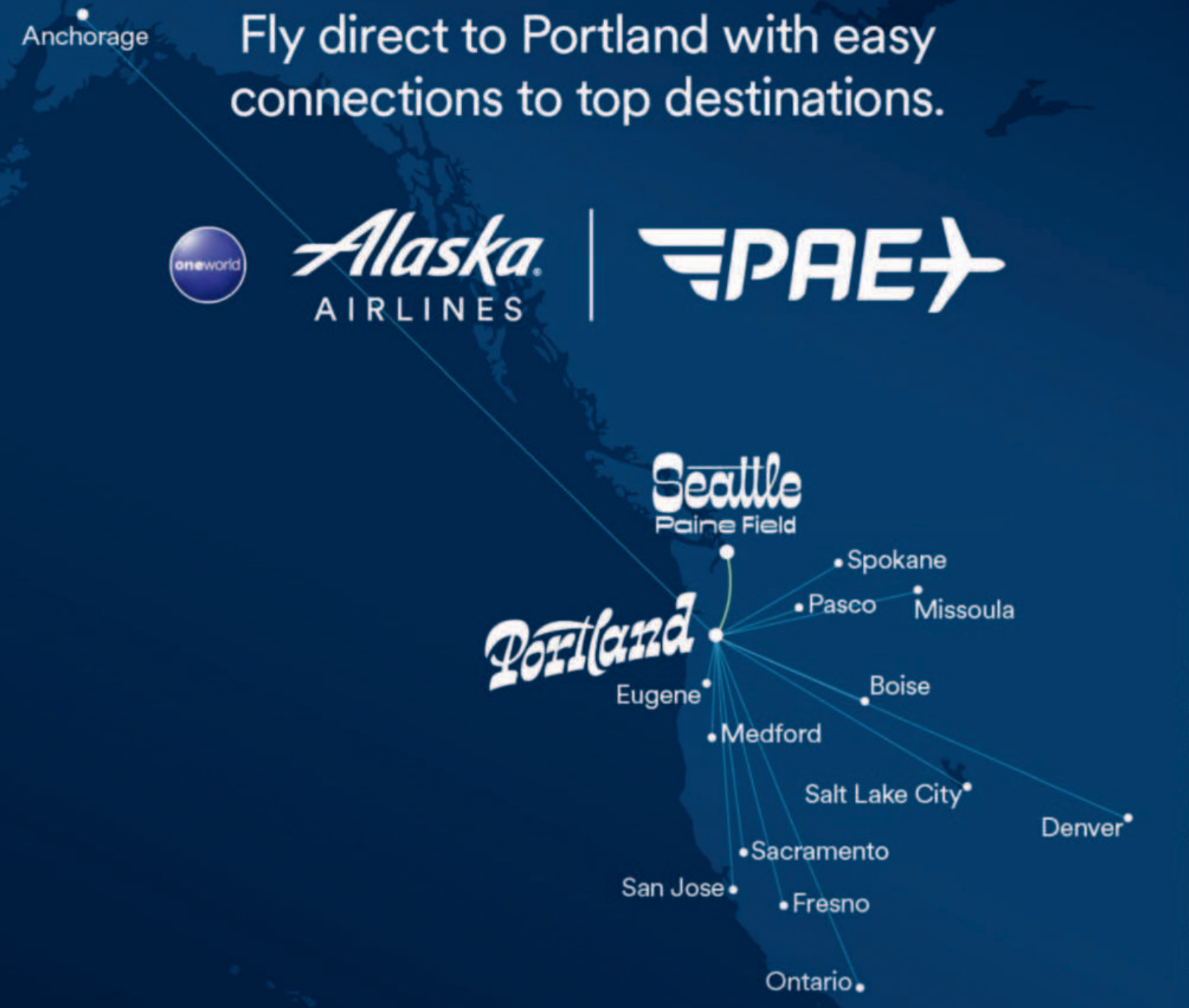
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