

A Boy Named Alex

By Dede Webb

Let me tell you about a boy named Alex. I first met Alex at the kid's fishing derby during Jamboree. As we were setting up he approached several of us and asked if we had some work he could do. We told him that we did not have any work... sorry. My husband, Don, and I were at the information booth on Sunday of Jamboree and Donna Webb came by. While we were visiting I noticed this boy across the street going thru the garbage can. I said to Donna, "Isn't that the same boy that was at the fishing derby looking for work?" Donna replied, "He approached me looking for a job. At first I couldn't think of anything for him to do, and then I told him he could have all the cans in the garbage bins". She gave him a garbage sack and gloves and made arrangements at the Lions booth for him to leave his cans there until the end of the day. At the end of the day he had too many cans to take home on his bike so Donna had her daughter, Erin, come down and follow him on his bike to his house with all the

cans in her car for him.

Several days later, as I was leaving Park Drive, Alex was waiting to cross the street and he motioned for me to go. I rolled down my window and said, "Aren't you the boy that was collecting cans at Jamboree?" He replied that he was. I then ask him if he made a lot of money. He said, "I made \$40.60. It was enough to buy my BB gun." I replied, "That's great, good job."

Donna has since given him more cans and has seen him at the Country Market offering to help people bring their purchases to their cars. She has also seen him working outside one of the businesses.

Donna told him she had some cans he could have and he asked, "Where do you live because I can't go past the green bridge." He planned to ride his bike to get them, but she said there were too many for him to carry on his bike. After calling his parents to see if she could give him a ride they preceded to her house for the cans.

I'm sure many of you know this young boy as you have probably been approached for a job. He is not looking for a hand out; he wants to work.

We have been quite impressed by this 10-year-old boy, and since I live on this side of the green bridge I'm sure he will be getting my cans from now on.

His parents need to be commended as they are evidently teaching him that if you want things in this life you must work for them.

Some day I expect to see him on TV or in the newspapers as the CEO of some large corporation and then I can say, "I remember him".

Since I wrote my article on Alex, there has been another incident that I wanted to share.

The latest sighting of Alex was at the First Friday event. He was promoting s'mores that they were selling and getting a job or two.

During the evening he asked Donna if she got paid for working there and she replied, "No, I am just a volunteer."

As they were packing up at the end of the evening Donna asked Alex to help him carry some things for her and on the way to the car he said, "I won't charge you for doing this, I'll be a volunteer."

Darn, you gotta love that kid.

Consilience: Light

By Erika Paleck

CONSILIENCE: The joining together of knowledge and inspiration across disciplines to create a unified framework of understanding.

Or, to put it simply in my case, it is gathering as much knowledge as possible to try to create my own personal mythology about how the world works. We all do this by using different tools but hardly ever all the same tools at the same time. Sometimes we read a book or listen to friends. Sometimes we do something stupid and get hit upside the head by the great shovel of stupidity, one of the best tools of all for figuring things out. Maybe it is an exercise in futility. It might be like asking the Thermos bottle how it knows when to keep hot things hot and cold things cold: it doesn't know, nor does it need to.

But while we don't know how it all works or why we are here, we do know some of the tools that allow us to live life on a higher level of awareness—that elevate our conscious states so that we may more fully be ourselves. In some schools of thought, this is a state of grace, enjoying God's favor for no particularly obvious reason. Athletes call it being in the zone: when a hundred mile an hour fastball coming at you looks like slow-pitch softball, or you can sink a three-pointer at the buzzer as though the basket sucked the ball right out of your hands. Poets and songwriters call it the Muse, when the lyrics simply write themselves. These are the moments when we are so alive and in tune with the world however it works that we can function at our utmost abilities. And what can help take us to this place?

Various chemical and ritual combinations have been used as we've sought the keys to creativity and athletic achievement. Commonly known are the stories of Samuel Taylor Coleridge beginning his poem "Kubla Khan" while under the influence of opium, or great athletes superstitiously repeating behaviors for years to stay in or get back to the zone. Stories abound of baseball players not changing their underwear or shaving while they are in the zone or eating the same meals day after day after day. To each of us, in our own way, this state of super-consciousness is precious.

So how do we legally touch these gossamer threads of grace and enchantment? Light is one tool, something almost so banal in our everyday lives that we overlook it until the lights unexpectedly go out. Yet, it is one of the most powerful forces in our lives and on the planet, if not the universe.

Let there be light, begins the Bible, because without it, there is nothing. We are nothing, and there is no matter, no life, no end because there was no beginning.

Did you know there is coherent and incoherent light? But it makes sense on an intuitive level when you realize that our incandescent lighting is incoherent light, while the light from the sun we describe as coherent light. We've all had those defining moments where our minds have slipped off their leashes of ego and the task-

driven world. Suddenly we find ourselves parked right smack dab in the middle of where we are, intoxicated by the beauty of sunlight through a sparkling wet cobweb or the mist rising through colorful trees in an early autumn morning. Or we're house cleaning and stopped dead in our tracks by the beauty of a dust mote passing through sunlight. Not dust floating under lamplight or fluorescent light, but sunlight.

Is it a few seconds? Or is it eternity, this flash of wonder that grasps us, filling us with calm and pulling us solidly into a space between now and then, dark and light, that space between heartbeats—that moment when we are really, deeply, truly, authentically, fundamentally alive and in tune. Are we even here on those occasions? Or have we left behind a world of illusion and stepped into the real world, into an existence so pure and powerful that the moment captured in our memories can pull us back into it with intensity so exquisite that it brings tears to our eyes.

I don't know why the physicists call sunlight coherent light. It must be with a finely developed sense of irony that we examine how coherent light can knock our precariously erected perceptions and notions of reality out of kilter and cause us to question just where are we, anyway? One minute I'm standing in the driveway under a tree, and the next I'm with the clouds scudding between the hills across the summer sky. This is coherence? Or is this madness?

Or is this a moment of crystalline sanity where we perceive the differences between shadow and substance, form and function with acute clarity?

So if light is a tool of enlightenment, has it helped me come any closer to figuring out how the world works? Not really. If anything, I have way more questions than ever before. But I'd rather know I don't know and see clearly than continue seeing the world through veils of ignorance. This way, anything is possible.

It's not something we talk about in normal conversation while standing in line at the Mini-Mart with our bags of whole-wheat flour, head of lettuce and frozen pizza. But suppose we did? Can you imagine what a difference it could make?

"Hey, Kate, how's it going?"

"Oh, pretty well. My back's been acting up again, but, you know, I had the most incredible moment this morning when I walked by my neighbor's yard. She had just watered, and the color in the roses was so beautiful I had to stop and compliment her. First time we'd spoken in months. Back doesn't bother me any more, either."

"I know just what you mean. I was looking at the shadows under the trees the other day, and I was wondering, would the tree exist without the shadow?"

"Say, that's a good one. Well, be seein' you. Gotta get home and wash my windows. Not supposed to rain for a couple of days, you know. Don't want to miss anything!"

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Judge Grant is a native Oregonian, and lives in an 1890 historic home in St. Helens with her husband, Charles, their three year old daughter, Daphne, and canine friends Jordi and Bella.

"Judge Jenefer Grant has demonstrated the qualities Columbia County deserves in a Circuit Court Judge. She is fair, experienced, hard-working and has excellent judicial temperament. She is committed to the rule of law and to ensuring justice for the citizens of Columbia County. I am pleased to have appointed a judge of her caliber to the Columbia County Circuit Court."
Governor Ted Kulongoski

"Judge Grant's tenure as Columbia County Circuit Court Judge has been marked with sound judicial temperament and adherence to the rule of law."
Hardy Myers, Oregon Attorney General, Oregon's Top Law Enforcement Official.

Judge Jenefer Grant has served the people of Columbia County with fairness, impartiality and an understanding of the law. I proudly endorse Judge Grant's election because of her mature judgment and the respect she demonstrates for all who appear before her.
Betty Roberts, Former Oregon Supreme Court Justice

supporters

experience

- Columbia County Judge, June, 2007-present
- Columbia County Commission on Children and Families, 1997-2007 (Vice-Chair)
- Columbia County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council
- Columbia County Sheriff Supervisory Authority
- Columbia County Legal Aid, 1997-2007 (Board President)
- Attorney in private practice, St. Helens, 1997-2007 (District and Circuit Courts, Juvenile Court, and Rainier, St. Helens and Scappoose Municipal Courts)
- Adjunct professor, Portland State University School of Business, 1996-1999
- Columbia Rotary Club, St. Helens

- Northwest Oregon Labor Council, AFL-CIO
- Brad Witt, State Representative, House District 31, Columbia County
- Tualatin-Valley Firefighters Union, Local #1660
- Barbara Roberts, Governor of Oregon 1991 to 1995
- Cheryl Young, Mayor of Columbia City
- Sally Harrison, Mayor, City of Vernonia
- Randy Peterson, Mayor of St. Helens
- Cathleen B. Callahan, City of Clatskanie, Prosecutor

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