



The Taylor Times

The Newsletter with "Schmaltz"



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IT JUST KEEPS GOING AND GOING!



In front of the Orca sculpture, Blaine Marine Park, Blaine, WA

OUR YEAR

(by Jeff)

2021 has proven to be another most difficult year. For one thing, it has deprived me of having suitable subject matter for this newsletter. Stories about staying healthy, staying home, and staying sane don't seem to provide the entertainment value earlier stories seemed to have.

February saw major, if short-lived snow. June brought the hottest weather ever recorded in Seattle. We went both strawberry and blueberry picking this year. The blueberries are gone already despite the 25 lbs or so that were picked. Donna has been juicing some 15lbs of carrots every week. She's turned a lovely shade of orange.

Aside from occasional drives around

the Seattle-Tacoma area and a few ferry trips to Vashon Island and across the Sound, travels this year have been light and not the most comfortable. Twice we visited Birch Bay and twice, Long Beach. All travel has been within driving distance. On the good side, our first visit to Birch Bay found us at a resort that restricted use of common facilities to reservations only. This made us feel much safer. On the bad side, our last trip to Long Beach revealed a management that had no concern at all for the safety of its visitors, left the monitoring of people wearing masks (a mandate in our state) to the owners, then punished them for doing the monitoring. We found ourselves kicked out with two days left on our vacation. There's a strong possibility we will never



Fawning over a deer near Lake Whatcom

return to Long Beach and another strong possibility we will sue Worldmark to recover the money spent on "ownership" over nearly 30 years.

For almost two years I've been working from home and driving my wife crazier. For much of that period there were no rehearsals or performances by most of the music groups I was in. October brought some of that back but was still worrisome despite protections. Now with the omicron variant those protections may be of lesser value and it would seem wise, at least to me, that we again do our sheltering to try to stop this thing.

But being home has allowed for continued composition, resulting in the [Serenata Perpetua](#) and the completion of the [Second Symphony](#), both large works. Still more writing goes on.

We've both been healthy, at least physically, and we'd like to keep it that way. Mentally may be another story and that story is not yet written. But here's another one that is:

THE HUMMINGBIRD

It was toward the end of June. Seattle was just coming off the hottest days ever recorded in the city. The entire state had sweltered under the same oppressive extremes. And it was the heart of raspberry season. The heat was causing some of the berries to ripen too quickly leaving parts of berries overripe and other parts still white. I was picking diligently every evening, and despite the stress on the plants, was managing to salvage a decent harvest.

On one of those warm evenings as I moved canes to find as many hidden berries as I could, I heard a noise behind



Sunset on Mount Baker from Birch Bay

me. It was like the buzzing of a bee or wasp, but at a much lower frequency. I continued about my business for a moment or two, not willing to risk upsetting a stinging insect. Finally, when it did not seem to move, I slowly turned around to see what it was. For a brief second it looked like one of the huge moths we had seen at the Butterfly Museum

in Victoria a number of times, but I'd never seen one in the wild, much less around the house. Suddenly I realized as I stared at it, that staring back at me in a perfect hover was a hummingbird.

Yes, it was literally looking right at me from no more than arm's length away. Hummingbirds have rather large eyes in proportion to their bodies, at least this one did, and I was fascinated watching it as it watched me. I couldn't help it, but started talking to it, asking how it was doing and what it was doing there, the kinds of things one normally asks of hummingbirds.

It was probably less than a minute that this encounter lasted, at which point it darted away briefly then came back for a



Harbor Seal pup on Fox Island

quick snack on some flowers in the garden before flying off again for the night.

For the next several evenings I watched for it as I picked berries. The first couple of nights nothing happened, but long about that fourth night the bird returned. I was not so blessed this time with the friendly chat but still enjoyed watching it visit the flowers it seemed to like. I even set up a video camera and one night managed to catch it in its mission. I'd seen hummingbirds before, visiting the feeders and flowers neighbors had, but this was much more personal, even transcendental. I would not and have not forgotten it.



Cape Disappointment State Park near the mouth of the Columbia



Donna's carrot juice attracts strange friends



Sunset over the Sound



Yes, we Mask Up!



Best wishes for a healthier and happier
NEW YEAR! Stay safe!

Jeff and Donna

