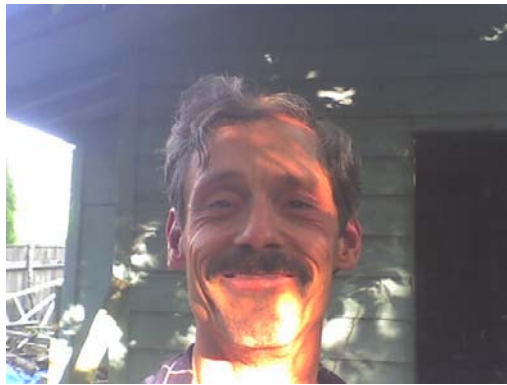


*A Successful Sortie
Into Nourishing the
Malnourished Mind:
or, 'How My Cat Got
Ticked Off at Vitamins'*



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MIND Wellness Task Force:
(dedicated to the vision &
courage of David Romprey)

Mid-2008

A Successful Sortie Into Nourishing the Malnourished Mind

(Why My Cat Got 'Ticked Off' at Vitamins)

by Chris C. Foulke

In the last 2½ years, the fascinating world of nutritional medicine and psychiatry has opened before me. It is a rich landscape of health, diversity, and natural input for our body and brain. Learning about natural and 'alternative' therapies for alleviating illness is educational and empowering. I've used therapeutic nutrition for my physical, emotional, and behavioral health ever since—with some major successes & remaining challenges...

After being diagnosed with Schizophrenia and other Latin conundrums at age 21, I have confronted periodic symptoms and ravages of depression as well as infrequent energy highs and lows for over 30 years. It's been a long, interesting, tough, and colorful road replete with joy, sadness, surprises, great friends, vexing challenges, blasé days, incredible times, beautiful people, stress beyond the pale, ups, downs, struggles. Life is tough, not just for the cerebrally-upset, but for everyone at times. Ask your parents.

Having taken psych meds almost non-stop since 1971, I am familiar with an entire lexicon of pharmaceuticals most people would rather forget, not list. Starting with earlier 'junk' tranquilizers Trilafon & Mellaril, then a potpourri of drugs spanning the pharmacological alphabet from Abilify-Zyprexa, I've been very good to the drug industry.

I won't forget spacey, detached Thorazine, dreamy Stelazine, the incontinence, memory loss, and thyroid damage of Lithium Carbonate, Clozaril and Agranulocytosis, and then nifty 'atypical' antipsychotics like Seroquel (rapid heart beat, disabling muscle spasms, internal tension, leaky bowel), and Lamictal (leg cramps)—the last attempt at an antipsychotic fix. With friends like those, who needs diagnoses?

Of course, most drugs had some beneficial effects in terms of 'reducing symptoms', easing conversation, and facilitating P/T work, but all carried multiple minor (bothersome), moderate (disturbing), and/or major (disabling) side-effects. 'Side effects' are anything but tangential to one's health, functioning, and social interface. So, I researched side-effects to figure out what was going on with 'meds and I'. My doctor would basically sign off on my suggestions as my medication level was gradually reduced over several years. In 2005, I was on a low dose of Seroquel, mostly for sleep.

The side-effects were so disturbing, though, *that I decided to deal with things through natural, non-drug means—diet, lifestyle, and other personal resources—somewhat like letting and 'launching out into the deep.'* At one point, my doctor scribbled some mega-doses of vitamins, minerals, and fish oil on a drug company notepad. I began taking these regularly like medication and researching their use. I first found a wonderful book by a savvy Eugene nutritional writer, Eva Edelman. This outstanding resource should undoubtedly be required reading for medical students, especially those of psychiatric bent.

Natural Healing for Schizophrenia and Other Common Mental Disorders by Edelman is a goldmine of sound, neatly-put, and documented information about the nature of Schizophrenia; how nutrients help; biotypes; allergies; free radicals; sugar imbalances; fasting; toxic metals; neurotransmitters; toximolecular drug effects; herbs; psychological treatments; and a whole bunch more. Loads of facts and commentary

about vitamins, minerals, fats, amino acids, and plant medicines are presented. She explains the physiological functions of natural dietary inputs and lists both food & supplemental sources for each nutrient or herb. Focus is on enhancing brain health naturally to alleviate ‘mental problems’ and to improve overall health at the same time.

Being somewhat unschooled, this was eye-opening and almost breath-taking. From Ms. Edelman and others, I learned that a major component of ‘mental illnesses’ is, in fact, nutritional in nature. Widespread nutritional problems include vitamin and/or mineral deficiencies, food-based brain allergies, and pollutant/food additive/chemicals getting into our food, air, & water. Sugar metabolism also weighs heavily in ‘brain metabolic disorders’, a term used by Abram Hoffer, M.D. to describe schizophrenia, bipolar, etc.

Hoffer is Father of Orthomolecular Medicine and Pioneer of Vitamin Therapy for his work with Niacin, triglycerides, and schizophrenia. His accolades for Ms. Edelman’s great book attest to the honesty and professionalism she exhibits in the ground-breaking research and attractive presentation in [Natural Healing for Schizophrenia](#). It may well deserve a place in historical medical literature. Highly recommended. She has just published a similar in-depth resource, [Natural Healing for Bipolar Disorder](#) in 2009. For ordering and information, go to www.boragebooks.com or call (541) 683-8720.

Since 2006, I’ve practiced this nutritional method for building physical and mental health. Sharing this little-known school is very motivating. It’s like returning home to Health & Nature after decades of frustration and futility thrashing about in Medicine & Psychiatry. I now know most everything we need is right in the Earth, Soil, and Whole Food—in elements native to our bodies. We just need to learn about them and use them.

Earth to Mental Health System!! [Time to go back to basics]

Let’s use stuff that’s been here for millions of years, first: Food, Water, Air, Sunshine, Good Protein & Healthy **FAT!** These are things everyone needs. As I applied individual nutrients and chose healthier foods, my health improved dramatically, following a little-mentioned Law, “Healthy Inputs, Healthy Output.” My life is now pregnant with hope. The Father of this nutritional child was a physician. With one brother a doctor & another a mental health counselor, becoming a nutritional therapist has the feel of destiny for me.

Learning about nutrition for brain health was like finding a chunk of prismatic beryl right outside the door or in the living room window. It’s always been there; I just didn’t see it. It’s similar to discovering ‘the birds and bees’ at age 48—and you just wonder what would have occurred if you ‘knew it’ 35 years ago. Still, I’m very glad to discover this orthomolecular gem (at any age). You can’t keep a good thing down. For some history, fundamentals, scientific studies, and practical guidelines in using orthomolecular, see the websites www.mercola.com, www.orthomed.org, or <http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/>.

I’ve witnessed the incredible effectiveness of nutritional therapy in my own life as my physical health, energy, and emotional wellness have improved remarkably. First, I could run three times more (until my left calf mutinied). I do feel livelier, mentally sharper, and better coordinated. Supplying my body and brain with the right nutrients for better functioning helped boost felt confidence, active creativity, & productivity.

I can better accomplish short-term and lifelong goals—things like writing articles, performing poetry, finishing projects, organizing my time, fixing things, and traveling. Prioritizing comes more naturally. Issues still exist, but new friendships ‘happen’ almost

daily—life is often ‘quite a party’. I must still prioritize work, sleep, eating, social, exercise, clean-up, time, & daily plans, but it is much easier while using robust nutrition.

Friends and family are so important. Having recently had a close partner as well as a supportive family has been invaluable for my physical, emotional, and mental health (overall well-being). Personal health can’t be separated from the Greater Environment, natural or human. Healing flows from Nature. With good nutrition, starting with a healthy diet (food-wise), & adding targeted megadose nutrients (vitamins, minerals, fatty acids, & amino acids), disease prevention and optimal health could become available to many feeling trapped in the medication pipeline. Major progress or total recovery from bio-behavioral conditions could become commonplace in the foreseeable future.

In the last few years, I’ve snatched up over 30 books on alternative health at various bookstores in the Valley. They are gold mines of readily available, healthy, cheap, effective, and little-known information on treating, reducing, or curing disease. Most deal with vitamins, minerals, good food, herbs, and traditional or Eastern knowledge. Some classic works on nutrition and brain health are [Brain Allergies: the Psycho-Nutrient and Magnetic Connection](#) by William Philpott, M.D. and [Nutrition and Mental Illness](#) by Carl Pfeiffer, M.D. Also highly useful are the likes of [The Green Pharmacy](#) by James Duke, Ph.D., [The New Vitamin Bible](#) by Earl Mindell, and [The Mood Cure](#) by Julia Ross.

After examining this field using logic, intuition, science, personal insight, and an academic eye, I’d say without hesitation that nutritional therapy for bio-behavioral conditions is fundamentally and scientifically sound. It is really the pre-eminent biological approach addressing underlying bio-chemical issues, going beyond symptom management, and focusing on the sources of our various ills. Orthomolecular doctors use natural elements in our food supply and internal systems to treat illness. They regularly claim 80+% success in treating major depression, schizophrenia, anxiety, ADHD, Alzheimer’s, autism, and other vexing, ‘non-understandable’ bio-behavioral illnesses.

These seasoned nutritional doctors also use medications in their practice when helpful—as tools, not the ‘whole tool bag’ But before thinking about stopping one’s medications—it is not recommended unless done in a wise, intentional, well-informed, and guided manner. Healthy eating will certainly help most folks, and, while large salads, non-gluten bread, quality meat and poultry, eggs, organic fruit, and medicinal tea taste good and can alleviate some conditions, orthomolecular (nutritional) psychiatry as practiced by Abram Hoffer, M.D. utilizes both nutrient therapy and medications.

Dr. Hoffer, ‘Father of Vitamin Therapy’, combines both components in an integrated approach to bio-behavioral health. Nutrients provide natural support for all forms of therapy, but are also a very effective stand-alone biochemical therapy in many illnesses. This is common sense. Things our bodies routinely ingest, know how to process, & are in short supply should be provided up front, at least in a sane health care system.

That medicine and psychiatry have not acknowledged this highly successful, fundamental approach to correcting neuro-chemical and behavioral problems is no small tragedy. Rather than an indicator of weakness with natural biochemical treatment, this deficiency is more a symptom of the historic resistance, unnatural predisposition, and not-so professional prejudices that have hampered medicine historically, powering ignorance of nutrition and other ‘alternative’ forms of therapy.

Throw in a dollop of in-group protectionism, a side of pride, and a whiff of arrogance, and you understand why practitioners in a field where some claim schizophrenia is ‘not understandable’ would be reluctant to acknowledge naturally-oriented doctors who routinely claim 80% success with first-time patients (within 1 year of initial episode). Success to Hoffer and his compatriots is roughly defined as helping patients become symptom-free (‘much improved or well’), have functional relationships with family and friends, and ‘pay taxes’—or do substantial volunteering or creative works.

The lack of nutritional training in medicine/psychiatry is a strategic deficiency in the systemic healing arts. This deficiency needs our attention at a time of widespread recognition that our health care system needs drastic reform. If we want to develop a sound, cost-effective, and top-notch health care system, we must acknowledge realities knocking at the door or already inside, needing recognition. Many doctors, therapists, and administrators personally use nutrients or alternatives to counter disease but cannot or do not use these apparently safe and cost-effective practices with their patients.

What Medicine and Psychiatry do well is focus on disease and calm, quell, or overpower it with drugs. This dominant therapeutic regime is allopathic—wielding powerful medications to ‘knock out disease’. Doctors are intelligent, but often secondary agents in an increasingly pharmacological and profit-driven trade. Dominant in medicine, allopathy surely helps in many everyday and life-and-death situations, but is widely seen as ineffective, shifting our burden, or creating worse, even life-threatening conditions.

Integrated medical doctors try to use a holistic approach, but drugs have become the dominant biochemical intervention. Drugs unfortunately are unnatural (toximolecular) and often crude or misguided attempts to suppress symptoms rather than treat underlying conditions. Drug side-effects are rampant. Many doctors regularly admit these problems, but feel their hands are tied by their trade, practicing medicine at the margins of health, offering late-stage intervention. Not in all cases--signs of reform are slowly cropping up.

The nutritional (orthomolecular) approach is already in use by thousands of health care professionals, including doctors. It continues to expand in scope as patients, public, and providers learn the theory, application, and superior results associated with nutrition and integrated care. Stopping one’s medications abruptly can be dangerous, though. If you desire or intend to reduce/withdraw from medications, it should be discussed and carefully done along with a trained health care provider. Some doctors are more familiar with nutritional therapy & medication reduction/withdrawal, many not at all.

In Your Drug May Be Your Problem, Dr. Peter Breggin presents well-researched clearly-stated guidelines for people considering the possibility of withdrawing from medications. It provides extensive education, supportive planning guidelines, & wise warnings to help insure success. Abrupt reduction of medications is not recommended. Gradual withdrawal with strong support **is** much preferable. Doctors need to learn how.

Dr. Abram Hoffer, aforementioned **vitamin therapy** pioneer, has written many excellent books and articles explaining his revolutionary findings for treating classic ‘diseases of brain metabolism’ nutritionally. Highly recommended books by Hoffer include [Naturopathic Nutrition: A Guide to Nutrient Rich Food & Nutritional Supplements for Optimal Health](#) and [Healing Schizophrenia: Complementary Vitamin & Drug Treatments](#). The latter provides a well-supported theory for a metabolic pathway through which Schizophrenia occurs in many. It has to do with adrenochrome, a

metabolite of adrenalin. Increased adrenochrome inhibits production of GABA, a naturally-relaxing neurotransmitter and may increase levels of excitatory biochemicals.

Hoffer's style is logical and scientific, yet easily readable. He dispels myths, provides diagnostics, and explains the biochemical and perceptual changes with Schizophrenia. Best of all, he includes specifics of vitamin therapy for a whole panoply of illnesses. Counseling, occupational/recreational therapy, and family supports are also covered. His knowledge and discoveries from over 50 years of cutting-edge research and clinical application with nutritional and conventional medicine is profoundly significant today.

Many of us have been taught that our conditions are permanent like oak flooring, Mt. Everest, or the Bible. Yet with nutritional therapy, we will find the ground shifting, even vibrating underneath. But instead of cracks to fall through, these friendly vibrations will expose fault lines in the current system and hidden opportunities all around us. The tremors of funding crises and rumbles of increased disease should drive us to find firmer ground and alternate routes forward—up and out of the valley of disease and dysfunction.

Sensible routes like nutrition will inevitably take us into progressive foothills of positive prognosis, then into the airier heights of hope, holistic health, and wholeness. New routes are opening up right now, such as with informative workshops at [Alternatives 2008: Creating Community Through Active Citizenship](#), the annual national mental health gathering (in Buffalo, NY this year). Native Americans wrapped up loose ends at the gathering's beginning and end with soulful, earth-friendly, and life-affirming prayers.

At Alternatives, I put on a workshop with Nadine Grzeskowiak, Corvallis' Celiac Disease Educator & On-Call Nurse (rnoncall.net) It was titled **Food, Vitamins, and Alternative Grains: The Firm Nutritional Road to Health and Recovery**. It was well-received. Numerous other consumer-run workshops provided fun, exciting, and informative times for learning and communicating. Pertinent areas of recovery, building community, configuring services were fleshed out. I participated in workshops covering cooperative research, healthy transportation, alternative health, story-telling, and powering system change. Alternative routes to recovery are developing. Many are already there, but have been covered over with brush, insufficiently mapped, not yet constructed, or less traveled.

It's time for interested folk to 'get their boots on'. We need to train to head out, even if only initially as scouts or hearty individuals seeking new health and brighter days. Later, cohorts and savvy providers can co-lead this group expedition into sunnier climes. This is real and happening right now. We must train new leadership and develop trip plans. Certainly, using peer-run approaches (personal, nutritional, wholistic)—'recovery' should be not only 'possible' but expected, 'commonplace'.

As we face these stark statistics of reduced and morbid life spans for those of us with psychiatric diagnoses, we can gain real HOPE AND CRITICAL HANDHOLDS from savvy nutritional doctors Dr. Hoffer, William Walsh, Hyla Cass, M.D., John Gambee, Marcia Liberatore, and thousands of nutritional peers. We can help each other. Other community and societal resources will become available. My life has been transformed in good part to the natural power of putting simple nutritional building blocks into my body and brain. Our system knows exactly what to do—no metabolic counseling needed.

It is clear to me that recent changes in my life are due in good part to super nutrition and adequate supplementation. In some respects, I feel like a 'different person'—more

confident, assertive, creative, organized, mentally healthy, active. I eat really well and take a panel of megadose supplements identified from research and applied therapists.

Noteworthy: I can type ~2x faster than before. That's not incidental. It feels almost like I didn't do it myself: this new person inside of me did it without asking. Who are you, by the way? Fewer fears and foibles exist, but some persistent paranoia. Overall, much improvement. *Frankly, my mind just works better.* I am confident similar things can happen to others with a nutritional regime adapted to individual needs and wants.

In February 2008, I stopped eating gluten, the protein found in wheat, rye, barley, and some lesser-used grains. Within days, I felt a modest but definite (and continuing) pleasurable high—and more energy in succeeding months. Relieved of the dietary onslaught of problem-causing gluten grains—which are chemical ‘exorphins’ (structurally close to our natural endorphins), I believe my body’s native endorphins are connecting again. Endorphins are pain-reducing compounds in the body and brain.

Another possible explanation of these changes is alleviation of ‘brain fog’. This is an oft-mentioned result of going gluten-free. Celiac disease is an auto-immune disorder caused by indigestible gluten proteins leaking through the gut into our bloodstream, leading to inflammation in varying areas. Hypoperfusion (limited blood flow), may be affecting many of our brains. Surely, organs need good circulation. I may have Celiac disease of the brain, but since I am off the toxic, disease-causing gluten grains, my brain feels GREAT! Recovery isn't an adequate term. I feel better than before “I got sick.”

Nutrition—the staff of metabolic life—is what makes up our cells & brain tissue. It's what constitutes our bones, skin, organs, blood, hormones, enzymes, and antibodies. But if you think quality and quantity of essential nutrients isn't critical for health, or that our modern diet isn't a miserable failure—a prominent doc might agree. Stephen Barrett, M.D. of quackwatch.com downplays any significant role for nutrition in treating disease/improving health beyond ‘the 3 squares’. This near-total ignorance of the major role of poor diet in modern disease pathology demonstrates 1st-order quackery in itself.

Other doctors want to make commercial vitamin dosages extremely low (thus non-therapeutic), closer to *radically-deficient amounts* listed as ‘RDA’ levels. Many support more strictly regulating vitamin manufacturers to insure quality, although testing and certification bodies already exist and supplements have proved thousands of times safer than medications. Some want sale of vitamins by prescription only. This control- and ignorance-based mindset is big in our pharmaceutical-driven medical industry & the FDA.

Tragically, most doctors are nutritionally illiterate---by training, that is—or lack thereof. The situation hasn't changed much in 60 years. My Father went to medical school at Case-Western University in Ohio in the late 1940's. He received only ½ or 2 clock (not credit) hours of nutrition in 4 years of medical school. Ray Strand, M.D., author of [What Your Doctor Doesn't Know About Nutritional Medicine May Be Killing You](#), reports that only 6% of doctors today receive any substantial nutritional education. This is changing, gradually, yet Medicine is still 50+ years behind in this area.

Warning: There Are Side-effects To Nutritional Therapy!!! Be prepared! Inevitably, ‘side effects’ occur—nasty things like ‘loss of symptoms’, more energy, clear thinking, & newfound abilities, not to mention ‘The Niacin Flush’ (uncomfortable hot sensation w/ Niacin), colorful urine, and creative developments. Abram Hoffer wryly warns people of “longer life”. Seriously, new-found health is empowering, but can also be unsettling.

Major life transitions are akin to entering a new land—the terrain changes, things ‘feel’ different; opportunities and risks appear. It is a time of great growth and potential pitfalls, yet with perseverance, guidance, and time, it offers a rich milieu for rewarding experiences, new friendships, and—building out those DREAMS!

Americans increasingly realize the dire consequences of both our nutritionally-compromised food and lousy diet choices on physical and mental health. Now we must spread the good word and practice of nutrition for ‘bio-behavioral health’. Its stellar effectiveness, phenomenal safety, & huge cost savings will sell themselves over time as more and more folks use food & supplements to treat illness/improve health.

We must trust and challenge OURSELVES on this group climb out of the dead-air valleys of co-morbidity and early demise. We will discover new chutes, clamber up unique rocks, rest on outcrops, ascend intermediate peaks, and maybe ‘summit’ someday. For now, let’s get base camp going, gather equipment, train up, and build group cohesion and infrastructure. Assaults aren’t easy. There’s only one way to climb---TOGETHER.

Like our Oregon’s HEART & Mind Wellness Task Force so proudly led by peers and DHS workers in the spirit of our fallen comrade David Romprey, who did not die in vain but left a rich legacy of courage, a creative vision, rascal humor, and a “hurricane of hope”. David built connections so deep...that we are inspired to walk and talk and struggle to bring about that vision he nobly fought for. I feel his spirit still burning strong and bright inside—among us, inside us, a flame circulating around and up.....

This is a call to Peace with Strength—to fully utilize the most powerful arsenal on Earth--which comes from the Earth directly and from what we have learned with our creative, logical minds--about Nutrition and Natural Medicine—to physically solve these puzzles of body, brain, and behavior—and move to higher ground..

The Call to Natural Arms: Study & Use Nutritional Therapy—healthy food & megadose nutrients, along with medications and other ‘alternatives’. Healthy physical inputs underpin recovery, becoming long-term companions. Your health will improve. The need for medications will likely reduce over time. Warning: people may get jealous, like one friend who dumped out all my vitamins once in good-humored disgust.

Even your pet could get ‘ticked off’. My cat, seemingly perturbed, used to appear regularly at my desk around a certain time as I powered past his bedtime using my new-found creative energy. I will listen and go to bed, though, since he is my on-site counselor—heart-based, holistic, cheap. I get ‘therapeutic intervention’—he gets fish nuggets, rubs, & vitamin-rich cat chow. The better deal? It’s great for both of us.

Alternatives 2009. I hope to see some of you there for a new round of ground-breaking and dynamic, consumer-driven workshops. The rapidly-expanding nutritional route effectively turns the lights on from inside the system. The system I refer to is our physical body with brain—an integrated whole. Nutrients provide cheap alternative energy for a rich metabolic infusion. Nutrition rocks! Vitamins roll! Start the Music!

Begin to supply your body with the building blocks for good health to greatly reduce disease and disability. Our bodies & brains automatically know what to do as we supply them with the raw materials for health. After all, they’ve been doing it for millions of

years! Talk about empowering & reforming ‘the system’! Our bio-energetic body is the most basic and important ‘system’ of all. Our biological self deserves better days!

Our native body and intelligent brain instinctively create homeostasis and good health when given the chance. In this ‘natural behavioral system’, counselors are our DNA and consumers are our cells, tissues, and organ systems living in our inner nutrient environment. Co-equal participants. Structure and function. As organism, we Homo sapiens are extremely wise inside. Trust your inner self! Vitamins, minerals, enzymes, fats, and proteins naturally interact in our cells to perform a myriad of functions. It’s been equalitarian and dynamically evolving since Day 1. All essential elements needed, in small or large quantities. One missing element can hold up the whole process.

Time to get motivated, people! Alarm Bells and the Liberty Bell are ringing! An intentional peer-led path can only head upward. As motivated people seeking health and ‘recovery’—we can be unstoppable. Folks, it’s time to get serious about getting well. We need a coordinated strategy, to develop sound organization, then to communicate, coordinate, plan, train climbers and leaders, and procure the necessary supplies for ascent.

We should realize: this is a joint venture and we need to help each other. Some create ideas or metaphors, some tie knots. Some can cook. Some can prepare gear, get supplies. Others can share know-how of hiking, climbing, scrambling up rocks, utilizing chutes, and rappelling. I can help with braiding stronger internal ropes— metabolic mainstays to guide functional moves onto greater heights. Things previously unimaginable could become possible. ‘Recovery’ could become a milestone rather than a destination.

The progressive heights I refer to are long-term health, wellness, support, community, freedom of spirit, vital activity, understanding, respect. Don’t hesitate to contact me or other nutritional/alternative therapists around for ‘equipment, maps, technical know-how, foul-weather gear, or expedition planning’ *on this, the climb of our lives.*

Conventional providers may come along as they learn the ropes. They can also lend assistance if they understand and subscribe to the overall goals of the expedition: to achieve the safest, least cost, most expeditious, and harmonious ascent. Some may have old-fashioned ideas or outdated techniques. Others are great allies already. Some will say the whole expedition is fruitless—‘just stay in the valley’. Counseling for them and others will be required. Base camp is where it’s at for now. See you there!

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**“The Essence of Geology is this: the top of
Mt. Everest is made of marine limestone”**

WORDS ETCHED IN STONE MARKER BY CREEK NEAR DHS BARBARA ROBERTS BUILDING IN SALEM

>>>>—Our efforts at the bottom are substrate for a great uplift event (already happening) that will fundamentally and forever change the natural bio-behavioral landscape for all—<<<<

Have Faith! Mountains Move! Keep looking up!