

# My Monday Memo

May 30, 2022

Adventures in the PNW

Issue 105

Today is... May 30th

National Creativity Day

On this day in 1431...

Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in Rouen, France, at the age of 19.

Quote of the Week

"Hurt me with the truth. Don't comfort me with a lie."

- Rihanna

MIRA'S PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Rachel Recommends

An older show on Netflix that is worth the watch if you are looking for a few laughs, *Great News*. It's only two seasons but a fun show. How can you go wrong when John Michael Higgins is involved on a project?

R.I.P. RoadKill



Did you find it?

Merriam-Webster's Word of the Day  
Friday, May 27th

uncanny

Uncanny is typically used to describe something that is strange or unusual in a way that is surprising or difficult to understand. It can also describe something that seems to have a supernatural character or origin.

## An Old Friend Visits Washington

By Rachel Brandes

On Saturday, May 21, 2022, Rachel had the opportunity to spend the day with a childhood friend, Larry. Rachel and Larry's friendship goes all the way back to the early 80s when they attended 6<sup>th</sup> grade together in Missouri. Through the years the two have never been out of touch. When Blake and Alec's father, Craig, moved to Missouri in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, he and Larry became the best of friends, which was the assurance that Rachel and Larry's friendship would endure.

Larry was the best man at Craig and Rachel's wedding, and Craig was a groomsman at Larry's wedding. Blake was even the ring bearer at Larry's January 1999 wedding. Alec was there too and even had a bit of champagne; Craig and Rachel just didn't realize he was on board quite yet.

Through the years, and after Rachel moved away from Missouri, Larry and Rachel have gotten to see each other on many occasions with the most recent being right here in Washington. Larry is a prosecuting attorney back in Missouri but has been a part of the Naval Reserves since his teens. He travels all over the world and has epic adventures but had never visited the Pacific Northwest until now. There are a few bases at which he could have been assigned for this trip, but as fate would have it, he was stationed at the base near Whidbey Island, which is a few hours north of Rachel.

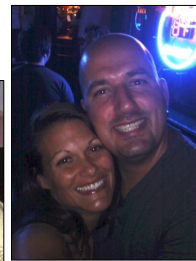
On Saturday, they met in the middle in Port Angeles, of Twilight fame, and did some adventuring together. Rachel had the chance to take Larry to the Dungeness Spit and Olympic Game Farm, a couple of her favorites. Well, not so much the Olympic Game Farm, as it still stresses her out to be near those large animals. Nonetheless, they had a fantastic day before heading off in their own directions.

After spending the day with Larry, Rachel pulled out some old yearbooks and photos and took a fun trip down memory lane. It is *uncanny* how neither of them seem to have aged. Insert laughter here. As you will see from the included photos, they have both changed quite a bit over the years. Rachel hopes to see Larry again before he heads back to Missouri and looks forward to seeing him again in the next year, as he says it is likely he will be stationed back in Washington within the next 12 months.

Until next time, cherish old friendships, and be well.



Just for fun... pictured left: (1 to r) Larry and Rachel in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. That hair, oh wow, that hair. It was the 80s after all. Pictured right: Larry teaching a 3 and a half-year-old Blake how to stick his tongue out for a photo.



A visit in 2010, oh, so young.

## Alec's Adventures- Throwback

Alec's adventures in Asia will return next week.

A memory resurfaced for Alec's mother this week as a Texas elementary school became the latest mass shooting site on Tuesday. Parents, in large part, have no control over the lives of their children in this world that can be so very cruel.

When Rachel dropped Alec off at the University of Utah in August of 2017 for his freshman year of college, the last thing on her mind was an active shooter situation on the horizon. Although much time has now passed, she recalls being suddenly awakened from her sleep by Alec on October 30, 2017. Campus had been locked down due to an active shooter. There was one reported dead, 23-year-old ChenWei Guo, and the gunman's whereabouts were unknown. Alec reported that he and his dormmates were on the floor of their room, lights off. The police lights lite up their room and the helicopters searching overhead could be heard and seen throughout the dorms.

While Alec was for all intents and purposes safe, this moment was terrifying from the parental perspective, and most certainly left a mark on the students of the U. In this case, the gunman was caught the next day with no additional lives lost. The next October, the University of Utah once again lost a student to gun violence on campus, 21-year-old Lauren McCluskey (while on the phone with her mother). Dateline did a special on Lauren's story in an episode titled, *She Did Everything Right*.

This is an all too familiar scene in the United States and the pain felt by the parents of Tuesday's lost children is undoubtedly unbearable. There are simply no words.



Rachel and Larry at the Dungeness Spit on Saturday, May 21, 2022.



Pictured Top: It was a beautiful day in the PNW for Saturday's adventure.

Pictured Below: What remains of a shark that washed up on shore. Rachel got a bit too close and caught a whiff of the rotting flesh. Fascinating find!



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## 22 for 2022 Happier Project Update

Almost June, wow. Here is an update to the 2022 Happier Project.

**Learn Spanish**- 169 days of Spanish lessons to date.

**Walk 7,000 steps on average**- May average 4,524.

**Happiness Project Audiobook**- Chapter five completed.

**Zen as F\*ck Book**- May entries made.

**Yoga**- practiced three to four days a week in May.

**Family VHS Tapes**- Completed!!! Still figuring out how to get into MP4 format.

**Oral Communication**- talked with both moms in May.

**Written Communication**- two handwritten cards mailed to loved ones.

**Journaling**- wrote in both Blake and Alec's journals.

**Read Weekly**- Caught up on Sports Illustrated magazines in May.

*As far as long-term goals:*

**Get Spine Fixed**- Surgery scheduled for June 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Boobs Be Gone**- Surgery postponed to mid-August to follow recovery of spine.