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Calm before the storm? My previous newsletter was issued last November. This year it comes out earlier. Why? Because October, November and onward will prove so chaotic that it is safer to act sooner rather than trust in being able to act later.

Overall, my life since last year, has been uneventful. That is: no shocking news—I do business as usual, socialize as usual, and my health is sound as usual. Below are shared miscellaneous matters noteworthy in my life. Also for you is a full-page excerpt from a lengthy speech given in August by Robert F. Kennedy Jr; an important message too few people heard. I write much about a superb classic novel, *Kristin Lavransdatter* by Sigrid Undset (1882–1949). And last, pay tribute to the late Dr. Olaf Ribeiro, an ardent tree fan.

Tree news. This year, Seattle lost three significant trees; the largest Montezuma Pine, largest Silk Tree, and largest Daimyo Oak.

In 1982, I joined the International Dendrology Society—people sharing a deep, broad passion for tree learning. The Society prints an annual yearbook for which I am writing a submission with Bob Van Pelt about special Seattle trees such as extremely rare, notably large, or otherwise of interest to tree lovers globally; plus noting that no other city has as many different kinds of trees. After this article is submitted, it should be able to be posted on my website.

Book news. I now have only 76 copies left of *Trees of Seattle*, so if you'd like to buy any from me, act. After publishing my edible houseplants book (started in 2010), and Gary Lockhart's health books, I may do a digital-only *Trees of Seattle* 3rd edition.

Meanwhile, for all people who like Seattle, check out Taha Ebrahimi's *Street Trees of Seattle* book, published on April 17th. It is remarkable by including not only tree facts, but also history and curious trivia pertaining to the city's past. Here is Taha's website: <https://TahaEbrahimi.com>. She leads various tours and does book signings.

My 2024 resolution has been *finishing* my edible houseplants book. We shall see if I can. This is my masterpiece. It is apt to end up being digital only because producing and printing a paper book requires strikingly more work, time and money.

Weather. January's deep freeze of the 11th thru the 16th, when the low reached down to 18°F here, caused much damage to tender trees and shrubs. July's high of a scorching 97°F, also hurt—due partly to UV3 radiation increasing because the ozone layer is being depleted by geoengineering. In between, Seattle weather caused more vegetative growth than usual, requiring more pruning to control excess growth.

Health. I injured my shoulder and ribs in January, then spent 6 months doing chiropractic, acupuncture physical therapy, and osteopathy. Now, I am sound again. In previous newsletters are noted varied things done to be healthy. This continues; some new health aids and supplements have been added to my stock, including Nesa's organic Hemp extract.

Major changes and new insights

A person may experience in life something of such transformative impact that it alters in a major way his or her understanding and life choices. For example, when a child, with limited travel experience, I took Seattle for granted. It was only after bicycling across the continent at age 20, that I comprehended how *different* Seattle was compared to most places. A 2nd example: having spent life in a big house on a large lot, I had no idea what moving to an apartment would be like. It ended up being a definite improvement. 3rd example: certain women had profound effect on my life—for better or worse—details of which shall not be noted herein. 4th example: being *fired*, only to find it a blessing in disguise. My 5th and final example is when I *gradually* grew aware that the “powers that be” are not what I had believed before. I used to trust government, and mainstream media sources—the “mockingbird press.” Then peeked behind the curtain—as it were—to learn that *much* waste, cheating, lying and outright corruption, is *normal*; that I could no longer support the *status quo*.

In 2016's presidential election, I preferred Bernie Sanders; in 2020, I wrote in Tulsi Gabbard. Knowing what I do now about the likely effects on the USA and world of either a Democrat or Republican presidential administration, and knowing that independents such as Kennedy and Dr. Shiva are out of the competition, I ask *which party is the lesser of two evils?* It is not a mere matter of choosing a personality; it *really matters* as to our energy, security, economy, health—and survival.

So, below, I provide the gist of a 48 minute August speech by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. The *entire* speech is online; it's inspiring! RFK—like many of us such as Tulsi Gabbard—notes sadly that the current Democratic Party has gone rogue, forcing thoughtful citizens to flee it, fight evil, pray to God, and vote Republican. Rescue the Republic! There has been a shift, an inversion.

Mainstream/legacy media now reach *fewer* people than independent, largely digital media (like e-mail has replaced much paper mail). Mainstream medicine, corrupted by globalists and Big Pharma (“brought you by Pfizer”), is being increasingly rejected in favor of holistic health practitioners. Blind trust in government is being replaced by prudent skepticism. And millions of former Democrats are voting Republican.

Excerpts of RFK, Jr. August 23rd speech in Arizona.

"I began this journey as a Democrat, the party of my father and uncle, the party which I pledged my own allegiance to long before I was old enough to vote. . . I attended my 1st Democratic convention at age six, in 1960. Back then, the Democrats were the champions of the Constitution and of civil rights. The Democrats stood against authoritarianism, against censorship, against colonialism, against imperialism, and against unjust wars. We were the party of labor, of the working class, the party of government transparency and the champion of the environment. Our party was the bulwark against big money interests and corporate power. True to its name, it was the party of democracy.

I left that party in October because it had departed so dramatically from its core values. It had *become* the party of war, censorship, corruption, big pharma, big tech, big AG, and big money. When it abandoned democracy by canceling the primary to conceal the cognitive decline of the sitting president, I left the party to run as an independent . . . I'm sorry to say that democracy has become little more than a slogan for our political institutions, for our media, and for our government, and—most sadly at all, for me—for the Democratic Party. In the name of saving democracy, the Democratic Party set to dismantle it. Lacking confidence its candidate could win a fair election at the voting booth, the DNC waged continual legal warfare against both President Trump and myself. Each time our volunteers turned in boxes of the signatures needed to get on the ballot, the DNC dragged us into court, state after state, attempting to subvert the will of the voters who had signed those petitions. It deployed DNC-aligned judges to throw me and other candidates off the ballot and to throw President Trump in jail. It ran a sham primary that was rigged to prevent any serious challenge to President Biden. Then, when a predictably awful debate performance precipitated a palace coup against President Biden, the same shadowy DNC operatives appointed his successor—also without an election. They installed a candidate who was so unpopular with voters that she dropped out in 2020 without winning a single delegate. . .

President Biden mocked Vladimir Putin's 88% landslide in the Russian election, observing that Putin and his party controlled the Russian press and that Putin prevented serious opponents from appearing on the ballot. But here in America, the DNC also prevented opponents from appearing on the ballot. And our television networks expose themselves as Democratic Party organs. Over the course of more than a year in a campaign where my poll numbers reached at times in the high twenties, the DNC-allied mainstream media networks maintained a near-perfect embargo on interviews with me. . . During the 16 months since I declared, ABC, NBC, CBS, MSNBC, and CNN, combined, gave only two live interviews from me. Those networks instead, ran a continuous deluge of hit pieces with inaccurate, often vile pejoratives and defamatory smears. Some of those same networks then colluded with the DNC to keep me off the debate stage. . .

The mainstream media once guarded the 1st Amendment and democratic principles, but has since joined this systemic attack on democracy. Also, the media justifies **censorship** on the grounds of combating misinformation. But governments and oppressors don't censor lies, they don't fear lies; they fear the *truth*, and that's what they censor. . .

I promised to withdraw from the race if I became a spoiler and altered the outcome of the election, but had no chance to win. I no longer believe I have a realistic path to electoral victory in

the face of this relentless, systematic censorship and media control, so cannot in good conscience ask my staff and volunteers to keep working. . . In about 10 battleground states, where my presence would be a spoiler, I'm removing my name, and urge voters *not* to vote for me. . .

Three great causes made me enter this race in the first place, and are the principal causes that persuaded me to leave the Party and run independent, and now to throw my support to President Trump. The causes are: free speech, the Ukraine war, and the war on our children. . .

President Biden stated that his objective in the **war** was regime change in Russia. His defense secretary explained that America's purpose in the war was to exhaust the Russian army and degrade its capacity to fight anywhere else in the world. These objectives, of course, had nothing to do with what they were telling Americans about protecting Ukraine's sovereignty. . . War has been a disaster for our country, as well. We have squandered nearly \$200 billion already. And these are badly needed dollars in our suffering communities all over our country. The Nord Stream pipeline sabotage and the sanctions destroyed Europe's industrial base, which form the bulwark of U.S. national security. A strong Germany with a strong industry is a much, much stronger deterrent to Russia than a Germany that is de-industrialized and turned into just an extension of a U.S. military base. We've pushed Russia into a disastrous alliance with China and Iran. We are closer to the brink of nuclear exchange than at any time since 1962. And the neocons in the White House don't seem to care at all. Our moral authority and our economy are in shambles, and the war gave rise to the emergence of BRICS, now threatening to replace the dollar as a global reserve currency. . .

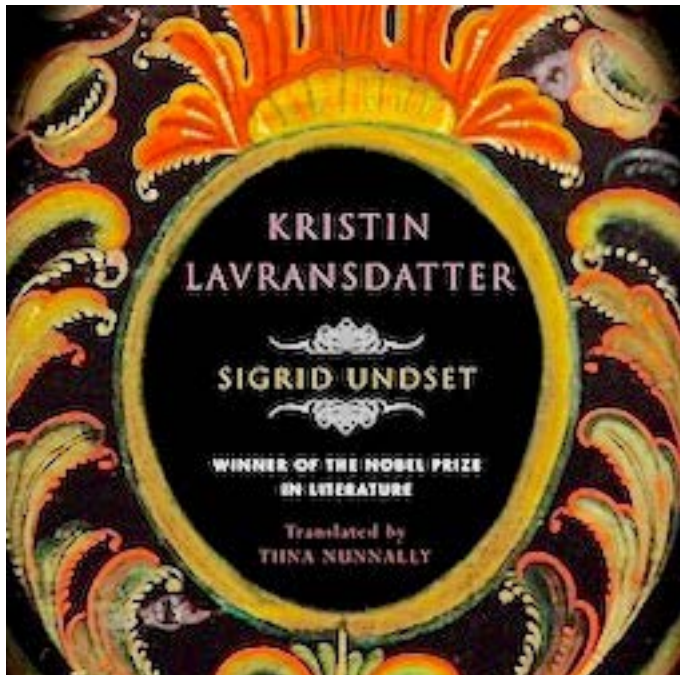
Today we spend more on **healthcare** than any country on Earth, twice what they pay in Europe, and yet have the worst health outcomes of any nation. We're about 79th in health outcomes—behind Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mongolia and other countries. Nobody has a chronic disease burden like we have. During the COVID epidemic, we had the highest body count of any country. We had 16% of the COVID deaths even though we only have 4.2% of the world's population. . . So what's causing this suffering? I'll name two culprits. First and the worst is ultra-processed foods. . . The second culprit is toxic chemicals in our food, medicine, and environment. Pesticides, food additives, pharmaceutical drugs and toxic waste permeate every cell of our bodies. This assault on our children's cells and hormones is unrelenting. . .

The FDA, USDA, CDC, are controlled by giant for-profit corporations. . . If given the chance to fix the chronic disease crisis and reform our food production, I promise within two years the chronic disease burden will lift dramatically. We will make Americans healthy again. Within four years America will be a healthy country. We will be stronger, more resilient, more optimistic and happier.

Ultimately, the future, however it happens, is in God's hands and in the hands of American voters and in those of President Trump. If President Trump is elected and honors his word, the vast burden of chronic disease that now demoralizes and bankrupts the country will disappear. . . Ultimately, the only thing that will save our country and our children is if we choose to love our kids more than we hate each other."

Kristin Lavransdatter

This world famous historical novel was published originally in Norwegian between 1920 and 1922 as a trilogy, by Sigrid Undset, who won the Nobel prize in 1928. Charles Archer's English translation was published in 1925; I read a copy 40 years ago. When moving from my house to a small apartment, I gave away that copy. Then one day walking by a little free library, I saw a copy of Tiina Nunnally's 1997 thru 2000 translation; this 2005 Penguin Books edition is more than 1,000 pages long and 2 inches thick. The original 1920s English translation is much inferior to the contemporary one, as explained by the translator, so don't read the old translation.



The book portrays rural Norwegian life in the early 1300s. We read the entire life story of Kristin. Despite the vast technologic differences between 1300 and now, basic human interactions remain the same, as regards sibling rivalry, guilt, jealousy, rage and suchlike matters and emotions. Perhaps the most striking difference between 1300s Norway and USA of nowadays, is that the former was comparatively uniform in culture and religion, whereas the USA is bewilderingly diverse in subcultures, and most people are now less religious.

Nowadays, many of us lead such busy lives that finding sufficient quiet time to read a novel of 1,000+ pages, is hard; it took me months. No novel that I remember reading, has pleased me more. That said, some of about equal weight include Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, Leo Tolsoy's *Anna Karenina*, and Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*.

The fullness and length of the narrative and depth of detail is awe inspiring. Its descriptions of people's appearances, thoughts, feelings and activity, the scenery they are in, the picturing of rural life including livestock, hunting, growing, preserving and storing food, excell. The power of kindred, and of the church, are omnipresent. Literary critic Clifton

Fadiman wrote of this novel: "With impressive dignity *Kristin Lavransdatter* celebrates the sanctity of the marriage tie, the spiritual importance of the family, the retribution that follows the commission of evil, and the case for a life led in accordance with absolute standards of morality."

Remarkable in scope, duration and detail, it is written masterfully, with such skill that I marvel in admiration, and cry often. Reading it transports me mentally to a bygone way of living, where life was harder, lifespans shorter, and nature closer. Here is a sample from the novel:

"Below her stretched the countryside, lit by the morning sun. It was an early spring day. She drank in the sharp, fresh air; the wind was icy cold, but it tasted of the faraway sea and of thawing snow. The ridges were bathed with morning sunlight on the opposite side of the valley, with snowless patches around the farms. Pale crusted snow shone like silver in all the clearings and the dark green forests. The sky was swept clean, a bright yellow and pale blue with only a few dark, windblown clusters of clouds hovering high above. But it was cold. Where she was standing in the snowdrift was still frozen hard after the night frost, and between the buildings lay cold shadows, for the sun was directly above the eastern ridge, behind the manor. And right in front of her, where the shadows ended, the morning wind was rippling through the pale year-old grass; it moved and shimmered, with clumps of ice shiny as steel still among the roots."

Client news. Client demand (39 clients YTD) in the growing season squeezes me tightly for time; I work more than I'd like. Last year was my highest ever net business income. This year—so far—is higher yet. The main reason is I used to be able easily to call on workers to assist me; now it is not easy, whereupon I end up doing more hours per client than heretofore. I lack the work volume to need employees; but sure value individuals who now and then assist in garden work such as clean-up, and are paid in cash.

Olaf Ribeiro (R.I.P.). In August, Dr. Olaf Ribeiro died, age 85. He and I were friendly for decades. He was a plant pathologist (nicknamed Dr. Rot) world renowned as a *Phytophthora* expert, with a keen love of trees, and a colorful personality. *Phytophthora* was the disease that caused the Irish potato famine in 1845; it also kills many rhodies, Lawson cypresses, and so forth.

Olaf grew upset at greed, at waste, at poor work, and he praised people who cared sincerely, trying to do good work. Once, outside his plant laboratory on Bainbridge Island, I noted a spotless, thriving native dogwood tree (they often look half-dead from leaf disease), and asked if it was a special cultivar. "No," responded Olaf, "it seems that something in the V8® juice that we dump here after using it in the lab, acts as a disease suppressant. But I cannot publish that because people will think I'm nuts." He specified that

there are more than one kind of V8®, and told me the right kind—but I do not remember.

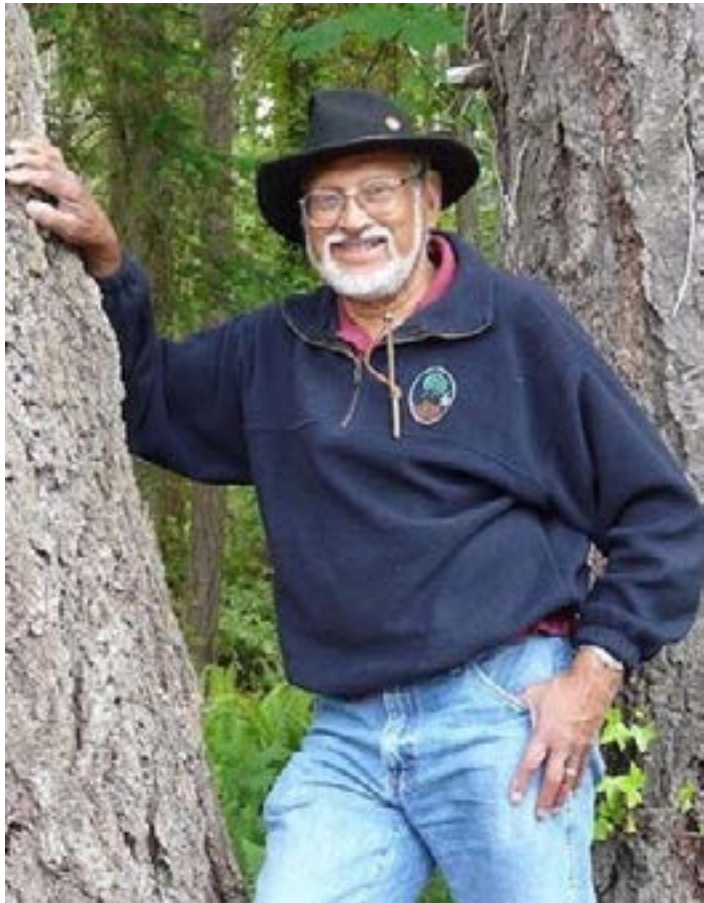
Olaf wrote me after my 2022 newsletter:

“Thanks for the newsletter. It is much appreciated. Your newsletters are always informative. However, I believe this one surpasses all in content. Made me want to find a recording of Faust right away! It brought back memories of my youth when my mother would bring home a record or two of classical music and we would sit in the living room and enjoy the beauty of music at its best!

I am really glad that you are still working on your edible plants. Keep up the good work. You are the most amazing person I have met in my career. You are a true renaissance man—a rare human in this day and age! I will always feel fortunate to have made your acquaintance.

I keep improving. I can now walk without assistance and hopefully will soon be able to spend more time on my computer and even be able to come by and see you.

I have finished my memoirs and now working on a little book of tree quotes using tree pictures I have accumulated over the years. Stay well.”



Photographer unknown

The work of Olaf (and of most tree care professionals) would have been lightened by the following practices:

- Plant trees that are good to begin with. Meaning, not root-bound; not planted too deep; not with grafts that will become incompatible later.
- Plant trees in the right place. Most city trees are planted too near one another, or to buildings, wires, traffic, etc. If there isn't enough room, don't plant.

- Plant trees of the right size. To succeed, some must be planted as little seedlings; others can perform okay even if large when planted. Trees that can be planted bare-root, should be.
- Plant trees in conditions they are suited to. Most city trees are not in ideal soil, don't get their ideal light level, mulch, or moisture. Do the best you can.
- Plant trees on a slight mound, because if planted level they sink into a hole, which will often bring on future problems. And if planted too deep to begin with, a tree can remain stunted its entire lifespan.
- Plant diversely. The current fondness for favoring native trees is problematic because few of Seattle's 33 native species make good urban street trees; foreign species are almost invariably superior. Most of our native trees are best limited to parks, greenbelts, swamps, and the like. I can list the pro and con aspects of each native species, but lack space in this newsletter. Our native oak is a good choice for places with room for a large shade tree.
- Prune trees properly. That entails motive, time of year; quantity removed; and precision of cuts. It so happens that poor pruning is faster, less costly, and often easier and certainly safer than proper pruning.
- Water trees as needed. Many in Seattle get too little summer water; some garden trees get too much. Too much water is not merely wasteful but can cause rank growth and promote fungal pathogens.
- Give trees as needed mulch, fertilizer, disease or insect control. Most diseases and insect munching of leaves are ugly to human sight but not really a significant harm to the trees. Caterpillars can defoliate a tree and it simply grows new leaves.
- Plant more food-producing trees; we shall need more.

If trees are propagated ideally, chosen carefully, planted properly, and cared for intelligently, they are better off. Part of that equation is consulting experts such as Olaf. Among other things, he had been able to diagnose harmful organisms such as *Phytophthora*, then advise applying benign fungi, who would spread and multiply, “elbowing aside” the bad fungi. Crucially, similar processes occur in human guts: antibacterials kill both good and bad, so smart folks replenish our guts with the good guys by eating fermented foods, and the like.

Care to **contact me**? Please feel welcome to write, e-mail, or telephone. We can also meet in person; 165 visitors to my apartment in under 6 years. But texts don't work ; I never even am aware if anyone texts me. My website has over 500 articles and essays, over 1,000 photos. No ads nor pop-up windows! Material that doesn't fit in my newsletters may be put into the website's Articles section. Also, worthwhile writing from old newsletters gets archived there.

About this **newsletter**. I've issued newsletters for over 30 years. Readers choose paper or e-mail. This is the the website PDF; the e-mail version is a bit different. Thanks to my family, friends, fans, clients, neighbors, associates, and readers—thank-you! I have been, am, and expect to remain, very fortunate. ☺