

Issue 24

Amber's Update



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The Adobe headquarters building, photo edited with Adobe software.

Coaching, Cliffhangers and Community

I never thought that in my life I would have a phone call that ended with a retired NBA player saying, “OK Coach” to me before hanging up.

The irony of this is as rich as the Miracle Grow soil I planted my basil and oregano in. I’m not that interested in sports. I’ve never played basketball and I’m not really a fan. I am definitely not a coach. I don’t even fully grasp the rules. However, my husband is a huge basketball fan, my sons are fans, and probably the biggest fan I know is my mother-in-law. Such a big fan that if you give her a complicated television remote that she has never seen before, she will get a game on in under five minutes. Even my parents who were definitely not into sports of any kind now watch the Warriors with some regularity and my mom cooks from Ayesha Curry’s cookbook. Because she is married to Steph.

The most time I’ve ever spent with a basketball was playing HORSE as a little kid and sometimes winning because I might have been the only one who knew how to spell and I might have cheated.

Me, the coach of a retired NBA player?

What could I possibly coach him to do?

These are very good questions.

More on that next month, as it develops.

How’s that for a cliffhanger? Not as good as the ones at the end of every single episode of Black Sails, for sure.

But maybe it will leave you wondering why he called me a coach and how many inches difference there is between his height and mine.



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Another view of the Adobe building, which I walk by often.

Three Things

1



About 30,000 FanimeCon attendees flooded downtown with elaborate and, to the uninformed like me, mysterious costumes.

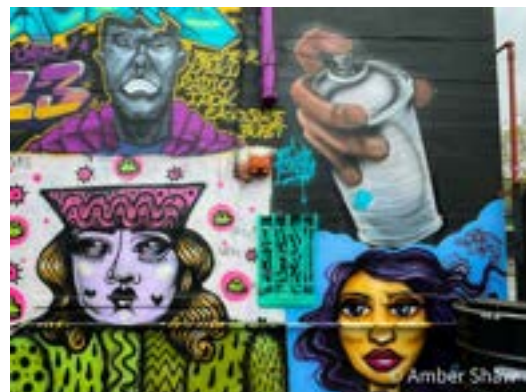
Urban Life

I am repatriating myself to the urban lifestyle. It's the part of the year where I spend more time in the city, so I make more of an effort to enjoy what it offers. I love being walking distance to so many diverse things. I can walk to: impromptu coffee with friends, downtown filled with convention attendees, hotel bars, plays, movie

sing-alongs, banh mi sandwiches and Detroit-style pizza, wine tasting, and paint-by-number with neighbors.



Sound of Music Sing-Along at [3Below](#). Bohemian Rhapsody Sing-Along is coming soon, I plan to go!



Environmental art display in downtown, otherwise known as graffiti. This one is a little difficult to find but super cool.

2



I'm thinking a lot about kidneys. I'm doing research for my next book, reading books about transplants. The 8th anniversary of my own kidney donation is in June, and the service for my friend who died six months ago of kidney disease is in June. I'm leaning into the emotion of the transplant process I went through, and am going

through, in order to write about it.

Some days the writing flows, some days are better for research.

The main library downtown, and the excellent librarians who work there, have been great resources for finding the materials I am looking for. They have helped me find resources I did not find searching online. And they are friendly and happy to help. I highly recommend using their services!

3

I helped to paint a 12,000 square-foot street mural in downtown San Jose. The painting volunteer spots, all 1,250 of them, filled up quickly. People were enthusiastic about participating in a giant art project! I painted my assigned color, elderberry, in a small section with two other volunteers, both young women. I guess I was the elderberry. It's a vibrant velvety color by the way. (*Note: In fact-checking the color name I discovered it's called Elderberry Wine haha*). One of our group of three wore over-ear headphones, making herself unavailable for conversation. Therefore, Mo and I spent most of our hour and a half of painting time chatting. I was delighted to spend time with a person I would not have otherwise had the opportunity to have a nice in-depth conversation with. We talked careers, art-making, making time for art, our favorite local restaurants, small businesses, homelessness, fitness, and the Breaking Bad Grandmother that lives in her neighborhood. That is community-building. More please. There is interest, even if people are wearing earphones.



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Cute Dog Photo



Best regards

Amber McClain Shaw, writer/artist/ambivert

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