



THE RIDER REPORT

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 8
FEBRUARY 2015

A PUBLICATION OF RIDER & ASSOCIATES, INC. REPORTING & TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES

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From Little Evergreens Grow Giant Lawyers

You'll never see The Evergreen State College on ESPN in a marquee sporting event.

It's not even in the NCAA; it's an NAIA school. Can you imagine the Geoducks (a large, edible clam) versus Notre Dame's Fighting Irish? It will probably never make headlines for making an innovative technology discovery, like Cal Tech, or cozy itself to the movers and shakers in the Silicon Valley.

From the beginning, Evergreen State set out to be a little different. It was founded in the year of The Summer of Love, 1967, when the world went topsy-turvy. Its school motto: Omnia Extares, meaning "let it all hang out," could hardly be compared to the Marines' Semper Fidelis.

Still, Nicholas Alexander heeded Evergreen's clarion call to be yourself, and he wouldn't have it any other way. "There you learn what you want to learn for learning's sake," he said. "I can't imagine a school that could better prepare you for being a lawyer."

Nick is a fledgling attorney at the law firm Charles H. Buckley & Associates in Vancouver. He passed his bar in October, and he has begun spreading his wings in a practice that includes criminal and family law.

"I don't recall a defining moment," Nick said in conversation. "People around me told me I'd be a good lawyer because they said I'm assertive, I speak my mind and I'm a good writer." All good qualities to be a Geoduck.

All you need to know about Evergreen State is that one of its most distinguished alums is Matt Groening, creator of the Simpsons, and that it once invited death-row inmate, Mumia Abu-Jamal to give the keynote address to the graduating class in 1999. To Nick, different is better.



"I don't know if this is statistically accurate, but I was told that Evergreen State's undergraduates had the best acceptance rate into grad school than any school in the country," Nick says. "Whether it's true or not, I do know that one of my roommates is studying for his Ph.D. at UC-Santa Barbara. Another friend is at the University of Idaho Law School, another is at Portland State and the University of Oregon and..." You get the picture.

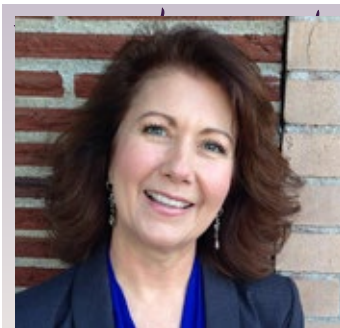
Nick had full confidence that he'd be accepted to Willamette University Law School, even though his school didn't post GPA scores. Evergreen gives narrative evaluations for their grades. As a matter of fact, at the end of the year, the profs evaluate the students in prose and the students do the same to the profs. What's good for the goose is good for the gander! Nick was accepted to eight of the 10 schools to which he applied.

Today, Nick is growing his practice according to the needs of his firm. He finds that criminal law is more straightforward, while family law "is much more convoluted and emotionally charged."

He particularly enjoys the volunteer work he is doing for the Homeless Court, one of five Clark County Specialized Court programs that have received national acclaim. Like his days at Evergreen State, this court uses a core curriculum that is loosely framed.

"It's a therapeutic court. We find ways for the accused to work off court-imposed fines, but in a way that benefits the community," Nick says. "We're part attorney and part case manager."

It reminds him of the core curricula he used to take in college. Isn't it great to be a Geoduck? ■



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TOP RESTAURANTS IN THE GREAT NORTHWEST

6 unique and superior restaurants in the Great Northwest made the grade as being named as one of the Top 100 Best Restaurants in America, as chosen by Open Table, and given the 2014 Diner's Choice Award. They are, in alphabetical order:

- Ariana** – Bend, OR
- May Kitchen & Bar** – Vashon Island, WA
- Montalcino Ristorante Italiano** – Issaquah, WA
- Natural Selection** – Portland, OR
- The Painted Lady** – Newberg, OR
- Roe** – Portland, OR

The Diners' Choice Awards are picked from five million reviews of 20,000 restaurants nationwide and collected from reviews between Dec. 1, 2013 and Nov. 10, 2014. ■

The First Rocket Scientist

The person who can lay claim to be the first rocket scientist was Russian Konstantin Tsiolkovsky. He calculated the equation which later scientists used to enable a space-bound vehicle to escape the earth's gravitational pull. That research was completed in 1903.

Tsiolkovsky calculated that to enter orbit in space, a vehicle needed to reach a speed of eight kilometers (approximately five miles) per second. He also reasoned that in order to achieve that speed, the vehicle needed to be a multi-stage rocket, fueled by a combination of liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen.

In his honor, the equation for rocket propulsion is known as the Tsiolkovsky rocket equation. ■



A Favorite for Word Aficionados

If you want to find a go-to Website for wordsmiths and English language buffs, Wordwizard.com just may be up your alley.

Its slogan is "For lovers of the English language," and it is filled with drop-down menu categories and links to all word-related topics. It connects to language and linguistics dictionaries and quotations, slang, word games, style guides and more.

Their "Clubhouse" chat room is replete with references and topics related to language use and questions readers to share "read anything good?" There are famous insults, jokes, quotations and new words to consider.

It's a good reference tool as well as a site for the curious. Make it one of your computer favorites. ■