



CLASS ACT

NEWSLETTER



Spring Term Mar 2026

<https://encorelearn.net/>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Winter Greetings!

It may be Winter, but Spring is almost here, a welcome time of renewal. Days are growing longer. Flowers and trees are blossoming. Robins have returned. Calves are appearing in farmer's fields. Wobbly little fawns will be out exploring the world soon.

ENCORE Learn is experiencing renewal, too. We enjoy steady growth in membership, and our volunteers continually plan interesting classes and activities to take us through the seasons. Between July 2025 and June 2026 (our fiscal year) our members will have an impressive 163 opportunities to join in an ENCORE class or event. That number is a total of all the days there was, or will be, an ENCORE class session or event to attend. THANK YOU to all our volunteers who worked diligently to provide so many opportunities to learn, grow, and connect with others who enjoy learning!

Speaking of volunteering, I recently read that volunteering appears to slow the aging process in seniors and improves mood and heart health. How's that for motivation?! How you might help ENCORE continue to flourish? We always need help with projects or events. We have Board and committee vacancies, and we welcome your expertise and ideas if you would like to teach a class.

Don't miss the list of Spring Term classes at the

end of this newsletter. Learning opportunities include history, philosophy, disaster preparedness, writing, gardening, and travel (members will share their travel adventures and photos in the Snapshots class).

Note that the time for Lunch Bunch has changed, join us on the first Friday of the month at 12:30 to visit and laugh over lunch (watch for email details from Webmaster Craig Holt).

Thank you for being part of ENCORE, and for spreading the word. You are our biggest asset and our best advertising!

Sharon Borgardt, President, ENCORE Learn



“ Wobbly little fawns will be out exploring the world soon. ”

THE QUOTERY

When I look into the eyes of an animal I do not see an animal. I see a living being. I see a friend. I feel a soul.

~ AD. Williams

BOOKS/MOVIES

The Color of Paradise

Movie Review

~Rodney Merrill

A quiet and beautiful film that follows Mohammad, an 8-year-old blind boy studying at a special school in Tehran. I had no idea such an oasis existed in Iran.

At the start of summer vacation, he waits for his father, Hashem, who arrives late and reluctant to take him home. Rather than welcoming his son, Hashem is embarrassed by Mohammad's disability and hopes to leave him at school permanently.

Hashem reluctantly brings Mohammad home to their rural village. He attempts to hide his son's blindness to secure approval from a prospective bride's family. He sends Mohammad to apprentice with a blind carpenter, hoping to remove him as a "burden."

Mohammad finds deep joy and connection in the natural world, sensing its beauty through sound, touch, and emotion even though he cannot see it.

Tensions escalate with family members — especially his loving grandmother — and ultimately lead to a dramatic emotional climax that blends hope, tragedy, and spiritual imagery.

The film contrasts Mohammad's ability to feel the world deeply with Hashem's emotional blindness.

Nature isn't just a beautiful backdrop — it is an active, sensory force that shapes the story and reflects inner states.

~ Rodney Merrill

Guilty by Definition

Book Review

~Lynne Ryan

Guilty by Definition by Susie Dent is a mystery set in Oxford, England. The characters work as lexicographers for the Clarendon English Dictionary and the mystery surrounds the disappearance of the sister of one of the employees several years in the past.

A series of coded post cards and letters have been sent to a number of people, hinting at foul play in the disappearance and the possibility of a connection to a rare, historic commonplace book by Shakespeare's sister.

The mystery is different than the usual and the book is filled with wordplay and word origins... like how 'manual' and 'digital' have such close roots... 'hand' and 'fingers'.

It's a fun read.

The Arc of Chinese Philosophy



Seth Tichenor teaching the historical development of Buddhism in China, the second in a three-part series that will conclude this Spring with *The Arc of Chinese Philosophy*.

UPCOMING TALKS

Erhard Gross to offer a one-hour talk on the Mammoth Site on April 13 at 11:00 AM at the Senior Center.

Restoring the Mammoth

~ Erhard Gross

The consensus is mammoths became extinct in the late Pleistocene, about 10,000 years ago. Scientists have attempted to restore the species. Prestigious organizations are engaged in efforts to recreate the Columbian and the woolly mammoth; the Russian government has set aside a large tract of land in northeast Siberia as a proposed sanctuary once the restorations produce results.

The choice of the sanctuary is based on the vegetation found in the stomachs of mammoths recovered from the frozen fastness of north-central Siberia. Frozen mammoth corpses continue being discovered, both fully grown animals as well as calves only weeks or months old.

Scientists believe rapid freezing and long-term stability of permafrost, make the preservation of the bodies and genetic material of these animals possible.

Most of the great rivers of Siberia flow from south to north, resulting in massive spring snowmelt that follows the lay of the land toward the Arctic Ocean. These masses of water flow over permafrost, carving channels and oxbow lakes of varying depths and dimensions.

Like immense snowplows, the great Siberian river systems sweep north through the taiga into the coastal plains. They carry with them soil, trees, and all life scoured by the onslaught of spring meltwater from the south. It is in the meanders of these rivers on the coastal plains where the bodies of Pleistocene megafauna are preserved and where well-preserved frozen mammoths are recovered to this day.

So-called mammoth hunters—people who recover the sought-after ivory of the mammoth—sometimes find entire mummified bodies from which scientists can extract DNA that may still be viable. This DNA

closely resembles that of a living species, the Indian elephant.

Japanese scientists believe they are on the path toward restoring the mammoth. Implantation of mammoth DNA into live female elephants is considered one of the most promising approaches.

In the United States, interest in prehistoric animals goes back to Thomas Jefferson's time. In his instructions to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Jefferson included his belief that the mammoth might still exist on the Great Plains, based on findings at Big Bone Lick along the Ohio River in Kentucky.

The discovery of the Mammoth Site near Hot Springs, South Dakota, in 1974 gave major impetus to scientific interest in the recovery of the mammoth. Harvard University's involvement in this research can be traced back to this site. Under the leadership of Dr. George Church, significant progress has been made toward the re-creation of the woolly mammoth.

Unlike the Japanese approach using the Asiatic elephant, the Church group is working on the creation of an artificial uterus designed to grow embryos. If such embryos can be brought to term, they will be incorporated into elephant herds to learn herd behavior before being transferred to Taiga Park in northeast Siberia.

The Pleistocene sinkhole Mammoth Site at the southern end of South Dakota's Black Hills provides an outstanding window into the megafauna of North America. A visit to the area is well worth the trip.

Yellow, orange, red,
cleared by winter's shears,
maples don white wigs.

~ Rodney Merrill



UPCOMING TALKS (CONT)

Ed Stewart, co-founder of PAWS (Performing Animal Welfare Society) to speak at Astoria Senior Center. Monday, March 16 at 2:00 PM

Since 1984, PAWS has protected abused and retired performing animals at three sanctuaries in California.

PAWS ensures humane care and advocacy for elephants, big cats, bears, monkeys and other performing animals that have either retired from service or were abused during service.



Stewart is internationally recognized for his expertise in animal rescue and sanctuary design. His presentation will highlight the conditions that motivated the creation of PAWS, show photos of various rescues, and explain why the fight to protect captive wildlife is as urgent today as ever.

PAWS has participated in many amazing and heart-warming rescues, such as the 2004 rescue of 39 neglected tigers from a pseudo-sanctuary in Colton, California.



PAWS was also instrumental in passing the 1989 elephant protection legislation in California after the brutal beating of an African elephant at the San Diego Wild Animal Park. In 2022, PAWS helped pass federal legislation (the Big Cat Public Safety Act) that prohibits private ownership of big cats and ends cub petting operations.



<https://pawsweb.org/>

COMMUNITY/SAFETY EDUCATION

Ham Radio Classes Forming Now!

Seaside Tsunami Amateur Radio Society (STARS) and
Sunset Empire Amateur Radio Club (SEARC)
will hold a 3-week test preparation review course for the
Technician (entry level) FCC Amateur Radio License.

The Technician license is your gateway to the world-wide
excitement of Amateur Radio ... **the class is FREE**

... and you do NOT need to learn Morse code!

Spring 2026 Class:

Saturdays April 11, 18, 25
1 – 5 pm

Clatsop Community College
Astoria OR

Towler Hall room 307



The class is based on ARRL training materials

**Testing session (\$14) open to new hams and upgrades,
4:30 pm April 25**

More information and registration at [W7BU.club/technician-training](https://w7bu.club/technician-training)

For questions contact training@w7buhams.club



ARRL® Affiliated radio clubs
The National Association for Amateur Radio®

To register for the ham radio Technician license
exam review class, [please click here:](https://clatsopcc.coursestorm.com/category/amateur-ham-radio1)
<https://clatsopcc.coursestorm.com/category/amateur-ham-radio1>

For recommendations on preparing for the exam
review class, [please click here:](https://w7buhams.club/technician-training/)
<https://w7buhams.club/technician-training/>



LIMELIGHTS

Disappeared!

By Mary Kemhus

“You could have been shot! You could have been killed! You could have been disappeared! It’s happened to others,” my grandmother sobbed as she collapsed onto a kitchen chair.

The year was 1917 and Finland had declared independence from Russia after their Revolution. It was chaotic in the new country, as they decided what form their new government would take – Democratic (White Finns) or Communist (Red Finns). It swung back and forth for a brief time and then the Red Finns brutally took control with the assistance of the new Soviet Union.

Years before, around 1912 my grandparents had both left Finland for a better life, my grandfather went to sea on the tall ships and sailed all over the world. My grandmother came over at age 18 to work as an indentured servant in Seaside. The two met, married and had a daughter born in America. It was important to remember the child had birthright citizenship. The young family returned to the family estate in Rauma, Finland flush with American money ready to take part in shaping their new country.

As my mother told the story. Soon after they arrived the political scene got bad. The Reds were in control, food was scarce, children dying of disease, and people were disappearing or being shot. A mass execution had taken place recently in a wood nearby. To quell unrest a town meeting was called. Tension

was thick in the village.

My grandfather dressed carefully in his best pants, freshly laundered shirt, jacket, scarf and hat. He picked up his rifle as usual just like everyone else, as he went out the door. At the outdoor meeting City officials stood on a raised platform surrounded by armed militia and Soviet soldiers. The speaker started with the usual rants about how glorious everything was going to be once the undesirable elements had been eliminated. Then he became specific about who the bad people were, targeting anyone suspected of being a White Finn. He started to focus on my grandfather. Others in the crowd slowly shifted away from him. The officials and soldiers began to repeatedly taunt him, hoping that he would raise his rifle, even a millimeter so they could shoot him and label the incident self-defense. He kept his eyes downcast, did not react to their insults and kept his rifle pointed steadily at the ground. His heart was pounding wildly. Finally, they gave up, looked at him in disgust and wrapped up the meeting.

He headed back home aware they were still watching him, rifles ready.

As he walked into his house my grandmother took one look at him and started screaming, "How could you wear that white, American-made scarf? Were you trying to be clever, thumb your nose at them secretly, thinking they wouldn't notice. A white, American-made scarf! How could you be so stupid! Do you have any idea what could have happened? Just so you could be clever, so smug, so superior. They are not stupid. They're just looking for reasons to get rid of

you. You know that."

My grandfather fingered the scarf as if surprised to find it around his neck. "I didn't even think about it. I just grabbed my scarf as usual," he sputtered looking abashed. "I'm so sorry." anguish filled his eyes. "I'll be more careful in the future. I'm so sorry."

My grandmother got up, crossed the room and hugged him. "I was so worried," she said.

A brief time later our family was placed under house arrest, a Russian soldier guarding their gate. My five-year-old mother was sternly cautioned not to go out of the yard, or she would be shot. My mother, not always the most obedient child, stayed in the yard but later said she didn't really think he would shoot her. "He gave me chocolate," she said.

Wild Things are Neighbors

~ Janeen Phillips

Lebanon in "the Valley"
Wild turkeys rule the town
Chase the cry of ambulances
Strut like a Mayors down Main
Puff up at threatening reflections
In store front windows

They leave my yard alone

Life on the Northside
Of old Astoria town
Deer trod on tiny hooves
Nibble precious flowers
Below my second floor
Veggies grow unmolested
In my lofty garden

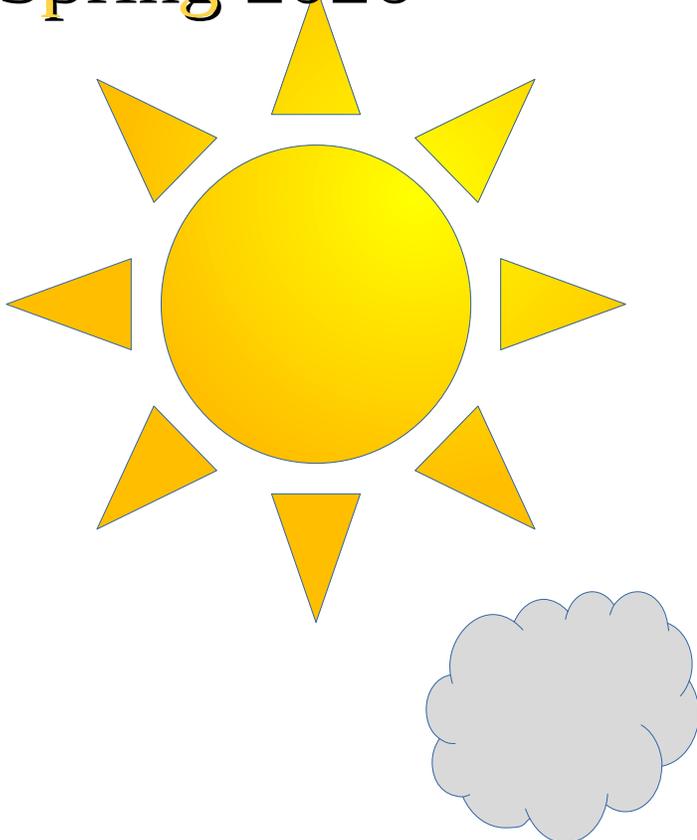
Warrenton, land of water

Roving herds of elk
Chewing cud at Dairy Queen
Traffic jam on Main
Camellias are a special treat
Elk “calling cards” dot
My freshly mowed lawn

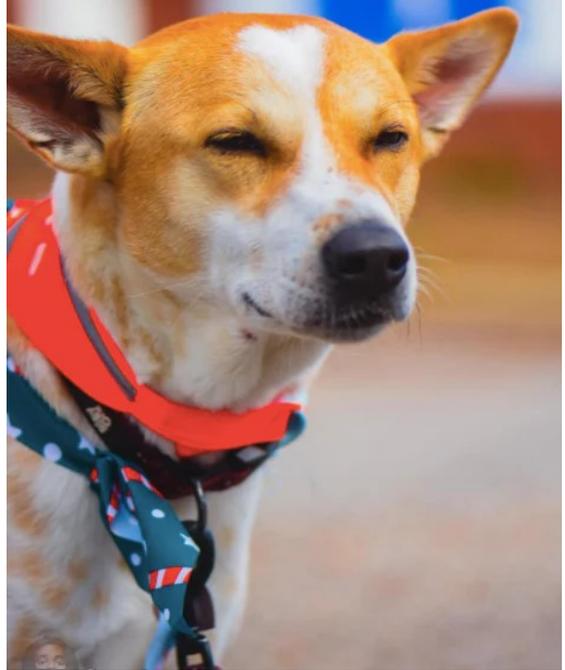
Every town has two sides
One is domesticated
Predictable and certain
The other is disorderly
Unmanageable chaos
I must make peace living
Where wild things are neighbors.



Spring 2026



REVIEWS



@alokathepeacedog on Instagram

Aloka Peace

~Rodney Merrill

Aloka, “the peace dog” walked alongside the procession of monks from Ft Worth, Texas to Washington, DC and captured the hearts of millions.

Aloka first joined the monks during a 100-day walk across India. He was flown to the United States after the India walk was over.

Aloka is a Indian Pariah Dog, a type of dog that can be traced back 4,500 years in India. They are considered loyal, intelligent, and easy to train.

<https://www.101dogbreeds.com/indian-pariah-dog.asp#>

The heartwarming bond between the monks and Aloka was obvious throughout this 2300-mile walk from Ft Worth, Texas to Washington, D.C. through harsh and unpredictable weather together.

“Aloka” is a Pali word that means many things, including vision, enlightenment, illumination, and radiance. He become a symbol of the journey and the bility to find peace wherever you are.

I wonder if Aloka is a Bodhisattva?

REVIEWS (CONT)

From Tin to Table: Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum Exhibit

~Lynne Ryan

On display until March 20, 2026 is a part of Matt Winters' collection of salmon and oyster cannery labels. The Ilwaco museum is open from 10-4, Wednesday through Saturday and if you haven't already done so, I recommend a visit.

There are historic labels from a number of canneries, including several along the Columbia River including Elmore, Megler and the Columbia River Packers Association, later Bumble Bee.

There is information on the history of canning, lithography and advertising along with the beautiful and, sometimes odd, labels. There are also beautifully designed and hooked rugs by local makers matching a few of the labels and they are being auctioned as a fund raiser for the museum.

Here are two of my favorite from the exhibit:



LUNCH BUNCH

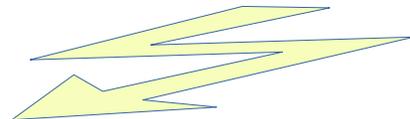
Don't forget ! Lunch Bunch meets about 12:30 on the first Friday of most months. Order upon arrival. Location of the next Lunch Bunch is announced by email sent to all ENCORE members two weeks and then again one week ahead of time.

For more information contact Sue Korpela 503-298-0422 or Bernie Thomas 503-861-2695.

NATURAL WONDERS

I'd never have guessed that a chihuahua/pug mix would be this cute. I met him while walking across a covered bridge in Vermont. His human named him "Oscar P. Wiggins"!

~ Rodney Merrill



HAIKU U2, BUDDY!

Golden moth fans
in early morning sun;
flutters, disappears.

~ Rodney Merrill

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CLASSES SCHEDULE

Arranged by Starting Date

All classes will be held at the Astoria Senior Center

*Notice: When you attend an Encore Learn class or event,
you are entering a place where photography, video and audio recordings may occur.*

March 30 to June 8 *History of Native Tribes and European Settlers in the Land of USA*

Mondays
11am to 12pm:
11 weeks

Instructor: Erhardt Gross

Classroom

A chronological review of major Indigenous encounters with the arrival of Europeans to North America. Also legislation during this long time period that has impacted Native tribes and changed their locations, customs and freedoms will be reviewed. Discussions about this missing information in US textbooks will accompany throughout.

Objectives:

1. To give the student a more complete picture of Native American experience that occurred after the arrival of the European settlers.
2. To introduce the restrictions and implications of treaties and legislation that has attempted to correct.
3. To allow students to understand the impacts and injuries experienced by the Native peoples throughout this time period.

March 30 to June 4 *Earthquakes & Tsunamis: How to Prepare & Survive*

Mondays
2pm-4pm
7 weeks

Instructor: Karen Elder

Classroom

Learn what to do before, during and after an earthquake or tsunami. Gain tips to stay safe in your home, what supplies to keep on hand, and how to prepare to ride out and survive extreme weather conditions. How various communications can be helpful, including ham radio operations and networks.

Objectives:

1. Learn how to prepare for natural disasters in our geographical area.
2. Learn about safe places in your area and how to survive in place if necessary.
3. Learn about communication availability, including ham radio operation and networks available locally.

March 31 – June 9 Writing Exchange Short Course via ZOOM

Tuesdays
9:45 am– 11:45 am
11 weeks

Zoom

Instructor: Eric Anderson

Awaken the writer within you! Experience the opportunity to explore new writing styles.

Share your memoir, short story, poem, or novel chapter and receive kind, constructive feedback. If you prefer, sharing of your writing and its constructive feedback can be recorded into audio and/or video format for later review by you. Contact instructor to join: EricCAnder@aol.com or 503-325-3131

Objectives:

1. Demonstrate increased confidence in sharing original writing with others in a supportive group setting.
2. Distinguish between different genres of creative writing (memoir, short story, poetry, novel chapter, etc) and explore writing in at least one.
3. Use constructive critique to evaluate writing samples in a respectful, growth-oriented manner.

April 3rd – June 5th The Arc of Chinese Philosophy – Part III

Fridays
10am – 12pm
11 weeks

Classroom

Instructor: Seth Tichenor

Medieval Chinese Philosophy and Beyond – the “New” Confucians, New Ideas and the Larger World. This course will look at the story of Chinese philosophy from the rise of Neo-Confucianism in the ninth century through the medieval period and into the emergence of comparative and Marxist philosophies of the modern era. We will look at the political, cultural and philosophical issues that gave rise to the ideas and practices that emerged in the major schools of Chinese thought in the medieval and modern eras. We will end with some reflections on the conditions and possibilities of Chinese philosophical work today and consider how it currently engages with the rest of the philosophical world.

Objectives:

1. Learn how the ancient wisdom of Confucians is revived during this time period and adapted once again to modern life.
2. Become familiar with the changes in customs, politics and thought and how they changed throughout this period in China.
3. To understand the changes made and what is the remaining philosophy that birthed the new China, as an entity of power and influence.

May 8 to May 29

Fridays
2pm - 4 pm
4 weeks

Classroom

The Spring Spectacular Gardening Series

Staff

Garden series to answer many questions for PNW gardeners and other interested persons. Experienced gardeners and naturalists will present a variety of subjects including: Successful Veggie Gardens on the PNW, Native Bees, Native and Hardy Flowering Plants, and the Natural History of Local Gulls. Learning how native plants assist pollinators and local birds and insects and vice versa, as well as how to have a beautiful garden to enjoy is the goal of our series.

Objectives:

1. To learn about our local ecosystem and how to support it.
2. To learn about important pollinators and how to encourage their presence in gardens.
3. To become familiar with the idea of native planting and how to create attractive plantings.
4. To learn to appreciate our local gulls and their history in our location.

We are thrilled to present the following:

May 8th Growing Vegetables Successfully in the PNW by Kathy Wilson

May 15th Native Bees by Melissa Allen

May 22nd Hardy and Flowering Plants by Robin Rogers

May 29th Local Gulls by Ginger Nealon & Ellison Randall

June 5th Garden or Wildlife field visit TBA

June 12th Butterflies by Bob Pyle

June 1st–June 15th Writing: Making More Sense

Mondays
11am to 1pm
3 weeks

Classroom

Instructor: Jim Dott

How to incorporate our senses into our writing. As writers we can tap into neglected senses through memory and imagination to make our writing richer and deeper. We will explore how our senses function for us and begin a personal vocabulary for each sense. Writing prompts will be provided to guide this instruction that will benefit poetry, fiction, memoir or non-fiction pieces.

Objectives:

1. To introduce the importance of senses and how to use words that represent our senses.
2. To practice using the word vocabulary to enrich one's writing and the opportunity to receive feedback.
3. Learn how to adapt this new awareness into one's desired writing format (poetry, fiction, memoir or non-fiction).

ENCORE CLASS ACT INFORMATION

Encore's Class Act is published quarterly except summers – December, January & February; March, April & May; September, October & November by Encore Learn (Exploring New Concepts of Retirement Education). Rodney Merrill, Editor 503-298-7776 or email rodney.merrill@gmail.com. Josh Allison, CCC Liaison, phone 541-290-5989 or email jallison@clatsopcc.edu/clatsop. Next Class Act deadline for Summer submission: Monday, June 15.



Encore Learn
c/o Clatsop Community College
1651 Lexington Ave
Astoria, OR 97103
www.encorelearn.net



Spring 2026

