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Reach Out Opening The Soil

- JOHN ODELL, allthelandandsea.wixsite.com/wordsofwords

A Note from the Publisher

The *North Columbia Monthly* is a free monthly magazine distributed throughout northeastern Washington and is a vehicle for sharing stories that we can relate to, imagine, or feel. It is about *where and how we live*. In emphasizing these kinds of stories, it is my hope that the idea of connection, common ground, and community will be infused into our consciousness and become integral to what we choose to strive for, and what is considered the norm.

I believe that we can all have different perspectives, different viewpoints, different ways of being, *and* I believe that we can find connection and build community around the things we share in common. Thank you for reading. I hope you feel enriched for having done so.

~ Gabriel

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The Dopamine Effect

By Christine Wilson

“In the human, more than 50% of dopamine is synthesized in the gut, and peripheral dopamine levels can be regulated by the gut microbiota.”

~ Journal of Neuroinflammation

“Dopamine [is] a neurotransmitter that helps control the brain’s reward and pleasure centers. An increase of dopamine in the brain tells the individual that he or she should try and get more of whatever it is that caused that increase. This influences the way we behave in the sense that we keep going back to the thing that makes us feel good. ... Chocolate contains a key compound called tyramine, which is derived from the amino acid tyrosine. Tyrosine is the amino acid precursor to dopamine.”

~ Colby College

“In one study we found that when people listen to intensely emotional music they actually release dopamine. ... Interestingly, people not only release dopamine at the peak pleasure moments in music, but also in anticipation of these moments.”

~ Valerie Salimpoor, McGill University

“...transmitting dopamine via decor is subjective.” ~ Rahul Mistri, founder and principal designer for Open Atelier Mumbai, quoted in *Architectural Digest*

By the time I finish this column, I will be jonesing for chocolate. It turns out that all I have to do is think about the joys of chocolate to activate the urge and then I will want to scrounge around in the cupboards for a dopamine hit.

We live in a world of designer hormone production now. Actually, we always have, but only in the last few

decades have we learned the details. I had a grand plan of writing about the chemistry of that, but reading the research triggered a serious flashback.

When I was a junior in high school, I took my first chemistry class. At home that evening my sister, who was coincidentally studying chemistry in nursing school at the time, asked me what I thought of the subject. I burst into tears.

I won’t presume at this point to accurately decipher the research. What I do know about, through my geeky hobby level interest in brain science, is that we have more control over our neurotransmitters than we thought.

There are multiple neurotransmitters that I like to read about. My current interest is in dopamine, which is a driving force behind our search for what feels good. It is sometimes called the hormone of addiction because,

when left unsupervised, it leads us to seek more of the dopamine rush. This can eventually create a dopamine deficit, which can make us feel cranky and want more of the addictive rush, even if we know it is not good for us.

When I long for chocolate, my dopamine system sets in motion the kind of agitation that starts the hunt. Unfortunately, dopamine doesn’t care what the hunt is for. The biological anthropologist Dr. Helen Fischer says that two people in the same office can get a forbidden crush on each other and that will also activate their dopamine rush. So, whether it is chocolate, forbidden love, heroin, or a myriad of other things, dopamine is just going to do its thing.

Dr. Anna Lembke, author of *Dopamine Nation*, says that the things that bring us pleasure can ultimately cause us pain. Whether the person is strug-



Random Acts of Community

gling with an actual drug, smartphone overuse, sugary food, or cigarettes, “over time, with repeated exposure, that drug works less and less well. But they find themselves unable to stop, because when they’re not using, they’re in a dopamine deficit.” She describes her daughter’s difficulty walking away from her video device. “A neural pathway made to ensure humans go seek out water when they’re thirsty is now being used to keep my seven-year-old watching yet another episode of a cartoon.” This effect even has a catchy new title: “the dopamine cartel.”

I find it comforting to know that when I am craving something, it might just be a dopamine deficit. That doesn’t make the urge go away, but it removes the powerlessness. I can sort out my choices.

Surges in brain chemicals have been dealt with since way before we had terms for them. My Swedish Grandma Mielke believed in distracting children, to shift their focus from things they should not be doing, and finding something fun as a replacement. I use that on myself, even though I am now the grandmother.

My English Grandmother Wilson emphasized conscious effort. I imagine she drew deeply on that skill as she studied to be a teacher in 1903. I do not know what she dealt with during that time, aside from the fact that she could not vote, but in my grandfather’s letters to her, he complained that she was not saving his letters. She was using them as paper to make patterns for dresses, which might have been a dopamine hit for her.

If my understanding of dopamine research is correct, Grandma Mielke may have been feeling a dopamine rush when she was able to successfully

manage her children. Grandmother Wilson, the more formal of the two, might have experienced a dopamine rush through dogged determination, although that term might have sounded a bit risqué to her.

There is another aspect to managing our brain chemistry, one my grandmothers would not have known about. We can create and manage our dopamine. To explain this, I get to use two of my favorite words, just because I love how they sound: exogenous and endogenous.

Exogenous circumstances are “outside the model being studied.” Corralling our dopamine structure to benefit a more positive lifestyle can include music that brings us pleasure, creating a home environment that soothes us, consistent exercise, and social interactions that delight us.

In my research on dopamine, I discovered “dopamine décor” is all the rage now. I saw a photograph of a living room that was intended to crank out the dopamine for the homeowner. However, it made me want to crawl under my bed. As it turns out, the process of creating a neurotransmitter happy place is, to say the least, subjective.

Music is equally personal. When my kids were in high school, they listened to a band that seemed to be yelling all the time. When, after having listened to one particular album multiple times, I complained that the lead singer was still yelling, one of my sons said, “Yeah, but he yells so well.”

On the other hand, the music I listened to in high school actually played in an episode of *South Park* as an older man’s description of depression. Yet when I listened to it, my brain chemistry produced a peaceful version of joy.

Internal, endogenous efforts to fos-

ter dopamine take a little more work and are a little slower to take effect. Fifty percent of our dopamine is produced in our guts, as well as 90% of its close relative, serotonin.

Years ago, I read an editorial by Robert Rodale of *Organic Gardening* fame. He described his family’s purchase of a piece of property that had been heavily, commercially fertilized. When it was wet, they had to slog through it in tall boots. His father started dumping organic matter such as leaves onto the soil, and by the time Robert Rodale was at the end of his life, he could wear flip flops there because the soil was springy and full of life.

There’s a reason parents want their children to eat more vegetables and less sugar. Specific to the production of dopamine, it turns out creating happiness starts with a “springy and full of life” gut biome. Our well-being, as it turns out, is a dance between the neurochemistry that occurs naturally within us and our living as the conductor in the symphony we call our lives. Now, should I go find that chocolate or take our dog up on Colville Mountain?

Christine Wilson is a psychotherapist in private practice in Colville and can be reached at christineallenwilson@gmail.com or 509-690-0715.



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The Question Nobody Asked

By Dr. Barry Bacon, MD

There are people living among us who have never had anyone ask them, “What do you dream of being when you grow up?” No one ever thought it was important to help that child to dream. No one ever thought they would amount to much. No one.

When I was six years old, my dad said something that I still remember, 60 years later. “Son, I see that you have a lot of empathy. I believe you could be a doctor someday.” I had no idea what he was talking about. But somehow, the words remained fast in my brain, and even though it may have initially been his dream, in time it became my own. I tried on a number of other occupations, saw myself with different futures, but I never wavered.

My dad was a flawed human being. He wasn't an educated man. Though he was intelligent and capable, his dad didn't value education more than alcohol, so my dad had to drop out of an engineering program after just one year of college. When I asked him if he was ever bitter because he wasn't able to fulfill his dream, he shrugged. “That's just the way it was,” he answered summarily. He didn't get everything right. But he gave me the gift of belief in myself, that I could be someone, that my life could matter, that, whatever

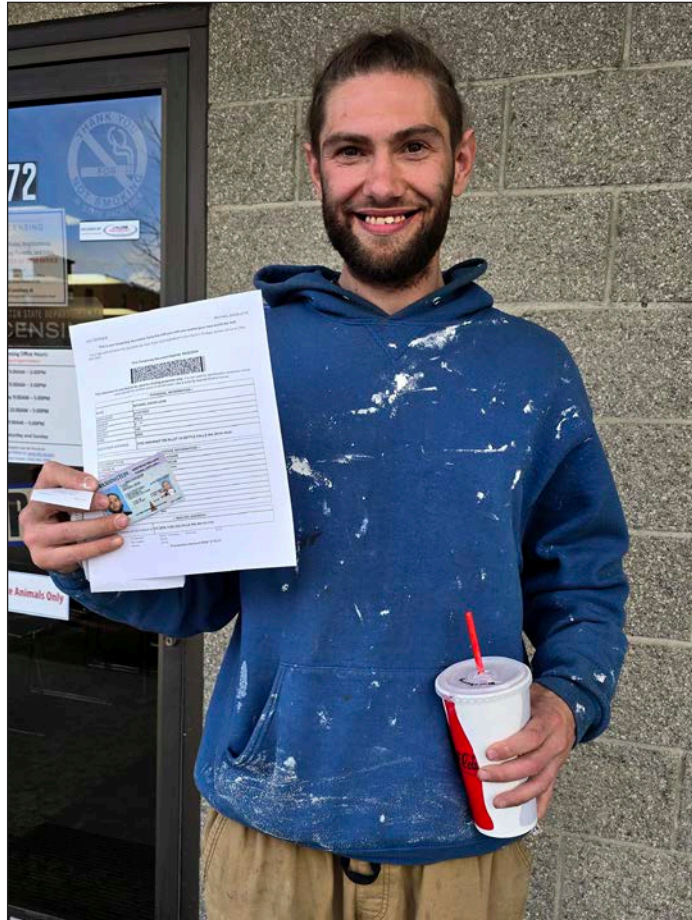
empathy was, I had what it takes.

My wife, bless her, says she has the best job in the world. She buys old houses that need restoring, creates a plan in her mind to make them beautiful again, and, after accomplishing

running this “for profit” venture. We don't make any money at it. We aren't taking advantage of poor people. We provide them with jobs and skills and confidence to be better human beings. By that, I mean

going to work every day, giving back to their community, paying their own way, staying clean and sober (no one can use illicit substances while working for Shelley). She is well rewarded, but not with cash.

This work is opening her eyes to the truth about how complex the suffering is for the people she works with. Common themes that emerge are that they don't believe in themselves. They don't believe they are capable of being better versions of themselves. They often feel like their lives have no purpose. They often feel like they aren't welcome with the rest of us. Not in our churches. Not in our meetings. Not in our towns. They see themselves as outsiders,



this hard work which any sane person would never try to tackle (because you can't make any money at it in this economy), she puts them on the market and sells them to anyone needing housing. She's on project number five. She accomplishes all of this with hired homeless men and occasionally a homeless woman.

I'm going to make some generalizations here based on our experience over the past three years of

and wander from one non-event to the next.

Shelley has many conversations with them while they are working. She expects them to stay busy, to give an honest day's work (no, they don't necessarily know how to work). She works alongside them, and that seems to open a window into their souls. They begin talking about life, their struggles, their hopes for a future, their past. She is their great en-

courager.

She has compassion for them, often driving them to their appointments, which are usually scheduled at the most inconvenient, disruptive time of the day in terms of a work schedule. Many have drug court, or Department of Corrections appointments, or mandatory classes, or random urine drug screens. Many don't have transportation or a driver's license. It's unlikely that an employer would go out of their way to help someone find housing, or a camper, or tell them to take the day off so they can celebrate their son's birthday, but that's what she does.

She isn't trying to turn a profit. She just loves the work. She is the one who asks those working for her, "What do you dream of being?" She is the one who is the first to hear them answer, "I've never been asked that before."

Shelley's not satisfied to do this work alone. She recently recruited a friend to provide financial counseling to one of her employees. The employee seemed eager to learn, which was good, because financial planning was, for him, a disaster. He began to learn basic budgeting, savings, paying bills on time, avoiding penalties, shopping for bargains.

She also recruited friends to stand in as supervisor whenever she is gone, so that the employees' income is not disrupted. Such friends are of great value. And they get to share in her joy.

What she does isn't easy. It's hard work. Not every story is a success. But there are many who use the chance they are given as a steppingstone to a better future. Shelley doesn't worry about what some might consider a failure. Instead, when I come home, and I see on her shoulders and in her hair the evidence that she has been pulling insulation and sheetrock off the ceiling, I see her smile through the dust and paint. She says to me, "I have the best job in the world." Something about watching a person move from despair and worthlessness to hope and confidence.

It seems that most of us identify ourselves by the kind of work that we do. There is a certain amount of pride in finishing the day and seeing the work of your hands and knowing that you created something beautiful.

Even though they don't have a home, they are creating a home for someone. Maybe someday it will be their turn.

Here's what she says about her

work: "Today was payday for me. No, I didn't get any money. I got something far better – the pure joy of seeing [name of person] get his driver's license for the FIRST TIME! I am so proud I could cry. The first day he came to work, back in November of 2023, he was homeless, in drug court, and planning to file for disability. Today, at age 30, he is making payments on his own fifth wheel and has an ADDRESS to use for his driver's license. He had a hard time containing his own excitement. His whole thinking is changing. His outlook for his future is completely different now ... I have the best job ever."

How much do you have to pay for a life like that? A life where you come alongside another human being and instill hope, tell them that someone believes in them? It's hard, but it's beautiful. You can't trade such a life for anything.

Just ask my beautiful, talented, compassionate wife.

Dr. Barry Bacon has lived and practiced family medicine in Colville for nearly 30 years, working in small, rural hospitals in Washington state, teaching family medicine, and working on health disparities in the U.S. and Africa.

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Casting About

Article & Photo by Tina Wynecoop

After work one day, my husband and his brother decided to go ride around the hills in the upper Sand Creek area. They pulled into an area where there were beaver ponds and discovered there were fish in them! That began many fishing trips to those ponds, including this memorable one:

Have you ever caught a fishing lure in your lip? One of our young nephews did. [Note: With six brothers and even more nephews – all grown men now – the “victim’s” name has been respectfully withheld by his uncle.]

Uncle Judge recalled, “I had rigged up fishing poles for some of the kids. I cautioned all of them to just use a

single hook, a sinker, and worms or flies for bait in these beaver ponds. Well, the one nephew found a big, beautiful, Gypsy King fishing lure in my tackle box, and that *had* to be the one he used.

“The thing about fishing lures on poles with ‘fixed length’ fishing lines is that you may be able to cast out, but when you try to retrieve the lure and recast to a new spot, the heavy lure will usually come straight back at you – fast. The lure he chose came whizzing back and stuck in his upper lip just between his nose and mouth.

“I was off a ways fishing when the commotion started. I ran back to see

what was going on and was met in the trail by the six-year-old. He was crying some but was actually quite brave as he came for help. After I took a quick look at his face, he looked up at me and asked, ‘Uncle Judge, am I going to die?’

“I told him no, but found very quickly that I would not be able to remove the hook on the lure, so off to the Wellpinit Clinic we went. His dad had been informed and came to the clinic to help, thank God, because his son refused to take a

Novocaine shot. The doctor explained that he had to cut off the eye end of the hook and then push the hook on through the lip. The boy was not about to take the shot unless his dad took one first! So, my brother got a shot and the operation was a success.”

Do fish feel the pain of a hook? I’ve often wondered how fish feel when hooked by the lip. Our family, for many generations, is stocked with fishermen. I would eat fish for breakfast, lunch, and dinner if I could get away with it. I’ve appreciated how our grandchildren have picked up the skills and knowledge it takes to be fly fishermen. They even tie their own flies like their dads and granddad.

There is one thing that has troubled me over the years. It began a decade ago when our grandkids attended the Spokane Kids Fishing Event sponsored by the state Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council. Although I witnessed the excitement of the children, I also observed the unnecessary suffering of captured fish left flopping around on the dock and suffocating while the kids kept casting to reach their limit.

Our sons were taught by their fathers to remove the hook from the fish’s mouth immediately and then, just as quickly, pull the fish head back to break the spine and end their suffering. Suffocation, for fish, is like drowning in air. Watching the fish flop around on a dock unattended and left to die made me terribly sad. With a little education, this practice doesn’t have to be so. What could I do about the agony?

This April, it was reported in the *Spokesman Review* that the 23rd Annual Kids Fishing Event will be held



Judge Wynecoop and his “giant” cutthroat trout from Harvey Creek. As with many a fish tale, it’s all a matter of “perspective” in how it’s told...

in May at Clear Lake, which has been freshly stocked with more than 5,000 rainbow trout. One of the organizers was quoted, “The kids who participate will be provided a rod and bait, and will get to catch their limit of three fish. Volunteers will be on hand to clean the fish so the youngsters can take their catch home. At the end of the day, it is so rewarding seeing all the smiles and excitement when they catch those fish.”

There was an answer looking for me. It was a model for how we should treat fish (and others) through education – a way to spare the fish from unnecessary suffering. I reached out to one of the event organizers and proposed a way to enhance the program’s goals by recommending the volunteers show the children how to take care of their catch, one by one, *as soon as* the fish was caught.

This kindness would appeal to the children’s innate compassion as well as complete their training. Enlightened, the practice of letting fish die through long suffering would be eliminated. It is such a simple solution – a “one of a kindness,” as it were.

The event organizer I spoke with stated that he fully agreed with me about the unnecessary suffering and would inform his volunteers. From now on, he assured me, to the best of his ability, this shift in fishing instruction would include the final touch of dispatching the catch with immediacy, relieving the stress of being caught.

Our nephew received relief from the huge lure dangling from his upper lip. Using great skill, the doctor didn’t have to break his neck – thanks to the nephew’s dad who agreed to take the local anesthetic with his son.

Things won’t be as dramatic at the fishing docks; from now on the local “anesthetic” administered by young fishermen will do the job.

Tina grew up in western Washington at a time when traffic and population weren’t daunting. In 1970 she

emigrated, with her newly acquired teaching credentials, to Wellpinit on the Spokane Indian Reservation. The people, culture, geography, history, flora, and fauna of the eastern part of the state easily became her beloved “home ground.”

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Unearthing Letters from Love

By Marci Bravo

When I first heard one of my role models and favorite authors, Elizabeth Gilbert, talk about how she began receiving Letters from Love, I was intrigued. Enthralled really. In an interview years ago, Gilbert described feeling at her wit's end and grief-stricken while watching her partner struggle with terminal cancer. One day, she sat alone in front of blank pages with a pen in hand. She wrote down a question in desperation and waited in stillness for an answer. Finally, it came. Loving, supportive, and, most of all, reaffirming words flowed from her pen. They were exactly what she needed in that moment, as though unconditional love was speaking through her.

Letters from Love has become part of Elizabeth Gilbert's daily spiritual

practice. It's part prayer and part meditation, helping set her intentions and grounding her at the start of each day. For years I flirted with this idea of sitting in stillness and just listening with pen in hand. Listening until I heard truth, or compassion, or wisdom, or patience, or love flow out of me. Toward me. For me.

For some time, I avoided this practice, scared perhaps of the outcome. I felt nervous that the truth might be harsh or unsettling. Or worse, that the only reply I would receive might be silence.

In her January interview with Glenn Doyle on the podcast "We Can Do Hard Things," Gilbert described her Letters from Love practice and invited anyone interested to give it a try. She

even created a Letters from Love community on Substack with the option to share letters with the community (totaling 20,000 at the time). In response to Doyle's trepidations, Gilbert declared that if the words received were unsettling, judgmental, or anything less than compassionate and patient, they were not coming from love. That was reassuring to me, as well as to the podcast host.

Finally, after all these years, on a morning when my house was quiet and empty, I sat down at my kitchen table. I opened my journal to a blank page, and wrote, "Dear Love, what would you have me know today?"

Then I listened for the answer. The words came and resonated with me deeply. Since that day, I've been invit-

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ing close friends to try the exercise for themselves. Each person has different styles and outcomes, yet everyone has expressed sincere gratitude for the practice. I'm grateful to share my first letter with you.

Oh my Beloved, my darling child, my constant heart's companion,

How delightful to be blessed by your attention today. I have been sitting quietly, reminiscing over a cup of tea, about the times in your life when we have had our chats. Remember all those amazingly supportive, lovely emails you'd send your friend from college, the one who, in turn, swore up and down you were destined to write a book? You channeled such pure love and non-judgment, held space for her like an umbrella in the downpour of her own self-doubt, that kept her so graciously dry and warm and reassured. Remember the letter you wrote to your first lost love, when you both encouraged and requested him to let go and direct his own movie? Those letters that pledged a ceaseless gratitude and appreciation for those other doomed romances and the parts they played in your life? Not to bemoan a loss, for if we are looking outward, how would we necessarily know the answers are within? Ah, the optimism and naïveté of youth.

But all those buoyant, delicious expressions of serendipitous fortune and abundance, those were meant from Me to YOU. Of course, you being generous and eager to share any treasure with someone close by, who whether consciously or subconsciously you recognized could use it, or find joy in it, well, you gave. You shared. You poured it forth. But this giving became a reflex, a habit. Nonchalantly you opened your palms and offered Love until you forgot how to discern who deserved it. Until you forgot that who needed, sought and completely had all rights to this love was You.

Years later you are still that little child wondering, that teenager resenting, that young woman doubting, seeking, looking into everyone else's eyes trying to reveal where your true love lies, and forgetting — or perhaps, let's be honest, avoiding — the mirror, the reflection of your own eyes. You have feared introspection, you have clung to Ego, getting in your own way, instead of moving quietly aside, loosening the tight fearful grasp to control, to noise, to distraction, that has kept me locked away, mute, unable to gently cradle your face between my palms, and kiss you on the forehead, a quiet earnest reminder, eye to silent eye...

But, huzzah! You are here! You are real! And you have traveled far and wide to arrive exactly where and when you are meant to be. Come sit and share a cup of tea with me.

I know you have a galaxy of questions and concerns tumbling through a vacuous and infinite space like stardust and comets and asteroids. But for each of those questions, let us pause and begin with I Love You.

You are so wondrously a part of this Universe and through it flows the light of Love. And I am Love, and you are Love and each fibrous mass of lichen and each eyelash of our sweet, growing, spirited son, and each beat of your husband's heart and each anxious tear of your exuberant mother, and each memory of your Grandma, and each generosity of your father, and each twitch of your dreaming dog — all these are vestiges of the Love that shines life into the Universe. Call it Pullman's Dust, or God, or Great Spirit, or the Universe, or Love. But believe it — believe Me — that I am the most gentle, forgiving, gracious and patient part of yourself, and I do exist. I am here to see you exist in this world in the most integral, serendipitous, ubiquitous, surprising, restoring, nourishing, reassuring, hopeful, scintillating and quotidian ways. In today's answer to your question, I only want to welcome you back home. To know that you are where you belong, fully and deeply recognized, celebrated, appreciated, forgiven and found.

That is what you get to understand from this point forward. Remember Me by remembering You.

*Always,
Love*

For more information about Letters from Love, check out Elizabeth Gilbert's Substack at <https://elizabethgilbert.sub->

[stack.com/](https://elizabethgilbert.substack.com/). And to Elizabeth Gilbert, if you come across these words, thank you. Marci Bravo is a multi-media artist,

wife, mother, teacher, friend and yogi residing in Colville. Follow her on Instagram @marci_bravo_makes.

Garage Sale Danger

By Ellen Shaw

You know May is here when the first hot pink poster is duct-taped to a stop sign, announcing GARAGE SALE TODAY, in bold print. Warning: Danger, danger!

Danger, you say? Yes! If you are a treasure hunter, beware. Here are some considerations as garage sale season begins:

“Your stuff expands to fill the space you live in.”

“She who dies with the most cool stuff wins!”

“For every one item you bring home, two items must go out.”

“It IS possible to get too much of a good thing.”

And, as a sage 80-something-year-old woman sitting behind her garage sale cash-out table said to me, “Honey, if you’re over 50-something years old, you ought to be thinking about getting RID of things, not accumulating more! Otherwise, you’re gonna end up like me!” And she swept her arm around at the 17 tables lining the walls of her tiny garage, piled high with boxes of clothes, interesting knick-knacks, an amazing assortment of kitchen utensils, bins of mixed items like wiring, light bulbs, dog leashes and cat toys, cigar boxes containing various old

Bic pens, markers, and stubby No. 2 pencils with chewed-off erasers, cloudy old glass bottles, dog-eared paperback books for 25 cents ... you know all the stuff, right?

Despite those words of warning, some of us still have the “treasure hunt bug” and cannot seem to stop the impulse that’s akin to gold fever. I am trying NOT to be one of those ... anymore. But treasure hunts are fun!

I’ve been a second-hand (or fifth-hand?) owner of many interesting items over the years. I come by this role honestly, growing up in New England and attending many Yankee auctions on chilly Saturday spring mornings with my family. My parents, Bob and Tess, married in 1954 and, like many newlyweds starting out, their beginning years of their marriage were lean ones. The “eclectic” furnishings for their first home were in a style called Early Garage Sale.

As Mom and Dad’s weekly paychecks grew over the years, so did their family. Pretty soon four daughters had been added to the family, and their tiny house became too small. Mom and Dad went to auctions out of necessity, to furnish a

larger house, but also for the excitement and enjoyment.

At least one hour before an auction began, we would all pile into the black Ford station wagon and head for a rural location, often an old barn. Viewing time before the auction was important for inspecting items and planning what to bid on. Mom was usually the bidder, holding her bidding card close, and whispering with Dad about whether to bid or not. I remember one particularly large farmhouse auction where she and Dad purchased an old, cob-webbed, marble-topped bureau. It had a “sticky” top drawer that, to this day, resists being opened.

I learned new, helpful information at those auctions. A “Klondike” was a mishmash of items all jammed into a box, and you bid on it not knowing at all what was inside, save for some random item sticking out of the top of the box. Self-control in not overbidding was important; and sussing out other bidders helped one learn to judge competition for items. Auctions were fun and also a practical means of obtaining quality items. I gained skill in assessing items carefully and discerning how they might suit my needs.

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In addition to auctions, local rummage sales and yard sales became part of Mom's shopping repertoire, yielding many unique furnishings and objects for our larger home. The "nicer parts" of town sometimes outfitted us four little girls quite handily. Perfectly good, almost-new, wool dress-length coats my mother found were handed down, one sister to the next, season to season. Sturdy winter galoshes, corduroy jackets, and pastel Easter dresses can be seen over and over in our family photos and slides. "Hey, that's my winter coat and hat Joan is wearing in that 1964 slide; and there it is on June the next year!"

Over the years, the antique rocking chairs, hardwood bureaus and even a hand-painted bedstead from auctions and sales have remained in our family and are appreciated by each of us. And I continue enthusiastically welcoming each spring garage sale season!

It's no surprise that I became a treasure hunter, outfitting my first apartment, then my home, with second-hand goods. At auctions, my

heart still beats fast when an item I desire comes on the block. Among my special treasures: an old wooden bread-making bowl, once owned by a founding family of Colville; a diamond earring for \$1 that matched the singleton in my jewelry box; a copy of the Australian book *Mutant Message from Down Under*; a tall hand-made bookshelf; various interesting glass vases and hand-woven baskets; and too many books.

Items that are a danger for me? Too many woven baskets, vases and bakeware. I eagerly await the spring-time garage sales around our area, but this year I'm determined to slow down on the treasure-finding. I'm working on staying away from too much of a good thing. Plus, I'm running out of room!

Back to Mom and Dad, now 88 and 91: They are downsizing to a smaller home. It has been difficult for my parents to relinquish, in their

own garage sales, the cherished items they have accumulated. Last summer my mom sadly set out on sawhorse tables in the driveway more unneeded things from the past. She was downhearted to hear a person comment negatively about "old things nobody wants" or "prices that are too high."

Thinking of my parents' pain, I encourage all of us to be respectful and kind to the proprietor of a garage sale. Realizing that the "interesting" (not "weird" or "ugly") metal floor lamp, or some such item, may have held a special place in their heart can ease the difficulty of letting it go. Tell them you will treasure it and care for it in its new home.

Have fun as you search for garage sale treasures; and remember, it's easy to get too much of a good thing.

Ellen Shaw, a former teacher, moved west in 1981. She has been garage sale-ing in our beautiful area for 20+ years.



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Some Insights on Fatigue, Weight and Stress

By Rob Sumner

The content of the North Columbia Monthly is strictly for informational purposes only and should NOT be used as a substitute for professional medical diagnosis, advice, or treatment. Please, ALWAYS seek the advice of a physician or other qualified health provider with all questions that you have related to, or about, a medical condition.

In the realm of strength and fitness, I have observed a frequent focus on the physical manifestations of health: the strength of our muscles, the endurance of our cardiovascular system, and the flexibility of our bodies. However, I think there's a deeper puzzle at play within human physiology that warrants attention: metabolic syndrome. It's the quiet force behind fatigue, weight gain, and stress, weaving a complex web through the body. This multifaceted condition, characterized by a cluster of interconnected metabolic abnormalities, poses a growing concern for public health in many countries.

To shed light on this issue, let's peek into the intricacies

of metabolic syndrome through the lens of a 64-year-old woman, Susan, whose journey shares the challenges and complexities of this condition.

A QUICK OVERVIEW

Metabolic syndrome is not a single disorder, but rather a constellation of metabolic dysfunctions. At its core lies insulin resistance accompanied by at least one additional metabolic abnormality. Susan, like many individuals grappling with metabolic syndrome, finds herself in the thick of insulin resistance, where her body's cells become less responsive to the hormone insulin. But what exactly does this mean for her health?

THE ROLE OF INSULIN

Insulin, often hailed as the master regulator of metabolism, plays a pivotal role in maintaining blood glucose levels within a narrow range. Every cell in Susan's body bears insulin receptors, highlighting its significance in cellular energy metabolism. However, when insulin resistance takes root, cells become fatigued and less receptive to its signals, setting the stage for a cascade of metabolic disturbances.

Susan's liver, tasked with the crucial duty of regulating blood glucose levels, faces the brunt of insulin resistance. Struggling to manage the influx of glucose, it resorts to converting excess glucose into glycogen and ultimately fat. This excess fat accumulation, particularly around the abdomen and liver, not only contributes to central obesity, but also predisposes Susan to fatty liver disease – a burgeoning epidemic in its own right, fueled by dietary factors such as fructose intake and inflammation.

UNRAVELING THE LIPID CONUNDRUM

Beyond the realm of glucose metabolism, Susan's lipid profile undergoes a critical transformation. High triglycerides and cholesterol levels emerge as hallmarks of metabolic syndrome, reflecting the liver's valiant yet futile attempts to handle excess fat. Contrary to popular belief, dietary fat intake alone doesn't bear sole responsibility for elevated lipid levels. Instead, it's the interplay of insulin resistance, inflammation, and dietary choices that precipitates this



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lipid conundrum.

INSIGHTS INTO NUTRITION

For Susan and other individuals, deciphering the dietary maze of metabolic syndrome proves to be a challenging task. The foods she consumes exert a profound influence on her metabolic health, either exacerbating or correcting her condition. Glycemic-based foods, notorious for eliciting robust insulin responses, heighten her insulin resistance and perpetuate the cycle of metabolic dysfunction. Conversely, prioritizing whole, nutrient-dense foods over processed counterparts empowers Susan to mitigate inflammation and support her cellular vitality.

STRATEGIES FOR METABOLIC HEALTH

Armed with knowledge, Susan embarks on a journey toward reclaiming her metabolic health. Through a multifaceted approach encompassing nutrition, exercise, stress management, and lifestyle modifications, she endeavors to dismantle the barriers erected by metabolic syndrome.

Nutritional strategies: Susan embraces intermittent fasting and eschews snacking to optimize her insulin sensitivity. By favoring low-glycemic foods and minimizing processed foods, she blunts the insulin spikes that fuel metabolic dysfunction. Moreover, incorporating ample protein into her diet supports muscle maintenance and metabolic function, helping to stave off the muscle loss often associated with aging.

Exercise protocols: Susan adopts a balanced exercise regimen that includes both strength training and aerobic exercise. Strength training not only enhances her muscle mass but also improves insulin sensitivity, allowing her muscles to uptake glucose efficiently. Meanwhile, aerobic exercise helps deplete her body's adenosine triphosphate (ATP) reserves, reducing the risk of oxidative stress and supporting mitochondrial function.

Stress management: Susan integrates stress management techniques into her daily routine. Grounding practices, deep breathing exercises, and regular sleep patterns help mitigate cortisol release, thereby dampening the inflammatory cascade that exacerbates insulin resistance. Additionally, she explores mindfulness practices and supplements such as 5-HTP and L-theanine to promote relaxation and hormonal balance.

Creating adaptive stress: Susan acknowledges the importance of subjecting her body to adaptive stressors that promote resilience and metabolic flexibility. Cold exposure, intermittent fasting, and high-intensity interval training (HIIT) serve as potent stimuli that challenge her body to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity.

SUMMARY: EMPOWERING SOLUTIONS

Metabolic syndrome represents a multifaceted challenge with far-reaching implications for health and well-being. Through a holistic approach encompassing nutrition, exercise, stress management, and adaptive stressors, individuals like Susan can navigate the complexities of metabolic dysfunction and reclaim their vitality.

Please note: Navigating the complexities of health and wellness can be daunting, often leading to frustration and mental exhaustion. If you're finding it difficult to begin, make progress, or adapt your wellness journey, don't hesitate to reach out. Our goal is to provide accessible, top-notch health and wellness solutions to empower individuals to lead more active, mobile, and independent lives. Please feel free to email or call the number below for assistance.

Plus, getting messages from people in my community is the best part of my day.

Rob Sumner is a doctor of physical therapy, strength specialist, and owner of Specialized Strength Fitness and Sumner Specialized Physical Therapy in Colville. He can be reached at 509-684-5621 or Rob@SumnerPT.com.

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Life With Art

By Dennis Held

In April's North Columbia Monthly, Dennis Held explored the question "What Has Art Done for Me, Lately?" In this month's piece, he gets into more answers.

Art is magic; it carries human expression and experience forward through time, long after the individual life of the artist is extinguished. Magic is so startling, so *enchanting*, because it violates the known laws of the physical universe, and thus enters the supernatural, the realm of religious and other mystical practices.

Art in all its forms is magic in that it can transport the untransportable: human emotion. And while bodies don't last over time, art can. Remember "*Ars longa, vita brevis*"? Art is long; life is short.

I believe that art has enriched the lives of everyone I know, whether they're aware of it or not. Everyone has heard a song, looked at a painting, read a story, and thought, "Yes, there, that's how I've felt, that's what I thought but never had the words or colors or sounds to say it." The importance of making that connection is what the poet William Carlos Williams had in mind when he wrote, in *Asphodel, That Greeny Flower*: "It is difficult to get the news from poems, yet men die

every day for lack of what is found there." I believe with all of my heart and soul that is true.

The poet Adrienne Rich thought long and hard about what can be found in a poem, and a lifetime pursuing the art. Rich has written about 20 books of poetry and prose, and she is widely respected for her considerations of ethics and morality in contemporary American culture. She takes the title of her 1993 collection of essays, *What Is Found There*, from Williams' poem.

In the book's first essay, "Woman and Bird," Rich writes that our appreciation of great works of art is rooted in recognizing similarities between things – or ideas, or people – that seem different. By observing those similarities, we are invited to see ourselves as participants in a wider web of being. For us to care about others, and act on that feeling of care, Rich says we first need to recognize one another's similarity: our shared humanity. Art, Rich says, helps us do that. Art encourages empathy.

Later, Rich describes how that spark of recognition can happen at "the crossing of trajectories of two (or more) elements that might not have otherwise known simultaneity. When this happens, a piece of the universe is revealed, as if for the first time." We gain a whole new frame of reference, a more comprehensive view of existence and our place in it.

That's an example of how art can lead to understanding, which can give meaning to our lives.

Art often accomplishes powerful acts through its connection to the mystical. Throughout history, art has been created through ritual practice, and is connected to religious and other spiritual practices through their com-

mon quest: the search to find meaning in individual existence. Through both artistic and spiritual practice, we take on the timeless questions: "Why am I here? What should I be doing? What's the best use of my time and talents? How can I become a better person – less selfish, more helpful to others?"

These questions, posed by life and repeated by art, are answered in turn by individual artists down through time: questions of identity, questions of moral development.

Because of the scope of the questions, all that any one of us can hope to offer, I think, is a partial answer. But asking the questions at all, in the face of pressure from contemporary culture to avoid doing so, is, in my estimation, an act of faith, and might provide at least a partial answer to that most difficult of questions; why am I here?

Perhaps we are here to learn, to be there for others in their hour of need, to offer help, to risk the pain that's always associated with opening our hearts to others ... these are some of the concerns of art, and they can arise from our collective desire to make the most of this rare and precious gift – our individual lives. As artists, and as the viewers, listeners and readers of art, we recognize the value of using art as a tool to probe our own experiences, and to learn from the experiences of others.

Saul Bellow, a novelist of deep thought and feeling, takes up the issues of the purpose and value of art in a collection of essays, *It All Adds Up: From the Dim Past to the Uncertain Future*. In "The Distracted Public," Bellow writes about the difficulty of making a coherent artistic statement, given the horrors of our time:





“We are called upon to have feelings – about genocide, for example, or about famine or about the blowing up of passenger planes – and we are well aware that we are incapable of acting appropriately. A guilty conscience of emotional inadequacy or impotence makes people doubt their own moral weight. This is not to say that fundamental feelings, the moral sentiments so long bred into civilized peoples, have been wiped out altogether, but the sentiments obviously haven’t been able to keep up with the abominations that have been visited upon us, with the cruelties and crimes of this century.”

Yet that’s all the more reason to continue our efforts to experience – and to create – lasting art, Bellow says. To begin with, art provides respite from the din. “The power of a work of art is such that it induces a temporary suspension of activities. It leads to wonderful and, to my mind, sacred

states of the soul. The emergence from distraction is aesthetic bliss, the pleasure that comes from the recognition or rediscovery of certain essences permanently associated with human life. These essences are restored to our consciousness by people who are described as artists ... they revive for us moments of completeness and overflowing comprehension, they unearth buried essences.”

It’s the job of the artist to provide such connections, Bellow says:

“The essence of our true condition, its complexity, the confusion of it, is shown to us in glimpses, in what Proust and Tolstoy thought of as ‘true impressions.’ This essence reveals and conceals itself. When it goes away, it leaves us again in doubt. But our connection remains with the depths from which these glimpses come. The value of literature lies in these ‘true impressions.’ A novel moves back and

forth between the world of objects, of actions, of appearances, and that other world, from which these true impressions come and which move us to believe that the good we hold onto so tenaciously – in the face of evil, so obstinately – is no illusion.”

Artists of today have the opportunity to continue this tradition – to bring the news, whether it be good or bad news, but to bring it, and bring it straight from the heart. As art may remind us, that is where meaningful, helpful decisions are made – with the help of the head, but guided by the heart.

Dennis Held lives in the Vinegar Flats neighborhood of Spokane, WA. He has published three books of poetry: Betting on the Night, Ourselves, and Not Me, Exactly. He lives along Hangman Creek and watches for kingfishers. His essay, “What I’ll Miss,” was awarded a Pushcart Prize in 2022.

The Many-Versioned Gull

Article & Photos by J. Foster Fanning

For this article, we will be taking a look at some of the fine-feathered creatures of Lake Roosevelt. Like many *North Columbia Monthly* readers, I've enjoyed a lot of time on and around the lake.

This body of water, following the course of the Columbia River upstream of Grand Coulee Dam, is roughly 150 miles long, though that seasonally varies by impinged water levels. Lake Roosevelt has several dis-

Both the flora and fauna can vary from end to end along this reach of the Columbia River Valley. There is, however, one group of species which can be found abundantly in all locations around the lake: gulls.

I've considered the Lake Roosevelt gulls for an article for quite some time. But the subject of gulls opens a door to a daunting quandary for this writer/photographer. First, there are no birds ornithologically defined as

correctly identify them. These birds complicate that problem by cross breeding, which is scientifically known as hybridization. This intermixing occurs quite frequently in gulls, although to varying degrees depending on the species involved. The hybrid birds also exhibit plumage characteristics of both species.

Further compounding the identification problem, gulls spend much of their time in open areas and their feathers can get bleached by the sun. Entire books have been dedicated to telling one gull from another, but even these barely scratch the surface. Additionally, their plumage changes as they age, with a great deal of variation within species. While at home in my study, I use hardcover field guides for bird identification, frequently resorting to online searches. In the field, I find the use of a smartphone app called Merlin (produced by Cornell Lab of Ornithology) or the Audubon Bird Guide app to be great resources, especially considering they are free to download and use. Nevertheless, I personally find gulls to be the hardest group of birds to correctly identify.



tinct microclimates; to the northeast, deep, lush, mossy forests of Douglas fir, spruce and cedars give way to open rolling hills of Ponderosa pine stands and occasional groves of quaking aspen. In the southwest reaches of the lake, the environment (depending on slope exposure) is much more arid with scattered pine and sagebrush. This is a beautiful, rugged, and remote highlands lake.

“seagulls.” They are simply gulls. Yes, I do sometimes use the word seagull as it is a common colloquialism referring to gulls in general. As gulls often live near the sea, and because they are so common along beaches and coastlines, over the years English-speaking people have referred to this mixed species as seagulls.

The next part of my dilemma of writing about gulls is attempting to

Lake Roosevelt has a large population of gulls, both year-round and migratory. Five species of the family of *Laridae* frequent our area. The California gull is a common, year-round resident of the lake, joined by the herring gull and ring-billed gulls during the summer breeding season. Less often, an astute observer may spot a Franklin's gull or a Bonaparte gull, both of which may be seen during



migration lay-overs.

Some facts I found to be quite interesting in my research about gulls: strangely enough, for example, Utah many years ago named the California gull as their state bird. By most accounts, this was probably done in commemoration of the fact that these gulls saved the people of that state by eating up hordes of crickets during an infestation which destroyed crops in 1848.

Great Salt Lake hosts the largest number of breeding California gulls (approximately 160,000), including the world's largest recorded single colony. Franklin's gulls are also prolific in Utah.

Gulls live around the world, both north and south of the equator. They live in summer or in winter in every state of the United States except Hawaii where it is too great a distance

to traverse from a mainland shore. Consider Franklin's gulls, and to a lesser extent, California gulls, which nest in the prairie provinces of Canada, North Dakota and western Minnesota until they migrate to eastern portions of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Yet all are still commonly referred to as seagulls.

Gulls are resourceful, inquisitive, and intelligent, demonstrating complex methods of communication and a highly developed social structure. For example, many gull colonies display mobbing behavior; attacking, and harassing predators and other intruders. On Lake Roosevelt, I once witnessed gulls mobbing an immature bald eagle that had taken a pass at snatching up a young gull. In a blink of an eye, there were 30 or more white, squawking birds attacking the unprepared eagle, which quickly aborted its gull hunting

practice.

Many species of gulls are kleptoparasitic and steal prey from other birds of the same or different species. In some locales, gulls will follow behind farm plows to consume upturned grubs and other delicacies. Gulls along Lake Roosevelt are known to drop hard-shelled mussels and mollusks onto rocks, breaking them open for a tasty treat.

Like all creatures, gulls fill a unique niche in our world. You do too. Mid-spring is upon us and it's a great time to take to the trails and the waterways and enjoy some time with Mother Nature.

J. Foster Fanning is a father, grandfather, retired fire chief and wannabe beach bum. He dabbles in photography as an excuse to wander the hills and vales in search of the perfect image. Learn more at fosterfanning.blogspot.com.

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Impacting Local and Global Communities

By Lynn O'Connor

I want to share bits from an article in the February 2024 Rotary magazine called “Central To Life,” and written by Dana Schoberg.

One of the things I love about belonging to Rotary is that everything is “local.” That’s true for over 46,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries around the world. And typically Rotary clubs reach out to each other to do projects together. For example, last year when the Colville club built a schoolroom in Tanzania, we worked with a newly formed Rotary club there. So, in this system, everything is local.

This caught the attention of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). UNEP’s goal is to protect ecosystems around the world and Rotary is just the organization that can work directly with communities on a global scale. We are now partnering on a new collaborative initiative called Community Action for Fresh Water. UNEP has the expertise, step-by-step instructions, and other resources for cleaning up bodies of water that people depend upon for life. Rotary can plant the ideas, find local leaders, and run with the project. Pretty cool, eh?

A quote from our magazine article: “Freshwater systems are under threat from climate change, habitat and biodiversity loss, and pollution. Billions of people around the world are at risk because they don’t know how safe surface and groundwater sources are.”

Rotary has seven Areas of Focus, and the latest one to be adopted is Supporting the Environment. “This initiative gives Rotary clubs a coordinated way to work on protecting the environment.” Clubs can write local and global grants for Community Action for Fresh Water plug-in projects: river clean-ups, native plantings, habitat restoration, biodiversity projects, wastewater treatment, and lake monitoring. It’s a win-win for both organizations!

This is where my love for Rotary lies: being able to see and

tackle global issues alongside local knowledge and passion. I love that Rotary is focused on collaboration to get big things done; the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, the Institute for Economics and Peace, and my favorite – the United Nations – are among many others.

Rotary International encourages clubs to form partnerships in their communities to effectively influence positive change. One local example is the happy relationship between the Northeast Washington Hunger Coalition and our No Produce Left Behind program (hopefully to be repeated this summer). Other local partnerships include Colville Together, the Libraries of Stevens



Rotary Club of Teresina-Fátima, Piauí, Brazil, distributes clay water filters. Photo courtesy of Rotary International.

County Foundation, and Providence/Mt. Carmel as well as others. We’re always happy to chat with the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Colville to find things that need to be done.

You are always welcome to come and meet us: colvillerotary.org.

*This page made possible by the Rotary Club of Colville. Learn more at www.colvillerotary.org
View where all the Clubs in the district meet at www.colvillerotary.org/?p=whereclubsmeet*



Surreal's *Prismatic Spectrum*

One of the best things about the state of modern music is that by going online you can find bands that you wouldn't otherwise hear. This exact thing happened to me in 2022 when Surreal's *Starmaps & Constellations* became one of my favorite albums.

Fast-forward (that's an analog cassette tape reference, for those born after 1993) to 2024 and the band is back with another incredibly imaginative, melodic and powerful prog release in the form of *Prismatic Spectrum*.

The Atlanta quartet blends extravagant themes with unbeatable melodies on the flawless "Perfect for a Moment," but this is just scratching the surface. After dialing up

metal guitar-amp goodness on the politically-charged "Muzzle," Surreal then deftly shifts gears into the atmospheric perfection of "Summer Hymns."

The levels to which this band can build up arrangements to dizzying, inspiring heights cannot be overstated. These songs aren't just beautiful and complex for the sake of audio-braggadocio ... there is real soul and excitement here. The standout track, "The Journey Begins," is one of the biggest, boldest rock epics in recent memory, and a massive track that stands alongside the likes of Rush, Yes and Kansas.

What distinguishes Surreal and *Prismatic Spectrum* from other



prog is the gorgeous, melodic sensibilities that seem to be a guiding star, even on the most adventurous tracks this band can create. In my opinion, Surreal and *Prismatic Spectrum* are among the best things to happen in all of progressive rock music.

Granddaddy's Alt-Country Waltz Oddness

It's always cool to hear an act take a genre in an unexpected direction, and Granddaddy's country-by-way-of-Pink-Floyd approach does just that. Granddaddy mines incredible melo-



dies and motifs, with just enough of an off-kilter approach to make their sound engaging and unique.

Jason Lytle's understated vocals on "Cabin in My Mind" lie in the mix in a perfect David Gilmour-ish subversive kind of way, taking what could be a somewhat stock country ballad and turning it into something utterly compelling. While "You're Going to Be Fine and I'm Going to Hell" stays in avant-garde-country-waltz territory, "Let's Put This Pinto on the Moon" has some subtle Owl City synths that bring the album into David Bowie territory.

In the seven years since the group's

last release, a lot of introspection and grief (over the death of bassist Kevin Garcia in 2017), as well as financial musings ("Will our band even make money?") have come and gone, leading Lytle to wonder "Some random ride/After an airline/Night of wondering/How you're doing now?"

The question above, leading Lytle and company to get back together after 32 years of ups and downs, gets us an amazing, subdued but creative release with *Blu Wav*, and hopefully future output that will come in less than just under a decade.

Check out Michael Pickett's music, free at pickettmusic.com.



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Take My Hand

By Tina Tolliver Matney

“There is something about mornings in the desert. It’s like food, water and air ... something you need even though you don’t know you need it until you get it.”

~ John Keck

The desert inside the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument was stunning on this bright, sunny morning. We were making our way to the last hike on this road trip. As we drove along a particularly winding stretch of highway, the morning sun gave the rocks a warm orange glow. Then John spoke those words above about the desert, and they have echoed in my heart ever since.

We were doing our best to beat the heat and the mass of tourists converging at the trailhead of our chosen hike. Trailheads can be crowded in some areas and parking is sometimes a challenge. However, we have noticed on more than one occasion that these crowds dwindle quickly about a quarter mile into the trail. Some folks are content to walk part of the trail, snap some pictures and leave. We generally choose a trail after poring over books and maps with every intention of hiking it through. Sometimes those intentions get sidelined and that is almost always on me. OK, it’s always on me.

We didn’t finish the Bristlecone

Pine trail last year when we visited the Great Basin. Apparently high altitude hiking can be a real challenge for some people. And by “real challenge,” I mean I think I heard angels singing at about 10,000 feet. We had to turn around. Last week, in Canyonlands National Park, I stood on a rock face that felt so steep I thought I was going to pitch forward and take out 10 unsuspecting hikers on my way to the bottom ... even though I was just five feet away from flat ground.

Then it happened; I started to cry. Real tears like a child stuck on a merry-go-round that is going too fast. I was embarrassed and frustrated with myself at that moment. I knew before we even started the hike that it wasn’t going to be easy. But we hadn’t walked more than a quarter mile before I felt my comfort zone become really, really tiny.

Even before that moment, John wanted to turn around and find a different route. He was sure this wasn’t the route we had intended. But I wouldn’t have it because I believed I could do it. I confess that I pick the dumbest

moments to be stubborn. I took a deep breath and muttered to myself, “I’m not scared! My house just burned down ... that was scary. This doesn’t scare me.”

I know now that was a big fat lie because it did scare me. And by “it” I mean I stood on a steep rock where there was nothing to grab hold of, and nowhere to go except up over a ridge. All I could think about was how sweaty my palms were and how many stars I was seeing in broad daylight. So I just stood still and let the defeat and tears well up and out of me.

I was scared. Afraid of falling. Afraid of failing. Afraid of the exposure I felt when having my feet planted firmly just wasn’t quite enough to make me feel safe. I needed something to hold on to.

That is when John made his way to me. With his soothing voice and reassuring touch, the fear and my frustration eased enough that we were able to make our way back and find a better route. My emotions finally righted themselves as I took in the beauty around me.

Before that day was done, I knew my tears had less to do with my lack of skills on that hiking trail and more to do with the long road facing me once I returned home. I carried John’s words with me for those last couple of days as we made our way back to Montana, followed by my own trip back to the family river cabin where I’m currently learning to live small and simple. “Minimalist” I think is the new-age term.

These past weeks I have come to realize that there really is no right or

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wrong way to adjust to my current situation. I simply have to lean into it all and trust that everything will be all right. I wonder if I could have made it to the top of that steep rock if I had just leaned into my feet and trusted that my boots would hold firm. I don't know and I don't know if I'll ever be brave enough to put myself back on a trail that steep and rocky again.

But life doesn't give us those choices. When we lose our grip and start to fall, there is no choice but to take the hands that reach out to help hold us up. It hasn't been easy to receive so many giving gestures. I have been completely humbled by this experience as those hands have also offered me food, clothing and hugs ... so many hugs. And so much more. I did not

know I could feel so loved by so many.

It is my intention to repay the kindness and support that has held me up and kept me going these past weeks. While I have no idea what that will look like, especially on the days when my own situation demands my full attention, there will undoubtedly be more opportunities for me to offer comfort and assistance when someone is slipping. Whether I am in the desert on a cool, clear morning watching the sun rise up over a plateau, or here by my river, breathing in the crisp, clean air and reflecting on all that I am grateful for, I will never take these moments for granted.

Staying focused on the present is enough for now. I have a lot of things to figure out, a lot of work to do and a

lot of love left to give in this great big life. Yes, I miss the comfort of that big ol' house, and I mourn the loss of it every day. But, as trite as this might sound, "home" has become more a state of mind for me. I know I will have a home again someday. But right now, I am doing all right in my little borrowed cabin by the river with the love and support of so many people. May you have your feet planted firmly on the ground with a hand to hold, wherever you are in life.

Tina is a mother, grandmother, artist, rescuer of owls, eagles, hawks and other wild creatures, children's book illustrator, gardener and hobby farmer who makes her home on the Kettle River. Check out the Kettle River Raptor Center on Facebook.

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Of Birds and Bees

Article & Photos by D.L. Kreft

It's mid-April and a fresh outburst of wildflowers is taking over the scene. Deep, buttery yellow arrowleaf balsamroot flowers dot the open hillsides. Cascades of soft white blossoms are erupting from serviceberry bushes, literally everywhere. Strikingly white blooms of chokecherries and bitter cherries can be found on any country gravel road. Dormant buds are swelling and bursting into vibrant green leaves overnight. Their appearance is fresh and pure since there hasn't been time for sun, wind, and dust to dull and mistreat them. Life is returning at a rapid pace and I find myself eager

to be out and about. I don't want to miss the unfolding stream of new life taking place around me.

What's more, all this new life attracts more life. Native bees, domestic honeybees, and an extensive list of other flying insects search and probe each new blossom for the tiniest sip of nectar. They are seeking energy to complete their own lifecycles and, in doing so, are also moving pollen from flower to flower. This leads to fruit and more food that other creatures will need to complete their lifecycles in the months to come.

Birds of all types are increasingly

full of song, chasing and squabbling over prime territory to attract mates and secure food sources and to raise their hungry broods. Some have been here all winter and are already settled, like the dark-eyed juncos, northern flickers, and black-capped chickadees. New arrivals come in from as near as California and as far as South America.

Warblers, flycatchers, and vireos stream into the landscape, as they have for millennia, and their voices join in the dawn chorus of a spring day. Each has their own preferred habitat, with preferred food choices, and special-



A Fresh Air Perspective

ized nesting sites. They too benefit from the flowers and leaves that grow in abundance. Within and on these plants live the insects and larvae that birds will feed to their young, ensuring the survival of their kind into the next generation.

These marvels of spring cannot be fully understood, or completely appreciated, behind the steering wheel of a vehicle. The buzz of a bee's wings cannot be heard if you're on a phone call. We all know this, but sometimes we fall into a paradoxical

trap of our own making. We say we're going to this place, or to that spot, to look at the wildflowers, only to miss all the flowers along the way! I don't know how many times I've done this, and I kick myself for it every time.

What I've come to learn is it's better to trade driving time for time on the ground – literally. A shorter trip could mean more purposeful time examining the inside of a flower or watching birds courting. These activities are best done sitting on the ground in the warm sun.

Recently I had one of these wake-up calls, and pulled over on the side of the gravel road I was driving. I had been driving home from a full day of photographing birds and landscapes when I realized my seat time in the truck had lasted way longer than my time out of the truck. Time to stop and look around.

As I stepped out of the cab, my feet

touched the ground and the satisfying crunch of gravel under my shoes reached my ears. At almost the same moment, a soft breeze brought me the fragrance of cherry blossoms. Across



the road, a cherry tree in full bloom met my gaze. It wasn't in an orchard, but probably a left-over homestead tree that had somehow survived. It was covered with a ridiculous amount of brilliant white blossoms. I don't think one more flower could've been crammed onto any branch or twig. It was loaded.

I took hold of my camera and followed my nose to the sweet aroma coming from the tree. I stood quietly for a moment, long enough to hear the soft buzz of insect wings. An assortment of different flying insects were moving from flower to flower, pausing, examining, sometimes probing, and sometimes just flying off. One little bee caught my attention, and I tried to follow it wherever it went. Finally, it came to rest on a group of blossoms that it seemed to like, and I was able to capture a few moments of hovering flight above the flowers.

Its hind legs were weighed down with balls of pollen that had accumulated as it climbed through the waiting anthers of the flowers it had visited that day. I would have missed that if

I hadn't invested in some time on the ground.

Turning to the field beyond, I could see the flights of birds crisscrossing the meadow. The brilliant flashes of icy blue color told me these were mountain bluebirds. Two birds in particular seemed to be hanging close together, and it was easy to see

they were a mated pair. They rested for a moment on the old seed heads of a couple of mullein plants and engaged in a courtship ritual. I watched as the female gave a rapid fluttering of her wings from a crouched position. I'm not sure what it meant exactly, but I can guess. The nearby male was aglow in his iridescent blue plumage and paid full attention. I would never have seen that behind a rolled-up tinted window.

It's not enough for me to know the bluebirds and honeybees are out and about. I need these uninterrupted moments to invest my time in observing their time. In this chaotic world, the unconcerned devotion to life by birds and bees is a balm to a troubled soul.

Now that he is retired, Dave is enjoying life as a nature photographer, writer, and administrator of the Northeast Washington Birders Group, @NEWAbirders, on Facebook.

Japanese Canadian History in Greenwood

By Michelle Lancaster

I am fascinated by cultures. Who lived where and when in history, what changes occurred and why? This spring, my family took a day trip to Canada. We crossed in Midway, drove to a bakery in Rock Creek, headed up the mountain to Greenwood, then crossed the mountain pass to loop back down through Grand Forks. The highlight of the trip was our stop in historic Greenwood.

You may have unwittingly already seen Greenwood; the movie *Snow Falling on Cedars* was filmed at the town courthouse. The film hints at the factual, historical context of the town's resurgence. I took a deeper dive into its history and here is what I learned.

In early 1942, after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Canadian authorities (in policies similar to those implemented in the U.S.) rounded up its citizens of Japanese descent – including Canadian citizens born in Canada – living within a 100-mile radius of the coastline. Men of working age were sent to work camps and men who protested removal were sent to Prisoner of War (POW) camps. Women and children waited in Vancouver until authorities sorted out

what to do with them.

Not knowing what to do, community leaders gathered to brainstorm solutions. Coming home from the discussion, Greenwood town mayor, W.E. McArthur Sr., initially agreed that his town would *not* house internees, due to racially motivated safety concerns.

Yet, the copper mining boom between the 1880's to the early 1900's left the town with housing remnants of 3,000 miners and camp workers. A step away from becoming a ghost town, town leaders thought internees could bring life back to the town. The mayor posted an ad in the paper cautiously stating, "The Mayor of Greenwood *does not refuse* to accept the Japanese into his ghost town."

Father Benedict, a friar tasked with finding safe places for the Japanese Canadians of his parish, met with Mayor McArthur. The men developed a plan to convince local citizens that Greenwood would benefit from allowing interned families into the town. All but two residents voted to invite the Japanese people into the town, under the condition that the Franciscan Sisters and Friars would take

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A Year On The Farm

full responsibility for the result. On April 26, 1942, 1,203 Japanese Canadian people began transferring to the town.

Initial housing consisted of around 90 people per floor of a downtown hotel. Each floor contained only one bathroom. The first Japanese Canadian baby born in Greenwood a month after arrival just happened to be our museum tour guide's sister. We asked her, "How did your family feel about the move?" She said that, of course some people were upset and angry, but her mother told her she wanted to be a good citizen, so she would obey her government.

After the war, Greenwood residents welcomed the interned citizens again by inviting them to stay in town permanently. Meanwhile many internees in other areas had to either head east or travel to a starving post-war Japan. Several hundred Japanese Canadians stayed in Greenwood, creating lifelong homes. By the 1950's, the Japanese Canadian population in Greenwood was still around 1,000.

Chuck Tasaka, a son of one of the interned families, is developing a Nikkei (meaning "moved-one" or immigrant) Legacy Park across the street from the museum. He proudly shared the history of the Japanese Canadian men who fought for Canada in both world wars, history of the internment, and stories of other main figures of the time, such as Greenwood's government and the Catholic church that provided schooling for the increased student population.

Chuck shared a piece of history that offered cultural insight: when orders for internment came, those interned had only a few minutes to collect essentials to take with them. Property left behind (the land and goods) was all sold to pay for internment. The men were sent to work camps, so the women had to care for children while carrying what they could. Instead of bringing tools for working the soil, the women brought their formal kimonos. Chuck has a Canada Day photo from an event showcasing the positive integration of the internees and residents. In the photo, the Japanese women are on a float, wearing their kimonos! What was essential in the men's minds was not the same as for the women.

The Nikkei Legacy Park and Greenwood Museum are both a great opportunity to learn more directly from the descendants of those who lived this history.

This history holds a personal connection for me, because my father's family is of Italian (Sicilian) descent, living near Portland, Oregon in the 1940's. They were registered and fingerprinted in February 1942, alongside Japanese Americans, as Alien Residents of the United States during World War II. Our family was not sent to an internment camp, but their Japanese neighbors, the Hasuiké's, were relocated. How might my life have been different if my family had been relocated as well?

Michelle Lancaster homesteads with her family on Old Dominion Mountain in Colville. She writes at Spiritedrose.wordpress.com.



Alien Registration No. 2740927

Name Charles Loprinzi
(First name) (Middle name) (Last name)

RIGHT INDEX FINGERPRINT

August 9 1942 By August 9 1942

Charles Loprinzi
witnessed by August 9 1942

(Signature of holder) August 9 1942

3033-861905 16-26150-1

Yoga and AI

By Brenda St. John

The world seems to be trying its darndest to switch almost everything, including yoga classes, over to artificial intelligence (AI). Supposedly, a yogi could get more individual guidance by taking a yoga class from an AI instructor online than from a human teacher in a yoga studio.

The theory is that the student would input personal information, including needs and goals, and the AI would tailor the class to the individual. Algorithms would adjust the difficulty level, pace, and focus areas. The yogi could take a class at any time and any place. Various styles of yoga could be explored since the AI instructor would know them all. AI would provide instant feedback on form, alignment, and performance.

However, I am not concerned about losing my job anytime soon.

I think one thing a person desires when they sign up for a yoga class is the personal connection and interaction with other humans. Some people also like the little bits of spirituality that come through from a teacher that are not present in AI.

From what I know about AI, it is totally data driven. It can regurgitate only what it has absorbed from previous human information. AI can process information and data, but spirituality is subjective and intangible. Certain religious and spiritual texts can be analyzed, but there is still an element lacking to bring these concepts to life. An AI instructor has limited ability to change a class on the fly, whereas a human instructor can achieve that quite easily. If students are struggling with a pose or sequence, the instructor can back up and review components of movement. AI would lack the intuition to recognize when remedial action could be beneficial.

I have heard that many yoga books coming out are AI-written, so buyer beware! They are likely to be cheap knockoffs and to have errors. Just for fun, I have played around with AI programs and encountered several glaring mistakes when it comes to yoga asanas. My brother has used AI in his teaching assignments and feels his students can't replace traditional studying with AI research because of the number of errors that pop up. The students need to be able to discern which AI information is correct and which is mis- or dis-information.

Downward Facing Dog is a foundational yoga pose, and AI can give decent instruction on how to do it. It can even instruct a person on how to do a Downward Dog Twist, I checked! Because Down Dog is such a versatile pose, I am using it, and

the twisted version, for the pose this month. Down Dog is a great asana because it stretches the entire body and is useful in transitioning from one pose to another. The twist version guarantees the yogi's weight is rooted through the feet, not the arms and hands, which is a common mistake.

For Downward Facing Dog, begin in Table Top pose, which is on hands and knees. Wrists should be aligned under the shoulders and knees aligned under the hips. Lift knees off the mat, straightening the legs as the hips reach toward the ceiling. Draw the navel toward the spine and lengthen the spine from the tailbone to the crown of the head. The neck is relaxed so the head hangs freely, and the gaze is straight back toward the feet. The energetic flow is up through the hands, arms, shoulders, and spine, and then down the legs through the heels, which may or may not reach the ground. However, many beginners will dump their weight into their hands, arms, and shoulders instead of their legs and don't realize they are doing so. The Down Dog Twist will quickly illuminate any misconceptions.



To add a twist to Downward Facing Dog, lift the right hand off the mat and reach it across to the left ankle or shin. Twist the torso to the left, opening the chest toward the ceiling. Keep both arms straight. Hold the twist for a few breaths. Then return the right hand back to its original place on the mat. Take a couple breaths in Down Dog. Repeat the twist to the other side by lifting the left hand and reaching it to the right ankle or shin. This action cannot be performed unless the weight is in the legs and feet, which is where it belongs.

Yoga is all about finding balance in life. This could be a balance between an AI yoga class and an in-person yoga class. AI could add some beneficial elements to a yoga practice. But in my opinion, it should not replace the personal instruction from a human being and the comradery that comes from sharing an experience with other like-minded people.

Namaste.

Brenda St. John has taught yoga classes in Chewelah since 2010 and is also a Spokane Community College ACT 2 instructor.

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Grape Selection

Article & Photo by Joe Barreca

As the temperatures warm up and plants everywhere are in bloom, many folks are contemplating planting grapes. It is a good time for that, but caution is advised. Informed by years of research and experimentation, here are some thoughts and suggestions on the subject.

I think the biggest danger this time of year is a late frost. Even at lower elevations, the growing season is relatively short. It's best to plant grapes after the danger of frost has passed. Grapes themselves can survive a frost, it's the buds you have to watch. Each bud has three baby buds inside. But by the time they come out to replace a frozen leaf, there is little chance of bringing in a ripe harvest. An additional perk to waiting is that

the buds eventually show themselves and you will be able to select viable plants.

The usual approach to selecting the right grape variety is to read through a catalog and pick ones that seem destined to be your favorites. A better approach, I think, is to consider your soil and exposure, as well as your personal preferences.

Grapes such as Monukka and Maréchal Foch are heavy feeders; they like rich soil and produce heavy crops. Others, like Himrod and Lucie Kuhlmann, can thrive in a wider variety of conditions while still producing well. Grapes in general don't like to be too dry or too wet. They became predominant crops in the Middle East because they could

grow on soils that were overgrazed and destructively plowed. The secret is that, unlike trees, they don't have to maintain large trunks. By climbing a trellis or a tree, they eliminate the need for a lot of structure and can produce more abundant fruit.

Historically, wine grapes were grown in Europe. But grapes are also native to North America. This leads to feuds and a sordid history. When American grapes were introduced in Europe, they brought with them a disease called phylloxera, which is caused by an aphid. The blight from this insect quickly spread throughout Europe, devastating crops. Eventually, grape growers realized that grapes grown on American rootstock were immune to the disease. After grafting the true vinifera grapes onto new rootstock, the European wine industry revived, but not without grudges. French/American hybrid grapes are often banned in Europe.

Another contrast between American grapes and European vinifera is in the heritage of the French/American hybrid grapes, many of which are grown in northeast Washington and live in forests. True vinifera from Europe tends to be "well behaved," meaning that they grow new canes every year from set locations on the cordon (the arms of a grape plant trained along a horizontal wire). Pruning consists mostly of cutting back last year's canes to a single bud and letting a new cane grow.

Hybrid grapes, however, love to climb to the top of trees as they would have done in their New England native habitat. Pruning becomes more challenging since they resist sprouting from last year's canes. This leads to a discussion of

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cane versus spur pruning, which is beyond the scope of this article.

Determining how to trellis grapes is an important factor. Generally speaking, grapes like air and light, and providing a wall to the north of the vine is usually helpful. Not only is soil an important factor as well, but exposure to sunlight is key to planning a vineyard. The higher a plant's canes are off the ground, the more impervious it is to frost. Selecting the strongest shoots to attach to a vertical stake or rebar when they are first planted is a good way to ensure that they will attain a good height. Sometimes this process can take a couple of years. In the meantime, trimming off potential clusters of grapes promotes growth.

Another perpetual source of grape confusion is choosing between different breeds: seedless, wine, juice. This aggravates me, not only because historically I have grown wine grapes, but also because wine grapes have been selectively bred over thousands of years to produce great tasting juice. If you are aiming to produce juice, consider wine grapes. They produce abundantly and the juice can be pressed out easily.

Another pet peeve is steam extraction. The extraordinary amount of sugar in grapes – typically twice the amount in pears or apples – is significantly degraded by steam extraction. Granted, the juice can be too sweet and steam extraction dilutes that.

A possible standard exception could be Fredonia. Also referred to as Early Concord, Fredonia juice is very thick. Concord is a commonly preferred juice flavor, but the thickness of straight Fredonia juice



is ideal for jams and jellies. Steam extraction might be a good alternative for the Fredonia juice. Note that original homestead Concord grapes get ripe much later than Fredonia, or not at all. Their vines are hardy, but so is Fredonia.

Sometimes I compare growing grapes to getting married. They need attention and care. Or perhaps it's like the police's motto to "protect and serve." This year is stacking up to be very dry. I wasn't aware of just how dry it was last year until I got a soil probe. This tool is easy to push into the ground to check soil color and dampness. Already the soil here by the Columbia River is very dry.

Watering grapes is another skill that sometimes becomes lost in translation. Grape expert Wes Hagan said, "Vines that are 'trained' to learn that their water only comes from one place (a drip emitter or a hose) will develop a root ball near the surface of the soil and will not

develop a deep and wide root system. Deep, infrequent applications of water are, in my estimation, best for the vine."

I use a sprinkler system that spins water out near the surface of the ground. In my grape growing experience, their roots tend to spread out. To get water to them, you need to spread the water out too. Overhead sprinkling is a no-no. Water on grape vines leads to mold and powdery mildew. Those two culprits will shrivel the grape clusters and rot the leaves. Conversely, too much water in the ground will not allow the roots to breathe and will kill the vine.

Go forth and grow yourself some grapes, but be sure to plan ahead and be prepared. It's a long-term relationship.

Joe Barreca makes maps, grows grapes, makes wine and posts blogs on BarrecaVineyards.com. Vineyard apprentices are welcome!

For the Birds

By Karen Giebel

They flit, fly, soar, dive, bank hard right, spiral, and hop and I love them. I am an amateur birder with the emphasis on “amateur,” but I sure do enjoy our feathered friends. I’ve been a bird watcher for a long time; but only in recent years has my attention turned to truly observing them, understanding their habits and learning to identify each species I spot. I’m not a true bird fiend. I don’t strap a pair of binoculars around my neck and head out into the fields and forests in search of a specific bird to add to my life list. Instead, I am a proud backyard and front porch birder.

Every year I tell myself I will stop feeding the birds because it’s become expensive, and every year I relent because they bring me so much enjoyment that the satisfaction far outweighs the cost of the food.

I start each spring by putting up two hummingbird feeders to welcome back our tiny visitors. The return of the hummers is something many folks eagerly anticipate and social media is full of comments when the first one is spotted. From there, I hang up two Nyjer seed feeders to attract those brilliant yellow goldfinches. I can’t stop snapping photos of them because they are so pretty and they brighten

up an otherwise dull, early spring landscape. I also put out mealworms for the bluebirds. All summer, and much of early autumn, the birds are on their own except for the ceramic bird baths I fill each morning to give them fresh, cold water.

More fun begins as the days grow shorter, the cold weather descends and our long winter enters the picture. I fill a large feeder with seed for the perching birds, set out a tray feeder for the birds that like solid footing, and hang a suet feeder for the flickers and woodpeckers. I toss a handful of seed on the ground for the ground feeders, like juncos. Each morning at dawn, I either stand on the front porch or look out the front windows to watch the arrival of the early birds. Usually it’s the chickadees, then it’s anybody’s guess. There could be quail, Steller’s jays, finches, woodpeckers, flickers or my favorite, Clark’s nutcrackers. They are a real treat to see!

Yesterday, I wrote down all the bird

varieties I have seen this past year from the porch or in our yard. I counted 28 species! Seeing their flashes of color, and hearing their songs and chatter, made those long, dreary winter days a bit more tolerable and I like to think I have helped my feathered friends survive.

They entertain me in more ways than one. A few years back we saw the occasional Steller’s jay at the house, then they disappeared. I was so excited to see them while camping in Westport last summer and I fed them peanuts. Once home, all of a sudden there was a Steller’s jay in the yard. I kept a bucket of cracked corn on the back porch for the chickens, and the jay would land inside the bucket to help himself! Then there were two more, and then three. I laughed, imagining they had followed us home.

What a noisy, raucous bird they proved to be. They aggressively chased the little birds out of the feeders, and even sparred with the northern flickers

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Reflections on Life's Journey

for first dibs on food. I finally started to put bird seed in the flower planters attached to the porch railing for the little birds, thinking the jays would stay away. That worked for a while, but the jays became emboldened and chased the little ones away again. Well, they all have to eat, but I certainly created a problem with the jays. It looks like they are here to stay, as my husband found a nest in the hawthorn thicket by his beehives. It will be interesting to see what happens next.

Another bird story occurred when I was nine years old and went to Girl Scout Day Camp in Black's Corner, N.Y. There was a great blue heron rookery down the winding country road from the camp. There must have been 50 nests up high in the trees and

those big birds were everywhere. That day, I had taken my sister's brand-new sweatshirt without permission because mine was in the laundry. I was standing underneath a tree with a large nest, head tipped back, mouth open (can you guess what's coming?) when that heron let loose! It rained bird poop on me and the borrowed sweatshirt. Thankfully I didn't get any in my mouth, but my hair was covered.

All the other Girl Scouts yelled "Ewww!" or laughed. The troop leaders were very kind but I could tell they were stifling their own laughs. I was a mess. We walked back to camp and Mrs. Andrews helped wipe my hair and gave me a flannel shirt to wear home. All I could think was that my mother was going to be so mad at me for taking

my sister's new sweatshirt. Luckily, I was spared. My sister's sweatshirt was identical in size and color to one of mine; my mom thought I was wearing my own. Mom was so sympathetic and I did not correct her. I've told this story a few times over the years, but I never told my mother or my sister about the sweatshirt, though I'm sure they both would have laughed.

I've seen a few more blue heron rookeries over the years, but funny enough, I have not been inclined to get close to them or take photos. That experience was, as they say, "For the birds!"

Karen Castleberry Giebel blogs about life and food at www.thejourneygirl.com up in the back of the beyond in Ferry County, Washington.

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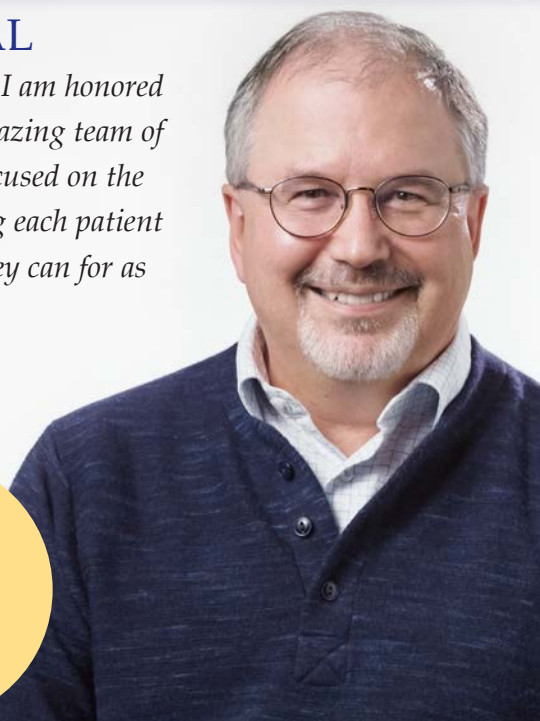
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Spring Hiking

By Bob McGregor

The other day my daughter stopped over and, as the conversation was about to start, I looked out the window and said, “Crap, the bird feeder needs to be filled!”

She said, “If it’s such a pain, quit feeding them. I heard you were supposed to bring your bird feeders in anyway, because the bears are coming out.”

“Well,” I replied, “you are completely unaware of our resident birds. They literally believe they are ‘the residents,’ and we are the interlopers. They are here 12 months a year – winter, spring, summer, and fall. If I quit feeding them, they begin harassing me and, unlike people, you can’t sue them for harassment.

“The black-capped chickadees and nut-hatches are the worst, but the others are all culpable. First, they start incessantly tapping on the bird feeder. Next, they fly up and start looking in the windows. Then they start crashing into the windows — it’s disgusting — they leave slobber marks and bird poop all over them. You can’t sue them, and they’re too small to eat, so it’s easier to go out and feed them. Sometimes I even think the black-capped chickadees follow me up Colville Mountain.”

Speaking of Colville Mountain, it’s a great time to be up there.

As of April 8, the buttercups and spring beauties were starting to disappear, but the arrowleaf balsamroot plants were just beginning to bloom. Soon the mountain will be blanketed with them. Shooting stars and ball-head waterleaf are coming out, and the phlox should soon follow suit.

There are new hiking trails above Madison Street. The streams are petering out, though some are still

on the west side. A pair of eagles can sometimes be seen circling overhead or chirping from a tree. The frogs are croaking like crazy, and some marmots are out and about. The trails are all in good shape.

The Aladdin Overlook has been cleaned up and the meditation/yoga circle is just in its infancy, or maybe it’s still in someone’s imagination.

I have hiked Chewelah’s Gold Hill

Community Forest four times this year. Some trails favor hikers, none too steep, but others were created especially for bikers – five skills parks are proposed. Maps are available at the Chewelah Chamber of Commerce. The maps are made of durable material. It’s helpful to know that two-track trails indicated on the map are old roadbeds. Many trails were built in a short time and several are not on the map.

On the Gold Hill Community Trail, be watchful of ticks if you hike off trail. I picked up a dozen in one day. There are so many trails that it is easy to get confused, but they do have a major loop that is well identified with carbide markers. The trailhead is located just

past the golf course on Golf Course Road. Happy hiking!

Bob McGregor, originally from North Dakota, taught science and math in North Dakota, Alaska, and for the Community Colleges of Spokane in Colville. He is happily retired.



flowing. Quite a few deer, both mule and white tail, are around, but spotting them depends upon the day. One day, I saw a herd of 17 mule deer and two groups of 10 and 11 white tail, but then none on other days. As for birds, there are a few strutting grouse, more

Lessons in Kindness

By JP Frawley

Can anyone, or any one place, hold a medal for kindness? I should think not, yet living the last few years in north Spokane has me questioning that sentiment. I have come to believe specific attributes can be acquired simply by existing in a society that is bountiful in certain characteristics, such as kindness.

During my first visit to a Fred Meyer store, an elderly woman was holding up the checkout line trying to find exact change for her purchase. I was aggravated at the delay and took note of the other customers around me. I was, quite honestly, flabbergasted.

None of my fellow shoppers were showing any signs of frustration, exhausted looks, rolling eyes or grumbling of any sort. No one else seemed to care about being held up over a nickel. Now you may think this story is silly; it may even be commonplace for you. Yet, that is not necessarily the case, depending on where you live. I automatically felt “put out” because that was the common experience where I came from.

This experience truly impacted me and gave me my first sign that I might be in an area that was significantly different from what I was used to.

When moving to north Spokane, I also witnessed, at my first job, the difference in how individuals communicated. It seemed like my coworkers would waste endless time relaying and repeating details to customers who had no intention of even making a purchase. My coworkers displayed bountiful patience and kindness with callers or customers that astounded me. They never used surly, short words to get the customers to leave or showed any kind of curt behav-

ior. Who were these alien people and what alien land had I found myself in?

What was common behavior where I used to work was not the norm here, and I learned quickly I would need to make changes to fit in. After the initial shock, I began to admire the qualities displayed by the people I worked with and wanted to bring those same qualities to MY interactions with customers.

One day while shopping, I realized I had locked my purse and phone in my car. Like most of us, I did not know anyone’s phone numbers by heart, and I felt quite helpless. A security guard in the vicinity must have recognized a woman who was frazzled because he asked me if I needed help. This amazing man spent over an hour of his time calling on his own cell phone to find me a towing service who would come to unlock my car.

It is a very strange concept, but if you do not have access to your credit card, you cannot get a tow truck, which is silly if the very reason you called for lock-out service is because your purse or credit cards are in the car! One could only imagine how grateful I was to this kind person who went completely out of his way to help me, with no personal gain of any sort.

At another time, I had purchased a desk and incorrectly assumed it would fit in my car. The store manager told me they would be happy to hold it for me until the next day when I could come back with a larger vehicle. However, the clerk, who had brought the desk out on a cart to the parking lot, decided she would be able to get it into my car by removing the desk legs. She then proceeded

to do that for me despite the frosty winter evening. She patiently got each leg off the desk as we talked and said she was “glad she could help.” I was struck by the fact I would never have experienced that level of service anywhere I have lived before, nor the act of kindness from someone, once again, going out of their way to help a stranger.

I could share more examples of kindness I have witnessed while living here, but there is another, even more important part of the story. I, myself, am now part of the community’s kind citizens. I have learned to offer more compassion, patience, and kindness to others in my job, in my personal life and in my community at large. I have even learned to extend more kindness and compassion to myself. Surprisingly, I have found myself reevaluating my own stance on political or moral issues the last couple of years. I am now less likely to see someone in the worst light and more likely to give them the benefit of the doubt. I have simply developed a stronger desire to help others, and it has changed everything.

Some may have always lived this way, but not all have been lucky enough to be surrounded by these attributes, nor lived in communities that inspired cultivating such a culture. I surely never expected this change in myself when I moved here years ago, and I am incredibly grateful it occurred.

It is funny, but I have become an alien in a new world, and guess what? I like being an alien now, too; it feels great.

JP Frawley lives in north Spokane and enjoys all things outdoors, from hiking to gardening.

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I'm Baaaack Again!

Article and Photos by Becky Dubell

Spent my last couple of weeks in Skagway, Alaska, showing sister Bonny the ropes on keeping Mom in line. Wait. I think Mom keeps us in line. One day, on a “stay at home day,” I was given about a half hour notice that there were a couple of free piles downtown that needed to be looked at. It takes Mom about three hours to be ready to go out into the world. I guess the 20 years difference in age is why it should only take me half an hour to get presentable. Well. I did make it and she got her free stuff – thank goodness we decided against the convict costumes.

Oh my, does it ever feel good to be home. Everything is green. Or freshly plowed – dirt not snow. Or budding out. Grass needs to be cut. Very wide horizons. Daffodils and dandelions are out in force. In big trouble with my granddaughter JJ, which means I have to suffer through HUGE hugs. She tells me that lipstick prints on the forehead are not allowed – dagnabbit anyway. So, I put one in her hair!

Have not yet smelled my signal that spring is here: skunk.

I learned of a new season that settles in Skagway. I thought tourist season was next. But nope. This one starts about a month before tourist season. Penny, a life-long Skagway resident, says it is called “seatbelt season.” This season starts just before the boats start coming in to unload thousands of tourists to wander the wooden boardwalks in Skagway. These newcomers are the ones that think that the stop sign means roll up to the intersection and “slightly stomp on pedal.” That is when the local folks have to start wearing their seatbelts. Penny almost got hit!

I noticed the traffic was heavier while crossing the bridge over the Skagway River. I could not straddle the potholes because you have to cross the centerline and the oncoming traffic would not be able to get out of the way. So it starts ... and continues till October.

A couple of days before I left, time was taken to sit on

the east deck, while Bonny was doing the Mom thing, waiting for the sun to peek over the mountain. Bonus was I got to watch the snowline move up the mountain. Only a light dusting that night. It dawned on me that there had been light in the sky before the sun peeked out at 8:09 a.m. That evening, the sun went out of sight behind the mountain at 5:36 p.m. Light in the sky until a little after 8 p.m. These times are up on our hill. So, in the valley, they definitely have a shorter time to play in the sun. Mom gets to spend time sitting on the deck in the sun and fresh air, enjoying the view until the sun disappears or the wind comes to say, “Hey. Whatcha doing?” and chases her inside. On this same day, Spokane also had white stuff in the early hours.

I finally got to split and stack wood the last week I was there. We ran out of wood about three weeks before we should have. Was using the oil heater.

One thing that is really different between Skagway and northeast Washington is the absence of log trucks. Skagway usually runs out of wood toward the end of the snow season. Mom has a buddy who works for the road department. When a tree goes down across the road, it is

“harvested” and put out to the elderly in need of wood. She was first on the list. This tree was mostly dead and lost its footing during one of the visits from the wind. The trunk on this thing is a little bigger than the three-foot bar on the chainsaw.

Left Skagway on the ferry – eight-hour trip to Juneau. Got a closer view of the Chilkat Range. Sure looks bigger than the view from Mom’s deck. Met up with

the madam from the Red Onion that had the “Brothel Sprout.” She was known as Madam Spitfire, which fits her totally, even to this day, 22 years later. Her son totally supports her, as you can see from the picture on the ferry trip.

Toured Juneau for a couple of days. Saw a deer that was the size of a muscular small doe. Went looking for crabs under rocks on the beach – not happening in Ju-





neau. Dangit. Flew out of Juneau at 8 a.m. on a 737 to Seattle. Had the smoothest landing ever! Switched to a smaller jet to Spokane. Goldline up to Colville. Picked up by Jamie, Dan and JJ to get to my house at about 8 p.m. I am sooooo glad to be home. See you soon at the Do-it Center.

Personal note: That very large crane is still hanging

around in the harbor, but no matter how long it hangs around it will not be getting Mom out of Skagway. Also, Mom. Please notice that I called it a “deck” not a “porch.”

Becky is a mother, grandma, and great-grandma who is all about family and friends, loves northeast Washington, and follows the mantra: “It is what it is and it will become what I make it.”

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CLOSED CAPTION

Hopes for a Proliferation of Butterflies

By Rich Leon

For me, one of those magical moments in nature is catching sight of a beautiful butterfly as it flutters gently from flower to flower. Being on the lookout for such moments, I have noticed that it seems the butterfly populations are dwindling.

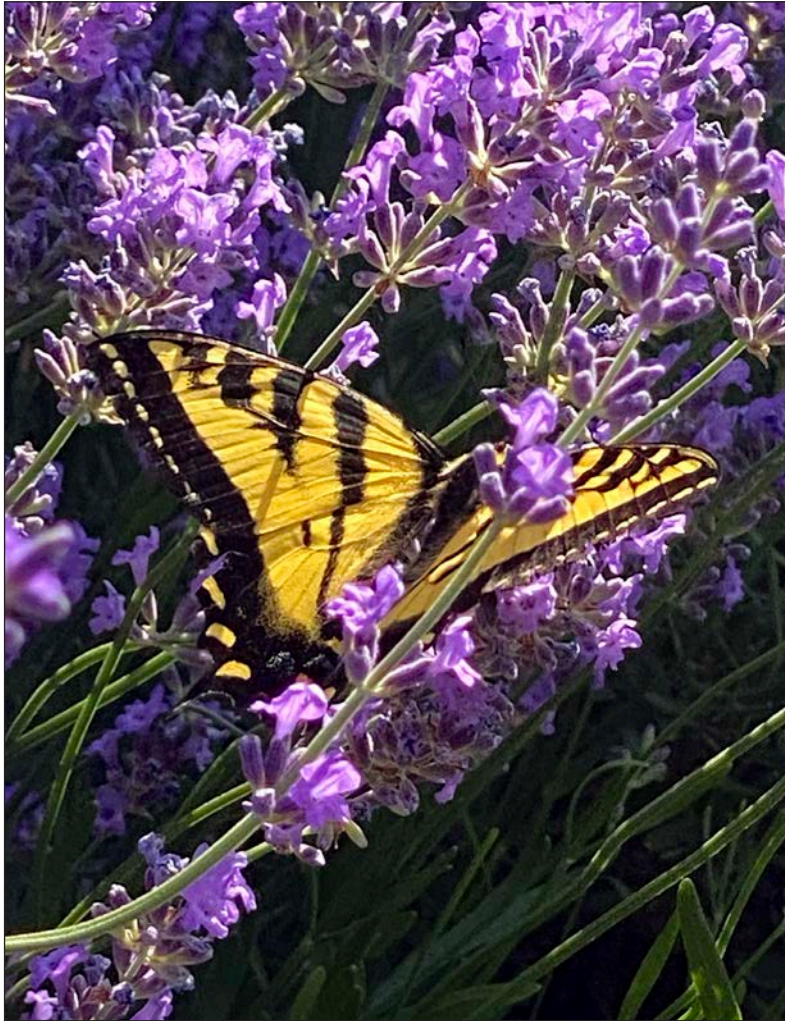
Being aware that pesticides have long posed a threat to butterflies, I've wondered how much our country's droughts and wildfires have also been impacting butterfly habitats. I understand warmer winter weather can also be a problem. For a species adapted to cold winters, warmer temperatures can make the butterfly eggs, caterpillars and pupae more susceptible to disease.

Most butterflies stay close to home, but a few species, like the monarch, migrate across great distances. While doing research for this article, I contacted a woman known as the "Butterfly Lady" who lives in Texas. She was kind enough to answer

my questions and told me that last year she saw a decline in the number of butterflies, especially the monarch, due to the very hot, dry summer. We will just have to wait and see whether this trend contin-

ues.

After speaking with the Butterfly Lady, I checked with some people in the Spokane area to get their take on whether there has been a decline in numbers. I first spoke with local gardeners and nature photographers. Finally, I visited Manito Park to see what the volunteers there had



to say about the butterfly population. Everyone I spoke to said pretty much the same thing: numbers were decreasing, although one person said it was about the same as past years. Granted, my survey was small

and unscientific.

The one butterfly I have seen consistently in my yard was the cabbage white.

To attract butterflies to a yard and garden, here are some suggestions. Avoid using pesticides in the garden and have something blooming in the spring, summer and fall.

Monarch butterflies feed on members of the milkweed family, while many other butterflies prefer nectar from a variety of flowering plants. Some plants that will help to attract butterflies are coneflowers, bee balm, sunflowers, asters, phlox and columbine, just to name a few.

Last fall I took out some grass from my yard and will be turning it into a butterfly-friendly garden this spring. I hope some of you will plant more butterfly-friendly plants this year.

This is the Chinese year of the dragon, but I hope it is also the year of the butterfly.

Rich Leon is a nature photographer, co-author of three hiking guides, avid hiker for the past 40 years and a maker of nature calendars, especially mushrooms, and can be contacted at richleonphotos@aol.com.



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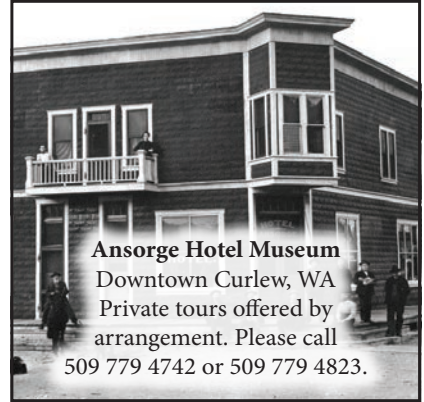
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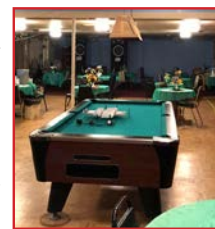
Featured Dining & Lodging 2024

Addy

ADDY INN: A full menu, family-style restaurant just a block off Hwy 395. A local favorite, Addy Inn boasts an Addy Burger that is a challenge to the largest appetites. Steaks, fish, burgers, specials and desserts. Enjoy the old west atmosphere or slide up to the unique bar. A creek and shady deck complete this adventure. Join us for your next outing! 509-935-6137.



COLVILLE EAGLE'S 2797: Serving Colville for 76 years. Open to the public for lunch Tue-Fri, 11am-2pm, with a great menu and salad bar. Fri dinner & salad bar, 5-7pm, with line dancing & karaoke. Sun breakfast, 9am-Noon. Bingo, Wed, 5:30 & 1st & 3rd Sun, 1:30. Pool-Darts-Poker. New members welcome. 608 N Wynne. 509-684-4535.



Chewelah

RUSTY PUTTER BAR & GRILLE - CHEWELAH GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB: A great place for friends, a frosty beer with a great burger, and the largest TV in Chewelah. Enjoy breakfast, lunch, or dinner, and relax on the patio (also the largest in Chewelah) overlooking the 9th Green and Pond of the 9 Hole Course, and the firepit on cool evenings. Public is always welcome. 2537 Sand Canyon Rd., 509-935-6807, chewelahgolf.com.



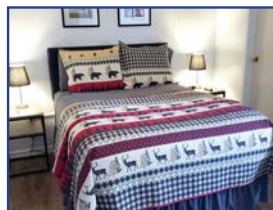
DRAGON VILLAGE: Authentic Cantonese, Hunan & Szechwan Cuisine. Dine in, take out, catering, beer, wine, cocktails. 155 S. Main. Tue-Sun 11am-9pm. 509-684-8989. See our menu at dragonvillagecolville.com.



MAVERICK'S: Where breakfast, lunch and dinner are served all day on the gorgeous patio or indoors. Friday is Prime Rib Night. Burgers, steak, chili, salads, beer and wine. Open Wed-Sat, 7am-8pm, and Sun, 7am-2pm. 153 W 2nd Ave. 509-684-2494.



CHEWELAH MOTEL & RV PARK: Play and stay at the edge of a vast wilderness with all the conveniences of home. 311 S. Park St. chewelahmotelandrvpark.com. 509-935-4763.



MR. SUB: Fresh baked bread daily. Hot and cold subs, wraps, salads, fresh baked cookies, U-bake pizza, party Subs, daily specials. Gluten free pizza, sandwiches & desserts available. Event catering and phone orders welcome. M-F 9am-7pm. Sat 10am-6pm. 825 S. Main. 509-684-5887.



Colville



ACORN SALOON & FEEDING STATION: Breakfast, lunch & dinner 7 days a week with daily specials. Cocktails and cold beer, pool tables and pull tabs. Mon-Thur: 7am-9pm, Fri-Sat: 7am-10pm, Sun: 8am-9pm. 262 S Main., 509-684-3337, find us on Facebook!

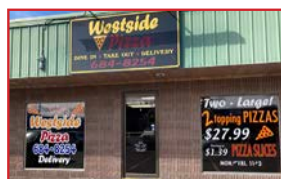
POUR HOUSE: A fun, family-oriented craft beer tap house and restaurant offering burgers, paninis, salads and wraps, 30+ taps, wine, and fun atmosphere. Banquet/event center/conference room for private parties and meetings. Mon-Thur, 11am-8pm, Fri & Sat, 11am-9pm. 202 S. Main. 509-685-7325. Facebook.com/PourHouseColville.



CAFE ITALIANO: Authentic Mediterranean cuisine featuring local, organic veggies and fresh seafood. Ask about our specials. 151 W. 1st. Call for hours open: 509-684-5268.



WESTSIDE PIZZA: It's all about the pizza! Eat in or sit back and enjoy our delivery service! Combo, specialty, build your own pizzas, plus dessert stix, appetizers, and salads. 555 S. Main, Sun-Thur 11am-9pm, Fri-Sat 11am-10pm. 509-684-8254.



BENNY'S COLVILLE INN: With 106 guest rooms, suites, spa and largest local indoor pool, Benny's has big city accommodations with that small town charm and friendliness. Simple breakfast 5-9am. Check out our fish museum lobby. 915 S Main. 800-680-2517 or 509-684-2517.



LOON LAKE MOTEL: Comfortable and super clean rooms with all the amenities at affordable prices, featuring themed and thoughtfully-selected decor. Pet friendly and close to picturesque Loon Lake and acres of wilderness. 3945 Hwy 292, 509-233-2916, www.loonlakeinn.com.



Kettle Falls

CHINA BEND B&B:

Luxurious lodging at the China Bend Winery Estate. Gourmet breakfast and complimentary wine tasting. Custom dinner available by reservation. Tasting Room open Mon-Sat. Call for Private Tasting with the Wine Maker or to arrange for a special occasion. Northport-Flat Creek Road along the Columbia River at 3751 Vineyard Way. 509-732-6123, www.chinabend.com.



Newport

DANNYANN'S B&B: Enjoy a hearty breakfast and explore the beautiful Pend Oreille River Valley. Two well-appointed



guest rooms with private baths. Play & Stay: an easy walk to shops, restaurants, museum, and less than 1 mile to river and trails. Relax. Renew. Retreat. 131 N. Spokane Ave., dannyanns.com, 509-447-3787.

RIVERWOOD B&B: Need a weekend getaway? Extra visitors



and no place to put them? Rent the whole Riverwood House, or just separate rooms for a comfortable and quiet, relaxing stay. Single room rentals can ask for full sit-down breakfast. 509-850-0873. riverwoodbnb.com.

Orient

BEARDSLEE FAMILY RESTAURANT: Where everyone

is family. Serving home cooking and prime rib on Fri. Spirits, beer, wine and hard ice cream. Karaoke every Sat. Open Wed-Sat, 8am-8pm, Sun, 8am-5pm. Hwy. 395 in Orient. 509-684-2564.



Ione

CEDAR RV PARK: Come enjoy the beautiful Pend Oreille River and make Cedar RV Park your base-camp for year-round outdoor activities. Full RV hook-ups, fully furnished cabin, tent camping, laundry, showers, dump station, VERY fast Wi-Fi/broadband internet, car & RV wash, and more! 4404 North Hwy 31, Ione. 509-442-2144. cedarrvpark.com.



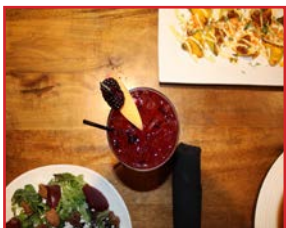
Springdale

RETAIL CAFE BY THE SPRING: Come in for fresh coffee, blended and iced espresso, blended fruit drinks, retro donuts, cookies and treats, and shop local craft items, vintage clothing, soaps, and more! Wed-Sat 9am-3pm. 104 West Shaffer Ave., 509-258-4613, cafebythespring.com.

B&B BY THE SPRING: Visit AirBnB.com, search for "Springdale, WA" and look for "Away to the Spring" for details and reservations for a special stay in a 100-year-old building by the creek at 104 West Shaffer Ave., 509-258-4613.



Loon Lake



THE LAKEHOUSE BAR & GRILL: A locally-sourced kitchen focused on comfort food with more adventurous specials. Mon-Fri, 4pm-close, Sat-Sun, 9am-9pm. 3998 Hwy 292, Loon Lake, Reservations at 509-644-0077 or at theloonlakehouse.com.

Please stop by any of these businesses and thank them for being locally owned and operated, and a part of our community.



Fun for the whole family to watch and participate in.



65th Annual



Enjoy the Kid and dog, and Prospectors Parades.

Sign up in the Costume Contest, Soap Box Derby, Mutt Strut, and Horseshoe Tournament.

Free Music

See Vintage Trailers, Vendors, and more!



Scan QR code for link to applications for events and more information.



For more information republicchamber.org

This ad is paid for by Republic Regional Chamber of Commerce