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Real News
Real Impact

New CDC Data supports natural immunity against COVID-19



By **BO JOHN BRUSCO**

New data released from the Center for Disease Control reignites the formerly dismissed debate about natural immunity against COVID-19. Though the data indicate that prior infections provided greater immunity than vaccines alone, the CDC maintains that vaccination is the safest strategy against COVID-19.

The CDC's Data

In the first month of 2022, nearly two years after the pandemic began, the CDC released a study titled, "COVID-19 Cases and Hospitalizations by COVID-19 Vaccination Status and Previous COVID-19 Diagnosis — California and New York, May–November 2021." As the title indicates, the study examined nearly 1.1 million people who were infected in New York and California over a seven-month period last year.

Given this time frame, the Omicron variant and the effectiveness of booster shots are nonfactors in the data.

When comparing case rates between vaccinated people without previous infections and those who were unvacci-

nated with previous infections, a clear picture is painted. From the end of May through the first half of June, the data favored the vaccinated.

However, this trend shifted with the arrival of the Delta variant near the end of June. By the first full week in October 2021, infection conferred greater immunity than vaccination.

In California, case rates were only 6.2 fold lower among the vaccinated with no prior infections but 29.0 fold lower with the previously infected unvaccinated group (compared to the control group who were neither previously infected nor vaccinated). New York saw a similar trend with case rates only 4.5 fold lower among the vaccinated with no prior infection and 14.7 fold lower among the unvaccinated with prior infection.

As Agency France-Press (AFP), an international French Press company, reported on the data, "By the week of October 3, vaccinated people who did not have prior Covid were three to four times (in California and New York, respectively) more likely to be infected than unvaccinated people with prior Covid."

The CDC's data also included hospitalizations, but only from California. Of the hospitalizations reported, AFP states, "vaccinated people who did not have prior Covid in California, were around three times more likely to be hospitalized than unvaccinated people with prior Covid," from October 13 to November 14, 2021.

The AFP also brought attention to potential "selection bias" that may have impacted the CDC's study since it "excluded people who died, who were overwhelmingly unvaccinated."

The CDC's conclusion

While the data indicate that prior infections provided greater immunity than vaccines alone, the CDC concluded that "vaccination remains the safest strategy to prevent SARS-CoV-2 infections and associated complications."

This conclusion, albeit accurate, may be a little disingenuous. Though it is a safer strategy to get vaccinated than to risk catching Covid, the CDC's own data indicates that natural immunity alone is more effective at preventing infection and hospitalization than vac-

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Mukilteo Councilmen Harris and Khan allegedly politicized vacancy appointment



Louis Harris



Riaz Khan

By **LYNNWOOD TIMES STAFF**

MUKILTEO, Wash.— During the January 18th City Council candidate interviews, it was revealed by one of the candidates, Ashvin Sanghvi, that allegedly Councilmen Riaz Khan and Louis Harris asserted party affiliation as a criterion for their support to fill the vacancy on the Mukilteo city council in a private meeting with him during the application process.

The Lynnwood Times immediately requested from the City of Mukilteo emails regarding the city council vacancy to/from all city councilmembers and candidates, sent emails to all city councilmembers inquiring on the potential process violation, and interviewed as many city council applicants as possible to investigate the matter.

As of the time of this article, the City of Mukilteo has delayed the request to release emails to and from city councilmembers regarding the city council vacancy appointment. The city originally stated it will fulfill the request on January 28, now the extended fulfillment date for the public records request is February 4 citing, "technical difficulties." Also, the video of the January 18th City Council meeting, is no longer on the city of Mukilteo's website yet other commission meetings are posted.

Councilman Emery shared that

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PDC opens formal investigation into Councilman Binda

LYNNWOOD, Wash. – The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) staff has opened a formal investigation and held an Initial Case Status Review hearing, January 20, concerning complaints filed against Lynnwood City Councilman Joshua Binda for allegedly using thousands of dollars of campaign funds for personal, non-campaign related, expenses.

Throughout his campaign leading up to his eventual election, Councilman Binda recorded almost \$4,848.19 in expenditures towards rent, towing fees, event tickets, jewelry, laptops, airfare, groceries, dental work, haircuts, and office furniture. An additional, over 100 purchases totaling, \$4,952.12 was recorded as “Expenses of \$50 or less.”

According to Washington State statute, any expenditure of a candidate’s campaign funds that is not directly related to the candidate’s election campaign is a prohibited personal use of campaign funds.

Multiple amendments to various contribution and expense reports were

submitted to the PDC throughout the afternoon of Sunday, October 31 by Josh Binda, just after the Lynnwood Times contacted him requesting an inspection of his campaign books. Some were amendments to newly amended reports.

On November 1, 2021, Binda failed to produce the supporting documentation required by Washington state law, during the public inspection of books of account (RCW 42.17A.235.8 and WAC 390-16-043 Section 6) requested by the Lynnwood Times. Binda also failed to meet with the Lynnwood Times within the required 48-hour deadline to publicly inspect financial records (RCW 42.17A.235.6.a and WAC 390-16-043 Section 4).

In October and November of last year, two other complaints were filed against Binda’s suspicious use of campaign funds, one by Thomas J. Brooks and the other by Glen Morgan for alleged violations of RCW 42.17A.235, .240 and .445 by failing to timely and accurately report and describe expenditures on C-4 reports;

and by expending campaign funds for activities not directly related to candidacy.

Another complaint was filed by the Lynnwood Times on November 2 for violation of RCW 42.17A.235 & WAC 390-16-043 for failure to timely allow inspection of books of account and include underlying source documents.

An initial complaint was filed by the PDC staff July 13 against Binda for alleged violation of RCW 42.17A.700 for failure to timely file a Personal Financial Statement (F-1 report) within two weeks of becoming a candidate which has since been closed administratively.

On November 22, just hours before the 14-day deadline to respond to the second complaint case filed in November, Binda requested more time to respond to the PDC requesting the commission provide a filer assistant to assist him in both, still open, complaints.

The PDC is currently continuing its

now formal investigation against these complaints and has yet to come to a resolution.

Ethics Violation Filed against Joshua Binda

In addition to the PDC’s formal investigation, a City of Lynnwood Ethics complaint was filed against the Binda campaign by a Lynnwood resident who preferred to remain anonymous concerning the aforementioned handling of campaign funds.

The ethics code for the city of Lynnwood (2.94.080 B2) requires the Board Counsel to meet with, at least once together, all parties to hear from them all aspects of the complaint and issues involved.

Attorney Grant Weed, of Weed Graafstra representing Lynnwood Board of Ethics legal counsel, was scheduled to meet with both Joshua Binda and the complaint filer, via zoom, on January 12 but was cancelled the day of due to Binda’s inability to attend.

New Gallup Poll shows Republican shift in national electorate

By BO JOHN BRISCO

The most recent data from Gallup illustrates a dramatic shift among the electorate at the end of 2021. While the year’s average favored Democratic support overall with a 3-point advantage, the fourth quarter of 2021 saw a 5-point advantage for Republican support. (Featured photo by Kelly Sikke-ma on Unsplash).

The 2021 shift

At the beginning of last year, Democrats held a solid 9-point advantage, with 49% of Americans identifying as Democrats or leaning to the left with 40% identifying as Republican or right-leaning. According to Gallup, this was the Democrat’s largest lead since 2012, when the party held another 9-point lead.

But in the fourth quarter of 2021, Republicans gained a 5-point advantage at 47%, while Democrats dropped to 42%. This shift is especially dramatic given that the Democratic party has usually held the lead. While the two parties had fairly equal levels of support from 2001 to 2003 and in 2010 and 2011, according to Gallup, the last

time Republicans held the lead was in 1991.

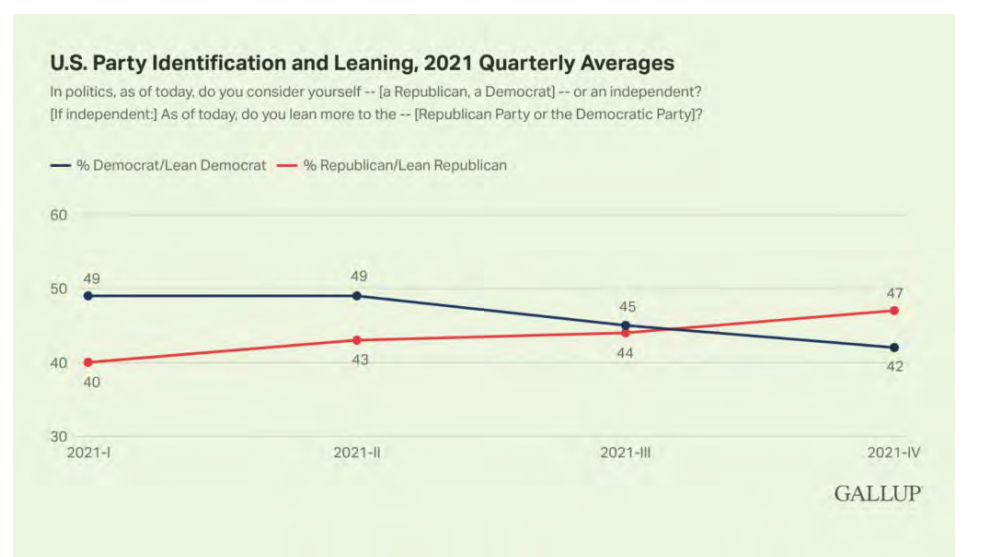
Affiliation follows presidential approval

The Gallup report suggests that this shift in party affiliation followed changes in presidential approval. Noting President Trump’s lowest approval ratings at the end of his term and Biden’s highest right as the Biden Presidency began, Gallup points to the 9-point gap between the Democrats and Republicans right after the change in office.

Gallup attributes the 7-point drop in Democratic affiliation at the end of 2021 to Biden’s handling of the Delta surge and the withdrawal from Afghanistan. “[Biden’s] ratings remain low as the U.S. battles rising inflation and yet another surge of COVID-19 infections, tied to the omicron variant of the virus,” states the Gallup report.

Independents outnumber Republicans and Democrats

One of the most interesting parts of this report was how Independents outnumber Republicans and Democrats. According to the report, “[T]he largest



proportion of Americans identify initially as political independents.”

The “initial” identification refers to Gallup’s surveying method. For example, the data in this particular report came from interviewing 12,000 randomly sampled adults in the U.S. In these interviews, Gallup asks Americans to identify as Democrat, Republican, or Independent. However, those who identify initially as Independent are asked a follow-up question: “whether they lean more toward the Republican or Democratic Party.”

According to Gallup, the American trend towards identifying as Independent started in the late 1980s. But in 2011, 40% of Americans identified as Independent, and that has generally

been the case ever since.

Exceptions to this generality are years with presidential elections. “At least four in 10 Americans have considered themselves independents in all years since 2011, except for the 2016 and 2020 presidential election years,” Gallup states.

Last year, 42% of Americans identified as Independents, while only 29% identified as Democrats and 27% as Republican. What’s more, when asked whether they lean left or right, the Independents seemed to be split almost evenly in two. “Roughly equal proportions of independents leaned to the Democratic Party (17%) and to the Republican Party (16%),” Gallup reports.

LYNNWOOD TIMES

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Rep. Larsen tours Lynnwood infrastructure project sites

By KIENAN BRISCOE

LYNNWOOD, Wash. — Representative Rick Larsen (WA-02) joined Mayor Christine Frizzell, Public Works Director William A. Franz, and Director of Development and Business Services Department David Kleitsch, on Wednesday, January 26, to tour four current and future infrastructure projects the City of Lynnwood identified could benefit from the investments in the Investments and Jobs Act.

The bipartisan infrastructure law, which passed late last year, will provide \$550 billion in new spending to the country's infrastructure, over the next five years, including several long-term investments in Washington. Lynnwood hopes to secure to develop its Poplar Way Bridge, City Center Station and City Square Park, and Wastewater Treatment Plant.

"I'm grateful for Rep. Larsen for coming and seeing with his own eyes what the projects are that we are asking for help with from the Federal Government. I'm excited to show him how we're growing and what our needs specifically are with that growth," Mayor Frizzell told the Lynnwood Times.

Poplar Way

The first stop on Larsen's tour was the future Poplar Way Bridge site, an arterial bridge that will cross over Interstate 5, providing congestion relief to the Lynnwood City Center along 196th St SW, around Alderwood Mall, to 33rd Avenue West. The city has already secured \$3,209,000 from

federal and state grants for project design and \$3,050,000 in federal grants for the right-of-way acquisition phase. The total cost of the project is around 35 to 45 million, with only the cost of construction remaining.

"We're pretty positive we're going to [secure funding]," Mayor Frizzell told the Lynnwood Times. "We really need it so that we can move growth from corridors that they're already on and use the city even better."

City Center Station and Town Square Park

Larsen and City staff then traveled to the future Lynnwood City Center Town Square Park and 42nd Avenue West, a future street that will aim to improve connectivity and pedestrian access currently in its design phase. Negotiations are also underway to purchase a nearly two-acre site on the future 42nd Avenue to create a Town Square Park that would support pedestrian and retail activities.

City Center Town Square Park Acquisition is envisioned as Lynnwood's future gathering place. This help will help catalyze City Center's transit-oriented development, supporting pedestrian-scale activity and retail, anchored by the Link light rail station.

Larsen, Mayor Frizzell, and City Staff then walked to the Lynnwood City Center Station to hear about the improvements to support the future Lynnwood Link light rail station and learn about proposed improvements to the 44th Avenue West Underpass, which aims to improve the existing



Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell (center) with Rep. Rick Larsen (right).

underpass by creating a 10- to 12-foot shared-use pathway with lighting and artwork providing multimodal connections to the Lynnwood City Center Station.

Wastewater Treatment

Larsen's final stop was scheduled to be the Wastewater Treatment Plant to hear how wastewater funding provided in the bipartisan infrastructure law can help provide necessary upgrades to the plant.

Population growth, an aging sewage sludge incinerator, and the Department of Ecology's new Puget Sound Nutrient Permit have combined to require a very significant upgrade to Lynnwood's Wastewater Treatment Plant, located on the shore of Puget

Sound. A Facility Plan to study the future needs of the WWTP is almost complete. The ultimate plan to solve all needs for growth and Puget Sound water quality is estimated to cost almost \$200 million.

However, a scheduling issue prevented the final tour location from happening.

"We want to connect with all of our legislators. We don't know where the infrastructure money is coming into, we don't know if it's going to be state, county, city; it's going to be all three of those but we don't know how much," Mayor Frizzell told the Lynnwood Times. "We just continue to be collaborative because what benefits Lynnwood benefits the whole area — benefits the county, as we are the third-largest city in the county."

Snohomish County recognizes February as Black History Month

SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash. — At its REGULAR ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION on Monday, the Snohomish County Council unanimously passed a resolution recognizing February as Black History Month in Snohomish County.

The resolution was introduced by Councilman Jared Mead and seconded by Councilman Nate Nehring.

WHEREAS, in 1926, Black historian, author, journalist and founder of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Carter G. Woodson, launched "Negro History Week" with the purpose of bringing attention to the need for acknowledging and accurately representing Black history in schools; and

WHEREAS, Woodson once remarked, "If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible

factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated"; and

WHEREAS, Black United Students and Black educators at Kent State University used the foundation laid by Woodson to found Black History Month on February 1, 1970, and six years later the month was officially recognized by the federal government during the nation's bicentennial; and WHEREAS, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), the founders of Black History Month, announced that the 2022 theme of Black History Month is Black Health and Wellness; and

WHEREAS, Black History Month is a time to recognize and honor the many people, events, and significant contributions of Black people to our community, nation, and world despite living under difficult and unjust circumstances; and

WHEREAS, Black Americans continue to experience inequality and inequity as a result of institutional racism. Snohomish County acknowledges racism is systemic, has historically hurt and continues to fracture the health and well-being of Black Americans through generations; and

WHEREAS, approximately 25,000 Black people live, work, and play in Snohomish County and make significant contributions to our economy, arts and culture, science, education, and more;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Snohomish County Council does hereby recognize February 2022 as Black History Month in Snohomish County.

In acknowledgement of disparate treatment, we recognize that Black Lives Matter and com-

Cont. PAGE 08 >>

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Dr. Betty Cobbs receives ACT leadership award



Dr. Betty Cobbs and her husband Zebedee at Western Washington University celebration in 2017 where she was named Distinguished Alumni. Photo courtesy of Everett Public Schools.

EVERETT, Wash. – Last last November, Everett’s own Dr. Betty Cobbs was awarded the Trustee of the Year Leadership Award. Dr. Cobbs was presented the award by the Washington State Association of College Trustees (ACT) for her contribution to Washington State’s community and technical colleges.

Cobbs has served as chair on Everett Community College’s Board of Trustees since 2009 after she was appointed by Gov. Christine Gregoire and reappointed in 2013 by Gov. Jay Inslee. Cobbs is currently serving her second five-year term.

On the day-to-day, however, Cobbs works as the principal of Woodside Elementary School, having served Everett Public Schools for over 48 years and currently overseeing 540 elementary students and dozens of staff.

Even after almost 40 years as principal, she still shares the same love for her students as her first day. Cobbs was meeting with a student up until the moment of her interview with the Lynnwood Times, sharing with a laugh that she was “just trying to get through this week and get these kids some teaching and learning going on without them getting into trouble.”

Cobbs did not necessarily dream of becoming a principal but originally

had another goal in mind. “I always wanted to be a teacher,” Cobbs told the Lynnwood Times. “Well, I knew by first grade, first or second grade that I wanted to be a teacher.” In fact, Cobbs served as a classroom teacher for the first nine years of her career.

While most people do not end up working their childhood dream job, Cobbs credits her own teachers for leading her toward teaching, particularly her second-grade teacher whom she admired. An even greater influence, though, was her mother, who worked as a beautician. “She did a lot of teaching and learning with the customers that she had, so I could see a lot of that modeled in my own home,” Cobbs shared.

Like her mother, Cobbs is a self-proclaimed life-long learner. She has earned multiple degrees, including a B.A. in Education, Elementary and Ethnic Studies and an M.A. in Education and Educational Leadership from Western Washington University, and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership in Policy Studies from the University of Washington.

But her education is not confined to the classroom. Cobbs seemingly relishes quickly learning and adapting to new situations, as she has done in her various community leadership roles. When she was approached to join the Everett Community College (ECC) board of

trustees, Cobbs admits it was a major learning curve for her.

“Being an educator in the K-12 system, I thought it would be similar to what we do here, and I found out it was really much different than my experience. . . . But all the things that I needed to learn was a surprise for me.” Yet within a few short years, Cobbs would prove herself indispensable to the college, eventually helping the institution select its first new president in over thirteen years as well as heading the institution’s strategic plan process.

Cobbs continues to pursue educational ventures, not only for her own benefit but the for benefit of her community. She has served on multiple boards, including Volunteers of America Western Washington, City of Everett Civil Service Commission, Everett Parks and Recreation Commission, and Imagine Children’s Museum. She currently serves on the Puget Sound Kidney Centers Board of Directors and the University of Washington-Bothell PEAB Advisory Board in addition to her work as a trustee at ECC.

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from page 1 **HARRIS AND KHAN**

although two applicants approached him, he was only able to meet with one candidate – Jason Moon. He stated that the conversation covered Moon’s background, interest and reasons for wanting to be a councilmember, how much time it takes, what the council does and does not do, and how to be an effective councilmember.

He assured the Lynnwood Times that it was clear to Moon not to suggest nor imply any support because he had not met with everyone and had to be neutral. Emery also assured the Lynnwood Times that he did not discuss Moon’s party affiliation.

“I did not ask about, nor was there any mention of, political orientation, belief, or party membership,” Emery wrote to the Lynnwood Times.

Tom Jordal shared with the Lynnwood Times that he spoke briefly with applicant Alex Crocco on the phone and that the conversation centered on the timeline of the process. He also assured the Lynnwood Times that at no time was party affiliation discussed. This content of the discussion was confirmed by Crocco during his interview with the Lynnwood Times.

No other Mukilteo City Council members responded to the Lynnwood Times after multiple requests to discuss the matter.

The Lynnwood Times was able to reach out to all city council applicants except for Jason Moon as no contact information for Moon was available nor provided. The Times was able to correspond with the following applicants: Carolyn “Dode” Carlson, Donald Saul, Ashvin Sanghvi, Alex Crocco, Ted Wheeler, and Peter Zieve. Kevin Stoltz never returned any calls nor emails from the Lynnwood Times.

Carlson, Saul, Wheeler, and Zieve all confirmed they did not meet with any city councilmember outside of the application process to discuss the city council vacancy. Crocco confirmed meeting with Jordal and that their discussion was trivial and brief.

Former Councilman Ted Wheeler

shared with The Times that city councilmembers should not be inserting party affiliation nor meeting with candidates outside of the agreed process.

“[This] is not the right thing to do,” Wheeler told the Lynnwood Times. “They are the ones making the choice.”

Sanghvi revealed details of the meeting he had with both Councilmen Khan and Harris at Starbucks last December. He shared that initially both councilmen were supportive. According to Sanghvi, the conversation was going well until Khan asked about his party affiliation and Harris reiterated the question. Sanghvi inquired to the councilmembers “Isn’t this a non-partisan position, how does it matter?”

According to Sanghvi, both councilmen responded stating, “We are both ‘Ds’ and if you want to get anywhere it really matters.” One can only assume that “D” is referring to the Democratic Party.

Both Councilmen Khan and Harris again allegedly asked Sanghvi to declare his party affiliation to them.

“I don’t think it matters for this job here,” Sanghvi told both Khan and Harris.

Then according to Sanghvi, the tone of the conversation changed as to why he may not be “ready” for the job. Both councilmen allegedly told Sanghvi that there are many other applicants with references from “higher-ups in the [Democratic] Party”, others have been on committees unlike Sanghvi, and that they also implied that he hasn’t “paid his dues” for the job.

Emery told The Times that he can understand concerns of transparency by the public in the vacancy fulfillment process.

“I do believe that it is the responsibility of any councilmember who have such conversations to be clear with the applicant(s) that it is inappropriate to indicate either support of or opposition to the candidate,” Emery wrote to the Lynnwood Times.



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Valentine's Day date ideas around Snohomish County

By KIENAN BRISCOE

Love is in the air as the nation's celebration of love and romance approaches this Valentine's Day. And although chocolates and flowers make great gifts any day of the year, sometimes it's simply more exciting to change things up.

Skydive Snohomish

For thrill-seekers looking to get a rush this Valentine's day, consider soaring 15,000 feet above the Snohomish River Valley with Skydive Snohomish.

Located just 20 miles north of Seattle at 9906 Airport Way in the city of Snohomish, Skydive Snohomish is more than just an adrenaline junky's dream. Take in the picturesque Snohomish River and beautiful mountain ranges from a new perspective.

Skydive Snohomish's team collectively has over 100 years of skydiving experience, over 80,000 skydives, and almost 32,000 hours in the sky. First-timers can expect to dive tandem with a highly-credentialed expert who will coach and guide their jump every step of the way.

Snohomish Balloon Ride

Take a ride at sunset in a hot balloon with chief pilot Captain Bob, who has logged over 9,000 hours piloting hot air balloons. Captain Bob has piloted hot air balloons worldwide, but Snohomish is his favorite – floating just above the rivers and trees but high enough to see Seattle, British Columbia, and both the Cascade and Olympic mountain ranges.

With unobscured 360-degree sites, balloon rides have been called a "nature walk in the sky."

The Snohomish Balloon ride is located at Harvey Airfield in historic Snohom-

ish.

Bowlero Lynnwood

Bowling, arcade games, pool, food and drinks – Bowlero has it all for a fun-fueled night out for the activity-focused couple.

With a wide variety of menu items and entertainment within a single establishment, Bowlero is not only the perfect night out for couples but for group dates or single friends as well.

Cinebarre Mountlake Terrace

Dinner and a movie may be a cliché, but sometimes clichés exist because they work. At Cinebarre you can have your dinner and a movie while relaxing in comfortable reclining chairs and enjoying table-side service during the film. At Cinebarre, you won't have to risk missing an important scene for a popcorn run.

This 21+ establishment also has a full bar, so be sure to arrive early for a pre-viewing cocktail.

Hike in Granite Falls

Just because it's winter doesn't mean you can't get outside and enjoy the refreshing Northwest air with a little bit of a workout to the top. Luckily there's no shortages of beautiful, scenic trails around Snohomish County, and nothing says romance like nature. Consider hiking the following trails:

- Lake 22 Trail
- Heather Lake Trail
- Mount Pilchuck Trail
- Gothic Basin Trail
- Big Four Ice Caves Trail
- Lime Kiln Trail
- Robe Canyon Historic Trail
- Granite Falls Fish ladder Trail
- Pinnacle Lake Trail
- Cutthroat Lakes

Tulalip Resort Casino

Tulalip Resort Casino's offerings do not stop at gambling – although they have that too. Book a night at the hotel, dress to impress, eat state-of-the-art food, catch some live entertainment, or spend a day at the luxurious, 14,000 square-foot spa, where couples can enjoy a romantic day of self-care.

Lynnwood Ballroom Dance

Sign up for private or group dance classes at Lynnwood Ballroom Dance. Whether you are new to dancing, learning a wedding routine, or growing your existing skills, Lynnwood Ballroom Dance's diverse and experienced staff will meet you at whatever level you're in.

Lynnwood Ballroom Dance teaches a variety of different dancing styles including swing, two-step, bachata, lindy hop, cha-cha, merengue, waltz, tango, foxtrot, salsa, rumba, foxy, and many more.

Escape Everett

What better way to get to know your partner than locking yourself in a room together, attempting co-operative puzzles in an attempt to escape?

At Escape Everett you are the heroes directly participating in a fun, live-action, immersive story where you must use your wits and teamwork skills to solve puzzles and escape the room in under an hour.

Quarantine Date Ideas

Of course enjoying Valentine's Day does not require spending money to show your significant other you truly care. And with the COVID outbreak still occurring, it can be intimidating to be out-and-about. Here are some safe, at-home date ideas for the quarantined, home-bodied, or cost-conscious couples.

Passport Dates

Just because traveling is restricted at the moment doesn't mean you still can't satisfy that desire for exotic cultures with the one that you love.

Close your eyes and pick a country on a map. Whatever you choose, learn to cook a meal from that country, watch a movie, read about the country's history and culture, and learn some phrases in their native language. Have an arts and crafts day and make passports, drawing in stamps for every country you've covered.

Board Game Night

Who doesn't love board games? They're competitive, team building, strategic, and just plain fun. Learning a new game together can also be a date in itself. Try picking up a game you've never heard of before, research some online, pour yourselves a glass of wine, and commit to a day at home together with some easy entertainment.

Take a Masterclass

Learn how to write, cook a new dish, skateboard, or perform magic tricks. Really, with Masterclass, there's something for everyone with a variety of different interests, all taught by celebrities and experts in the field. Try watching Penn and Teller's Masterclass on magic tricks and put on a magic show for each other, or watch Steve Martin's Masterclass on comedy and put on a stand-up comedy act.

In today's age, bingeing TV shows is something most of us are guilty of. But at least with Masterclass, you and your partner may come out with a new hobby or skill.

Spa Day

While self-care is important, it doesn't

Continued PAGE 08 >>

from page 5 **DR. COBBS**

She has also worked with several nonprofits, including the NW Regional Educational Lab, Everett Performing Arts Theatre, Everett Youth Symphony, and the Parent Teacher Student Association.

"I'm always interested in learning more things because it seems to really help me in anything that I'm doing, just being knowledgeable about the programs and services that are available to help people in the community and how it really fits with all the things that are going on. It does keep me busy, but I do enjoy the learning and the interactions with people that otherwise I probably would have not been associated with," Cobbs told the Lynnwood Times.

Not only has Cobbs worked to serve her community at the present but she also works to build a better future for her community as well, particularly focusing on equity and inclusion as a trustee at ECC.

On several occasions, Cobbs has been the only woman of color in a position of leadership. But rather than giving in to difficulty, Cobbs uses those situations to prove herself not only capable but exceptional. To her, much of that

strength comes from a strong support system and strong family values, much of which she learned from her mother.

"You can never forget where you come from and the struggles that you've gone through to get to where you are. . . . I grew up in a family that believed that we were leaders and I could be a leader and that working hard would

make a difference. That was kind of a part of my upbringing," Cobbs shared.

Dr. Cobbs continues to advance the college's goals for equity and inclusion to create space for more people of color in leadership.

In the meantime, she encourages others to become life-long learners as

well, not just through academic education but on a daily basis. To Cobbs, that means reading, staying informed, and on some level, getting outside your comfort zone, as she has done her whole life.

"I'm very much interested in the contributions I can make that help others to move forward."

Happy Hour
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Your December 2021 Horoscope

This February there is a great deal of action in and around the Sign of Capricorn. So, let's look at what Capricorn can represent and suggest ways in which generic Sun Sign individuals might deal with it. The Capricorn energy traditionally is all about Law, Order and the maintaining the Status Quo. The Capricorn effect can also indicate a period of Hard Work, Patience and Limitation. It might suggest Caution, Prudence and sometimes suggest a Restriction of things normally expected. So, for some this might be seen a challenging period. For others, it's a great opportunity to Plan, to Grow, to Lay Down Foundations or to initiate a period of positive Work Hard in pursuit of a distant goal or dream that needs to be realized. All these things, or some of these things, may affect all – or just some.

As indicated, it all depends on how an individual's personal Birth Chart is set up. Therefore, in reading the following, you are most probably the only one capable of interpreting just what it means to you...

ARIES: The inherent instinct of any self-respecting Aries spirit is to lead or strike out for what you care about or believe in. Maybe the somewhat limiting Capricorn energies could be hindering you right now? If so, perhaps focus more on why this might be, rather than striking out against it, and how you can use them to structure your life more positively in the future – that is, without limiting your drive and actions at the same time.

TAURUS: As we've said before, stability and a patient application of your energies is your style. In this sense, the practical, long-term nature of the Capricorn energies right now will not be too challenging for you. If anything, they may encourage you to go over and above your normal modus-operando and bring long-term objectives more into focus.

GEMINI: We can only reiterate what we said last month about it being a good time to get more serious in your thinking while your ruling planet travels through Capricorn. One would hope therefore that you've got more of a plan in mind, as now Mercury enters Aquarius this month, it's an opportunity to implement your thinking in a much more liberated and independent way.

CANCER: As I'm sure you've read a million times by now, the true Cancerian spirit tends to project a tough exterior, to protect the much more sensitive thoughts and feelings that are swirling around on the inside. Capricorn is your opposite Sign in the Zodiac. So, there's no doubt that all that activity over there right now is profoundly affecting your sense of inner peace and security – by polarity if nothing else. In that sense, it's probably more important that you take long-term plans and actions very seriously right now, so that your inner self might feel more secure and stable.

LEO: There's probably little doubt that your more gregarious self is feeling somewhat blocked and limited right now. You're not comfortable with limitations are restrictions to your naturally outgoing nature. Yet this could be a great opportunity to build better and firmer foundations for yourself, so that you can shine even more brightly in the future. "Brakes" are important to any vehicle, even if that vehicle is more of a sports car in your own particular case!

VIRGO: Being of service to others is one of the key expressions of the Virgo spirit – as is attention to detail and concerns in the spheres of health and well-being. The Capricorn effect can be cramping the style of most people. But if you identify strongly with those Virgo traits listed above, you may well be finding this a great time to better structure your interests and build stronger foundations that will allow you to express yourself much more practically and effectively.

LIBRA: On balance, perhaps the Capricorn effect right now could well be complimentary to your way of being. The pure Libran spirit is very much aligned to social justice, harmony, and diplomacy. The limitations that Capricorn can place on us all means that it's much harder for anyone to go out on a limb and ruffle too many feathers. You are not one for ruffling feathers unless it is in the pursuit of a great peace all round. Perhaps it could mean that you find yourself succumbing to your lazier tendencies as a result. But use the time wisely to build firm strategies for your future. It will benefit you in the long run.

SCORPIO: Let's face it, you can be quite controlled and compulsive when you want to be. A lot of it is hidden and internal, but I'm sure you feel it powerfully when you allow it to happen. Therefore, the practical realities and limitations of this Capricorn limiting time will either suit you or prove a huge hindrance to you. Either way, you will have strong emotions about it. Capricorn can bring order and structure to anything, so maybe this is a great time to explore your inner feelings – in whatever way they are going right now – and build for yourself a practical foundation that will allow you to express them more constructively.

SAGITTARIUS: If you reflect the true nature of the Sagittarian spirit – that is, a "don't tie me down" attitude, and a restlessness for new experiences and horizons – then these limiting Capricorn times will be extremely frustrating for you. However, if you are not able to fully express yourself right now, either mentally or physically, use the time to plan out your future adventures if you cannot fully implement them right now. Inner journeys can be just as rewarding as out ones by the way. So, maybe a little self-reflection and inner discovery is a perfect outlet for you right now?

CAPRICORN: You should be in your element right now! We everyone feeling limited and unable to move around and do what they want, it is a perfect time for the prudent planners to step in and show them the way to a better life. I'm sure you've found it a fruitful time for thinking through future endeavors and exploring the kind of new structures to implement in your own life for a better and more successful future? Well, why not help others explore that too, patiently sharing your methods and disciplined approaches with them, so they may find more order in their lives too. You might even profit from it if you plan it wisely!

AQUARIUS: There's a bit of an idealist and independent spirit about you that is no-doubt finding the current Capricorn limitations hard to accept. As the same time, you can see the big changes going on and so, for you, all change is good. You're not content to go with the herd however, feeling strongly within you the need for individualized personal expression. But going with the flow right now does position you to help others learn from their limitations and perhaps discover, like you, that each of us is an individual, who needs to think and take responsibility for their actions. In that sense, perhaps you can embrace the change and find your own long-term goals in amongst the disciplines we all share.

PISCES: You're certainly one for escaping the realities of the world in the creative dreams of your imagination. Consequently, the limitations of a Capricorn world right now must be tough to endure. However, see it as a wonderful opportunity to let your creative energies flourish. Like planting a seed in the cold, hard soil of winter, this is a great opportunity for you planting your own seeds of creativity and imagination that can flourish when the time of a fuller expression of movement and achievement can blossom and bloom. Dream on, dream – dream on. Your imaginings can be like the oil that is applied to a worn-out, rusty and long-neglected machine!

FEBRUARY 2022 Horoscope featured days at a glance...

- February 04th / Mars in Capricorn sextile Jupiter in Pisces: This could be a time of great and positive career energy, or perhaps an opportunity for working for a loftier and long-term cause or purpose.
- February 04th / Sun in Aquarius conjunct Saturn in Aquarius: A great "community" day possibly, where you think more in a social context, rather than a personal one. Could be a day to strike out more independently however or stand with those who do that for themselves.
- February 08th / Mars in Capricorn trine Uranus in Taurus: Working hard at building firm foundations are a good opportunity here. Could be a moment of great physical indulgence too – although if it is, perhaps it might also be advisable to initiate a long-term exercise plan as well!
- February 11th / Mercury in Capricorn conjunct Pluto in Capricorn: Could be a day where thoughts and words might shock. Therefore, think out what you say carefully and base everything you say or think on sure foundations of reality that won't rock the boat quite as much.
- February 15th / Sun in Aquarius semi-sextile Pluto in Capricorn: Certainly, an opportunity to strike out on your own, or in support of someone else's independence I would suggest. Perhaps a chance of ruffling a few feathers along the way, too?
- February 16th / Venus in Capricorn conjunct Mars in Capricorn: Passions of all kinds could be aroused here, although the most constructive use of this energy might be to plan, long-term, with someone you love – or start to work long-term for something you love, creative or otherwise.
- February 21st / Mercury in Aquarius semi-square Neptune in Pisces: A time to think and dream outside the box maybe? Perhaps your thoughts at this time may be somewhat otherworldly, spiritual or in some way escaping from the realities of those heavy Capricorn (and possibly limiting) energies that are hitting us all right now!
- February 23rd: Mars in Capricorn sextile Neptune in Pisces: Maybe a good day to act upon those big thoughts you had on the 21st? "Building towards a dream" in some practical way could well be indicated here.
- February 24th / Mercury in Aquarius sextile Chiron in Aries + February 24th / Venus in Capricorn sextile Neptune in Pisces + Mercury in Aquarius square Uranus in Taurus: It could be a big day for all kinds of powerful thoughts and affections right now! Maybe thoughts of the past or your childhood experiences could surface here. Maybe someone from the past emerges into your life or dominates your thoughts and communications today? Certainly, a good day for counseling – yourself or others – on what the "true You" is all about, and how others in the past have maybe affected that. Old thoughts and deeds coming home to roost perhaps?

Top ten billionaires wealth double during pandemic

By GEORGE FTIKAS JR.

For the majority of Americans — honestly, for most people globally — the pandemic has been difficult financially: loss of employment, wage and hiring freezes, reduced hours, soaring inflation, etc. Yet somehow, the ten richest billionaires more than doubled their wealth during the pandemic.

In a recent annual report from Oxfam, billionaires' wealth grew at a rate "unprecedented in human history." For the top 10, their collective fortune grew from \$700 billion to \$1.5 trillion. Over the two years of the pandemic, this would equate to \$15,000 per second.

"A new billionaire has been created every 26 hours since the pandemic began," according to the report. "The world's richest 10 men have seen their fortunes double, while the incomes of 99% of humanity are worse off because of COVID-19."

Overall, the 2,755 billionaires saw their cumulative wealth increase by over \$5 trillion since March 2021 — from \$8.6 trillion to \$13.8 trillion. This increase is more than the estimated December 2021 combined market cap of Apple at \$2.9 trillion and Google \$2 trillion. The total wealth there is as much as the top 8 market cap companies globally — Apple, Microsoft, Google, Saudi Arabian Oil, Amazon, Tesla, Facebook and NVIDIA — at roughly \$13.7 trillion. Of course, many of the billionaires go hand-in-hand with these companies, but this doesn't mitigate the staggering wealth of the upper 1%.

The pandemic has been particularly fruitful for Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk: who saw his wealth peak in October 2021 at \$294.2 billion. Forbes currently has Musk at \$238.5 billion and Bloomberg at \$240 billion, but this high in October was a 1016% increase since the start of the pandemic.

"If these 10 men were to lose 99.999% of their wealth tomorrow, they would still be richer than 99% of all the people on this planet," Oxfam International's Executive Director Gabriela Bucher said in a press release. "They now have six times more wealth than the poorest 3.1 billion people."



Oxfam cites the efforts to save the economy during the pandemic — \$16 trillion from governments globally — as the primary driving factor behind the billionaire boom.

"Billionaires have had a terrific pandemic. Central banks pumped trillions of dollars into financial markets to save the economy, yet much of that has ended up lining the pockets of billionaires riding a stock market boom," Bucher said. "The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed openly both the motive of greed, and the opportunity by political and economic means, by which extreme inequality has become an instrument of economic violence."

The Oxfam report, titled "Inequality Kills," is particularly critical of the billionaire boom as they maintain that wealth inequality contributes "to the deaths of at least 21,300 people each day." Oxfam equates Jeff Bezos' return quote from space — "You guys paid for all this" — to Marie Antoinette's "let them eat cake" on how out of touch the wealthy are to societal problems.

There is growing concern even among the wealthiest that scales are too unbalanced. On January 23, 100 millionaires and billionaires signed an open letter pleading for higher taxes on the rich.

The letter argues that "the bedrock of a strong democracy is a fair tax system" and faults the current international tax system for the divide and "colossal lack of trust between the people of the world and the elites who are the architects of this system."

It continues with:

"Most of us can say that, while the world has gone through an immense amount of suffering in the last two years, we have actually seen our wealth rise during the pandemic — yet few if any of us can honestly say that we pay our fair share in taxes."

One of the signatories of this letter is Abigail Disney: the granddaughter of Roy O. Disney, who started Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio along with his brother, Walt Disney, in 1922. Now a documentary filmmaker and social activist, she recently released "The American Dream and Other Fairy Tales." The documentary examines economic inequality in the U.S. — particularly for Disney employees.

"This is my name, this is my family," Disney said. "I don't have a role at the company, but I'm benefiting by the exploitation of these people."

The World Bank estimates that the pandemic has put 163 million more people into poverty, living on less than \$5.50 a day. It projects that unless addressed, these figures are unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels even by 2030.

The pandemic has exacerbated the wealth gap and undoubtedly pushed the sentiments behind the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement to the current "labor shortage." The open letter appears cognizant of that: "History paints a pretty bleak picture of what the endgame of extremely unequal societies looks like." It ends with: "it's taxes or pitchforks. Let's listen to history and choose wisely."

OSHA withdraws vaccine mandate

On January 26th the Biden Administration withdrew its vaccine mandate for businesses with 100 or more employees. This comes just 13 days after the Supreme Court ruled against the requirement in a 6 to 3 vote, with the majority concluding that The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) does not have "power to regulate public health more broadly."

"After evaluating the Court's decision, OSHA is withdrawing the Vaccination and Testing ETS as an enforceable emergency temporary standard," reads The Department of Labor's statement. "Notwithstanding the withdrawal of the Vaccination and Testing ETS, OSHA continues to strongly encourage the vaccination of workers against the continuing dangers posed by COVID-19 in the workplace."

OSHA's mandate was initially slated to take effect on Monday, January 10th.

According to the New York Times, "The case was headed back to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in Cincinnati for further consideration." But with OSHA's withdrawal, further legal proceedings have been dropped.

Without the federal mandate, employers will continue following state and local laws pertaining to workplace safety and COVID-19. In Washington state, for example, "Employers are required to implement a social distancing plan, conduct frequent cleaning and sanitizing and ensure frequent and proper hand washing."

In memory of Geri McBrady, 87



Geri McBrady, was born Geraldine Ann Rosholt on New Year's Day, January 1, 1934, in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. She lived in Seattle and Lynnwood, Washington most of her life and married Dick McBrady in 1957. As a single mother, Geri raised two sons by having faith in God and by being open to the love and blessings that surrounded her wherever she went.

She worked for many years—until age 84—as a housecleaner, enjoying her relationships with her clients, and sharing her income with her family and those in need.

Geri passed away on Christmas morning, December 25, 2021 at age 87. She was preceded in death by her brother, Jim Rosholt. She is survived by her sons, Greg McBrady (m. Katy Ellis), and Kevin McBrady, her granddaughters Anna McBrady and Qwynn McBrady, her sister, Pegi Rosholt, several dearly loved nephews and nieces, and great nephews and nieces.

Services for Geri will be held at 11:00 AM on February 11th 2022 at Chapel of the Resurrection at the Cedar Park Church in Bothell (16300 112th Ave NE, Bothell, WA 98011). Masks are required.

from page 1 **NATURAL IMMUNITY**

ination alone—as was the case during the seven months that were examined.

Johns Hopkins Professor rejects CDC’s conclusion

According to Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Professor Dr. Martin Makary, the CDC “spun” its report to reach this conclusion. In his Wall Street Journal piece on the matter, he claims the CDC’s conclusion was based on the finding that hybrid immunity, the combination of prior infection with vaccination, was associated with a lower risk of catching Covid.

“But those with hybrid immunity had a similar low rate of hospitalization (3 per 10,000) to those with natural immunity alone,” Makary writes, referring to the same CDC report. “In other words, vaccinating people who had already had Covid didn’t significantly reduce the risk of hospitalization.”

The keyword in Makary’s statement is “significantly.” Though it is accurate to say that getting vaccinated post-Covid did not significantly reduce the risk of hospitalization, the data still seems to favor the vaccine-prior infection combination above all others.

Looking at the latest 14-day period in California’s hospitalization data, it’s clear that individuals who had only been vaccinated without prior infection had the highest rate of hospitalization. From October 31 to November 31, hospital rates among the vaccinated with no prior infections were 21.7 fold lower, but 69.7 fold lower among the unvaccinated with previous infections and 85.1 fold lower among the hybrid

group.

This good, better, best pattern is observable among case rates in both states and hospitalizations in California—with most of the exceptions occurring before Delta’s arrival.

Johns Hopkins study might strengthen the case for natural immunity

Continuing his argument for natural immunity, Makary stated in his article that, due to the National Institute of Health’s (NIH) “inaction” to investigate post-infection immunity’s duration, he and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins conducted their own study.

“We found that among 295 unvaccinated people who previously had Covid, antibodies were present in 99% of them up to nearly two years after infection. We also found that natural immunity developed from prior variants reduced the risk of infection with the Omicron variant,” Makary asserts, though no link to the study was provided in his WSJ article.

Stacking this Johns Hopkins study up against vaccine efficacy, Makary states, “the effectiveness of the two-dose Moderna vaccine against infection (not severe disease) declines to 61% against Delta and 16% against Omicron at six months, according to a recent Kaiser Southern California study. In general, Pfizer’s Covid vaccines have been less effective than Moderna’s.”

As the previously mentioned Johns Hopkins study cannot be found, the Lynnwood Times was unable to verify Makary’s claim that natural immunity lasts up to two years, though he does

cite more studies suggesting that natural immunity lasts longer than vaccine efficacy.

Israeli study favors natural immunity over vaccination

One such study was conducted in Israel and published on August 25, 2021. Its conclusion reads, “natural immunity confers longer lasting and stronger protection against infection, symptomatic disease and hospitalization caused by the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2, compared to the BNT162b2 two-dose vaccine-induced immunity.”

Similar to the CDC’s data, the Israeli study concludes, “Individuals who were both previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 and given a single dose of the vaccine gained additional protection against the Delta variant.”

Caveats to studies published on Medrxiv

However, the validity of this study is not immune to questioning as it was published to a free online archive called medrxiv.org, which houses complete but unpublished preprints in the medical, clinical, and related health sciences.

Medrxiv’s “About” page states in bold letters, “Preprints are preliminary reports of work that have not been certified by peer review. They should not be relied on to guide clinical practice or health-related behavior and should not be reported in news media as established information.”

This fact is reiterated below the study’s title, where it reads, “This article is a preprint and has not been peer-reviewed [what does this mean?]. It reports new medical research that has yet to be evaluated and so should not be used to guide clinical practice.”

It should be noted that the Kaiser Southern California study Makary cited regarding the waning efficacy of inoculation was also published to medrxiv.org and displays the same disclaimer. However, a December 2021 report from the New England Journal of Medicine came to a similar conclusion, stating that “immunity against the delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 waned in all age groups a few months after receipt of the second dose of vaccine.”

Of course, the waning efficacy of vaccines is also evident in the necessity of booster shots, which is why the CDC recommends boosters for eligible age-groups “at least 6 months after completing the primary series [of vaccination].”

The National Institute of Health on long-lasting, post-infection immunity

Coincidentally, exactly a year before Makary’s article was published where-in he calls out the NIH for being dismissive towards natural immunity, the agency released a study titled, “Lasting immunity found after recovery from COVID-19.”

Led by Drs. Daniela Weiskopf, Alessandro Sette, and Shane Crotty from the La Jolla Institute for Immunology, the study concluded that—while the levels of immunity components such as antibodies, T cells, and B cells varied among individuals—post-Covid infections did provide immunity lasting up to 8 months.

As Dr. Weiskopf states, “Several months ago, our studies showed that natural infection induced a strong response, and this study now shows that the responses last. We are hopeful that a similar pattern of responses lasting over time will also emerge for the vaccine-induced responses.”

Even if Makary’s claim about two years of natural immunity doesn’t check out, the NIH’s findings still support his stance that natural immunity lasts longer than vaccine efficacy. Given that post-Covid infections provide immunity lasting up to 8 months, natural immunity appears to be at least comparable, if not superior to inoculation—especially since vaccine efficacy waned after only a few months in the face of Delta.

Challenging the previously held consensus

Back in October 2020, an article in The Lancet titled “Scientific consensus on the COVID-19 pandemic” claimed that “there is no evidence for lasting protective immunity to SARS-CoV-2 following natural infection.” Rochelle Walensky, who is now the CDC’s director, was one of the publication’s co-signers.

The article was determinative for America’s vaccine-forward approach. “The evidence is very clear: controlling community spread of COVID-19 is the best way to protect our societies and economies until safe and effective vaccines and therapeutics arrive within the coming months,” The Lancet piece stated.

Though this new data from the CDC may not cause an immediate about face, it is enough to challenge the previously held consensus, especially when over 146 million Americans have already been infected.

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from page 3 **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

mit to continuing to fund programs that ensure safety and equity across our community. We will also include the voices of local Black organizations and residents in decision making to build thriving, sustainable communities that create a sense of belonging.

All Snohomish County residents and visitors are encouraged to join the Snohomish County Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (SCB-NAACP), Communities of Color Coalition (C3), Snohomish County Black Heritage Committee, and Snohomish County Government in honoring the rich history and experiences of Black and Af-

rican Americans and celebrating their countless contributions to our community, nation, and world.

from page 5 **VALENTINE’S DAY**

necessarily require an expensive outing. Sometimes the best way to spend an evening with your partner is to drop a bath bomb in the tub, light some candles, put on some face masks, and exchange some massages. The best part is it can be paired with any of the previously mentioned ideas yet for one, eventful, intimate date experienced from the comfort of your home.